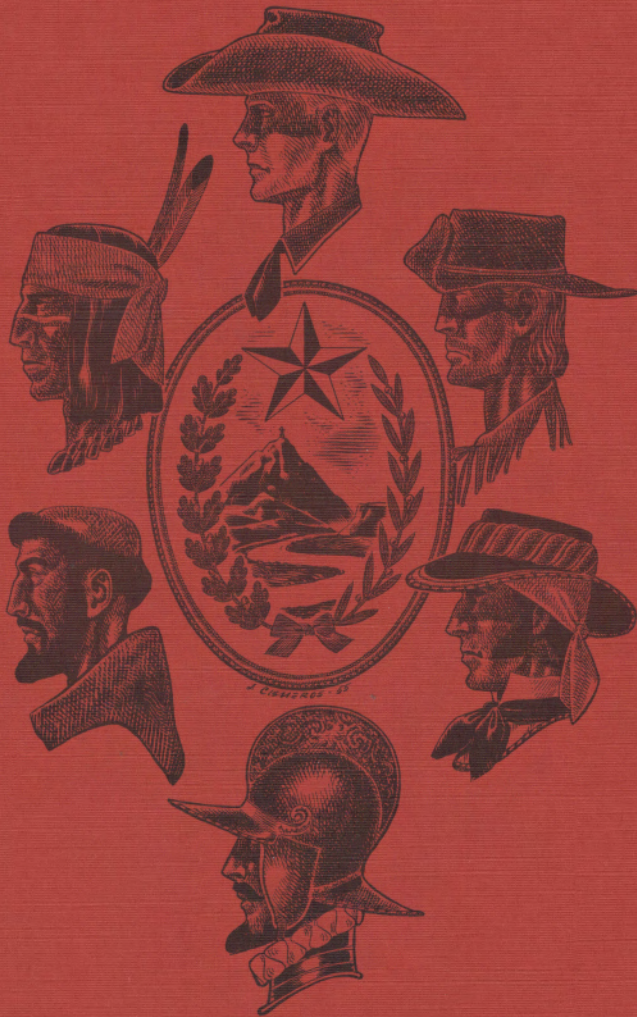


# PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. XXXIII, NO. 2 • EL PASO, TEXAS • SUMMER, 1988





# PASSWORD

LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD, *Editor*

CLINTON P. HARTMANN, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Board: Conrey Bryson, Nancy Hamilton, Leon Metz, Mrs. John J. Middagh  
J. Morgan Broadbuss, Francis L. Fugate, Martha Patterson Peterson

Honorary Board Members: Mrs. Eugene O. Porter, Millard G. McKinney

Typography and Graphics: Sheryl S. Montgomery

Historical Society Logo: José Cisneros

Book Section Artwork: Dr. Clarke H. Gamsey

Correspondence regarding articles for PASSWORD may be directed to the editor at  
5159 Sterling Place, El Paso, Texas 79932

The per-copy price of PASSWORD is \$5.

Correspondence regarding back numbers of PASSWORD should be addressed to  
Membership Secretary, El Paso County Historical Society,  
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

PASSWORD (ISSN 0031-2738)

is published quarterly by THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

Membership of \$20.00 per year includes a subscription to PASSWORD  
Second-class postage paid at El Paso, Texas

Postmaster: Send address changes to  
Password, The El Paso County Historical Society  
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS JOURNAL ARE ABSTRACTED AND INDEXED  
IN HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS AND AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE

Printed by Gateway Printing, El Paso





# PASSWORD

VOL. XXXIII, NO. 2  
EL PASO, TEXAS  
SUMMER 1988

## CONTENTS

- 55 "APACHE JACK" GORDON: *Desperado of the Pass*  
by Wayne R. Austerman
- 65 ON THE AIR: *The Early Years of Radio*  
*Broadcasting in El Paso* by Jack Rye
- 73 The GALATZANS of EL PASO, TEXAS  
by Judge Morris A. Galatzan
- 81 EARLY POSTMASTERS in EL PASO COUNTY  
by Frances Segulia
- 88 DESSERT at the GLOBE RESTAURANT  
by Frances H. Hatfield
- 89 OUR TOWN—ONE CENTURY AGO  
(April-June, 1888) by Art Leibson
- 93 A HISTORY of the HISTORY CLUB  
by Helen Gillett
- 100 BOOK REVIEWS



but his race as well, in a career that was brutal and audacious even for those violent times. A man of undoubted intelligence and physical courage, he carved out a reputation for treachery and pathological cruelty that was equalled by few of his criminal contemporaries in the Southwest.

John "Jack" Gordon claimed to have been born in England sometime in the middle 1820s. Beginning his career as a merchant seaman, he jumped ship at an American port, wandered west to Missouri, and joined Colonel Alexander Doniphan's legion of Missouri Volunteers as it departed the state for the conquest of Santa Fe in the summer of 1846.<sup>1</sup> He remained with the command throughout its New Mexico campaign and its subsequent capture of El Paso in early January of 1847. At some point during the Missourians' stay in the settlement, Gordon killed a Paseño in a personal dispute and found himself facing court-martial charges for murder. He fled the provost guards and rode northward, cantering squarely into an Apache ambush somewhere amid the rumbled wastes that flanked the Rio Grande. There must have been some compelling element in Gordon's appearance or personality, for the Indians did not kill him on the spot. In an unusual departure from their normal practice, they took him prisoner. As time passed, he won their trust and was permitted to accompany them on their raids. Eventually he was accepted into the tribe as a worthy brave.<sup>2</sup>

Gordon lived with the Apaches throughout 1847-48, acquiring at least one wife and winning renown as a war leader. His sense of bravado and his virulent hatred of the Mexicans appealed to the tribesmen, and they readily followed the breechclouted Englishman on raids against the river settlements along the Rio Grande and the Gila. Following one such foray, Major Enoch Steen led a detachment of the Second Dragoons in pursuit of the raiders and caught up with them near Dog Canyon in the "White Mountains" of New Mexico. The troopers fought until nightfall of July 5, 1849, killing five of Gordon's warriors. Less than six weeks later Steen took another patrol out from his camp at Doña Ana and trailed Gordon's band west to the copper mines at Piños Altos. Gordon met Steen in single combat just long enough to send a rifle ball through the officer's side. Reeling in the saddle, Steen relinquished command to a lieutenant, and the Apaches escaped into the mountains.<sup>3</sup>

---

*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* (Texas A & M Press, 1985). He is employed by the Office of History, United States Air Force Space Command, and resides in Colorado Springs.*



While Steen nursed his wound and plotted revenge in Doña Ana, a party of travelers arrived in El Paso and rested after the long journey from San Antonio. Colonel John C. Hays, noted Texas Ranger and explorer, was en route to the Gila River country for the purpose of establishing a government Indian agency. Traveling with him was a company of California-bound emigrants. Hays reached the Pass on September 10, and he immediately inquired about conditions on the road to the west and about the possibility of finding a guide who knew both the Indians and the country on intimate terms. The local residents told him of Jack Gordon, and related that the renegade occasionally slipped into the settlement at night to visit Benjamin Coons' store. Hays may have been puzzled by the community's tolerance of Gordon's appearances, but he decided to obtain Gordon's help if possible.

Late one evening Hays and his associates were in the store when Gordon appeared in the doorway. Traveler John Nugent described Gordon as a man "about five feet eight or nine inches in height, robust in frame, and wonderfully modeled for strength and muscular activity . . . Light haired and blue eyed, his face was colorless as to blood, but embrowned by years of exposure to the weather." The buckskinned figure strode silently into the flickering lanternlight and Coons introduced him to Hays.<sup>4</sup>

Hays told Gordon that he wanted to meet the Apache chieftains of the region somewhere near Doña Ana or El Paso and that he would talk peace with them and distribute presents. He added that he would meet them on their own ground should Gordon be unable to coax them into the settlements. Gordon consented to carry Hays' proposal to the Indians, and advised the Texan to attempt a rendezvous with him at the landmark of Picacho Peak if he did not return to El Paso prior to the agent's departure. Through further conversation with Gordon and others in the store, Hays learned that while the Englishman despised the Mexicans, and boasted of how many he had killed and scalped, he claimed that he had never harmed an Anglo. Hays tactfully refrained from mentioning the fights with Steen's dragoons, and the two men parted as seeming friends. Hays had little choice but to rely on Gordon to keep his word.<sup>5</sup>

On October 3, Hays and his party moved upriver to Doña Ana, where they were Major Steen's guests. The angry dragoon described Gordon and his activities in profane detail, sarcastically noting that "he would steal, lie & kill, but he was true to you." Hays stirred uneasily in his chair as he listened to the Major's outburst, especially in view of two disturbing developments which had occurred shortly after his meeting with Gordon at Coons' store. For one thing, a man named Eves, one of the emigrants,



child who had been abducted by the Apaches a year earlier. And he kept his word. The child was returned safely. However, this act of whimsical charity was outweighed by accounts of Gordon's more usual exploits. Early in November, James S. Calhoun, United States Indian Agent in Santa Fe, reported that Gordon's band had fallen upon a train of German emigrants somewhere northwest of El Paso, that at least seven men had died in the attack, and that another seventeen had been taken prisoner. It was also reported that the Indians tried to ransom the Germans to the authorities in Mexico, but Gordon's demands were rejected, leaving the captives to the Apaches' mercy. They were lucky if they died quickly.<sup>11</sup>

Following the failure of his attempt to establish an Indian agency on the Gila, Hays traveled on to the Pacific. And Gordon drifted west to California also. On a rainy day in the winter of 1850-51, John Nugent was surprised to see a familiar figure come riding down the muddy length of Montgomery Street in San Francisco. Through the curtain of the downpour he could see that the horseman was "enveloped in a soldier's gray overcoat, the collar was drawn high up around his face, apparently for the purpose of concealment, and casting suspicious glances on both sides as he rode." Nugent recognized Gordon immediately, and later learned the reason for his furtive behavior. On the night before his appearance in San Francisco, Gordon had broken out of jail in San Jose. He had earlier been sentenced by District Judge John H. Watson to two years in prison after his conviction for horse-stealing. It was a surprisingly mild punishment for the time and place, but Gordon had no intention of remaining incarcerated. "The county jail at San Jose was constructed of adobe and wood," Nugent wrote, "and was as much a restraint upon John Gordon as the film of the gossamer would be as a cage for the bald eagle." Stealing another horse, Gordon rode into San Francisco and paid his respects to John Hays, who was then serving as the local sheriff. Following an amiable visit, Gordon disappeared from town.<sup>12</sup>

He was soon back in the El Paso area, and found that conditions still favored his means of business. The Apaches remained as restive as ever, striking repeatedly at the Rio Grande villages. A native criminal element had also appeared in strength among the settlers to add to their problems. The Mexican-American Boundary Survey Commission had arrived in El Paso in November, 1850, and remained in the area until the following April. During that time Commissioner John R. Bartlett was forced to discharge many of his teamsters, who had proved to be troublesome types. Added to them was a collection of "rogues, fugitives, and ne'er do wells," who had previously worked for Ben Coons' freight company. Joining these



newcomers were assorted local hellions and also deserters from the nearby Army posts. Before long there was a reign of lawlessness in the valley of the Pass that was not completely curbed even by the trial and execution of several felons.<sup>13</sup>

Such men were willing grist for Gordon's mill, and the record indicates that he quickly organized a gang of white outcasts to join his Apache brothers in raiding the settlements and ambushing travelers. Not every Indian depredation of the time could be blamed upon him, but the intelligence of conception and the audacious conduct of many of them bore his mark.

