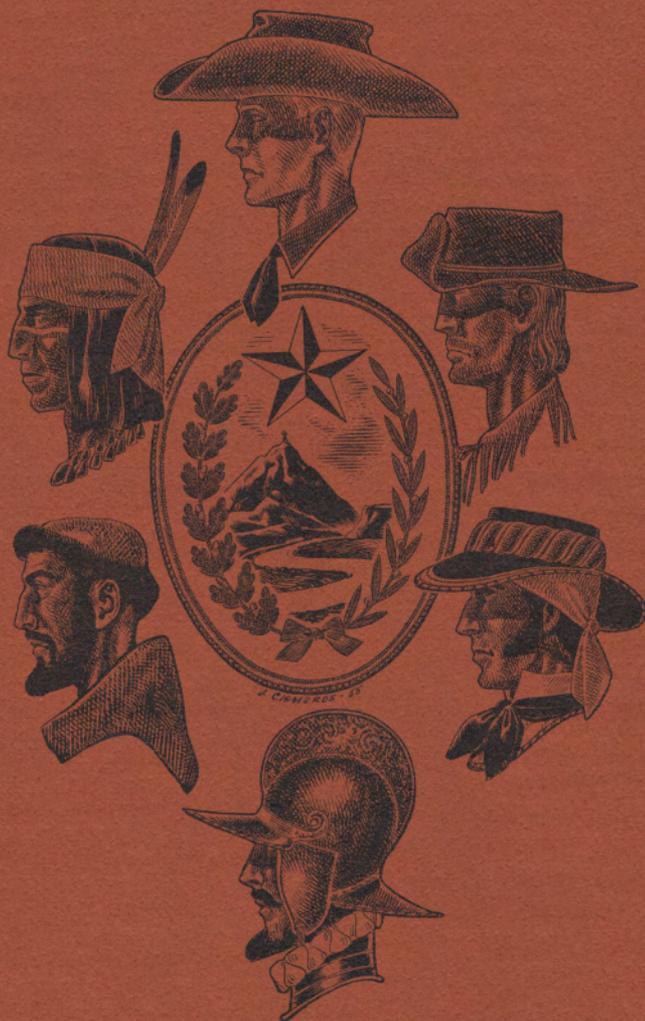


PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. XVIII, No. 1

EL PASO, TEXAS

SPRING, 1973

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PASSWORD

Published quarterly by The El Paso County Historical Society

EUGENE O. PORTER, *Editor*

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CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	3
<i>By James J. Crook</i>	
"MAMA DE": TOWER BUILDER	6
<i>By Pierce and Orndorf, ed. by Collingwood</i>	
THE ATTEMPTED PAYROLL ROBBERY	14
<i>By Eugene O. Porter</i>	
THE EXCHANGE	17
<i>By Chris P. Fox</i>	
DOWN THE CHIHUAHUA TRAIL WITH WISLIZENUS	21
<i>Intro. & Notes by Eugene O. Porter</i> <i>(Part One of Several Parts)</i>	
HERITAGE HOMES OF EL PASO	33
<i>By Harriot Howze Jones</i>	
SOUTHWEST ARCHIVES — THE THOMASON COLLECTION	36
<i>By Mildred D. Torok</i>	
BOOK REVIEWS	39
<i>Brinckerhoff, METAL UNIFORM INSIGNIA OF THE FRONTIER</i> <i>U. S. ARMY 1846-1902</i>	
<i>Glick, THE OLD WORLD BACKGROUND OF THE IRRIGATION</i> <i>SYSTEM OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS</i>	
HISTORICAL NOTES	41
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE	47

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"The Alamo was not a great victory for Santa Anna, and it might have been a tragic mistake for Texas; it demonstrated no great lessons of command, tactics, or strategy; it produced no great future leaders, and ended no promising military careers; and more than a classic encounter it resembled a gut-fight. But in a larger sense it was the revolution, it was the ultimate victory, it was an echo of principle fulfilled, it was and is Texas."

A. P. McDonald, *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*

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EUGENE O. PORTER, *Editor*

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by JAMES J. CROOK

Since my accidental entry into the El Paso County Historical Society in 1968 after working with the Society on the "Save No. 1" project co-sponsored with the El Paso Jaycees, a fund-raising project to construct a shelter for the historical old railroad engine now located on the UTEP Campus, and now having served under Col. H. Crampton Jones, Fred J. Morton, Barry O. Coleman, Fred Bailey, Stephen Kent and the immediate past-president, Leon C. Metz, I have witnessed the Society grow into the large organization it has and is becoming. It is with no small amount of enthusiasm and optimism that I enter into the 1973 administrative term ever mindful of the foundation that has been laid by these predecessors and of the responsibilities and duties that lie ahead.

The last two years under the leadership of President Leon C. Metz which in my opinion was an outstanding two years, witnessed an unprecedented growth and expansion of our Society and many notable achievements. Historically, El Paso is closing the gap between itself and other communities rich in an historical heritage similar to ours. Only within the past few years was the first historical monument, the Magoffin Home, placed upon the National Register of Historical Places in Washington, D.C. Since then, we received our second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth listing upon the National Register in rapid succession. All of the County's Spanish Missions are now listed.

In my opinion, the El Paso County Historical Society is entering into a new era. We are experiencing growing pains. The young plant has broken sod and its green stem is turning upward toward the sun as the Society moves toward a position of relative prominence among other historical Societies across the country, with a potential of maturing into one of the finest of such organizations anywhere. 1972 saw the publishing of our first completed volume entitled "El Paso" which I recommend highly to the entire membership. Harriot Jones deserves applause for completing this worthwhile project. Our quarterly magazine, *PASSWORD*, under the able editorship of Dr. Eugene Porter is the finest of its kind anywhere.

I view 1973 as an exciting year, replete with opportunities, challenges and goals that can be met. In that the membership has swelled so, largely due to the efforts of Leonard Goodman, Sr., we have reached a new organizational plateau. No longer can we function informally as we have in the past as an organization in which the Board of Directors in essence

was the body whole and the success of the organization was attributed to a dedicated hard core few who have loyally and unrelentingly served year after year forwarding the aims of the Society. To provide an organizational structure sufficient to support a large Society and accommodate its continuing growth allowing a maximum utilization of the talents and human resources to be found within our large membership, the Board of Directors has been restructured in a fashion which will more enable us to achieve the purposes for which we exist which is the preservation of the story of the southwest through protective and educational measures involving landmarks, archives and artifacts and other historical indicia which unfold the historical past of this area. Only with a proper interpretation of the past is man better equipped to perceive the future.

The activities of the Society have now been divided into three major areas: Internal Activities which have been assigned to the first vice-president, Dr. James Day; Ways and Means which has been assigned to the second vice-president, Burt Wright; and External Activities which have been assigned to the third vice-president, Frank Smith. This year, every director has been assigned a specific portfolio to which reference can be made in a recent copy of the Society's newsletter, *El Conquistador*. Another aim of the Society in 1973 is the activation of the non-board membership into positions of chairmanship and assisting on all of the Society's works. The past indicates that these projects were all carried out and completed by board members alone who gave unstinted amounts of time in significant individual efforts. This proved burdensome for a few and unwise for the organization in that members of the organization outside the board were not being utilized and groomed for positions of leadership as future members of the board and presidents of the Society. The membership will be asked and encouraged this year to play a total role in the completion of all projects. I encourage every one to participate and I feel that your involvement will prove exciting and interesting for you and it will strengthen the Society internally as we continue to expand.

A note of thanks goes to Mrs. Willard Schuessler who has assisted in activating the membership by providing each director with a large list of members who will be contacted shortly for responsible assignments. Ambitious projects worthy of mention to be commenced in 1973 will be a historical pageant running three months throughout the summer of each year, a continuing membership drive to compliment the upward surge of new members of the Society (it is to be noted that San Diego has 12,000 members), and the acquisition of a permanent home for the Society. The direction of the Society this year is obviously interpreting itself in terms of rapid growth. Stress MUST be upon organization.

In speaking of history, the late Harry S. Truman remarked that "Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs where courageous skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better".

I am looking forward toward another year of continuing growth of the Society and further contributions by our Society to the community of El Paso.

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company began operating in 1857. Butterfield had spent around one million dollars getting the line in shape. He had built 139 way stations across Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

—*El Paso—A Centennial Portrait*, 154

The last Indian fight in Texas took place near Guadalupe Peak about eighty miles from El Paso on January 29, 1881.

The Plains Indians lived between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains. They had a "buffalo culture."

The most confusing term in the Southwest was the word "Apache." In 1858 Indian Agent G. Bailey wrote that the term was generic "and is applied to all the tribes living on or near the 33rd parallel from Tontos on the west to the Mescaleros on the east."

—*Journal of Arizona History*

Tom Green, for whom the county was named, was born in Virginia and came to Texas in time to take part in the Battle of San Jacinto. He also served in both the Mexican War and the Civil War. He was killed in 1864 and buried in the State Cemetery.

Owen Wister, the author, and Frederic Remington, the artist, each came West in 1885.

Goldthwaite, Texas was named in honor of Joseph Goldthwaite, a railroad official.

William Walker, physician, journalist, politician, soldier of fortune, filibuster, was the first and only American ever elected president of a foreign country—Nicaragua.

“MAMA DE”: TOWER BUILDER

by BURTRAM ORNDORF PIERCE AND ALZINA ORNDORF GAY

edited and documented by LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD

In the July 30, 1937, issue of the *El Paso Herald-Post*,¹ there appeared a mention of the “steady march” of business out Texas Street. In a tone that mixed regret at the passing of beautiful things and pride in El Paso’s progress, the unidentified writer remarked the “clutter” of second-hand automobiles replacing the “cedar trees,” “flowers,” and “well-kept lawn” of the old DeGroff homestead. The writer then went on to pay tribute to the lady who had been mistress of that homestead, Mrs. Charles DeGroff, deceased for some eleven years at the time the article appeared, referring to her as a “forceful character,” as “progressive,” as a “tower builder,” as “proud of her boys, Burt, Seth, and Lee Orndorff.”

