

PASS WORD



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PASSWORD

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STAGE COACH THROUGH THE PASS— THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL COMES TO EL PASO

.by Joseph Leach

I

"By stage coach to Frisco, by space ship to the moon." News stories dated Cape Canaveral create hardly more interest today than did a series of articles published in the New York *Herald* in the fall of 1858.¹ With the beginning that September of Butterfield Overland Mail service between St. Louis and San Francisco, the modern traveler stood at a new "jumping-off place," this one called Tipton, Missouri, the point in western Missouri where rail service stopped, and the mail and passengers transferred to stage coach. Between Tipton and sundown lay almost as many dread perils as, for men of our time, those that wheel among Einstein's relative stars over Florida.

The *Herald's* special correspondent, Waterman L. Ormsby, rode west on the Butterfield Company's first stage out of Tipton fully aware that his trip was the opening sentence of a new chapter in transportation history. That Thursday, September 16, 1858, he mailed his first report back to his editor: "I could not but think that the time was not far distant when . . . I might look back upon that day as our fathers do now upon the time when a journey from New York to Albany was a great undertaking . . . I looked forward in my imagination to the time when, instead of a wagon road to the Pacific, we should have a railroad; and when, instead of having to wait over forty days for an answer from San Francisco, a delay of as many minutes will be looked upon as a gross imposition, and of as many seconds as 'doing fair to middling.'"²

Earlier that day, back in St. Louis, Ormsby had witnessed one of those simple episodes out of which the fabric of history is often woven. A postal clerk delivered two diminutive bags of mail to Mr. John Butterfield, president of the Overland Mail Company, who would accompany them personally as far as Fort Smith, Arkansas. If the schedule held up, those same bags would be tossed from a stage as it whirled into San Francisco less than twenty-six days later, after traversing more than 2700 miles of mud and dust and rock-covered trail.

For Paseños, Ormsby's published reports of his momentous cross-country ride are disappointingly silent about our town's reaction to the new development. But it is easy to imagine that sleepy little Franklin (not until the following year would it become "El Paso" officially) felt in its own small way the same thrill

¹Now available in book form as Waterman L. Ormsby, *The Butterfield Overland Mail*, edited by Lyle H. Wright and Josephine M. Bynum (San Marina, California: The Huntington Library, 1954). All subsequent passages quoted from Ormsby appear in this volume.

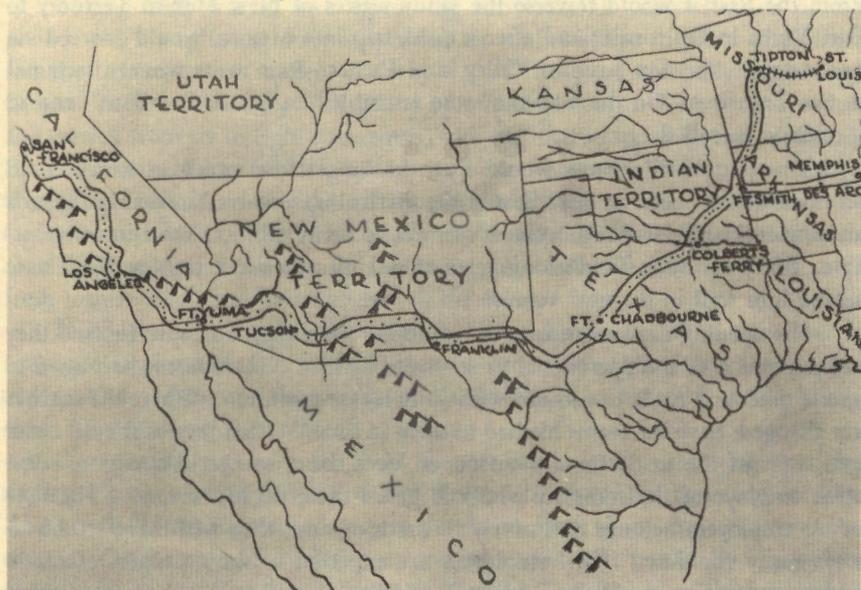
²The Atlantic cable providing telegraph service between the United States and Europe had been completed just two months previously.

of history-being-made that ten days later surged along the Barbary Coast. Those "diminutive bags" on their lumbering stage tore through the Pass at 5:40 a.m. on Thursday, September 30, 1858, after a throat-parching, all-night ride in from Hueco Tanks. Now Franklin would have, in the Butterfield time table, twice-weekly contact with the outside world. The news, mail, and passengers from both coasts were scheduled to meet here. Bounding along Overland Street the east- and west-bound stages would eat each other's dust.

II

Dramatic as Waterman Ormsby's first journey seemed at the time and, indeed, sounds today as one reads his articles, more than a decade of hard ground-laying, planning, and North versus South "politicking" lay behind it. Organization of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company was the direct outgrowth of the Postmaster General's search for a dry-land, all-weather route to California. Ever since James Marshall's shovel first struck pay dirt near Sutter's Mill, the need had grown increasingly urgent for a quick, regular mail connection between New York and the Pacific Coast. The high-seas route around Cape Horn and the sea-and-land journey via Central America were too slow, much too expensive.³

³As a test of the Butterfield route's practicality, a mail bag dispatched from St. Louis on September 16, 1858, was carried by train to New York, then by ship around the Horn. It reached San Francisco six days after the arrival of the first Butterfield Overland stage.



THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL ROUTE

The dots mark the relay stations. The place names mark the divisions points.
(Map by Major Richard K. McMaster — photo by Luis Perez)

For this reason, Congress authorized the Postmaster General in March, 1857, to let a contract for the overland transportation of all first-class mail between "a point on the Mississippi River" and San Francisco. The contract would remain in force for a period of six years, on condition that the contractor maintained a delivery schedule of no more than twenty-five days. Service was to be semi-weekly at a cost to the government of \$600,000 per year. The Northern city, St. Louis, and the Southern city, Memphis, each marshalled together a glittering array of statistics to prove itself superior as the eastern terminus of the projected route.

In June, a company composed of John Butterfield, William T. Fargo, and others was granted the contract, their bid having stated that they could operate a bifurcated line out of both St. Louis and Memphis, with the two forks converging at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Both Northern and Southern factions in Congress found this a sensible compromise. By September, details were worked out and the contract signed.

Mail and passengers from St. Louis would go by Pacific Railroad to its end at Tipton, then transfer to stage for the remaining journey. This stage would connect with the one from Memphis at Fort Smith. From here, the line would run through Indian Territory to Colbert's Ferry on Red River into Texas, then bear west across the bone-dry *Llano Estacado* to Franklin on the Rio Grande. From the Pass it would traverse the sandy wastes of New Mexico Territory to Fort Yuma in California; and after a quick trip into Mexico, would proceed via Los Angeles, the San Joaquin Valley, and Pacheco Pass to its western terminal in San Francisco. On the map the route resembled a gigantic "ox-bow," and so it came to be called.

The Butterfield system would span the longest distance over which coach service had ever been attempted, and the difficulties involved in managing such an unwieldy and far-flung business seemed, to many critics, almost insurmountable. But John Butterfield's long years of staging experience in New York state served him well in the new venture.

His opening-day instructions to employees were exact and specific, and they indicate much of the operational problems to be met. "Have teams harnessed in ample time, and ready to proceed without delay or confusion. Where the coaches are changed, have the teams hitched to them in time." "Conductors should never lose sight of the mails for a moment, or leave them, except in charge of some other employe of the company who will guard them till his return." "The time of all employees belongs exclusively to the company; they will therefore be always ready for duty." "All employees are expected to show proper respect to and treat passengers and the public with civility, as well as to use every exertion for the comfort and convenience of passengers." "INDIANS. A good look-out should be kept for Indians. No intercourse should be held with them, but let



An exact replica of a Butterfield Stage Coach. It is owned by the El Paso Sheriff's Posse. (Photo through the courtesy of Dr. Willard Schuessler.)

them alone; by no means annoy or wrong them. At all times an efficient guard should be kept, and such guard should always be *ready* for an emergency."

Rolling-stock was of two types: the conventional Concord coach of the period with its spherical body suspended on leather straps in place of springs, and the lighter, canvas-topped "Celerity wagon" designed especially for hauling freight. Each was pulled at full gallop by a span of four or six horses or mules, and carried from six to eight passengers, with the mail strapped on top or behind. By the time the Butterfield Company was in full operation, stations punctuated the entire route at an average distance of about twenty miles (some as close together as ten miles, others—especially in the Western stretches—much farther apart). Here passengers usually found simple meals and water available, and fresh teams stood ready to be hitched to the coach.

Nobody ever disagreed with Ormsby when he wrote: "The travelling is not quite as pleasant as in a Fourth Avenue car, or the fare as excellent as that of the Astor House, or the climate and temperature as agreeable as the shady side of Broadway in September."

One can easily imagine the short tempers and long faces resulting from the rigors of a cross-country trip in one of Butterfield's swaying, bouncing coaches. At no time did the tight schedule give the driver much time "to go easy over the stones." On the unpadded seats, sleep and relaxation were practically impossible, at least during the first few days out of Tipton. The drivers on the box lashed and cursed their horses forward with one major purpose in mind: "Get the mail through in less than twenty-six days."

Fare for the entire distance was \$200, with all meals extra. Baggage allowance was forty pounds. Passengers normally expected to make the journey straight through without stops in any of the towns or stations. They would sleep as best they could, sitting up if the stage was crowded. Otherwise, the middle seat on some coaches could be folded down to form a make-shift bed. When passengers did elect to stop over, Butterfield regulations made it expressly clear that said passengers could continue their trip subject always to the complete convenience of the company.

