THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Corporate Sponsors

We appreciate the support of our business and professional sponsors and we encourage our readers to patronize these businesses.

AINSIA HUTSON LLP
5509 Acacia Cr.
El Paso, Texas 79912

BANK OF THE WEST
500 N. Mesa
El Paso, Texas 79901

CGN DESIGNS
6927 N. Mesa
El Paso, Texas 79912

CSJ INVESTMENTS
El Paso, Texas 79912

CURREY ADKINS
200 S. Alto Mesa
El Paso, Texas 79912

SUSAN EISEN FINE JEWELRY & WATCHES
5557 N. Mesa St.
El Paso, Texas 79912

EL PASO, INC.
& PDX PRINTING
100 Porfirio Diaz
El Paso, Texas 79902

GADDY CONSTRUCTION
5875 Cromo Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79912

GREATER EL PASO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
10 Civic Center Pl.
El Paso, Texas 79901

HUNT FAMILY FOUNDATION
4401 N. Mesa
El Paso, Texas 79902

KASCO VENTURES
1600 E. Fourth Ave.
El Paso, Texas 79901

KOHLHAAS CORPORATION
6831 El Paso Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79905

JAN GUYNES McNUTT
ERA
900 Resler
El Paso, Texas 79912

MITHOFF BURTON PARTNERS
4105 Rio Bravo, Ste. 100
El Paso, Texas 79902

THE NILAND COMPANY
320 N. Clark Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79905

ODESSA ENTERPRISES
1014 N. Mesa
El Paso, Texas 79902

OESTE HOMES, INC.
465 N. Resler Dr., Ste. D
El Paso, Texas 79912

THE SCHATZMAN COMPANY
200 Bartlett Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79912

SCOTT HULSE MARSHALL
FEUILLE FINGER & THURMOND PCL
201 E. Main
El Paso, Texas 79901

SMG–EL PASO CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
1 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Fe St.
El Paso, Texas 79901

TVO GROUP
221 N. Kansas
El Paso, Texas 79901

UNITED BANK OF EL PASO
DEL NORTE
125 Mesa Hills Dr.
El Paso, Texas 79912
CONTENTS

Editor's Message .............................................. 2

Morality and Money on the Border:
The Reverend Bob Jones Crusade, El Paso 1922 .................. 3
DR. ROBIN ROBINSON

Reformers Fight Saloon Men in El Paso County Attorney's Election
(or were they Reformers?) .................................. 23
KEN JACKSON

Miss Fanny .................................................. 34
MARDEE deWETTER

A River Runs Through It: Conflict and Compromise of the Chamizal .............................. 35
JOSHUA MORRIS

In Memoriam / Correction ................................... 48

Lecturas .................................................... 49

Archival Pictures of El Paso Prior to the Mexican Revolution ........................................ 50
Editor's Message

The first issue of Password for 2008 is late. The transition to a new editorial board has taken some time as has the review of backlogged papers. We plan to be on a proper schedule for the future. Papers are solicited from anyone writing about El Paso and its surrounding area. Also, if you have written a paper that is published in another journal about or of interest to those in the El Paso Southwest, please send a bibliographical entry that can be listed on our new journal articles page. The "Guidelines for Submitting Papers to Password" are given below. Please send your articles to:

Patricia H. Worthington
Editor, Password
El Paso County Historical Society
P. O. Box 28
El Paso, Texas 79940

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING PAPERS TO PASSWORD

1. The El Paso County Historical Society strives to publish a balance of academic articles and those of general interest. Academic articles should have a length of approximately 5500 words; general interest articles should have a length of approximately 2500 words. Endnotes are in addition to the article.

2. The Chicago Style Manual will govern the format of papers and footnotes.

3. Complete name, address, contact information, and brief biography should accompany each paper.

4. All papers become the property of the El Paso County Historical Society.

5. The El Paso County Historical Society reserves the right to republish an article whose subject matter is of special interest.

6. Notification will be made to each author regarding the publication status of his/her paper.

All photos in this publication not otherwise credited are from the archives of the El Paso County Historical Society.

© 2008 The El Paso County Historical Society, El Paso, Texas

THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DISCLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY for the statements and opinions of the contributors.

Entered as periodical mail at El Paso, Texas
Morbidity and Money on the Border: The Reverend Bob Jones Crusade, El Paso 1922

By Dr. Robin Robinson

The Mexico-U.S. border population explosion of the 1920s brought into conflict the newly arrived citizens and the old business elite, causing a compromise in the way border commerce and community would develop in the future. As the region grew in population, the increasing number of upstanding, church-going citizens found the wide-open frontier attitudes and practices morally offensive. Although not silent in opposing unwholesome tourism and vice across the river, the El Paso community of churches received a unifying voice in September 1922. Blowing across the plains of Texas from Alabama charged a charismatic, fundamentalist, traveling revival show trumpeting a choir 400-soul-saving strong. The fire and brimstone of Reverend Bob Jones arrived at the Pass of the North to redeem the good people of El Paso from the sin and damnation lurking next door, upsetting a comfortable, profitable relationship between the businessmen of El Paso and Juárez. The combined Chambers of Commerce of both cities mounted an aggressive counter campaign, heightening the battle between morality and money on the border. Although other border communities may have lacked the drama and colorfulness of a Bob Jones campaign, the same forces existed and similar results occurred the length of the Mexico-U.S. borderlands.
The Border Before Jones

Tourism and vice managed to function through the havoc reaped on the border by the Mexican Revolution. During lulls in conflict, Juárez continued to take advantage of its location across from El Paso by offering a variety of diversions for Anglos. When battle raged, the tourist establishments closed down and their clients fled. With the restoration of peace, however, the saloons, horse racetrack, gambling houses, keno parlors, and other related activities resumed full operation. As the war ended and conflict slackened, things changed quickly on the border.¹

At the conclusion of the revolution, the border grew amazingly in population and development. In response to revolution in Mexico, the U.S. Army stationed a large contingent of troops all along the border. War in Europe increased further the number of soldiers, expanding an already lucrative industry that serviced and supplied the army. U.S. growth coupled with war in Europe demanded the mineral wealth possessed by both the American Southwest and Northern Mexico.² Mining jobs and increased opportunity on both sides of the border attracted unemployed Mexicans from other parts of their country still in economic straits. Prosperity and reduced violence made the border attractive nationally. As the economy of the Southwest opened up, railroad passengers traveling between California and the East abandoned the traditional route through Denver for the one via El Paso. In 1920, the entire United States went dry, adding significantly to the border’s popularity. Rail travelers stopped, not only wanting to see Mexico, an exotic, romanticized foreign country, but also to drink.³

The Chamber of Commerce sought to capitalize on this unexpected opportunity by aggressively marketing El Paso/Juárez as a tourist and convention center. Crowded hotels, restaurants, cabarets, and dance clubs generated much profit, but the city planners entertained grander visions. If they could encourage travelers, tourists, and conventioneers to come to El Paso once, they could pitch its many attributes and get these visitors to return as residents to live, work, and participate in the cities’ growth. The border’s future lay in commerce, not prohibition.⁴

The increased population changed the make up of the community. Frontier towns, like El Paso, used to dirt streets, independence, individualism, and minimal interference from central authority transformed awkwardly into cosmopolitan cities. Families headed by professionals with society wives replaced cowboys
and prospectors as the influential inhabitants of El Paso. The “wild west” attitudes and personalities of the “old-timers” that ran the city clashed with the more sophisticated, morally upstanding “newcomers.” Just four years earlier (January 1918), city leaders thwarted a local option election on the prohibition of alcohol led by the “self-proclaimed forces of morality and patriotism supported by the newspapers and churches.” By 1922 “religious intolerance, hate, suspicion, and anger” replaced the city’s “spirit of enterprise, cooperation, and neighborly good will” and affected “every civic activity, from the deliberations of the Chamber of Commerce to the political primary.”

Along with the growth in homes, businesses, banks, and schools, the newcomers fueled an astonishing growth of churches. Until 1881 El Paso possessed no churches of any kind. In 1922, at the time of Bob Jones’ arrival, three new churches occupied the landscape that year; a fourth was under construction; and a third synagogue awaited groundbreaking. El Paso offered four Baptist churches alone, with a combined membership of 2800 and growing. Of these four, one church occupied a new building that it already had expanded; a second had just moved to a larger location; a third was adding space; and the fourth needed desperately to build a new structure. Along with the major denominations attended by whites, all outgrowing their accommodations, El Paso contained five “Negro” churches and six Mexican mission churches. The Herald recognized that one “estimates the character of a community by its churches” and further reported, gleefully, that “El Paso creates a most favorable impression.” The paper praised the cooperative spirit and teamwork that prevailed amongst the various denominations, making them one of the most potent institutions in molding community life. All denominations, creeds, and faiths called El Paso home—and sought to “mold” El Paso into their home. The increasing number of El Paso’s church-going citizens awaited eagerly Bob Jones’ message.

