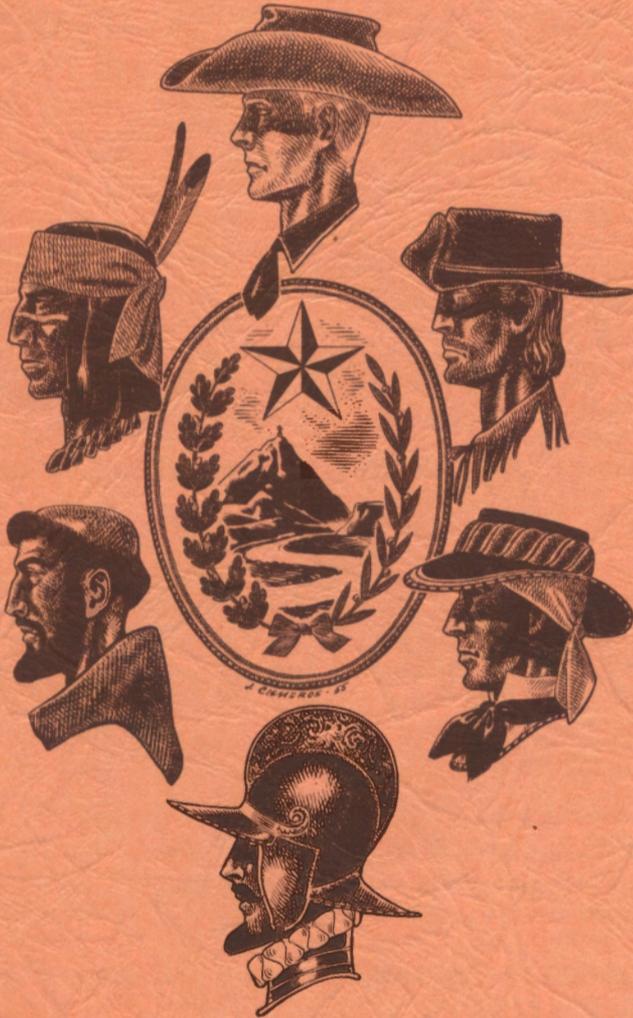


PASSWORD



OF THE
EL PASO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PASSWORD

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Jack C. Vowell, Jr.



JACK C. VOWELL, JR.

The beginning of a new year should be a time of evaluation and of expectation. So it is with the El Paso Historical Society; and today we confront the problem of formulating a long-range developmental program. Only in this way can we avoid the adoption of a "by guess and by gosh" approach to the increasing demands being placed upon us by our members, our community, and national and local historical organizations. The El Paso Historical Society cannot be all things to all people. We cannot be a general service organization and still do justice to our primary function as an institution for the discovery, publication, and dissemination of historical knowledge. Neither can we be simply a social or-

ganization. This, I believe, is well recognized by all of us.

What is not so well recognized, however, is that 1959 is going to be a critical year for our Society. We are being forced by circumstances to make decisions which may set the pattern for the Society's operations in the years to come. These decisions cannot be postponed, and they can only effectively be made by the membership of the El Paso Historical Society.

This year will mark the tercentenary of the founding of Paso del Norte, now Ciudad Juarez. Plans for celebrating this event are now being formulated, and we have already been asked to play an important role in sponsoring and promoting this celebration. The extent to which the El Paso Historical Society participates in the Tercentenary Celebration is a matter which ultimately must be determined by the membership. Not only will the acceptance of such responsibility require a consignment of manpower and money, it will also touch upon a basic policy question of whether the Society should become a sponsor for such city-wide or regional activities. Certainly, the record of our recent sponsorship, in cooperation with other civic organizations, of the Overland Stage Centennial indicates that we can assume responsibilities of this nature and do a respectable job. Still, it is vital to realize that future activities of this kind will have to be more widely disbursed among the membership if we are to avoid placing an un-

endurable workload upon a small group. This is a matter to which I hope you will give some careful thought.

In the field of historical research and the preservation of historical documents and relics, we face several problems. During the past year, the size of our historical collection has rapidly grown. We still do not have an immense collection of items of historical significance, but we must now begin to think seriously about the storage and preservation of such research materials. If we intend to build a significant historical collection and expand our research activities, we must assume the responsibility for providing adequate storage facilities and begin the formulation of a research program which may involve purchase of manuscripts, and books as well as the eventual sponsorship of full-fledged research projects. The initiation of the Annual Prize Awards for Historical Research and Writing is a small step in this direction, as is the oral history project which is now in the process of getting underway.

Related to this is the hope of obtaining a permanent home for the Society. In past years, we have postponed consideration of this matter because of the financial considerations involved. There are other important problems here involved, such as the question of duplicating the services of already existing community institutions. However, the continuing growth of the Society and the enlargement of our activities indicates that we must soon make some decision concerning this vital matter.

There are, of course, other concerns demanding our attention, but the ones already mentioned bring into focus the necessity for the initiation of effective long-range planning. In the final analysis, all will depend upon the willingness of each of us to give something of ourselves in order that together we may thoughtfully and prudently achieve the purposes which led to the establishment of the El Paso Historical Society. The year ahead of us is, for your officers and members of the Board of Directors, a time of great expectations. We shall exert every effort to maintain the high standard of achievement which has already been established; and, with the guidance and assistance of our membership, I feel confident that our common aspirations will be realized.

THE
EL PASO - FORT YUMA
WAGON ROAD: 1857 - 1860

by Jack L. Cross

Part One of Two Parts

During the Civil War the railroad came into its own, but only after the groundwork had been laid by explorations, topographical surveys, and wagon road building in the Trans-Mississippi West. Little was known about the area won from Mexico in 1848, and the curiosity of a still-pioneering generation was great. For several years following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the army was the major source of authoritative information about these regions. The Bureau of Topographical Engineers first began to systematically collect and disseminate this information. It, also, was the first federal agency to build wagon roads in the territories.

Because of a technological lag the engineers built wagon roads instead of railroads, constantly accumulating, however, experience and knowledge that was to contribute mightily to later railroad development. Private entrepreneurs were given not only land and money subsidies by the nations' politicians, but army-derived topographical and geographical knowledge as well.

One part of the winning of the west that is often overlooked was the acceptance of certain responsibilities by the national government to the people residing in the acquired territories and to its citizens who were soon to migrate there. Among these duties to fall upon the central authority was that of insuring peace and prosperity to the area. Roads were a basic desideratum in such a promise. It was not accidental that settlers in New Mexico petitioned for them before they called for assistance in educating their youngsters. Trade is important to all communities of men, but especially to newly established ones. The military situation also offered the inhabitants and the federal government excuses for government assistance in building roads; connections of rapid communication between frontier forts was necessary to keep down the frequent Indian forays.

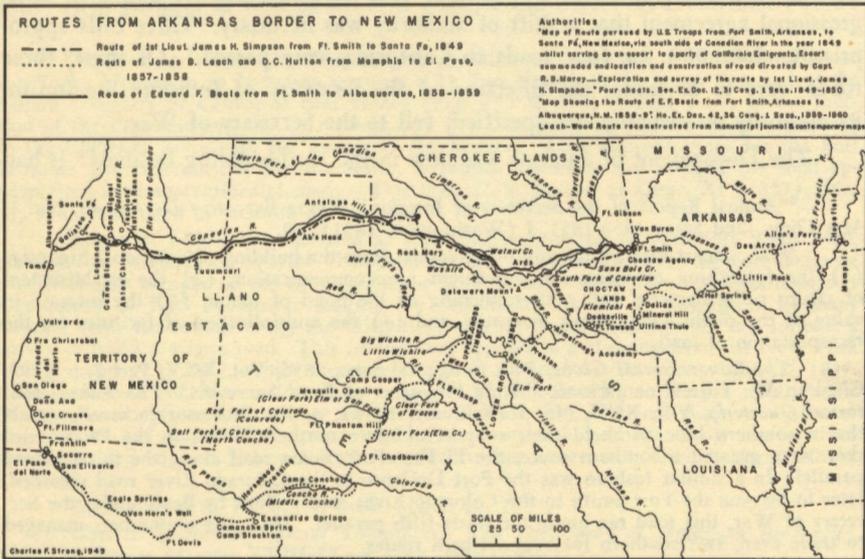
Whatever the many excuses invoked happened to be, these early demands were followed by a period of exploration that eventuated in a comprehensive local road building program in New Mexico by the army. The process was simple: the representatives of the territory would petition Congress for a road-improvement appropriation, their territorial delegate would persuade Congressmen to support his cause, the army would support the territorial pleas on the grounds of military necessity, and the politicians would vote the money designating the authority under whom it was to be spent.

The discovery of gold in and the tremendous increase of migration to the California diggings, created a demand for trans-territorial routes. Again, it was the federal government that was expected to establish them. Politicians wrangled over these lush appropriations, and except for one road along the thirty-fifth parallel, gave the others to the civilian administration of the Department of Interior. Thus, if one considers wagon roads and railroads as part and parcel of one process, the transfer of authority over their construction moved from the army to the Interior Department and finally into private hands. In this pattern of development, laissez-faire is seen to be a learned response.

Wagon roads were a rehearsal for the more extravagant transportation age that was to follow.

The United States Department of Interior's interest in building roads was foreshadowed by one of its earliest Secretaries, Thomas Ewing. He reported that some kind of transportation link was necessary to meet the everyday commercial needs of west coast citizens as well as to protect American citizens living in Indian country. Citing the resolutions and proposals of the St. Louis and Memphis railroad conventions, Ewing was unconcerned about what kind of road should eventually be built. That depended on Congress. Certainly the decisions about its location and the agencies which should build it had to be left to the national legislature.¹

¹"Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior," *House Executive Documents*, No. 1, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 1849-1850, III (Washington, 1850), 13 f.



Ewing's successor, Alexander H. H. Stuart, repeated these sentiments in his 1850 report. Again, it was immaterial to him whether the road was built of rails, was a turnpike, or a plank road. Something was needed to aid the increasing migration that in 1850 was "... a toilsome journey of months' duration through comparatively trackless wastes, or by a circuitous voyage, attended with many privations and dangers."² But prior to laying final plans a better knowledge of the country was necessary. Therefore, Stuart urged a reconnaissance of the newly won West.³ Thus, exploration and survey of the Trans-Mississippi West had the support of the Interior Department as well as that of the Department of War.

Unlike their predecessors, who expressed an early interest in transportation problems, later Secretaries of Interior looked on while the War Department's Topographical Engineers dominated the government's road building program in the West between 1850-1857. However, the military's efforts did not satisfy all observers. California's Senator Weller, in debating the location of authority for the construction of four transcontinental wagon roads, recommended that it be given to mail contractors. He suggested this because these men wasted little time in weather observations or in measuring mountain heights, but instead, they wielded shovels and pickaxes with vigor. Weller thought the Topographical Engineers too interested in the collection of geological and botanical information to build roads. At all events, they were too slow. He illustrated his point by reminding the Congress that fifteen months had elapsed since it had authorized the Fort Riley-Bridger's Pass road on which work had not yet begun.⁴

Weller's arguments were effective. The resulting debates ended in Congressional agreement that a shift of authority was necessary. Three bills appropriating \$600,000 for four roads to California were passed.⁵ Of these, three roads were to be under the direction of the Secretary of Interior; the fourth, its authority accidentally not specified, fell to the Secretary of War.⁶

The Department of Interior was now in the road-building business. It had

²"Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior," *House Executive Documents*, No. 1, 31st Cong., 2nd Sess., 1850-1851, I (Washington, 1851), 30.

³*Ibid.* Stuart foresaw the following results from the building of a national highway: (1) the furnishing of means of convenient intercommunication, (2) the establishment of chains of settlements and a strengthening of the bond of union, (3) the increase in value of the public lands along the route, and (4) the multiplication of facilities for the transportation of mail.

⁴*The Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., 1856, Vol. XXV, Part 2, p. 1298. Cited in W. Turrentine Jackson, "Army Engineers as Road Surveyors," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (February, 1949), p. 58. Professor Jackson suggests that a southern bloc withheld their support of more northern routes to the Pacific until they were granted a southern route, the El Paso-Fort Yuma road along the thirty-second parallel. In a similar fashion was the Fort Defiance to the Colorado River road obtained, later to become the Fort Smith to the Colorado River route. Built by Beale under the Secretary of War, this road ran along the thirty-fifth parallel. Thus, the southerners managed to trade even, two southern for two northern routes.

no organization or bureau for carrying out these projects as had the War Department in its Bureau of Topographical Engineers. Furthermore, it lacked experience. One interested party was convinced that these inadequacies would be compensated for by the diminution of military formalities and the substitution of civilian control. He suggested that Congress

. . . took it from the War Department, that it might not be baffled, or smothered by the routine, and forms, *delays*, and *ceremonies of military etiquette, and parade*.⁷

These works of national interest now became political footballs. Hats in hand, businessmen, contractors, and unemployed explorers lined up outside the Interior office for appointments. The absence of any organization or of any road-building procedures gave them an excellent opportunity to flood Interior officials with road-building advice and recommendations for their many versatilities.