We agree with this description of Mrs. DeGroff, our grandmother. As we remember her, the term “forceful character” is especially accurate. Indeed she had “character”—the kind that comes from integrity, courage, self-assurance; and “force” she had, too—the force that derives from intelligence, vision, will-power, daring, skill. To us, “Mama De,” as her grandchildren affectionately called Mrs. DeGroff, was truly a remarkable person—a fine example of the kind of pioneer belief and resourcefulness which built our country, our Southwest, our El Paso.

“Mama De” was born in Louisiana in 1859. When she was seventeen, she married our grandfather, Lee H. Orndorff, of Moundville, Missouri. Soon afterward, the young couple moved to Tucson, Arizona, where a few years later Mr. Orndorff was killed in a railway accident.²

To support herself and her three boys, the young widow rented an eight-room hotel in Tucson. Some three years later, she married Charles DeGroff, the Tucson postmaster, who joined her in her hotel business. During the 'eighties and 'nineties, “Mama De” instructed her boys in hotel management; and one of them, Burt (our father), made the hotel business his lifetime career. In later years, Father often commented that he had “literally grown up in the hotel business, learning it from the ground up.” How he used to delight us girls with reminiscences of his “apprenticeship” in Tucson: “It was part of my duty, when I was a little barefoot boy and helping my mother run the hotel out in Tucson to fill the oil lamps, trim the wicks, clean the chimneys. Another of my duties was to meet all the trains with the hotel hack, which furnished free rides for passengers to the hotel. Oh, yes, I looked after the horses, too.”

And while all this was taking place, the DeGroffs' business flourished. By the mid 'nineties, they owned and operated a sixty-room hotel — "The Orndorff" of Tucson.³ In our family "archives," we find a tribute to this hotel, written many years later, by a California editor named George H. Clements: "Whenever I see the name 'Orndorff,' my mind wanders back to the early days in southern Arizona, when 'west was west' and when the Orndorff Hotel was the acme of western comfort, as comfort was understood in those days." Later in the same article, Mr. Clements spoke of Mrs. DeGroff's "three stalwart sons, each a credit to their high-minded pioneer Mother."

In 1898, "Mama De" learned that a piece of important real estate in El Paso, known at the time as the Vendome property,⁴ was for sale. She became interested in buying the property with a view toward opening an "Orndorff Hotel" in El Paso. The story goes that "Papa Sox," as we called our step-grandfather, was not in favor. "If you go [to El Paso], you go alone," he is supposed to have said: "I like Tucson." It was such events as this that brought out our grandmother's "forceful character" and revealed her persuasive powers: she got "Papa Sox" to agree that she should make a trip to El Paso and view the property. When she saw it, she was impressed with its location and with the four-story, red-brick hotel that stood upon the property.⁵

She returned to Tucson and somehow inspired her husband to see what she saw: that a new century was about to begin, that El Paso was destined for great growth, and that together they could contribute to that growth. Then she encountered another obstacle: the sale of the Tucson hotel didn't cover the down payment on the Vendome property. And again "Mama De" showed her ability to overcome obstacles. She campaigned among their friends; and one of them, Francis J. Heney, who later became a prominent lawyer in California, so respected Mrs. DeGroff's integrity and determination that he arranged a loan.

The DeGroffs arrived in El Paso in the spring of 1899. On April 13, 1899, *The El Paso Times* reported that "Mr. and Mrs. M. DeGraff [*sic*] of Tucson, Arizona, have purchased the Vendome Hotel and will remodel [*sic*] and refurnish it" and that "yesterday from Cashier C. S. Stewart of the First National Bank the TIMES learned that Mr. and Mrs. DeGraff would take charge of the property at once and begin putting it in thorough repair in order to have the hotel open for business in the early fall."⁶

Actually, the hotel opened sooner than "early fall." On June 5, 1899, the "Hotel Orndorff" was listed for the first time in *The El Paso Times* in a column headed "Hotel Arrivals," which appeared daily on the Classified page in those years.⁷ The formal opening, however, did not take place until Saturday evening, June 24, 1899.⁸

On the following day, *The El Paso Times* printed an extensive report of the opening.⁹ Bearing the headline "The Orndorff Opening . . . a Brilliant Society Event," the article describes the "Grand Ball and Supper," noting the "Palatial Elegance" of the setting and commenting that the "supper approached to a royal banquet and was enjoyed by about one hundred people, many of the leading society people of the city being among the number." The report informs the readers that "The large handsome dining room has been renovated and refurnished" and that "Prof. Concho's [*sic*] excellent orchestra . . . discoursed sweet music during the feast."¹⁰ Then the reporter details the tour of the building which took place while the "dancing hall . . . was being put in readiness for the ball":

The Building was brilliantly illuminated throughout . . . The house—every room, nook, and corner in it—has undergone a complete transformation, and cannot now be recognized as the old Vendome. The Orndorff is in all its equipments a first-class modern hotel . . . and the spirit of elegance . . . is everywhere in evidence. The large airy rooms have been repapered, the floors covered with fine Brussels carpet to correspond with the handsome new paper and the elegant new furniture that adorns every room in the building. Everything so harmonizes that it delights the eye and fills the weary traveler with a sense of comfort and restfulness . . .

There is hot and cold water in every room; a public bath and closet on each floor and private baths in many of the bed rooms. The rooms of the third and fourth floor are as elegantly furnished as those on the parlor floor. Very handsome glass chandeliers burning gas are in all of the rooms. The rooms in suit are furnished exactly alike, the furniture in every instance harmonizing in color with the papering and carpet . . .

The article then quotes "the rates for such an elegant hotel": "50 cents single, \$1.00 double and board, three meals a day, \$30 a month" and comments on the cuisine: "Among other choice items, on the daily menus for breakfast, dinner and supper are quail. Boarding guests can have quail three times a day."

The final paragraph of the report pays tribute to the new proprietors:

Mr. and Mrs. DeGroff have in one evening made a reputation for themselves, as entertainers, among the society people of this city. Mr. DeGroff and his estimable wife have made a study of the art of entertaining, and they do it with an easy grace that is charming. They made the opening of the Orndorff a delightful success, as they are going to make that hostelry the most popular hotel in the southwest. They thoroughly understand the hotel business.

So "thoroughly" did the DeGroffs "understand the hotel business" that within a short time they were able to repay the loan which Mr. Heney had arranged. And The Orndorff Hotel entered its two-and-a-half decades of popularity and prosperity.¹¹

In 1907, while the Orndorff was in full swing, the DeGroffs purchased

another El Paso hotel, the Sheldon,¹² on the site of the present Plaza Hotel. Father managed this hotel for a number of years. In 1916, the DeGroffs sold their interest in the Sheldon, Father retaining his interest, which he had meanwhile acquired.¹³ Father continued to manage the Sheldon, even after Albert Mathias bought it in 1920,¹⁴ until J. E. Goodell bought the furnishings and assumed the managership in 1922.¹⁵

Success in the hotel business is only one example of our grandmother's visionary talent and business acumen. In the early 1900's she began buying property on Texas Street, which at the time was sparsely settled—and probably considered not very attractive or promising, if one judges by the low cost of the land in those days. But "Mama De" saw more than desolate land as she cast her eyes down Texas Street. She visualized a time when Texas Street would become a major place of business, a heavily-trafficked thoroughfare, and the site of warehouses, stores, and—yes—even the "clutter" of second-hand automobile dealers. Time proved that "Mama De" was right.

Even though our grandmother thought of Texas Street as a commercial, rather than a residential, potential, she and "Papa Sox" did choose Texas Street for their homestead—a lovely acre which in those days was located at a considerable distance from the busy center of town where "The Orndorff" with its "cool, shady verandas"¹⁶ welcomed travellers. The DeGroffs considered this place their "retreat," and since it was really in the country they called it "The Ranchita." The building still stands, its present address being 2103 Texas Street.

"Mama De" loved to entertain there in her "large wainscoted living room" where "comfortable chairs made visitors want to linger."¹⁷ "Hostessing," of course, was our grandmother's greatest talent, the talent she had turned into business success; and it was her large family that she most liked to "hostess."

By this time, all three of her sons had settled in El Paso, and all were family men with growing children. Shortly after the opening of the Orndorff, our father had come to El Paso with his beautiful wife (our mother) and their baby (Alzina). Before he assumed the managership of the Sheldon, he worked with the DeGroffs at the Orndorff, where I (Burtram) was born in what we called the Annex, now the alley between the Cortez Hotel Building¹⁸ and the Post Office. In addition to his busy life as a hotel man, Father was active in the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, twice serving as its president, and in many other civic affairs. In 1916, he received the great honor of being elected a delegate to the League of Nations in Washington. The other sons, Seth and Lee, were engaged in the real estate business, Uncle Seth serving as Sheriff of El Paso County for many years and also as County Commissioner. Yes, indeed, "Mama De" was "proud of her boys." And they were proud of her. Looking

back now over our grandmother's splendid accomplishments, we believe that her most spectacular success was as a parent.

And as a grandparent. Several memories from our childhood stand out in this connection. Once, when we were living at 1925 Arizona, we children were playing Run Sheep Run. I was always called "Sister" by my playmates, and my team was yelling "Run, Sister, Run." Just at that moment "Mama De" appeared in a surry with a fringe on top. She called us children to the surry and, pointing at me, said in a stern voice: "Her name is Burtram, not Sister." That was the end of "Sister."

Another incident which reveals our grandmother's concern for us occurred when we girls were scheduled to begin school. The school nearest our house was the old Lamar School.¹⁹ Before entering public school, all children had to be vaccinated. But "Mama De," progressive as she was, didn't believe in vaccination. This posed a problem, but the family worked out a solution: we were entered at St. Joseph's Academy, which was located at 701 N. El Paso Street. We remember very well the journey to and from school every day—a long streetcar ride from Cotton westward on Alamogordo (now Yandell) to Oregon, where we were met by a nun; and in the afternoon the same procedure in reverse, except for the nun of course. Our home was within walking distance of Lamar School, but "Mama De" was the matriarch. We all respected and loved her so much that we wouldn't have even thought of going against her wishes.