Some sixty miles west of the Red River crossing, Ormsby's vehicle "came to a patch of woods through which the road was tortuous and stony. But our driver's ambition to make good time overcame his caution, and away we went, bounding over the stones at a fearful rate . . . To see the heavy mail wagon whizzing and whirling over the jagged rock, . . . and to feel oneself bouncing—now on the hard seat, now against the roof, and now against the side of the wagon—was no joke, I assure you."

Late in the night when the wagon jolted to a quick stop at Waddell's station in Indian Territory, the New Yorker reported, "I had been dreaming of Comanche Indians, and in the confusion of drowsiness first thought that the driver and the mail agent had been murdered, and that I, being covered up in the blankets, had been missed." He was just on the point of "feeling for" his pistol, when "I was brought to my senses by a familiar voice saying, 'Git up there, old hoss,'" and found that it was only the driver hitching up a fresh team.

Near Gainesville, Texas, on the edge of the Lower Cross Timbers, Ormsby ate the first of a series of "rough meals" typical of fare throughout the rest of his journey. Breakfast was served on the bottom of a candle box. There were no plates; coffee was served without sugar or milk. "The edible—for there was but one—consisted of a kind of short cake, baked on the coals, each man breaking off his 'chunk' and plastering on butter with his pocket knife."

At Fort Chadbourne the fresh team of half-broken mules "reared, pitched, twisted, whirled, wheeled, ran, stood still, and cut up all sorts of capers," and the gyrations ended up with the mules thoroughly tangled in the harness. Ormsby thought it among the funniest scenes he had ever witnessed, though he sympathized with Mr. Mather, the driver, who had "become completely anxious that every one should go to the d——l, and understand that he did not care a d——n for anyone."

From Fort Chadbourne to the Rio Grande the route lay through the barren waste that would always present serious difficulties to the Butterfield system. Water was so scarce and rain so infrequent, the line of supply so extended, and the Indian menace and natural discomforts of the region so extreme that travel through it was always a dreaded experience. Ormsby's questions to the inexperienced driver are understandable:

"How far is it to the next station?"

"I believe it is thirty miles."

"Do you know the road?"

"No."

"How do you expect to get there?"

"There's only one road; we can't miss it."

"Have you any arms?"

"No, I don't want any; there's no danger."

Near the head of Delaware Creek, far from any station, the party stopped to cook breakfast on a fire of buffalo chips, which, as Ormsby discovered, is a fuel "which makes excellent manure."

At the Pinery station, nestled in the shadow of Guadalupe Peak, Ormsby ate another "stereotyped meal, with the addition of some venison pie and baked beans," before beginning the sixty-mile ride to Cornudos, "over some of the steepest and stoniest hills I had yet seen, studded with inextricable rocks, each one of which seems ready to jolt the wagon into the abyss below. It is enough to make one shudder to look at the perpendicular side of the canyon and think what havoc one mischievous man could make with an emigrant train passing through the canyon."

The sulphur water at Ojo del Cuervo proved welcome in the heat of Salt Flats, and the wagon made its way uninterruptedly into Cornudos⁴ where a large well-equipped station stood ready with food and good water from its collecting basins in the rocks (Thorne's Well).

Some ten miles beyond stood another station at Alamo Springs on the west slope of Alamo mountain.⁵ From here to Hueco Tanks, a distance of twenty miles, there was no water and the trail around Cerro Alto was rocky and precipitous, "but our driver seemed to know every stone, and we whirled along on the very brink of the precipices with perfect safety, though the night was quite dark."

Though Hueco Tanks afforded an excellent corral and a new rock-walled station built into the northeast outcropping of rocks, the official in charge regretfully pointed to two eight-gallon kegs, "The only water we have left for a dozen men and as many head of cattle." The summer had been an unusually dry one, and the natural collecting basins in the rocks stood empty. A large tank which had recently been enlarged to hold at least a year's supply of water was still dry. After supper and a change of horses, the wagon rolled on through the sand toward Franklin.

Early the next morning, like many later travelers, Ormsby found the town huddled at the foot of Mount Franklin almost miraculously attractive "after so

⁴Just north of the state line in present Otero County, New Mexico.

⁵The rock walls of this large station are still standing and can be reached easily from Hueco Mountain Inn on U. S. 180.

long and dreary a ride over the desert." He noted especially the fine grapes and onions growing here. The town, which then numbered only a few hundred inhabitants, seems not to have been awake at so early an hour; there is no indication in Ormsby's notes that they turned out in welcome.

But ten days later, keenly elated at having taken part in such an historic ride, Ormsby shared the tremendous excitement that broke loose when the Butterfield stage galloped into San Francisco. "Swiftly we whirled up one street and down another, and round corners, until finally we drew up at the stage office in front of the Plaza, our driver giving a shrill blast of his horn and a flourish of triumph for the arrival of the first overland mail in San Francisco from St. Louis . . . In a jiffy we were at the post office door, blowing the horn, howling, and shouting for somebody to come and take the overland mail."

"When the startled clerk took the mail bags, at half past seven a.m. on Sunday, October 10, only twenty-three days, twenty-three hours and a half had elapsed since the start of the journey." And Ormsby had the satisfaction of knowing that the "correspondent of the New York *Herald* had kept his promise and gone through with the first mail—the sole passenger and the only one who had ever made the trip across the plains in less than fifty days."

III

It goes without saying that Waterman Ormsby's adventures on the first wild dash across half a continent differed in many respects from those of later Butterfield passengers. In a sense he was as much a trail breaker as were the original tracers of the route. But in another sense he spoke for all the later intrepid individuals who gripped their courage in their hands, forebore all basic comforts, strapped on their side-arms and money belts (or knotted their chin ribbons) and lit out for the Pass and California. The three years of the Overland Mail's operation—which ended in 1861 when the outbreak of the Civil War made a Yankee company like Butterfield no longer welcome so far south—saw great improvements in facilities along the entire length of the ox-bow. Stations steadily improved, though the menu seldom varied from the black coffee, beans and molasses that sustained Ormsby on that first trip. Better water facilities and supply schedules made for much greater ease of operations and decidedly greater comfort for the passengers.

But comfort and convenience in 1858 meant little that such terms imply today. From 1858 to 1861 the route from the Pinery station at Guadalupe Pass into El Paso—the portion of the Butterfield Trail which most interests the readers of *PASSWORD*—remained an essentially ragged scar through the sand and over the rocks of an aggressively hostile country. In spite of assurance that U. S. troops based at some seventeen West Texas forts guaranteed protection against "desperate white men" and Indian attack, it was a rare individual who

ever boarded a Butterfield stage confident of his healthy arrival on the Coast. If the bandits and skins let him alone, there was still the country itself to worry about.

Opie Read tells of a traveler on a stage in Colorado whose fears closely resemble the feelings of many a Butterfield passenger. His dread of the pass over Red Mountain was undoubtedly echoed a thousand times as an Overland Mail coach began its steep descent into Guadalupe canyon.

"Is it very dangerous?" I inquired.

"Well, the livery stable man is willing to risk his horses, ain't he? And you don't pretend to say you are worth as much as a horse, do you? . . .

"Is this the road where the stage tumbled off the other day?" I inquired.

"Yes, but not in a very bad place."

"Is it customary to topple over in the best places?"

"Well, generally."

"What do you think of this trip?"

"Didn't see me taking it before I had to, did you?"

"How high is Red Mountain?"

"It is 13,000 feet."

"Can you fall all the way down?"

"Well, not very easy. You hit a crag down about a thousand feet."

"Do people fall very often?"

"Only once."⁶

Nowadays we may well wonder, "What was it that ever made a trip on the Butterfield stage worth all the discomfort? 2700 miles of jolts, and fly bites, and no sleep, and frazzled nerves, and baking heat or freezing cold—or worse. None of us, of course, can answer with certainty. Partly, it was gold, raw or already minted; partly, it was family sentiment, reaching across a whole continent to gather in its members; perhaps, after all, it was something more mystical, something like "Manifest Destiny." Who can say?

But if I may hazard a guess, the answer for some, perhaps for many ran a little like Mallory's as he gazed determinedly up toward the arrogant, unconquered, snow-hung reaches of Everest.

Like the tallest of all mountains, San Francisco was *there*, a sizable hell of perils lay between her and St. Louis—these may have seemed good enough reasons for climbing aboard a Butterfield stage. You could not expect convenience. You certainly could not expect solicitous care, for the mail always came first. But if you held onto your hat, swung onto your scalp, the chances were good that Butterfield's boys, hell-bent for Frisco down the ox-bow trail, would put you there in less than twenty-six days.

⁶Quoted in B. A. Botkin, *A Treasury of Western Folklore* (New York, 1951), 106-7.

EL PASO'S NAVY

. by Frank B. Putnam

El Paso's Navy was launched fifteen years ago. A year and a half had passed since Pearl Harbor, a year since the Battle of Midway. General George Smith Patton's 7th Army had landed on Sicily six days earlier but the Battle of Leyte Gulf was a long year away in the uncertain future.

