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PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 60, No. 3 • El Paso, Texas • Fall 2016

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VOLUME 60, NO. 3

FALL 2016

CONTENTS

The El Paso Branch of the 1923 and 1929 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People	70
<i>By Will Guzmán</i>	
Relocating the School of Mines	88
<i>By P.J. Vierra</i>	
UTEP: A Dynamic Force in El Paso's Cultural Heritage	101
<i>By Cristina Casas Palmer</i>	
Guidelines for Publication in Password	102
Board of Directors and Committees	103
Membership Form	104
Upcoming Events	104



The El Paso Branch of the 1923 and 1929 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

By Will Guzmán

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had been established in New York City in 1909—the centenary of President Abraham Lincoln’s birth.¹ The NAACP founders, nearly all of whom were white, wanted to bring attention to Lincoln’s presidential accomplishments, but also to point out the fact that such an organization was needed due in large measure to address issues related to the race riot that occurred six months earlier in Lincoln’s adopted hometown, Springfield, Illinois.² The children of white abolitionists, along with white Jews and white liberals, came together out of genuine concern for the plight of Blacks in the United States. They were horrified about the attacks upon African Americans in a northern city after having been accustomed for decades to seeing the overt oppression of Blacks restricted to southern states. The shock and fear among liberal whites was that the barbarity of the southern treatment of its Black citizenry would now spread northward. In May 1909 the organization convened for the first time and invited some progressive African Americans to its initial meeting, including Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church-Terrell, Archibald Grimké, Kelly Miller, Bishop Alexander Walters, William Monroe Trotter, William Scarborough, and W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois would be the lone African American when appointments to the executive board were made and fulltime paid positions were assigned.³

In its infancy the organization struck a delicate chord between the conservative strategies of Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee Institute principal, author, and civil rights leader, and the perceived militant approach of William Monroe Trotter (1872-1934), civil rights activist, newspaper editor, and publisher.⁴ Trotter helped establish the Niagara Movement (1905) and National Equal Rights League (1908).⁵ The Niagara Movement was instrumental in the later formation of the NAACP. Trotter famously chastised Woodrow Wilson during a fall 1913 meeting at the White House when, despite promises to the contrary, Wilson segregated the federal workforce.⁶

The NAACP challenged institutional white racism through public protests, demands for political participation, legal campaigns that focused on lynching and the redress of other racist assaults, and on the publication of its official organ: *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*.⁷ Despite the South’s insistent claims of the organization being too

radical, or in later years dominated by communist sympathizers, the fact is the NAACP operated within the legal structure—primarily the court system—and “remained firmly committed to the institutional and normative framework provided by the United States Constitution and the American political system.”⁸

El Paso’s NAACP Branch

Blacks in El Paso found themselves in a social and racial climate that precipitated their attempts to write the national headquarters of the NAACP in New York and ask for the establishment of a local outlet to fight against Jim Crow and racial oppression in the border city. Within two months after having been formed in September 1913, members of the El Paso Lyceum and Civic Improvement Society (EPLCIS) wrote the New York headquarters of the NAACP requesting to become an official branch.⁹ The NAACP responded to their request on December 5 stating “we are gratified to learn that you are interested in the work of this Association and that the El Paso Lyceum and Civic Improvement Society is contemplating becoming formally identified with us.” In this initial letter to the EPLCIS, the NAACP was careful to stress that “you cannot announce yourselves as a branch until your constitution has been formally approved.”¹⁰ Months later, in May 1914, the national office had mailed the constitution and bylaws that allowed the El Paso branch to be officially chartered. The local members planned their first meeting the fol-

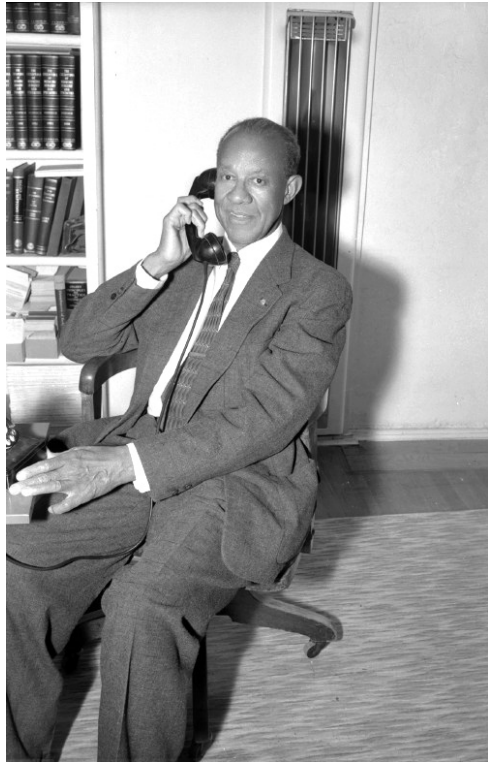


Figure 1. Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon in 1959. Nixon was one of El Paso’s most prominent civic leaders, who led the legal battle to obtain voting rights for African-Americans. From the Thirman (Morris) Photo Collection, courtesy of the C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, MS505, University of Texas at El Paso Library.

lowing month, on June 14, where their officers were named: Jasper B. Williams (President), Le Roy White (Secretary), and William Coleman (Treasurer). The El Paso NAACP executive committee consisted of physician Lawrence A. Nixon (Chairman), Sylvester M. Collins, Le Roy W. Washington, John F. Kelley, John Slater, and J.H. Donnell.¹¹ This initial step by El Paso Blacks was an important one. "Organization is sacrifice," emphasized W.E.B. Du Bois to his readers in the April 1915 *Crisis*: "It is sacrifice of opinions, of time, of work and of money, but it is, after all, the cheapest way of buying the most priceless of gifts—freedom and efficiency."¹²

Although Lawrence Nixon is perhaps the most well-known advocate of voting rights in El Paso, he was not the only member of the El Paso NAACP who demanded suffrage for African Americans. Black women in El Paso also asserted themselves in their advocacy for voting rights.¹³ In March of 1918, women in Texas had won the right to vote in Democratic primaries. Maud Edith Sampson, as president of the El Paso Colored Woman's Club, attempted to apply for membership to the Texas Equal Suffrage Association.¹⁴ Like Lawrence Nixon, she and her husband Edward P. Sampson, both of 710 South St. Vrain Street, were members of the El Paso NAACP.¹⁵ In June 1918, Maud Sampson sent a letter applying for membership in the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) on behalf of the El Paso Colored Woman's Club. The NAWSA had no individual club members, membership was through state associations only.¹⁶ The matter was referred back to Texas.¹⁷ The Texas Equal Suffrage Association sought advice about Sampson's application from the NAWSA. A response came from the president, Carrie Chapman Catt, longtime women's advocate and founder of the League of Women Voters.

In her response to the State chapter president, Mrs. Edith Hinkle League, suggested that

"if you find it so, you write Mrs. Sampson and tell her that you will be able to get the vote for women more easily if they do not embarrass you by asking for membership and that you are getting it for colored women as well as for white women and appeal to her interest in the matter to subside."¹⁸

The comment makes it clear that the national leadership of the Women's Suffrage Movement did not want to be affiliated with Black women, because in doing so would alienate their nearly all-white membership base and thus jeopardize their cause.¹⁹

El Paso NAACP members' activism also entailed attending the organization's annual meetings and conferences. As an official delegate representing the El Paso branch, Lawrence Nixon attended the Six-

teenth Annual Conference of the national organization, which was held June 24-30, 1925 in Denver, Colorado. Also meeting Nixon there as official delegates for El Paso's NAACP were Reverend and Mrs. H.A. Rogers but the Rogers were not at the opening session because they had attended the Baptist Young People's Union Congress in Wichita, Kansas earlier in the week. NAACP El Paso branch president Le Roy Washington was not able to attend due to illness within his family. In a letter addressed to Walter White, Washington regretted "not to come in contact with you men who are giving your very lives to such a worthy cause as is the N.A.A.C.P."²⁰

While at this NAACP conference, Lawrence Nixon met Edna Tandy, the person who four years later in 1929 would introduce him to his future second wife, Drusilla E. (Tandy) Attwell. It was at this conference that the NAACP proclaimed five key principles as its aim: "the complete abolition of lynching and mob law; full political freedom; industrial democracy; better education; and the absolute ending of segregation on race and color." The organization believed that the values that the United States professed to hold were not only worthy enough to fight for, but necessary so as to redeem the nation from its evil past and present. As made clear in the Fifteenth NAACP Annual Conference in 1924, "it is not to obtain mere benefits and privileges for the Negro that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is striving; it is striving to vindicate the American idea. That idea is: that every man shall have opportunity for the highest self development and that his achievements shall not be denied recognition on their merits."²¹

What follows is a brief biography of four members of the 1920s El Paso NAACP and the actual 1923 and 1929 membership roll, designed to highlight the multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual characteristics of this branch. What is fascinating is not only the race and commitment of the El Paso members of this civil rights organization, but also the myriad of occupations members toiled within.