No one could personally identify Gordon as a participant in the attacks, but the circumstantial evidence was strong. In January, 1852, John Calhoun reported from Santa Fe that "perfect tranquility prevails among our Indians," but that "The Apaches of the West Side of the Rio del Norte continue to commit . . . murders and depredations." In April, 1851, fifteen warriors had ambushed eight men on the *Jornada del Muerto* above Doña Ana, killing one and wounding several others. In November they killed two herdsmen and burned a wagon train not far to the south. December 2 saw the death of territorial legislator Robert T. Brent in another ambush on the *Jornada*. The killings led the *Missouri Republican's* Santa Fe correspondent to report that "It is many years since [the Indians] have been so excited and furious as they are now."<sup>14</sup>

None of the survivors of these raids had seen Jack Gordon among the braves, but on January 25, 1852, a witness may have caught a fleeting glimpse of the Englishman. The mail coach from El Paso to Santa Fe, with an eleven-man escort from the Second Dragoons, had just left the *Laguna del Muerto* when at least forty Apaches attacked from ambush. Three whites died in the first flurry of shots. The fighting raged around the outnumbered dragoons for twenty minutes as they were forced to give



Robert Eccleston, a member of the party of California-bound emigrants who traveled through El Paso to Tucson with Colonel John C. Hays' contingent in 1849. (Photo courtesy Dr. Wayne R. Austerman)



ground and abandon the coach. One soldier died and another was wounded as they cut their way clear of the trap. The corporal in command reported to his superiors at Fort Conrad that he was certain there were white men with the Apaches, "as they had large whiskers and curly hair . . . that he was so well satisfied that he cursed them in English."<sup>15</sup>

A month later the next Santa Fe mail was attacked on virtually the same spot. Two men died and a third was wounded before the Apaches withdrew. This attack was followed within a few days by a bold raid into El Paso itself and by yet another assault on the March mail coach as it ran Gordon's gauntlet on the *Jornada*. In April the savages emptied corrals in Doña Ana and returned to El Paso on a second brazen visit. If all these sorties were made under Gordon's leadership, he must have taken a perverse sense of pride in the results, for the residents of El Paso petitioned the state governor to post volunteer troops in the region for their protection.<sup>16</sup>

Gordon's next recorded appearance reached the height of irony. By November of 1854 he was employed in legitimate work—as a driver on the mail line operated by Henry Skillman and George Giddings. On November 2, Gordon and Skillman left San Antonio in company with Frank Giddings, the contractor's brother, and James Hunter. By November 15, they were just east of the oasis of *El Muerto* Springs when they met the mail coming down from El Paso. Gordon exchanged places with the other driver and headed back toward San Antonio while Skillman and Giddings continued on toward the Pass. Only a few hours after Gordon's departure, the expressmen met an Apache attack at *El Muerto* and were besieged for the rest of the day. It may have been guileless coincidence, but where Jack Gordon was concerned no one could ever be certain.<sup>17</sup>

Gordon's tenure with the stage line was a brief and curious affair. When Skillman hired him, Gordon's reputation as a killer was well established, and his friendly relations with the Apaches were a matter of record. Perhaps the company hoped that his presence on the coaches would give them immunity from Apache attack. If so, the Indians extended their forbearance only to those rigs on which Gordon held the reins. Whatever the reason for his having been hired, it did not remain defensible for very long. By the fall of 1855 the Briton had been fired. That July the Apaches had emptied Giddings' corrals in El Paso, and suspicion had doubtless mounted against Gordon, who already was much resented by his fellow drivers.<sup>18</sup>

Gordon was back in El Paso by the end of October, along with the rest of his gang. He and his chief lieutenant, known variously as William



Blair or William McElroy, blew open the safe in the United States Customs Office and stole \$2,300. The next night they robbed Ben Dowell's store and corral, leaving a taunting note behind before escaping upriver to Las Cruces. The San Antonio newspapers reported that several members of the gang were later killed by Apaches near Fort Thorn, New Mexico, but that Gordon and McElroy had survived. Perhaps Gordon had used his Indian friends to insure that he would have to split the loot only two ways. McElroy openly boasted in the New Mexico settlements that he would someday return to El Paso and kill Dowell.<sup>19</sup>

The following June, Frank Giddings took the stage west from San Antonio in company with two travelers who rode their own horses. They enjoyed a clear passage to the Pecos. On the morning after they forded the turgid river, Thomas O. Wright and his companion saddled their mounts and left camp early to scout the road ahead of the coach. Giddings and his crew finished breakfast and followed soon afterwards. Five miles beyond they found the bodies of Wright and his friend sprawled in the dust. Both men had been stripped, and their horses were gone. There was little sign of a struggle, and neither victim had been scalped or mutilated. It was odd behavior for Indians. Giddings quickly buried them, leaving behind two lonely rock cairns to mark the site of another all-too-common tragedy of the trail.<sup>20</sup> In El Paso there was some speculation about the killings, but much greater excitement followed the next month when the Apaches burned out the relay station at Eagle Springs, west of Fort Davis, and massacred the staff.<sup>21</sup>

On August 6, 1856, Gordon and McElroy rode in from the desert to spend the night in San Elizario. They did some serious drinking at William Ford's saloon, totally unaware that he was one of Dowell's best friends. While the two hardcases discussed their plans to kill and rob the merchant, his ally sent a rider off to El Paso with a warning for Dowell. The next morning the killers rode north to the village. As Gordon stood watch from outside, McElroy slipped into Dowell's establishment with pistol in hand. Dowell and Albert Kuhn were waiting for him with weapons ready. There was a brief volley of shots, and McElroy was dead before his body hit the floor. Gordon wheeled his horse about in the street, cursed Dowell with an oath of vengeance, and galloped out of town.<sup>22</sup> When a curious crowd of onlookers rolled over the bandit's shattered body in Dowell's store, one of Giddings' men declared that he had previously seen the dead man's revolver in possession of either Thomas Wright or his friend, who had both been murdered the previous June a few miles west of the Pecos. There could be only one response to such treachery. Gordon had finally



overstepped himself, and every man on the stage line would be hunting his head from that day forward.

That August of 1856 marked Gordon's last known appearance in the El Paso Southwest. Eventually he was drawn back to California. Journalist John Nugent of the *San Francisco Herald* crossed Gordon's path again some years later and determined that Gordon had settled in Fresno County, buried his past, and prospered. By the mid-1870s Gordon was dead, and none in the state beyond Nugent had been the wiser to his infamous career in Texas and New Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

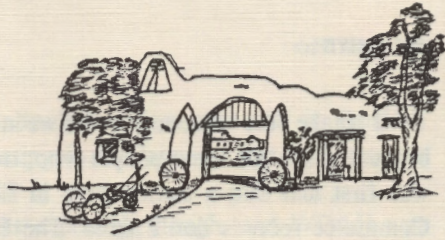
In the mid-nineteenth century, life was hard in the border country, its challenges and rigors greatly complicated by an influx of ruffians and criminals. "Apache Jack" Gordon was unquestionably one of the most loathsome of these undesirable types. However, for all the havoc he wrought, his notoriety was fleeting even in his own time. For a few years into the 1860s, his infamy lingered in the Southwest as a certain taint on the wind. Today, only scattered references to him in a few memoirs and official documents bear final witness to the existence of one (occasional) Paseño who cast his lot with the blood enemies of his own people and earned the consummate hatred of those who came to build rather than to destroy. ☆

#### NOTES

1. John Nugent, "Scraps of Early History, —III," *The Argonaut*, No. 10 (1878), 6-7.
2. *Ibid.* Documentation is lacking for Gordon's military service. The published rosters for Doniphan's command list a William Gordon and a B. F. Gordon as private soldiers with the volunteers. Journals and narrative accounts by several men serving with Doniphan mention a Lieutenant Pope Gordon, who was a commissary officer for the unit. James M. Cutts, *The Conquest of California and New Mexico by the Forces of the United States in the Years 1846 and 1847* (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace Publishers, 1965), 87-88; John T. Hughes, *Doniphan's Expedition* (Chicago, Rio Grande Press, 1962), 141, 256, 281, 292, 313, 363-64; Ralph P. Bieber, ed., *Journal of a Soldier Under Kearny and Doniphan, 1846-1847* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1933), 333, 335; Bieber, ed., *Marching with the Army of the West 1846-1848* (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936), 32-33, 186, 243, 279; William E. Conelley, *Doniphan's Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Kansas City, Missouri: The Bryant Book and Stationery Company, 1907), 534, 539, 553. While one of these accounts notes Gordon's participation in a brawl that erupted in Chihuahua, there is no mention of any murders of Mexicans by American soldiers in El Paso. We have only Gordon's account of events during this period.
3. Nugent, "Scraps," 6-7; Annie H. Abel, ed., *The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun While Indian Agent at Santa Fe and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1915), 72-73; *U.S. Secretary of War, Annual Report, 1849*, House Executive Document No. 5, Part I, 108-11; Theo P. Rodenbrough, *From Everglade to Canon with the Second Dragoons* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1875), 163-64.
4. Nugent, "Scraps," 6-7.

(Notes continued on page 72)





## ON THE AIR:

### *The Early Years of Radio Broadcasting in El Paso*

*by Jack Rye*

THE YEAR 1921 SEEMS TO BE THE YEAR THAT people first started "broadcasting"—BROADCASTING as opposed to amateur radio or code transmitters. In that year, 25 stations were licensed by the Department of Commerce—specifically to broadcast market or weather reports, music, concerts, lectures, etc. to the general public. You have probably always heard that KDKA in Pittsburgh is the nation's oldest broadcast station, and that might well be true, but KDKA was not the first LICENSED broadcast station. The first station to be licensed was WBZ, owned by Westinghouse in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was licensed on September 15, 1921, to operate with 1,500 watts on 360 meters. That 360 meters is right at 833 kilocycles. KDKA wasn't licensed until November 7, 1921, and was the eighth station licensed. Why KDKA usually gets the "FIRST" credit, I don't know. All stations licensed prior to September 15, 1921, were of an experimental nature or of the amateur classification with broadcasts not intended for public reception.



I make the distinction between BROADCAST and AMATEUR because there are some people who, over the years, have felt that KDKA was first and that a station here in El Paso was second. Department of Commerce records don't agree. The El Paso station, I'm told, was built by W.S. Bledsoe in 1921. The description that has come down to me is that it was a two-tube affair that ran about three watts and carried the call 5AW. I'm sure there's no doubt that 5AW was operating, but it wasn't a licensed BROADCASTING station, even though it was sending some kind of programming to the estimated 15 radio sets then believed to exist in El Paso. It matters not that 5AW isn't listed in the first 25 stations. It did exist, and the name "Bledsoe" is an important one in El Paso radio's beginnings.

Stories indicate that there were at least two stations operating in El Paso on an amateur basis in 1921 and early 1922. The Bledsoe operation was located in the Five Points area; and down on San Francisco Street the Mine and Smelter Supply Company also had an experimental station on the air. A certain Karl Wyler, who was about 17 years old at the time, appeared in singing roles on the Bledsoe station as one of the "Happiness Boys." I've been able to find no reviews and no ratings of his performances. Probably just as well.

The folks at Mine and Smelter were so taken with this new toy that they applied for and received a broadcast license from the Radio Division of the Bureau of Navigation, Department of Commerce, in June of 1922. Like everybody else, they were authorized to operate on "the broadcasting wave" of 360 meters with 200 watts. Sequentially-issued call letters of WDAH were granted to the firm, of which a Mr. Mackey was agent. The station was reported on the air by early July, 1922.

By November of 1922, when Mine and Smelter wasn't using the air wave, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce put programming on WDAH. Evidently the Supply people and the Chamber tired of their new toy, and the station was discontinued by the firm on March 15, 1923. However, the Reverend W. B. Hogg saw the opportunity afforded by this new way to the people and, praise the Lord, he got the congregation at Trinity Methodist Church to join him in the move into "show biz." On March

---

*Jack Rye began his lifelong career in broadcasting as a child singer in Dallas and, later, in El Paso. During World War II, he was an announcer for the American Forces Network and the Allied Expeditionary Forces Program of the BBC at London's Broadcasting House. Since 1969 he has served El Paso's radio and television station KTSM as its Executive Vice President.*



22, 1923, the corner of Mesa and Boulevard (we now call it Yandell) became the center of radio broadcasting in El Paso. A "flat-top" antenna was installed on top of the church.

Things didn't go as smoothly as expected, though, and WDAH was reported "temporarily out of commission" on July 3, 1923. But the church wasn't ready to give up on this new way to reach the heathen. Trinity retained the call and got the station back on the air in December of 1923, although it reduced its power from 200 down to 50 watts. It also changed its frequency to 268 meters (1120 kilocycles). And...WDAH now had a slogan: it was identifying El Paso as "The Climatic Capital of America."