**Enter Bob Jones**

Bob Jones’ front men prepared well for the reverend’s arrival. Invited by pastors and church leaders from the majority of the Protestant churches, they anxiously awaited, anticipating the glorious uniting of area Christians under one roof. A choir of 400 formed from local congregations initiated the opening of a just completed and yet unnamed 4000-seat temple located in the heart
of town. The schedule included special meetings with men’s and women’s business and civic groups, schoolchildren, army personnel, and the Christian Mexican community. Citizens gathered daily in over 40 private homes for “Cottage Meetings,” preludes to the big evening service. Publicized social events included a concert by the Fort Bliss army band and a softball game umpired by Jones. All these activities supplemented a program of two services a day for four weeks at the temple.\(^8\)

Reverend Jones spoke to an overflow crowd the first meeting. Initially, sermons consisted of the standard fundamentalist fare—fire and brimstone; come down and repent; pass the plate. It did not take long, however, for Bob Jones to turn his attention to Juárez. The usual sermons condemning the evils of drinking, dancing, and gambling received special emphases.\(^9\)

Reverend Jones asked the assembly what they were going to do about the sinful conditions in Juárez. He condemned El Pasoans that wasted $1,000,000 a year gambling and drinking in that city. Jones demanded elimination of that hell on earth across the way that took money from needy families, corrupted youth, and led girls to promiscuity. Proclaiming that no God-fearing man had any business in Juárez after dark, Bob Jones suggested closing the international bridges at 6 P.M. rather than the standard 12:30 A.M. He lambasted the leaders of El Paso who put money before morality for not taking the initiative and challenging the churches of the city to exert their influence in persuading federal authorities to close the bridge early.\(^10\)

Bob Jones knew how to put his threats into action by capitalizing on wives’ and mothers’ concern about morality. At a special women-only meeting, a capacity crowd of 4,000 signed pledge cards supporting an early bridge closing. The cards read:

I, the undersigned, a citizen of the city of El Paso, respectfully request the federal authorities to close the Juárez bridge at 6 o’clock at night until the next morning, and I earnestly ask the cooperation of the county and city administration and the El Paso daily papers in making this closing effective.\(^11\)

Bob Jones’ convictions received greater resolve when he witnessed things for himself. In the third week of the revival, the reverend paid a visit to notorious Juárez on a Saturday night. He discovered children drinking, painted girls dancing, fathers gam-
bling, and whores whorering. He was appalled; it was worse than he had ever imagined. “It’s a raging hell,” Jones declared before a men-only meeting of 3,000.

“I never knew there was such a vile place on the continent. It’s robbing El Paso of morals and money.” The reverend asked all who felt the bridge needed closing to stand—all but about five stood. Jones then passed the pledge cards. Bob Jones had found a crusade on the border in El Paso, Texas.12

With fundamentalist zeal, Jones organized a Committee of Concerned Citizens over 200 strong to address the problem. A list of members appeared in the newspaper the next day for everyone to see who represented the moral elements of the conflict. From the pulpit Jones condemned El Pasoans opposing the early bridge closing, labeling them “indecent citizens.” Jones especially fingered the businessmen who opposed the bridge closing because of the “loss of a few dollars.” These men, Jones announced, should not receive the patronage of decent El Paso citizens.13

The citizens of El Paso and Juárez took notice of Bob Jones’ calls for action. Other religious denominations not attending his revival, including a Jewish Rabbi, took up the cause and the El Paso newspaper, the Herald, backed Jones’ movement. The Herald reported the only talk heard in Juárez concerned the bridge closing. Local promoters, wishing to

El Paso Times,
August 28, 1922
avoid the inconvenience of an early bridge closing, arranged for a convention of visiting realtors to take a train trip to Cloudcroft, New Mexico where they could drink undisturbed. All three newspapers carried daily Jones’ sermons, accusations, and actions, forcing the businessmen of El Paso to respond to public pressure.14

The Chamber of Commerce called a special meeting to discuss the situation. The Herald reported that those attending split into three opposing factions causing a “heated discussion that threatened to defy parliamentary procedure.” Although a vote on closing the bridge earlier than the standard hour prevailed, the board of directors staunchly opposed it. The Chamber directors were the planners and builders that had developed prosperous, growing El Paso, and they did not take kindly to an outsider impeding the process. The board forced through an official position of opposing an early bridge closing.15

Attendees of the same meeting next listened to the reading of a communication from the Juárez Chamber of Commerce. It stated the agitation caused by the bridge closing campaign “disturbed the peaceful commercial relations between El Paso and Juárez.” The notice warned that Mexico City would retaliate in the form of a free zone and strict enforcement of the Mexican customs regulations covering the importation of merchandise from El Paso, severely hurting El Paso merchants. The complaint recognized that El Paso businessmen were not to blame, but a “certain element that does not care for the legitimate commercial interest of our cities.”16

Juárez’s position caused concern for El Paso’s Chamber of Commerce. Due to the “seriousness” of this matter, those attending the meeting demanded all members deserved a say in the response, not just the directors. The Chamber’s leadership agreed that, after conferring with the Juárez business leaders, they would conduct a referendum ballot of all members of the Chamber in an attempt to put the bridge closing issue to rest.17

Bob Jones fired from the pulpit that the bridge closing was not a business proposition but a moral proposition and tagged the Chamber of Commerce as the “element which would let the town go to hell.” Jones commented that some members of the bridge closing committee belonging to the Chamber of Commerce had caved in to the board’s wishes. Jones said these men should “get off” the committee and proclaimed, “we can get 2,000 men who will be glad to take [their] place.” He reminded the assembly
that the moral elements of the community had driven gambling out of town before and that this issue would not be settled "by two or three rich men." Identifying local businessmen and politicians as one in the same, he brushed aside the Juárez Chamber of Commerce’s threat to reinstate the free trade zone and reminded his listeners that they, the people, controlled government, not corrupt politicians.¹⁸

Knowing that federal, not local, authority controlled the bridge, Bob Jones next wrote letters to the presidents of both the United States and Mexico. He described the sinful things that went on and the detrimental effect it levied on both communities. He explored each leader to take action, suggesting an early bridge closing. Jones drafted a letter to President Obregón asking for his assistance not just for El Paso’s sake but also to protect Mexican people from “Americans who go to Juárez for drunken orgies.” Jones encouragingly relayed to the assembly that he expected a favorable message from a “Washington [that] was friendly to the moral welfare of America.”¹⁹

Concerned citizens went to work. The Ku Klux Klan stationed “spotters” at the bridge, recording names of pedestrians and the license plate number of cars crossing over into Juárez. Men and women in disguise entered saloons and cabarets to see who from El Paso occupied those vile establishments. Bankers matched the names of gamblers to that of delinquent borrowers. Church leaders learned of members of their congregations that frequented dens of vice in Juárez.²⁰

The Golden Goose

Not everyone in El Paso appreciated this scrutiny. Discussing everything from business to politics, long-time residents made a tradition of concluding a hard day’s work with neighbors and friends over a drink in Juárez. This practice existed before prohibition and prior to the arrival of the city’s new citizens. But, more importantly, the tourist industry in Juárez represented to many the proverbial goose that laid the golden egg. With prohibition and intense marketing by the Chamber of Commerce, El Paso hatched into a popular tourist and convention destination. Groups such as National Postal Clerks, B’nai Brith, American National Livestock Association, and Disabled American Veterans held conventions in El Paso. The West Texas Chamber of Commerce alone brought over 10,000 members to the city while the Federation of
Labor included delegates from the United States, Mexico, Canada, and the United Kingdom. El Paso proudly hosted the 1924 International Fair and Exposition of the Southwest. Not only did tourists spend much money, city leaders made the most of an opportunity to promote El Paso to visitors. Although they spent the majority of their time and money in El Paso, they all came to see and visit Juárez.\textsuperscript{21}

Juárez offered more than lowbrow vice to badly behaving men separated from their wives and families. Traditional attractions included Juárez’s famous old mission, bullfights, the marketplace, curio shops, and simply the thrill of visiting a foreign country. Tourists enjoyed entertainment, unique cuisine, and cocktails in “delightful” surroundings at the many cafés, cabarets, and saloons along the popular Avenida 16 de Septiembre. Some restaurants and cafés catered to families while adults enjoyed first-class orchestras in superb, tasteful surroundings.\textsuperscript{22} A variety of quaint establishments supported a trendy café society fueled by street music and jazz.\textsuperscript{23}

Besides the nightlife, a 1923 venture called for a family entertainment center including an ice skating rink, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, a stocked fishing pond, and, of course, a beer garden. Juárez added in 1926 a new, large open-air sports arena. The Juárez Coliseum offered prizefights, wrestling, dog races, bicycle races, and track-and-field competition. So tame were traditional and family attractions that most conventions included special excursions across the border for the wives and children of convention delegates. The El Paso Chamber of Commerce promised in its literature that women visitors would receive just as great of a reception in Juárez as men.\textsuperscript{24}

Undeniably, liquor, dancing, and gambling constituted the biggest attractions. Here, however, the tourist also enjoyed quality. World-class orchestras from major cities in the U.S. and Europe as well as from Mexico City impressed patrons with the most popular tunes of the day.\textsuperscript{25} Floor shows, dance troupes, magicians, and comedians entertained in classy venues.\textsuperscript{26}

The more popular places sported trendy décor in a cosmopolitan atmosphere that catered to as many as 3,000 patrons. One café even provided air conditioning. Quality service, gourmet dining, and the largest dance floors in the Southwest earned Juárez the reputation as the “Monte Carlo of America.”\textsuperscript{27} Proprietors of the better places looked after the safety of their guests by providing a
“special police force” consisting of off-and-on duty city policemen. Only those tourists that strayed into the rougher, less protected areas of the city risked assault or robbery.28

The Juárez business elite directly and indirectly held interests in the quality establishments in their city. Independently and in partnership with Americans and other foreigners, they owned and operated tourist attractions. The liquor wholesalers and distillers relied on the large, popular restaurants, saloons, and cabarets to purchase their products. These same places attracted visitors to El Paso, placing the members of the Chambers of Commerce of both cities in a profitable, cooperative relationship. They

That was the result of the overwhelming vote of El Paso’s Chamber of Commerce, an organization composed of clear-thinking, capable men who constantly strive for the best interests of moral and commercial El Paso.