It was a cool mid-afternoon in Wilmington, California, on that Friday, July 16, 1943 — in the upper sixties — but it was a happy day. The Frigate *El Paso*, worthy descendant of *Old Ironsides* and of the *Constellation*, was being christened. Mr. Karl Wyler, publicity chairman of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, acted as master of ceremonies. Mr. E. H. Hill, president of the Chamber, gave a short address in which he stated: "Naming this ship after an inland city has formed a new bond of relationship between the Navy and El Paso."¹ Mrs. J. E. [Georgiana] Anderson, matron of honor and wife of Mayor Anderson, uttered a prayer: "May God guide and watch over this ship and its crew and bring them back safely to us."² Sheriff Allan G. Falby delivered a short message and Mr. Chris P. Fox spoke briefly. Then Mrs. John L. [Susan Peterson] Kaster, widow of Captain John L. Kaster who had disappeared into the black-out of Bataan's long night,³ christened the frigate: "May the history of this ship be as glorious as that of El Paso's fighting sons." The *El Paso* slid down the ways. The crowd cheered. And El Paso had a navy, the first naval vessel ever to be named for an inland city.⁴

The bottle of champagne with which the ship was christened was a gift from our neighbor city across the Rio Grande. Unfortunately, Mayor Antonio Bermúdez was unable to attend the ceremony, but asked that Ciudad Juárez be granted the privilege of providing the champagne as a token of the city's good wishes and friendship. The Rotary Club sent a telegram which read: "The entire membership of the Juárez Rotary Club joins in extending best wishes and felicitations on the occasion of the launching of the U.S.S. *El Paso*, and to wish this glorious armed vessel, named for its sister city opposite Juárez, 'godspeed'."

¹*El Paso Herald Post*, July 17, 1943.

²*Idem*.

³A second tragedy overtook Jack Kaster. The ship on which he was being transferred as a prisoner-of-war from the Philippines to Japan was bombed and sunk by our own Air Force.

⁴The Frigate *El Paso* was not the first ship to bear that name. The Southern Pacific's Ferry *El Paso* was built by the Union Iron Works, now the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation. The keel was laid on June 19, 1924, and she was launched on October 27 and placed in service on December 31 on San Francisco Bay. Her length was 246 feet; breadth, 63 feet 6 inches; depth, 19 feet 2½ inches; gross tonnage, 1,953, net, 926; horse power, 230, being equipped with triple-expansion condensing steam engine. She cost \$509,577.52. The *El Paso* was sold to the Richmond-San Rafael Ferry Company and placed in service between the two cities in November, 1938. She has now been retired and will probably be scrapped. Data from J. G. Shea, Public Relations Manager, Southern Pacific Company.



Part of the El Paso contingent at the christening. Front row, left to right: Chris P. Fox, Karl Wyler, Captain Art Seth (Los Angeles Sheriff's office), Inspector William Penprase, John Storm, Raymond Stover. Rear row, left to right: Mrs. Karl Wyler, Jennings Pierce, Mrs. Paul Thomas, Allen Falby, Eugene Biscailuz, Sheriff of Los Angeles County, Mrs. Allen Falby, Mrs. Chris Fox, Erwin H. Will, Paul D. Thomas.

In spite of war-time restrictions and gasoline rationing, almost 500 persons attended the christening, including about two dozen El Pasoans. In addition to those named above were Mrs. Kaster's parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Peterson, and her small daughter Sue; Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hardage; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Thomas; Mrs. Chris Fox; Mrs. Allan Falby; Mrs. Karl Wyler; and Mr. Raymond Stover. One of El Paso's oldest pioneer families was represented by Mrs. James W. Magoffin and her son Joe, residents of Beverly Hills.⁵ Another El Pasoan, Ensign J. E. Counts, then stationed at Los Alamitos, California, in the Naval Air Corps, was also in attendance. According to the *El Paso Herald-Post*,

⁵Joe Magoffin's grandfather, Judge Joseph Magoffin, was one-time Mayor of El Paso. His great grandfather, James Magoffin, a Kentuckian, was in business in Chihuahua in the early 1820's and was the first U.S. Consul in Chihuahua. He was a "social, genial-tempered man who loved company, spoke Spanish fluently and entertained freely." (See Owen White, *Out of the Desert*, 45.) Through his influence Santa Fe was taken by the Americans without a struggle. He hoped to take the city of Chihuahua in similar fashion, but was arrested in El Paso del Norte (modern Juárez) and taken to Chihuahua and later to Parral where he was held as a prisoner until the close of the Mexican War. The old Magoffin adobe on Magoffin Avenue is an excellent example of the early border architecture.

"The Texans were given complete charge of the launching observances in defiance of custom and in recognition of the large delegation in attendance. Ordinarily, officials of the shipyard building the ship spearhead the launching ceremonies."⁶

The U.S.S. *El Paso* (PF 41 Hull No. CSC 526, USMC 1453) was constructed by the Consolidated Steel Corporation. The twin-screw vessel was 304 feet long, 38 feet in beam, displaced 1,1000 tons, had a speed of 18 knots, and was intended primarily for convoy duty and anti-submarine patrol. She was placed in commission on December 1, 1943, and on February 20, 1944 left California, heading into Japan's setting sun. She was commanded by Romeo J. Borromey, U.S.C.G.⁷

Borromey was born on October 7, 1904, in Trieste, at that time under Austrian domination. His parents came to the United States in 1911 and settled in Flint, Michigan, where young Borromey became an American citizen. After two years of junior college in Flint he received an appointment as cadet to the Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut, on August 12, 1926. He was graduated on May 15, 1929, and commissioned an Ensign. During the ensuing years he served in various capacities on the Coast Guard Destroyer *Davis* and on the cutters *Champlain*, *Cayuga*, *Mojave*, *Escanaba* and *Modoc*. From June, 1940, to July, 1943, he served as communications officer and personnel officer in the Boston District, receiving a letter of commendation from Rear Admiral Wilson Brown, USN, Commandant of the First Naval District. After brief training at St. Augustine, Florida, and Alameda, California, he was ordered to Wilmington to await the outfitting and commissioning of the *El Paso*.

Upon arrival in the South Pacific on May 24, 1944, the *El Paso* was ordered to bombard enemy positions on Maffin Bay, New Guinea, where enemy forces had stopped the Allied Army at Maffin Village. The *El Paso* made several runs along Maffin Beach, pouring destruction into the enemy and raking Japanese gun positions enough to permit an allied break-through next day. Three days later she was at it again, performing a similar mission at Wake Island, New Guinea, in company with two destroyer escorts.

⁶July 17, 1943.

⁷Borromey was promoted Lieutenant (JG) on May 15, 1931; Lieutenant on May 15, 1933; Lt. Commander (temporary status) on February 25, 1942; and Commander (temporary status) on September 19, 1946. Subsequently he was given permanent status as Commander on February 9, 1948 and Captain (temporary status) on September 1, 1950. Since July, 1957, Captain Borromey has been Chief of Staff, First Coast Guard District, Boston. For meritorious performance of duty Borromey received a written commendation from the commander of the 7th Fleet. He is also entitled to wear the following campaign decorations: American Defense Medal and Sea Clasp; American Campaign Service Medal; European Campaign Medal; Asiatic Campaign Service Medal (3 bronze stars); World War II Victory Medal; Philippine Liberation Ribbon (2 bronze stars). He is married to Elizabeth Richardson and they have two daughters, Nancy Ann, 20, and Marjorie Jane, 18. (Biographical data from the Public Relations Divisions, U. S. Coast Guard.)

While on anti-submarine patrol in the Aitapo region of New Guinea, the *El Paso* received her first night assignment and on June 14th bombarded bivouac areas, supply dumps and gun positions; eleven days later she struck again, this



AT THE SPEAKER'S STAND

Left to right: Erwin H. Will, Miss Mary Astor (of the movies), Chris P. Fox, and Karl Wyler.

time the eastern edge of the Maffin Airdome on Wakde Island. On August 23 the *El Paso* was directed to furnish fire support in an attempt to salvage an Australian Beaufighter that had been forced down on Fanildo Island; a previous salvage crew had not returned and it was hoped that it could be rescued. During the early morning a PT boat landed a search party but under heavy gun-fire was forced to retreat at 9:20. The *El Paso* laid down a blanket of fire at suspected gun positions while an accompanying plane strafed at Japanese who were shooting at the PT party. All returned safely, the *El Paso* giving the area a thorough going-over before the small task force unit departed.

On *Diez y Seis de Septiembre*⁸ the *El Paso* formed part of an escort screen that led some 40 Liberty Ships, LST'S, LCI'S and other craft into Morotai, Indonesia. One Japanese bomber got through the covering American aircraft, dropped two bombs and sent several bursts of fire from his machine guns. Under fire from the *El Paso*, the Japanese plane hightailed westward and was soon out range, but shortly a report arrived that one of our planes had shot him down. Next morning while swinging at anchor at Morotai the enemy began a dawn plane attack; the *El Paso's* gunners picked a plane passing over the inner end of the harbor but it escaped, streaking off across Point Gila. Later the *El Paso* was in the Leyte operation from October 23rd until November 5 and earned an engagement star.⁹ Then after bombarding Sarmi Point and Mount Makko, New Guinea, she returned to Leyte.

What of the men who served with Borromey? In the words of Captain Borromey:

Like actors on a stage, many faces, figures and scenes appear in my memory: the first view of the vessel that was to take us to the other side of the world; the chaos of the shipyard fitting out; the agony of shakedown training — truly a time to try men's souls; the indescribable military inspection at the end of the shakedown period and finally the great day when with mixed feelings and emotions we headed west from California and watched Long Beach disappear over the horizon as we started on the first leg of our long trek to the forward areas.

Some of the "characters" I can still recall vividly are, for example, the Chief Quartermaster with the florid face, ample figure and fog-horn voice who had a nose for alcohol better than that of any bloodhound on a trail. Who will forget the tall, lanky Radarman who, among others, grew a beautiful long pointed beard and spent hours each day brushing its glossy length. He even developed a double action method of brushing with two brushes, one from each side and stroking simultaneously.