Secretary of Interior Jacob Thompson, a Buchanan appointee, had taken office only a short time before the passage of the road bills. Although a "State Rights" southerner and a cabinet representative of the southern bloc he seemed to find nothing contradictory in executing these internal improvement projects.⁸ The selection of personnel to man his wagon road building program was the first problem facing Thompson. One of the earliest applications for superintending the location and construction of the El Paso-Fort Yuma road reached Thompson within one month after the passage of the law. It was from Albert H. Campbell whose experience included a familiarity with the topography along the thirty-fifth parallel as well as his civil engineering duties on Lieutenant Parke's

⁷These roads were: (1) Fort Ridgely in Minnesota territory to the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains in Nebraska territory, (2) Fort Kearny to the South Pass and to the eastern boundary of California near Honey Lake, (3) El Paso to Fort Yuma at the junction of the Colorado and the Gila rivers, and (4) Fort Defiance in New Mexico territory to the Colorado River near the mouth of the Mohave. Later appropriations for the Fort Defiance road extended it to Fort Smith, Arkansas, eastward, and brought the total appropriated for transcontinental roads to \$750,000. *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XI (1857), 162, 27, 336. Also cited in Jackson, *op. cit.*, pp. 58 f.

⁸James B. Leach, later selected as superintendent of the El Paso-Fort Yuma road, claimed that Secretary of Interior Thompson relinquished authority over the Fort Defiance road willingly because of the cooperation the army would receive from the Quartermaster Department of New Mexico in making the preliminary survey. It was agreed by many familiar with the terrain along the thirty-fifth parallel that \$50,000 would not support a survey or build a wagon road. This information appears in a clipping from the *New York Herald*, April 25, 1857, which Leach enclosed in a letter to Thompson, May 2, 1857. *Correspondence and Manuscripts Relating to the El Paso-Fort Yuma Wagon road*, Pacific Wagon Roads Office, Department of Interior Records, The National Archives. All correspondence and manuscript reports used in the preparation of this study are in these records housed in The National Archives. No further reference to their location will be necessary.

¹A. Anderson to Thomas J. Rusk, March 10, 1857.

²Charles S. Snyder, "Jacob Thompson," *The Dictionary of American Biography*, edited by Dumas Malone, XVIII (New York, 1936), 459 f.

railroad surveys along the thirty-second. More important than these qualifications, however, were his supporters: Senator Thomas J. Rusk of Texas, Jefferson Davis, ex-Secretary of War, now Senator from Mississippi, and John B. Floyd, Buchanan's Secretary of War. Davis, in particular, praised Campbell's ability, predicting that if the superintendency were entrusted to him the work would be ". . . well and faithfully performed."⁹

James B. Leach of Stockton, California, was endorsed by Congressman John S. Phelps of Missouri, whose voice in the determination of New Mexico affairs was particularly powerful; by George Chorpenning, a pioneer mail conductor on a line between Salt Lake City and San Francisco, California, under whom Leach had carried the mail; and by Levi K. Bowen of Baltimore, a member of an influential group interested in opening a steamship line between New Orleans and Bordeaux, France.¹⁰ Leach had built one road in Utah territory under a contract with Lieutenant Colonel E. J. Steptoe in 1855.¹¹ His early background included canal and railroad contracting in Michigan and Ohio, and during the Mexican War, Leach had been quartermaster agent on Colonel Doniphan's expedition. He had also performed that same duty on the march of the rifle regiment to Oregon in 1849.¹²

N. P. Cook, delegate-elect from New Mexico territory in 1856-1857, was supported in his application for the supervising job by three senators, four representatives, and one territorial delegate, among whom were such men as: Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, James C. Jones of Tennessee, Rusk of Texas, John A. Quitman from Mississippi, James W. Denver from California.¹³

Five other men sought the job: N. Henry Hutton, one of Campbell's close friends and a veteran of Whipple's and Parke's surveys, but a man apparently without political friends.¹⁴ James A. Scott of Missouri supported by Phelps;¹⁵ J. S. Coburn, ex-quartermaster officer in Texas, whose supporters included several famous military figures;¹⁶ H. S. Claiborne of Nashville, Tennessee, an acquaintance of Postmaster General Brown;¹⁷ and A. B. Gray of San Diego whose petition was signed by Representative Philemon T. Herbert of California

⁹Campbell to Thompson, March 17, 1857. Davis to Thompson, March 13, 1857. Campbell to Rusk, March 13, 1857.

¹⁰Chorpenning to Thompson, March 18, 1857. Bowen to Thompson, April 8, 1857.

¹¹"Contracts—War Department," *House Executive Documents*, No. 1, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., 1855-1856, VII (Washington, 1856), 47.

¹²Leach to Thompson, May 2, 1857. The enclosed newspaper clipping carries the biographical data cited here. The story appearing in the *New York Herald* was prepared by Leach, according to his letter.

¹³Rusk, Jones, Douglas, Smith, Quitman, Powell to Thompson, March 7, 1857. Anderson to Thompson, March 7, 1857. Denver to Thompson, April 17, 1857.

¹⁴Hutton to Thompson, March 25, 1857.

¹⁵Phelps to Thompson, March 30, 1857.

¹⁶Coburn to Thompson, April 8, 1857.

¹⁷Claiborne to Thompson, April 10, 1857.

and Senator John Slidell of Louisiana.¹⁸ Secretary of War Floyd suggested that Dr. J. R. McCay be added to the payroll as physician and surgeon.¹⁹

Thompson's first move was to organize the Pacific Wagon Roads Office, an agency whose activities have since been lost to history. Campbell was selected to direct its affairs,²⁰ his functions being primarily to handle all correspondence concerning the Department's total road program. Because of his previous experience and knowledge, Campbell was a valuable advisory assistant to Thompson, helping him to work out policies and directives, while fixing suspicious eyes upon records of the disbursement of the public funds entrusted to the project. Campbell and Peter Lammond, his disbursing clerk, made up the office staff.

Once the organization of the administrative machinery was completed, Thompson and his new subordinates turned to the problem of selecting the superintendent of the El Paso-Fort Yuma wagon road.²¹ The choice was not a simple task because there were many applicants and even more political supporters. In the year of the Dred Scott decision sectional animosities were increasing; political protocol was becoming more and more intricate. Moreover, two other road-building groups had to be selected. For the southern road, James B. Leach was selected as superintendent, Hutton as chief engineer, Cress as assistant engineer, McCay as physician and surgeon.²² M. A. McKinnon's later appointment as disbursing agent for the wagon train completed direct selections of personnel by the Interior Secretary, although the Department continued to exercise influence over several of Leach's other choices.²³ By May 12, 1857, the major appointments had been made. The problem of manning his organization fell to Leach, and he added Wharton and Cook as assistant engineers and employed D. Churchill Woods as his assistant superintendent.

Since the appointments to these key positions had been dictated by political expediency, it was comparatively easy to determine personnel. Not so simple,

¹⁸Herbert and others to Thompson, March 15, 1857.

¹⁹Floyd to Thompson, April 27, 1857.

²⁰Captain John Pope suggested to Rusk that Campbell was the best qualified to guide the establishment of the southern route. Pope to Thompson, March 9, 1857.

²¹While under consideration for appointment on the El Paso-Fort Yuma road, Cook wrote Thompson that he had received information that certain men having no interest in the country through which the road was to run were trying to get control over the road's construction. Believing them to be after personal gain, he suggested that a commissioner be appointed, that the road be divided into sections, and that contracts for the sections be let to people living along the line of the road. There may have been no grounds for Cook's charges, and he may have made them to bolster his chances of appointment. But, in view of the eventual outcome of the road's affairs, his warning seems to have been timely. Cook to Thompson, March 24, 1857.

²²Thompson to Leach, April 22, 1857. Thompson to Hutton, April 22, 1857. Cress to Thompson, May 12, 1857. Thompson to McCay, May 1, 1857.

²³Thompson to McKinnon, May 10, 1857. Leach wrote Thompson on April 20, that Cook was well qualified for the job of engineer on the road and that he had his support. Leach to Thompson, April 20, 1857. Leach's later appointment of Wharton as assistant engineer may have been made at Thompson's suggestion.

however, was the selection of the route or the agreement on the procedure for obtaining maximal results from the appropriation. At least six detailed plans were submitted to the Pacific Wagon Roads Office outlining routes to be followed and organizational procedures to be used in building the southern wagon road to Fort Yuma.²⁴

Senator Rusk of Texas was responsible for the preparation of three of these. His interest in pushing the road was natural since the State he represented would benefit most directly from its establishment. In response to his request, Pope, Campbell, and Anderson, wrote out their recommendations for the location of the road. The three plans agreed that the route should follow the line of Parke's railroad survey, although they differed insignificantly on the whole itinerary. One of Pope's most valuable contributions to the evolving scheme was his financial estimate. The 237 miles from the Rio Grande to the San Pedro River Pope described as being the easiest section of road, along which no difficulties of road making should arise. He estimated that \$12,000 would be sufficient for all improvements on that division. However, the mesquite-laden sixty-mile San Pedro River Valley would cost \$20,000 to make passible. Another \$20,000 would be required for removing rocks from the boulder-studded twelve miles beyond the San Pedro-Gila intersection. The remaining 242 miles Pope estimated should cost \$250 per mile to improve. Above all, water facilities needed to be improved or made, and he figured the minimum requirements would cost the government \$13,000. Pope's over-all estimate totaled \$125,000. Although his suggestions on organization of the work were not heeded, he offered an interesting alternative. He believed the work should be let out by contract, and that a general superintendent and an engineer should be appointed to oversee construction.²⁵ Certainly his idea reflects the influence of Topographical Engineering procedures on his thinking.

Campbell's plan proved important to the final plans adopted because of his position as head of the Pacific Wagon Roads Office. He offered no specific estimates of cost, but detailed the route the road should follow.²⁶ Campbell's major disagreement with Pope's plan of operation was that he sincerely believed the construction project should not be let by contract. He thought that Congress had been far too lenient in advancing funds to low bidders who ran short of their estimates. He wanted to build the road within the amount of the original ap-

²⁴Pope to Rusk, March 9, 1857. Campbell to Rusk, March 13, 1857. Anderson to Rusk, March 10, 1857. Gray to Thompson, March 15, 1857. Leach to Thompson, March, 1857. Jacques to Thompson, April 8, 1857.

²⁵Pope to Rusk, March 9, 1857. Pope consulted Campbell before he wrote this plan for Rusk, therefore it is understandable that their plans should be so similar in detail. In conclusion, Pope volunteered to arrange a meeting between Campbell and Rusk.

Ibid.

²⁶The details of the route have not been included here since they are treated later in Part Two.

propriation. Campbell suggested that a bonded superintendent and engineers who received fixed salaries should be hired, and full responsibility given to the former.²⁷ This method was later adopted by the Interior Department.

One Anderson of Tennessee, in a twenty-page plan, agreed with Pope and Campbell on the general route, but disagreed over the difficulty of building the road. The first 225 miles from Mesilla would be no easy construction job, but: "The ridges, and broken scraps of mountains are sometimes rocky, and will require much labor to make a stage road such as it ought to be." In the organization of a working force, Anderson advised that Americans be used because their presence bolstered Mexican morale. In working out his ratio, he figured that one American to two Mexicans would be sufficient to ward off expected Indian attacks and maintain a high level of worker productivity. The labor force of about 250 men should be broken down into three groups: (1) road workers and well and tank diggers, (2) the commissary, or supply group, and (3) the vigilance department. Anderson would have supplied the working parties by means of a shuttling wagon train hauling supplies between the Texas settlements and the various field locations. He estimated the cost of the road at \$174,630. In closing, he very dramatically wrote for Rusk's benefit:

It is the only little scrap of Southern Territory we have. It is the great link to the Pacific. I hope the road may be made.²⁸

Two of the remaining three plans, those of one A. B. Gray and William B. Jaques from San Antonio, Texas, were of no importance to the procedures or routes adopted by the Department, except to illustrate the interest that the road excited.²⁹

The last of the six plans, however, and the one that together with Campbell's most directly influenced the procedures adopted by the Interior Department, was offered by Leach. He wanted to build along the east bank of the Rio Grande from El Paso to Doña Ana, then west to Cooke's spring, on to the Rio Mimbres, and westward to the Ojo la Vaca twenty-five miles beyond. Then varying his route to northwest by west thirty miles, he wanted to head it west again for twenty-five miles into the Santa Domingo River Valley. He planned to follow that river as it flowed into the Gila, a distance of fifteen miles, thence along the south bank of the Gila for twenty-five miles to a point where it touched the thirty-third parallel. He would leave the river at that spot and proceed to the San Pedro River Valley. Following that stream to its mouth, he planned to cross the Gila four times because the terrain promised better traveling, finally arriving at the Pimas Villages on the south side of the river. Heading south of west, he wanted to avoid the Big Bend of the Gila River by

²⁷Campbell to Rusk, March 13, 1857.