Bear in mind that "being on the air" in those innocent early years wasn't like we think of "being on the air" today. You got morning and evening Sunday services, the Prayer Meetin' on Wednesday, and—by 1924—on Monday and Thursday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30 you got concerts, orchestra, and Hawkins Night Hawks broadcasts. Later in 1924, it was reported to the Radio Division that WDAH was "infrequently operated." By mid-1925, O. W. Norton was in charge of the station for the church. Apparently he was not too excited by his charge, and WDAH left the air in July, 1925. Its license expired in August of that year. Then the Reverend W. Angie Smith came on the Trinity Methodist Church scene and had WDAH relicensed on December 7, 1925.

In the other parts of Texas, BROADCASTING got its start with station KAAM (later WRR) in Dallas; KNOW, Austin; KFJZ, Fort Worth; KILE, Galveston; KTSA, San Antonio; WBAP, Fort Worth; WFAA, Dallas; WACO, Waco; KGNC, Amarillo; WOAI, San Antonio; and WTAW, College Station. All of these stations were on the air by the end of 1922. There may have been others too, but these stations are still in the broadcasting business.

On June 1, 1927, WDAH (now operating with a big 100 watts) was ordered by the newly empowered Federal Radio Commission to move to the frequency of 1180 kilocycles. On November 11, 1928, the station's dial position was again altered, this time up to 1310 kilocycles. Local traffic on 1310 wasn't too heavy, what with mostly church goings-on being broadcast. But all of that was due to change with the return of W. S. Bledsoe to the saga of El Paso broadcasting in August of 1929.

On July 1, 1929, W. S. Bledsoe and W. T. Blackwell received a license to operate station KGKF on 1310 kilocycles with a power of 100 watts. They would share broadcast time with WDAH, which was still spreading the good word from Trinity Methodist Church. Since the studios of the new station were to be in the basement of Blackwell's Tri-State Music



Company at 103 South El Paso Street, Bledsoe and Blackwell thought it would be real neat if that location could be reflected in the call sign of the station. The Federal Radio Commission didn't object and granted the call KTSM, the TSM for Tri-State Music, to this new operation in time for its premier broadcast on the evening of Thursday, August 22, 1929. From the *basement* of the Tri-State Music Company, there was no place to go but . . . UP.

Speaking of UP, the time has come to outline briefly the Karl O. Wyler story. A true native born son and El Paso High School graduate, Karl O. had demonstrated from an early age a desire to perform and entertain. Witness . . . his appearance on the 1922 Bledsoe operation in five Points. After that, he sold stationery, drove a gasoline truck, tried Dallas for a while. But the "show biz" desires were always there. When KTSM made its 1929 appearance, it had something like four employees—and Wyler was one of them, as announcer and ukulele player and singer. More importantly, he had the will and the drive to make his presence known, appreciated, and desired. "Karl the Kowhand" was able to stay glued to this maverick called KTSM through some very rough ridin'. Uke strummer in 1929, program director in 1930, station manager in 1933. And by 1952 he was—and is—the majority stockholder of KTSM, the Tri-State Broadcasting Company, Inc. KTSM Radio just celebrated its 58th birthday, and Karl O. Wyler has been on hand for each one of them. When people ask me (and they do ask) when Karl O. is going to retire, I echo his reply to that question: he doesn't. Since he can do anything he wants to do, he must be doing what he wants to do: run the KTSM properties. As we continue with the story of early radio broadcasting in El Paso, keep in mind that from 1929 right on up to this moment Karl O. Wyler has had an influence on every move made by the KTSM management, the Tri-State Broadcasting Company, and, indirectly, on most happenings in the El Paso broadcasting world.\*

So . . . in 1929 El Paso had two radio stations, two transmitters, and one frequency (1310 kilocycles): KTSM, located in the 100 block of South El Paso Street, and WDAH, with its studio and transmitter located in the 100 block of South El Paso Street, and WDAH, with its studio and

---

\**Editor's note:* In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the community, Karl O. Wyler was inducted into the El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor in 1986. It was one of many honors he has received—among them, Pioneer Broadcaster of the Year (1977) from the Texas Association of Broadcasters, the Dorrance D. Roderick Distinguished Service Award in Mass Communication (1977), and El Gran Paseño Award from the University of Texas at El Paso (1983). (See *Password*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1, p. 23.)



transmitter located at Trinity Methodist Church on the corner of Mesa and Yandell. And by this time WDAH had added commercial programming to its church services. Earlier in 1929, before KTSM got on the air, WDAH had made an agreement with the Wilson boys—E. E., C. T., E. M., and Ernest—four brothers who also owned station KGFI in Corpus Christi and KGKB in Brownwood, Texas. The lease between Trinity Methodist and the Wilsons' Eagle Broadcasting Company provided that the Church was guaranteed air time for the continuing broadcasts of its services. The Wilsons were, of course, a party to the agreement for WDAH and KTSM to share time on 1310 kilocycles.

By September of 1930, the Wilsons had brought WDAH from the Church and had moved the studios to the Hotel Paso del Norte and the transmitter to the roof of the del Norte. The station was on the air only part-time, having to share with KTSM, and some of that part-time was taken up by the Trinity Methodist services. It was not unusual for stations of this era to operate on a share-time basis, but it was a practice that was beginning to cause financial problems for some. And that may well



W. T. Blackwell, owner of Tri-State Music Company as he appeared c. 1929. Together with W. S. Bledsoe, he launched radio station KTSM on August 22, 1929, from a studio in the basement of his music store, located at 103 South El Paso Street. (Photo courtesy W. T. Blackwell, Jr.)

be the reason why the Wilsons decided, in the early summer of 1931, to sell WDAH to KTSM owners Bledsoe and Blackwell and go back to their full-time stations in Corpus and Brownwood.

Now, operation on 1310 kilocycles in El Paso was no longer split between two separate groups. And I hasten to add that Trinity Methodist was not left out in the cold by this sale. A condition of the sale was that specified hours of the WDAH operation would continue to be turned over to the Church. Another condition, reported to the government, was that WDAH "won't broadcast the church [programs] over KTSM." There might have been other ways to insure Trinity Methodist air-time,



simpler ways, but the arrangement was that there would still be two stations and two transmitters. The WDAH call was "retired" in 1939, when KTSM power was raised to 1,000 watts and the transmitter moved to its present location in Ascarate.

In January of 1931, KTSM had erected a new transmitter atop the El Paso National Bank Building, located at Texas and Stanton. It was a two-wire, flat-top, "T"-type antenna, 70 feet long and suspended between two 40-foot-high wooden towers. Like all the other "transmitters" that were used in El Paso during these early years, this one was home-made. Louie Gemoets, a former electrical engineer for the El Paso Electric Company, had been responsible for an early WDAH transmitter. He was now Chief Engineer at KTSM, and the new transmitter was of his doing.

The year 1932 was an important one for KTSM. In February of that year, it moved into new studios on the tenth floor of Hotel Paso del Norte; and on August 23, it acquired a new owner. KTSM (as well as WDAH) was sold by Bledsoe and Blackwell to the Tri-State Broadcasting Company, which was owned by Bill Walz of the W. G. Walz Company, one of El Paso's major appliance distributors. W. S. Bledsoe and W. T. Blackwell were true pioneers in El Paso broadcasting. In 1929 they had launched KTSM, which turned out to be Texas' 24th oldest continuously licensed broadcast station. Although they owned the station for only three years, they laid a foundation for others to build upon. And a solid foundation it was. It now supports an FM station, a TV station, and an aerial tramway to the top of a mountain—all of these enterprises operated by this Company whose ownership never left town.

It would be nearly eight years after the significant events of 1932 before another radio station would go on the air in El Paso. Dorrance Roderick, owner and publisher of *The El Paso Times*, decided that he wanted to establish a radio station, but the KTSM folks objected. KTSM said that there wasn't room "economically" for another station in El Paso, and the FCC people in Washington agreed that perhaps El Paso couldn't support two stations. Obviously, this now put several attorneys to work—Roderick's arguing that El Paso could support TWO radio stations and KTSM's declaring that TWO was ONE TOO many. In the end, the FCC decided that it was none of their business whether a city could "support" more than one station. If the applicant was financially and morally sound and if a frequency was available, then let 'em have a go. And so they did. KROD (R-O-D for Roderick) hit the air on 1500 kilocycles in June of 1940 and soon moved to 600 kilocycles, where the original call still remains, although several owners have passed by.



My role in the early years of broadcasting in El Paso was something in the nature of a bit part. I came to El Paso as a boy in the early 1930s, and I was an avid radio fan. I was also, you might say, a "veteran" radio performer. In Dallas, I had appeared on a kiddie radio program from the Melba Theater carried by the then "world's oldest municipally owned radio station," WRR. When I got to El Paso, I listened to KTSM every chance I could. And I remember like it was yesterday some of those programs from the '30s: Uncle Van (des Autels) and the Funnies; the Purity Baking Company's presentation of "Cecil and Sally," the voices of Allen Hamilton, Morrison Qualtrough, Jimmie Faust; and Roy Chapman emceeing the *Times* Plaza Theater-KTSM "Mickey Mouse Club." Before long, I got in the act, too—doing the singing-on-the radio thing again with Dayton Payne at the mighty Wurlitzer organ.

In the late '30s, I pursued my radio "career" in company with my friend Herbert Noyes Rand (now chief engineer at KHEY). We made frequent visits to Juarez stations XEP and XEJ. And on Sunday mornings, while KTSM carried the Trinity Methodist services, we would go over to Juarez station XEFV and be announcers on their program of American music...until the Sunday morning that Mexican Immigration people came by and escorted us to the bridge. Unlicensed gringo announcers were not permitted. But KROD came on the air about then, and we managed to appear a few times on a couple of their shows: a safety program they did and also a weekly dramatization of the *Times* Sunday funnies.

Then, in 1942, my big break came. I got a job at KTSM—replacing announcer Muriel Parker, who left El Paso right after her marriage to Dick Guinn, fresh out of Annapolis at the time (and now a retired Admiral). Finally I became a REAL participant in the growing-up—and the growing-pains—of early broadcasting in El Paso. It was FUN being the only male announcer on the KTSM announcing staff before I myself went off to World War II. And later, it was exhilarating to watch the wonderful work of the Chapman boys (Roy and Jack) before they left the local scene for more spectacular heights in the broadcasting industry.

As for the growing-pains, well...there was the episode of Conrey Bryson and the missing microphone. He was sitting on it. And there was Ted Bender's appearance on our Wrestling Show for a demonstration of the infamous "sleeper" hold. It worked, and Ted has never forgotten. Also unforgotten around the studio is the story of one-eyed, hat-wearing, news anchor Ted Hunt and why he thought the KROD production staff was trying to kill him. The light fixture actually fell three feet away. And just to show you what a great impression I was making in those days, there



was the time that Sam Donaldson introduced me to his wife as his old Texas Western College professor—Virgil Hicks.