And how welcome we grandchildren were at the DeGroffs' farm down the valley. In later years, probably as the "clutter" of business moved closer and closer to "The Ranchita," "Mama De" and "Papa Sox" established their "retreat" at yet a farther distance from the commercial center of El Paso: they bought several thousand acres a few miles below Ysleta. They called the place "The Big Ranch" and "retreated" from time to time to the beautiful old adobe house which was on the property. We grandchildren spent many happy summers there, riding horseback, picnicking with our friends, and swimming in a lovely lake which was surrounded by weeping willows and where peacocks with their brilliant plumage, as well as the farm animals, added to the enrichment and joy of our childhood.

Devoted as "Mama De" was to her family, she never neglected her beloved "Orndorff" nor the El Paso which so fired her faith and stimulated her imaginative powers. She took an avid interest in the city's politics and engaged actively in its civic and social affairs. She was president of the El Paso Civic League, which improved Sam Houston Square for the city; and she was the first president of the El Paso Equal Franchise League, forerunner of Women's Suffrage.

Perhaps the greatest honor that she received as a result of her civic-

mindfulness was her appointment in 1923 by Governor Pat M. Neff of Texas to the first Board of Directors of the newly-founded Texas Technological College in Lubbock, Texas.²⁰ Her name, along with those of the other members of the first Board of Directors, remains on the corner stone of the Administration Building,²¹ the college's first building. In our family papers, we find several telegrams of congratulations which "Mama De" received at the time of her appointment, among them one from Governor W. P. Hunt of Arizona; another from George Kelly, Arizona State Historian at the time; and also one from Mr. Heney, the lawyer who had made the loan possible. We also find an undated and unidentified newspaper clipping which states that "Friends throughout the southwest have rejoiced at Mrs. DeGroff's appointment to the first board of directors of a new college which will have an enrollment of 2,000 students."²²

After the sale of the Sheldon Hotel furnishings to Mr. Goodell, our father joined the DeGroffs in their greatest venture: the razing of the Orndorff and the construction on its site of a deluxe hotel, estimated to cost one and a half million dollars. About three years were required for the planning and the financing. In 1925 the old Orndorff was torn down, and the new Orndorff began its stately ascent.

On August 6, 1926, a few weeks before the scheduled opening of the New Orndorff—so handsomely designed by Henry Trost, of the architectural and engineering firm of Trost and Trost;²³ so scrupulously appointed by "Mama De"; so sedately towering above the east side of San Jacinto Plaza ("A Castle of Old Spain on the Plaza of El Paso," said Norman Walker in his brochure of the hotel)²⁴—"Mama De" paid a visit to the hotel to inspect the steam-heating system, which was being tested that day. Somehow, stepping from the heated building to the fresh air, she caught pneumonia. And in a short few days she was gone.²⁵ Death, by only a few weeks, separated the pioneer woman from the realization of her life's dream: the formal opening of the New Orndorff Hotel.

That unidentified writer of the July 30, 1937, *Herald-Post* article called Mrs. Charles DeGroff a "tower builder." He was right. She did indeed build a tower, one that for almost half a century now has graced downtown El Paso. It is true, of course, that in the tides of time and circumstance her Tower swept to other ownerships and took on other names (The Hussman, The Cortez).²⁶ But our "Mama De" built it. And we, her granddaughters, believe that she was able to build her tower because she herself was a "tower"—of courage, faith in El Paso, discipline, vitality, and perseverance.

NOTES

1. See "Hotels," Vertical File, Southwest Reference Section, El Paso Public Library.
2. See Mrs. DeGroff's obituary in *El Paso Post*, August 11, 1926.

3. See "Know El Paso—No. 5," *El Paso Herald-Post*, August 30, 1946.
4. In the El Paso County Deed Record, Vol. 46, p. 257, this property is described as "the South half of Lot Number Seventeen (17) and all of Lot number eighteen (18) in Block number Three (3) according to what is known as Anson Mills Map of El Paso, having a frontage of One Hundred and thirty (130) feet on Mesa Avenue and extending back Easterly 120 feet to an ally being the land on which the Hotel Vendome is located." This is the site of the present Hotel Cortez Building.
5. For a description of the Vendome Hotel at its height, see "Old Vendome Hotel Was Elegant," *El Paso Herald-Post*, January 1, 1936, p. 6, col. 2.
6. The warranty deeds transferring the property from Joshua S. Raynolds and Chester Reeves to Mr. and Mrs. Charles DeGroff are dated April 24, 1899. See El Paso County Deed Record, Vol. 46, pp. 257-8.
7. Listed as having registered at Hotel Orndorff (presumably on the previous day) are the following persons: W. T. Meyers, St. Louis; E. Canange, Paris; William Guggenheim, New York; William L. Morse, Monterey; F. Gregory, Boston; A. V. Wilson, W. V. Dorsey, Guadalajara.
8. In *The El Paso Times*, June 23, 1899, p. 6, col. 2, there appeared this article under the heading "Formal Opening": "Mrs. Chas. DeGroff, proprietor of the Hotel Orndorff, takes pleasure in announcing to the citizens of El Paso . . . that the hotel, refitted and refurbished, will be formally thrown open for inspection Saturday evening, June 24th, with an elaborate dinner from 6 to 8 p.m."
9. On p. 7, *The El Paso Times*, June 25, 1899.
10. The reporter undoubtedly referred to Trinidad Concha, known as Professor Concha, whose services as a musician were much in demand in the El Paso of the 'nineties and during the first two decades of the twentieth century. According to Mr. Concha's obituary (entitled "A Musical Soul Departs") in *The El Paso Times*, July 4, 1933, Mr. Concha came to El Paso in 1887 and was "an organizer of the famous McGinty Band." According to his grandson, Jim Concha, a resident of El Paso and an employee of El Paso Water Utilities, Professor Concha began his musical career as a member, and later as assistant director, of the Mexican National Band. Mr. Jim Concha further stated, in an interview on January 8, 1973, that his grandfather, in addition to his work with McGinty's Band, organized his own band and orchestra, called Concha's Mexican Band, which furnished music for a variety of El Paso affairs. Mrs. Burtram Pierce states that Professor Concha's orchestra regularly furnished dinner music at the Orndorff Hotel. Professor Concha's obituary reports that he was also musical director at the church of St. Ignatius and that "in late years" his "interest . . . centered in liturgical music."
11. For a brief description of the Orndorff at the peak of its popularity, see Bob Chapman, "Hotel Orndorff, On Cortez Site, Served Quail Three Times Daily," *The El Paso Times*, February 10, 1952.
12. Announced in the *El Paso Herald*, May 11, 1907. The Sheldon Hotel, even at the time, was a famous El Paso landmark. Frank Mangan, in his *El Paso in Pictures* (El Paso, Texas: The Press/El Paso, 1971), p. 75, says that the Sheldon was built in 1887; an article appearing in the *El Paso Herald* on August 28, 1929, states that the structure was erected in 1884 as an office building by a Dr. Lionel Sheldon and that in 1900 it was leased by Dr. Sheldon to a John W. Fisher, who converted it into a hotel. During the years that the DeGroffs owned the Sheldon, it was the center of considerable social and political activity. C. L. Sonnichsen in his *Pass of the North* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968), p. 389, says that in 1910 El Paso "could almost have been called the headquarters of revolutionary Mexico and the Sheldon hotel . . . practically the capitol building." The Sheldon burned down on April 9, 1929 (*The El Paso Times*, April 10, 1929, p. 1), its owner at the time being Albert Mathias. In 1930, the land was leased to Conrad Hilton for ninety-nine years. The Hilton Hotel, now the Plaza Hotel, was constructed on the site in 1930.
13. This transaction was reported in the *El Paso Herald*, February 5, 1916.
14. Reported in the *El Paso Herald*, May 5, 1920.
15. Reported in *The El Paso Times*, August 3, 1922.
16. Frank Mangan, *El Paso in Pictures*, p. 56.
17. *El Paso Herald-Post*, July 30, 1937.
17. At present this building houses the El Paso Residential Manpower Center, which

- is operated for Job Corps, U.S. Department of Labor, by Texas Educational Foundation.
19. According to the El Paso Public School records, the original Lamar School, built in 1906, and its grounds occupied the entire 1600 block between Montana and E. Yandell. In 1970 a new Lamar School was built at 1440 E. Cliff. The old Lamar School building was razed in 1971.
 20. Ruth Horn Andrews, *The First Thirty Years* (Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech Press, 1956), p. 4.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
 22. This statement probably alludes to a prediction made by Robert A. Stuart, a Texas Senator from Ft. Worth. See Homer Dale Wade, *Establishment of Texas Technological College: 1916-1923* (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1956), p. 144.
 23. See "Hotels," Vertical File, Southwest Reference Section, El Paso Public Library.
 24. This brochure may be found in the Vertical File, Southwest Reference Section, El Paso Public Library.
 25. See "Mrs. DeGross Dies as Last Son Arrives," *El Paso Post*, August 11, 1926.
 26. See "Hotels," Vertical File, Southwest Reference Section, El Paso Public Library.
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Saint Barbara is the patroness of artillerymen. She lived and died about 300 A. D. and was venerated as early as the seventh century. The legend of the lightning bolt that struck down her persecutor caused her to be regarded as the protector against thunderbolts, fires, and sudden death. When gunpowder made its appearance in the Western world, St. Barbara was invoked for protection against accidents resulting from explosions, as some of the earlier artillery pieces often blew up. Because of this, in time she became the patron Saint of artillerymen. The feast of Saint Barbara falls on December 4.

The Ninth and Tenth Regiments of Cavalry and the Twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth Regiments of Infantry were all-Black outfits with white officers. They were organized after the Civil War for service in the West.

Jefferson Barracks, the old army post lying just south of St. Louis, was established in 1826 and inactivated in 1946.

Membership in the Industrial Workers of the World (called "I Won't Work" and also "Wobblies") did not exceed 14,000 in 1912.