²⁸Anderson to Rusk, March 10, 1857.

²⁹Gray to Thompson, March 15, 1857. Jaques to Thompson, April 8, 1857.

locating the road across the Jornada. According to Leach's proposal wells and reservoirs were needed along the whole line of road,

. . . for the great desideratum of this road is water, in the rainy season there are numerous springs, creeks and other supplies of water which become dried up under intense heat of summer.³⁰

The road required frequent bridges, too.

Leach based his estimates and plans on the assumption that he would be allowed to outfit his train on the Atlantic side from which he would lead it through Texas to El Paso, where he would begin work. The road would be built westward, thereby allowing him to dismiss his laborers at Los Angeles or San Diego, California, and saving the government a considerable sum since it would be spared the expense of transporting them back to the settlements. Leach counted on hiring 100 Americans in the East, and 200 Mexicans upon reaching El Paso. He shared Anderson's sentiments toward all "greasers."

In the very warm country through which this road is to pass, the Mexicans acclimated to the heat make good laborers when they are working with a party of white men sufficiently numbered to protect them from the Apaches.³¹

Leach planned to divide his Americans into several groups: six subordinate road superintendents, in the ratio of one to each gang of fifty men; one group to be in charge of the commissary; one physician and surgeon; six carpenters, one to each gang; three blacksmiths; six watchmen, one to each camp; three herdsmen, to be assisted by the Mexicans; six cooks; and one teamster to each wagon. If Leach's original plan had been closely followed, his expedition would have been made up of sixty-eight wagons and one hundred Americans.³² Leach recommended that all of the provisions except fresh meat should be purchased in the stable markets of the East. The El Paso market was erratic, according to him. All staples should be bought at the outset for the additional reason that all of the wagons were needed for road building, not supply hauling. The superintendent estimated that the necessary supplies would cost over \$28,000. Thirteen of the forty covered wagons that Leach requisitioned were to be mule drawn while five yoke of oxen were to pull the remaining twenty-seven. Consequently seventy-eight mules and 135 yoke of oxen would have to be purchased. After figuring the wages of the Mexican, laborers, and mechanics at one, two and three dollars per day, respectively, Leach announced that \$155,800 would see him through. This left a balance of \$45,000 plus

³⁰Leach to Thompson, March, 1857.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Leach evidently erred in his calculations because the figure of sixty-eight wagons was not the number he requested. He got the forty covered wagons he estimated he would need. But as events proved, Leach was not good in arithmetic.

the proceeds from the sale of used equipment for contingencies, out of which, incidentally, he thought his salary was to come.

I have estimated for a very large working party that the road might be finished as rapidly as possible consistent with economy, and made available to the emigration at the earliest moment; indeed the road should be finished and the announcement of such being the fact made early in the coming winter, that the Pacific emigration of 1858 may avail themselves of the Southern Road.³³

After much consideration, discussion, and review, Campbell and Thompson settled upon a final plan of organization and operation. Leach, after being notified of his appointment as superintendent, was authorized to employ an assistant at \$1,200 per year. An engineer, physician, and disbursing agent, and an assistant engineer were selected and their duties and relationship to the superintendent were defined.³⁴ These officers of the expedition were to receive subsistence and traveling expenses. The road superintendent could hire seventy-five men in the East,³⁵ for whom he was to provide eight months wholesome rations. However, it was advised that those articles of food that could be obtained from the settlements along the line of march should be purchased for only the first four months thereby cutting down the number of wagons needed to haul them. It was Leach's duty to provide ample supplies of water along the route as well as to safeguard all the public property placed under his charge. He was held accountable for the proper execution of all financial reports, and the actions and duties of his subordinates. In addition to these responsibilities, Leach was required to keep an itinerary of the journey from Memphis to El Paso containing observations on the nature of the country passed through and including the results of all incidental road surveys he or his subordinates might make along the route. Collections of information on road conditions would prove useful to the Department's future building program. Superintendent Leach, however, was allowed great latitude:

In the organization of so great a force, much must be left to your discretion and judgment, and the Department cannot too often impress upon you the necessity of an effective, yet economical outlay of the means placed at your disposal.³⁶

Thompson enjoined Leach to locate the road from Franklin, a town opposite El Paso, Mexico, north to Fort Fillmore, located on the east bank of the Rio Grande across from the town of Mesilla. Crossing the Rio Grande and

³³Leach to Thompson, March, 1857.

³⁴Annual salaries for these men were: engineer, \$2,000; physician, \$1,500; disbursing agent, \$2,000; and assistant engineer, \$1,000.

³⁵However, this number was flexible to allow for emergencies that might arise.

³⁶Thompson to Leach, May 9, 1857.

passing through Mesilla, the route was to ascend across the Rio Mimbres, the road was run to Aqua Fria, a point six miles south of the Ojo de la Vaca. Then, passing over the Janos road, an old wagon road trace about one and one-half miles south of the Ojo de la Vaca, the road was to proceed westward to the Railroad Pass by way of a pass in the Peloncillo Range and on to the Valle del Sang. Leach's engineer was to explore the area northwest of the Railroad Pass for a shorter route to the San Pedro River.³⁷ Should that investigation prove fruitless, the road was to run due west to the San Pedro via the Croton Springs of the Playa de los Pimas, thence down the San Pedro Valley to the Gila River. From that point, it was to follow the Gila River to the Maricopa Wells, then it was to cross the Jornada de les Estrellas to Tozotel, a small settlement on the western edge of the Gila Great Bend. Into Fort Yuma, the route was to follow the Gila.³⁸

In enumerating the places where Leach and his working parties were to conserve existing water supplies or to search for new ones, Thompson blue-printed the procedure to be followed. When improving a canyon or gorge, ". . . a rough wall of loose stone lined with clay or earth may be resorted to." In order to concentrate water and reduce the rate of evaporation, wells or pits were to be dug in the bottoms of the canyons. In preparing arroyos as watering places, a wide earthen dam lined with stone was approved. Again, the digging of wells behind the dams for dry season storage was sanctioned. Boring of small-depth common wells were to be attempted in some places, although the absence of timber would often prevent extensive or deep drilling.

According to the Department's design, no heavy grading jobs or bridging was to be attempted: Leach was to furnish specifications and descriptions of such exigencies for official consideration. Apparently recognizing the magnitude of the job, Thompson encouragingly wrote Leach:

It is not expected by the Department that you will be able to construct a finished road over this route in one season; but it is confidently hoped that you will be enabled to report by 1st of December that a road over which loaded wagons can with ease and safety pass has been opened, and that ample provision has been made for the collection and preservation of the rainfall on the plateau, and also that the permanent sources of supply have been improved; so that by another season the Emigrants shall feel no hesitation in adopting it.³⁹

Almost as an afterthought, \$200 was granted to the roadbuilding party to

³⁷This northwestern exploration may be traced back to Campbell's initial plan. He believed that a practicable route could be found from the Arravaypa Creek to the San Pedro River.

³⁸This final Departmental plan reflects the difference between Leach's and Campbell's plan.

³⁹Thompson to Leach, May 9, 1857.

buy presents with which to placate hostile Indian tribes along the way. Leach and his officers were to be ambassadors of good will for the future thousands expected to travel over their route, for after capturing the attention of the native chieftains they were to warn them of the power of the federal government. Above all, they were to: "Counsel them against hearkening to the advice of selfish and designing men, who would instigate them to deeds of violence and leave them to suffer the consequences."⁴⁰

For the closing out of his operations, further instructions were to be sent to Leach at Fort Yuma. It was clearly anticipated that the road would be worked back again to Mesilla from that point. But Thompson warned his superintendent that he wanted the appropriation of \$200,000 expended proportionately along the entire road, without relying on the possibility of future Congressional grants. Accepting Leach's proposal for moving the wagons, men, and equipment from some point east of the Mississippi River, Thompson ordered Leach to make Memphis, Tennessee, his depot where, after assembling his group, he was to proceed ". . . by the most direct route to El Paso on the Rio Grande."⁴¹

As soon as the plan was thus devised and communicated to Leach, organization for the migration to El Paso began. Leach immediately set about buying the equipment, supplies, hiring men, and arranging for the shipment of his purchases to Memphis.⁴²

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²In the absence of other evidence, it may be assumed that many of the supplies, if not all, that Leach and Woods bought in the east were listed on Leach's original organizational plan. The following itemized list was abstracted from that document.

27,000 lbs. of bacon	\$5,000 worth of ammunition
245 lbs. of flour	6 doz. ploughs
33,400 lbs. of hard bread	6 doz. scrapers
234 bushels of beans	blacksmith tools and a complete forge
3,075 lbs of rice	6 doz. axes
19,225 lbs of sugar	18 doz. extra quality pick handles
10,012 lbs. of coffee	9 doz. extra axe handles
40 barrels of vinegar	1 doz. heavy iron bars
1,327 lbs. of salt	35 kegs blasting powder
434 lbs. of pepper	2 doz. stone hammers
2,675 lbs. of soap	1 doz. churn drills
434 lbs. of saleratins (?)	patent fuse and cannisters
Small store of medicines for the physician	3 cross cut saws
30 doz. steel shovels	1 doz. augurs
12 doz. picks	1/2 doz. handsaws
chalk lines and chalk	2 whip saws
1 doz. foot adzes	2 sets of bits
2 sets of planes	60 small camp kettles
60 large camp kettles	60 camp pans
500 tin plates	400 prs. knives and forks
400 tin cups or canteens	2 doz. bread pans
1 doz. bake ovens	6 doz. butcher knives
2 doz. hatchets	1 doz. tents

On an undated memo on wagon roads, evidently a part of Campbell's early plans, a

After several delays and many difficulties in the eastern markets, Leach and his inseparable assistant, D. Churchill Woods, reached Memphis sometime in May of 1857. They brought with them several mechanics and laborers whom they had employed in Fall River, Massachusetts, and in other New England towns.⁴³ They were accompanied by Charles F. Whitcomb who was later to act as star witness for the prosecution in the case of fraud to be brought against them.⁴⁴

On June 27, 1857, Leach informed Thompson that his party was organized. Bullwhips cracking, the long caravan of wagons crossed the Mississippi River optimistically and unknowingly headed into difficulties none had foreseen.⁴⁵ En route to Little Rock by way of Des Arc on the White River, the first of the troubles became apparent. The forty wagons had begun their westward roll with fewer than the estimated number of oxen because Leach thought that other animals could be procured in Arkansas. Fifteen of the wagons were, according to the original plan, drawn by mules, six mules to the vehicle; the other twenty-five wagons required oxen. Upon their arrival at Des Arc, Cook was dispatched to Fort Smith to buy the needed stock, but after an extensive delay, Leach moved on with the mule train leaving the ox train to follow after.⁴⁶ The superintendent decided not to take his disbursing agent, McKinnon, with him because the man had brought his family along and travel with the slower moving ox train would be easier on McKinnon's pregnant wife.⁴⁷ Leach predicted that his mule train would reach El Paso in forty days.⁴⁸

Leaving Des Arc, Leach guided his men to a camp on the east bank of the Arkansas River opposite Little Rock, from which they crossed into the town on the steam ferryboat. Assigning his command to Hutton while he went back to Des Arc to check on Cook's report that oxen had been purchased and were being delivered, Leach rejoined his men on August 1, in their camp on Collins

notation listed the following: two ten-gallon water kegs to each wagon, one traveling forge, complete blacksmithing tools, a small quantity of iron and coke or charcoal, a separate ordnance wagon with a fireproof magazine and armoury boxes for storing blasting powder, and two India-rubber pontoons which could be used for crossing streams and for storing water.

An Ordnance office report dated August 17, 1857, listed the ordnance supplies furnished the expedition: 75 percussion rifles, 20 colt belt pistols, 11,250 rifle ball cartridges, and 3,000 colt pistol cartridges.

⁴³Leach to Thompson, May 6, 1857.

⁴⁴Captain Harry I. Spotts to Thompson, October 29, 1859. Spotts enclosed a passenger list on the "H. D. Newcomb" steamer for May 23, 1857, that included the names of Leach, Woods, and Whitcomb.

⁴⁵Leach to Campbell, June 27, 1857.

⁴⁶The itinerary of Leach's mule train movements to El Paso is a manuscript of 134 pages. Like the other documents and correspondence used in this study, it is housed in the collection already cited in The National Archives.