Speaking about beards, how about the short golden haired Radarman of the fancy high heeled boots whose hair and beard curled in tight ringlets

⁸September 16th is one of Mexico's two great patriotic holidays as it was on that date in 1810 that Miguel y Costilla raised the standard of revolt against Spain.

⁹According to Lieutenant Commander James A. Small, the *El Paso* was awarded 4 battle stars and had 3 submarines painted on her. (Letter to this author.)

and the coal black bearded Boatswain's Mate who somehow always reminded of John the Baptist. When he and his fiery red haired and bearded pal were together, which was most of the time, they appeared as though they had just stepped out of the pages of a Bible history.

I can see our barrel chested Chief Engineer with his bowed, knotty legs, bare beneath his shorts and wearing his "Frank Buck" hat, wandering about the decks; also our Doctor sporting a very luxuriant mustache, puttering with his sea shells that always smelled so abominably. Our pale, thin Executive Officer seriously studying the charts and our rotund Gunnery Officer who was ready to take on the entire Japanese Navy single handed.¹⁰

What was life on the *El Paso* like, in retrospect 15 years later?

Again, Captain Borromeo:

Our gun crews and in fact our entire ship had become a well-organized and well-functioning team and we eagerly awaited our first contact with the enemy. Our first enemy contact was over with before we hardly were aware of it. The dominating item seemed to be convoys, more convoys and still more convoys. There were morning alerts, evening alerts, an occasional exchange of shots with enemy planes and shore batteries, then more convoys.

Then there were tropical islands all of which looked pretty much alike, a lot of rain, so much in fact that some wag aptly remarked that the rainfall must be measured in fathoms rather inches.

I recall an occasional welcome interruption in the form of a beer party ashore, some swimming and a lot of sunbathing to help prevent the dreaded fungus infections.

Some days were quiet, some were hectic, all were tiring, but we made the most of the opportunities to go ashore and see whatever sights were available. Often the visits ashore brought a most welcome bonus, such as fresh native fruits, souvenirs or perhaps a boat or native canoe for recreation.¹¹

A few weeks after returning to Leyte, the *El Paso* was detached from the Pacific Fleet and ordered home. She passed into the Panama Canal Zone on February 5, 1945, and left for New York three days later.

One of the most cherished American Freedoms, guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, is the freedom to gripe! No doubt the *El Paso's* crew, in the tradition of military men of all time and all places were not less proficient in that respect than their comrades in all the theatres of that vast war. They would be glad to see the last of the tropics, the last of the *El Paso* and last of each other! But it wasn't that simple, as they soon discovered, arriving in New York from the tropics in the dead of winter. Then:

The next few weeks were perhaps the saddest of my entire lifetime. *El Paso* was to be converted for Weather Observation duty and workmen began to remove some of the guns, doing what could also be described as "pulling out her teeth."

¹⁰Letter to this author from Captain Borromeo.

¹¹*Idem.*

To *El Paso*, nearly two years before, we — her original crew — had come; men from all parts of the country and from all walks of life. This floating thing of steel we had turned into a home and a fighting machine that had carried us to the farthest battle zones of the war. When her guns began to go, I am sure other hearts as well as mine went with them. Orders for detachment began to arrive and our happy family broke up. Leaving the ship in capable hands of the Executive Officer, I departed for other duties.

As I write this it is winter here in Massachusetts, snow still covers the ground, but in memory I can still see the lush tropical islands, hear the distant sounds of gunfire and can almost feel the warm humid air.

To my loyal officers and crew of *El Paso* — my best wishes. Time and memories have placed a halo over the *El Paso*.¹²

She was overhauled at the New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, and then proceeded to Casco Bay, Maine, for a period of training. During the summer she returned to the New York Navy Yard and was converted to a weather ship; meteorological gear was installed. On August 7th, she sailed for Staten Island bound for more service in the Pacific under Captain Lewis C. Houston — a good Texas name.¹³

V. J. Day found the *El Paso* passing through the Panama Canal. At Honolulu, Lieutenant Thomas W. Phillips, Executive Officer, succeeded Houston. Phillips, formerly of Tuckahoe, New York, is now a resident of Garden Grove, California.

Leaving Honolulu, the *El Paso* proceeded to the Philippines and served as a weather ship off Leyte until recalled in the spring of 1946. She arrived in Seattle on June 3 and was decommissioned in July. Lieutenant Commander Thomas W. Spencer, Holyoke, Massachusetts, had succeeded Phillips. *El Paso's* last skipper was Lieutenant Commander J. A. Small, now living in Whittier, California; her last yeoman was Robert Joseph Smith, 170 69th Street, Brooklyn.

In July, 1947, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Materiel) authorized the sale of the *El Paso* as surplus, but because of the large number of disposal actions the formal directive was not issued until October 14, although she had been sold on September 8 for \$4,444 to Dulien Steel Products, Inc. of Washington, Seattle, where she was scrapped.

The *El Paso* had served her city, her nation and her allies well. It is regrettable that she could not have been kept as a weather ship or in some other peace time capacity, but in being scrapped she still serves. Her old metal, fused with new, is shaped and reshaped into a thousand new forms, perhaps even "into plowshares and into pruning hooks."¹⁴

¹²*Idem.*

¹³Captain Houston is not listed in the History of the U.S.S. *El Paso*, but the information was furnished by Lieutenant Thomas W. Phillips.

¹⁴Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3.

REVOLUTIONARY EL PASO: 1910-1917

. by Mardee Belding de Wetter

Part Three of Three Parts

Quiet reigned in Mexico and on the border during the first month of 1914. On February 4, however, a revolting horror occurred in Chihuahua. One of Villa's bandit-chiefs, Máximo Castillo, set fire to the Cumbre Railroad Tunnel by running into it a burning lumber train. He then allowed a passenger train to enter the tunnel where it collided with the smoldering debris.¹ At first the officials of the Mexican Northwestern Railroad were unable to penetrate the tunnel because the smoke and heat were intense. All that was ever recovered of the passengers were a few charred bones. Villa immediately published a report that he had executed Castillo at Chocolate Pass but it was a false report as Castillo soon appeared in El Paso where he was arrested and placed in prison at Fort Bliss. Several Americans had been among the victims in the Cumbre Tunnel and El Paso consequently seethed with indignation.

The feeling was still running high when a second incident occurred in Villa-held Chihuahua. William S. Benton, an Englishman who, years before, had gone to Mexico to make his fortune, had married a Mexican lady and, through the years, had built up a large and profitable cattle business. Villa was fond of appropriating a few head of Benton's cattle for beef and Benton strongly objected to the practice. Being both brave and foolish, Benton came to Juárez to see Villa, and was never seen again. Britain was enraged over the disappearance of her subject. And the British colony in El Paso asked Mr. George C. Carothers, a special agent of the United States, to go to Juárez to find out what had happened to Benton. Villa at first claimed that Benton was well and safe. Later Villa said that he had been executed for using abusive language and drawing a six shooter in Villa's presence. Unofficially Carothers was told what was probably the true story. Benton had been insulting to Villa and Villa had sent him to Samalayuca under guard. There some *Villista* soldiers dug a shallow grave and stood Benton beside it. Benton calmly said that the grave was too shallow, that the coyotes would get him. The soldiers made the hole deeper. Then Rodolfo Fierro, Villa's brutal aide, drew his pistol and shot Benton through the head.²

Even as fury against the many atrocities and indignities committed in Mexico increased, the hospitality of El Paso did not waiver. General de la Luz Blanco, a Constitutional general from Sonora, came to confer with the El Paso *junta*. He came openly, without fear of arrest. General Lúis Terrazas, not only enjoyed the

¹O'Shaughnessy, *A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico*, 186.

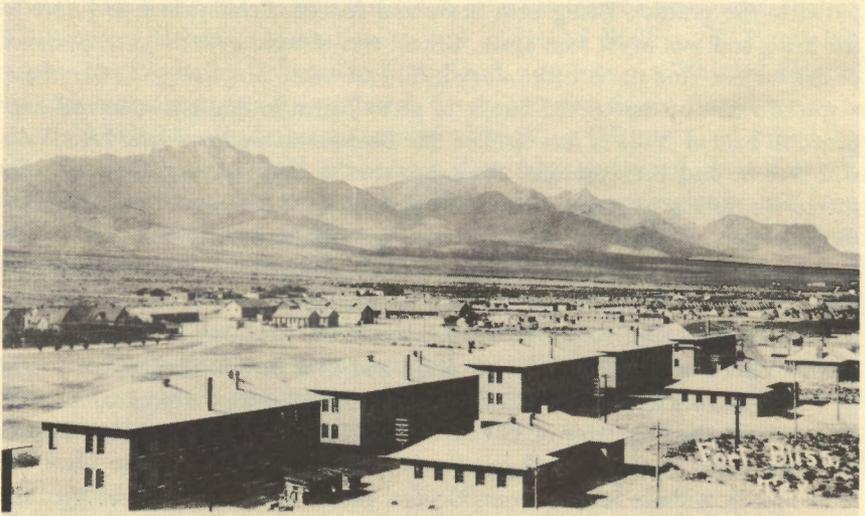
²Report of Mr. George C. Carothers, February 28, 1920, Fall Report, I, 1784-85.

safety of El Paso but hoped to make use of American diplomacy, too. He appealed to Consul Marion Letcher in Chihuahua to save his son, Lúis, from death at the hands of Villa. "I am eighty years old and neither life nor money mean much to me," the General said. "My son Lúis has thirteen children and they need him. I will gladly return to Chihuahua and Villa can kill me instead of my son." But Consul Letcher was powerless to negotiate such an exchange.