The Deseret alphabet was a simplified system of writing developed in Utah. Although a few books were printed in these Mormon letters the alphabet was never widely adopted.

THE ATTEMPTED PAYROLL ROBBERY

by EUGENE O. PORTER

[EDITOR'S NOTE: When your editor read a copy of the letter Mr. Chris Fox wrote to Murray Neal (see following article), he realized that it treated of an interesting but little-known episode in the history of El Paso. He realized, too, that the information in the letter was incomplete because it did not tell the story of the attempted payroll robbery that made the exchange of prisoners possible. He decided, therefore, to write the story of the robbery and to use it as a prologue but a separate article to Mr. Fox's article.]

At eleven-fifteen on the morning of Tuesday, March 18, 1924, a Dodge touring car rolled to a stop in front of the Van Noy lunch room¹ on Octavia Street, opposite the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio railroad shops.² It was payday for the railroaders and the unmasked men in the Dodge were intent upon stealing the \$14,000 payroll.³

As the men alighted from their car, Anastasio López, a twenty-one-year-old car repairman, was coming out of the restaurant. He recognized one of the men, José Carrasco, a former employee of the railroad, and not realizing the men's mission, yelled: "Hi, Carrasco." These were the last words López ever uttered. He was shot in the heart and died instantly. But his greeting gave the police their only clue to the crime.

The shooting of López proved to be the signal for a general attack. Darting around the corner of the restaurant to where the paycar was parked, the bandits opened fire on the men delivering the money. William H. Meers, 49, one of El Paso's best known police officers and a special guard for the Federal Reserve Bank, was the driver of the car. He was shot in the right shoulder midway between the arm and neck and died almost instantly.

With Meers was Charles A. Bitticks, a Federal Reserve Bank guard who lived at 617 North Raynor Street. He was shot in the groin but recovered. George H. Reed of 3837 Fort Boulevard, a teller for the American Trust and Savings Bank, was shot in the chest. He likewise recovered. Another teller, W. L. Laird, escaped unscathed. Laird was carrying the four sacks of money but when the shooting began, dropped the bags and ran for cover where he was able to do some effective shooting. When Laird dropped the bags, Carrasco rushed to pick them up but was stopped by a bullet in the right leg. He dragged himself back to the car.⁴ His companions followed and the Dodge hurriedly departed, speeding south on Octavia Street. One of the bandits almost missed the car. He leaped on the back, crouched on the spare tire and bumper, and fired his revolver as the car sped away.

The El Paso police were notified and Captain J. E. Stowe accompanied by acting captain Stanley Good, detective J. B. Womack, and patrolmen R. N. Goldie and George Sweeney hastened to the scene. Witnesses told the police of López last words—"Hi, Carrasco." A check of the railroad personnel records revealed a former employee named José Carrasco, thirty years of age. His address was listed as 607½ Tornillo Street. Re-

pairing to that address the police found Carrasco hiding under the bed. On the bed was an old woman who pretended to be too old to be moved. Carrasco was badly wounded. He was taken to the emergency hospital at the police station where Dr. John A. Hardy removed his right leg at the knee. Meanwhile, the police located at Second and St. Vrain streets a blood-splattered, bullet-ridden Dodge automobile bearing a Chihuahua, Mexico, State license.⁵

When Carrasco gained consciousness after the operation, he confessed to his part in the affair and named his accomplices. He gave the name of one partner as Agapito Morales. The police, however, believed "Morales" to be an alias, that Rueda was his true name. An Agapito Rueda had only recently been released from Leavenworth prison where he had served a three-year sentence for smuggling liquor. He was a known drug addict and when arrested had needle marks in both arms. The police found him at noon on Wednesday, hiding in a back room of a house at 410 South St. Vrain Street. He was wounded in the knee but the wound was not serious.

There was no little confusion as to the number of bandits involved. Carrasco in his confession said there were four but some of the witnesses thought there were five and others six. County Attorney Pelphrey insisted that there were six. He announced to the press that he had the names of five and a good description of the sixth. The confusion was in no way dispelled by Rueda in his confession to District Attorney C. L. Vowell.⁶ Rueda said that there were five men in the original plan as formulated the previous evening in Juárez but that the fifth became drunk and could not be awakened.⁷

Actually, five men were involved or, at least, five were indicted, namely, Fernando Ortega, Manuel Villarreal, Alejo Minjárez, Agapito Rueda and José Carrasco. Of these, only two were brought to trial—Rueda and Carrasco. Ortega died in jail before his trial could take place. Villarreal and Minjárez escaped to Mexico immediately after the robbery and all "efforts to extradite them failed."⁸

Rueda was tried in the 34th District Court, Judge W. D. Howe, Presiding. The defense attorneys, appointed by the court, were Robert E. Cunningham⁹ and W. Joe Bryan. The jury found Rueda guilty of murder with malice on November 13, 1924 and sentenced him to death. The decision was appealed and one year later, on November 14, 1925, W. C. Morrow, Presiding Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeal, Austin, announced: "It is the opinion of this Court that there was no error in judgment." Consequently, Rueda was taken to the Huntsville penitentiary on December 22, 1925 where he was electrocuted on January 9, 1926. His body, claimed by his relatives, was shipped to El Paso at the expense of El Paso County.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Carrasco was tried in the 34th District Court, found guilty, and sentenced to death. However, his attorney, E. B. Elfers, appealed the case on the grounds that there were seven errors in judgment. The Court of Criminal Appeals, on July 3, 1925, ruled that there were errors in judgment and "ordered, adjudged and decreed" that "the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings." The second trial was held in February, 1926. The jury found Carrasco guilty and ordered that he "be confined in said Penitentiaries for an indeterminate period of not less than 5 years and not more than his natural life."¹¹

This should have marked the end of the payroll robbery and its aftermath. But it did not. Seven years later Carrasco was again in the news. This time he was the subject of an unusual "exchange" for an American prisoner in the Chihuahua State Penitentiary. Mr. Fox's article which follows tells the story of that exchange.

NOTES

1. The *El Paso Times*, March 19, 1924. The *El Paso Herald*, March 18, 1924, erroneously referred to Van Noy's as a newsstand.
2. The G. H. & S. A. was part of the Southern Pacific system. The newspapers used G. H. & S. A. and S. F. interchangeably.
3. The *El Paso Herald*, March 18, 1924, gave the amount of the payroll as \$15,000. The indictment stated, however, that the men did "fraudulently and against the will of the said W. L. Laird take from the person and possession of the said W. L. Laird Fourteen Thousand (\$14,000.00) Dollars in money." — District Clerk's Office, File No. 10760.
4. The *El Paso Herald*, March 18, 1924, stated: "The payroll was saved, it is said, by the action of M. [sic.] Laird, who grabbed the money and ran with it." The version given here was taken from the *Times*, March 19, 1924. The author believes the *Times* story the more likely one.
5. Captain Stowe testified at Carrasco's trial that the bandits' car had a bullet hole through the radiator, one through the windshield, one through the left front door, and another hole but that he had forgotten where. There were blood stains, he testified, on the back cushion and on the back floor rug.—District Clerk's Office, File No. 10760.
6. C. L. Vowell was the father of the late Jack C. Vowell, Sr., who was elected to the Society's Hall of Honor in 1968.—See *PASSWORD*, xiii, No. 4 (Winter, 1968), 120-124.
7. All factual statements in this article were taken from either the *El Paso Herald*, March 18, 19, 20, 1924, or the *El Paso Times*, March 19, 20, 21, 1924, unless otherwise noted.
8. District Clerk's Office, File No. 11017, February 20, 1929.
9. Mr. Cunningham had just arrived in El Paso and this was his first criminal case in the city. He was destined to become judge of the 65th District Court on April 10, 1957 and he continued in that office until his retirement on December 31, 1968. Judge Cunningham well remembers the Rueda case. He insists that Rueda's constitutional rights were violated by Judge Howe when he permitted the defendant's confession to be read in court. The U. S. Supreme Court in a similar case recently ruled in favor of Judge Cunningham's contention.—Telephone conversation with Judge Cunningham, October 7, 1972.
10. N. L. Speer, Warden, Huntsville Penitentiary, in a letter dated January 13, 1926, to Deputy Sheriff Dick Guinn, wrote: "I have duly executed said Agapito Rueda on the 9th day of January, 1926."—District Clerk's Office, File No. 10760.
11. 34th District Court, *Minutes*, Vol. vi, 433.



WAITING FOR THE EXCHANGE

*l. to r., Marshall Hail, reporter, Sheriff Chris Fox, Jimmie Sheppard, reporter,
Murray Neal, reporter.*

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Marshall Hail.

THE EXCHANGE

by CHRIS P. FOX

Mr. Murray Neal¹
Managing Editor
Waco-News Tribune
Waco, Texas 76701

Dear Murray:

Thanks to Betty's Ann Carroll column, which young and old read, I got word of you, your work, and your family, and was happy to note that all was going well down there in the Bible Belt, as it is up here on the fringes.

In your exchange of correspondence with her, you made a comment about our sheriffs' days . . . weren't they sumpin'? The picture you sent Ann of you, Jimmy "Shep" Sheppard,² Marshall Hail³ and me was taken in the Sheriff's office by Jerome Gerlack.⁴ If you have forgotten the occasion, I will remind you that it was the day and the night . . . both were long, when we were anxiously awaiting word from Winston Pettus⁵ in Chihuahua City . . . as to whether the Governor of Chihuahua had kept his word, and had "sprung" Jeff Meers, whom we had been anxiously trying to swap for one José Carrasco . . . who was languishing in our jailhouse. You may recall that José was charged with killing Jeff's father in the Octavia Street S. P. payroll holdup on March 18, 1924. Carrasco was badly wounded and, as a result, he lost a leg . . . he was caught before he could go to Juarez with the rest of the gang . . . and was sentenced to the electric chair, but was granted a new trial. The second jury sentenced him to life imprisonment.