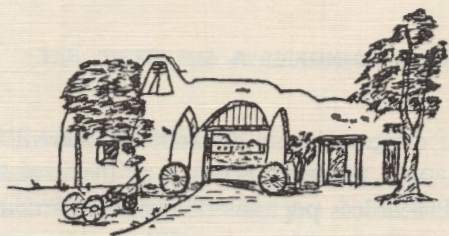
I would hope that I also made some positive impressions. But this much I know: it was an exciting time—those early years of radio broadcasting in El Paso.☆



"APACHE JACK" GORDON...from page 64

5. *Ibid.*; James K. Greer, *Colonel Jack Hays Texas Frontier Leader and California builder* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1952), 239-42.
6. Greer, 241; George P. Hammond and Edward H. Howes, eds., *Overland to California on the Southwestern Trail 1849 Diary of Robert Eccleston* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 161.
7. Greer, 241-42; Nugent, "Scraps," 6-7; Hammond and Howes, 175.
8. Abel, 176-80; Greer, 242-243; Hammond and Howes, 175.
9. Abel, 176-80; Greer, 244; Nugent, "Scraps of Early History —IV," II, No. 11 (1878), 11.
10. Hammond and Howes, 182-83.
11. *Ibid.*, 203; Greer, 244-47; Abel, 72-73.
12. Nugent, "Scraps —III," 6-7. Gordon's activities are difficult to trace during the period of November, 1849, through 1851. In November, 1855, the *San Antonio Herald* reported that in 1850-51 Gordon had hung about El Paso until suspicion of his links to the Apaches led to a warrant for his arrest being issued. He supposedly escaped to California, returned east as far as the Mexican state of Durango, was arrested there for killing a native, and then escaped back to Franklin at El Paso. No other documentation is available on this period of his career. *San Antonio Herald*, November 27, 1855.
13. Rex W. Strickland; *Six Who Came to El Paso Pioneers of the 1840s* (El Paso: Texas Western College, 1963), 15-17; John R. Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua, Connected with the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission, During the Years 1850, '51, '52, '53*, Vol. I, 157-61.
14. Abel, 473-74; *Missouri Republican*, October 1, 1851, January 5, 31, 1852.
15. *Missouri Republican*, January 30, February 28, 1852; Abel, 475-76, 485-87.
16. *Missouri Republican*, March 26, May 22, August 31, 1852; Abel, 485-89; Robert W. Frazier, ed., *Mansfield on the Condition of the Western Forts* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 70-73.
17. *San Antonio Ledger*, December 28, 1854; *Texas State Gazette*, January 6, 1855, *New Orleans Weekly Picayune*, January 10, 1855; "El Paso Pioneers Sketchbook," Southwestern Collection, University of Texas at El Paso Library, 2. Price Cooper was the driver with whom Gordon exchanged places.
18. *San Antonio Herald*, March 8, April 26, June 28, 1856; Ralph A. Smity, "The Scalp Hunter in the Borderlands 1835-1850," *Arizona and the West*, VI, No. 2 (Spring, 1964), 18; Deposition of George H. Giddings, George H. Giddings vs. the United States, Kiowa, Comanche and Apache Indians (Indian Depredation N. 3873), United States Court of Claims, December Term, I-IV.
19. *San Antonio Ledger*, December 1, 1855; *San Antonio Herald*, November 27, 1855, January 3, 1856; Nancy Hamilton, Ben Dowell, *El Paso's First Mayor* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1976), 19-21.
20. *Texas State Gazette*, August 2, 1856; *San Antonio Herald*, August 30, 1856.
21. Giddings Deposition, Giddings vs. the United States.
22. *San Antonio Texan*, August 28, 1856; *San Antonio Herald*, August 30, 1856.
23. Nugent, "Scraps, —III," 11.





● PIONEERS IN THE EL PASO SOUTHWEST ●

# The GALATZANS of EL PASO, TEXAS

*by Judge Morris A. Galatzan*

MY PARENTS, BENJAMIN AND ELKA Galatzan, were married in 1903 in a small village near Belz, a part of Russia at that time, but later becoming a part of Roumania and then again Russia, depending upon changing political times and whichever of the two countries wanted Belz. Three girls were born to my parents in Russia: Sarah, in 1904; Lena, in 1906; and Ruth, in 1908. If the reader saw the movie *Fiddler on the Roof*, he has a perfect picture of life in their Russian village where my parents and sisters lived as Jews.

My mother had two brothers, Jacob (Jake) and Sruel Snider living in the United States, in a place called El Paso, Texas. Uncle Jake had gone to El Paso in the 1890s from Minneapolis, seeking a climate more conducive to his health. He had taken Uncle Sruel to El Paso with him, along with Uncle Sruel's wife and three small children (one of them being Mike Snider, who later became a captain on the El Paso Police Force).

Uncle Jake and my parents corresponded regularly. Uncle Jake, having



States citizens. Pop never missed the opportunity to vote. He was never able to understand why so many citizens failed to go to the polls and cast their vote, a privilege he had not enjoyed in Russia, and one denied to so many people all over the world.

The "bottom fell out" of the second-hand store business, and Pop was faced again with finding a means to provide for us. He took a job with Katz and Sons peddling merchandise on foot from door to door, his customers—low-wage-earning Mexican laborers—paying for the merchandise on the installment plan. It was hard work lugging heavy suitcases all day long laden with wares for sale, and his weekly salary of fifty dollars was less than adequate. By now, my sister Sarah was working; but Lena,



The Galatzan family of El Paso, c. 1920. Back row, parents Benjamin and Elka. Front row, children, l. to r., Sarah (later Mrs. Julius M. Nasits of El Paso and now deceased), Lena (later Mrs. Irwin Behrman of El Paso and now deceased), Ruth (now Mrs. Bernard Gluck of Las Cruces), Morris (later Judge of the 65th Judicial District Court of Texas and now of counsel to the El Paso law firm of Grambling & Mounce), and Joe (later an El Paso physician and now deceased). (Photo courtesy Judge Morris A. Galatzan.)



Ruth, Joe and I were still in school. Lena and Ruth took after-school and Saturday jobs with Kress. I sold newspapers on the downtown streets of El Paso, and I also had newspaper routes. At 13, I went to work for the Popular Dry Goods Company after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer as a cash boy for \$3.00 a week, \$1.50 of which went to the El Paso Gas Company every Monday to pay for my Mom's new gas stove I purchased. I continued to work at the Popular while I was in high school and the Texas College of Mines. I graduated from the cash-boy ranks to become a wrapper and relief cashier, and continued that work until I left for the University of Texas in 1929. So, with a team effort, the Galatzans made it through some tough times.

But even through the hardest years, we were never deprived of fun and entertainment. On many a Sunday afternoon of my early childhood, Pop would give my sister Sarah fifty cents to take all five of us "kids" to a movie downtown. That fifty cents took care of the admissions (five cents each for Sarah, Lena, and Ruth; Joe and I were admitted free because of our age), the streetcar fare to and from, and also some popcorn or candy. More than once, I remember, Sarah had change to bring back to Pop.

Education had been a main key for opening the door to El Paso, and Pop never lost sight of that. He encouraged each of the five of us to apply ourselves and to learn. In 1923, Sarah graduated from high school. To help with the family financial support, she took a six-week business course and went to work as what they then termed a stenographer (now secretary) for Haymon Krupp and Comapny. The legendary El Pasoan, Haymon Krupp, was her "boss" for almost twenty years.

My sister Lena graduated from high school in January, 1925, as the valedictorian of her class. That graduation night was a memorable one. The following news item, written by Cynthia Gray and entitled "DAD'S STRUGGLE, HER VALEDICTORY," from El Paso's afternoon paper gives the picture of that evening far better than I could ever express:

The proudest and happiest man in El Paso, in the United States, in the world?

He is Benj. Galatzan, 49, 2011 N. Stanton.

For Galatzan's dreams have been fulfilled beyond his wildest imaginings.

Last night he sat in the High school auditorium. He was only one of hundreds there. But, on the stage, a slim, pretty young girl was talking.

Folks listened intently—not a sound but her voice.



The girl was Galatzan's daughter, Lena, 18, valedictorian of the January High school graduating class.... She had made an average of 93 in her High school course. It is said to be the highest mark ever made by an El Paso graduate....

The story of her life—or, rather, her father's—his fight for her education—that was her valedictory address.

And as she talked, tears of happiness crept down the cheeks of Galatzan and his wife, sitting back there, unnoticed, listening.

Today in his little second hand goods shop at 801 S. El Paso, Galatzan beamed on all who approached.

"In Russia 14 years ago, I was a persecuted Jew farmer," he told a *Post* reporter. "My children couldn't get an education."

"We will go to America," I told my wife. "We had \$35 when we arrived in El Paso."

"Lena succeeded because she worked," Galatzan said. "She never put a lesson aside until she had mastered it thoroughly, and often she studied far into the night. To think that I came here to give my children the greatest thing in the world, education, and now my Lena has the highest honors."

Two years later, Lena graduated as Number One from El Paso Junior College and then went to The University of Texas at Austin, working her way through as secretary to the then Dean of the School of Education. She graduated with honors in August of 1930 from the School of Business Administration and returned to El Paso to teach in the Commercial Department at El Paso High School. She married Irwin Behrman of El Paso, and later in life, when her own daughter, Suzan, left El Paso for Stanford University, she returned to teaching in the Business Administration Department at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Ruth graduated from El Paso High School in May of 1927. She then obtained a teacher's certificate available under the then existing laws, and in September commenced teaching first grade at Aoy School in El Paso. She later married Bernard Gluck and now resides in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

My Dad was most pleased that both Lena and Ruth, as teachers, were giving something back to the El Paso schools for the education they had been fortunate to receive. He would be further pleased that four of his grandchildren (Suzan, daughter of Lena; Ann, daughter of Ruth; Sandra and Judy, my daughters) followed the teaching profession. Suzan is a high



school teacher in Palo Alto, California; Ann teaches at Las Cruces High School, in Las Cruces, New Mexico; Judy heads the English Department at Jefferson High School in El Paso; and Sandra was a teacher in Montessori schools in El Paso and in Dallas, Texas. Three of his other grandchildren—Leigh, Russell, and Stephen (sons of Joe)—followed in their father's footsteps and became medical doctors. David, my son, is in advertising; and Alan Nasits, son of Sarah (Mrs. Julius M. Nasits), is an attorney in El Paso.

My brother, Joe, and I graduated from El Paso High School in May, 1931, and January, 1928, respectively. Each of us attended Texas College of Mines (my period) and Texas Western College (Joe's period).

In 1929 I went to The University of Texas at Austin, where I attended the Arts and Sciences College and the Law School. I worked my way through school as a table waiter in boarding houses, as a fraternity house manager, as a laundry and cleaning agent, and—on Saturdays—as a clerk in downtown Austin stores.

I was admitted to practice law in July of 1934 and was associated with Judge S. J. Isaacks and Stephen O. Lattner. Mr. Lattner died in 1937, and in 1941 I became Judge Isaacks' partner. In February of 1942 I was inducted into the Army. After basic training, I was retained as part of the Cadre to assist in the instruction of new basic trainees until November of 1942, when I entered the Adjutant General Corps Officers Candidate School at Fort Washington, Maryland. Upon my completion of that course, I was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Adjutant General Corps. I saw service in England, France, and Germany as a member of General Eisenhower's G-5 (Civil Affairs) Staff, for which I was awarded the Bronze Star. I was separated from the Service in February of 1946 as a Captain and resumed my law practice with Judge Isaacks. In June of 1947 I married Irene Asbach from London, England.

In 1950 I was appointed Judge of the 65th Judicial District Court by Governor Allan Shivers. As you can well believe, December 7, 1950, when I took the Oath, was a great day for my parents, as well as for our entire family, and bore out what Uncle Jake had written to my parents forty years prior, that "in America you will have the opportunity to pursue the goals you set for yourself, and to live in freedom and dignity." Yes, Uncle Jake, and only in America can a son of immigrant parents be appointed a State District Judge.

I served as Judge for approximately six and a half years, being elected three times without opposition. In April of 1957, I resigned to become a member of the law firm of Hardie (Thornton Hardie, Sr.), Grambling



(Allen R. Grambling), Sims (Harold L. Sims) and Galatzan. The firm is now known as Grambling & Mounce. Since January 1, 1982, I have been of counsel to the firm.

My brother, Joe, graduated from The University of Texas Medical School at Galveston in June of 1941. In early 1942 he joined the Army Medical Corps as a First Lieutenant. He served with the 82nd Airborne Division in Europe until 1945, and returned to El Paso to start his medical practice. In August of 1946 he married Sylvia Leib of El Paso. He enjoyed a busy, meaningful, and outstanding career as a fine and caring general practitioner until ill health forced his retirement in March of 1982 and his subsequent death in September of that year. For over 20 years he volunteered his services to the athletic teams of Texas Western College/The University of Texas at El Paso, and shared with the basketball team the great victory over Kentucky in 1966 and the NCAA Basketball Championship.

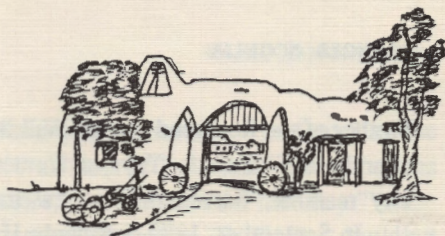
El Paso was very good to my parents and our family. Through my civic service with the Jaycees (1937 Charter Member; President, 1939), El Paso Chamber of Commerce (Director and then General Counsel), El Paso Downtown Lions Club (46 years), the Armed Services YMCA Board of Trustees, and the El Paso Community Foundation, I have tried, and am still trying, to give something back to El Paso in return for that which all of us Galatzans received over the years.