Le Roy W. Washington

Le Roy Washington was born in Hard Times, Louisiana in 1880 and was a graduate of Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in Lorman, Mississippi.²² Alcorn A&M College was established in 1871 and is located eighty-five miles southwest of Jackson, Mississippi in the town of Lorman, Mississippi. Originally called Alcorn University, it changed its name to Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1878. Hiram R. Revels (1827-1901), the first African American to serve in the United States Senate, became the college's first president in 1871 and served until his retirement in 1882. The initial mission of the school was to educate African American men, although in 1895 it became

coeducational.²³ Washington taught school at Mary Holmes Industrial Seminary for Colored Girls in Mississippi.²⁴ He moved to El Paso with a civil service appointment in 1910 to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Sometime between 1918 and 1920, Washington became president of the El Paso branch of the NAACP and served in that capacity until his death in May 1941.²⁵ He was a co-founder of the El Paso NAACP, a member of its initial Executive Committee, and later served as its Secretary. He was a member of Shiloh Baptist Church in El Paso and was married to Viola E. Washington, who was a teacher in Louisiana before arriving in El Paso in 1918. In El Paso, Mrs. Washington became a civic worker and public speaker.²⁶ The couple lived at 3910 Manzana Street and had two children: Viola Edwina Washington (b. 1926) and Le Roy W. Washington, Jr. (b. 1923). In the 1930 U.S. Census, Anna Wright, Viola E. Washington's seventy-one year-old mother, is listed as living in the Washington home and Le Roy Washington is listed as the head of the household with an occupation of guard at the U.S. Immigration Station.²⁷ Besides raising their own two children, they also helped rear their nephews, Edward W. Wright and Oscar B. Wright.²⁸

Rudolph W. López: Afro-Latino Member of the El Paso NAACP

The 1929 El Paso NAACP membership rolls indicate that African American Mary López and her Afro-Latino husband Rudolph W. López lived at 3328 Manzana Avenue.²⁹ According to the 1930 El Paso United States census, by that time the López couple did not have any children residing with them and had moved to 1009 South Third Street in El Paso.³⁰ Rudolph López was described as a thirty-five year-old Black man who was a Teacher of Manual Training at Douglass School.³¹ Mary López was a thirty-six year-old maid for a local family.³² Frances Hills, a longtime African American El Paso resident, remembers Rudolph López as "one of the leaders in [the] Pullman car." López may have had another career after teaching at Douglass School either as a Pullman Porter or their union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.³³ This may have been due to the financial shortcomings in public education brought upon by the onslaught of the Great Depression. In the 1930s, Douglass School laid off some of its teachers and Rudolph López may have been one of them. That is what happened to Blanche Grundy, whose daughter, Francis Hills, later recalled that her mother "taught for twelve years at Douglass School. In the 1930s when they were cutting down on teachers, she lost her job."³⁴

Hills recalled that López "came here from somewhere, I think it might have...he might have been a Cuban or something like that, West

Indian descendant, because he came here from that part of the country, Florida.”³⁵ It is clear that López was not originally from El Paso. He was born in October of 1894 to Feribee López and Manuel López. Feribee López (b.1870) and both of her parents were born in Florida. Manuel López (b.1864) and both of his parents were born in Portugal. The 1900 census labeled the entire López family as being Black. They lived at 3 Ruseau Street in the tiny community of Warrington, Florida, which is located in Escambia County, six miles southwest of Pensacola and ten miles southeast of the Alabama state line.³⁶ Both parents may have been Afro-Latinas/os. Although both of Feribee’s parents were born in Florida, the presence of Afro-Latinas/os in Florida stretch back into the 18th century when Florida was a Spanish borderland.³⁷ In the 19th century, the specific presence of Afro-Cubans in Florida included cities such as Pensacola, Tallahassee, West Tampa, Key West and others.³⁸ Since Manuel López is classified as Black and both he and his parents were born in Portugal, it could be possible that they were descendants of Africans who had been in the Iberian Peninsula for many centuries due to commercial trade, migration, or forced importation by Portuguese colonizers.³⁹

When and why Rudolph López arrived into El Paso is not clear, but he (like Lawrence Nixon) was very active within the relatively small Black enclave in the city. He not only was a member of the local NAACP, but also was involved in musical groups at Douglass School and various churches in the city. For a brief time López was heard on the local AM radio station KTSM, and was a member of the Prince Hall Masonic House—achieving the rank of Thirty-Third-Degree Mason. In addition, he was active in the American Legion and the St. James Myrtle United Methodist Church.⁴⁰ Lawrence Nixon must have served as a mentor to the younger López, who was named an honorary pallbearer at Nixon’s funeral on March 8, 1966.⁴¹ At the age of eighty-seven López himself died in El Paso on November 6, 1981.⁴²

Louis Laskin: Jewish Member of the El Paso NAACP

Louis Laskin was a white Jewish member of the El Paso branch of the NAACP in 1924 and he too must have known Lawrence Nixon.⁴³ Laskin was one of the proprietors—his older brother Israel Laskin being the other—of the Globe Department Store which was located in downtown El Paso at 214-18 East Overland Street. The Lenox Hotel occupied the upper floors while the Globe operated on the bottom floor.⁴⁴ By the late 1920s, the Globe had eighty employees.⁴⁵ Under the management of Louis Laskin, Helen Laskin (Israel Laskin’s wife), and Harold Laskin (Israel’s Laskin sole son), the Globe Department Store incorporated in the midst of the Great Depression in 1931 at a sum of \$50,000.⁴⁶

In the 1920 census, Louis Laskin is listed as a forty-seven year-old white male merchant of a dry goods store who lived at 1126 Los Angeles Drive with Celia Laskin, his thirty-eight year-old wife, and Minda Laskin, their eighteen year-old daughter. Louis Laskin was born in Russia in 1887 and Celia was born in Russia in 1895. Both Celia and Louis became naturalized citizens in 1908 and they list Russian as their mother tongue; additionally, all their parents were born in Russia and all spoke Russian. The daughter, Minda was born in Arizona.⁴⁷

Louis Laskin was an “Annual Member” of the Jewish Publication Society, a scholarly organization which published Jewish works in English. In 1918, this national organization had nearly 15,000 members which included 64 in El Paso and a total of 290 in Texas.⁴⁸ Cyrus Adler, Mayer Sulzberger, and Solomon Solis-Cohen created the Jewish Publication Society in 1888 and the American Jewish Historical Society in 1892, both based in Philadelphia, to promote serious Jewish scholarship throughout the United States.⁴⁹

Jewish involvement in the NAACP is not surprising when one considers that some Jews, particularly those who arrived from Europe after 1880, sympathized with the plight of African Americans in light of their own historical oppression.⁵⁰ And if Jews were not directly involved with the NAACP in El Paso as members, there were some actively engaged in social justice causes such as endorsing the passage of the Costigan-Wagner anti-lynching bill.⁵¹ On Sunday February 3, 1935 progressive whites, and many Jews, met at the predominately African American Second Baptist Church in El Paso’s Second Ward neighborhood to read the letters that had been sent to various politicians in support of stopping the barbarity of lynchings in the nation.⁵² The groups and individuals included Women’s City Government Club, Rabbi Joseph M. Roth, and Rabbi Martin Zielonka.⁵³

Frederick C. Knollenberg: Anglo Member of the El Paso NAACP

Frederick C. Knollenberg was born in Quincy, Illinois in January 1877 to parents who had roots in Germany and Britain. Knollenberg’s father was in the merchant milling business.⁵⁴ Fred Knollenberg earned his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1901.⁵⁵ In 1902, he moved to Missouri to practice law and eventually made his way to New Mexico—Silver City and Alamogordo—where he practiced between 1907 and 1910. In 1910, he moved to El Paso where he was admitted to the Texas Bar and soon after became a member of the Bar Association of El Paso County.⁵⁶ Also in 1910, he established a law partnership with his fellow 1903 Michigan Law School alumnus Charles R. Loomis.⁵⁷ When the law partnership between Knollenberg

and Loomis dissolved in 1915, Loomis partnered with James F. McKenzie in 1916 who was formerly associate justice of the Court of Civil Appeals in El Paso.⁵⁸

In October 1916, Knollenberg became a member of the newly formed Tri-State Bar Association and after the Bar Association of El Paso County disbanded, he became a member of the newly created El Paso Bar Association in August 1919, two months after its inception.⁵⁹ In 1941, Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes appointed Knollenberg to serve as the Southwestern representative for the American Law Institute, a national governing body with restricted membership.⁶⁰ Knollenberg was a “self-described green country lawyer with a trademark mouth full of gold teeth and a jovial personality.”⁶¹ As one of the few Anglos in El Paso’s NAACP, Knollenberg served as Lawrence Nixon’s legal council during his court battles with the judicial system to secure the right to vote during the Texas Democratic primaries. El Paso Lawyer Julian Bernat described Elisha F. Cameron and Fred C. Knollenberg as “two fine old gentlemen of the old school. They were good lawyers and good people.” Bernat, who practiced in Cameron’s firm, says his partner spoke often and proudly of his involvement in the case. “It was a challenge to them, but they went ahead and did it.”⁶² In describing Knollenberg to Walter White, national secretary of the NAACP, in 1932 Le Roy Washington wrote:

“He is very interested in our welfare here and throughout the country. There has never been a time when we have called on him for legal advice or aid but that we got it without question as to the fee. In fact, he is the only lawyer whom we have found here, as yet, who will go to the bat with and for the NAACP, locally and nationally. As we understand it, he is thoroughly conversant with southern tactics in evading the law.”⁶³

He obviously was well liked by many within the Black community in El Paso. Knollenberg died at the age of seventy-four in El Paso on June 11, 1951 at his 2613 Silver Street home. He was survived by his seventy-three year-old wife Florence C. Knollenberg, his daughter, Florence K. Roy, two grandchildren, Bobby and Marilyn Roy, all of El Paso, and four sisters: Mary E. Orr (b. April 1883), Louella M. Johnson (b. May 1889), Cora E. Johntz (b. October 1880), all of Kansas City, and Florence Herr (b. April 1891) of Benton, Illinois. Funeral arrangements were handled by his longtime friend Barry Hagedon and services were conducted at Kaster and Maxon Chapel with Reverend B.M.G. Williams officiating.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The end of legal disfranchisement against southern African Americans in 1944 (*Smith v. Allwright*) not only modified the politics of the Democratic primary, but also altered the democratic process as a whole. By the mid-1960s, Black participation in politics generally “injected a new liberal element” into the Democratic Party. Racially progressive and pro-federal government, African American political beliefs were in contrast to the traditional political values of historically conservative Democrats. When combined with white moderates, progressives, and liberals, by the 1970s Black voters became more influential in their ability to sway elections. These varied reasons would result in conservative white politicians attempting to stigmatize, often with success, any moderate white candidate who appealed to Black voters as liberal integrationist. In addition, conservative candidates began to lose to strong moderate candidates who made them appear as relics wanting to defend an undemocratic, racist political system. And finally, as the new racial reality secured a foothold, conservative Democrats fled the party in mass and became Republicans, and couched their politics in more coded language, and subtly race-baiting constituents to vote for them.⁶⁵ Lawrence Nixon’s steadfast involvement in the political process in Texas helped usher in the changes mentioned and many others.