⁴⁷Leach to Thompson, July 26, 1857.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

Creek in Montgomery County, Arkansas. The trip was not uneventful. While rolling into the Hot Springs region one of Leach's men had slipped from the tongue of his wagon and was crushed under the turning wheels. Rough country and poor roads accounted for breaking several wagon tongues and wheels, and sickness laid many men low, slowing down the expedition's advance. On leaving the Hot Springs area, Leach decided against following the usual route to Barton, Texas, via Ultima Thule and Fort Towson. Heavy rains had made that road impassable. Rather, the mule train moved from West Point, Arkansas, to Ultima Thule by way of Mineral Hill, Arkansas. In all, the trip across Arkansas consumed forty days, the length of time Leach had figured necessary for him to reach El Paso.

Departing from Arkansas on August 10, the mule train moved into the Choctaw Nation's lands. They crossed Rock Creek, halted momentarily at Doaksville, forded the Kiamiche River, and stopped at a settlement named Plantation in Indian territory. Having passed over the Boggy River, the train paused at Armstrong's Academy, a Choctaw Seminary for boys. It finally arrived opposite Preston, Texas, after crossing the many southward flowing tributaries to the Red River.

The expedition was welcomed into Texas by a blue-spotted sky and falling temperatures. These signs were the prelude to one of the renowned Northers, a phenomenon so unusual to Leach's experience that he felt compelled to describe it minutely. Following repairs on worn wheels, and a re-shoeing of his footsore mules, Leach turned his train toward Fort Belknap. En route to that place, the caravan traveled through Gainesville, Texas, and crossed the Dry Fork of the Elm River in Cook County, Texas. The next stop for the men was at Camp Cooper which they reached after journeying through the Brazos River bottomlands. Meanwhile, Leach suffered an attack of inflammation of the stomach and bowels, and the march was halted for a short time while he improved.

Impatient at the delay and anxious to reach the field to begin road building, Leach drove his men forward, although he recovered from his ailment very slowly. Pushing across the Brazos River near the Comanche Indian agency, they arrived at Fort Phantom Hill, Texas, an abandoned fort that had been built in 1851-1852. Their route from that point ran to Fort Chadbourne where Leach was so sick that he remained behind in the care of several of his men while the mule train worked its way over the southern route by way of the Salt Fork of the Colorado River to the headwaters of the Concho and Pecos Rivers. They moved along the divide that separated the waters of the Concho and the Pecos to the Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos, a ford used by Marcy in 1849. Traveling along the San Antonio-El Paso mail road, the wagon train meandered through cacti-studded country to Fort Davis, Leach and his attendants meanwhile having caught up with the group. From Fort Davis the expedition steered its way

through Barrel Spring, and "El Muerto," to Van Horn's Well. Driving westward through Eagle Springs, their movement continued straight to the west until they encountered the Rio Grande River some eighty miles below El Paso. Anxious to reach their destination, the men, wagons and animals, hurried through San Elizario, El Presidio, and Isleta, three Texas border towns, to arrive in El Paso on the afternoon of October 22, 1857. The Memphis-El Paso trip had required 114 days of travel, and had covered a distance of 1,309½ miles.⁴⁹

Leach's advance party when it reached El Paso numbered about eighty men, mostly mechanics and engineers. The rear guard, however, consisting of about thirty-five men, remained with McKinnon and the ox train under Woods' command. From its initial delay in seeking oxen at Des Arc, the story of the ox train was one of misfortune. Following in the path of the mule train, but several hundred miles behind it, the rear echelon advanced across Indian territory uncertainly because sickness incapacitated so many men that the entire train was immobile for days. There were too few able-bodied men to drive the wagons. Arriving at Fort Belknap, Texas, in November, almost a month after Leach had reached El Paso, Woods decided to winter there, discharging his men until the following spring. In addition to the fact that the oxen were exhausted, all who were consulted advised against attempting the plains during the approaching cold.⁵⁰ After a six month pause, the ox train moved out of Fort Belknap and on May 6, 1858, finally pulled into Mesilla on June 25, 1858, two days short of a full year from the time of their Memphis departure.⁵¹

⁴⁹"Annual Report of the Secretary of Interior," *House Executive Documents*, No. 1, 35th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1858-1859, IV (Washington, 1859), 11.

⁵⁰McKinnon to Thompson, November 18, 1857.

⁵¹Welcome B. Sayles to Thompson, June 20, 1858. Leach to Thompson, July 6, 1858.

FORT HANCOCK — LAST OF THE FRONTIER FORTS

. by *George Rublen*

Brigadier General Davis S. Stanley,¹ commanding the Department of Texas, reflected deeply before answering General Phillip Sheridan's telegram. On September 1, 1884, Stanley's former West Point classmate, now Commander-in-Chief of the Army, had asked if he recommended permanent abandonment of Camp Rice, Texas.²

By General Stanley's order of July 1, 1884, Camp Rice had ceased to be a sub-post of Fort Davis, Texas, and had become a separate post reporting directly to Department Headquarters.³ Three weeks later the Secretary of War had approved expenditures not to exceed \$47,200 to build quarters for one captain, three lieutenants, and barracks for one company.⁴ Only six weeks before he himself had visited this crude frontier post, home of Captain T. A. Baldwin's Troop I of the 10th Cavalry, and personally corroborated the official report of the Department Inspector General. Located some 53 miles southeast of El Paso on the joint trackage of the Galveston, Houston & San Antonio and the Texas & Pacific railroads, the fort consisted of huts with stockaded cottonwood log walls and dirt roofs. One three-room hut, floored, was Captain Baldwin's quarters; another of four rooms served two lieutenants; another the surgeon; two were barracks; and similar smaller huts served as guardhouse, kitchen and mess. The stable was an open shed with dirt roof but provided good shelter for the troop's mounts. None of the buildings was fit for a permanent post but the Negro troopers had done commendable work in their efforts to establish some sort of habitation.⁵

It had been hard work not only to build but to keep such shelter as they had. Floods from April to July of that year had raised the river higher than since 1863, washing out the new railroad tracks and forcing their relocation on higher grounds to the east. Only the ingenuity of Captain Baldwin and the frantic labor of his men in throwing up a protecting levee had saved the adobe buildings of the post. To prevent a recurrence of this danger, General Stanley in his letter to the Adjutant General of the Army on August 18, 1884, recom-

¹United States Military Academy, 1852; Cavalry officer brevetted twice in the Civil War for bravery; Brig. Gen., 1884; died, 1902.

²Telegram Hqs. Army, 1 September 1884 to Dept. of Texas, (Military File, Ft. Hancock, National Archives, Old Army Branch. Abbrev: NA,OAB).

³Special order 78, Hqs. Dept. Texas, 1884. (NA,OAB).

⁴Ltr. QM Gen., 9 June 1884, to Sec. of War; Ltr. Hqs. Army, 21 June 1884 to Dept. Texas, Ft. Hancock. (NA,OAB).

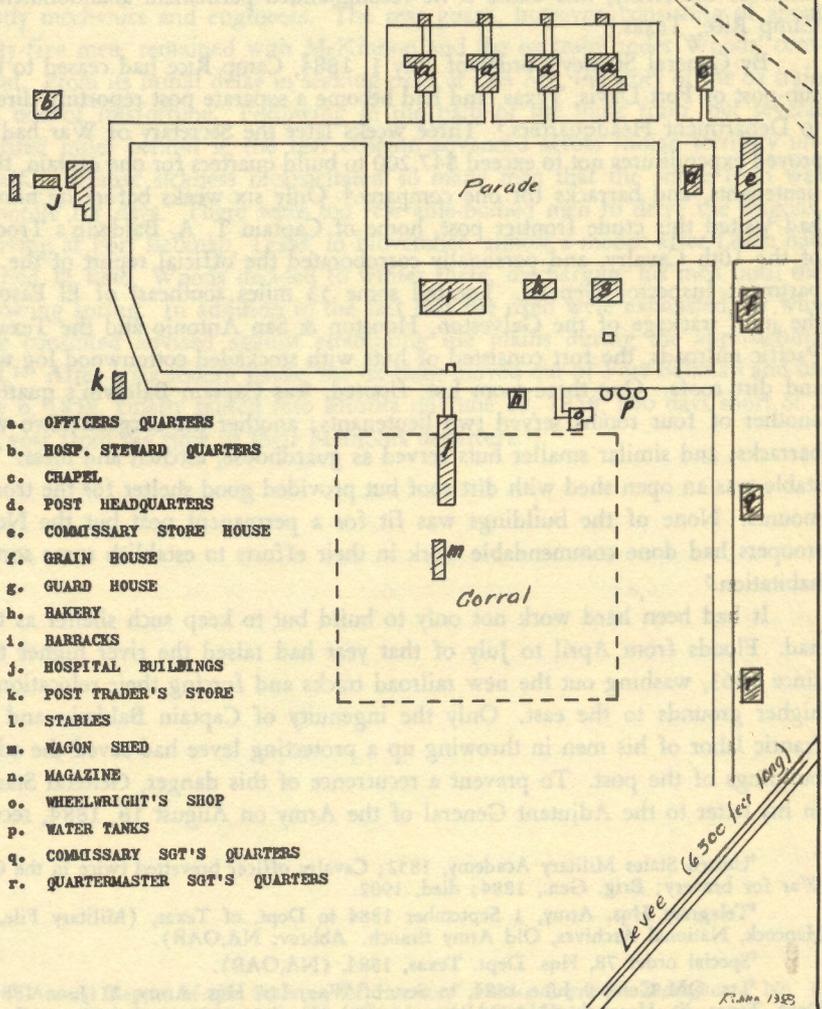
⁵Report of Inspection, Major S. S. Sumner, Insp. Gen., Dept. Texas, 25 July 1884, Ft. Hancock. (NA,OAB.)

FORT HANCOCK

1889

adapted from a map by
2D. LIEUT. PERKINS, 5TH INF
ACCOMPANYING REPORT OF CAPT. T.H. LOGAN

Scale
0 100 200
feet



mended that the site for the new post be moved from the planned location halfway between the river and the railroad tracks to within 200 feet of the railroad. This was only a foot higher in elevation than the old site but at least it was inches higher than the crest of the unusual flood of the previous spring. He said then that he thought it better if the money planned for Camp Rice were spent on improving forts Davis and Clark; it would thus go much further towards sheltering the troops in his department.

Congress, however, in 1880 had appropriated \$200,000 for the construction of new posts to protect the Rio Grande frontier after the Department of Texas commander had repeatedly urged additional posts to properly house the troops newly added to his department. General Sherman, then Commander of the Army, considered the time had come for the inevitable change from a "defensive" against the Indians, sustained by numerous small forts, to consolidation of the Army into several large posts located near railroads and augmented by a few small forts along the national border facing a then unstable Mexico.⁶ The unsettled conditions in that area, dramatically emphasized by the "Salt War" incident of 1877* which had caused the regarrisoning of Fort Bliss, undoubtedly influenced Sherman's opinion. He and General Augur, then Department Commander, both considered that included in the new plan should be a post about 30 miles from Sierra Blanca at the point where the Southern Pacific Railroad turned east away from the river, then known as Camp Rice.⁷

General Stanley's telegram replying to the Commander of the Army stated that Camp Rice was the best site for a post on the river between Del Rio and Fort Bliss, and that it fulfilled the conditions laid down by General Sherman. On the other hand it was only 53 miles from Fort Bliss, was subject to disastrous flooding as last spring had proved, and was an unhealthy post whose sick rate, even before the flood, exceeded that of any other post in Texas. General Stanley again recommended its abandonment.⁸

General Sheridan thought otherwise, however, and, like General Sherman, believed that there should be some protection at that point to obstruct movements of smugglers and renegades crossing the border. A telegram to Camp Rice in

⁶Annual Rpt. Sec. of War, 1879, Rpt. C. G. Dept. of Texas, 1 October 1879; Ltr. Gen. Sherman to Sec. of War, 18 March 1882. Mil Res. File, Fort Clark. (NA,OAB.)

*For an account of this affair see Albion Smith, "The Salt War of San Elizario," *PASSWORD*, V. 1, No. 1 (February, 1956.) (Editor's Note.)

⁷The origin of this "camp" is obscure. It appears to have started as neither an Army outpost nor a railroad construction camp. It was a mail station on Ficklin's stage line, the last to be operated before the completion of the railroads, located about two miles southeast of present Fort Hancock where the old road joins Highway 80. It is so shown on an "Outline Map of a New Route for Cattle Drivers and Emigrants from Texas to Fort Yuma, California," prepared about 1877. Army regimental returns during 1877-1881 mention troops being stationed at numerous temporary camps as bases for scouts against the Indians, but nowhere is Camp Rice mentioned as such.

⁸Telegram Dept. Texas to Hqs. Army, Sept. 1884. (NA,OAB.)

September, 1884, from Headquarters, Division of the Missouri, directed that work on the new post at Camp Rice be resumed at once.