My mother passed away in November of 1960, and my Dad in October of 1961. Neither of them ever regretted leaving Russia; and they loved El Paso. All of us children were and are thankful they made the move to freedom. May their memory always be for a blessing. ☆

### WHAT'S IN A NAME

El Paso's Clardy School, which opened in 1955, is named for Allie Clardy, nicknamed Polly, the mother of Josephine Clardy Fox and wife of Zeno B. Clardy, a pioneer El Paso lawyer. Mrs. Clardy was the youngest of five daughters of Colonel and Mrs. Joseph Davis, who lived near Kansas City. She was born November 2, 1865, and married Clardy in 1880. They made their home in El Paso, where she continued to live after his death in 1901. Clardy School was built on land that had been owned by her daughter, Josephine.





# EARLY POSTMASTERS in EL PASO COUNTY

*by Frances Segulia*

*Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night  
stays these couriers from the swift completion of their  
appointed rounds.*

--Inscription on the Main Post Office, New York City

A

REQUEST SENT TO THE UNITED STATES Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., asking for early post office records for Tornillo, Texas, netted copies of a few pages of handwritten entries under the heading "El Paso County."<sup>1</sup> The entries begin as early as 1876, when El Paso County included the areas that would later become Hudspeth and Culberson Counties. Sifting through the maze for locations within the present boundaries of El Paso County brought light on early postmasters in the now familiar locations as well as in others long forgotten.

In the documents received, the names of postmasters for the city of El Paso begin with that of Albert Schutz in 1877, twenty-five years after the naming of Jarvis Hubbell as El Paso's first postmaster.<sup>2</sup> Many of the names listed, like that of Schutz, suggest a relationship, if not a definite identity, to some of El Paso's most prominent early citizens.

Albert Schutz was succeeded in February, 1879, by John B. Tays,



brother of the Reverend Joseph Wilkins Tays, founder of the first protestant church in El Paso.<sup>3</sup> Tays, a former Texas Ranger, and El Paso's first city marshal,<sup>4</sup> served only a few months as postmaster.

In September, 1879, Leonardo Hart, a son of Don Simeon, was named postmaster. Like Tays, Hart kept the post for only a few months. He was followed by James Marr, who remained in the position for about a year. Next came Fannie D. Porter, El Paso's first woman postmaster. Porter served a period of six years or until James A. Smith was appointed in June of 1890. Smith, an early editor of the *Herald*, also was known as "Uncle Jimmy Smith, one of our best loved men. . . ."<sup>5</sup> Smith was postmaster until 1894; then, in 1907 he was appointed a second time, continuing in the position for eight consecutive years. The name of this beloved and respected early El Pasoan was entered into the El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor in November, 1969.<sup>6</sup>

Postmasters between Smith's separate terms were John Julian, 1894, an El Paso liquor dealer and city treasurer<sup>7</sup> for a time; Robert F. Campbell, 1898, an El Paso mayor during "the clean up"<sup>8</sup> of the city's political and social conditions; and Theodore B. Olshausen, appointed by Teddy Roosevelt in 1902. (Olshausen may have been better known as the father of Bessie Olshausen, an accomplished singer of her day.)<sup>9</sup> As postmaster, Olshausen made an effort toward improving mail service in El Paso<sup>10</sup> before his resignation due to ill health in 1906.<sup>11</sup>

In January, 1915, Eugene A. Shelton, prominent in both the social and political life of El Paso and a pillar of the First Presbyterian Church, assumed the duties of postmaster. Shelton was succeeded by one of El Paso's "foremost business and professional men," James J. Ormsbee, in 1922. Ormsbee was the superintendent of the El Paso Smelting Works and the first President of the Board for the El Paso School for Girls.<sup>12</sup>

Four years later, Postmaster Ormsbee was replaced by Luther C. Cole, who remained in the position less than a month or until April, 1926, when Henry C. Kramp became El Paso's postmaster. The final page relative to El Paso postmasters, only partially copied by the National Archives clerk, continues with the names of Milton L. Burleson, Charles T. Boyce, and J. J. Kaster. No dates are visible.<sup>13</sup>

An entry identifying a post office in "East El Paso" names George A. Long postmaster by June of 1888. Long was in the position until July,

---

Frances Segulia, a resident of Tornillo, Texas, and a frequent contributor to *Password*, is the author of *Moments in Time: A History of the Tornillo Community and its People* (Coyote Publishing Company, 1981).



1891, when mail for the East El Paso post office was transferred to the city's main office. However, by 1907 an East El Paso mail substation was operating from "J. M. Connors" Store, the Boulevard Pharmacy."<sup>14</sup>

Altura, Texas, a fourth-class post office in the "E. F. Hurt building at the end of the Highland Park [streetcar] line"<sup>15</sup> listed Jacob Heberer postmaster by April of 1908. In November of that year August L. Spahn was named, followed by Henry Bozarth in August, 1909. Alva F. Lee was Altura's postmaster by February, 1911. Theodore G. Mosely took over in December of that year, serving until March, 1913, when James L. Kale was named. Mail service to Altura was discontinued the following month and the mail sent to El Paso station "A," located at the "junction of Cedar and Montana Streets."<sup>16</sup> A few months later, Station "A" had been moved to another building "rented from Miss Winifred Watson at the junction



The Federal Building, located on the southeast corner of Oregon and (present-day) Mills Streets, housed El Paso's main post office from the early 1890s to the mid-1930s. The site is now occupied by S. H. Kress and Company. (Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)



of Cedar and Montana Streets."<sup>17</sup>

Another El Paso County post office was located at Tobin, the townsite promoted by real estate developer Frank R. Tobin about 1907. "Tobin Town" lay beyond the (then) city limits toward Alamogordo, New Mexico.<sup>18</sup> In 1908 Patrick J. Phelan was named Tobin's first postmaster, who was followed that same year by Sam L. Shapiro. Frank Tobin took over in 1910, remaining in charge until September 30, 1912, when the Tobin post office was discontinued and the mail sent to El Paso. Tobin Town did not develop in the way that Tobin had hoped in spite of the railway he built to connect the new townsite with El Paso.<sup>19</sup> When Fort Bliss needed the area for expansion just before World War II, the Army took the land for national defense.<sup>20</sup>

The records indicate a Fort Bliss post office by April, 1907, naming Louise Biefer postmaster. By August, 1913, Edwin R. Homan held the position. Known as an independent post office for a number of years, today the area is served by the Fort Bliss Branch Post Office.

A single entry for Newman, Texas, names Charles A. Rapley postmaster in December, 1922. A marginal note indicates that the post office was discontinued later and the mail sent to Otero County, New Mexico, a statement reminiscent of an early dispute over the Texas-New Mexico state line. Today, according to the Texas Almanac, Newman, Texas, is a densely populated community, but with no post office by that name.

The little town of San José, situated down the valley between El Paso and Ysleta, had its own post office. In October, 1894, San José postmaster was Felipe Candelaria. Also serving briefly in the position were José Luna and José L. Luna, respectively. The San José mail service was discontinued in February, 1899, when the mail was sent to Ysleta. Annexed by the city of El Paso years ago, San José retains its identity through the long-standing San José Catholic Church and the former site of the San José School, an El Paso County grade school in use as late as the 1920s.

The records show that the upper-valley towns of Canutillo, Vinton, and Anthony (Texas) each, at some time or other, maintained a post office. The single entry for Anthony names Alden McIlvane postmaster in 1884, indicating the post office was discontinued that year and the mail sent to El Paso. Obviously, the Anthony, Texas, post office was reinstated in later years.

At Vinton, located a few miles south of Anthony, early postmasters were John E. Morce in November, 1892, followed by James H. Osborne in December, 1902. Morce was again appointed five years later, serving until Myron R. Hemley was named in December. The Vinton post office



continued for a number of years beyond those indicated in the documents at hand. However, the newly incorporated town with a population of 372 has no United States Post Office at the present time.

Such is just the opposite at Canutillo, an unincorporated town *with* a post office. With the help of Thava Brown, the recently retired postmaster, it was determined that a post office for the farming community was established around 1920 with Ray Viescas the first postmaster. The second postmaster was William F. Stuart, who held the position for a number of years. Stuart was followed by Eileen Flint (later Jackson). Mrs. Brown succeeded Mrs. Jackson.<sup>21</sup>

Ysleta, down the valley from El Paso, had an independent post office until the town was annexed by El Paso in 1955. Names drawn from the list of early postmasters begin in 1876 with that of Moritz Lowenstein. Robert Keating was in the position in 1878 for a short time before being replaced by Moritz Lowenstein that same year. In 1879, James M. Smith was postmaster followed by George W. Wall in 1880. In less than a month Wall was replaced by Pedro Lassaigne. Next came Manuel E. Flores, 1881; James W. Stitt, 1882; followed by Isabel Blanchard the same year; Amelia Day, 1883; Max Schutz (brother of El Paso mayor Solomon Schutz), 1885; Adolph Schildknecht, 1890; Wade H. Watt, 1892; Helen B. Jones, 1894; Lotta Burden, 1895; Laura Hay, 1896; William B. Hawkins, 1897; Emma Burnham, 1898; Concha Logan, 1900; Ida C. Johnson, 1903; Jennie L. Black, 1904. In 1905, John L. Hix was appointed and kept the place less than a week, being replaced by Dr. Franklin Baze. Next came Juliet Blanchard, 1906; Mame McDonald, 1913; Josephine Lowensetin, 1919; Flora M. Reid, 1921; William L. Sauter, 1922. Early in 1923, Carolina Rubio was acting postmaster until William T McPherson received the assignment. Next postmaster was Ruby E. McPherson, 1925, who continued in the position as Ruby Ambler after her marriage in December of that year. Mrs. Ambler's name is the last listed in the records on hand.

Belen, Texas, a small town that once existed below Ysleta in the area where Buford Road now crosses the railroad, had its own post office as early as 1890 when Marian A. Molina was postmaster. Jesus M. Padilla was postmaster in 1892, when the Belen mail was moved to the centuries-old community of Socorro located two miles or so south of the little town on the railroad. By 1909, the Belen post office was re-established. Stuart G. Schairer,<sup>22</sup> a man who would later become one of the lower valley's most prominent cotton farmers, was postmaster. Following Schairer were Frederick Mueller in 1915 and Dora Jones in 1917. In November, 1918, mail service to Belen was discontinued. The mail for the residents of the



small community was sent to Ysleta.

Records for the Socorro post office show Cecelio Cadena as successor to Jesus M. Padilla. Next named were Mariano Sierra, 1894; Donaciano Baca, 1895; Romulo Provencio, 1899. In 1900 Cadena was again named postmaster followed by Baca, who received his second appointment in 1909, the year mail service was re-established for Belen. The Socorro post office remained open with Gorgonio Hernandez named postmaster in 1911, Anfrés G. Hernandez in 1913, and Micaela Apodaca in 1915, the year that mail service to Socorro was discontinued and again moved over to Belen. The records for Socorro end with this last entry. Most likely, after 1918, the community was served by Ysleta, at least for a time. Later, Socorro received mail via rural route through the El Paso station. Recently, a long-dormant record of an incorporation was discovered; and consequently a mail contract, initiated by Tedd F. Richardson, was obtained. The present post office at Socorro is located in the new Socorro Center at the corner of Texas Highway 20 and Horizon Boulevard. The postal clerk in charge of this station is Ignacio G. Apodaca.

San Elizario, a short distance down the South Loop Road from old Socorro, was sometimes shortened to "Elizario" on early post office records. Those in hand date as far back as 1876, when John P. Clarke was postmaster. Maximo Aranda was named in 1879, serving briefly before Catharine L. Newman was named the same year. While Newman was postmaster, the post office was discontinued for a brief interval, then reopened in March, 1881, with Clarke again in charge. William Hamilton was named postmaster in 1887, followed in January, 1894, by Gregorio N. Garcia, who served a four-year term. Following Garcia, Clarke was again named, remaining in office until J. J. Montes was named in 1912. The last entry for San Elizario on the records received lists as postmaster Francisca G. Alarcon, a great aunt of Ann G. Enriquez, who currently serves as Second Vice President of the El Paso County Historical Society. Although no further records are available for this account, it is believed that postal service has been continuous for San Elizario since 1881.