Was the ballot the ticket to freedom for Black America? Joseph Madison, former NAACP voter registration director, replied: “It has been the ticket to the train but the train has not arrived at the final destination which would be the sharing of wealth and power. The great problem is that in many black communities there is not even a stop to board the train.”⁶⁶ Unfortunately, economic opportunity and parity, along with access to capital and finance to increase wealth and power-sharing between racial groups continue to challenge the nation.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the decades following Nixon’s involvement in the struggle for political participation, the right to vote remained an important component in the NAACP’s strategic approach, culminating in the landmark legislations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The logic was that unrestricted access to the polls and the “intelligent” use of the ballot would provide the Black community with the tools necessary “to win inclusion into the democratic and egalitarian promise of America.”⁶⁸ To be sure, the members of the 1920s NAACP El Paso branch would be elated to know that the nation elected its first Black president in Barack H. Obama eighty-years after persistently championing for more voting rights. In a small way they helped produced this historic outcome due to their own activism. Indeed, the multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual aspects of the El Paso NAACP mirrored the voters who elected President Obama in both 2008 and 2012.⁶⁹ For

this, El Pasoans should be proud, for—as Lawrence Nixon himself once said—the Black man just “wants true democracy as laid down in the constitution, and feels he will be satisfied if he gets that.”⁷⁰

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Endnotes

1. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: H. Holt, 1993), 390.
2. Roberta Senechal de la Roche, *In Lincoln's Shadow: The 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008).
3. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 386-407.
4. Stephen R. Fox, *The Guardian of Boston: William Monroe Trotter* (New York: Atheneum, 1970).
5. Information on both of these important civil rights organizations can be found in Fox, *The Guardian of Boston*, 81-114; and Nina Mjagkij, ed. *Organizing Black America: An Encyclopedia of African American Associations* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 456-57 and 523-25.
6. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (Edison: Transaction, 1984), 72-73; Fox, *The Guardian of Boston*, 179-85; and Christine A. Lunardini, “Standing Firm: William Monroe Trotter’s Meetings with Woodrow Wilson, 1913-1914” *Journal of Negro History* vol. 64, no. 3 (Summer 1979): 244-64; William Harrison, “Phylon Profile IX: William Monroe Trotter—Fighter” *Phylon* vol. 7, no. 3 (Fall 1946): 237-45.
7. Manfred Berg, “*The Ticket to Freedom*,” *The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), xiv-xv. When *The Crisis* began in November

1910 the first issue had a circulation of 1,000, a year later it would be 9,000 and within five years the circulation jumped to 35,000. Du Bois fought for its establishment and was its first editor. He believed that Booker T. Washington “had a tight hold of most” of the Black press, which resulted in the NAACP getting “a pretty raw deal from the colored press and none at all from the white papers,” see Abby A. Johnson and Ronald M. Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of African American Magazines in the Twentieth Century* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), 32-33 and 35.

8. Berg, *The Ticket to Freedom*, xv.

9. Letter from Jerry B. Baldwin to Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, 27 November 1913, LOCMD, NAACP Papers, Part I, Branch Files: El Paso, Texas, 1913-1925, Box G-202, Folder 2.

10. Letter from NAACP to Jerry B. Baldwin, 5 December 1913, LOCMD, NAACP Papers, Part I, Branch Files: El Paso, Texas, 1913-1925, Box G-202, Folder 2.

11. Letter from Le Roy White to Ms. Mary Childs Nerney of the NAACP, 15 June 1914, LOCMD, NAACP Papers, Part I, Branch Files: El Paso, Texas, 1913-1925, Box G-202, Folder 2.

In 1930 John Kelley was a fifty year-old janitor for a shoe parlor, his wife Lena Kelley was a forty-five year-old homemaker, and they had a thirteen year-old son named Rogers Kelley. *Fifteenth*

Census of the United States: 1930—Population Schedule, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 7 and 8 April 1930 by Edith A. Finch, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 105, Line 71-3.

Sylvester M. Collins was an African American mail carrier for the post office, see *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Voting Precinct 6), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 21 January 1920, Series T625, Roll 1798, Page 116, Line 13-17; *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930—Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 4 April 1930 by Margaret E. Bowden, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 3, Line 54-7.

J.H. Donnell is listed in 1910 Census without his first name fully spelled-out. The forty-three year-old porter of a bank was married to forty year-old Mary Donnell who had no occupation listed, and they had a twenty-one year-old son, Clayton Donnell who also was not employed, see *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce and Labor—Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 22 April 1910, Series T624, Roll 1548, Page 86, Line 8-10.

12. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois*, 513.

13. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 105.

14. On the Texas suffrage movement, see A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas," *Journal of Southern History* vol. 27 (May 1951): 194-215; and Mary S. Cunningham, *The Woman's Club of El Paso: Its First Thirty Years* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1978).

15. Line no. 89 and no. 90, "Membership Report," 27 June 1929, Viola E. Washing-

ton, El Paso Branch Secretary to NAACP New York headquarters, received 3 July 1929, see *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Part I, Box G-202, Folder 4, Branch Files: El Paso.

16. Ruthe Winegarten, *Black Texas Women: A Sourcebook: Documents, Biographies, Timeline* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 187. On the National American Woman Suffrage Association, see Mari Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle, eds., *The Concise History of Woman Suffrage: Selections from History of Woman Suffrage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

17. Winegarten, *Black Texas Women*, 291.

18. Ibid., 188-9; and Ruthe Winegarten, ed., *Black Texas Women: 150 Years of Trial and Triumph* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 209. Sara Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 24-25.

19. Ann D. Gordon and Bettye Collier-Thomas, eds., *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 12.

20. Letter from Le Roy W. Washington to Walter F. White, 11 June 1925, *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Part I, Branch Files: El Paso, Box G-202.

21. Lee Sartain, *Invisible Activists: Women of the Louisiana NAACP and the Struggle for Civil Rights, 1915-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 38.

22. At the time of the 1880 census, Le Roy Washington was two months old, see *Tenth Census of the United States*, Schedule 1, Tensas Parish (Ward 1), Louisiana, enumerated on 9 June 1880, Series T9, Roll 472, Page 44 Subpage B, Line 7-11. The community of Hard Times is briefly mentioned in Mark Twain's 1883 classic *Life on the Mississippi*. Today this tiny village is no longer found in maps or directories, see Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1917),

4 and 152; Lori L. Smith, *Louisiana Directory of Cities, Towns, and Villages* (Hammond: SLU's Sims Memorial Library, 2005), 19, available at <<http://www.state.lib.la.us/empowerlibrary/LA%20Cities%20and%20Towns.pdf>> (accessed 27 December 2009).

23. In 1978 the school renamed itself Alcorn State University. Some prominent students who attended or graduated from the school include Myrlie Evers-Williams (civil rights activist), Medgar W. Evers (Mississippi's first NAACP field secretary and 1952 graduate), J. Charles Evers (civil rights activist and politician), and Alexander "Alex" M.P. Haley (co-author/author of the bestsellers, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965) and *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976), see Josephine McCann Posey, *Against Great Odds: The History of Alcorn State University* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994); and Myrlie Evers-Williams and Manning Marable, eds., *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005), 7-9 and 26.

24. The *El Paso Herald-Post* incorrectly states that the Mary Holmes Industrial Seminary for Colored Girls is in Louisiana; the school is actually in Mississippi, see error in "Washington, Top pioneer for blacks" *El Paso Herald-Post*, 9 February 1976, 40; for Mary Holmes Industrial Seminary in Mississippi see Day O. Kellogg, ed., *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 3 (Chicago: The Werner Company, 1897), 1724; and "A Glance at the Past and Present: Some Freedmen Schools" *The Home Mission Monthly* vol. 19 (November 1904–October 1905), 135.

25. "Along The NAACP Battlefront: News From The Branches and Youth Councils," *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* vol. 48, no. 6 (June 1941): 200.

26. "Washington, Top Pioneer for Blacks" *El Paso Herald-Post*, 9 February 1976, 40.

27. *Fifteenth Census of the United States:*

1930 *Population Schedule*, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 3 April 1930, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 31, Line 86-90.

28. "Washington, Top pioneer for blacks" *El Paso Herald-Post*, 9 February 1976, 40.

29. Line no. 4 and no. 5, "Membership Report," 27 June 1929, Viola E. Washington, El Paso Branch Secretary to NAACP New York headquarters, received 3 July 1929, see *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Part I, Box G-202, Folder 4, Branch Files: El Paso.

The term Afro-Latino is a contemporary word used by activist and scholars to describe individuals of African descent who are born in Africa (such as Equatorial Guinea or Angola), the Americas, or the Iberian peninsula and speak Spanish/Portuguese and/or have been acculturated into Spanish or Portuguese culture. The term Afro-Latino, and similar terms such as Afro-Caribbean/Afro-Latin America, announce a reclamation of, and sense of pride in, the African heritage as well as a social and political connection with others throughout the African Diaspora based on the legacies of slavery, segregation, discrimination, and racial violence in the Americas and abroad. The phrase Afro-Latino also complicate homogenizing uses of Latino/a and definitions of Latinos/as as a mixed-race constituency, see Paul Allatson, *Key Terms in Latino/a Cultural and Literary Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 11; George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7; Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanna Oboler, eds., *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 29.

30. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated: no month or day given, 1930 by Margaret E. Bowden, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 1 Subpage

B, Line 86-7.

31. Ibid.; and "4 Pioneer E.P. Blacks Are Profiled," *El Paso Herald-Post*, 13 February 1976, B-6.

32. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated: no month or day given, 1930 by Margaret E. Bowden, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 1 Subpage B, Line 86-7.

33. Frances Hills, "Interview no. 751," page 21.

34. Maceo C. Dailey and Kristine Navarro, eds., *Wheresoever My People Chance to Dwell: Oral Interviews with African American Women of El Paso* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2000), 87. In 1930, Frances Hills was four years-old and she lived at 1101 Park Street with Blanche E. Grundy, her twenty-seven year-old mother who was a teacher at Douglass School. Hills also lived with Lau Henderson (sixty-eight year-old grandmother) and William H. Henderson (eighty-year-old grandfather), see *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 4 April 1930 by Larine Evans, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 52 Subpage B, Line 64-69.

35. Ibid., Hills abruptly ends her thought within the transcript without explanation from either the interviewee or interviewer.

36. *Twelfth Census of the United States*, Schedule 1-Population, Nix Precinct, Warrington (Village), Escambia County, Florida, enumerated on 14 June 1900 by B.R. Stewart, Series T623, Roll 168, Page 75 Subpage A, Line 33-7. Manuel López could also have been born in Cape Verde, and thus part of the Cape Verdean diaspora when he moved to Florida. Located off the coast of West Africa, the Portuguese colonized Cape Verde between 1462 and 1975, see Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, eds., *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean*

Migration and Diaspora (Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

37. Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

38. Louis A. Perez, Jr., ed., *Cuban Studies* vol. 25 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 54-55; and Susan D. Greenbaum, *More than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

39. Stefan Goodwin, *Africa in Europe: Antiquity into the Age of Global Exploration* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 168; and Stefan Goodwin, *Africa in Europe: Interdependencies, Relocations, and Globalization* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 134 and 313.

40. "4 Pioneer E.P. Blacks Are Profiled," *El Paso Herald-Post*, 13 February 1976, B-6.

41. "Nixon," *El Paso Herald-Post*, 8 March 1966, 21.

42. El Paso County Clerk, Rudolph W. López Death Certificate, 6 November 1981, reel no. 0366, frame no. 1179.

43. "Memberships of the El Paso Branch," Jerry B. Baldwin, Secretary of El Paso Branch, to NAACP Secretary, 27 August 1923, line item no. 42, *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Part I, Branch Files: El Paso, Box G-202.

44. James R. Murphy, *El Paso, 1850-1950* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 45.

45. "Immigration from Countries of Western Hemisphere," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Hearings of Committee on Immigration and Naturalization (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 787.

46. "The Globe, 218 E. Overland, Has Capital Stock of \$50,000" *El Paso Herald-Post*, 14 August 1931, 10.

47. *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Precinct 36), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 5 January 1920 by John T. Sullivan, Series T625, Roll 1799, Page 72 Subpage A, Line 24-6.

48. Samson D. Oppenheim, ed., *The American Jewish Year Book, Volume 20* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1918), 424 and 578.

49. Stephen H. Norwood and Eunice G. Pollack, eds., *Encyclopedia of American Jewish History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 31 and 142.

50. A brief history of Jews in El Paso can be found in H. Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Works* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 102-19. On Jewish sympathies with the plight of African Americans, see Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1977), 12, 23, 28, 35, 71, 154 and 229; and Rafael Medoff, *Jewish Americans and Political Participation: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 89.

51. Edward P. Costigan (1874-1939) was a Democratic United States Senator (1931-1937) from Colorado who co-sponsored a bill with New York Democratic Senator (1927-1949) Robert F. Wagner (1877-1953) that was designed to punish sheriffs who did not adequately protect the prisoners within their custody from mob rule. Despite Eleanor Roosevelt's support of the bill, her husband President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not support the bill and it eventually did not pass.

52. "Branch News" *Crisis*, vol. 42, no. 4 (April 1935): 121.

53. The Women's City Government Club was a predominately white civic local organization, see Judith N. McArthur, *Creating the New Woman: The Rise of Southern Women's Progressive Culture in Texas, 1893-1918* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 77. In 1930, the thirty-five year-old Rabbi Joseph M. Roth lived with his family at 1216 Los Angeles Drive in El Paso. Roth's parents were born in Hungary, as he too was originally from Hungary, arriving into the United States in 1903, see *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, Department of

Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 9 April 1930 by Grace C. Tannelvill, Series T626, Roll 2329, Page 159 Subpage A, Line 45-50. In 1930, the German born fifty-three year-old Martin Zielonka lived with his family at 837 W. Yandell Drive in El Paso. The German-speaking Rabbi arrived into the United States in 1898 and his father was born in Poland and his mother was born in Germany. There is also an entry for him in the 1910 and 1920 El Paso census, see *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 18 April 1930 by Grace C. Tannelvill, Series T626, Roll 2329, Page 167 Subpage A, Line 13-5.

54. *Twelfth Census of the United States*, City of Quincy (Ward 4, Precinct 15), Adams County, Illinois, enumerated on 6 June 1900 by John E. Fick, Schedule 1-Population, Series T623, Roll 236, Page 131 Subpage A, Line 38-43.

55. *University of Michigan, Department of Law, Catalogue of Students for 1899-1900 and Annual Announcement, 1900-1901* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1900), 35, 40, and 43; *University of Michigan, General Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1837-1911* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1912), 485 and 1031.

56. J. Morgan Broadus, *The Legal Heritage of El Paso* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1963), 171, 177, 178, and 223.

57. "News from the Classes" *The Michigan Alumnus* vol. 22 (October 1915—August 1916): 251. In January 1920 Charles Russell Loomis was forty-six years-old, head of the household, and living with his thirty year-old wife Ethel W. Loomis, and their nearly three year-old daughter, Jane Hunter Loomis, as well as a live-in nineteen year-old "servant" or "domestic" named Margarita Marquez. Charles R. Loomis died August 28, 1959, see *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population*, Department

of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, City of El Paso (Precinct 35), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 26 January 1920 by Abbie [sic] Frank Smith, Series T625, Roll 1799, Page 66, Line 18-22; and El Paso County Clerk, Charles R. Loomis Death Certificate, 28 August 1959, reel no. 0489, frame no. 1294.

58. Eugene Campbell Barker, Francis White Johnson, and Ernest William Winkler, eds., *A History of Texas and Texans*, vol. 3 (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1914), 1421. The first name of McKenzie was taken from "Funeral Services For Judge M'Kenzie [sic]," *El Paso Herald-Post*, 6 March 1939, 10.

59. The El Paso Bar Association had its first organizational meeting 24 June 1919 and adopted its new constitution which was stronger than the previous. Knollenberg's application for membership was approved 2 August 1919. The Tri-State Bar Association consisted of attorneys and judges of West Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, see Broadbudd, *The Legal Heritage of El Paso*, 177-78 and 181.

60. "Death Takes Well Known Attorney," *El Paso Times*, 12 June 1951, A-1. The American Law Institute (ALI) "was organized in February, 1923, for the purpose of restating in simpler and clearer form the principal topics of American law," see "Notes and Personals," *The American Law School Review*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1923): 246; *The American Law Institute: Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1923-1998* (Philadelphia: The Institute, 1998).

61. Borreson, "The Good Fight" *Texas Lawyer* (December 1999): 26.

62. Ibid.

63. Le Roy W. Washington, president of El Paso NAACP, to Walter White, NAACP Secretary, 25 January 1932, *NAACP Papers*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Part I, Box G-202, Folder 4, Branch Files: El Paso.

64. "Death Takes Well Known Attorney," *El Paso Times*, 12 June 1951, A-1; "Fred Knollenberg Taken by Death," *El Paso Herald*, 12 June 1951, A-1. Knollenberg

was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. In the 1930 census, the fifty-three year-old Frederick C. Knollenberg is listed as having only one daughter and her name is Elizabeth A. Knollenberg, see *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930 Population Schedule*, City of El Paso (Justice Precinct 1), El Paso County, Texas, enumerated on 11 April 1930, Series T626, Roll 2328, Page 101, Line 91-4. Florence C. Knollenberg, Frederick C. Knollenberg's wife, died over twenty years after her husband, see El Paso County Clerk, Florence C. Knollenberg Death Certificate, 14 July 1972, reel no. 0088, frame no. 1334.

65. David Lublin, *The Republican South: Democratization and Partisan Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 116.

66. Berg, "The Ticket to Freedom," 264.

67. For an excellent report on this issue, see Dedrick Asante-Muhammed, Chuck Collins, Josh Hoxie, and Emanuel Nieves, "The Ever-Growing Gap: Without Change, African-American and Latino Families won't match white Wealth for Centuries," Corporation for Enterprise Development and the Institute for Policy Studies (August 2016), <http://cfed.org/policy/federal/The_Ever_Growing_Gap-CFED_IPS-Final.pdf> (accessed 10 August 2016).

68. Berg, "The Ticket to Freedom," 251.

69. For a demographic analysis of both the 2008 and 2012 elections, please see "Inside Obama's Sweeping Victory," Pew Research Center, 5 November 2008, <<http://www.pewresearch.org/2008/11/05/inside-obamas-sweeping-victory/>> (accessed 10 August 2016); and Ruy Teixeira and John Halpin, "The Obama Coalition in the 2012 Election and Beyond," Center for American Progress (December 2012) <<https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ObamaCoalition-5.pdf>> (access 10 August 2016).