Central Cafe
Jimmie O’Brien’s
Oasis Cafe
Maison Dell’Ara
Lobby Cafe
The Toltec
Big Kid’s Palace
Smith & Mitchell
Latin-American

El Paso Times, October 3, 1922, 10.
refused to take the loss of business caused by the Reverend Bob Jones’ cleanup crusade passively.  

The Chambers of Commerce launched a campaign of their own to remind the old-timers and to inform the newcomers about the importance of Juárez to El Paso. A full-page ad placed in the *Times*, paid for by the better establishments in Juárez, laid out nicely their argument. The notice proclaimed that “international amity between the United States and Mexico . . . demands that the bridges between the sister cities be kept open.” It next reminded everyone that Juárez is “the chief talking point” in enticing new growth and conventions such as the “Shriners, Realtors, Medicos, Labor men, and Elks.” Thanks to Juárez, the railroad allowed a ten-day stopover in the city where passengers spent time and money. After reminding the community of Juárez’s value, it went on to warn the reader about the painful effects of Mexican reprisals should the bridge be closed. The lessened traffic of Mexicans coming to El Paso would “deprive El Paso merchants of nearly two million dollars a year.” With the bridge closed, Mexico would grant Juárez the “free zone” status that it once enjoyed, making goods, and products cheaper in Juárez than in El Paso. The ad pointed an accusing finger at the newcomers by saying “Old-timers in El Paso know what the free zone means.” The notice concluded with identifying Bob Jones (though unnamed) as the main problem by stating, “In the years past El Paso and Juárez have been friends . . . Until a few weeks ago it seemed they were to remain so . . . El Paso should remain firm. She knows where her interests lie. It is well not to be stampeded.”

**Groom the Goose**

Bob Jones stood firm, unpersuaded by the argument that Juárez represented an asset to El Paso. To the contrary, he proposed, the vice in Juárez prevented growth and even caused some residents to contemplate leaving town because of it. Even if what the Chamber of Commerce said was true, Jones said further, a believer in God did not put money before morality. In Jones’ eyes, the good people of El Paso should willingly sacrifice monetary profits and community growth for their souls. He continued his relentless pursuit of the bridge closing, causing the business elites to offer some appearance of accommodation.

The El Paso Chamber of Commerce felt further the effects of the campaign; its membership of 971 divided equally on the
issue. Validation of the board's decision to oppose the early bridge closing required a vote of the entire body. The final count measured the effect of Bob Jones on the city. A time other than the 12:30 closing fell to defeat by a narrow 495 votes to 471. Although this validated the leadership's slogan of "Keep the Juárez bridge open for business," the close vote caused dissension within the chamber, forcing the directors to hold further meetings to consider their next step.32

Expectedly, the vote only reinvigorated Bob Jones. He held up the outcome as proof that city business leaders cared only about money, not the citizens of El Paso. Bob Jones urged the religious community to take out an ad similar to the one posted by the business elites to attract visitors. The notice should read:

We invite you to come to El Paso and invest your money. We can promise you all the atmosphere of the old saloon days in America and the biggest red-light district you ever saw... All you have heard of the city is true, come on to El Paso and go to the devil with some of our crowd.33

The business elite recognized that making some concessions served best its interests. Business had dropped off, both Mexico City and Washington showed interest in getting involved, and the El Paso Chamber of Commerce and the public antagonized each other over the issue. Juárez and El Paso coordinated their efforts. The El Paso Chamber sent representatives to a Juárez Chamber of Commerce meeting to consider an offer to reduce vice and impose earlier closing times on saloons if the 6 o'clock closing campaign ceased. The mayor, Pedro Fierro, called on the governor of Chihuahua, Ignacio Enríquez, and the federal government to assist in removing "dangerous criminals" from the city. The mayor further promised to work closely with Americans in a renewed effort to "cleanup" and improve tourist areas and even considered moving the district to the outskirts of town. At a dinner in El Paso hosted by the president of the Chamber of Commerce, Governor Enríquez promised to assist in closing "about 75 saloons" and in the deportation of undesirable Americans terrorizing Juárez.34

Officials forced prostitutes off the streets of Juárez and indoors. They expelled from town loiterers, vagrants, and army deserters. Juárez police apprehended criminals wanted in Texas and turned them over to El Paso authorities. Tourist areas received additional lighting and security. Assuring that their interests did
not succumb to the sacrifice, authorities closed the smaller, less important drinking and gambling establishments that catered mostly to locals. The larger, more extravagant places, those owned and operated by the business elite attracting the American tourist, continued to operate. Policing increased and citizen complaints, such as allowing minors into saloons, received greater attention.\textsuperscript{36}

The businessmen boasted success, claiming that court records in Juárez reflected fewer fines and arrests because of the cleanup. The El Paso Chamber of Commerce publicized, “the campaign has changed Juárez conditions to the extent that we can hardly believe it is the same city.” City leaders hoped that newspapers reporting the actions would please some of the complainers, reduce pressure to close the bridge, and take the issue out of public debate. Tourism actually benefited; the improvements and the closing of offensive establishments created a more attractive and safer environment for tourists.\textsuperscript{36}

Things quieted down when Bob Jones left town, but the seeds he planted changed El Paso forever. No longer could the old elites running the economy and the government behave as in the past. In the 1920s El Paso’s population diversified, reflecting more the nation as a whole than the independent frontier societies of the past. Educated professionals and entrepreneurs with sophisticated views and tastes sought a more religious and moral environment to raise their families and call home. Although they may not have threatened the entrenched old-boy establishment, the old-timers recognized the need to accommodate the newcomers.

Those concerned about what went on across the river probably did not visit Juárez—not much existed there for them. As long as vice and crime remained “over there” and not in El Paso, it did not affect their quality of life. Many recognized the value and even benefited from tourism and the Mexicans that spent tourist receipts in El Paso. As El Paso grew, however, so did Juárez, and it became harder and harder to keep problems “over there.” The biggest complaint expressed by El Pasoans was the effect of Juárez on their children. Youngsters could drink, gamble, and, if not take part in, at least see prostitution and other unsavory goings-on. The immoral behavior of neighbors and visitors to El Paso set some very bad examples for the young to emulate. Along with drinking, drugs represented another genuine fear. These activities threatened girls as well. Although parents may not have tied dancing to promiscuity as closely as Bob Jones did,
they definitely did not want to risk their daughters in testing the connection.37

It may have been only a matter of time—a very short time—before the moral newcomers united and took their demands to the city elite. In 1922, prohibition’s effect on the border were just gaining steam and notoriety. One cannot discount, however, the presence of Bob Jones. He acted as the agitating force that united an already concerned religious community, creating a movement that demanded attention from city leaders. Unlike the stereotypical traveling revivalists of that era, Bob Jones was not the shady opportunistic character some readers might envision. He displayed genuine sincerity, extending his originally scheduled four-week tour to five because he found a moral mission in El Paso, not because it enriched him. Jones knew what was happening on the border before he arrived, recognized a distraught community, and devised a course of action. He effectively worked from the pulpit and within the community. With conviction and tenacity, Jones organized the moral citizenry of different denominations into a powerful, focused, united group. He knew how to use the press and outside government to exert pressure on the enemy. He skillfully gained the backing of men’s and women’s groups, even the Ku Klux Klan. They all recognized the threat that Juárez represented; Bob Jones gave life and urgency to the problem in such a way that any upstanding citizen, religious or not, had to demand change.38

Bob Jones’ success should not have surprised the old-timers and business elite. The changed moral compass of El Paso’s inhabitants resulted from their marketing efforts to attract growth and increase economic opportunity. They knew better than to ignore or alienate the part of the community that was quickly surpassing established residents in number and influence. Not willing to join the crusade that threatened their “golden goose,” they responded just as shrewdly as Jones. The El Paso Chamber of Commerce’s leadership mounted a counter-publicity campaign reminding long-time residents and educating newcomers about the historic relationship between El Paso and Juárez and the economic co-dependency of the sister cities. Upstanding people did not close the bridge on a dependent sister, even if she was sick. Recognizing the magnitude of Bob Jones’ crusade, the business leaders effectively used the press, careful to attack the Reverend subtly and indirectly.
When the Juárez Chamber of Commerce voiced retaliation, El Paso responded quickly, letting their business partners in that city know that they would not be sacrificed to the moral movement going on across the river. The two Chambers coordinated efforts and charted a course aimed at quelling the unrest and maintaining, if not strengthening, the existing tourist industry. When Bob Jones attempted to bring the government in on his side by writing to the presidents of Mexico and the United States and the governor of Chihuahua, the old-timers stole the incentive and turned what could have been a devastating action by Governor Enríquez into a positive cleanup and improvement of the tourist district.