As it follows, young Jeff was married and working for the PFE,⁶ and his mother was working hard as a physician's office assistant . . . and one night, June 18, 1930, while he was over in Juarez galloping about, and someone told him that a certain person seated at a certain place . . . was the man who had killed his father . . . or one of those who had been involved. . . he promptly took unto himself a six-shooter of sorts and killed the man . . . but he killed the wrong person and was gobbled up by the Juarez police and later on tried and sentenced to life in the State Penitentiary in Chihuahua. His mother, being a mother, of course tried valiantly in later years to have him extradited or gotten out of there by parole or something . . . all to no avail until it was hit upon that there might be a chance to swap Carrasco for Meers.

Hence endless negotiations took place and considerable amounts of money were involved⁷ . . . but with no result. When I took office as sheriff, it was placed in my lap, as for why, I don't know . . . but we had Joe Carrasco in our bastille and I wanted to get rid of him, and I wanted to help Mrs. Meers, and in fact I just wanted to get the whole thing behind me . . . so I took a couple of trips down to Chihuahua and pretty soon we began to pry loose a few planks off of the "house of obstacles;" and in the springtime of 1933 we had the stage set and all the promises made, and I was assured that even though the road was not paved . . . as it was just a dirt path, you might say, between Chihuahua and El Paso . . . that after dark on a certain night, he would be taken out of the penitentiary and placed in a car, and a fast run would be made to El Paso.

We finally got the word from Winston Pettus about 3:00 p.m. on April 19, 1933. Of course, the press had been alerted and all the boys were on hand . . . that Carrasco and two guards had left and should be at the

middle of the Santa Fe Bridge about 3:00 in the morning . . . much coffee was drunk, and many cigarettes were smoked, and many stories were told in the Sheriff's Department . . . and everyone was hanging around waiting for that call, that the car bringing up Meers was to make, when it hit a certain secret checkpoint on the eastern outskirts of Juarez.

The bleary-eyed crew of 'waiters' and I were made happy when we got the call about 3:00 a.m. . . . I told the person who was talking to me to use extreme caution, as we'd be keeping things under wraps as we didn't want to have Meers hijacked over in Juarez by members of the family and friends of the man he had mistakenly killed . . . and of course, we didn't tell Joe Carrasco anything either, but I'm sure that he must have suspected something, because when we went up to get him, he was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, completely dressed, and we whisked him out of there and down to the Santa Fe Bridge, with all the necessary papers from the Governor of Texas.⁹ Finally, at the other end, lights flashed, and our U. S. Customs boys, who had been acting as liaison, gave us the word that they were approaching; so we went to the middle of the bridge . . . and without any further ado, the swap was made. And after we processed Jeff at the Sheriff's Department, he was tearfully met by his devoted mother, Mrs. Edith C. Kenton, and wife Elizabeth . . . and they drove away into the dawn of another day, and another life.

Sorry I was so lengthy with this, but it was quite a story at the time . . . running brimful of human interest, pathos, gunplay, international intrigue, disappointing frustrations, and you name it . . . but like all things that are worthwhile, it was ultimately successfully concluded . . . unfortunately, young Meers' mother is passed away now . . . I think he's somewhere out in California. And the last I heard, Joe Carrasco,¹⁰ still sporting his wooden leg, was running a little cantina in Juarez.

You boys of the press checked up, and if I recall correctly, came up with the fact that nothing of its kind had ever taken place before in these or other parts of the United States. So I'll conclude by reminding you of another thing . . . we had the busiest up-and-at-'em, go-go, gung-ho Sheriff's Department in the whole cockeyed world . . . they were rewarding years.

To you and your family, our best wishes we send, and I know that Betty wishes to join in them.

Sincerely,
[signed] Chris

NOTES

1. At the time of "The Exchange" Murray Neal was on the staff of the *El Paso Herald-Post*.
2. Jimmy "Shep" Sheppard was also on the staff of the *Herald-Post*. The *El Paso Times* was represented by Raymond Stover but he was not in the picture that brought on this story.
3. Marshall Hail was also with the *Herald-Post*. In addition to his newspaper work he was the author of a number of articles in *PASSWORD* and other magazines and of a book, *Knight in the Sun*, a biography of a local boy who became an outstanding bullfighter. Mr. Hail passed away in October, 1970.
4. Jerome Gerlack was a commercial photographer. In that day and time he may have been called a police photographer.
5. Winston Pettus was connected with the American Consulate in Chihuahua. He may also have had some business interest in that city.
6. The Pacific Fruit Express of the Southern Pacific Railroad.
7. Governor "Ma" Ferguson of Texas was known for her liberal pardoning policy. Her "two thousand acts of executive clemency evoked much gossip and unfavorable comment. An investigating committee found that most of the governor's pardons were issued on the recommendation of her husband, some of them before the beneficiaries reached the prison."—Rupert Norval Richard, *Texas, The Lone Star State* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 429.
8. Editor's note: Mr. Fox became sheriff of El Paso County on January 1, 1933 and served until 1941 when he resigned to take charge of the Chamber of Commerce. Elected sheriff five times, Mr. Fox never had an opponent except for the first election. This is certainly a testimonial to the love and respect in which Mr. Fox was held by his fellow-Paseños.
9. Mrs. Miriam A. (Ma) Ferguson was governor of Texas. At the time of the exchange she was serving her second term, January, 1933 to January, 1935. Her first term ran from January, 1925 to January, 1927.
10. A further check since writing this letter revealed that Carrasco died a couple of years ago in Juarez and was buried in that city.

The Mesa Private Sanitarium, located, according to the 1913 City Directory, at 915 Mesa Avenue, was devoted to the famous "Neal Three Day Cure for the Drunk Habit and the Neal Treatment for Drug addiction." It lasted only a year.

The City Eruptive Hospital, popularly known as the Pest House, was the first El Paso hospital of historical record. *The Lone Star* made mention of it as early as February 11, 1882.

—*El Paso—A Centennial Portrait*, 222.

El Paso's Hotel Dieu was formally opened on January 25, 1894.

El Paso's Liberty Hall opened for its first public assembly on the evening of April 17, 1918. Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo was the speaker.

DOWN THE CHIHUAHUA TRAIL WITH WISLIZENUS

Intro & notes by EUGENE O. PORTER

(PART ONE OF FOUR PARTS)

[Editor's note: the "road" from western Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico has been known since it opened in 1821¹ as the Santa Fe Trail and the much older road from Santa Fe to Chihuahua City as the Chihuahua Trail. There is a rather large bibliography on the Santa Fe Trail whereas the Chihuahua Trail has been more or less neglected by historians. This is one reason your editor thought it best to follow Dr. Wislizenus over the lesser known trail.

Another reason is that Dr. Wislizenus has given us an account of the first and only scientific investigation of the flora and fauna of the region between Santa Fe and Chihuahua. The daily record of his journey, considered a "western classic," is of the utmost importance, therefore, because it pictures a Southwest that no longer exists.

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the War with Mexico was in progress during the entire time of Dr. Wislizenus's expedition.]

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Frederick Adolph Wislizenus² was born and educated in Germany. As a student he was involved in the revolutionary movement against the reactionary system conceived and executed by Prince Klemens von Metternick. With the failure of the Frankfurt Putsch of April 3, 1833, young Wislizenus escaped to Zurich, Switzerland where he completed his medical studies. He then went to Paris where he spent several months as a hospital intern before migrating to the United States in 1835. Here he settled in New York City but after a couple of years moved west to Muscota, St. Clair County, Illinois. Finally, in 1840, he decided to make St. Louis his permanent home.

Before deciding upon a permanent home, however, Dr. Wislizenus wanted to see more of his adopted country. In 1839, therefore, he ascended the Missouri River to Westport³ where he joined a fur-trading party bound for the Rocky Mountains. Returning to St. Louis he wrote and published *Ein Ausflug Nach den Felsen-Gebirgen im Jahre 1839*. It is considered one of the standard sources for western history.⁴

This expedition seems to have whetted the doctor's appetite for more knowledge of the West because it was not long before he was planning another expedition. As Dr. Wislizenus tells it in the Preface to his *Memoirs*:⁵

The principal object of my expedition was scientific. I desired to examine the geography, natural history, and statistics of that country, by taking directions on the road with the compass, and by determining the principal points by astronomical observations. I made a rich collection of quite new and undescribed plants. I examined the character of the rocks, to gain insight into the geological formations of the whole country. I visited as many mines as possible, and analyzed some of the ores. I made barometrical observa-

tions, to ascertain the elevation above the sea. I kept meteorological tables, to draw general results from them for the climate, its salubrity and fitness for agriculture, and took memoranda in relation to the people—their number, industry, manners, previous history, &. The intention, in short, for which I started, was to gain information of a country that was but little known.

Wislizenus left St. Louis on May 4, 1846 and arrived at Independence⁶ five days later. On the 14th he launched his voyage on the “waste ocean of the prairie” for Santa Fe, 800 miles⁷ to the Southwest. He arrived in “that irregular cluster of low, flat roofed, mud built, dirty homes, called Santa Fe” on June 30.⁸ There he remained until July 8 when he struck out for Ciudad Chihuahua, arriving there on August 24. In Chihuahua he was arrested and placed under governmental restraint as an enemy alien. He remained under restraint until the Americans captured the city on March 1, 1847 at which time he “signed on” as a contract surgeon with Doniphan’s army. He accompanied the troops through northern Mexico and finally returned to St. Louis after an absence of fourteen months. He had traveled 2200 miles by land and 3100 by water, from Brownsville, Texas to New Orleans and up the Mississippi. He took back a wagon-load of plants and the journal of his adventure.