The new post was the outcome of several circumstances. The Congressional Act of 1880 had provided that none of the appropriation for new posts should be used until valid titles to the sites were vested in the United States. Most of the posts in Texas at that time were on land leased on an annual basis from private owners. Many were no longer needed for protection from the Indians. Such a one was Fort Quitman, situated on the Rio Grande about 70 miles southeast of El Paso, garrisoned except during the Civil War from 1858 to 1877 and then during and subsequent to the Victorio campaign of 1880. It had been of great value in the past being adjacent to the fords used by Indian marauders and also at the point where the stage route from San Antonio first reached the river. But now the old fort, noted for its unhealthy and wretched living conditions, was bypassed by the railroads through Sierra Blanca; the Indian menace had vanished from Texas forever; and in addition some twenty years of litigation had failed to establish which of some four or five claimants held valid title to the land it occupied.⁹

A few weeks after Sherman's visit, Lt. Nordstrom of Troop A, 10th Cavalry, was directed to examine carefully the country near the railroad station at Camp Rice for the purpose of selecting a suitable place for a camp of one company of Cavalry. On April 28, 1882, Nordstrom's report of a favorable location two miles above Rice Station was forwarded to Department Headquarters with the concurrence of all his superior officers. General Augur, on June 19, 1882 concurred that Rice should be occupied and Fort Quitman abandoned; on July 5th he approved the immediate movement to the new site on account of the better grazing for the horses. Captain Nicholas Nolan's A Troop of the 10th Cavalry, stationed at old Fort Quitman since the previous October, marched 15 miles to Rice's Station on July 9, 1882.¹⁰

A month later the Department Commander visited the new site and finding the company's encampment at the station devoid of wood, water, or grass moved it two miles closer to El Paso where he had found a good location for a two company post. (The same spot which Lt. Nordstrom had recommended.) This site—new Camp Rice—was soon surveyed by A. C. Savage and no difficulty in purchase was anticipated as the land was owned by "old friend General Grenville Dodge." It was considered quite advantageous for it bordered on both the Rio Grande and the Southern Pacific RR and was only a short distance

⁹Fort Quitman, generally overlooked by historians, had a varied history of which the land dispute is an engaging though complicated chapter.

¹⁰Telegram Ft. Davis to Ft. Quitman, 12 April 1882; Letters sent (LS) Fort Davis, 1882; Telegram Fort Davis to Dept. Texas, 28 April 1882; Telegrams Dept. Texas to Fort Davis, 19 June 1882 and 5 July 1882, LS Dept. Texas, 1882; Organization Returns, 10th Cavalry, July, 1882. (NA, OAB.) Post Returns, Fort Davis (PR Davis), July, 1882, (NA, OAB.)

from the Texas & Pacific right of way.¹¹

On August 7th, as soon as Captain Nolan had completed the survey of "a certain tract of land in the vicinity," his troop marched to Fort Davis, mutually transferring with Troop K, commanded by Captain Thomas C. Lebo.¹² On September 14, 1882 Camp Rice was officially declared a subpost of Fort Davis and the troopers' former routine of five day scouts searching for Indians, escorting the mail, and furnishing detachments to protect workmen building the Texas and Pacific westward, abruptly changed. Work on shelter for men and horses commenced and in December 2650 adobe bricks were purchased out of the \$300 allotment made available to the new camp. Conditions continued primitive; the following June water wagons were requested to replace the slow, tedious, medieval method of filling and hauling water barrels from the river.¹³ In September 1883, Captain T. A. Baldwin and his I Troop replaced Troop K.¹⁴

The new commander felt that some more improvements could be made. Tiring of going 37 miles to San Elizario for the daily mail, he asked that a post office be established at the railroad station three miles from the post where all trains stopped daily, and also urged that tarpaulins be issued to cover the men's quarters to protect them during the coming winter.¹⁵ After cession of jurisdiction over the reservation by the Governor of Texas, the War Department on October 29, 1883 approved the purchase of two tracts of land for the new camp. One of 432 acres was acquired on 14 April 1883 by deed from Grenville M. Dodge and his wife; the second of some 37 acres from the T & P Railroad and Charles E. Satterlee and George J. Gould, trustees, on August 31, 1883.¹⁶

Pursuant to Special Orders No. 78, Headquarters Department of Texas, on and after 1 July 1884 Camp Rice became a separate camp of the Department and the garrison of 3 officers, 1 surgeon, and 59 men were assigned as its permanent complement. To Captain Baldwin's current problems of fighting floods while making his outpost habitable, with both lieutenants sick, were added those of post administration in the 80's. A veritable barrage of letters from Department Headquarters descended upon him asking why he had not submitted a special post return when the troops were permanently transferred, why special reports required by three different regulations had not been submitted, why he had not reported the number of qualified marksmen on the post, that the entries in his last return were improperly made, detailed directions on

¹¹Letter General Augur to General Sherman, 16 August 1882, LS Dept. Texas, 1882; Letter Dept. Texas to Hqs. Div. of Missouri, 21 September 1882, LS DT 1882 (NA, OAB.)

¹²Orders 159, Ft. Davis 1882; PR Cp Rice Aug. 1882, (NA, OAB).

¹³Letter Book, Letters sent (LB-LS) Cp Rice, Dec. 1882 and June 1883, (NA, OAB).

¹⁴Orders 192, Ft. Davis, 1883; PR Cp Rice Sept. 1883, (NA, OAB).

¹⁵LB-LS Cp Rice, Sept. 1883, (NA, OAB).

¹⁶General Orders No. 58 Hqs of the Army, 13 Nov. 1895

making out returns were hereby sent, what and where were the nearest post office and telegraph office, and finally what was the location of his post? Struggling over this paper deluge, his request for one civilian clerk denied, one lieutenant evacuated for chronic rheumatism, the other sick in quarters for six days from alcoholism, the harassed captain received word that the Department Commanding General was en route to inspect his command.¹⁷

Trying to secure maximum use of the limited funds allotted for the new construction, General Stanley questioned the requirement that both material and labor be on a contract basis rather than the normal usage of material by contract and labor by troops. To him, this innovation appeared more expensive and unnecessary; but the Quartermaster General of the Army informed him that new regulations now required such procedure. However Stanley was successful in obtaining authority to import, duty free, stone and lime directly across the river from Mexico thus saving the cost of long shipments from the east — so the foundations of the new post were made of Mexican stone.¹⁸ In October Major J.G.C. Lee, the Department Quartermaster, was sent to Rice to supervise planning and 2d Lieutenant E. B. Ives, 19th Infantry, was assigned as officer in immediate charge of construction of public buildings to be performed by the contractor, W. S. Pleasant.¹⁹ This month also saw the arrival of Assistant Surgeon Buffington, destined to be a long time resident. With this assistance, Captain Baldwin may have enjoyed the change the 90 mile scouting missions down the river offered in October and December.

As the new buildings slowly arose several changes in the garrison occurred. In mid-April of 1885 the 10th and 3d Cavalry regiments exchanged posts and Troop I of the 10th left Camp Rice only the day before the camp was quarantined for two weeks against an outbreak of smallpox in San Ygnacio across the river. In May, Troop C, 3d Cavalry arrived under command of Captain J. G. Bourke, the famed chronicler of General Crook's Apache campaigns. Various chores were their lot — building dikes around the camp, patrols to old Fort Quitman fruitlessly looking for signs of Indians, and occasional assistance in the capture of smugglers.²⁰ Captain Bourke recommended that Lieutenant Ives be sent from the post in order to save his life as the latter suffered repeatedly violent spasms diagnosed as "acute neuralgia of the stomach."²¹

On July 20, 1885, Major Heyl in his inspection report announced completion of the new post, located at latitude 31 degrees 16 minutes north, longitude 105 52 minutes west. He described the post as one of the best on the frontier.

¹⁷LB-LR Cp Rice, 1884; PR Cp Rice July-Aug. 1884, (NA, OAB).

¹⁸Ltr Dept Texas to AG Army 13 Sept 1884 (Mil Res file, NA, OAB).

¹⁹Spec Orders 121,168—1884, Dept Texas; SO's 88,134—1885 Dept Texas, (NA, OAB).

²⁰PR Cap Rice Jan-July 1885, (NA, OAB.).

²¹LB-LS Cp Rice July 1885 (NA, OAB.).

The buildings were all of brick, well constructed from excellent plans, and the quarters boasted of the startling innovation of having bathrooms with running water. He recommended that this comfortable, attractive little garrison be officially designated as a post and be properly named.²² Major S.B.M. Young, who assumed command in August, did not share Heyl's views of the construction. He reported that the sub-contractor had left the post as neither money nor materials had been furnished to complete the construction. In a report, painfully similar to those seventy years later, he listed deficiencies: latches which would not reach, doors that would not lock, quarters without a bit of shelving, lacking windows and in some cases even complete roofs.²³

The months that followed were filled with the usual routine incidents of the peacetime garrisons of those days — occasional investigations of cattle rustling by bands from across the border, intercepting smugglers, requests for garden seeds, finishing the new target range north of the railroad tracks, and the gracious approval for grape cuttings to be shipped from Ysleta to Camp Rice. In mid-February C Troop departed for Fort Davis and was replaced by E. Troop, 3d Cavalry, under Captain Eltinge.²⁴

In the meantime Major Heyl's recommendation that the modern little post bear an appropriate name had not been forgotten. In his letter of April 26, 1886 to the Adjutant General of the Army, General Stanley requested that an appropriate name be given the new post. The camp's name had been taken "from an old railroad camp at the place (Rice's Station), so-called for a squatter or cattleman without prominence in the community. As it is on the Rio Grande it will be doubtless kept up as long as that river is an international boundary."²⁵ In view of the death the previous February of the distinguished soldier, Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, it was requested that the post be named Fort Hancock. Approved by the Division of the Missouri and by the Secretary of War, a War Department order of 11 May 1886 directed that "the military post on the Rio Grande in Texas now called Camp Rice will hereafter be known and designated as Fort Hancock."²⁶ A few days later the Post Office Department notified the Secretary of War that the post office name would also be changed to Fort Hancock.

Any incipient boredom at Fort Hancock in the spring of 1886 was soon to be dispelled. By late May the annual flood of the Rio Grande had ominously approached the record crest of '84, but the slightly higher elevation of the new post and timely preparation of protecting levees had brought the flood suffi-

²²Inspection Rpt Maj. E. M. Heyl, 20 July 1885 (Mil Res file, NA, OAB.).

²³Ltr Maj. S.B.M. Young to Dept Texas, 17 Aug 1885, LB-LS Cp Rice (NA, OAB.).

²⁴PR Aug 1885-Mar 1886; LB-LR 3 Feb 1886 (NA, OAB.).

²⁵Ltr Dept Texas thru Hq Div Mo to AG Army, 26 Apr 1886, Mil Res file, (NA, OAB.).

²⁶Gen Orders No 28, Hqs Army, 14 May 1886

ciently under control to declare a holiday for the 30th. In the forenoon of that day a large Mexican dyke two miles upriver washed away and water began spreading over the entire valley. By nightfall frantic efforts had just succeeded in extending the dyke on the north side to connect with the railroad embankment when streams of water were found pouring through gopher holes in the old dyke on the west side. All night long by lantern light every man labored to plug these widening gaps only to see ten feet of the dyke break away at dawn. Corrals and stables in the southern half of the post were flooded to a depth of two to three feet. Horses and mules and such forage as could be saved were taken to the sand hills to the east of the post. Dykes around the barracks and quarters were strengthened and narrow foot bridges were built connecting the railroad embankment with buildings still in use. The worst seemed over until on the night on June 4th a heavy gale from the west drove the water over the west dyke, finally breaching it. The whole post lay in two to three feet of water. The river was fought day and night until the 12th when the flood was finally contained.²⁷

Major Young's letter of June 11 speaks for itself: "the flood almost wrecked the post, corral and stables abandoned and the horses placed in safety in the sand hills . . . send baled hay at once for forage . . . All are compelled to use sickening water containing the accumulated offal and filth of the valley for years . . . I would move to the hills with the troops but have not sufficient tentage nor a water supply . . . I would be grateful to have the Commanding General see the present conditions in person."²⁸ Nearby Mexican farmers said they never knew of the water being so high within the memory of man. Major Young proudly reported that during the entire two weeks of constant heart-breaking labor not one man shirked his job, deserted his post, nor was even drunk. Troop E had saved Fort Hancock from being washed away.²⁹

After reading the official report, General Terry, commanding the Department of the Missouri, added his forwarding comment that unless some urgent military reason existed for keeping up Fort Hancock it would seem to be an unsuitable place at which to station troops. Headquarters of the Army, apparently nettled because the Adjutant General's forwarding indorsement asked for a decision since General Sherman had selected the location, demanded to know if the post were in the exact location indicated by the general. General Stanley's 7th indorsement wearily replied that the post was in the general location, not the exact location determined by Sherman and that the new dykes would protect the post. Stanley remarked that "whatever necessity or use for the post at the

²⁷Annual Rpt Mil Posts, 1887, *op.cit.*; PR May-June 1886; Ltr Cmdg Off Ft Hancock to AG Dept Texas, 11 June 1886, LB-LS; Ltr Cmdg Off Ft Hancock to AG Dept Texas, 14 June 1886, LB-LS (NA, OAB.).