A compromise resulted. The bridge, this time, remained open. No longer, however, did it require the economic concerns caused by war department demands for vice cleanup or the legislative mandate of prohibition to force El Paso’s leaders to take a moral stance. The moral newcomers realized that they could force an issue if their concerns went un-addressed by the city elite, and they increasingly pushed their agenda as prohibition continued. The old-timers learned that the growing clout possessed by El Paso’s new citizens needed to be taken seriously.

Application to the Broader Border

El Paso/Juárez was not alone in this 1920s border community adjustment. Although other border locations may have lacked the drama of a Bob Jones campaign, the same forces existed and similar results occurred the length of the Mexico-U.S. border.\textsuperscript{39} With virtually no other industry than tourism, Tijuana’s population mushroomed from less than 1,000 in 1921 to near 10,000 in 1930. The international crossing point for the insignificant towns of Naco, Sonora and Naco, Arizona did not even warrant shelter for its customs agents; yet during prohibition the American side of the line “looked like a parking lot” for pedestrians visiting Mexico to drink. Even smaller than Naco, tiny Los Algodones offered a large bar owned by an American businessman who ran a bus service back and forth from Yuma.\textsuperscript{40}

The city developers of Nogales, Arizona pursued the same strategy as El Paso in encouraging growth. Nogales in 1925 “did not have an inch of hard surface road.” By 1927 Nogales advertised itself as a tourist “Mecca” with a golf course and country club, a dude ranch, and, of course, old Mexico just across the
street. Like El Paso, the town's leaders used tourism to get people to visit where they then promoted Nogales' industrial potential and promising future. As the rest of Mexico struggled to stabilize politically and gain its footing economically, the border moved forward, attracting migration from across the country. All along the border, up-standing Mexican residents called for moral cleanup of their towns. Tijuana experienced a crackdown on vice in 1921. Piedras Negras called for restoration of the free trade zone to combat its dependence on American tourists. A moral campaign in Matamoros for the cleanup of vice, alcohol, and corruption in 1924 resulted in the dismissal of judges and city officials. Attempting to curb the smuggling of liquor and narcotics, in March 1924 authorities imposed an early closing time on the international line between Mexicali and Calexico. As in El Paso, international bridges and border crossings opened and closed as government and community agents sought to force their issues and changes.

Although Bob Jones did not conduct a revival at another border location, his El Paso crusade offers a colorful example of what occurred the length of the border in the 1920s. The Mexico-U.S. border population explosion brought into conflict the newly arrived citizens and the old business elite, causing a compromise in the way border business and community would develop in the future. Due to changes in population character, no longer would business be conducted as usual in El Paso/Juárez or any place else on the border.

**DR. ROBIN ROBINSON** is an Associate Professor of History at The University of Texas, Brownsville. He earned his Ph.D. in history at Arizona State University, and his research specialties are the U.S./Mexico border and modern Mexico and Latin America's Southern Cone. He teaches courses related to these subjects as well as U.S. history. He was previously in the airline industry during which time he traveled to Mexico and South America. It was during those trips he developed his interest in history.
NOTES


3. For the economic situation that drove Mexican migration see, Martinez, *Boom Town*, 72-76 and in Northern Mexico see, Wasserman, *Persistent Oligarchs*, 31-34; for the need of Mexican mining labor in Arizona see, Thomas E. Sheridan, “La Crisis” in, Martinez, *Borderlands*, 133-134 and for agriculture in Texas see, Selden C. Menefee, “Mexican Migratory Workers in South Texas: Crystal City, 1938” in Martinez, *Borderlands*, 170. A good study about the railroad and El Paso is found in, Edward A. Leonard, *Rails at the Pass of the North*, Southwestern Studies Series, no. 63 (El Paso: Texas Western Press, The University of Texas at El Paso, 1981), including pages 17-18 and 41 for the reasons that passengers disembarked on cross-country journeys and page 45 for the increase of El Paso’s passenger service during the 1920s. The period from July 1918 to July 1919 saw 14,000 tourists visit El Paso. The following year, the first of prohibition, the number jumped to 419,000 in, El Paso Post, 9 May 1923, 1. Timmons gives a similar figure of over 400,000 for the same period in, Timmons, El Paso, 227. Stopover traffic alone was estimated to have spent as much as 1 million dollars in 1922. An estimated seventy-five percent of all travelers on the southern rail route disembarked for a border crossing in, Martinez, *Boom Town*, 58. In 1922 that amounted to nearly 20,000 rail passengers taking advantage of an allowed ten day stopover in, El Paso Post, 28 March 1923. One railroad official estimated that on the E & S W line alone an average of 300 people per month traveling through El Paso stopped for an average of 5 days and spent $10 a day that amounted to $180,000 a year as reported in, El Paso Post, 30 August 1922.

5. El Paso's citizenship had been changing since the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s. It took some 25 years to pass moral reform legislation as El Paso's political machine controlled gambling and prostitution. By 1905, however, families had replaced the individual as the "social microcosm" of El Paso in, Timmons, El Paso, 191-93. The vote for prohibition was close, being defeated by a count of 2,421 to 2,207 in, Timmons, El Paso, 225; quotes found in, El Paso Times, 30 September 1922.


8. "Front men" found in, El Paso Herald, 26 August 1922, 5; special meetings found in, El Paso Herald, 4 September 1922, 5 and El Paso Herald, 6 September 1922, 5 and El Paso Herald, 23 September 1922, 4; "Cottage meetings" found in, El Paso Herald, 4 September 1922, 8; social activities found in, El Paso Herald, 5 September 1922, 5.


10. The amount of one million dollars seems high to this author and is probably just a nice, round number chosen by Jones to serve as illustration in, El Paso Herald, 13 September 1922.


12. Ibid., September 1922, 5.

13. Ibid.

14. Other denominations in, El Paso Herald, 25 September 1922, 3; newspaper support in, El Paso Herald, 25 September 1911, 3 and 2 October 1922, 3; Cloudcroft trip seen in, El Paso Herald, 29 September 1922, 4 and El Paso Herald, 26 September 1922, 3.

15. The closing hour and number of votes were: 12:30 A.M.-9 and 9:00 P.M.-26 in, El Paso Herald, 22 September 1922, 1; El Paso Herald, 23-24 September 1922, 4.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 4.


in, Martinez, "Prohibition and Depression in Ciudad Juárez-El Paso" in, Martinez, Borderlands, 154-155.

21. A long-time El Paso citizen and businessman describes where and who gathered in Juárez in, Chester Chope, Interview by Wilma Cleveland, July 1968, Interview 27, transcript, The University of Texas at El Paso Institute of Oral History, El Paso, hereafter Chope, "Interview." Juárez received credit for attracting over 50,000 tourists and conventioneers to El Paso in 1925 in, El Paso Post, 21 December 1926, 9; individual conventions and their economic impact may be seen in, El Paso Post, 8 April 1924, 1, 15 April 1924, 1, 18 June 1927, 1, 27 January 1927, 1; and a more general discussion and evaluation is found in, Langston "The Impact of Prohibition," 82-85, 88-89.

22. Martinez, Boom Town, 58; Langston, "Impact," 91; and Carl Hertzog, Interview by Oscar J. Martinez, August 1975, Interview 170, transcript, The University of Texas at El Paso Institute of Oral History, El Paso, 5-6, hereafter Hertzog, "Interview."


26. Martinez, Boom Town, 58; Langston, "Impact," 91; Hertzog, "Interview," 5-6.

27. For a description of the large, popular tourist establishments, including Big Kid's Palace Café, the Baghdad, and the Central Café, see, Langston, "Impact," 95-99; air-conditioning on page 96; "Monte Carlo of the Southwest" found on page 131.


29. A good discussion of business and political relationships in the liquor and tourist industries is found in, Langston, "Impact," 219-239. Armando B. Chavez M., Mexican historian of Ciudad Juárez, described the economic relationship between the two cities as having always been, and remaining, "co-dependent," a situation especially true during the prohibition era in, Armando B. Chavez M., Interview by Oscar J. Martinez, Date unknown, interview 146, transcript, The University of Texas at El Paso Institute of Oral History, El Paso, 19-21.

30. The full-page ad is located in El Paso Times, 3 October 1922, 10.


32. El Paso Herald, 2 October 1922, 3; El Paso Herald, 5 October 1922.

33. El Paso Herald, 2 October 1922, 3.

34. El Paso Herald, 4 October 1922, 4; El Paso Herald, 5, 7 October 1922, 2; El Paso Herald, 7 October 1922, 2; El Paso Herald, 10 October 1922, 5.


36. Ibid., 18 October 1922, 10.

37. The availability of drugs and its effect on the youth of El Paso is seen in a report from U.S. Consul in Juárez, John W. Dye, dated February 24, 1923 in, Department of State, Records, 812.114.
38. Closing the bridge continued to be a threat by different interests over varied issues. Blaming gambling for economic troubles in 1931, the same parties using the same techniques, squared off as in 1922. A straw vote taken by the El Paso Times reflected the change in community attitudes; of the 5,470 ballots cast, 83% favored a 6 P.M. bridge closing time in Oscar J. Martinez, "Prohibition and Depression in Ciudad Juárez-El Paso," in, Martinez, Borderlands, 155. These conclusions are the opinion of the author from his analyses of the evidence.


41. Nogales, Arizona in 1925 “did not have an inch of hard surface road” in, Nogales International, 20 May 1975, 8. Along with tourism, also prominent is the role of the military as seen in a publicity brochure, Nogales and Santa Cruz County, Arizona, (Nogales: Nogales Wonderland Club, Inc., 1927).