Another visitor to El Paso at this time was Señora Venustiano Carranza. Her husband was known as First Chief of the Revolution, as he was head of the Constitutional party. He was expected in Juárez, to confer with Pancho Villa and she waited for him with their two daughters. When Carranza arrived in Juárez for his conference, he sent his limousine to El Paso where the coat of arms of the *Constitutionalistas* was painted on the doors and the back, greatly enhancing its beauty.

Less willing visitors were the group of Huerta Federal soldiers who were held as prisoners at Fort Bliss. The number had considerably increased since the count had been taken in 1913. The Federals who had crossed at Presidio with Terrazas and the Spanish refugees had been added to the previously held prisoners. Now there were some five thousand. Local attorneys representing the Huerta government argued that the soldiers were illegally held. But the State and War Department officials stated that to allow the prisoners to return to Mexico during the upheaval would be a violation of the Hague Convention.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1914, the Tampico Incident made headlines and war between the United States and Mexico seemed imminent. A delegate



FORT BLISS IN 1916

(Richard K. McMaster Collection — now the property of the El Paso Historical Society.)

from the *Huertista* followers in El Paso went to Juárez to offer the services of all *Huertistas* in El Paso in the event of war. This was a delightful touch. The men who owed their very lives to the asylum afforded them in El Paso now offered their services to their former enemies against their hosts.

There can be little blame placed upon the Mexicans throughout this time, however, for their country was in such disorder that there was no logic in their reasoning. Huerta was in a death struggle with his powerful adversary, President Wilson. Carranza and Villa were in open break, thus splitting the Constitutionalist party. José Maytorena of Sonora was organizing a new party and Zapata still ruled the south. The trouble between Carranza and Villa was temporarily patched up in a meeting in El Paso between representatives of each faction. The two leaders realized the importance of a solid front. Then, when the tension over Mexico was at its greatest, in the last of June, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria was killed at Sarajevo. From then on the interest of the United States in Mexico was necessarily lessened. Wilson had succeeded in unseating Huerta who quitted his capital on July 15, leaving the presidency to the little known and unimportant Francisco Carbajal.

Huerta's departure actually left the presidency to First Chief Carranza, the United States-supported candidate, for Carbajal could not prevail against such strength as Carranza had. When the news reached El Paso, the many Constitutionalist officials prepared to depart for Monterrey to join Carranza for his trip to Mexico City. By August Carranza had entered the capital and was appointing his cabinet. Carbajal had quietly retired and Pancho Villa was noisily complaining that he had not been invited to Mexico City at all. Huerta was in exile



INDIAN SCOUT WITH VILLA'S ARMY
(Richard K. McMaster Collection—now the property of the El Paso Historical Society.)

in London. Yet there was no peace in Mexico. Maytorena headed a rebellion in Sonora where he aroused the Yaqui Indians against the Carranza government and all foreigners. The uprising was so serious that Carranza sent his two generals, Villa and Obergón, to negotiate peace. The two men with their staffs came to El Paso where they asked permission of General Pershing to be allowed a bodyguard of thirty-five picked rebel soldiers to accompany them through the United States to Nogales.

Too many men in Mexico tasted a little power and wanted more. Francisco Carbajal, president less than a month, did not put by his hopes as easily as he did his office. He came out of Mexico to El Paso after his resignation and lived with Abraham Luján, where he plotted to regain power. He hoped to make use of the former followers of Pascual Orozco who had been refugees in El Paso since Huerta's fall and were anxious for a chance to return to Mexico. A petition was circulated to raise funds; and plans were made for a newspaper to be published in *Chihuahuita*.

The most important revolutionary development of September, 1914, was the repudiation of the Carranza government by Pancho Villa who made a grand



AN INDIAN GIRL REVOLUTIONIST
WITH VILLA

(Richard K. McMaster Collection—now property of the El Paso Historical Society.)

statement that he would fight to restore Mexico to her people. Carranza continued to head the Constitutionalist party while Pancho Villa organized the Conventionalist party. A convention was held and the Villa-supported Eulalio Gutiérrez was selected provisional president. Mexico now had two presidents. Villa, in a dramatic flourish, sent word to Carranza that he would face the firing squad with Carranza if it would bring peace to Mexico.

Instead, Villa moved on Mexico City and installed Gutiérrez as president, forcing Carranza to retire to the city of Puebla. Zapata and Villa shared the occupation of the capital in its most terrifying experience of the revolution. The turmoil and strife in Mexico became incomprehensible. The factions, large and small, were innumerable. Carranza,

Villa, Zapata and Maytorena held parts of Mexico. Other leaders hoped to get into the fight and continued to plot in border towns like El Paso. There seemed no end to bloodshed and suffering. The peon shrugged his shoulders and said, "1915 can be no worse."

Mexico now entered the gloomiest period of the revolution. She was called "the land where peace breaks out once in a while."³ El Paso was irretrievably bound up in the affairs of her neighbor. The little border city was known as a refuge, a center of plotting and smuggling activity. No course remained but resignation to the fate of an accomplice.

Eduardo Iturbide, former governor of the Federal District under Huerta and Carbajal, was hiding in El Paso as the year 1915 began. He escaped from a train coming to the border at Santa Rosalia and made his way overland to Juárez where he was smuggled into El Paso. The Zapatistas had been most anxious to execute him for treason. Instead, he enjoyed the safety afforded by El Paso.

Meanwhile, an important meeting was arranged in El Paso. General Hugh L. Scott, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, met Pancho Villa, now chief of the Convention forces in Mexico. The purpose of their meeting was to prevent further bloodshed of Americans. The José Maytorena forces of Sonora were now the Convention forces and had surrounded the town of Naco on the Arizona border which the Carranza forces under General Benjamin Hill held. The Maytorena garrison at Nogales, Arizona was, however, surrounded by the *Carranzistas*. Both trouble spots faced American soil and any fighting would endanger American lives. First plans called for the meetings of the generals to take place on the international bridge but Special Agent Carothers urged that the discussions be carried on freely in both Juárez and El Paso.⁴ This was allowed and an agreement fortunately was reached, by which Villa agreed to allow the peaceful evacuation of Naco and the *Carranzistas* agreed not to molest the Nogales garrison.

It was at this same meeting that Villa hinted to General Scott of a grave situation. A Japanese officer had called on Villa in Mexico City and had told him that Japan was preparing for war against the United States. He encouraged Villa in a war against his neighbor and suggested that the Germans and Japanese would be his allies. Nor was this all a pipe dream of Villa's. George Carothers discovered circulars printed in Japanese and Spanish in El Paso urging Mexico to continue its fight against the United States for the Mexicans would have the support of the Japanese.⁵

Shortly after this meeting between Villa and Scott, the turmoil in Mexico

³Hackett, *The Mexican Revolution and the United States*, 1910-1926, 344.

⁴Special Agent Carothers to Secretary of State, January 5, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1915, 788.

⁵Report of George C. Carothers, February 28, 1920, Fall Report, I, 1777-78.

grew worse. General Roque Gonzáles Garza brought about his own appointment as provisional president, and Villa proclaimed himself executive head of the Republic with Felipe Angeles his minister of war. Simultaneously, four men claimed the presidency; General Garza, Eulalio Gutiérrez, Carranza and Villa.

Fighting throughout Mexico continued unabated and with no one faction gaining supremacy. Villa claimed great modernity for his army because he had four aeroplanes. The aero bombs, manufactured in Chihuahua, were five-inch pieces of steel pipe, filled with shrapnel and cemented with a protruding fuse.

The most important news to come out of El Paso at this time was the surprise arrest of General Victoriano Huerta and Pascual Orozco. Collector of Customs Cobb gives the following account of the arrest:

Late last night I learned through the railroad of Huerta's plans to leave the train at Newman Station, twenty miles north of El Paso. With Beckman (agent of Department of Justice),⁶ two deputy marshals, and Colonel G. H. Morgan accompanied by twenty-five soldiers, we went to Newman Station this morning and found Orozco and Huerta's son-in-law awaiting the train. Beckham invited Orozco and Huerta to accompany us to the Federal Building without arrest which they did, Huerta is suave though Orozco is not.⁷

The pair was charged with conspiring to set on foot another revolution in Mexico and thereby breaking the neutrality laws of the United States. Tom Lea acted as Huerta's attorney and had him released on a cash bond of fifteen thousand dollars while Huerta put up another bond of seventy-five hundred dollars for Orozco.⁸ Huerta then became a much feted prisoner. He was the guest of Colonel George H. Morgan at dinner where he was escorted by police. Even though Huerta was not feeling very well he told reporters: "I'm going to see that I won't be sick tomorrow. I am going to save up my appetite for the dinner which you newspapermen are giving me at the Hotel Sheldon. You can count on me, rain or revolution."

As Huerta was still under bond he was often taken to the Federal Building. His trial was set for July 1, but was postponed. On that day, when he emerged from the building he was greeted with *vivas* and handclapping by several hundred Mexicans. Huerta was sent home but troops guarded his home and also that of Pascual Orozco. The family of Orozco objected to this and made derisive remarks to the guards. One of the women called in Spanish: "Watch out or he'll run between your legs."⁹ Nevertheless, Orozco did disappear from his house one night and escaped his guards. By this action he forfeited his bond. At approxi-

⁶From these D. J. men evolved the present F.B.I.

⁷Collector Cobb to Secretary of State, June 27, 1915; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915*, 828; Corroborated by A. J. W. Schmid, *Interview*, November 9, 1945; Stevens, *Here Comes Pancho Villa*, 225.

⁸Stevens, *Here Comes Pancho Villa*, 225.