Clint, Texas, a town built on the railroad well before 1900 and later re-built on U. S. Highway 80 (now Texas Highway 20), gained its own post office in January, 1886. Thomas Collins was the first postmaster at Clint. In July of that year, Herman Newfield replaced Collins. Charles S. Allen was Clint postmaster in 1888, succeeded by William T. Allen in 1890. The mail service to Clint was discontinued for a couple of years, and area residents picked up their mail in San Elizario. By April, 1892, the Clint postal service was re-established, with Daniel Scanlin listed as



postmaster. Following were Samuel P. Lindley, 1896; Coburn M. McKinney, 1897; Frederick Mueller, 1900; Alfred L. Tharpe, 1904; John J. Schairer (one of Clint's first merchants), 1906; McKinney, for a second term, 1909; Minnie Murphy, 1912. Mrs. Murphy served for a number of years before she was succeeded by Lillian B. Washburn in 1924. A year later Miss Washburn became Mrs. Lillian White on the post office records. In 1933, Fern Fields, the wife of the late El Paso County Clerk Wally Fields, became the Clint postmaster, remaining in the position for many years before she was succeeded by Miss Dovie Beene.<sup>23</sup>

A United States post office at Fabens, Texas, located on the Southern Pacific Railroad thirty miles east of El Paso, was established in 1906. Eugenio Perez was the first to serve as the Fabens postmaster. In 1914, he was succeeded by Stephen M. Aguirre. Next named was Vivian B. Boone, who assumed duties in 1916, was reappointed in 1924 and again in 1928. Boone was followed by O. P. Ford.<sup>24</sup> After Ford, Bernie Kempf was the Fabens postmaster.<sup>25</sup>

Tornillo, Texas, is the southeasternmost United States post office in El Paso County. Located on the Southern Pacific Railroad six miles below Fabens, the town (as well as its post office) was established in 1909.<sup>26</sup> Monico Jiminez, a native of San Elizario, was the new town's first postmaster. In 1913, mail service to Tornillo was discontinued and the area's mail sent to Fabens. By 1919, the Tornillo postal service was re-established with Halford G. Gray in the position of postmaster. Following Gray were Elbert F. Ayers in 1920 and Albert J. Peterson in 1921. Orine H. Palmer was the Tornillo postmaster until after World War II, when he was succeeded by his son, Ralph W. Palmer. Virgie Smith succeeded Palmer in 1954.

The foregoing segment of the early history of El Paso County post offices and the postmasters who served them is just that—a segment, offered for whatever measure of information might prove interesting or helpful to others.★

#### NOTES

1. Records on hand include pages 240-241, 245-248, 277-278 of the United States Post Office records for El Paso County.
2. C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968), 140.
3. *Ibid.*, 202.
4. *Ibid.*, 217.
5. *Ibid.*, 351.
6. *Password*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Winter, 1969), 99.

(Notes continued on page 92)



# DESSERT at the GLOBE RESTAURANT

by Frances H. Hatfield

An article in the *El Paso Times* of Sunday, March 15, 1898, recounted an incident which was said to have occurred several years earlier, in September of 1881. According to the *Times* story, a large crowd of boarders was having lunch at the Globe Restaurant on El Paso Street when a "wild and woolly wolf hunter" wandered in and sat down to be served. When the waiters ignored him, the hunter began to mumble that he wanted some pie. Then, to the annoyance of the other customers and the fiery-tempered owner, Doc Cummings, the hunter shouted, "Pie! Pie! Gimme some pie!" Doc, who was better known at the time for his talents as a gunfighter than as a chef, took one look at his unhappy customers and another at the loud-mouthed wolf hunter, and settled the problem with alacrity. He picked up a freshly-baked molasses pie and shoved it in the hunter's face, saying, "Here's your pie." The stranger quickly and quietly left the Globe.

Old timers who recalled the incident remembered Doc's molasses, or Shoo-Fly, pie as one of a number of delicious desserts that were served daily at the Globe Restaurant. In addition to a variety of pies and cobblers, there were several kinds of cakes as well as a tasty bread pudding and a molasses gingerbread topped with lemon sauce.

It can probably never be known for sure just how Doc made his molasses pie, but it's possible that he used the following recipe, which was a popular one at the time.

## MOLASSES PIE

Line a medium-sized pie pan with crust and pour into it  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of boiling water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of baking soda, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of dark molasses. This should half fill the pie pan.

Mix together the following ingredients:

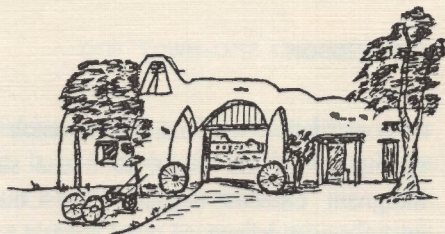
1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of flour, or 2 cups fine white bread crumbs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of melted butter,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon each of cinnamon and grated nutmeg, 1 cup pulverized brown sugar.

Sprinkle the dry ingredients into the molasses and bake the pie in a slow oven, about one hour.

---

Frances H. Hatfield is a researcher and writer for the El Paso County Medical Society Auxiliary. Her collection of recipes entitled *From Maize to Mousse: Cookery in El Paso County, 1598-1986*, is scheduled for publication this year.





# OUR TOWN— ONE CENTURY AGO (April-June, 1888)

*by Art Leibson*

**J**N THE SIX YEARS SINCE THE RAILROADS HAD arrived at the border, El Paso clearly was busting its britches—and without even the benefit of a Chamber of Commerce. The city suddenly had become a mecca for meetings and conventions as visitors from faraway places came to satisfy their curiosity about Sin City and Paso del Norte, forming the gateway into Mexico.

The state convention of fire fighters was one of the first to reach El Paso, with an assist from community-minded railroads that allowed the firefighters to travel free to the convention that brought hundreds of visitors from all over the state. Then there was the state conclave of the Grand Commandery of the Knights Templar of Texas that attracted some outstanding civic leaders. The Rio Grande and El Paso Railroad Company announced that it was holding its annual stockholders meeting in El Paso. Looking ahead, the Texas Press Association decided it would hold its 1889 meeting here on the border.

Hotels were kept filled to capacity. Rental property was at a premium



as construction was unable to match the city's growth. A tent city had sprung up in the plaza, to house some of the homeless visitors; and indignant citizens begged City Council—in vain—to get rid of the unsanitary nuisance.

New organizations were springing up to meet the local social and fraternal demand. The Knights of Pythias, meeting in Odd Fellows Hall, started with 29 members and about doubled that number after their first meeting. The Mysitc Order of the Shrine got off to an auspicious start, as did also—and very loudly—the Howlers, a group of musically and dramatically inclined men who were presenting fund-raising programs around town. Their objective? A fine downtown clock for the city.

Sewer lines were being installed as part of the great decade of progress; and the traction system was being expanded, new schedules added to better serve the community. The electric company announced that it had all the equipment it needed to carry out its contract to light the downtown streets except for the poles that had been lost in transit. The shipment had been largely carried off in a flashflood.

It was all heady stuff and there was just one sour note in the utility picture, the service and quality of product dished out by the El Paso Water Company. Among other things it was learned that the company had violated its franchise privilege of pumping water from the river by lifting some of its supply from acequias filled by the city. Then, once *The El Paso Times* had bared some odd discrimination in metered prices charged customers, a roar of objection arose from the public. Suddenly it seemed as though they all felt overcharged. The *Times*, to prove its point, told how its supposed metered water use for January had been 3,700 gallons. For the following, shorter month, it was billed for 11,250 gallons. Either the meters were out of kilter or the meter-readers were. City Council ordered an investigation. Later, after its disclosure of the discrepancy, the *Times* reported that its April bill was 40 cents less than any previously received.

Politically, El Paso was part of a vast wasteland. The eleventh congressional district, widely publicized as the biggest in the United States, included 95 Texas counties, greater in size than all of New England, nearly twice the size of Illinois. The district's representative, Samuel Lanham, serving his third term in Congress, lived in Weatherford, nearly 585 miles

---

Art Leibson, an attorney-turned-journalist and formerly the border correspondent for the *Time-Life* organization, is the author of this regular *Password* feature as well as a weekly column in the *El Paso Times*.



from El Paso. He represented a district extending 800 miles from north to south and 600 from east to west. It was expected that there would be some major changes in district lines after the 1890 census.

The county political conventions already were becoming major forums for letting off steam in the direction of candidates and issues. At the Democratic convention delegates were named to the upcoming party convention in Fort Worth without too much harangue, but a battle shaped up over resolutions and instructions the delegates were to take with them. Dr. Y. M. Yandell, something of a wit besides a very effective city health officer, remarked that he "had understood before the convention there would be no instructions or resolutions adopted, and no endorsements, to prevent heartburn." The Republicans also held their convention, but nobody attended from outside the city limits. They were allowed one delegate to the state convention for each 250 votes which had been cast in the county for John G. Blaine for President in 1886. That gave the Republicans three delegates plus the one at-large they were allowed.

*The El Paso Times*, addressing the issue of the foreign-language offerings in the local schools, editorialized: "In view not only of the desirability but of the business necessity of enlarging to the utmost extent our commercial intercourse with the Spanish-speaking states of our hemisphere, a wider knowledge of the Spanish language on the part of our young men than is possessed at present is an essential requisite. A much easier language to learn than either German or French, it should be placed in our schools and colleges generally, with an equal footing at least with either of those languages."

At this time the long arm of the law was reaching into El Paso and bringing unfair labor charges against a local employer. El Paso Smelting Company was charged with systematically importing cheap Mexican labor, keeping it separate from its United States counterpart, and paying lower wages to the aliens. Before the case was thrown out on a technicality, there was evidence that the Company foremen had been instructed to keep such workers on the job at least until they had repaid the \$4.00 provided by the Company for their rail fare from Santa Rosalia, Mexico.

Figures continued to reflect El Paso's confident growth. Community leaders had over-subscribed the \$100,000 required to build a railroad to White Oaks, New Mexico, a railroad intended to bring cheaper fuel to the border. Additionally, imports through the El Paso gateway, for the past quarter, were 50 per cent ahead of those reported for the same period of the previous year. A new custom house had been approved in Washington, and its construction was expected to begin soon. El Paso's school census



also showed a 50-per-cent increase over the 1887 figure, with a total of 1,152 males and 1,617 females in the county's schools. Illiteracy was reported as at a very low rate among the young people.

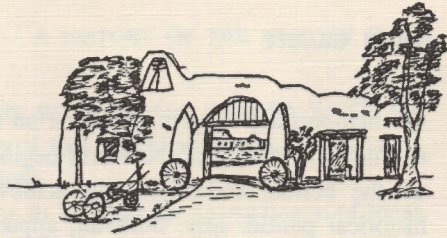
With all that progress, El Paso seemed poised to slough off her frontier reputation and accept her new nickname, the "Chicago of the Southwest." Reform was strongly in the wind, and peace seemed to have come to the border. A vain hope. The day of El Paso's gunfighters was just around the corner, with the coming arrival of George Scarborough, Jeff Milton, Martin M'rose, John Selman, and the number-one bad man, John Wesley Hardin. They will headline the El Paso story of the 1890s.☆



#### EARLY POSTMASTERS IN EL PASO COUNTY...From page 87

7. C. L. Sonnichsen and M. G. McKinney, *The First National Bank* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1971), 41.
8. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*. Chapter XXIII ("The Clean Up") relates the story of El Paso's moves toward ridding the city of vice.
9. *El Paso Herald*, June 29, 1904.
10. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1902.
11. *Ibid.*, May 26, 1906.
12. Phyllis A. Mainz, "Crinoline, Curriculum, and Cannons: The Story of Radford School for Girls," *Password*, Vol. X, No. 3 (Fall, 1965), 96.
13. The pages from which the early postmasters' names were copied will soon be placed in the Special Collections Department of the Library, The University of Texas at El Paso.
14. *El Paso Herald*, January 14, 1907.
15. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1908.
16. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1915.
17. *Ibid.*, August 28-29, 1915.
18. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, 257.
19. Frank Mangan, *El Paso in Pictures* (El Paso: The Press, 1971), 40, 42.
20. Leon Metz, *Fort Bliss* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1981), 121.
21. Telephone conversation, February 27, 1986, with Thava Brown, retired postmaster at Canutillo, Texas.
22. "Stuart G. Schairer," in Ellis Arthur Davis, ed., *New Encyclopedia of Texas*, Vol. I (The Texas Historical Society, nd).
23. Telephone conversation, February 27, 1986, with Mrs. Sybil (Jonsoni) Ludlow, Clint, Texas. Mrs. Ludlow was a postal clerk during both Mrs. Murphy's and Mrs. White's terms as Clint postmasters.
24. Telephone conversation, February 27, 1986, with Mina Ruth Wagoner, Fabens, Texas. Mrs. Wagoner is the daughter of the late O. P. Ford.
25. Telephone conversation, September 27, 1986, with Mrs. Helen (O'Donnell) Byrd, Fabens, Texas. Mrs. Byrd is a retired Fabens postmaster.
26. Frances Segulia, *Moments in Time, a History of the Tornillo Community and Its People* (Tornillo, Texas: Coyote Publishing Company, 1981), 2.