* * *

The *manners and customs* of the New Mexicans proper are very similar to those all over Mexico, described so often by travellers to that country. While the higher classes conform themselves more to American and European fashions, the men of the lower classes are faithful to their serapes or colored blankets, and to their wide trousers with glittering buttons, and split from hip to ankle to give the white cotton drawers also a chance to be seen; and the ladies of all classes are more than justified in not giving up their coquetish rebozo, a small shawl drawn over their head. Both sexes enjoy the cigarrito or paper cigar, hold their siesta after dinner, and amuse themselves in the evening with monte, (a hazard game,) or fandangos. Their dances are, by the way, very graceful, and generally a combination of quadrille and waltz. The principal ingredient in the Mexican race is Indian blood, which is visible in their features, complexion, and disposition. The men are, generally taken, ill-featured, while the women are often quite handsome.⁹ Another striking singularity is the wide difference in the character of the two sexes. While the men have often been censured for their indolence, menacity, treachery, and cruelty, the women are active, affectionate, open-hearted, and even faithful when their affections are reciprocated. Though generally not initiated in the art of reading and writing, the females possess, nevertheless, a strong common sense, and a natural sympathy for every suffering being, be it friend or foe;¹⁰ which compensates them to some degree for the wants of a refined education. The treatment of the Texan prisoners is

but one of the many instances where the cruelties of the Mexican men were mitigated by the disinterested kindness of their women.

The rulers of *New Mexico*, under the Mexican government, used to be a governor and a legislative power, (junta departamental;) but as the latter was more a nominal than a real power, the governor was generally unrestrained, and subject only to the law of revolution, while the New Mexicans used to administer very freely, by upsetting the gubernatorial chair as often as the whole republic did that of the President. Governor Armijo,¹¹ the last ruler of New Mexico, before it was invaded by the Americans, has already received his full share of comment from the public press. He is one of those smart, self-confident men, who, like their prototype Santa Anna, are aware that the wheel of fortune is always turning, and that the Mexicans are a most credulous and easily deceived people; and though at present he is a fugitive from his country, and subdued, I have no doubt he will before long appear once more on the stage, and by some means come into power again. The judiciary power in New Mexico has always been as dependent as the governor was independent. Besides that, the clergy, as well as the military class, had their own courts of justice. In relation to the general government of Mexico, New Mexico has always maintained greater independence than most of the other States—partly from its distance from Mexico, and partly from the spirit of opposition in the inhabitants, who derived very little benefit from their connection with the republic, and would therefore not be taxed without an equivalent. Several times the general government tried to introduce in New Mexico the so called *estancillas*, or the sale of tobacco in all its forms, as a monopoly of the general government; but it never succeeded. In the same way the introduction of copper coin was resisted. This loose connection with the mother country will aid a great deal its annexation to the United States, provided that the latter will bestow upon it what the Mexican government never could—stability of government, safety of property and personal rights, and especially protection from the hostile Indians.

Finally, we will take a view of the capital of New Mexico. *Santa Fe* is one of the oldest Spanish settlements in New Mexico; its origin dates probably as far back as the end of the sixteenth century.¹² It lies in 35° 41' 6" north latitude, and 106° 2' 30" longitude west of Greenwich.¹³ Its elevation above the sea, according to my own observation, is 7,047 feet.

Santa Fe lies in a direct line about 20 miles east of the Rio del Norte,¹⁴ in a wide plain, surrounded on all sides by mountains. The eastern mountains are the nearest; those towards the northeast, the Taos mountains, the highest: some of their snow-capped peaks are supposed to be from four to five thousand feet higher than *Santa Fe*. A small creek, that comes

from the eastern mountains, provides the town with water, and runs about 25 miles southwest from it into the Rio del Norte. There is no timber on the plains, but the mountains are covered with pine and cedar. The soil around Santa Fe is poor and sandy; without irrigation, scarcely anything can be raised. There is no good pasturage on the plains; stock is generally sent to the mountains, and only asses, mules, and goats—the stock of the poorer classes—are kept near the settlements.

The climate of Santa Fe is rather pleasant; not excessively warm in the summer, and moderately cold in the winter, though snow is a common occurrence. Nearly all the year the sky is clear, and the atmosphere dry. All the houses in Santa Fe are built of adobes, but one story high, with flat roofs; each house is square in form, with a court or open area in the centre. The streets are irregular, narrow, and dusty. The best looking place is the "plaza;" a spacious square, one side of which the so-called palacio, the residence of the Governor, occupies. The palace is a better building than the rest; it has a sort of portico, and exhibits two great curiosities, to wit: windows of glass, and festoons of Indian ears. Glass is a great luxury in Santa Fe; common houses have shutters instead of windows, or quite small windows of selenite, (crystallized gypsum.) The festoons of Indian ears were made up of several strings of dried ears of Indians, killed by the hired parties that are occasionally sent out against hostile Indians, and who are paid a certain sum for each head.¹⁵ In Chihuahua, they make a great exhibition with the whole scalps of Indians which they happen to kill by proxy; the refined New Mexicans show but the ears. Among the distinguished buildings in Santa Fe, I have to mention yet two churches with steeples, but of very common construction.

The inhabitants of Santa Fe are a mixed race of Spanish and Indian blood, though the latter prevails. The number of inhabitants was in former times reported as high as 4,000; at present it contains at most 3,000; and with the surrounding settlements belonging to the jurisdiction of Santa Fe, about 6,000. The manners and customs of the inhabitants of Santa Fe are those of whole Northern Mexico; they are indolent, frugal, sociable, very fond of gambling and fandangos, and the lower classes, at least, exceedingly filthy. As in most Mexican towns, I was at a loss to find out by what branch of industry the mass of the people support themselves; and I came at last to the conclusion, that if from natural indolence they work as little as possible, their extreme frugality, too, enables them to subsist upon almost nothing.

Since the commencement of the Santa Fe trade,¹⁶ the Mexicans there have been accustomed to see strangers among them; and the trading companies from the United States are anxiously looked for by the government and people of Santa Fe, because they fill the empty pockets of the one, and provide the other with the necessaries and comforts of life.

Santa Fe receives nearly all the goods from the United States, and some foreigners, mostly Americans and Frenchmen, generally reside there for commercial purposes. Among the foreign residents of Santa Fe, it affords me pleasure to recollect Mr. Houghton,¹⁷ Mr. Alvarez,¹⁸ and others who gave me in relation to the country all the information in their power to give.

As to the Santa Fe trade carried on between the United States and New Mexico, I cannot add anything to what has been published already by Dr. J. Gregg, in the "Commerce of the Prairies," to which interesting work I refer the reader, in relation to it.¹⁹ I will mention, only, that on an average the annual amount of merchandise carried there is estimated at half a million of dollars.

After a week, Mr. Speyer²⁰ had finished his business in Santa Fe, and resolved to go on to Chihuahua. No further news had during that time been received either from below or from the plains. In this state of uncertainty, I thought it best, instead of waiting idle in Santa Fe for the possible arrival of an army over the plains, to spend my time more usefully by extending my excursion as far as Chihuahua, where, according to all accounts, everything was quiet as in Santa Fe. Besides, I had a passport from Governor Armijo, drawn up in the usual form, and securing my retreat in case of necessity.

Mr. Speyer's caravan was encamped five miles west of Santa Fe, in Agua Fria, and was ready to start on the 9th.

July 8.—I left Santa Fe for the camp in Agua Fria.

July 9.—The caravan started on the usual road, by Algodones, for the Rio Del Norte. But being anxious myself to examine the celebrated gold mines of New Mexico, the old and new Placer, in a range of mountains southwest from Santa Fe, I intended to make first from here this out of the way excursion, and to join the caravan afterwards on the Rio del Norte, near Albuquerque. I started, therefore, in this direction, riding alone and taking nothing along but my arms and a pair of saddlebags.

The distance from here to old Placer is about 25 miles; from Santa Fe, 27. In a southern direction I rode through the valley that separates the mountains east of Santa Fe from the chain of the Placers. This valley is about 25 miles broad, very sandy and sterile, covered with artemisia, and nearer the foot of the Placer mountains with dwarfish cedars. Traveling along a low chain of hills that form an outward wall to the mountains of old Placer, I passed by two springs, on the first of which I found sienite; on the other a fresh water limestone. Ascending afterwards to the hills, I met everywhere with a red and brown sandstone, looser or more compact, and with large masses of petrified wood. From here the ascent to the mountains is rather rapid till a plain is gained, from which a fine

retrospective view is enjoyed towards Santa Fe, and over the whole valley. Pine and cedar cover the mountains all around. Slightly ascending from the plain for some miles, a narrow ravine between high walls of mountains suddenly opposes further advance, and about 20 houses are seen hanging on both sides of the narrow valley. This solitary place is *el Real de Dolores*, or as it is commonly called, *old Placer*.²¹ Several foreigners live here. The first one I saw was Mr. Watrous, a New Englander, but for many years a resident of this country. He received me very hospitably, and invited me to his dwelling. Some fresh skins of grizzly bears were spread out on scaffolds, the sure American rifle stood in the corner, and everything else bore the character of the backwoodsman; but by his intelligent conversation he showed himself a man of very good sense, and as an acute observer. Though Mr. Watrous had not himself been engaged in mining he paid attention to his whole neighborhood, and showed me many specimens of gold ores, which in his rambles through the mountains he had collected. I took a walk with him to the nearest gold washes. The first instance of this operation I witnessed on the small creek that runs through *old Placer*. From the bed of the creek, which was in most places dry, they took up some of the ground—gravel, sand and earth—put it in a spacious, rather flat wooden bowl, (*batéa*,) added water, removing first, by stirring with the hand, the coarse pieces of gravel, and then, by well balanced shaking, all the earthy and sandy particles, till at last nothing is left at the bottom but the finest sand, from which all the visible portions of gold are picked out. The poorer class of Mexicans are generally occupied with those gold washes in the creek; and they divide for that purpose the creek with the water amongst themselves, in lots, which often call forth as many claims and contests as the finest building lots in our cities. As the gold is apparently carried here by the waters of the creek from the higher auriferous regions, the gain from these washings is different according to the season. The most gold is generally found in and after the rainy season, and it diminishes with the failing of water. Occasionally they discover a larger piece of gold in the sand; but generally the gold is so divided, that a whole day's work will amount on an average to not more than a quarter or half a dollar. Every evening they sell their small gains to the storekeepers, and take provisions or goods in exchange, or receive cash for it at the rate of sixteen dollars per ounce. This is the most common but least profitable way of gold washing. It may be practised on all the water-courses in those mountains, provided that there is sufficient water to wash with. In going from this to some other gold washes in the neighborhood, I took notice of the prevalent rocks in *old Placer*; they are white and yellow quartzose sandstone, quartz, hornblende and quartz, sienite and greenstone, (*diorit*.) The second place where I saw the process of gold washing was on a high piece

of ground not far from a creek. They had opened here a great many pits to the depth of from 50 to 60 feet, and raised the ground, a sandy earth mixed with iron ochre, to the surface, where it was washed for gold in the same way, in batéas. These gold washings are said to be profitable, but they would in my opinion be more so where a regular mining was done by sinking a shaft, and by separating the gold by quicksilver, or in some other way than mere washing.