⁹Interview with Wilfrid Kranzthor, March 13, 1945. Mr. Kranzthor as a boy lived in the house next to the Orozcos.

mately the same time another Mexican leader made another type of escape. Worn and very old Porfirio Díaz died in exile in France.

Huerta remained a prisoner. The one-time president said that if the United States was willing to give him only conditional liberty he would prefer to remain in jail. Huerta's family came to El Paso and lived at 415 West Boulevard while it waited for the charges against the General to be cancelled. The charges remained but his case was never brought to court. Instead, Huerta was removed as a Federal prisoner to Fort Bliss where he was given quarters in an abandoned hospital. Six secret service agents guarded him but his family visited him every evening. For Huerta was a sick man. He had always been a heavy drinker, drinking as much as a quart of cognac a day. This was beginning to tell on him now. Tom Lea, his lawyer, got him transferred to a four room cottage but his health did not improve. He was a wistful figure in his foreign prison and his guards grew to love him. Once he said: "I failed because I was obliged to try the impossible. Mexico cannot live without the favor of the United States or, at least, without the enjoyment of its indifference. I had neither."¹⁰

With Huerta a virtual prisoner, General Hugh L. Scott came once more to El Paso to have a conference with Villa. Scott was one of the few men that Villa respected and heeded. On August 10, the two men had a three-hour conference at J. F. Williams' residence on West Rio Grande. Villa had issued an order confiscating all mines and smelters that were foreign-owned in his territory. This order General Scott prevailed upon him to rescind.

Soon a most dramatic incident occurred which interested every El Pasoan. Pascual Orozco and four companions were killed near Van Horn, Texas, by a posse of American ranchers. Orozco, after his escape from El Paso, had gone south along the river. He had forced a cook to prepare him a meal and later a blacksmith to shoe a horse. So a posse started after him and came upon his party as it was settled around a fire cooking a meal on High Lonesome Mountain. The posse killed the whole group. All the bodies were brought to Van Horn in an automobile and there packed in ice to await the arrival of the undertaker, J. J. Kaster. The Orozcos, both father and son, had met ignominious deaths. The father had been executed by Emiliano Zapata and the son had died the death of a horse thief. There were many Mexicans who became bitterly aroused by Orozco's death and they gathered into a muttering, grumbling crowd to meet the train on which his body was to come. Mayor Lea foresaw a riot and had the body taken off the train east of El Paso.¹¹

The body lay in state throughout one night and then amid a throng of nearly three thousand people it was interred in a vault at Concordia Cemetery.

¹⁰Stevens, *Here Comes Pancho Villa*, 227-228; *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1915, 829; Interview with Tom Lea, March 7, 1945.

¹¹Interview with Tom Lea, March 7, 1945.

There were many orations, chief among them was one by R. Escobeda. Escobeda declared that Orozco was a great man and soldier and not a horse thief. Among the many wreaths was one sent by Victoriano Huerta. It was a large one of lilies of the valley tied with mourning tulle and white streamers which had on them in purple ink: "General V. Huerta a General P. Orozco."

Another revolutionist was gone. And the powerful grip of Pancho Villa was beginning to weaken. General Felipe Angeles bought a ranch six miles from El Paso where he decided to retire. Dr. Villareal, Villa's surgeon general, came across to El Paso. Many other *Villistas* deserted the Juárez garrison. Rodolfo Fierro, known as Villa's official executioner and credited with more killings than any other man in Mexico, was drowned near Villa Ahumada. Fierro was best known for the murder of William Benton and his death was good news to many. Even Villa's prisoners were escaping. Lúis Terrazas, who had been held for nearly two years, escaped from the Chihuahua penitentiary.

Meanwhile, El Paso endeavored to do something about its undesirables. Always before it had been a haven for refugees of any faction. Now by an agreement between Mayor Tom Lea and General Pershing all soldiers of Villa's command and other persons from Juárez who were considered undesirable were to be detained and given six hours to leave the city.

Villa constantly lost power. He moved his wife, Luz, to Chihuahua City and prepared Juárez against an attack by the *Carranzistas* but there was no battle this time. By negotiation Juárez was surrendered to the Carranza troops. General Alvaro Obregón came to El Paso to take command in Juárez, establishing his headquarters in the Del Norte Hotel. On the last day of the year he entered Juárez for the first time. Pancho Villa hid himself in the mountains of Chihuahua. Hipólito Villa served his time in the El Paso county jail. General Huerta was seriously ill. The revolutionists were having a hard time of it. But they alone did not suffer for those troubled times. Many people and at least two countries suffered, too. The revolution had developed into an international tragedy.

The month of January, 1916, saw hopes for peace waning. General Huerta knew that he would never live to see another New Year. He was removed from Fort Bliss to his own home in El Paso where Dr. M. P. Schuster, his physician, operated again and again on the dying man. Huerta had cirrhosis of the liver.¹² But the old man held on to life long enough to hear of two other important events in January, 1916. Don Lúis Terrazas, Jr., after an absence of two years from his family, during which time he was a prisoner of Pancho Villa, arrived in El Paso. He was met in Juárez by his brother, Alberto Terrazas, and on the

¹²Stevens, *Here Comes Pancho Villa*, 225-227; Interview with Tom Lea, March 7, 1945.

American side by his father, General Terrazas. Captain Bill Greet¹³ who saw and talked with Lúis said that he was "so tortured he could not look a man in the eyes." He did not long survive.¹⁴

Yet even the fate of Lúis Terrazas did not compare with that of the mining officials of the Cusiuhiriachic Mining Company. The first news of the tragedy later known as the Santa Ysabel Massacre came in a terse telegram:

The Manager of American Smelting and Refining Company has just given me confidential message from employee in Chihuahua: Three, yesterday afternoon, passenger train with Cusi (Mining Company) employees was held up by bandits at Kilometer 68, shooting C. R. Watson, W. J. Wallace, M. B. Romero, Thomas M. Evans, Charles A. Pringle, Maurice Anderson, R. P. McHatton, J. P. Coy, Alexander Hall, Charles Wadleigh, E. L. Robinson, George W. Newman, R. H. Simmons, A. H. Couch, H. C. Haase, Thomas Johnson, J. W. Woon, W. D. Pierce. Will give details later. The de facto authorities are unequal to the necessities of the situation.¹⁵

These were the facts of the massacre as first known. They would have been the entire story had there not been the one survivor, Thomas B. Holmes. Tom Holmes reached El Paso the day after the massacre and brought with him the details.

Our train left Chihuahua January 10, about 11 a.m. It was stopped at or about Rancho Baeza, a point five miles west of Santa Ysabel, between 1:30 or 2 o'clock that afternoon. The last car was just inside a cut. Evans Newman, McHatton and I were the first to get off; Watson was getting off the steps behind us. Just after alighting I heard a volley of rifle shots from the other side of the cut and just above the train from a bunch of twelve men standing shoulder to shoulder and shooting directly at us . . . McHatton fell. They were still shooting at Watson when I ran diagonally back from the train down grade, where I fell in some bushes probably a hundred feet from the rear of the train. I lay quiet and looked around . . . There I lay for half an hour and heard the shooting as they were evidently finishing the Americans . . . Later, after going to several ranch houses, I met an unknown Mexican who directed me to Chihuahua.¹⁶

After the massacre it was necessary to bring the bodies to the States and to this end a special train was sent into Mexico with Mexican soldier guards.¹⁷ The bandits who had perpetrated the deed were commanded by Pablo Lopez and (?) Beltran, both of whom were Villa colonels.¹⁸ Immediately the American Smelt-

¹³Captain Bill Greet was police captain in El Paso during this time and knew many stories and persons of the revolution.

¹⁴Stevens, *Here Comes Pancho Villa*, 157-168.

¹⁵Collector Cobb to Secretary of State, January 11, 1916; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916*, 651.

¹⁶Cobb to Lansing, January 12, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916*, 651.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 615, Secretary of State to Collector Cobb, January 11, 1916.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 652, Cobb to Lansing, January 12, 1916.

ing and Refining Company telegraphed its manager at Chihuahua to come out of Mexico and to bring various other Americans with him. The train bearing these fifty-two people reached El Paso safely on January 14.¹⁹

The most dangerous night of the revolution so far as the tranquility of El Paso was concerned was the night the train bearing the bodies from Santa Ysabel arrived. A great crowd of Americans gathered and headed for "South of Town." Tom Lea ordered out every policeman and these officers stopped the crowd at pistol point on Overland Street. If the mob had not been controlled, they would have massacred the Mexicans living in *Chihuahuita*.²⁰ The United States Consul, T. D. Edwards, stationed in Juárez, appeared in a hotel lobby in El Paso where a crowd hooted and shouted at him: "Villa's consul, not ours. We have eighteen dead boys in town now because of such as you." Joint funeral services were held at St. Clement's Episcopal Church for Maurice Anderson and E. L. Robinson. El Paso went into mourning. Even as it mourned its dead, Victoriano Huerta day dying. On January 13, he received the last sacraments and spoke the few significant words required of him by the priest. General Huerta, well-beloved by many El Pasoans, lay at peace with the Mexican flag draped over his couch. The window of his death chamber faced south, toward the mountains of his country. He was buried in Concordia Cemetery. His wife left for Cuba to make her home until she could return to Mexico.

In February, Villa committed more atrocities in Chihuahua. The bandit seemed to be anxious to draw the United States into the revolution by any means. When the smaller killings of Americans did not succeed he planned the infamous atrocity, the Columbus raid.