42. Kearney and Knopp, Border Cuates, 201; Mexicali/Calexico found in report to Washington from U.S. Consul in Mexicali, H. C. von Struve, date April 24, 1925 in, Department of State, Records, 812.14/99. Examples of border crossing closings at multiple locations is found in, Buffington “Prohibition in the Borderlands,” 19-38.

43. The only “western campaign” conducted by Bob Jones was in Mineral Wells, Texas in April 1921, and other than El Paso, in 1922 Jones held a revival in St. Petersburg, Florida per, Mark Sidwell, J. S. Mack Library, Bob Jones University, msidwell@bju.edu. Although his purpose is unknown, in 1922, before coming to El Paso, Bob Jones visited Albuquerque and Los Angeles in, El Paso Herald, 8 September 1922, 7.

---

Urgent Request!

Over the 54 years of the Historical Society’s existence its collections have been housed in several locations. If you helped by taking care of some of the Pioneer Association collection or any other collection and still have it, would you please return the items to the Historical Society at Burges House as soon as possible.

---
Dan Jackson—William Fryer Collection,
El Paso County Historical Society
Reformers Fight Saloon Men in El Paso County Attorney's Election (or were they Reformers?)
By Ken Jackson

One century ago the rest of America might have thought the big event was Henry Ford’s introduction of the Model T, or Wilbur Wright’s record-breaking airplane flight, or Admiral Peary’s attempt on the North Pole, or even the Chicago Cubs’ last World Series championship.\(^1\)

For El Paso voters in the 1908 elections, the big event was a Texas saloon regulation law called the Baskin-McGregor Act.\(^2\)

Texas historian Mike Cox wrote that the Wild West died in Texas with that law’s passage. The law was a significant step toward complete prohibition. Even though some prohibitionists were unhappy because the law didn’t ban liquor in the Lone Star State, the law seriously curtailed saloon activities.

The Baskin-McGregor Act required saloons to close at midnight every night and all day Sunday. It also imposed a substantial license fee and major restrictions on saloon operations as follows:

1. No prostitutes or lewd women
2. No female bartenders or waitresses
3. No music
4. No cockfights, boxing or wrestling
5. No gambling

Cox notes that many local elections throughout Texas were contested on the question of whether Austin’s affront to the old frontier ways should be vigorously enforced or discreetly ignored.\(^3\)

El Paso’s 1908 election drew that battle line with the focus being the Democratic primary race for County Attorney, the office responsible for prosecuting offenders of the Act.
Two slates of candidates contested most offices. For the County Attorney’s position Dan M. Jackson opposed W. W. “Billy” Bridgers. The party establishment candidates, including Bridgers, were called the “Ring” ticket. The newspapers called the other candidates, including Jackson, the “Anti-Ring” ticket. Republicans were not a significant factor.4

The Ring was created by political boss, C. E. “Henry” Kelly and Judge Joseph U. Sweeney. Kelly wielded political power in El Paso from 1902 until Tom Lea beat him for mayor in 1915. From 1902 through 1910 Kelly was county treasurer. In 1910 he became mayor. Sweeney was mayor from 1907 to 1910. The 1908 election consolidated Kelly’s control over the city and county government of El Paso.5

The contestants for County Attorney were both well-known lawyers. Jackson was Tom Lea’s law partner. He represented Francisco Madero and was later elected State Judge for the 34th Judicial District. Bridgers had been in the Texas House of Representatives and later served as District Attorney.6

The Ring’s campaign strategy was to attack gambling interests and saloonkeepers, especially Tom Powers, president of the liquor dealers association. “Using Tom Powers as their whipping boy, [the Ring] hammered the old gambling group unmercifully.”7 Bridger’s own strategy also included insinuating that Jackson was in the pocket of the liquor men and could not be trusted to enforce Baskin-McGregor against them.

For Jackson, any position he might openly take against Baskin-McGregor was risky. The Act was Texas law, not pending legislation, and if elected, his oath of office would compel him to uphold it.

Perhaps recognizing this, Jackson changed the subject of the political rhetoric and came out strongly against vice magnate, Lew Vidal. Vidal owned El Paso’s last existing old west style dance hall, The Fortune.8 He also owned as many as two-thirds of the small rooms, or “cribs,” used by independent prostitutes.9 He was often prosecuted, unsuccessfully, for vice crimes and was a popular police target during El Paso’s various reform spasms.10

Vidal became the whipping boy that Jackson and his running mates used to attack Bridgers and the Ring. One political ad read: “Will Boss Kelly please give Billie B. permission to tell how he stands on the dance hall? No the Boss can’t. If Billie were to declare against the dance hall it would offend the Boss’s friend, Lew Vidal
and that would not do, for Vidal is a contributor to the Boss’s campaign fund and Vidal must not be molested. Poor little Billie; he is up against it.”

The night before the election, at a packed rally at the Crawford theater, Jackson hit the Vidal theme hard: “I called on Bilious Bridgers to state his attitude on the dance hall and he is today sitting as dumb as an oyster. If he would answer, he would be withdrawn from the race before tomorrow morning.”

Jackson’s view on ordinary saloonkeepers, however, was less transparent. A huge banner exhorting “Vote for Dan Jackson” below a row of beer kegs outside Steve’s Barrel House and similar signs in English and Spanish hanging inside that saloon heightened reformers’ concerns about Jackson.

Throughout the campaign, both sides desperately courted Mexican voters. Antis held weekly meetings in South El Paso, the heart of the Mexican community. At one meeting, a former Juárez police captain introduced Jackson as “half Mexican.” At another rally, “Jackson’s appearance was the signal for a shower of flowers from a box in which sat several handsome Mexican women.” (Free beer was a reliable inducement on both sides’ South El Paso rallies.)

A Ring rally in South El Paso featured Mexican revolutionary and editor of “La Reforma Social” newspaper, Lauro Aguirre. He was primarily speaking in support of the Ring candidate for county clerk, fellow Mexican-American, Ike Aldrete. He was also speak-
ing against all Anti-Ring candidates.\textsuperscript{17}

Aguirre had recently been arrested for the third time under the U.S. Neutrality law for hoarding arms and advocating the overthrow of the Mexican government.\textsuperscript{16} This time, though, Sr. Aguirre wasn’t denouncing the corruption of Porfirio Díaz in Mexico City, but rather the reduction of property values in “Chihuahuita” if the Antis were permitted to give saloon men and gamblers free reign in the neighborhood. Billy Bridgers and his Spanish interpreter spoke after Aguirre. Bridgers charged that Jackson was supported by a coalition of liquor dealers. He then listed the reformer’s favorite scoundrels who he said led the Anti-Ring:

1. “One-Eyed” Tom Powers, “El Paso’s most profane individual”\textsuperscript{19} who was a “compadre” of Pat Garrett and owner of The Coney Island Saloon (which one lawyer called the “rendezvous for all the un-caged convicts of the West.”)\textsuperscript{20}

2. Pete Adams, who owned The Lobby Bar (and after prohibition, Lobby # 2 in Juárez where Dan Jackson’s photo hung for many years.)\textsuperscript{21} Adams later married May Palmer, Madame of the Gentleman’s Club, thereby removing himself from El Paso’s “polite society.”\textsuperscript{22}

3. George Ogden, who managed the Parlor Saloon for his common-law wife, El Paso’s most famous madame, Tillie Howard.\textsuperscript{23}

4. Jim Dwyer, who shot and wounded a man during a political argument in Tom Powers’ saloon.\textsuperscript{24}

5. Pat Dwyer, who used family political connections to dodge a murder charge arising from a shooting in Pete Adams’ Lobby Bar;\textsuperscript{25} and of whom Bridgers said that night, “If Pat ever took a drink of pure water, he would probably die.”

6. The semi-anonymous banner-man “who owns Steve’s Barrel House.”

Free beer flowed throughout this anti-saloon rally.\textsuperscript{26}

Jackson never denied receiving these men’s support. Indeed, in the case of Barrel House Steve, such a denial would have been somewhat implausible. But he argued that he also had the support of the majority of other businessmen in the community.\textsuperscript{27}
The Ring took out regular political ads linking Jackson to the liquor boys and especially to the legendary Tom Powers. Eventually, the accusations against Jackson reached such a crescendo that the *Herald* invited him to respond. He did so as follows:

If I am elected county attorney of El Paso County, I shall fully and vigorously enforce all provisions of the Baskin-McGregor law without fear or favor. My oath of office would require me to enforce all the criminal laws of this state, but in my view of the challenge contained in your editorial of yesterday I feel it my duty to give emphasis to my attitude on this subject.

Yours truly, Dan M. Jackson

The paper immediately followed Jackson’s letter with a report of a Jackson campaign rally under the heading:

**DAN JACKSON AND TOM POWERS SPEAK**

Dan Says He Can’t Get Out of Enforcing the Law—
Tom Says, “Take a Drink”

The meeting was held in front of a saloon and the speeches were made from an automobile Tom Powers drove. Dan declared: “It has been charged that I have promised that in case I am elected I will not enforce the liquor laws, but even if I had made that promise I could not carry it out.” The *Herald*, apparently unconvinced, observed: “Many officials have failed to enforce the law after taking an oath to do so.” At the end of the meeting, One-Eyed Tom invited all attendees to drink a glass of beer. “Needless to say the invitation was generally accepted.”