On the next day I went to see a gold mine, near the upper part of the town, belonging to Mr. Tournier, a French resident of the place. The mine lies between one and two miles west of the town, on the slope of some mountains. It was discovered several years ago by Mr. Roubadoux, who commenced working it, but for some reason gave it up. Mr. Tournier had worked it for one year, and found it very profitable. The gold vein runs from SSE. to NNW., with a slight dip. It is generally from two to four feet wide. Mr. Tournier has sunk a shaft already in the entire depth of 40 varas,²² and with the drift of about 30 varas, and the ore promises to hold out very fairly. The vein is found in sienite and greenstone, the gang consists of argillaceous iron ore, (yellow and brown iron ochre,) with which the native gold is very intimately mixed. A yellow or brown earth, a decomposition of the same rocks and found among them, is considered peculiarly rich in gold. The ores are carried in bags to the surface, and on mules to the amalgamation mill in town. After the ores have been ground, by hand, (pounding them with rocks,) they are put in the mill, a small circular basin formed with rocks, with one or two millstones, which are constantly turned around in it by mule power. These millstones are placed on their face, revolving round a centre pole, which is turned by the animal. To the coarsely powdered ore, water, and then quicksilver, are added, and the amalgamation goes on in the usual way. Mr. Tournier told me that he worked in this way every day about two and a half cargass (750 pounds) of the ore, and that he draws, on an average, three-quarters of an ounce (about \$12 worth) of gold out of it. Although the whole work at present is done on a very small scale, and would allow yet many improvements, Mr. Tournier makes nevertheless a smart business of it, and will soon turn his gold mine into real gold. Near Mr. Tournier's gold mine is a copper mine, (sulphur of copper,) said to contain gold ore, and worked for some time, but now given up. Several other specimens of copper ore from the vicinity were shown me; a very rich iron ore I saw myself in one neighborhood; but neither of them is worked.

The old Placer is a very promising place for mines. The gold ores there were discovered by mere accident in 1828, and gold washings established; but besides that, the ground is barely touched, and will yet open rich treasures to the mining enchanter, who knows how to unlock them.

In the afternoon of the same day I left old Placer to pay a visit to the other mining-place, southwest from it, called new Placer, and about nine miles distant. I rode there with Mr. Nolan, a French resident of new Placer. Our way lay through fine pine timber, over steep mountains, and through narrow ravines; the road is so rough, that no wagons can pass it. After having reached the highest point, an extensive plain is seen towards the south; and towards the west a small valley opens, in which new Placer, or Real del Tuesto, a town of about 100 buildings, is situated. Several foreigners reside here, generally storekeepers. In the house of one of them, with Mr. Trigg, I found a kind and hospitable reception.

The gold in new Placer is also got in two ways, by washing and by mining. The principal place for gold washing is about one mile southwest from the town, at the foot of a naked granite mountain, the so called "Bonanza." A cluster of houses, or rather huts, form here a small village, whose inhabitants live exclusively by gold washing, but look as poor and wretched as if they never handled any gold of their own. The whole place is excavated with pits, from whose depths they dig the same yellow auriferous ground as in old Placer, and they wash it also in the same way. Not a drop of water is found here; all the water for washing must be brought in barrels from new Placer. The wash gold obtained from new Placer is generally considered inferior to that of old Placer, as being more impure. To ascertain the correctness of this opinion, I examined some wash-gold from new Placer, and found it to contain:

Native gold	92.5
Silver	3.5
Iron and siliceous matter	4.0
	100.0

I am sorry that I have no wash-gold from old Placer at hand for a comparative analysis, but the above mentioned result shows that if any difference exists between the two ores, it cannot be considerable.

Two gold mines are worked at this time at old Placer; one by Mexicans, and the other by an American. They are said to be very similar to each other. I visited but the nearest, belonging to Mr. Campbell, an American resident of new Placer. Mr. Campbell commenced mining only a short time since. His amalgamation mill was not yet in operation; but he had already collected heaps of gold ores, and invited me to see the mine that he had opened. It lies about one and a half mile southwest from the town, near the top of a high mountain, to which a rough and steep road leads, accessible only to pack mules. The gold mine is found, as in old Placer, in sienite and greenstone; it runs horizontally from east to west: the gang is iron ochre and crystallized quartz. The vein was from eight to ten feet wide, and explored only to the length of about 20 feet, and to the depth of about 10 feet. The ore seems to be very rich in

gold, and the prospects it offers Mr. Campbell are certainly very flattering.

The new Placer adds to the attraction of the gold ores, which seem to be found in this whole range of mountains, that of a better situation as a town than old Placer, and some passable roads. But many other mining places will no doubt spring up in this neighborhood as soon as the state of the country allows. Up to this time many causes have existed to prevent rather than to encourage mining enterprise. Though the law in New Mexico was generally very liberal in granting lots for mining, the instability of Mexican laws, and their arbitrary administration, have neutralized and annihilated it. When a New Mexican wants to work a gold or other mine, not yet occupied by another, he has to apply to the nearest alcalde; (justice of peace of the district,) who, according to the means and intended work of the individual, allows him a smaller or larger tract of land, measured only in front, and reaching in depth as far as the owner pleases to go. The price of the land is trifling; but if the owner does not work a certain portion of the mine every year, it falls back to the government. Foreigners were, in consequence of the eternal revolutions and new law-codes in Mexico, sometimes excluded, sometimes allowed to participate in this privilege. By taking a Mexican as partner, they obviate the law; but the most dangerous enemy was generally the avaricious Mexican government itself. Often when a foreigner had opened a profitable mine, those trustees of justice interfered for some reason or other, and ejected the owner of his property. Several instances of such proceedings are known. If we add to these causes the isolated situation of New Mexico, the thin population, the want of good mechanics and real miners, the hostilities and depredations of Indians, it will not astonish us at all, that notwithstanding the great mineral resources of the country, so few mines are working at present.

The annual production of gold in the two Placers seems to vary considerable. In some years it was estimated from 30 to \$40,000, in others from 60 to \$80,000, and in latter years even as high as \$250,000 per annum.

July 11.—Loaded with specimens of gold ore, I started this morning to join the caravan again, which expected to reach Albuquerque within four days. The road from here to Albuquerque leads at first through a cañon in a SSE. direction, because a chain of granitic mountains to the west does not allow a more direct course. Tall pines, cedars, and sometimes a small oak tree, grow in the narrow valley, and all over the surrounding mountains. After having travelled six miles, I passed by a small Indian village or pueblo; they cultivate some fields by way of irrigation, but look exceedingly poor. The entrance to their houses was, as usual, a hole on the top, to which they climb on a ladder. Riding on through a solitary

valley, I met with a Mexican soldier, who recognized me at once as a "Tejano," and, professing great friendship, bothered me so long with his Spanish that I put my horse in a trot and left him, with his mule, behind. About 10 miles farther I reached a Mexican town, San Antonio;²³ my horse was tired, and I would have wished, myself, to stop; but everything looked so mean and filthy that I passed through the town, and rode three miles farther. Here I met with a little stream, and followed it some distance into the mountains; and grass and water being excellent, I resolved to camp here for the night. I picketed my horse to the best grass, and prepared for myself a supper. In the night my horse, watchful as a dog, disturbed me several times by getting frightened and running towards me, but it was caused by nothing but wolves, deers, and other innocent animals.

To be Continued

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. There is some disagreement among historians as to the exact date the Santa Fe Trail was opened. The title "Father of the Santa Fe Trail" was bestowed upon Captain William Becknell by H. M. Chittenden. It is true that others crossed the western plains to New Mexico before Becknell. James Purcell, for instance, arrived in Santa Fe in 1805 and Jean Baptiste Lelande in 1807. Becknell's chief distinction, however, is that after he opened the trail in the autumn of 1821 "it stayed open." Also he was the "first to use wagons."—Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur-Trade of the Far West* (New York, 1902), vol. ii, 493; R. L. Duffus, *The Santa Fe Trail* (New York, 1943), 67.
2. For a short biographical sketch of Dr. Wislizenus see Eugene O. Porter, "Doniphan's Shadow," *PASSWORD*, xvi, No. 4. (Winter, 1971), 170-173.
3. Westport, now a part of Kansas City, gradually replaced Independence as the jumping-off place for the "far West."
4. *Dictionary of American Biography*, entry, Wislizenus, Frederick Adolph.
5. The complete title is, *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition in 1846 and 1847* (Washington: Tippin & Streeper, Printers, 1848). The memoirs were published by order of the United States Senate. There were 5000 copies printed for the Senate and 200 additional copies for Dr. Wislizenus. There has never been a reprint and the few volumes known to exist bring a handsome premium. Hereinafter the book will be cited as *Memoir of a Tour*.
6. Independence, Missouri, made famous in recent years as the home of President Harry S. Truman, was founded and made the seat of Jackson County in 1827. By 1831 it had become headquarters for caravans fitting out for Santa Fe.
7. The length of the trail from Independence to Santa Fe was approximately 800 miles. Josiah Gregg who made the trip six times compiled "a table of the most notable camping sites and their respective intermediate distances" and arrived at the figure 775. Your editor compiled a similar table from Wislizenus's data and arrived at 765.—Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, ed. by Max L. Moorhead (Norman, Okla., 1954), 23n; Stella M. Drumm, ed., *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico: Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin 1846-1847* (New Haven, 1962), 1n.
8. *Memoirs of a Tour*, 20.
9. A soldier with Doniphan described the women as "neatly dressed and some fine and [they] presented as good an appearance as we usually have in 'the States'."—George Rutledge Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier under Kearny and Doniphan, 1846-1847*, ed. by Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale, Cal., 1935), 375.
10. An argonaut (a Forty-niner), writing in 1849, "found" the women "kind [,] warm hearted and generous even to a fault."—Mabelle Edward Martin, ed., "From Texas to California in 1849, Diary of C. C. Cox," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. xxix, No. 2 October, 1925), 131.