70. "El Paso Negro Doctor To Fight Again For Vote," *El Paso Herald-Post*, 4 August 1932.

Appendix: List of NAACP Members

Name, Address, Race, Occupation, Notes, Age, Source (El Paso City Directory or US Census)

1. Mr. A. Fields (Allen A. Fields), 3401 Alameda Ave, Black, Boilermaker, Unlisted, 1924 City Directory
2. Mr. H. Nelson, 407 S. Willow Street, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
3. Mr. James A. Odom, 312 Tornillo Street, Black, "Helper" at RR Shops, [Wife Lilly is maid at Dept Store][Son Jabres? 19 y/o truck driver], 35, 1920 US Census Roll: T625_1798, Pg: 37 B
4. Mr. Sam Sulcer, 3300 Alamogordo, Black, Boiler Maker at Steam Rail Road Shops, Wife: Maggie 37 y/o, Daughter: Claudia, 16 y/o both Mulatto, 46, 1920 US Census Roll: T625_1799 Pg: 37 B
5. Mr. W. B. Gray (William B. Gray), 507 S. Ochoa, Black/White, Barber, Marked Black and White in 1920 Census, N/A, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 12B ED 45
6. Mrs. W. Sanders, 416 S. Campbell Street, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
7. Miss A Cole, 407 S Willow Street, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
8. Mr. F. Longway, 2029 Bassett Avenue, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
9. Mr. Joseph H. Sims, 2024 Olive Avenue, Black, Laborer, Listed as "Jasper" Sims, 39, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 9A ED 55
10. Mr. R. Edmonson, 1913 Magoffin Avenue, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
11. Mrs. R. O. Boston [Mrs. Olevia Boston], Census address: 3113 Manzana Ave, Black, Cleaner at Office Building, Husband: W. Orange Boston, 48 y/o machinist at Railway Shop, Negro, 41, 1930 US Census Roll: 2328 Pg: 6A
12. Mr. Joe Bailey, 407 S. Willow Street, Black, Laborer at Railroad Shops, [Wife Alice 43 y/o, no occup. Negro], 45, 1920 Census Roll T625_1798 Page 9A
13. Mr. Chas. Edwards, 1913 Magoffin Avenue, Black, Cook, N/A, Unlisted, 1923 El Paso City Directory p.439
14. Mr. David Ward, 2015 Madera Avenue [Census- 2915 Madera St.], Black, Hammer Operator at Blacksmith Shop, [Wife Lizzie, 49, also black, no occup], 61, 1930 US Census Roll: 2328 Pg: 1A ED: 45
15. Mr. Henry Neil, 407 S. Willow Street [1910/20 Census: 517 Ange St.], Black, Laborer at Railroad, [Wife Louisa Black in 1910, Mulatto in 1920, worked from home], 46 in 1910, 57 in 1920, 1910 US Census: T624_1549 Pg 3A ED: 75 /1920 Census: T625_1799 Pg 7A ED 75
16. Mr. R. Hodge [Mr. Richard Hodge], 407 S. Willow Street [1920 Census: 3300 N Rosa St], Mulatto, Blacksmith at SW Railroad, 5 Children and wife all Mulatto, 39, 1920 Census T625_1799 Pg 5A ED 56
17. Mrs. Clara Thomas, 117 Anthony Street, Black, None, 39, 1920 US Census T625_1798 Pg 3B ED 37
18. Miss Bessie Hall, 802 E. Missouri Avenue, Black, None, 18, 1920 US Census T625_1799 Pg 2B ED 75
19. Mr. J. H. Donnell, 515 S. Mesa Street, Black, Janitor at Franklin School,, Unlisted, 1923 El Paso City Directory
20. Mr. J. H. Jackson, [Possibly James H. Jackson at 1914 Bassett Ave], Black, Train Porter,, Unlisted, 1923 El Paso City Directory
21. Mr. C. Wilkerson, Possibly Mr. Cleveland Wilkerson at Estrella St., Black, Acetylene Cutter, 1930 US Census El Paso Roll 2328 Pg 16A
22. Mrs. W. A. Crawford, Possibly Mrs. Ollie Crawford at 3120 Manzana St., Black, none,, 28, 1930 US Census Roll 2328 Pg 11A ED 33
23. Mr. E. O. Ware, Possibly Eddie O Ware at 360 N. Estrella, Black, Painter, 51, 1930 US Census Roll 2328 Pg 18B ED 33
24. Mr. R. E. Lee, Possibly Robert E Lee at 605 Tornillo St., Black, Helper at RR Shop,, 28, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 37B ED 48
25. Mr. A. B. Stevens, Possibly Albert Stevens at 3608 Durazno St., Mulatto, Cotton Seed Mill Laborer,, 50, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1799 Pg 3A ED 58
26. Mr. G. W. Thomas, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,
27. Mr. Cary Richardson, 1906 Maguffin Avenue, Black, Treasurer of El Paso Mercantile Co/ RR Laborer, None, Unlisted,

Password

Name, Address, Race, Occupation, Notes, Age, Source (El Paso City Directory or US Census)

1922 El Paso City Directory

28. Mr. William Davis, 4209 Durazano St., Black, Mechanic Helper, None, 53,

1930 US Census, T2328 Pg 14A ED 40

29. Mr. ?Lawrence? Burton, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

30. Mr. S. Watkins, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

31. Mrs. George W. Thomas (Olive Thomas), 418 Willow St., Black, No info, Husband George is a pipeman, Unlisted, 1923 EL Paso City Directory

32. Mrs. Willie Moore, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

33. Miss Viola Bailey, 407 S Willow Street, Black, Cook, None, 25, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 9A ED 55

34. Mrs. S. Bailey (Mrs. Alice Bailey), 407 S Willow Street, Black, none, none, 43, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 9A ED 55

35. Mr. Joseph B. Bailey, 407 S Willow Street, Black, Laborer at RR Shop, None, 45, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 9A ED 55

36. Mr. Calvin W. Wade, Lodger, Black, Boiler Maker, None, 38, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 19B ED 55

37. Mr. J. H. Coffield, S Willow, Lodger, Black, Laborer at RR Shop, Widower, 45, 1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 9A ED 55

38. Mr. F. Check, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

39. Mr. L. W. Walker, 2923 E San Antonio, Black, Hotel Porter, N/A, 52, 1930 Census Texas Roll 2328 Pg 14B ED31

40. Mr. Charles C. Moore, 3100 Riviera Ave, Black, Janitor, N/A, 1923 El Paso City Directory

41. Mrs. Salina A. Moore, 3100 Riviera Ave, Black, Laundress, Widowed by 1930, 61, 1930 Census Texas Roll 2328 Pg 1A ED 33

42. Miss Louise Moore, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

43. Mr. Louis Laskin, Globe Department Store, White, Business Owner, Wife White, 47, 1920 US Census Texas T625_1799 Pg 1A ED 87

44. Mr. David Gray, 405 S. Virginia Street, Black, Laborer at Customs House, N/A, Unlisted, 1923 El Paso City Directory

45. Mr. Louis Brown Jr., 3617 Alamogordo St., Mulatto, RR Porter, Divorced, 31, 1920 US Census T625_1799 Pg: 3B ED 62

46. Mr. George Sears, 3618 Durango St., Black, Bootblack, N/A, 48, 1930 US Census T2328 Pg 5B ED 35

47. Mr. J. White, Possibly James White at 416 Florence, Black, Porter, N/A, Unlisted, 1925 El Paso City Directory

48. Atty. Frederick Knollenberg, 4523 Trowbridge St., White, Lawyer, Wife White, 42, 1930 US Census T2328 Pg 11B ED 90

49. Mrs. E. B. Williams, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

50. Mrs. Emory D. Williams, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

51. Mr. Jasper B. Williams, 513 Park St., Black, Druggist, N/A, 38, 1920 US Census T625_1798 Pg22B ED 47

52. Mr. Jerry B. Baldwin, 2918 Frutas Ave, White, Barber, Wife White (see below), 38, 1920 US Census T625_1798 Pg 3A ED 54

53. Mrs. Jerry B. Baldwin (Bertie Baldwin), 2918 Frutas Ave, White, None, N/A, 20, 1920 US Census T625_1798 3A ED 54

54. Rev. M. P. Parish, Possibly Rev. Willard P. Parish at 3319 Alameda Ave, Black, Reverend, N/A, Unlisted, 1924 El Paso City Directory

55. Miss Vera Sturges, 541 W Missouri, Possibly white, not listed as Colored in the 1922 or 1923 City Directory, YWCA, N/A, Unlisted, 1922 El Paso City Directory

56. Mr. M. Roberts, No info found, No info found, No info found, No info found,

57. Mr. Le Roy White, 3219 Madera Ave, Black, Janitor, N/A, Unlisted, 1923 El Paso City Directory

58. Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon, 3114 Oro St., Black, Physician and Surgeon, N/A, 36, 1920 US Census T625_1799 Pg 10B ED 63

59. Mr. Robert S. Crane, Lodger, Black, none, N/A, 45, 1920 US Census T625_1799 Pg 9A ED 66

60. Mrs. Geo. Cheatam (Ella Cheatam),

The El Paso Branch of the NAACP

Name, Address, Race, Occupation, Notes, Age, Source (El Paso City Directory or US Census)

101 S. Cotton St, Black, None, N/A, 28,
1910 US Census Roll T624_1548 Pg 2A
ED 65

61. Mr. W. M. Sublett (William M.
Sublett), Lodger, Black, Letter Carrier
with USPS, N/A, 38, 1920 US Census
T625_1798 Pg 11A ED 48