The day before the election, the Ring ticket took out a final ad against Jackson:

Scratch Dan Jackson—he is bound hand and foot to the promises he made to the would-be whiskey trust.

Tom Powers, Pete Adams and Barrel House Steve were very much pleased with the speech made by their candidate for county attorney at the Crawford House last night.

It seems strange that [liquor dealers] should take such an interest in the election of a candidate for county attorney who claims he will enforce the Baskin-McGregor law to the letter. Or can it be that the saloon men who are engaged in fighting the further enforcement of the
Baskin-McGregor law in this city have confidence in the promises made them by Dan Jackson? They probably have.

The attempt of [Jackson] to throw dust in the eyes of the public must fail for the reason that Bridgers went on record in the beginning, while promising Daniel was hobnobbing with the enemies of the liquor law.30

The Ring further alleged that Jackson’s campaign manager, attorney Victor Moore, canvassed the Utah Street brothels on behalf of Jackson and found strong support from none other than Tillie Howard. Jackson and Moore felt it necessary to deny this.31

Election day arrived July 25. Whether the two candidates mutual mud slinging influenced the jaded electorate, or the Ring simply commanded superior voter organization skills, Bridgers beat Jackson in a close race.32 In fact, the Ring won every contest. The El Paso Herald exclaimed:

TOM POWERS GETS THE HOOK
Saloon Keepers and Reactionary Element
Badly Defeated by the Voters of the City.34

The closest race was Jackson-Bridgers:

Although Bridgers was considered safe, early returns showed that Jackson was making a good run. Jackson called at [Bridgers’] San Antonio Street headquarters shortly before midnight and jollied with Bridgers, who was also sitting out front. He said he had run his best, and while he said he believed he was beaten he still had hope at that hour.33

Whether Bridgers jollied back, or sat as dumb as an oyster, is lost to history. The final count was Bridgers 1735, Jackson 1414.

We don’t know if Jackson would have enforced Baskin-McGregor or winked toward the saloon men, but we do know what Bridgers did. He did close the Fortune Dance Hall, as Jackson’s tactics probably compelled him to do. Remarkably, this prompted the stridently reformist Herald to eulogize the demise of the Fortune and its “frontier legacy.”34

Beyond the Fortune’s closure, little else changed for El Paso’s vice establishment under Billy Bridgers and Mayor Sweeney. The Herald later editorialized against Bridgers and Sweeney: “It is evident that now we have not only the lawless saloon men to fight
THE SIGN IS STILL THERE

The Adams-Powers combination of saloon men have spared no effort to elect Dan Jackson, their candidate for County Attorney.

Don't Be Deceived By Promises

These supporters of Jackson got his promise long before he promised you. These men have furnished Jackson with the “sinews of war.” It is their money that he has spent and is spending in this campaign. Do you think Jackson an ingrate? Do you believe he will disappoint his said supporters? With whom do you think he will keep faith?—you or those who have been at his elbow and following at his heels during this campaign? Look at the company he keeps!

Vote for W. W. BRIDGERS for COUNTY ATTORNEY

He is the original advocate of the continued enforcement of the Baskin-McGregor liquor law in El Paso. Powers, Adams, Barrel House Steve and all that clan are turning every effort to the election of Jackson. Why? Let your answer be a

Vote for Bridgers

Political Sign from 1908 election—W. W. Bridgers Scrapbook, EPCHS
but also the city and county officials without whose connivance it would be impossible for violators of the law to persist in their evil ways. 

Bridgers’ first defense to this editorial was to accuse the paper of a political agenda. Then he said he thought the saloon and gaming laws “have been reasonably well observed.” But his real defense was that as county attorney he could only prosecute people who get arrested. He could not file his own complaint against law violators. Bridgers’ real defense neatly summed up the problem. No matter what his or Jackson’s prosecutorial plans might have been, El Paso’s mayor and police chief had not changed in 1908. Nor had their unenthusiastic pattern of vice law enforcement.

The Ring and Boss Kelly’s alignment with El Paso’s moral reform movement in 1908 not only resulted in an election sweep, it also cemented their political dominance. Reformism, however, was a stunning departure from the Ring’s traditional worldview.

cratic establishment under Mayor Charles Morehead had become soft on the reformers. Sonnichsen wrote: Kelly and Sweeney were “good friends who saw eye-to-eye in political matters and despised the reformers.”

As the Herald’s attack on Bridgers’ laxity toward the saloon men and Bridgers’ defense illustrate, the Ring’s heart was not in reform. In fact, reformers opposed the Ring ticket in every election after 1908 until they finally beat them in 1915.

What caused the Ring’s temporary black-to-white reversal of political philosophy? If you think about “reform” practically rather than morally, and there is no evidence that C. E. Kelly did anything else, his 1908 campaign makes sense. In 1908 Kelly was County Treasurer and Party Boss. He understood municipal finances and election finances. Keeping those finances solvent depended upon collecting “fines” from gamblers, dancehalls, saloons, “parlor houses,” and even from individual prostitutes.
A quarter century earlier, City Attorney Will Burges, a lifelong reform advocate, explained that El Paso's fine system was a form of licensing by which the city, although it had no legal authority to do so, granted fine payers month to month immunity from prosecution under Texas state vice laws. By 1908 the fine system had become regularized. The monthly fines for gambling, for saloons, for dance halls and for prostitution were set at the city council's first January meeting each year. In 1908, however, the number of fine payers had been drastically reduced. A 1905 state law permitting injunctions against property being used for "nuisance" (read, gambling) purposes effectively finished gamblers "as an organized group in El Paso." The last dance hall was going the way of the dodo. Madames and the sex workers were still paid, but the total intake must have been much less than before.

In this context, perhaps, the Baskin-McGregor Act was a godsend to the Ring. Run an aggressive campaign against saloon men based on the Act and vow to shut them down at midnight every night and all day Sunday as the law required. (The closure provisions of the Act were what saloon men disliked most.) Then, after winning the election, re-institute the celebrated fine system to free saloons from those pesky Baskin-McGregor closure rules and, incidentally, refill the city's coffers and the Ring's campaign war chest.

A decade later, none of it mattered. Eighteenth Amendment prohibition gave El Paso's reformers their Pyrrhic victory and gave Juárez saloons their financial one, and it consigned the fight over the Baskin-McGregor Act to obscurity.

KEN JACKSON is an Alabama lawyer and the great-grandson of Judge Dan M. Jackson, the unsuccessful candidate for El Paso County Attorney in 1908.
ENDNOTES

1. The January 2008 edition of *Smithsonian Magazine* explores the great events and achievements of 1908, but inexplicably omits the El Paso County Attorney’s election.


7. Vowell, 134.

8. The Fortune was a solitary anachronism in 1908. The heyday of dance halls in El Paso had been more than a decade before, when “amid the clinking of beer glasses and vulgarity, drunken men reeling and yelling danced with Mexican women, then went staggering to the bar for liquid refreshments. Women, long since sunk from respectability, joined in the terrible brawl. Hair streaming in masses of disorder, dresses rent by the yanking and howling of intoxicated men and lending their shrill voices to the completed chaos of debauchery.” H. Gordon Frost, *The Gentlemen’s Club: The Story of Prostitution in El Paso* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1983), 89.


10. Frost, 186.


14. “Anti’s Hold Rally,” El Paso *Herald*, July 20, 1908. (This came as a revelation to Jackson’s descendents.)


18. David Dorado Romo, *Ringside Seat to a Revolution: An Underground Cultural History of El Paso and Juárez: 1893-1924* (El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press, 2005), 60. Aguirre was acquitted all three times. Mr. Romo hypothesizes that Aguirre may have found his friendship with Alderete useful in those cases.


23. Ibid., 163.


25. Ibid., 373.


32. El Paso Herald, July 25, 1908, 1; Ike Alderete's friends were thick around this place all day and are voting as fast as they can,” El Paso Herald, July 26, 1908, 1. “Bridgers majority commenced climbing when returns from Ysleta gave him 256 votes against 20 for Jackson.”


35. Bridgers, 155.

36. Ibid.

37. Sonnichsen, 375.

38. Ibid., 370.

39. Ibid., 374-375.

40. Ibid., 371.

41. Frost, 98.

42. Frost, 156.

43. Sonnichsen, 369.

44. “Saloon Men Demand That All Places Close Sunday,” El Paso Herald, September 6, 1907.
"The Foster Women" by Dee Birch Cameron in the last issue touched many readers, among them Mardee de Wetter who sent a poem in the women's memory.

**Miss Fanny**

Long since, her hair, a hennaed white, became uncompassed, free as flight. Through wisps she searched each callow face with certain, knowing, pale blue eyes that judged us all as old and wise.

Her desk of schoolroom-damaged oak she called a stage and by a stroke formed Shakespeare's Globe beside the Thames. His players? Wooden spools, unthreaded, like sweet Ophelia, unwedded.

Macbeth, cracked as his blemished life, diminished by his outsized wife, and Lear, was ever spool so mad? Or dying Dane, flung down at last? Such shadows no live actor cast.

The sky grew drab with desert sand when April came to the Rio Grande, yet yellow Wordsworth daffodils bloomed bright beside Burns heather as we explored the glens together.