A strange story has since come out about the Columbus raid. In January, 1916, A. C. Rowsey, an Associated Press correspondent, gave a soiled letter to the managing editor of the *El Paso Morning Times*, James S. Black. The letter was from one of Pancho Villa's cast off mistresses telling that Villa planned to raid the Southern Pacific's Golden State Limited. Rowsey sent the story out and Villa naturally did not raid the train. Rowsey was discharged by the Associated Press. Black took over Rowsey's correspondence with the ex-mistress and when he was told of the plans for the Columbus raid he sent the news to Washington where it was scorned. He then went to General Pershing at Bliss who gave the story no credence and did not reinforce the Thirteenth Cavalry at Columbus.²¹ Finally Black went to Colonel Herbet J. Slocum of the Thirteenth but Slocum resented his interference. After doing all in his power to prevent or prepare for the raid, Black sent two reporters and a telegraph operator to Col-

¹⁹Cobb to Secretary of State, January 13, January 14, 1916. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1916, 655.

²⁰Interview with Tom Lea, March 7, 1945.

²¹Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, 42.

umbus where they sat in an old box car and waited to flash out the news of the raid to the country.²²

On March 5, the news of a Villa raid on Columbus, New Mexico broke. Several buildings were burned and several American soldiers were killed. Twenty-three Villistas died.²³ Before the bodies of the American dead could reach El Paso, plans were being made for an American punitive expedition. On March 10, General John J. Pershing was placed in command of five thousand men to enter Mexico and annihilate Villa. The expedition was planned to start from Columbus.²⁴ Sam Drehan promptly volunteered as a scout with Pershing and was accepted.²⁵

After various hasty preparations, the expedition entered Mexico on March 15. Several valuable days had passed since the raid and Villa had used them to make his escape.²⁶ The United States employed air scouts to tract down and locate the *Villistas* but Villa himself had disappeared.

The entrance of American troops into Mexican territory enraged the government of Carranza. A meeting was arranged in El Paso between General Hugh Scott and General Alvaro Obregón, the Mexican minister of war. The purpose of the meeting was to settle the dispute between Mexico and the United States over the punitive expedition. Scott had orders not to agree to immediate withdrawal. Though the general public did not then how serious the situation was, the State Department did. "The situation appears critical and deadlock certain. From reliable source am informed that Obregón made the statement to his officers that one mile or five hundred is the same thing insofar as affecting the sovereignty of the Government of Mexico . . . Border sentiment almost unanimous against withdrawal."²⁷ This was the telegram sent by Special Agent Carothers to the State Department. General Scott's message contained the same ominous tenor: "Mexican general has been instructed to be fully prepared to crush or annihilate the American forces in Mexico in case of non-withdrawal."²⁸ Negotiations were resumed the next day at the Del Norte Hotel but no news of the results was given to the press. General Scott met General Obregón about twelve o'clock, May 2, with J. H. McQuatters, an interpreter, and a stenographer. An agreement was finally reached but it was not altogether satisfactory to either side. The agreement was that the Carranza forces would endeavor to show their ability to control the situation in northern Mexico while American troops re-

²²Benjamin, *The Inside Story*, 1-9.

²³Carothers to Bryan, March 9, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1916,

²⁴Interview with A. J. Schmid, November 9, 1945.

²⁵Major Richard Burges' Scrapbook, 90A, 97.

²⁶Jackson, *Pership's Expedition into Mexico*, 47.

²⁷Special Agent Carothers to Secretary of State, May 1, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1916, 536.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 536, General Scott to Secretary of War, May 1, 1916.

mained in Mexico temporarily. This was a decided compromise for both countries as Obregón wanted the immediate withdrawal of the American troops and the United States wanted to be given *carte blanche* in its hunt for Villa.²⁹

The United States accepted this agreement but President Carranza refused to do so. Conferences continued because a break in them would prove fatal to the peace effort. Obregón promised a strong border guard on condition that Pershing's troops leave immediately. The conference did end on May 12 without agreement. The situation was critical. Each year the United States had found itself more involved in Mexican affairs. The question now was whether there would be complete involvement or a gradual receding of interest. There had to be a critical point and this was it. The crisis was postponed, however, by Carranza's message four days later that he would agree to Scott's informal understanding with General Obregón which the United States had already recognized.

Yet the crisis was not over. Pershing's troops advanced farther into Mexico and Carranza ordered his generals to prevent the advance of American troops. Any incident caused much commotion in El Paso. The border town was nearly under arms and Juárez thought she was under seige for two hours one hot June day. The United States border brigade had battle practice. Juárez was terrified, believing an American invasion had come. Crowds rushed to the bridges where they thought they'd see the entrance of American troops into Juárez.

Some twenty thousand United States troops lived in military encampments on the mesa near Fort Bliss. There were fifteen thousand national guardsmen and five thousand regulars. At such a height of preparedness and intense mobilization, the United States began a deadening period of waiting and negotiation. Her policy with Mexico had made her seem in the eyes of the world a nambypamby nation, vacillating and weak. Perhaps it was this lack of determination that made Germany flaunt United States warnings.

An American-Mexican joint commission met in New London, Connecticut, to consider some sort of international or neutral constabulary along the border. Its negotiations ended in the signing of a protocol which provided for the recall of the American troops from Mexico and for the patrol of the border by both American and Mexican troops, each on its own side of the line. This joint commission meeting ended in the triumph of the Mexicans and the unconditional retirement of the Pershing Expedition.

In January, 1917, the retreat began. The camp at El Valle was broken and the troops started their march toward the border. National Guard units stationed in El Paso were transferred to other points. The withdrawal was to take no more than ten days and as Pershing withdrew, Pancho Villa entered the formerly occupied districts. The journey out of Mexico wasn't the triumphal return of a victorious army or the dejected retreat of the defeated. It was a stoical, silent,

²⁹Carothers to Secretary of State, May 3, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1916, 537-38.

unenthusiastic march. The Americans and many Mexicans who lived in the Colonia Dublán district left in haste as Pershing departed. During Pershing's stay in Mexico he had acquired a number of Chinese cooks who were residents of Mexico. These cooks enjoyed their new station in life immensely and got rich playing fan tan with the troops. The Mexicans already hated the Chinese but after their association with the invaders the hatred was intemperant. When at last Pershing reached the boundary on his retreat, he paid his Chinese cooks and told them goodbye. The next morning all the Chinamen were in Columbus saying "hello." This of course was in violation of the Oriental Exclusion Act but Pershing could not send them back to sure death in Mexico. Instead he placed them in a stockade and many months later the Congress passed a special act allowing them to remain in this country. In El Paso they were known as "Pershing Chinamen."³⁰

On January 29, the Pershing troops began arriving in El Paso from Columbus. They received a great reception but nothing like the one which was arranged by the Chamber of Commerce for General Pershing himself. The city decorated and dinner planned at which only one hundred and fifty people were present. The price was fifteen dollars a plate. Pershing arrived on February 7 and rode through the streets of El Paso where he received a great ovation from the crowds.

On March 12, 1917, General Venustiano Carranza was elected president of Mexico. The beginning of comparative peace for Mexico was elected with him. The Mexican people were exhausted by their civil strife and the threat of American intervention. With a United States-recognized and Mexican-elected president, there was a chance for peace to come at last.

● ● ●

The revolution, which consumed the thoughts of El Pasoans for eight years and filled the city with new and often unsolved problems, could not but leave its mark on every phase of city life. Economically, there were two related but opposing effects. The town profited by the revolution in the early years when many wealthy refugees hustled out of Chihuahua to make their temporary home on the American side of the border. Their wealth, much of which they brought with them, gradually filled El Pasoan's pockets where it jingled pleasantly and gained much sympathy for the spenders. Later, in 1916 and 1917, the many National Guard units stationed at Fort Bliss, added their monthly pay to this refugee money which increased the prosperity of the entire city. But not all the refugees were rich nor did all the rich refugees retain their wealth. Gradually the population was increased by these elements of the needy Mexicans.

El Paso was dependent to a considerable extent on the great customs smelter. This Guggenheim plant employed many people and its welfare had a direct

³⁰Interview with W. H. Fryer, November 13, 1945.

bearing on the welfare of the city. The turbulence in northern Mexico caused an ore shortage and the smelter had to sputter along as best it could, stopping often and throwing men in unemployment.

Culturally and socially, El Paso began to grow up and feel important. The town had not received much publicity until this time but now numerous reporters were based in the border city. Many of them were impressed by the town and the situation and felt compelled to write books and articles praising the city. At first, El Paso greatly appreciated this publicity and tried to befriend the reporters with elaborate banquets and parties. Later when the continued revolutions began to cause unfortunate economic disturbances, El Paso did not show much appreciation for publicity.³¹

The most unfortunate and probably greatest effect of the revolution was the rising hatred, distrust and half-submerged anger between Mexicans and Anglos. Every American realized that any unknown Mexican he saw on the streets might be a *Villista* or directly responsible for the kidnapping or killing of an American. It was hard to forget Santa Ysabel and Columbus. El Pasoans felt indignant because of the mistreatment of their compatriots and the slanders of Mexican newspapers. The Mexicans, too, began to distrust the *gringos* and to fear them. "Might not these people at any time invade our Mexico?" they thought. "Have they not interfered constantly in our revolution, harbored our enemies, put bans on food and ammunition, imprisoned our one-time president? Are they not to be feared, these *gringos*, who seem to want to control our country?" The Americans were wrathful. The Mexicans were afraid and angry. There was no compromise. El Paso was left with this intangible residue of revolution. For years now she has strived to overcome it. She is still working toward this goal and with increasing success. But the scars of the revolution are with her still.

³¹Turner, *Bullets, Bottles and Gardenias*, 70.