62. Mr. Le Roy W. Washington, 3910
Manzana St., Black, Watchman, N/A, 49,
1930 US Census Texas Roll 2328 Pg 2B
ED 40

63. Mrs. Viola E. Washington, 3910 Man-
zana St., Black, None, N/A, 47, 1930 US
Census Texas Roll 2328 Pg 2B ED 40

64. Mr. W. L. Townsend (Walter L.
Townsend), 3314 Madera, Black, Farmer,
N/A, Unlisted, 1924 El Paso City Direc-
tory

65. Mrs. J. M. McHenry (Janie Mae
McHenry), 1914 Basset Ave, Black, none,
Huband, 48, Gus a Porter, 35, 1920 Cen-
sus T625_1798 Pg 2A ED 53

66. Mr. I. C. Bowels, No info found, No
info found, No info found, No info found,
No info found,

67. Mrs. I. C. Bowels, No info found, No
info found, No info found, No info found,
No info found,

68. Mr. J. M. Goodwin, 3401 Alameda
Ave, Black, Mechanic, N/A, Unlisted,
1925 El Paso City Directory

69. Mrs. Rebecca M. Goodwin, 417
Overland, Black, Domestic, N/A, Unlisted,
1923 El Paso City Directory

70. Mr. E. W. Thomas, No info found, No
info found, No info found, No info found,
No info found,

71. Mrs. C. M. Washington, 315 Tornillo,
Black, None, Husband: Casimir/Casimer,
Black, Janitor, Unlisted, 1922 El Paso
City Directory

72. Mrs. Emma Scott, 500 S. Oregon,
Black, Landlady, Husband: Momford
Scott, Black,, 1920 US Census T625_1798
Pg 2B ED 40

73. Mr. Albert R. Spiller, 1110 E Second
St., Black, Janitor, N/A, 42, 1930 US Cen-
sus Texas Roll 2328 Pg 3A ED 20

74. Mr. E. Ford (Eugene Ford), 3125 Tor-
nillo/1127 Overland, Black, Blacksmith,
N/A, 62, 1940 US Census Toll T627_4182
Pg 11B ED 256-36

75. Mrs. Cecelia Long, 510 Vrain St.,
Black, Cook for Private Family, Divorced,
41, 1920 US Census T625_1799 Pg 6B

ED 75

76. Mr. Isaac N. Nash (Isiah Nash in 1920
Census), 2925 Madera Ave, Black, Porter
at Railway, Rosa Nash, see entry 77, 40,
1920 US Census Roll T625_1799 Pg 10A
ED 63

77. Mrs. Rosa Nash, 2925 Madera Ave,
Black, None, Isaac Nash, see 76, 25, 1920
US Census Roll T625_1799 Pg 10A ED 63

78. Mrs. Ara Sims, 316 Tornillo St,
Black, None, N/A, 30, 1920 US Census T
625_1798 Pg 16A ED 47

79. Mr. Edward Sampson, 710 S. Vrain
St., Black, Real Esate Agent, N/A, 30,
1920 US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 4A
ED 48

80. Mrs. Maud E. Sampson, 710 S. Vrain
St., Black, None, N/A, 30, 1920 US Cen-
sus Roll T625_1798 Pg 4A ED 48

81. Mr. Frank Forte, 961 East Rosedale
St., Black, Porter at the Elk Club, Wife
Amanda was a domestic, 32, 1920 US
Census Roll T625_1848 Pg 9A ED 126

82. Mr. J. B. Moore, Possibly John B.
Moore, White Cigar Salesman or John B.
Moore, Black Laborer, Unlisted, 1923 El
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83. Mr. Sylvester M. Collins, 406 Hills,
Black, Mail Carrier, See below, 45, 1920
US Census Roll T625_1798 Pg 18A ED 47

84. Mrs. Beatrice Collins, 406 Hills, Black,
None, Husband Sylvester Collins,, 1920
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85. Mrs. H. H. Cotton, 420 S. Luna, Black,
Domestic, N/A, Unlisted, 1924 El Paso
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St, Black, Barber, Anita Bush - Wife, 41,
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Relocating the School of Mines

By P.J. Vierra

Following its establishment in 1914, the State School of Mines and Metallurgy, known today as the University of Texas at El Paso, published a series of historical sketches as part of its annual catalog of curricula. The first complete catalog, circulated in 1915, included a history of the school and was probably penned by the institution's first dean, Steve Worrell. The sketch described El Paso as being located "at the crossroads of several of the oldest highways established by white men on the continent." While such passages may give us pause today, the rest of the prose provided a straightforward account of the school's founding and establishment on property adjacent to Fort Bliss that once belonged to the former El Paso Military Institute.¹ This narrative would change two years later with the May 1917 catalog as new events required revision of the narrative. "On October 29, 1916," the passage stated, "the main building was burned. It was then decided to remove the institution to a more suitable site on the west side of Mt. Franklin, donated for that purpose."² That site is the current location of the University of Texas at El Paso.

One hundred years later, this decision to relocate the school seems straightforward, but it does not tell the full story. Several weeks before the October fire, the actions of two actors playing on an international stage set into motion a series of events that made relocation inevitable. One actor was Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States. The second actor was Doroteo Arango, otherwise known as Francisco "Pancho" Villa. It was President Wilson's response to an act by Villa that set into motion a series of events that led to the relocation of the School of Mines.

The El Paso Military Institute

The original home of the University of Texas at El Paso once belonged to the El Paso Military Institute (EPMI), a private school for boys chartered in 1907. The investment group, which consisted of six prominent El Pasoans—Charles N. Bassett, Beauregard Bryan, Alfred Courchesne, Thomas A. Davis, Wyndham Kemp, and Horace B. Stevens—believed that a military boarding school located next to Fort Bliss would attract not only the children of El Paso, but also those of expatriate Americans living in Mexico and wealthy Mexican families. By December 1907, the investors had raised \$100,000 and purchased eighteen acres of land to the east of Fort Bliss. The construction firm of



Figure 1. The School of Mines, circa 1915. The Main Building is on the right and the Dormitory on the left. From the Aultman Photo Collection, PH023, courtesy of the C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, MS505, University of Texas at El Paso Library.

Otto P. Kroeger erected the buildings.³

For a military post in a city on an international border with five major railroad lines, Fort Bliss in 1907 did not make much of an impression on the region or on the army commanders and politicians in Washington. Few changes had been made to the fort since its construction on the extreme western edge of the Lanoria Mesa in 1891. With buildings able to accommodate up to 500 troops, its garrison at the time consisted of just 14 officers and one hundred enlisted men belonging to elements of various infantry regiments. Despite its isolation and underutilization, the fort was easily accessible, with a streetcar line running from downtown El Paso to today's Pershing gate and making an average of five trips per day.⁴

EPMI enjoyed initial success in its early years. The board of the school engaged Henry Trost to design the main building, a two-story building with basement in a colonial style with four massive columns on its portico. It included offices, classrooms, mess hall with kitchen, and an assembly hall. Boarding students would live on the top floor. Day students would commute to the school by trolley or automobile, disembarking at the fort's main gate and walking a little over one-half mile across the parade ground.⁵ The school opened October 1, 1908, with an enrollment of 100. By 1910, the institute had added four more

acres and built a new two-story dormitory to accommodate sixty students and included a swimming pool in the basement.⁶

The fortunes of the school changed over the next two years with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Enrollment at the school plummeted with only 47 students signing up for the start of the fall semester in 1912, of which only seventeen were boarders. While the superintendent of the school, Henderson “Harry” Van Surdam, proclaimed in print the “brightest prospects” for the future of the school, privately he knew the venture was probably doomed and he directed his attention to finding a new use for the assets of EPMI.⁷

The Establishment of a Mining School

In 1902, Hughes D. Slater, the editor of the *El Paso Daily Herald*, declared in an editorial that the key to future growth for El Paso resided in making it an “educational center” as a way of attracting residents to the area. He went on to say that the city was “an ideal location for a first class school of mines.”⁸ With the blessing of several mining organizations and the head of the geological survey at the University of Texas at Austin, William B. Phillips, state representatives from El Paso then spent the better part of the next decade taking up the cause in the Texas state legislature in Austin with little to show for the efforts. In the 1911 legislative session, state senator Claude Hudspeth came close: he convinced the mining committee to support his bill, but he was never able to push it to a vote in either legislative chamber.⁹

In the fall of 1912, Van Surdam took it upon himself to see if an arrangement could be made to establish a state school in El Paso by having the El Paso Military Institute fall on its sword. In November 1912, Van Surdam traveled to Austin to officiate at the University of Texas-Southwestern University football game. The thirty-year-old superintendent who had played football with high regards at Wesleyan University was also a recognized as a trustworthy referee, which made his services in demand throughout the southeast. On this trip to Austin, Van Surdam paid a visit to Governor Oscar Colquitt where he floated the idea of turning the property of the El Paso Military Institute over to the state in exchange for a mining school. Colquitt, intrigued by the idea, suggested Van Surdam meet with William B. Phillips, who now headed the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, as well as the El Paso legislators to work out the specifics of such a plan.¹⁰ On his return to El Paso, the board of the military institute accepted Van Surdam’s proposal and agreed to sell the school to the state for \$50,000—well below the \$150,000 they had put into the school. The 33rd State Legislature, meeting in 1913, passed S.B. 183,



Figure 2. The Isolated Location of the School of Mines Beyond Fort Bliss circa 1915, Prior to Villa's Columbus Raid. From the Millard McKinney Photo Collection, PH054, courtesy of the C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, MS505, University of Texas at El Paso Library.

which founded the School of Mines as part of the University of Texas, but would not establish the school until the citizens of El Paso raised \$50,000 to purchase the EPMI property and turn it over to the state.¹¹ After several false starts in which supporters hoped that the city or county would foot the bill, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce worked out a ten-year mortgage deal with the investors of EPMI in which the Chamber would purchase the property backed by pledges from eighty individuals and organizations. On April 21, 1914, the Chamber of Commerce turned over the deed to EPMI to the attorney general for the state of Texas. El Paso now had its very own branch of the University of Texas.¹²