# A HISTORY of the HISTORY CLUB *or The LADIES of the CLUB,* El Paso, Texas

*by Helen Gillett*

**J**N MAY OF 1926, HISTORY WAS MADE WHEN Harriet Heermans Smith (Mrs. Forrest) entertained a group of friends in her apartment at 1301 N. Oregon.

The game was bridge, but in a discussion that followed, it became apparent that the women wanted to study history—not as they had studied it in school, but as a many-faceted search into art, architecture, archaeology, religions, politics, and personalities of each period of history. And so was laid the foundation of a club dedicated to the study of what is now called Cultural History. The founders of this club were Betty Safford Belding (Mrs. Charles DeLap), Florence Cathcart Melby, Betty Mary Smith Goetting (Mrs. Charles), Imogen Leavell Moore (Mrs. Paul), Hallett Johnson Mengel (Mrs. Sherod), and Harriet Heermans Smith.

The six founders immediately sought the assistance of Mrs. Maud Sullivan, Librarian of the El Paso Public Library. Seven years later, their meeting with Mrs. Sullivan was described in the *El Paso Herald-Post* by reporter Betty Luther. According to the article, entitled "Found: A Club Without Officers or Dues" and based on an interview with Mrs. Sullivan,



the members appeared in the Librarian's office announcing that they wanted to study the history of the world beginning at the beginning and including all the human endeavors and achievements of each culture and each historical period. Mrs. Sullivan, apparently undaunted by this staggering announcement, promptly made all the resources of the Library available to the members. And, further, she and her staff drafted a tentative outline of study for the group.

Meanwhile, Imogen Moore "boned up" on ancient Egypt and presented a report on that subject one week after the club was organized.

The membership grew at once, and an effort was made to keep the number at twelve. The club met every Thursday at 12:30 p. m. in the home of one of the members, the meeting-place arranged on a rotating basis. Sherry, followed by gourmet food, served as a warm-up for the afternoon report.

Sometime during the first year, the ladies of the club established a procedure. At the end of each (academic) year, the members would agree on a topic to be studied in the forthcoming year. Then two of the members would use the summer months to research the topic and prepare a study-outline for the year. Bystanders seeing the club members stumble forth from the Library with armloads of books may have assumed that these women were learned scholars. Actually, they were just learning: continuing education, it is now called.

When additional research revealed that civilizations had developed along the great rivers and that the Tigris-Euphrates area was considered to be maybe a thousand years earlier than the Egyptian, a later study became "The Great Rivers." The study-topics ranged far and wide. One year the group would delve into "The Bible as History," which might lead to "Comparative Religions" the next year. The reports delivered on this topic, and the ensuing discussions, might very well then suggest a subject entirely different (or seemingly so)—say, "Latin American Countries." Certain members had preferences for a particular period of history or vein of historical ore. Some favored the Renaissance; others, the Middle Ages; a few, present-day problems. Each year the topic had to be negotiated. And it was interesting to observe how proprietorial each member became

---

*Helen Gillett, a former high school counselor and teacher of English, has made many contributions to civic affairs in El Paso. 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, and served as president of the El Paso County Mental Health Association.*



in regard to a country or personality or developing art-form which she had studied and presented, especially if that aspect of world history came under attack in subsequent discussions.

The sherry-luncheon period came to be used for an exchange of ideas and questions that had occurred to the members during the previous week's report. A decided advantage was the ability to project one's voice. With all voices being projected, a noisy clamor was the result. At one point Laura Rawlings proposed that Lord Chesterfield's conversational rules be adopted: that is, one person speaking at a time. This was tried but soon abandoned. The sherry-luncheon period continued to feature a cacophony of voices. In the words of Imogen Moore, "None listened, but all spoke." However, during the formal presentation of the week's report, quiet and thoughtful attentiveness prevailed. The ladies of the club were serious in their desire to study the history of the world.

Dr. Cathcart, Florence Melby's father, suggested that the members keep a journal of their activities and reports. The suggestion was approved, and the members took turns recording the events. Sometime in 1935 the journal could not be found. In an article titled "History Club Has Lost Its History: To Pay a Reward to Finder of Book," Peg Wilson (later Marlowe), who wrote for the *El Paso Herald-Post*, reported the loss and described the reward offered: tasty recipes guaranteed to please. (Nobody thought of a money reward during the Great Depression.) Your author (Mrs. Frank Safford, Jr.) eventually found the book on one of her bookshelves, where it had gone unnoticed during the months immediately following the birth of her son. She apologized to the ladies of the History Club as follows:

#### A Pome

After Franklin Robinson Safford had occurred,  
Our housecleaning was for many months deferred.  
When at last the dark corners were uncovered,  
Many long lost treasures were discovered.  
For there upon the shelf in safety had rested  
The History Club Book so long requested.

One of the entries in the Journal records that Hallett Mengel added luster to the History Club's collective crown sometime in about 1936. She was approached by an agent from the prestigious Delphinian Society to become a member. Whereupon Hallett replied, "No thank you. I belong to a good History Club." The agent then fired a question: "Who was the first important queen in ancient times?" Without a pause, Hallett replied, "Hatshepset, who lived in Egypt about 1500 B.C." According to the



Journal, "The agent retired without further ado."

Other passages in the Journal describe the period of World War II. The ladies of the club were very busy in those years, and attendance dwindled. Betty Belding and Imogen Moore were working in offices. Peg Stevenson was organizing her photography business. Helen Safford began teaching high school English shortly after she was widowed in 1941. Laura Rawlings, as president of the El Paso Junior League, was constantly traveling to meetings. Caroline Gillett was seriously ill and died in 1943. Others were working for the Red Cross. Florence Melby and Romaine Howell were living in Wasington, D. C., where their respective husbands



The members of the History Club of El Paso as they appeared in 1976 at a luncheon given by Helen Walker in celebration of the Club's fiftieth anniversary. *Back row, l. to r.,* Helen Walker, hostess; Club founders Imogen Moore, Hallett Mengel, Betty Mary Goetting, Florence Melby, Betty Belding. *Front row, l. to r.,* Mary Morris, Helen Gillett, Birdie Hewitt, Esther Curtis, Romaine Howell, Jane Burges Perrenot. (Photo courtesy Helen Gillett)



were stationed, John Melby with the State Department, and Ben Howell serving under General Hershey. However, the History Club hung on and was reunited with the return of peace.

The child of the History Club, the Book Club, was born in 1928. Several of the History Club members were so enthusiastic about the books they had read for their reports that they decided to meet during the summer months that year and review one of these books at each meeting. They invited their friends to these meetings, and the experience was so pleasant that at the end of the summer the Book Club was formally organized. It now has a membership of 25 women, and book reviews are given weekly throughout the year.

In 1976 the History Club celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary. Two gala parties marked the event—a luncheon in the home of Helen Walker and a party given by Laura Rawlings (who had moved to Flint, Michigan, but who frequently visited El Paso). The highlight of that party was the reading of a Proclamation composed by your author. "Signed" by such notables as Richard III, Arnold Toynbee, Will and Ariel Durant, Lord Chesterfield, and The Delphinians, the Proclamation was printed on paper resembling fine parchment, and copies were distributed to all the ladies of the Club.

#### A PROCLAMATION

Whereas (and where else?) the History Club of El Paso, Texas, U. S. A., becomes in this Bicentennial Year of 1976 fifty years old, the History Club-Persons now assembled and those in absentia are hereby certified to be members in good standing, having faithfully performed the weekly conversational, culinary, and reportorial tasks and having handled, cracked, paid fines on, and carried hither and thither many a book for lo these many years; furthermore they are recognized as bona fide Personae Historicae, Summa Cum Loudly, and are entitled to all the rights and privileges of Personae Historicae wherever they are, i. e., to interrupt, to ask unsettling questions of the reporter, to raise the voice to an extra audible pitch when a brilliant idea is not getting proper attention, to doze off occasionally, and finally to advise and titillate strangers with: "I belong to a little History Club." Individual embellishments may be added.

This 9th day of February is therefore proclaimed to be the beginning of a full year of Bi-Centennial and Semi-Centennial celebration.

This celebration does not excuse future reporters and hostesses from scheduled performances for the next 50 years.

A year or so ago my daughter, Helen Hackett, and I were traveling to Chicago. Sitting with us was a young man, a Bostonian currently living in El Paso. My daughter was telling about some Latin American writers



whose books she was reading. The young man asked if she was a teacher at The University of Texas at El Paso. She replied that she was a member of a study group sponsored by the Pan American Round Table.

"I can't imagine women in El Paso sitting around discussing books," he said.

Well, besides our 62-year-old History Club, I count at least nine book-discussion clubs and history-study groups which meet regularly in our "provincial" city.

Little did that young man know about the women in El Paso. ☆

## ~ THE HISTORY CLUB OF EL PASO ~

### Founders

Harriet Heermans Smith (Mrs. Forrest Smith)  
 Betty Mary Smith Goetting (Mrs. Charles Goetting)  
 Imogen Leavell Moore (Mrs. Paul Moore)  
 Betty Safford Belding (Mrs. Charles DeLap Belding)  
 Hallett Johnson Mengel (Mrs. Sherod Mengel)  
 Florence Cathcart Melby

### Other Members *(listed in the order of their joining the Club)*

Eleanor Wright Ringland (Mrs. James Ringland)  
 Mardee Merrill (Mrs. Howard Merrill)  
 Margaret Hardie Cunningham (Mrs. C. L. Cunningham)  
 Peg Arnold Wilson Marlowe Stephenson (Mrs. Sanford Marlowe)  
 Laura Bassett Boynton Rawlings (Mrs. J. Mott Rawlings)  
 Caroline Hill Gillett (Mrs. I. W. Gillett)  
 Helen Robinson Safford (Mrs. Henry Safford, Jr. Later,  
     as of June, 1945, Mrs. I. W. Gillett)  
 Romaine Safford Howell (Mrs. Ben Howell)  
 Catherine Coles Wilcox (Mrs. Phillip Wilcox)  
 Helen Harris Tucker (Mrs. Calvert Tucker)  
 Eleanor Eubanks Coldwell (Mrs. Ballard Coldwell)  
 Katherine Taff McAlmon (Mrs. George McAlmon)  
 Lois Rogers Hamilton (Mrs. Robert Hamilton)  
 Jane Burges Perrenot  
 Birdie Krupp Hewitt (Mrs. Leland Hewitt)  
 Helen Hellmuth Walker (Mrs. Newton Walker)  
 Mary Curtiss Morris (Mrs. Curtis Morris)  
 Esther Pickett Curtis (Mrs. Wickliffe Curtis)





# A DIAMOND ON THE HILL

The El Paso County Historical Society salutes The University of Texas at El Paso on the seventy-fifth anniversary of its inception. On April 11, 1913, the Governor of Texas signed the legislation which created the State School of Mines. One year later, the institution was formally opened as the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy at El Paso. It was housed in three buildings located on a site adjacent to Fort Bliss.