²⁸Ltr 11 June, *op.cit.*;

²⁹Ltr 14 June, *op.cit.*

present site there may have been at the date of its establishment still exists . . . in my opinion the post of Hancock is a necessity that will remain whilst the Rio Grande is the Mexican boundary."³⁰

A little over a year later, September, 1887, E Troop turned Fort Hancock over to a mixed detachment of 5 officers and 19 men from the 3d Cavalry and the 16th Infantry who guarded the post until the arrival on December 2d of Captain L. T. Morris' Troop L of the 8th Cavalry from Fort Clark. They in turn departed for Fort Davis the following May and Company H, 5th Infantry, consisting of 2 officers and 39 men arrived from Fort Keogh, Montana, on June 17, 1888. Despite the small garrison, one officer and two men were at once detailed for rifle competition at San Antonio for the entire summer. The following year companies from Fort Bliss used the Hancock rifle range for annual target practice, and the little Hancock garrison conducted practice marches and field training to old Fort Quitman in October and to Fort Bliss in December.³¹

The accompanying map shows Fort Hancock as it appeared in 1889. All buildings were of brick with barracks and quarters boasting broad two story verandas in front and rear, quite similar to the old yellow brick quarters at present day Fort Bliss. Accomodations were considered ample for four officers, a surgeon, about 75-90 men and 64 horses. One rifled three-inch Rodman gun was on hand with 50 rounds of time-fuzed Hotchkiss shells. Although it was one of the first western posts to have a central water system, pumped from a rather shallow well, the sewage system consisted merely of cesspools near each building. For such a small garrison the housekeeping facilities were a significant burden, for Hancock had its own warehouses, guardhouse, bakery, and twelve-bed hospital. In 1889 many improvements and additions, done entirely by troop labor, were made. These included a dining room and kitchen for the hospital, carpenter and blacksmith shop, ammunition magazine, new water tank, a chapel surrounded with a picket fence, and brick walks throughout the post.³²

Winter training duties emphasized tri-weekly schools for officers and non-commissioned officers; physical training included participation in baseball, football, polo, and gymnastics—particularly the latter. For off duty recreation there was a library of 161 volumes, the post canteen, and the post trader's store operated by H. G. Ross and Briggs. The latter had been recommended as Hancock's first postmaster several years before and with D. L. Creswell and C. Wilson was one of the older residents of Hancock Station. Captain Logan, post commander, reported that the new canteen experiment had proven to be a great benefit and unqualified success, effectively destroying the illicit mescal traffic which had plagued posts for years.³³

³⁰7th ind. to ltr Hq Div Mo to AG Army, 7 July 1886, Mil Res file (NA, OAB).

³¹PR 1887, 1888 (NA, OAB).

³²Rpt of Capt. T. H. Logan, 5th Inf, Cmdg Off Ft Hancock, 1889 (NA, OAB).

³³Rpt Capt Logan, *ibid.*

On May 20, 1891 the garrison again changed, Company H departed Fort Hancock as Troop F of the 3d Cavalry arrived from Fort Davis. Captain Dodd in the tradition of new commanders, upon reading of a recently discovered grass which thrived in arid and barren lands, promptly requested some of its seed for "experimental" purposes. He called attention to the need for proper stabling of the Quartermaster animals and to the "wretched and unsatisfactory condition of the canteen building, and so-called bowling alley and gymnasium, all of which in plan, construction and location are totally unfit for the purpose intended." His solution was the purchase of the post traders building and conversion of the "barrel-stave" canteen into mule stables.³⁴ Stable conditions also led to a series of formal correspondence between Dodd and Assistant Surgeon Buffington who demanded more expeditious action in improving the box stall accommodations for his pony. Seeking redress at Departmental level, Buffington's allegations resulted in exposure of numerous derelictions on his part and subsequent annulment of his contract. The captain was also successful in obtaining discontinuance of the thirteen man detachment required for years at Presidio del Norte. The original need for this outpost had long since vanished and Dodd felt that the sole purpose in the merchants pleas for protection was to assure readily available customers.³⁵

Troop F left for Fort Riley, Kansas, June 15, 1893 to be replaced at Fort Hancock by Captain Henry Jackson's Troop C of the 7th Cavalry. After a few monthly patrols along the river, the tribulations of post command soon fell heavily on the captain. The Inspector General reported that the post's fire fighting means were inadequate and that neither daily dress parades nor monthly lyceum meetings of officers were held. Jackson in rebuttal pointed to his months old request for new water pipe, the ludicrousness of a 30 man daily dress parade, and the difficulty in conducting professional forums when he had been the only officer on the post until Lieutenant Corcoran had returned in time for the target practice season. However, the lieutenant he reported had been studying hippology as befitted a cavalry subaltern and he himself was preparing an essay on field engineering.³⁶

The subject was most appropriate, for a plethora of utilities disasters was imminent. In June, one fourth of the garrison were in the hospital with intestinal disorders blamed on the water, which even though boiled tasted of the rotten wood in the old well which six months earlier Department Headquarters had forbidden Jackson to replace. In July wind moved the upper water tank eight inches laterally, leaving it precariously perched above the carpenter and black-

³⁴Ltr Capt. G. A. Dodd to AG Dept Texas, 13 Nov 1891, LB-LS (NA, OAB).

³⁵Rpt of Capt. G. A. Dodd to AG Dept Texas, 7 Sept 1892, LB-LS (NA, OAB).

³⁶Ltrs Cmdg Off Ft Hancock to AG Dept Texas, 19 Jan 1894, 24 July 1894, 17 May 1894; LB-LS (NA, OAB).

smith shop. The next month the portable engine and the boiler on the water system pump broke down; 2000 feet of replacement pipe were requested to render the water pressure adequate for fire fighting. Rather than receiving ice by express, half melted away by the time it reached the post from El Paso, one of the new ice machines at Fort Bliss was requested. The following March the cesspool piping was found to be disintegrating within a few feet of the buildings and shortly thereafter the blacksmith shop burned down. On May 4, 1895 the gymnasium and Quartermaster stable burned to the ground although there had been no fires in either building for eighteen months. An incendiary was suspected for on May 25th, two weeks after the destruction of the hay stack and wood pile in a day long fire, a prowler identified as a disgruntled deserter who had sworn revenge on the troop, narrowly eluded capture while attempting to fire one of the officer's quarters. Meantime a departmental telegram reminded Captain Jackson of pertinent regulations regarding prevention of fires on posts. As a final blow the three-inch wrought iron Rodman gun, Model of 1861, blew up while firing the Fourth of July salute, burning two men and amputating the thumb of Number Three cannoneer while the latter was correctly "thumbing the vent." The Captain's report reflected his confidence that the men were not careless for all were afraid of the gun. Until requisition for a new modern three-inch field piece was filled, salutes were ordered discontinued.³⁷

The harassed captain departed for recruiting duty on September 13. On October 4, 1895 Orders No. 93, Ft. Hancock, in compliance with General Orders No. 50, Headquarters of the Army, relieved Troop C, 7th Cavalry from duty at Fort Hancock and directed it to proceed via Southern Pacific Railroad to Ft. Grant, Arizona. General Order 50 also announced the discontinuance of the post of Fort Hancock, and General Order No. 58, Headquarters of the Army, 13 November 1895, turned over the reservation to the Secretary of the Interior as excess to the needs of the War Department. The last post to be established on the frontier ceased to exist.

The reservation apparently remained under some control of the War Department for records show that Troop G, 3d Cavalry was stationed and encamped at Fort Hancock reservation during April, 1911.³⁸ In November 1922 the War Department leased officer's quarters No. 2, Fort Hancock to J. N. Wafer, Customs Inspector and Louis J. Ivey of Fabens for \$11 per month. The lease was revoked the following year.³⁹ The present owner is believed to be Mrs. Roy Davidson of Clint, Texas.

³⁷PR May 1894 - Aug 1895; Ltrs Cmdg Off Ft Hancock to AG Dept Texas, 24 July 1894, 3 Sept 1894, 26 Sept 1894, 2 Feb 1895, 2 Mar 1895, 6 May 1895, 26 May 1895, 4 July 1895, 5 Aug 1895, LB-LS; Telegram Dept Texas to CO Ft Hancock, 13 May 1895 (NA, OAB).

³⁸Org Returns, 3d Cav, April 1911 (NA, OAB).

³⁹War Dept, Office Quartermaster General, ltr to CG Fort Bliss, 2 Oct 1923, Mil Res File, Ft Hancock (NA, OAB).

* * * * *

A few months ago in the yard of the International Museum, Mrs. O. L. Shipman of Marfa and El Paso viewed the old government marker of the post. Apparently removed by a former owner of the land, and partially destroyed by vandals, some of the inscription is still legible:

Fort Hancock

Built 1884 - 1885

Department Command—

Planned by Maj. A.G.C. Lee, Chief QM

Post Commander — Capt. T. A. Baldwin, 10 Cav.

In Charge of Construction — Lt. E. B. Ives, 19 Inf.

Contractor — W. S. Pleasant

It seems but fitting that the old monument should once more mark the site of old Fort Hancock, for nothing else remains but the records and memories of gallant, sincere soldiers who once served there.⁴¹

⁴⁰Ltr Mrs. O. L. Shipman to Col Ruhlen, Nov., 1957.

⁴¹About 25 years ago the red brick walls of a few of the old buildings could be seen some 200 yards south of Highway 80; since then they have vanished as land cultivation expanded.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRRIGATION IN THE CITY OF EL PASO

by Alice White

The first man to settle on the left bank of the river in the El Paso Valley was Juan Maria Ponce de Leon who, on September 24, 1827, was granted a tract of land across from Juarez.¹ Contemporary records of Ponce's activities on this side of the river do not reveal very much, but there is creditable evidence to the effect that he did do some farming and that he dug a ditch from the river to bring water to his crops. This ditch headed from the east bank of the river just above the dam which diverted water into the El Paso del Norte *acequia* on the other side.²

In 1849 the Ponce property passed into the hands of an American, Benjamin Franklin Coons, and the settlement which grew up around the Coon's ranch headquarters became known as Franklin.³ A little farther east an American trader, James Wiley Magoffin, set up his headquarters, also in 1849, and shortly thereafter a compact little settlement sprang up around it which came to be known as Magoffinsville. Magoffin did some farming and irrigated by means of a canal leading from the river.⁴ Previously, sometime between 1827 and 1848, the Rio Grande jumped its banks and shifted its channel far enough to the right to place the towns of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario on the left side where they remain.⁵

This shift in the river affected the farming in this section of the valley very little and only temporarily. It necessitated a reestablishment of the *acequia* on the left bank. Otherwise the main *acequia* systems remained unchanged. The people continued to irrigate and raise crops when there was water in the river, and they shrugged their shoulders resignedly when there was not.

As time went on the water situation in the valley became steadily more complex and alarming. Not only was a greater amount of water being taken from the river in Colorado and New Mexico but a much heavier demand was being

¹The location of Ponce's property was determined in 1896 under the direction of Anson Mills in connection with the International Water Boundary Commission's investigation of Mexico's claim to the "Chamizal" section of El Paso, Texas. See *Department of State Proceedings of the International (Water) Boundary Commission, United States and Mexico*, 1, 62-4; maps, 96, 97. (Hereafter cited *Proceedings*.)