The School of Mines

The Board of Regents of the University of Texas took its first steps to establish the State School of Mines and Metallurgy on April 28, 1914, at its regular meeting. After formally accepting the EPMI property from the attorney general, the regents selected Steve Worrell, a chemist under William Phillips at the Bureau of Economic Geology, as

the first dean of the school, which would be a department of the university. The next item on its agenda concerned the preliminary budget for the school. It authorized the expenditure of \$1,018.35 to cover the first month's expenses, half of which went to pay for fire insurance.¹³


Fire, or the threat of it, destroying public buildings became a topic in the biannual addresses given by Governor Oscar Colquitt to the state legislature. From 1911 through 1914, Colquitt pointed out in 1915, fire had destroyed \$790,000 (\$41 million in 2015 dollars) in state buildings. This included \$335,000 at A & M College (now Texas A & M University) alone.¹⁴ Throughout the state of Texas, communities and state agencies embraced new codes and rebuilt structures using the latest fireproof building materials, such as concrete, in an effort to reduce the risk of catastrophic loss. There was one notable exception and that was the University of Texas. Few buildings on the campuses of Austin, Galveston (U.T. Medical Branch), and College Station were built using the latest building techniques due to the peculiar funding mechanism for university building construction. Under the state constitution, Texas provided an endowment of two million acres of land, known as the Permanent University Fund (PUF), to branches of the University of Texas, which included A & M College, to be used for building construction and maintenance. While the legislature could appropriate monies for operations out of its general fund, it could not pay for the construction of new buildings. The universities could only access interest and incomes from the land, and not the principle for construction, maintenance, and upkeep. This income, which came in the form mostly of grazing fees, often amounted to less than \$140,000 in most years through 1914 and had to be divided between the three campuses.¹⁵ Chronically short of funds, Austin, Galveston, and College Station typically erected just one main structure; the remaining buildings were often just wooden "shacks," not durable over the long term and subject to fire. So critical was the shortage of funds for construction that many students at the A & M campus lived in a tent city.¹⁶

There was, however, a loophole. While the state of Texas could not pay for new construction out of the general fund, it could through emergency measures authorize funds for buildings destroyed by fire. Exploiting this loophole, the legislature paid to replace both the main building and mess hall at the A & M College.¹⁷ Meanwhile, both the boards of the University of Texas and A & M lobbied to amend the constitution to provide a more stable means of funding, both for operations and for construction. The voters of Texas rejected these amendments each time.¹⁸ It would be another decade before oil would be discovered on the PUF lands, which would significantly change the fortunes (and buildings) on these campuses.

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WESTERN UNION



TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

Form 1201

RECEIVED AT 801 MAIN ST., DALLAS, TEXAS ALWAYS OPEN

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El Paso Texas Via Austin Texas Oct 29th 1916.

1078 DR. VINSON

PRES OF UNIV OF TEXAS ADOLPHUS OR SOUTHLAND HOTEL DALLAS TEXAS.

MAIN BUILDING OF SCHOOL OF MINES BURNED LAST NIGHT CAUSE ~~EX~~ NOT
KNOWN NO CONTENTS SAVED DORMITORY INTACT ONLY ONE PERSON HURT.

K.L. WARRELL. (COPY)

Figure 3. Kathleen Worrell's Telegram to University of Texas President Robert Vinson Informing Him of the Fire at the School of Mines. From the U.T. Presidents Records, VF8Aa, courtesy the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Work Begins at the School of Mines

Steve Worrell began work in earnest in early May 1914 to have the School of Mines ready to open in September. The School of Mines property he now managed differed in a significant way from when it was the El Paso Military Institute. To begin with, Fort Bliss was no longer a sleepy outpost with fewer than 200 men and horses. As hostilities erupted in Mexico, the installation grew to 700 men by 1912. With the increased demands for patrols to intercept weapons smuggling and incursions onto U.S. soil, commanding officers over the years submitted many requests for additional troops. The troop augmentations were especially needed because America's neutrality laws prevented them from directly intercepting munitions flowing into El Paso's many hardware stores. They could only act if and when their soldiers actually observed the contraband being smuggled into Mexico along the 91-mile patrol range. By the time the School of Mines opened in September 1914, there would be over 7,000 troops quartered at Fort Bliss.¹⁹

Meanwhile, across the border in Mexico that summer of 1914, peace at last seemed a possibility. General Venustiano Carranza, leading the Constitutionalist forces, succeeded in ousting Victoriano Huerta from power, thanks in large part from support from President Woodrow Wilson. Francisco “Pancho” Villa, who led the forces of the Division of the North and effectively controlled all of the state of Chihuahua, had his doubts about Carranza and lobbied to prevent him from becoming Mexico’s next president. Villa possessed a certain natural ability when it came to leadership and politics, but denied that he had any ambitions for the presidency. Born in Durango in 1877, Villa’s impoverished upbringing led him to a life as an outlaw. With the 1911 revolt, he joined the cause against Porfirio Diaz and quickly assumed command of the revolution in the north. With Huerta removed, the world watched to see if the 37-year-old Villa would lead his own revolt against Carranza. Tensions eased when Villa and Carranza agreed to a truce on July 8, 1914, known as the Torreón Agreement, which called for a constitutional meeting to take place in Mexico City on October 1, 1914.²⁰ With the most men under arms of all the armies in the Constitutionalist cause, Villa was certain to receive the most delegates at the convention, as well as enjoying the support of the United States. President Wilson may have found Villa a “cruel barbarian,” as one reporter described him, but he looked to have the interests of the Mexican people at heart. “General Villa certainly seems capable of some good things and often shows susceptibility of the best influences,” Wilson wrote. “He is hard to understand, however.”²¹

By the time that the State School of Mines and Metallurgy opened for its first day of classes on September 28, 1914, there were already signs that the Mexico City convention would fail. Fighting had broken out in Chihuahua between Villa’s forces and those allied to Carranza, while Villa worked to exclude Carranza from any and all negotiations. When the convention took place, various factions shifted alliances between Carranza and Villa. Carranza eventually proposed to “retire” and leave Mexico if Villa would do the same. Villa found this compromise unacceptable and, on November 19, all negotiations broke down. Wilson and his secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, had all but washed their hands of the affair. By then, the European powers were at war.²²

The Columbus Raid

When matters in Mexico once again captured Wilson’s attention, the School of Mines was approaching the end of its second year. Plans were being made for the first commencement to take place that May of 1916.

Villa for his part spent the past year in open revolt and out of favor with the Wilson administration. Wilson and his new secretary of state, Robert Lansing, backed the *de facto* government of Carranza in his dispute with the northern general. Particularly infuriating to Villa was the unprecedented level of cooperation the United States extended to Carranza, which included allowing Carranza's army to cross into American territory to steal a march on Villa's army.²³

In March 1916, Villa decided on a new strategy to weaken Carranza's government. He would attack the army garrison stationed in Columbus, New Mexico. Such an attack, Villa surmised, would provoke Wilson to invade Mexico, at which point Carranza would have only two options. One would be to allow foreign troops onto the soil of Mexico, which would threaten Carranza's legitimacy with the Mexican people. The second would be for Carranza to oppose the presence of U.S. forces and possibly provoke war between the two nations.

Villa's gambit took place during the predawn hours of March 9, 1916. Crossing the border with close to 500 men, Villa's objective was Fort Furlong, which was garrisoned by the 13th Cavalry under Colonel Herbert J. Slocum. Operating under the cover of darkness, Villa's forces mistakenly attacked the stables rather than the barracks. This misstep gave the army troops time to organize a counter assault using machine guns. Villa's men, outgunned, fell back through the town of Columbus, setting fire to the hotel and shooting indiscriminately at soldiers and civilians. When the fighting ended three-hours later, Villa retreated to the border, pursued by U.S. cavalry. In the end, eight civilians, seven soldiers, and 67 attackers were dead.²⁴

Wilson's reaction to events in New Mexico was swift and assured. Conscious of the ongoing war in Europe and perceptions of the United States as unprepared, the president ordered the Department of the Army forces to pursue and capture or kill Villa wherever he may be in Mexico. Overall command of the pursuit, which became known as the Punitive Expedition, fell to Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, who now commanded all forces between Columbus, New Mexico, and Sierra Blanca, Texas.²⁵ In addition, Wilson mobilized the National Guard to support Pershing's efforts. Over the course of the next several weeks, Guard units from across the United States began arriving in El Paso. By September, close to 100,000 troops from thirteen states and the District of Columbia would be stationed in the El Paso region. With these troops came 10,702 horses and 10,495 mules.²⁶

The expanding concentration of troops pushed the boundaries of Fort Bliss to the east into the desert and created what became known as Camp Beirne. There they encountered the School of Mines and enveloped the mining school on both its northern and southern borders. Colonel J.W. Heard, the commanding officer of cavalry at

the military installation described the impact of so many troops in close proximity to the school as “severe.” “We have practically isolated it,” Heard would later write, “from communication with the outside, except through the worst portions of this Post—i.e., the stables, railroad tracks, etc. ... We have surrounded it with our line of stables, our dump piles of manure, our track yards, railroad spurs, and drill grounds, all necessary to us, and which we can put nowhere else.” He added, “It is my opinion that surrounded as stated, the value of the place, for school purposes ... is practically nothing.” The only fitting use for the site, he declared, was for a saloon.²⁷

Conditions at the school had deteriorated to such a point that the new president of the University of Texas and the School of Mines, Robert Vinson, traveled to El Paso in September to inspect the facilities. Of immediate concern was the school’s supply of water. Over the past two years, the War Department in Washington had denied requests for both new water lines and electricity service to the isolated school. Vinson expressed his concerns to the *El Paso Morning Times* concerning the risk of fire due to the inadequate water supply and the lack of a fireproof roof on the structures. The president also lamented the state of higher education funding, which prevented the erection of adequate buildings to meet the needs of the University of Texas.²⁸

Vinson discussed with Worrell the need to relocate the School of Mines and took time to meet with several other civic and business leaders regarding the possible donation of land. In his October budget submittal, Worrell deliberately omitted several capital improvement projects given, as he stated, “that there is also a future possibility of our being able to move the Institution and certainly wish to put in as little as possible of a permanent nature.” He did include a \$600 request to install a 60-foot-high water tank and riser system “for any emergency that may arise in the way of fire.”²⁹

Eighteen days later on October 29, 1916, fire destroyed the main building of the State School of Mines and Metallurgy.