Fey she grew, and so much older. The years flew by. I never told her the dazzling worlds she brought alive—enchanted worlds I'd never seen when I was only seventeen.

*Mardee de Wetter*
A River Runs Through It: Conflict and Compromise of the Chamizal

By Joshua Morris

Editor's Note: Josh Morris is in the 9th grade at Cathedral High School. His paper won the silver medal at the State History Day competition in Austin, Texas. It was presented at the National History Day Competition in Washington, D.C. in June. Local competition is sponsored by The University of Texas at El Paso, Department of History, and the El Paso County Historical Society. Gertrude "Sugar" Goodman funds the local prizes in memory of her parents, Karl and Helen Goodman.

It is a warm afternoon as one family walks through a park and sits down on the lush grass to listen to live music and enjoy a picnic. Another family walks by a reflecting pool and admires giant frieze sculptures. These families are each visiting the same land area known as the Chamizal, but one family is in the United States and the other is in Mexico.

There is peace between the United States and Mexico concerning this tract of land between El Paso, Texas and Juárez, Mexico, but this was not always so. Controversy centered on the Rio Grande River, the present border between Texas and Mexico, which has shifted course several times throughout history. Some of the historical land changes created an area known as the Chamizal Zone. This zone consisted of "a small area of land southeast of downtown" El Paso, and Cordova Island, a "horse-shoe shaped peninsula" of Mexican-owned land located north of the Rio Grande (see Appendix A). Conflict over ownership of the Chamizal Zone led to a 100-year disagreement between El Paso, Texas and Juárez, Mexico, two cities destined to become one of
the largest economic and cultural border metropolises in North America. The history of the Paso del Norte region truly began in 1598 when Don Juan de Oñate claimed the land for Spain and settled the area. Throughout time, the culture of the region developed from the influences of the Spaniards and Mexicans who lived there.7

In May 1846 the Mexican-American War began,8 and General Zachary Taylor gave control of the Rio Grande to the state of Texas. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, the Rio Grande became the official border between Texas and Mexico.10 Because the United States had assumed moral superiority in their negotiations of the treaty, it “ensured that Mexico would remain an underdeveloped country. Mexican...politicians [viewed] this treaty as a bitter lesson in U.S. aggression.”11

Due to flooding, the Rio Grande shifted course several times between 1853 and 1867.12 In 1866, with territory being lost, Mexico expressed its concern.13 Matias Romero, Mexican minister to Washington, filed a complaint regarding a district in Paso del Norte (to be renamed Ciudad Juárez in 1888).14 The district El Chamizal, named after the chamiso bushes, was dissolving into El Paso. In 1867 he asked the United States to take notice of the situation and recognize Mexico’s sovereignty.15

Mexico and the United States decided to sign a treaty that would “avoid difficulties which may arise through the changes of [the river] channel.”16 The Treaty of 1884 stated that if the river changed by the natural process of erosion, then the boundary would move along with the river, but if the river changed suddenly by avulsion, the old river bed would remain the boundary.17

The first formal land claim was presented to the United States by the Boundary Commission in 1894.18 Mexico’s government voiced a complaint regarding the Chamizal on behalf of Pedro Ignacio García, a Mexican farmer.19 When the Rio Grande changed course and divided García’s land, he wrote a letter to the mayor of Juárez complaining that his land was “on the side of what is called today, El Paso, Texas.”20 This claim effectively started “the famous ‘Chamizal’ case.”21

In 1897 a second claim was filed after a massive flood caused extensive damage to both cities. The United States and Mexican governments jointly decided to straighten the river channel. Cordova Island was created by the new channel, and this channel put
the Mexican-owned Cordova Island north of the Rio Grande, effectively surrounded by the United States.22

In the summer of 1910 the International Border Commission became an arbitration commission in an attempt to settle the Chamizal conflict once and for all. The commission’s undertaking was to “decide which nation, under the Treaty of 1884, possessed title to El Chamizal, and for both governments the decision was to be final and conclusive.”23 According to Article VIII of the arbitration case, if this “shall be favorable to Mexico, it shall be executed within the term of two years, which can not be extended.”24 On May 15, 1911 the Arbitration Commission met and discussed issues about the boundary lines and the definitions of erosion as they related to the change of the Rio Grande.25 The Arbitration Commission ruled that the Rio Grande had changed rapidly, so they sided with Mexico. Based on legal technicalities, the United States refused to honor the binding agreement.26 Once again, the United States took a position of superior authority.

In 1916 the Chamizal issue heated up again when the Elephant Butte Dam was completed.27 This dam alleviated flooding of the Rio Grande, and one can infer that it made the Chamizal more desirable for settlement.28

Mexico and the United States continued to disagree over the Chamizal for forty-five more years. During this time, “The population of the Chamizal was increasing, and capital investment in the area was rising despite the cloud on its title.”29 By 1950 the population of El Paso had risen to 130,485 and Juárez had grown to 122,600.30 Border commerce of the late fifties and early sixties demonstrated the need for resolution of the Chamizal. Annual border crossings increased 136% in the ten-year period from 1950-1960. During this same period, border imports increased 58% and exports increased 44% (see Appendix B).31

The citizens of El Paso and Juárez had developed a symbiotic relationship, depending on one another for economic and cultural growth. Yet there was still the matter of the Chamizal, the cause of “animosity between neighbors.”32 Robert Utley writes, “With the continued growth of El Paso and Juárez, the problems posed by the clouded title to Chamizal...grew yearly more serious.... Such a settlement could come only through rational compromise...through...the chief executives of the two nations.”33 In 1962 Mexican President Adolfo López Mateos initiated the move to end finally the Chamizal conflict.
On June 30, 1962 President López Mateos and United States President John F. Kennedy issued a statement that the State Department and the Ministry of Foreign Relations would work together to create a solution to the Chamizal conflict. Kennedy was critical of the United States for rejecting the decision of the 1911 Arbitration Committee. President Kennedy demonstrated valuable foresight for the Chamizal when he declared the solution, “will make a significant contribution to relations between the United States and Mexico and will contribute to the welfare and orderly development of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua.” Thomas Mann, the United States Ambassador to Mexico and architect of the Chamizal Convention, agreed saying, “We are neighbors, and this had been a thorn in our side exploited by nationalists and Communists and everybody for fifty years. A constant source of friction in relations we thought ought to be
removed.” With hard work and cooperation the diplomats created a solution and presented it to the presidents on July 17, 1963. It was “reworked into a treaty signed in Mexico City on August 29, 1963 by Ambassador Thomas C. Mann and Foreign Minister Manuel Tello.”

The terms of the Chamizal Convention resolved the territorial disputes resulting from the erratic flow of the Rio Grande. To prevent the river from changing course again, a 4.3-mile long, concrete channel running along the El Paso-Juárez border would be built. Cordova Island was to be divided equally with each country receiving 193 acres. Some of this acreage was dedicated for a national park on each side of the border. Sections of land to the east (264 acres) and west (366 acres) of Cordova Island would be given to Mexico. The 264 eastern acres were not part of the original disputed territory (see Appendix A). Living on the trans-
ferred land were 5,000 American citizens who needed to be compensated and resettled.\textsuperscript{42,43} Public facilities, such as Navarro Elementary School, were transferred to Mexico.\textsuperscript{44}

The Chamizal Convention Act of 1964 was approved by both governments. Thomas Mann said of this great compromise, "We didn’t get everything we wanted, and they didn’t get everything they wanted. We negotiated hard on that, and I think what came out of it was something which was good for Juárez, good for El Paso, and good for Chihuahua, and the State of Texas."\textsuperscript{45}

"Mexican business and home owners had to relinquish their claims on Cordova Island,"\textsuperscript{46} but, even so, "The reaction of Mexico to the Chamizal settlement was enthusiastic."\textsuperscript{47} Charles Murphree, who was in Mexico City when the act was signed, described the scene, "If you hadn’t known better, you would’ve said Mexico just won the next world war. People were cheering and waving banners. All over that one little bit of land they got back."\textsuperscript{48}

"‘Adios, Chamizal.’ Some say it with satisfaction, some with regret, and a few with tears."\textsuperscript{49} This statement embodies the reactions of about 5,000 Americans who were forced to move from the Chamizal zone. Lucy Fischer-West, who grew up near the Chamizal, described the scene in El Paso as generally a relieved reaction. She said that although some people may have been unhappy by having to move out of their homes, they moved out of a barrio and into better neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{50} Jose Gonzalez, who had to move out of the Chamizal, was satisfied with the way everything worked out. He said it was a big advantage to live closer to where he worked. Mrs. Miguel Luna said she missed her friends but accepted the circumstances of the Chamizal.\textsuperscript{51}

However, there were people who did not like the Chamizal compromise. Emma Díaz and her friends were frustrated with having to leave their neighborhoods. To graduate from Bowie High School, where she had attended, she had to get on a bus at 4:45 every morning.\textsuperscript{52} Other people were concerned with the unknown. People attending a discussion with Ambassador Mann voiced concerns over a variety of topics, such as loss of American citizenship, displacement from the "area where they have spent all their lives," and loss of their land to Mexico.\textsuperscript{53} The Chamizal Civic Association members wrote letters protesting the Chamizal Convention.\textsuperscript{54} Yet overall, "Reaction in El Paso was generally favorable."\textsuperscript{55}

After the assassination of Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued with the Chamizal Convention in Kennedy’s
place. Presidents Johnson and López Mateos met on September 24, 1964 at Bowie High School in El Paso, Texas to commemorate the settlement.66 One day later, President Mateos said of the peaceful compromise of the Chamizal “[T]his is] a happy event for the progress of these two twin cities...which we are thus joyfully witnessing. I voice my most heart-felt hope that it will also become a point of departure for even greater achievements.”67

In October 1967, President Johnson and Mexico's new President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz met in Ciudad Juárez to transfer officially the land to Mexico. On December 13, 1968, the presidents met again at the center of the new border crossing, the Bridge of the Americas, to open the river channel.56,59 On January 18, 1969 the last part of construction listed in the Chamizal Convention was completed.60 The compromise of the Chamizal Convention had been accomplished and the 100-year conflict of El Chamizal was officially over.