Beginning with an enrollment of 27 students (all male), the School was headed by a Dean, W. S. Worrell, who also served as Professor of Mining and Metallurgy. Its original faculty included four other professors (each one an expert in a field of geology, mining, chemistry, and/or engineering), as well as an engineering instructor, a tutor in Spanish, and four lecturers who gave instruction respectively in mining law, ore dressing, internal combustion engines, and first aid. In the fall of 1916, the school admitted its first woman student, Ruth Brown (later McCluney).

In 1917, the School moved to its present location. Its Bhutanese architectural style, originally suggested by Dean Worrell's wife, Kathleen, was approved by The University of Texas Board of Regents upon the recommendation of El Pasoan Charles E. Kelly, a member of the Board's Building Committee. In 1920 the School was renamed Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy.

As the years passed, the College steadily expanded its academic offerings in order to accommodate applicants wishing to pursue disciplines other than mining and metallurgy. Shortly after World War II, the little College on the hill was no longer little—and it had outgrown its name. In 1949, it became Texas Western College. Then in 1967, the ever-widening curricula, the ongoing improvement in research facilities, and the increasing number of graduate programs warranted yet another name for the institution: The University of Texas at El Paso.

Among the special events planned for the two-year-long celebration of the institution's Diamond Jubilee is the publication next fall of *Lamaseries on the Hill: A Pictorial History of The University of Texas at El Paso*. The book will be issued by Texas Western Press in conjunction with the University's Alumni Association. Its text is being written by Nancy Hamilton, a former editor of *Password* and now Associate Director of Texas Western Press.

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TEXAS AT EL PASO



DIAMOND  
JUBILEE





**ANGLOS AND MEXICANS In the Making of Texas, 1836-1936**

*by David Montejano*

**Austin: University of Texas Press, \$12.95/\$29.95**

Somehow this title suggests to me that the book will detail how today's Texas is the result of a fine cooperative effort between its two principal population groups, Anglos and Mexicans. Of course Texas' history is not like that, and it never has been made clearer than in this excellent, scrupulously-documented work, which also gives insight into the "why's" and "how's" of the long confrontation. It is depressing reading, if absorbing, but it ends on an upbeat.

Broadly, the author deals with four main periods in Texas: 1) the post-independence and post statehood 19th century, a time of uneasy truce, with Anglo ranchers largely adopting the styles and patterns of their Mexican forerunners; 2) the first two decades of the 20th century, when large numbers of Anglo farmers were introduced into the picture, bringing cultural and economic differences that were to prove disastrous to the equilibrium; 3) the "modern" farm society of the 20s and 30s with its need for cheap labor, and the resultant organized, cruel efforts to keep the Mexican in that role; and 4) the period since World War II and the Korean War when for a variety of reasons the forces of segregation, exploitation and repression have begun to fall apart.

Perhaps the biggest source of trouble was in phase "2" above, for two sharply contrasting social (and economic) systems were set side by side and simply could not co-exist: the old, comfortable "patron" system, operating like a family unit, and the coldly-commercial market farming, with impersonally-hired labor and total emphasis on "the bottom line." (Of course the small farmers were many, and promptly were dominant at the polls.) Ironically, many of the big ranchers brought their troubles on themselves through springing at the opportunity of raking in dollars by selling bits of their ranches for town sites and farms.



When you get at the heart of it, then, the whole thing comes down to such eternal human characteristics as greed, short-sightedness, callousness, and cruelty—and is but another chapter in an ancient tale. (Oddly, these same unlovely traits served to exempt the border cities—El Paso, Laredo, Brownsville—from the “prevailing racial practices” of the rest of the state, as the author points out, for in these cities merchants depended heavily on the custom of Mexicans, and you do not thrive by maltreating your customers.)

As you might guess, David Montejano has a more than casual interest in the story. He describes himself as a “fourth generation native” Texan, and his name would indicate where his sympathies must lie. I take off my hat to him: you would never tell it from his text, which is objective, detached, unbiased, balanced—all those good things.

In fact, *Anglos and Mexicans etc.* can well serve as a model for this kind of writing. It is tightly and clearly organized, its points are cogently made, and it is generally well written, lapsing only rarely into sociologists’ jargon.

RAY PAST

Professor Emeritus of Linguistics  
The University of Texas at El Paso.



## HIGH NOON AT LINCOLN: VIOLENCE ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

by Robert N. Utley

Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, \$22.50

Few Western sagas are as compelling as the Lincoln County War of southern New Mexico during the late 1870s. It is quite possible that more histories have been devoted to that War than to any other similar event in American history.

Utley’s strength is not in fresh information, but in how he uses the old. He has pulled the facts together, added meaningful insights, and placed the bloodletting known as the Lincoln County War in perspective. He duly notes and evaluates Billy the Kid’s place in the War, presenting the Kid as an incidental character in a drama composed of a large cast of complex individuals.



The opening section of the book sets the stage by describing the death of Englishman John Henry Tunstall. (The slaying, as Utey explains it, is a little different from the way the report is ordinarily given, but it rings with reasonableness.) Then the characters are introduced, the struggle is defined, and the Five Day Battle in Lincoln explodes. John Selman's "wrestlers" are raping the countryside, Lew Wallace replaces Samuel Axtell as Territorial Governor of New Mexico, and the War lurches to its inconclusive, spastic finality with the Wallace amnesty proclamation in 1879.

Several maps enrich the text. Numerous photographs are introduced, some of them traditional, some of them new. And a bank of expansive footnotes enlightens the scene.

The author sums up with an appropriate chapter entitled "Post Mortem." He calls the war a "clash of personalities" motivated by "a quest for money and power," an economic conflict possible only in a backwater community remote from moderating and restraining influences. He points out how the War gave rise to "one of the mightiest legends of all time," meaning Billy the Kid, and how the violent world of the Kid and his Lincoln County cohorts would "find understanding in the violent world of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon."

Other researchers will discover additional information about the Lincoln County War. But nobody will describe it with more finesse than Robert M. Utey.

LEON C. METZ  
El Paso



**TUCSON: A SHORT HISTORY.** *Southwestern Mission Research Center.*  
Tucson: (Distributed by the University of Arizona Press), \$12.95

This attractive little book is an ideal introduction to the history, anthropology, and ecology of Tucson. The treatment of both the natural environment and the people who have called it home at one time or another over the past 11,000 years should help the more than 600,000 present inhabitants, full-time or otherwise, come to a better understanding of why they are there and, more importantly, how long they may expect to continue enjoying their splendid habitat.

Published by the Southwest Mission Research Center, the book has



several authors — Charles W. Polzer, Thomas H. Naylor, Thomas E. Sheridan, and Tony L. and Martha Ames Burgess — all of them from the corps of volunteers who make up the Center, a “not-for-profit corporation committed to the continuing research, promotion, public education, and preservation of the Hispanic period of history in the American Southwest.”

The narrative opens with an account of the pre-Hispanic habitation of the Tucson Basin, now a veritable anthropological Garden of Eden. We learn in succession of the Stone Age big-game hunters, the Desert Culture’s plant foragers, the rise and fall of the irrigation farmers (the Hohokams), and, finally, of the Pimans and Papagos, the native Americans encountered by the Jesuit padre Eusebio Kino on his mission-founding journeys.

When Charles III brutally ended the activities of the Jesuits, the Franciscans moved in and to their everlasting credit built the mission San Xavier de Bac. They welcomed the protection given by the Spanish cavalry, but the growing herds of horses, demanding more and more grain, placed a terrible strain on the local resources.

The chapter “Sonorenses, Tucsonenses” explores the ties between Sonora and Tucson, and describes Tucson’s Mexican population as “not a colony of immigrants,” but rather “a society of Sonorenses who happen to live in the United States.” It traces the successful careers of several Mexican-Americans, but further notes that by 1880 “Tucson was already starting to resemble other southwestern cities like Los Angeles or El Paso. Anglos held most of the . . . managerial positions, while nearly sixty percent of the Mexican work force labored at unskilled jobs.”

In the chapter dealing with territorial times, we learn that Tucson did not become an “American city” until 1853 and that there were only nine Americans present to run up “Old Glory.” After the Civil War, we watch Tucson resume its role as a wagon and stage stop until the arrival of the railroad in 1880, when it began to take on a character typical of communities experiencing sudden population-growth.

The closing chapter, “Clouds, Spires, & Spines,” should delight those who appreciate the natural environment. As the authors phrase it, “This interplay of climate and geology in the Tucson area has given rise to the diversity of living things.... It can be seen as visible patterns on the landscape—a colorful mosaic of different plant and animal communities.”

What makes this book especially interesting are the parallels that any southwesterner can draw to his own community—learning to appreciate the past and becoming more perceptive about the future of the Sunbelt.

As a final note, El Pasoans can be proud that in the section on “Further



## BOOK REVIEWS

Reading" C. L. Sonnichsen's *Tucson: The Life and Times of an American City* heads the list and is recognized as the "best general work on the community."

CLINTON P. HARTMANN  
Assistant Editor, *Password*



### NANA'S RAID; APACHE WARFARE IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO, 1881

by *Stephen H. Lekson*

El Paso: Texas Western Press, \$5.00/\$10.00

No other topic of western history has received so much attention in recent years as subjects related to the native Americans. This short monograph, which is a volume in the Southwestern Studies Series, focuses upon the Apache leader Nana during his brief period of glory.

In October, 1880, Mexican troops killed the famous Apache leader Victorio and most of his followers at Tres Castillos. Nana, who had been Victorio's second in command, and a few Tcihene Apaches escaped and returned to their favorite camps in the Black Range in New Mexico. From there they began to conduct raids, but were forced to flee south to Mexico, where they found refuge in the Sierra Madre. At this time Nana, who was now in his mid-seventies, decided to conduct a campaign of revenge.

Nana led some twenty warriors through Chihuahua and eventually crossed the Rio Grande southeast of El Paso. After attempting to obtain supplies at the Mescalero Indian Reservation, he fought the first of seven battles with the buffalo soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry. During the summer of 1881, Nana's Tcihene warriors also raided towns, farms, and ranches. The author presents a detailed account of these conflicts to illustrate the significance of what were apparent Apache victories. Hopefully in the future he will research and publish a full biography of this controversial Indian leader.

J. MORGAN BROADDUS  
Department of History  
The University of Texas at El Paso





# OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 1988

## THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<i>President</i>	Hon. Colbert Coldwell
<i>First Vice President</i>	Colonel (Ret.) James W. Ward
<i>Second Vice President</i>	Ann Enriquez
<i>Third Vice President</i>	Gary Sapp
<i>Recording Secretary</i>	Major (Ret.) Jack D. Redman
<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	Jeanette G. Brady
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jack L. Hunt
<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>	Mary A. Sarber
<i>Membership</i>	Rebecca and Dodson Garrett
<i>Historian</i>	Major (Ret.) Jay D. Smith
<i>Curator</i>	William I. Latham

### MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO

<i>Director, El Paso Museums</i>	Leonard P. Sipiora
<i>Curator, El Paso Museum of History</i>	Barbara J. Ardus
<i>Editor, PASSWORD</i>	Lillian Collingwood
<i>Editor, EL CONQUISTADOR</i>	Janet Brockmoller

### DIRECTORS

#### 1986-88

Jeanette G. Brady  
 Barry O. Coleman  
 Colonel (Ret.) Hal Gambrell  
 Ruth Graham  
 Frank Hunter  
 Mrs. Werner Spier  
 Hon. Richard C. White

#### 1987-89

F. Bernie Bracher  
 Mary J. Hellums  
 Colonel (Ret.) David C. Kelly  
 Mrs. F. Jules Lund  
 Colonel (Ret.) Paul J. Maline  
 Mary Alice Prendergast  
 Mrs. Rhys W. Rees

#### 1988-90

Karl F. Bennett  
 Elias Bonilla  
 Rebecca Craver  
 Barbara Dent  
 Hallett Luscombe  
 Bradley Poilett  
 Dr. Jesse Stiller

ALL PAST PRESIDENTS ARE HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Paul Harvey, Sr.	Mrs. Ruth Rawlings Mott
Fred Hervey	Mrs. Willard W. Schuessler
George Matkin	Mrs. L. A. Velarde

Hon. Richard C. White