BOOK REVIEWS

ROY BEAN: LAW WEST OF THE PECOS

by C. L. Sonnichsen

(New York: Devin-Adair, 1958. \$4.00)

Heroes often seem to be utterly devoid of qualification for the role until the very moment of destiny. Then they climb to stature, sometimes for the briefest of spans, sometime for time immortal.

Roy Bean was one of the most unlikely candidates for a hero's mantle ever to don one. He qualified in no respect at any time, from birth to death. He never rose to destiny, for to him destiny never really came. For him there was no true "moment of truth."

Had there been one, he probably would have destroyed the legend before it was born. His courage was that of the skilled duellist only. In moral integrity he was totally lacking. His physical appearance literally clarified the debauchery that was his normal way of life. Yet somehow he became the giant of his region and his era.

Sometimes errant villainy can confer that distinction upon a man. But his dastardly was not of that score. He was a cheat, a thief, a liar, a short-change artist, a bully, even a killer. But all in petty fashion, cheap and minuscule in scale. His blackguardy was the kind that rouses contempt rather than hatred.

The only explanation for his fame, for the niche he occupies in West Texas folklore, seems to be that what events race at floodtide across virgin ground, any channelizing influence, however shallow, however meandering, becomes by sheer physical circumstance the mainstream. Roy Bean was on the scene, with no place else to go. He had brought to Langtry from Kentucky and Chihuahua and California and Mesilla and Beantown (San Antonio) nothing but a record of bistro conquests, a rope burn across a permanently-dislocated neck, and the opening stock for the Jersey Lily saloon. He had the opportunity and the arrogance to fill the void that no one else wanted. And so became Law West of the Pecos.

This book is no hoar-laden biography, chronicling every movement of its subject as the minute hand ratchets across the face of the grandfather clock. Instead it reads like the script of one of the TV westerns currently extant — a series of illustrative episodes replete with dialogue, shoot-em-up drama, and tongue-in-cheek wit. It is written in Leland Sonnichsen's typical two-dimensional style, impacts the mind's ear even as it delights the mind's eye.

Fifteen years after its original publication by the Macmillan Company. Devin-Adair has re-issued the book as a "Western Americana Classic." That it is in truth.

Frank Feuille III

HANGING JUDGE

. by *Fred Harvey Harrington*

(Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, 1951)

That vast expanse of country known as the "Indian Territory" in the 1870's was a region noted primarily for its famous outlaws and gunslingers. It was the territory inhabited by such famous hoodlums as the Dalton gang, the Younger Brothers, Belle Starr and the Verdigris Kid. Into this valley of death in 1875 rode Judge Charles Isaac Parker and his wife. They settled in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where the Judge "buckled down to work and kept on working until he died." It did not take him long to earn his sobriquet of "Hanging Judge."

It was a fluke of circumstance that brought Ike Parker to the Southwestern frontier. Upon his retirement from Congress in March of 1875, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Utah Territory by President Grant. Parker, however, had long since been nipped by the western virus and he took an important step. He wrote the president requesting that he be made, instead, Judge of the U.S. Court for the Western District of Arkansas. His wish was granted.

Unlike the Robinhoods which current drama and fiction have devised, the badmen of the old west were not heroes, "brave and resourceful." They were as vicious and cowardly a cast as ever trod the boards of destiny. They were "preying wolves . . . unfit to live and unfit to remain at large." Nor were their crimes the romantic sort the storytellers picture. They stole from the poor, they robbed their best friends, they assaulted the wives of their neighbors and crimes of lust and sex were rampant.

Arrived at Ft. Smith, investigation showed Parker that his court was logged with corruption, "disorganized, incapable, corrupt . . ." He swore to "administer justice without respect to persons and do equal rights to the rich and poor." This he did — and at once!

Parker opened his court the day his oath of office was administered, taking up eleven cases which ranged the gamut of crime. During his first official term he heard eighteen murder cases, sentencing all but three to be "hanged by the neck until dead." Statistics tell that Parker disposed of more than 600 cases each year. He was proud to be the "Hanging Judge" and the territory was proud to have him.

"Hanging Judge" is a brilliant and moving historical and sociological saga of the southwest with Judge Parker as the central hero. He was strong, indomitable and incorruptible and he brought law and order to the territory over which he presided for 16 years, predicating his power upon the firm belief that the Almighty had created him for this purpose.

Mary Ellen B. Porter

El Paso, Texas

CONTRIBUTORS

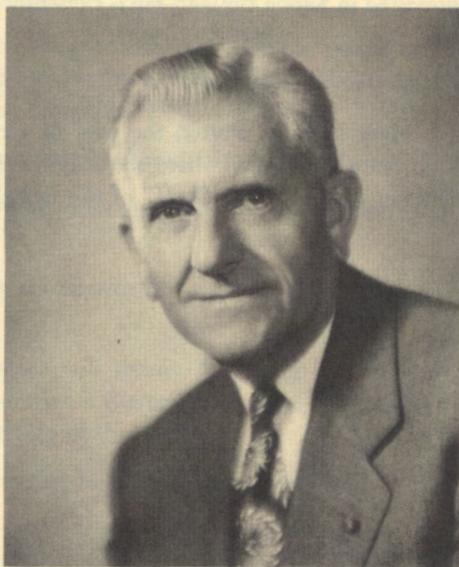
Dr. Joseph Leach is Professor of English at Texas Western College. He received a leave of absence for the school year 1957-58 to teach in the University of Maryland, European Division. He was married in June in Gibraltar to Miss Dorothy Stuart, an instructor in English at TWC.

Dr. Leach is the author of one book, *The Typical Texan*, and of a number of articles which include "Farewell to Horse-Back, Mule-Back, 'Foot-Back' and Praire-Schooner: The Railroad Comes to Town" published in *PASSWORD*, V. 1, No. 2 (May, 1956).

Frank B. Putnam is a native Texan now living in California where he is Ass't. Cashier and Historian of the Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles. His father, Arthur B., was a U. S. Customs Inspector and was drowned in the Rio Grande while on duty. His mother who now lives in Alhambra, was Deputy Collector of Internal Revenue for the Third District of Texas from 1890 until 1912. She handled all of the Spanish-American War revenue stamps for that district.

Mr. Putnam is deeply interested in civic and historical affairs. He is a member of the El Paso Historical Society; the Historical Society of Southern California; vice president of the California Society of Sons of the Revolution; a member of the executive committee of the Los Angeles County Museum; treasurer and former president of the Optimist Home for Boys; and a director of the Russian Children's Welfare Society.

Mr. Putnam writes that his "principal occupation for several years has been the pursuit of a copy of Vol. 1, No.1 of *PASSWORD*; still pursuing."



Frank B. Putnam

Mardee Belding de Wetter, a native El Pasoan, is a graduate of Texas Western College where she received both her A.B. and M.A. (History) degrees.

Mrs. de Wetter's chief interest is in the education of her two young sons, Charles and David. She is an active member of the Junior League and of the Junior Woman's Guild of St. Clement (Episcopal).

For further biographical data and a photograph see *PASSWORD*, Vol. III, No. 2 (April, 1958).

Frank Feuille III, Associate Editor of *PASSWORD*, is vice president of Food Mart, Inc., and former president of the El Paso Historical Society. He is the author of *The Cotton Road*, a story of the Civil War laid in East Texas.

Mr. Feuille lived for several years in Venezuela where he became deeply interested in Simón Bolívar. He is presently at work on a novel based on Bolívar's life.

Mary Ellen B. Porter, the wife of Dr. Eugene O. Porter, is a graduate of Ohio State University where she majored in political science. She is a frequent reviewer for the "Book Shelf" of the *El Paso Herald-Post*.

ANNUAL WRITERS' CONTEST

EL PASO HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL PRIZE AWARD FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND WRITING

The Board of Directors announces the establishment of three annual \$100 prize awards to be given for the best paper or historical essay about the El Paso Southwest in each of the following categories:

- I. Research and historical writing by a high school student;
- II. Research and historical writing by an undergraduate college or university student;
- III. Research and historical writing by an amateur or professional historian not eligible to enter categories I and II.

The winning paper in each category will receive \$100 and will be published in *PASSWORD*. Deadline for entries is December 1, 1958. Awards will be announced at the January, 1959, meeting of the Society.

Rules governing the entry of papers may be obtained by writing to:

The El Paso Historical Society
El Paso Public Library
El Paso, Texas

HISTORICAL NOTES

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Board of Directors of your Society has voted to conduct an intensive membership drive for 1959. It is hoped that the present membership which is already the largest of any local society in the State can be doubled. To accomplish this goal every member is asked to bring in at least one new member. Or better still, give memberships to your friends and relatives for Christmas gifts. Use the gift card which accompanied this issue of *PASSWORD*. If you need more cards, contact Mrs. T. W. Lanier.

OLD FORT BLISS

The accompanying picture of the Officers' Quarters at Old Fort Bliss, Harts Mill, was taken in 1905. The building is still standing, although converted into an apartment house, but the trees are long gone.

The photograph was given to our Society by Mrs. Edith Phelan Lane, P. O. Box 999, El Paso.



The following item was taken from *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. LXII, No. 1 (July 1958): "Rowena Ferguson's book on *Editing the Small Magazine* was published by the Columbia University Press in March. There is one undoubted gem of wisdom which

ought to give pause and call for thoughtful consideration from all readers of magazines: 'It is important to realize that going to press satisfactorily depends as much on what you have done six months previously as upon what you do on the day of the printer's deadline.' Constructive editing is a long, laborious process ordinarily overlooked by the average reader of a periodical." To all of which your editor says, "AMEN!"

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