Both El Paso and Juárez have continued to grow and prosper. In December 2006, El Paso's population reached 624,365 and Juárez had a population of 1,455,687.61 Population projections for the year 2020 in El Paso are 767,750 and 2,458,789 for Juárez.62 Though they face common border problems such as immigration and pollution, the relationship between El Paso and Juárez is one of shared culture and economics. Many who resettled now see it as “a boon to their own upward social and economic mobility.”63 The success of the Chamizal in El Paso served as a doorway to resolve other border conflicts between Mexico and the United States by leading to the 1970 Border Treaty.64

Because there are no scenarios quite like the Chamizal, one can only speculate about what might have happened had the Chamizal issue not been resolved. With the Cuban Missile Crisis just ended and the Cold War still in full force, the threat of the Soviet Union's alliance with Mexico could have become a reality. Thomas Mann noted that communists had been exploiting the Chamizal issue,65 and the Soviet Union was trying to spread communism throughout Latin America.66 Due to dissatisfaction with the United States over the Chamizal, Mexico might have welcomed an alliance with a strong Soviet nation. This alliance may have resulted in the Soviets giving nuclear arms to Mexico as they had to Cuba.67 This could have forced another missile crisis or even created a situation similar to today's Kashmir, the site of an on-going war between Pakistan and India. Both Pakistan and
India have publicly shown nuclear weapons, creating "the most likely spot on the planet for a devastating nuclear war."

The unrest being felt in Asia may have been North America's destiny if Mexico and the Soviet Union had allied over the unresolved Chamizal conflict.

Even if Mexico had simply remained disgruntled, a situation similar to the Falkland Islands conflict could have arisen. Argentina claimed sovereignty over the Falklands, but Britain had control and rejected Argentina's claims. Argentina's military gave up on negotiating and made the political decision to go to war to retake the Falkland Islands. They believed it would unite the people behind what had become an unpopular Argentine government. This failed military action cost over a thousand lives. Likewise, Mexico wanted the sovereignty of the Chamizal recognized, but the United States refused. With Mexico's political uprisings and unrest in the 1990s, the government could have attempted military action to try to unite the people against the country they believed stole their land. Even though the weaker Mexican army would have stood little chance against the superior forces of the United States, the goal would have been to divert people's attention away from political unrest and to unite them against a common enemy.

The Chamizal resolution should be a model to other countries throughout the world as to how compromise can peacefully solve a conflict. The acts of the United States and Mexico in successfully compromising the Chamizal prevented us from experiencing what has happened in other conflicts: the escalation of military tensions, unnecessary loss of life, and a future of uncertainty.

As President Johnson said, "Too many times has the world seen attempts to change boundaries through force. Let us be thankful that here at Chamizal we celebrate an example of how such matters should be settled." From its humble beginnings as El Paso del Norte to its status as a thriving border city, the El Paso/Juárez metropolis is a living example of the power of compromise over conflict. The Rio Grande River which divides the two cities is also the force that unites them. The Chamizal Compromise is rich with the history and promise of this great land, just like the river that runs through it.
Appendix A — Maps

Map of the Disputed Territory of the Chamizal

Map of the Chamizal Settlement

Chamizal Settlement 1963

Liss 164-165

Timmons 280
Appendix B — Chart

Border Crossings: 1950 and 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Crossing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>12,525,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>30,009,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>+136.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imports and Exports: 1950 and 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>$32,500,000</td>
<td>$31,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>51,355,200</td>
<td>45,386,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change</td>
<td>+58%</td>
<td>+44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Report Community Economic Analysis Chamilal Planning Program

NOTES

7. Timmons, 12-100.


21. Ibid., 70


26. Ibid., 104.


29. Liss, 37.


34. Ibid.

35. Timmons, 278.


37. Thomas Mann interview with Joe B. Frantz, Interview (Internet copy, November 4, 1968), 8. www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/oral-history.hom/Mann-t/MANN.PDF

38. Utley, 108.


41. Liss, 164-165.


44. H. E. Charles, Superintendent’s Report: El Paso Public Schools, Raymond P. Daguerre collection 1918-1967, MS 075, C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

45. Mann, 8.


55. Mueller, 103.

56. Timmons, 282.


58. Timmons, 282.

59. Utley, 114.

60. Ibid.


62. Ibid.


65. Mann, 8.


67. Ibid.


IN MEMORIUM
Mary Lillian Reid Collingwood
Former Editor, Password
1922–2008

CORRECTION
Volume 52, Number 3, Fall 2007
“An Early College of El Paso”

Correction as submitted by the author, Donald F. Nelson:
After approval by the author, Donald Frederick Nelson, of the article “An Early College of El Paso” for publication, a sentence reading “Florence gave birth to their third child, Dorothea, the author’s mother” was altered to read “Florence gave birth to their third child, Dorothea, (who, after marriage to Paul V. Nelson gave birth to the mother of the author of this article)” which is wrong. Dorothea is the author’s mother, not his grandmother.
Lecturas:

Articles and Dissertations on El Paso and the Southwest recently published in other journals


Miguel Antonio Levario, “Cuando Vina Mexicanada: Authority, Race, and Conflict in West Texas, 1895-1924” (PhD. Diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2007): 178 pp. in Proquest Dissertations and Theses 2007, Section 0227, Part 0337, Publication Number: AAT 3277567.


The Mexican Revolution. Postcard courtesy of the C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, The University of Texas at El Paso Library.
Archival Pictures of El Paso Prior to the Mexican Revolution

Unless otherwise noted all pictures are from the EPCHS archives.

As El Paso grew after its incorporation in 1873, it became a center of business, activity, and society for this area of the Southwest. Easy access to Mexico fostered many of these activities, and ultimately El Paso became a safe haven for many engaged in the Revolution, an event occurring 38 years later.

(at left) One of the most reproduced pictures of El Paso is the view down El Paso Street toward Mexico. There is debate about when this view was actually photographed, but it was before 1880. Ben Dowell's saloon was to the right where the Camino Real is today.

(at left) S. Schutz & Bros. general store was in business in 1878.

(at right) Mundy's Butchers was next to the Central Hotel.

(at left) Opposite Lightbody & James Clothiers.
(above) The view from Mesa Gardens shows a developing residential district and some downtown buildings.

(at right) The 1883 building was at the bend of Pioneer Plaza and showed the increasingly busy route to Mexico. The Myar Opera House is on the right. This straight view to Mexico can be seen today from the roof of the Plaza Theater deck.

(at left) Mandy the Mule transported people around town. From the Otis Aultman Collection, El Paso Public Library.

(below) Early churches have been built; trees are growing. The city limits does not extend much past Kansas St., however.

(below) Kilburn of New Hampshire invented stereocards. This original view is to the West and shows the Plaza, Grand Central Hotel and Pioneer Plaza. It is around 1886. Yucca is planted in the Plaza. The Sheldon Hotel has not been built. From the Worthington Collection.
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2008
THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President  Jack Niland
1st Vice-President  William Hooten
2nd Vice-President  Lillian Crouch
3rd Vice-President  Mary Jo Melby
Recording Secretary  Patty Bruce
Corresponding Secretary  Sandra Gibson
Treasurer  George O’Brien
Accountant  John B. Butterworth
Historian  Magda C. Flores
Membership  Carmen Stearns
Curator  Patricia H. Worthington

MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO

Editor, PASSWORD     Patricia H. Worthington
Editor, EL CONQUISTADOR  Magda C. Flores
Annual Fundraising  Jack Niland
Program Chairman  Mary Jo Melby
Burges House Commission  William Hooten
Immediate Past President  Mike Hutson

DIRECTORS

2006–2008
Dr. Charles Ambler
Robert Bean
Magda C. Flores
Charles Gaddy
Jon Hansen
Dr. Jon Wilbanks

2007–2009
John Broaddus
Dr. Ann Gabbert
Harris Hatfield
Jack McGrath
Amy Paschich
Jim Tritton

2008–2010
Bill Avila
Jed Becker
Keith Erickson
Kurt Goetting
Mary Haynes
Marcus Hunt*
Charles Mais
A. C. Sanders III
*deceased

ALL PAST PRESIDENTS ARE HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS
MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the society shall be to study the history of the city and county of El Paso and of the surrounding territory; to conduct and to foster research in the history of the area; to acquire and preserve documents, papers and other objects of historical interest and value pertaining to this area; to make such material available for the information of the community; to publish and encourage the publication of historical writing pertaining to this area; to develop public consciousness of the rich heritage of our historical background; and to engage in such activities which would contribute to the restoration and maintenance of the Richard F. Burges House, home of the Society.