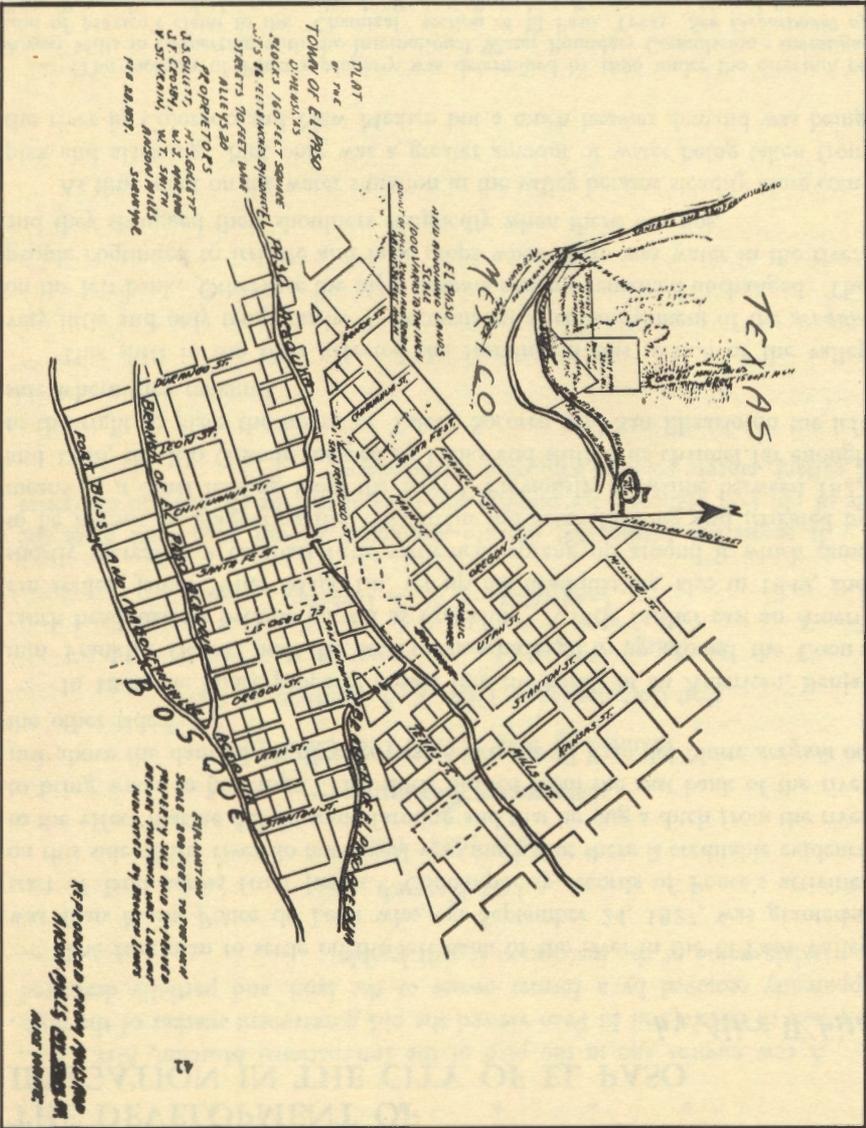
²*El Paso Times*, September 18, 1888. *Minutes of the City Council*, (City Clerk's Office, El Paso), Book E, Part 11, 385. *Proceedings*, 11, 393. VII, 305.

³Ralph P. Bieber, ed., *Exploring Southern Trails 1846 - 54* (Berkeley, Calif., 1915),

⁴*El Paso Times*, September 18, 1888. Roscoe P. and Margaret B. Conkling *The Butterfield Overland Mail* (Glendale, California, 1926), 1,77.

⁵Anson Mills to the Secretary of State, December 10, 1888. *Proceedings*, 11, 394 - 5.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN THE CITY OF EL PASO



made locally.⁶ The population was growing rapidly on both sides of the river and soon there developed a rivalry for the use of the river water not only between the Mexicans and the Americans on opposite sides of the Rio Grande, but also between the several communities on the American side.

In 1858* the village of Franklin was renamed El Paso by a group of men who had bought the Coons Rancho with a view of converting it into a townsite, and a map of the proposed townsite was prepared by Anson Mills. The map shows the two main branch *acequias*.⁷ The El Paso *acequia*, from its heading to San Francisco Street, was popularly referred to as Ponce's Ditch. The Fort Bliss and Magoffinville *acequias* became known as the Magoffinville *Acequia*.⁸

El Paso was incorporated in 1873, taking in Magoffinville, and one of the first acts of the new city administration was the passing of ordinances regulating the use and maintenance of the *acequias* within the city limits.⁹

During the next forty years the water problem in the El Paso Valley grew worse, and various plans for alleviating the situation were discussed and debated and made political issues, but nothing of any importance and very little of any ultimate value ever came to pass. Along in the 80's the attention of the United States was being directed towards the possibilities of reclaiming the arid west through irrigation, and the capitalists of both this country and of England began turning a speculative eye towards the dry valleys of the Rio Grande.

As early as 1875 Joseph Magoffin, A. Krakauer, and several other local men had formed a company known as the El Paso Mill and Irrigation Company for the purpose of building a canal down the valley, opening up new lands to irrigation, mining, milling, cattle raising, and a few other activities.¹⁰ Between

⁶*Ibid.*, 11, 286, 296; *National Planning Committee, Regional Planning*, Part VI — Upper Rio Grande, 8

*The postoffice of "El Paso, El Paso County, Texas," was established on July 26, 1852. The town was incorporated as "El Paso" on June 18, 1873. Evidence would indicate that the names "Franklin" and "El Paso" were used interchangeably until the 1880's. See Brig. General William J. Glasgow, "On the Confusion Caused by the Name El Paso," *PASS-WORD*, 1, No. 2 (May, 1956), 67, 67n. (EDITOR'S NOTE.)

⁷W. W. Mills, *Forty Years in El Paso, 1858 - 1898* (El Paso, 1901), 13. *Thirty-Four* (Las Cruces, New Mexico), September 17, 1879. Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington, D. C., 1918), 51 - 2; map, 54 - 5.

Colonel Anson Mills first came to Texas in 1858 at the age of twenty-three. In the same year he was appointed to the Boundary Commission as a surveyor but resigned soon thereafter. In 1859 he surveyed the townsite of El Paso and his map of that survey hangs in the public library of El Paso today. At the outbreak of the Civil War he joined the Federal forces and having been a student at West Point soon received a commission as First Lieutenant. He remained in the army over fifty-four years and rose to the rank of brigadier general. During that time he performed several important duties for the government, among which was that of Commissioner on the International (Water) Boundary Commission from 1896 to 1914.

⁹*El Paso Times*, September 18, 1888. *Minutes of City Council*, Book A, March 5, 1875.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, Book A, August 15, 1873. *The Lone Star*, August 6, 1884.

¹¹*Deed Book F*, 325, County Clerk's Office, El Paso.

1882 and 1885 three other companies with even greater ambitions were formed for the purpose of improving the water situation in El Paso and the El Paso Valley. It was the declared aim of these companies to solve the water problem on the American side of the valley by running either a canal or a large pipe line from a point above the Mexican diversion dam, through El Paso and down the valley to San Elizario and even farther. One company planned magnificently to dam the river across the narrows at the head of the valley with a permanent dam capable of storing a great lake of water behind it. Each company, however, apparently found its great project more gigantic than it was prepared to undertake and soon faded out.¹¹

The water problem continued to be of vital interest to the people of El Paso and the towns below. Nevertheless, as time went on it became ever more urgent that they do something about it. Numerous meetings were held and various plans proposed and discussed. Some of the plans were quickly rejected as impractical; others were accepted tentatively only to be discarded later. Thus the matter went until 1888.¹² On November 19 of that year a plan known as the Stevenson plan from its sponsor, Colonel George B. Stevenson, was accepted at a mass meeting of the people of El Paso, and a temporary organization was effected on the spot for the purpose of putting the plan into operation as quickly as possible.¹³

Although the Stevenson plan was not received favorably by the people of Ysleta, its El Paso backers went ahead with the project and their organization was chartered on July 6, 1889, under the title of The El Paso Irrigation Company.¹⁴ Now that the company was in legal existence it went ahead with its purposes with commendable energy. On September 14, 1889, it petitioned the city council for a right-of-way through El Paso, and on September 16 the council granted the petition.¹⁵ An encouraging number of water rights were sold throughout the valley, and in the early part of October a contract for the construction of the canal was let to the Rosenfield Construcion Company of Denver, Colorado. The contract also called for the construction of a wing dam across the river about two hundred yards below the old Mexican dam and of suitable head-gates for the canal immediately above the dam. From that point the line of the canal as surveyed followed along the left bank of the river until it intersected Eight Street in the city of El Paso. It then swung back to the east and followed along Eight Street for about nineteen blocks, hence northward for eleven or

¹¹*The Lone Star*, March 11, 1882. *El Paso Times*, January 11, 12, 20, 21, 25, 26, 28, 29, 1888. *Minutes of City Council*, Book E, Part II, 385-6.

¹²Anson Mills to the Secretary of State, November 10, 1888, *Proceedings*, 11, 394. *El Paso Times*, September 28, 29, November 5, 11, 1888.

¹³*Ibid.*, November 20, 1888.

¹⁴*Deed Record Book No. 23*, 345.

¹⁵*Minutes of City Council*, Book F, Part 1, 38, 41.

twelve blocks to pass around the bend in the river forming Cordova Island. It then swung back to the east and continued in a general easterly direction for about three miles. From that point it followed a fairly straight course for approximately twenty-three miles about midway between the scarp line and the river to terminate within about a mile of Fabens.¹⁶

After about seven weeks of surveying and clearing of the right-of-way, which work was done under the supervision of the irrigation company's engineer, the Rosenfeld Construction Company, on November 6, 1889, began the actual construction of the canal. The work did not progress rapidly, however, as had been anticipated. It had been stipulated in the contract that the canal should be completed by February 1, 1890, but it was further stipulated that the irrigation company would have the right-of-way secured through all private property before the work on the canal began, so as not to delay the construction.¹⁷ The matter of securing the right-of-way through some of the private property within the city of El Paso proved to be a difficult problem, and the construction company was soon complaining of being held up in its work because of it.

The irrigation company was also having difficulty raising the money with which to pay the contractor. Water rights were not being sold so rapidly as the promoters had expected, and the company was not doing so well in collecting on those that had been sold. Meanwhile Rosenfeld was demanding money with which to carry on his work. Furthermore, the construction company presented an additional claim to the irrigation company of \$60,000 because of alleged delays and damages resulting from the irrigation company's failure to be able to obtain the necessary right-of-way through certain private property in El Paso. To satisfy Rosenfeld, the irrigation company issued him canal bonds in the amount of \$50,000, in addition to several thousand dollars in cash and notes.¹⁸

By the first week in May, 1890, the canal was far from complete and the irrigation company pressed Rosenfeld to have it finished by June 1, or forfeit his contract. Rosenfeld, in turn, blamed the delay on the inefficient management of the irrigation company, and on June 18 filed an application with the clerk of the District Court for the appointment of a receiver to take charge of the El Paso Irrigation Company. Litigation over the appointment was avoided, however, by the surrender of a majority of the stock of the company to A. J. McQuaid of Pueblo, Colorado, who promised that he would, as the controlling stockholder, bring about the early completion of the canal. McQuaid reorganized the company and appointed Rosenfeld manager. Thus the El Paso Irrigation Company passed out of the control of the local men who had organized it and had devoted so much of their time and energy to it.¹⁹ The canal was

¹⁶*Deed Record Book No. 39, 440 - 5.*

¹⁷*El Paso Times, October 8, 1889.*

¹⁸*Ibid., May 8, 1890.*

¹⁹*Ibid., June 22, 1890.*

not completed and ready for use, however, until 1891.

For the next twenty-one years the history of the Franklin Canal, as it came to be called, is one of repeated failures. In the early part of 1892 the El Paso Irrigation Company asked W. de S. Maud of London, England, agent for the bondholders of the company, to take over the company as receiver.²⁰ Maud came to El Paso and spent more than \$10,000 of the bondholders' money to improve the canal and place it on a serviceable and paying basis.²¹ In 1895 the bondholders, through their trustee, Thomas Worthington of Manchester, England, foreclosed the mortgage securing their bonds, and the property of the company was sold in one lot at public auction in April of that year. Worthington bid in the property for \$60,000.²² For the following three years the canal was neglected. Then, on June 16, 1898, Worthington sold it to the bondholders for \$125,000. The new owners organized the Franklin Irrigation Company²³ and proceeded to spend more money to get the canal in operating order. In 1903 the management of the company was placed in the hands of John Summerfield of Dallas, Texas, who leased the canal under option to J. J. Mundy and C. O. Coffin of El Paso.²⁴

In an effort to get their share of the ever-dwindling supply of water coming down the river, the Franklin Irrigation Company in March, 1907, abandoned their heading at the Rosenfeld wing dam about where the old Ponce ditch had headed. The extension of the canal back to the old Ponce heading, however, was accomplished only after considerable difficulty with Juan S. Hart, one of the heirs to the old Simeon Hart estate lying across the needed right-of-way. The canal company had planned the extension the previous year, but the lowest figure Hart would agree to for a right-of-way was \$5,000 which the company considered exorbitant. The matter was referred to the commissioners' court in July, 1906, and condemnation proceedings were instituted. The commissioners awarded Hart \$2,000. It appears that Hart was very dissatisfied with the award and undertook to be troublesome about it for some time thereafter by instituting various suits of title and damages on ill-founded premises.²⁵ For the little good it did the farmers of the valley, however, the heading might better have been left where it was, for the canal, with no water in the river to supply it, had become a bigger problem than private enterprises with limited capital could cope with.

On March 24, 1909, Coffin and Mundy sub-leased the canal and con-

²⁰*El Paso Herald*, December 23, 1907.