Conclusion

Exigence that brings about significant change can often emerge out of seemingly unrelated situations. In this case, the State School of Mines and Metallurgy did not arise like some phoenix out of the ashes of the October 29 fire, but out of the burning Columbus buildings Villa left in his wake on March 9, 1916. It was Villa’s desire to disrupt Wilson’s foreign policy toward Mexico that led to the school’s relocation.

Even before the October 29 fire, Robert Vinson had been in regular communication with various War Department officials regarding a trade involving the EPMI site and land near the present day Beau-



Figure 4. Detail from Map of El Paso, circa 1915, with Annotations. Robert Vinson's pencil marks, made in 1916, show the encroachment by Fort Bliss as it surrounded the School of Mines. From the U.T. Presidents Records, VF8Aa, courtesy of Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

mont Medical Center at the foot of the Castner Range. When Vinson arrived in El Paso two days after the fire, he immediately met with Brig. Gen. George Bell, Pershing's replacement as commander of the El Paso sector, to expedite matters. At the same time, investment groups lined up to offer six different locations around El Paso to relocate the School of Mines. Rebuilding on the old site, though cheaper, never warranted serious discussions.³⁰

Many aspects of any history appear crystal clear when a historian has what appears to be a primary source to cite. The historical sketch found in the early catalogs of the University of Texas at El Paso—an official publication of the institution—on the surface present a pretty convincing case as to why the School of Mines relocated to the western foothills of the Franklin Mountains. The catalog in this case, however, despite providing historians with first hand evidence of the school's curricula, proved to be a poor source when it came to the school's history. The purpose of the history presented in the historical sketch was to promote the school. Providing details regarding the degradation the EPMI site suffered following Villa's raid would have scared off far more students that it would have attracted. The fire offer school officials the opportunity to recast the school's move in a much more positive light, even if it did not convey the whole truth about the school's dire predicament.

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UTEP: A Dynamic Force in El Paso's Cultural Heritage

By Cristina Casas Palmer

In the mid-1900s, three highly talented visionaries—Abraham Chavez, Engebret Thormodsgaard, and Ingeborg Heuser—embarked on their respective careers in El Paso. Their paths would intersect, and the collaboration among them would usher in a most remarkable cultural era in El Paso. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP, known as Texas Western College until 1967) was central to their collaborative achievements.

Abraham Chavez was born and raised in El Paso and joined the El Paso Symphony Orchestra (EPSO) as a violinist at the age of 13. Five years later, in 1945, he became the concertmaster. Engebret Thormodsgaard, known affectionately as “Dr. Thor,” arrived in El Paso to head the Music Department at Texas Western College (TWC) in 1949. In his first year, he launched an opera series, which soon evolved into a collaborative venture with the community. The TWC College-Community Opera presented its first opera, *Robin Hood*, at Liberty Hall in 1950. Ingeborg Heuser spent her formative years training, performing, and touring with the *Deutsche Oper* of Berlin, Germany, as a professional ballet dancer. She arrived in El Paso in late fall of 1953 to join her husband, who had been drafted and sent to Fort Bliss for basic training. By 1955, she had opened her Ballet Centre studio on Federal Street. The following year, she moved the studio to Reynolds Street and organized a small company of dancers, the Youth Ballet Guild.

From Collaboration to Excellence

In 1957, Abraham Chavez met Ingeborg Heuser. By now, he was on the Music faculty at TWC in addition to working with EPSO as concertmaster. In May of that year, Maestro Chavez (as he was often called) led a small orchestra for Ingeborg's first public performance at Liberty Hall. She choreographed and staged two ballets to a sold-out audience with original music by Helen Hartmeyer and original costumes she designed herself. It was a grand production, indeed.

Following Ingeborg's successful production, Maestro Chavez introduced her to Dr. Thor. That summer, Ingeborg wrote to Dr. Thor, who was teaching at the University of Texas at Austin, on temporary leave from TWC. She offered to stage the dance sequences for his next opera *The Merry Widow* in December 1957.

Ingeborg not only designed the costumes and choreographed the dances



Figure 1. Abraham Chavez. Photo by Tony Canales, courtesy of I. Heuser



Figure 2.
Dr. Engbret
Thormodsgaard.
Source: Souvenir
Album, 1964-65

for *The Merry Widow*, she also performed the Marsovian Dance, partnered by Canio Pavone. Impressed by Ingeborg's work and that of her students, Dr. Thor initiated plans to build a ballet program at the college, similar in concept to his College-Community Opera.

In 1959, following a meeting of college officials and community leaders, TWC President Joseph Smiley approved the formation of the Texas Western Civic Ballet. Ingeborg became artistic director of the company, Maestro Chavez was appointed musical director, and Dr. Thor, as head of the music department, did all he could to ensure the success of the new company.

The collaboration of Dr. Thor, Maestro Chavez, and Ingeborg Heuser laid the foundation for many significant "firsts" during the 1960's, including the following:

- The TWC Ballet debuted in January 1960 at Magoffin Auditorium. It was described as "auspicious."
- In March 1960, the College-Community Opera, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, and the TWC Ballet performed together for the first time in a production of the opera *Rigoletto* at Liberty Hall.
- A month later, the TWC Ballet performed in the first annual Texas Western Fine Arts Festival.

Ballet classes were added to the Music curriculum in the fall of 1960. TWC was the first public school in the University of Texas system to offer ballet training.

• In 1962, the Music Department published and released the first issue of their newsletter *Musicale* to promote the arts in El Paso.

• In spring 1963, the College-Community Musical Arts Association was formed under Dr. Thor's leadership.

• During the 1963-64 school year, TWC celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Music, opera, and ballet came together in joint performances to commemorate the college's 50th anniversary.

• In 1966, the TWC Ballet presented the first local *Nutcracker*, which began a holiday tradition that was cherished by El Pasoans for 40 years.

• After three consecutive *Nutcracker* ballets, in 1969, the ballet *Cinderella* was presented for the Christmas season. It marked the end of the first



Figure 3. *The First Nutcracker, Act I, 1966.* From Gene Adams personal archive, courtesy of Marion Adams

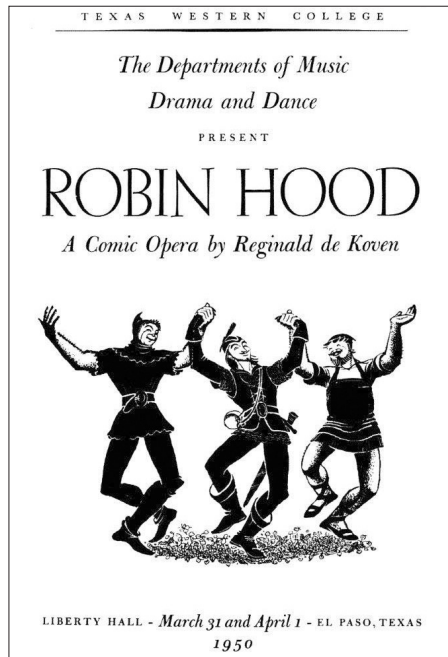


Figure 4. Program Cover for the first TWC Opera (1950). Courtesy of UTEP Library, Special Collections

decade of our local ballet company, which a local newspaper article compared to the “rags to riches” story of Cinderella.

A Momentous and Memorable Legacy

Working together, the disciplines represented by the TWC Music Department in those early years strengthened the relationship between the college and the community, and propelled the performing arts to the forefront of El Paso’s cultural heritage.

Dr. Thor left TWC in 1965 but returned to chair the Music Department from 1972 to 1974. Maestro Chavez was musical

director of the ballet until 1966, when he too left TWC. Both men continued to make significant contributions to the arts.

Ingeborg Heuser continued her illustrious career at TWC/UTEP as master teacher of classical ballet and artistic director of the company until her retirement in May 2007. By then, her company of dancers had premiered over 100 ballets, performed in yearly student recitals, and appeared in some 20 operas. Many of the company’s ballet premieres were restaged, some of them many times. The *Nutcracker*, for example, was performed for 36 seasons over a 40-year period.

Ingeborg’s final *Nutcracker Ballet* in December 2006 honored the tradition of excellence that was rooted in her early association with Dr. Thor and Maestro Chavez and later supported by other prominent university and community officials. The half-century that began in 1957 with the fortuitous alliance of three great artists was truly a remarkable era in the history of our university and our city—one that is a source of great pride and one that merits any and all efforts to preserve it.

Cristina Casas Palmer, Ph.D., is the author of the recently published book For Love of Dance—The Early Years of the UTEP Ballet (Book Publishers of El Paso, 2014, hardcover; 2nd edition printed by CreateSpace, 2016, softcover).



*Figure 5. Ingeborg Heuser.
Courtesy of I. Heuser*



Figure 6. The Final Nutcracker, Plaza Theater, 2006. Courtesy of photographer Beverly Kerbs-Ward

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ORGANIZED MARCH 18, 1954

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