²¹*Minutes of City Council*, Book F, Part 11, 560.

²²*Deed Record Book No. 39*, 440 - 5.

²³*Ibid.* No. 38, 607.

²⁴*El Paso Herald*, December 23, 1907.

²⁵*Ibid.*, August 18, 1906; March 3, 1907; December 23, 1907.

veyed their option to the El Paso Valley Water Users' Association.²⁶ Three years later, on October 14, 1912, the Franklin Irrigation Company sold the Franklin Canal and all their holdings appurtenant to it to the United States.²⁷ The final transfer of the Franklin Canal to the federal government marked the end of efforts of private enterprises to capitalize on irrigation in the El Paso Valley. It also marked the beginning of a new era of irrigation farming in the valley, and the old, which had endured for over two centuries, drew rapidly to a close. There were still some years to intervene before the Franklin Canal as a part of the Rio Grande Project would be ready to serve adequately the farmers of the El Paso Valley, but there was now reasonable assurance that the project would be carried to a satisfactory completion. Furthermore, there was the added prospect that the government would always have funds available with which to remedy any defects and inadequacies in the system as they appeared or to make whatever improvements time and experience might demand.

During all of these years, from 1890 to 1912, the farmers in the Valley had received very little benefit from the project which Colonel G. B. Stevenson, Judge A. Blacker, and others had initiated with such great expectations. When there was enough water in the river to flow past the Mexican dam, the Franklin Canal carried water to the Valley, and hopes were revived temporarily among the people whom it was supposed to benefit; but there was seldom any water going past the Mexican dam, except in periods of flash floods; and the floods often did more harm than good.

The Franklin Canal project may have fared much better and prospered the farmers whom it was designed to serve had the valley population been differently constituted. The failure of the project was not altogether due to a lack of water, for there were years between 1891 and 1912 when it did have water and was able to supply its customers, and there were years it might have supplied them had it been in better repair. But the operators of the canal, under its various ownerships, failed to win over a large per cent of the valley people to full confidence in its promises, and they failed to unite the will and energy of these people in a firm determination to make the enterprise a success.

For two centuries the El Paso Valley inhabitants, in their own crude and adequate fashion, had been taking water from the river, if there was any to take, and flowing it onto their fields through their own ditches which were built, operated, and maintained by themselves. At times, of course, there was no water in the river, and at other times there was too much; but down through succeeding generations the community ditch had become an institution among these people as sacred to their mode of living as the soil from which they took their sustenance. It was the tie that held them together in social unity and it was

²⁶*Deed Record Book No. 207, 323 - 6.*

²⁷*Ibid. No. 203, 455 - 62.*

the substance of their local politics. If Juan Fulano had not the money to pay his water assessment, he did work on the ditch in accordance with the amount of water he needed, and when the water flowed he received his share. The Franklin Canal, on the other hand, was an alien-controlled innovation that treated water rights and water assessments in terms of dollars rather than *tareas* and *fatigas**. Juan Fulano looked upon it, therefore, with skepticism and distrust, and its only appeal to him would have been a plentiful flow of water between its banks. This it seldom had. This factor in the defeat of the Franklin Canal project was by no means peculiar to El Paso Valley, for it has long been observed, in various parts of the world, as one of the strongest forces contributing to the failure of irrigation enterprises backed by private capital.²⁸

*For an explanation of *tareas* and *fatigas* see Alice White, "*The Beginning and Development of Irrigation in the El Paso Valley*," PASS-WORD, 11, No. 4 (November, 1957), (EDITOR'S NOTE.)

²⁸Hearings before the Committee on Irrigation of Arid Lands of the House of Representatives (Relating to the Proposed Legislation, Present Conditions of Reclamation Projects, Success of Settlers, Returns to Reclamation Fund, Crops. etc.), January 27, February 3, 8, 1912.

BOOK REVIEWS

EARLY DAYS IN THE MOGOLLONS: Tales From the Bloated Goat

by *H. A. Hoover*

(El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1958. Paper, \$3. Cloth, \$6.)

Fifty-five years ago a young man from Indiana came West and settled in "The Mogollons" (locally pronounced "Muggy-yones"). This picturesque range of mountains lies in southwestern New Mexico, about ten miles from the Arizona state line. It extends roughly fifty miles north and south and twenty-five miles east and west. Today most of the area is contained in the Gila National Forest.

Herman A. Hoover had been attracted to New Mexico by the tales of M. L. Bugbee, a Westerner, who had worked in 1902 on the staff of contractors for the hydroelectric power installation on the St. Joe River in Indiana, where Mr. Hoover was also employed. Mr. Bugbee returned west and became manager of a store in Cooney, owned by the Mogollon Gold and Copper Company. The two men corresponded regularly and finally Mr. Hoover, "being young and foot-loose and of an adventurous nature," decided in 1904 to move west. From then until his death in December, 1957, Mr. Hoover lived in the mountains he learned to love.

The men of Mogollon gathered regularly "in the convivial atmosphere of the Bloated Goat to swap yarns about those turbulent days before New Mexico became a state and before Mogollon became a ghost town." Mr. Hoover became a member in good standing of that exclusive fraternity. He also kept a diary. Refreshed by entries from the diary and from the memories of other old-timers at the Bloated Goat saloon, Mr. Hoover wrote of those early days: of desperados, of Indians, and of the just plain life during those roaring days when the staples of life came into the mountains behind 24-horse teams and coffin handles were standard items at the general store.

The scholarly introduction and notes were written by Francis L. Fugate of the English Department of Texas Western College. The book was printed by El Paso's Carl Hertzog. Mr. Hertzog notes that the book was planned for release at Christmas time, 1957, but was delayed for procurement of additional photographs. Mr. Hoover stopped in El Paso on his way to visit his folks in Indiana for Christmas. Only half the pages had been printed "so we took proofs of pages and pictures and made up a special copy for him to take on his trip. He did not see the finished book but he did see what it was going to look like, and he enjoyed being an author."

The author with the aid of Mr. Fugate and Mr. Hertzog has produced a very readable and human document. And the 14 unusual and rare photographs and the two maps greatly increase the book's historical value. There is little doubt but that "Tales from the Bloated Goat" will become a collector's item.

Eugene O. Porter

Texas Western College

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MURDER AND MYSTERY IN NEW MEXICO

by Erna Ferguson

(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948. \$3.50)

The nine stories of crime and mystery selected by the author have been well chosen to grip the reader's imagination, and hold his interest from beginning to end.

The first five stories are by far the most typical of New Mexico during its romantic period as a territory. The crude justice of the vigilantes was more often than not directed in the proper direction; the land troubles of the Oteros typified the misunderstandings that arose during the change-over from Spanish to Anglo-Saxon laws; the saga of Billy the Kid will never dim in the memory of the Southwest; and honest men such as A. J. Fountain were bound to suffer at times in their attempts to stop cattle rustling. Nor would any story of the Southwest be complete without an account of the train robberies immortalized on film in the Keystone comedy era.

The remaining stories, while interesting enough, might have occurred almost anywhere. Just the same this reviewer can think of no companion, more congenial, with which to spend an evening at home, or in the club car of the Sunset Limited from El Paso to Tucson.

Albion Smith

El Paso, Texas

CONTRIBUTORS

Jack C. Vowell, Jr., is now serving his second term as president of the Society. Mr. Vowell, a native El Pasoan, is an Instructor in Government at Texas Western College. He is presently completing his dissertation for his doctorate at Harvard.

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Dr. Jack L. Cross, born in Oklahoma, spent most of his youth in Texas where he attended Texas Western College before World War II. During that conflict he was a Navigator and a pilot in the Air Force, serving in North Africa and in the Pacific in combat. He holds the usual decorations for such service. After the war he entered the University of Chicago where he received his academic degrees. From 1951 to 1956 he worked for a governmental agency in Washington, D. C. He left the government for a career in college teaching in 1956. He taught one year in a college in Wisconsin before coming to Texas Western as an Assistant Professor of History. He is married and the father of two boys.



DR. JACK L. GROSS

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Colonel George Ruhlen, U. S. A., will be remembered as the author of the excellent two-part article "Brazito — Tho Only Battle in the Southwest Between American and Foreign Troops," in *PASSWORD*, V. 11, No. 1 and 2 (February and May, 1957). For a biographical sketch of the Colonel see the issues noted. Since publishing the above article Colonel Ruhlen served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations of the First Army at Governors Island. He then attended the National War College at Washington, D. C. and upon being gradu-



COL. GEORGE RUHLEN, U.S.A.

ated was assigned to the Military Assistance Advisory Group, Taiwan, where he is presently serving as Chief of Staff of the Army Section of that group. He writes that he "hopes to return to the States, and particularly to El Paso, in the summer of 1960."

In a later issue of *PASSWORD* will appear Colonel Ruhlen's interesting history of Fort Thorn.

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Alice White will be remembered as the author of the unusually interesting article "The Beginning and Development of Irrigation in the El Paso Valley," in *PASSWORD*, V. 11, No. 4 (November, 1957). The present article like the former was taken from her Master's Thesis in history at Texas Western College.

Mrs. White is Chairman of the Department of Social Science Studies at Burgess High School, El Paso. She lives with her husband, Thomas B. at 711 Loretto Road.



ALICE WHITE

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Albion Smith is a retired colonel of the U. S. Army. He received his Master's Degree (History) from Texas Western College.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The annual convention of the Veterans of the Military Railway Service of World War I was held in El Paso in October, 1958. The first M.R.S. in the United States Army was created by Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War in Lincoln's Cabinet, on February 11, 1862. Mr. D. C. McCallum, general superintendent of the Erie Railroad, was assigned the task of organizing and commanding the corps. After the war, however, it was disbanded.

When Pershing's expedition into Mexico was being considered, the government decided to build and operate a railroad "of not longer than 150 miles" in support of the expeditionary force. To carry out this project a regiment of six companies, known as the 3d Reserve Engineers, was organized. Pershing's logistical line of support, however, was by motor truck. But the railroad unit was not demobilized. It was reorganized to become the Thirteenth Engineers and, with our entry into World War I, served in France. For further details see Major General Carl R. Gray, Jr., *Railroading in Eighteen Countries*.

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One of the first men to be hanged in El Paso County was Bartolo Mendoza. The *Galveston News*, October 1, 1869, quoting from the *St. Mary's Gazette*, September 24, 1869, noted that "Bartolo Mendoza, who was hanged at San El Elizario, El Paso County, a fortnight since for the murder of his step-daughter, refused to eat beans on the morning of his execution, because 'they always disagree with me,' and made particular request for a purple shroud."

J. Frank Dobie, *Puro Mexicano* (Austin: Texas Folk-Lore Society, No. XII, 1935), 120 - 1, also writes of the hanging:

"The night before the execution, the condemned man was saying his beads when one of the guards entered. 'Bartolo,' he said, 'you will soon be face to face with God. Won't you please tell Him to send us a little rain? A few more days of this terrible drought and all our crops will be ruined.'

"A look impossible to describe came over Bartolo's face. 'Stop worrying,' was all he said.

"The next day dawned bright and clear. Not a cloud could be seen. The sun seemed to grow hotter with each moment that passed. At three o'clock it beat down mercilessly on the procession that was slowly making its way to the gallows.

"Father Borrajo walked with the prisoner. As the priest intoned the prayers of the litany, the people joined in the responses. Slowly, praying as they went, the procession moved on.

"At last they reached the gallows. With steady steps Bartolo mounted the platform, accompanied by Father Borrajo. He knelt to receive the priest's blessing. Then he got up, looked around him, and took his place. The noose was adjusted. In a second the trap had been sprung.

"Hardly had he been pronounced dead when the sky began to cloud. By the time the procession with the body reached the church, a few drops of rain were falling. Before long it was raining hard, and the rain continued all the next day.

"Can anyone doubt that the soul of Bartolo Mendoza went straight to heaven?"

SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL AWARDS

"Beginning with 1958, the San Diego Historical Society will offer annual awards to writers of outstanding articles dealing with San Diego County historical subjects. Gold plaques will be presented to winning writers in both magazine and newspaper classifications at the annual meeting of the Society in January; and, when possible, the winning articles will be reprinted in the Quarterly. As a by-product of this award, we hope to obtain many good articles of local history now lost to us in the files of magazines and newspapers."

For further information, write to Wilmer Shields, Chairman, Library Committee, San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, California.

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According to *History News*, V. XIV, No. 1 (November, 1958), "The Barton Museum of Whiskey History, Barton Road, Bardstown, Kentucky, is interested in acquiring any memorabilia or artifact that was connected in any way with the preprohibition industry."

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To promote and engage in research into the History, Archeology, and Natural History of West Texas, Southern New Mexico, Eastern Arizona, and Northern Mexico; to publish the important findings; and to preserve the valuable relics and monuments.