11. Manuel Armijo served as governor of New Mexico on three occasions—1827-29, 1837-44, 1845-46. Of lowly birth he spent his early life as a shepherd and sheep thief. He was, however, a man of intelligence and ability and he possessed feelings of patriotism.
For more than a century writers have intimated that James Wiley Magoffin who was married to a cousin of Armijo, bribed the governor "to offer only a feigned resistance to the entry of Kearny's troops into New Mexico." But William A. Keleher stated that "there is no evidence of a satisfactory nature . . . to support the contention." And he added, "It is extremely doubtful if they resorted to bribery of any sort." Also De Voto believes the tale "almost certainly untrue." Professor Lamar, on the other hand, believes "undoubtedly the governor was promised some remuneration if he would not resist." In any case, Kearny occupied Santa Fe without bloodshed on August 18, 1846. Armijo died at Limitar, New Mexico on December 9, 1853.—Drumm, *Diary of Susan Magoffin*, xxvi, 98n; Keleher, William A. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico 1846-1868* (Santa Fe, 1962), 114n; Bernard De Voto, *The Year of Decision 1846* (Boston, 1943), 496; Howard Roberts Lamar, *The Far West 1846-1912: A Territorial History* (New Haven, 1966), 61.
Armijo's colorful life is dramatized by Elliott Arnold in his historical novel, *The Time of the Gringo* (New York, 1953).
12. There is disagreement among historians as to the exact year Santa Fe was founded. L. B. Bloom, "When Was Santa Fe Founded?," *New Mexico Historical Review*, vol. iv (April, 1929), 188-194, states that Santa Fe was founded in 1610 and in the same year was made the permanent capital of New Mexico.
13. Dr. Wislizenus states in a footnote that the figures for latitude and longitude he gives are "the result of the most numerous astronomical observations made by Lieut. Emory, of the engineer corps, during his stay in Santa Fe, and which he had kindly allowed me to refer to."—*Memoir of a Tour*, 28n.
14. The Río Grande was originally called "Río del Norte." Later it was called "Río Bravo" and sometimes "Río Bravo del Norte." Since 1848 it has been known as the Río Grande to Americans and Río Bravo to Mexicans.
15. For the best account of the scalp-hunters see William Cochran McGaw, *Savage Scene: The Life and Times of James Kirker, Frontier King* (New York: Hastings House, \$8.95, 1972).
16. See above, fn 1.
17. This was very likely Joab Houghton, "a lawyer of later prominence in the Territory." He was appointed on September 22, 1846 a judge of the superior court of New Mexico by General Kearny.—Hubert Howe Bancroft, *A History of Arizona and New Mexico* (San Francisco, 1889), 426n.
18. Manuel Alvarez was a native of Spain. He migrated to the United States in 1823 and the following year made his way to New Mexico where he operated a store for over thirty years. In 1839 he was appointed United States consul at Santa Fe and three years later became an American citizen. In 1850 he was made lieutenant governor of the Territory.—Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 162n.
19. Wislizenus does not exaggerate the importance of Josiah Gregg. His *Commerce of the Prairies* has been recognized for more than a century as "the epic of the Santa Fe Trail." (The first edition was published in 1844, the second, 1845.) He was described by Mr. Max L. Moorhead who edited Gregg's book herein cited as "an amateur writer, and a naturalist, . . . a professional trader, an experienced frontiersman, and a keen observer."
Josiah Gregg, the youngest of seven children, was born in 1806 in Overton County, Tennessee, but moved with his family to Missouri when he was six. He was a frail child and thus "something of a misfit on the family farm," but brilliant in the classroom. However, he had little formal schooling, being largely self-taught. Mr. Moorhead stated that "Josiah shied away from the fairer sex. He never married. Knowledge was his real home."—Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, ix, xviii.
20. Albert Speyer (his name was spelled with several variations as Speyres, Speyers, etc.) was a Prussian Jew who always carried both a British and a Prussian passport. He was well known in the West, having been engaged for many years in the Santa Fe Trade. On this particular trip his train included two wagons of arms and ammunition which were owned by Governor Manuel Armijo. Captain Benjamin Moore's company of United States Dragoons was ordered to overtake Speyer and arrest him. Armijo is supposed to have sold his interests in the arms to Speyer when he learned that American troops were approaching.

Later in Mexico Speyer was forcibly dispossessed of the arms and powder by the Mexicans. He finally retired from the Santa Fe trade and resided in Kansas City, Missouri, and then in New York City where he became involved in a Wall Street crash and committed suicide.—Drumm, *Diary of Susan Magoffin*, 10, 96n; De Voto, *The Year of Decision*, 117.

21. There were two placers, "old" and "new," as Wislizenus points out. Old Placer was located or discovered in 1828 and New Placer in 1839. Both were located some thirty miles southeast of Santa Fe.—Bancroft, *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, 380.
22. The *vara* is a land measure. By legislative enactment the Spanish *vara* was established in Texas as 33.33333 inches. The Castilian *vara* is 33.372 inches and was adopted in Florida while New Mexico and Arizona adopted a *vara* of 32.9682 inches.—Katherine H. White, "Spanish and Mexican Surveying Terms and Systems," *PASSWORD*, vol. vi, no. 1 (Winter, 1961), 25.
23. San Antonio, New Mexico, is known today as the birthplace of Mr. Conrad Hilton whose father kept the first Hilton Hotel in that small village. Evidence of the philanthropy of the son to San Antonio's sister town, nearby Socorro, is a very fine Catholic school building.—Robert M. Zingg, "The Importance of the El Paso Area in the Conquest and Reconquest of New Mexico," *PASSWORD*, v. i, no. 4, Part Two (November, 1956), 135.

The first Mormon family to settle in El Paso was that of Isaac W. Pierce. The year, 1897.

The word "Lamanite" is used by the Mormons to describe the American Indians.

The Mormon Battalion was recruited during the Mexican War from the Latter Day Saints after they left Illinois.

The Comstock Lode in Nevada was discovered in 1859.

The Tyler, Texas, Rose Festival was held for the first time in 1933.

St. Joseph, Missouri, was the jumpling-off place for the '49 era.

"As the trains came rattling in during the spring, summer, and fall of 1887, they spilled thirty to forty thousand people a month into Southern California."

—*The American West*

HERITAGE HOMES OF EL PASO

THE TROST HOUSE
by HARRIOT HOWZE JONES



(Photo by Cmdr. M. G. McKinney)

The unique and interesting house at 1013 West Yandell Boulevard, which is now owned by Malcolm McGregor, was built in 1908 by Henry Charles Trost to be used as his own home.

Architecture was the chief art of ancient people; painting and sculpture were subordinate to the demands of structural necessity and beauty. Architectural styles developed gradually, affected by social ideals, climate, topography and available materials. The so-called *Mission* style is ideally suited to the southwestern desert country. In mission style there are always thick walls, which keep heat out in summer and warmth in in winter. Often roofs project to shield the interior from the blazing sun; there may be arched colonnades on one or more sides of the house, and a patio, which is an oasis of green vegetation and trees, surrounded by a wall for privacy.

Henry Charles Trost was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1860; his parents had emigrated from Germany in 1850; he died in El Paso in 1933; he never married. Trost graduated from art school at age seventeen and worked for three years as a draughtsman with a firm of architects in Toledo. From Ohio he went to Chicago, where he worked as an architect, then to Arizona and later to New Mexico. Trost built many homes, club houses, hotels and apartment houses before he came to El Paso in 1904. With his brother Gustavus Adolphus, and his nephew George Ernest Trost, he formed the firm of Trost and Trost, which continued after Henry's death until 1946. Gustavus Adolphus' twin brother Adolphus Gustavus, joined the firm in 1908. There was a sister, Matilda, who never married but was the chatelaine of the Trost mansion.

Trost and Trost built many fine houses in El Paso, by no means all in Mission style. Most of these homes are still in use. If there is only one thing that can be said about a Trost house it is that it was built to last. Henry Trost was the head of the firm and chief designer. In addition to El Paso homes, Trost designed the famous Mills Building, the Roberts — Banner Building, the Brazos Apartments, and the Y.M.C.A. (built in 1907 and recently demolished), to name only a few such structures.

Architects note that Henry Trost's designs for some of his buildings were strongly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. This is quite obvious, even to a layman, but he also built in several other styles. In El Paso the Turney home on Montana Avenue, now the El Paso Museum of Art, the Ainsa and Zach White homes on North Mesa illustrate what Trost could do with Greek Revival design, whereas the Joe Williams house on West Rio Grande is distinctly Spanish. Other homes in El Paso were designed in entirely different style: there is a four-square simplicity and lack of ornamentation in his work on the Fink house on Upson Street.

The house which Henry Trost built for himself shows a marked influence from the work of the great Frank Lloyd Wright, although it is not in any sense a copy of any of the master's buildings; it is as if Trost studied Wright's designs and selected the ideas which pleased him most to combine into his "dream house". There is a full description of the Trost house by Lloyd C. Engelbrecht in the architectural magazine *The Prairie School Review*, vol. vi, no. 4 (1969).

The house is built on a slight elevation in the Sunset Heights section, and there is a good view of part of Juárez and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Mexico. It is basically constructed of cream color brick, but the second story is mostly of plaster panels outlined with wood. The gabled roof is pitched to an obtuse angle and extends far beyond the walls, giving shade from the hot sun. There is a deeply sculptured frieze just under the roof. There are three balconies at the second story level which form roofs for terraces below, there is also a large uncovered terrace off the main floor. The house has five bedrooms and two baths.

It is rather curious that the address of the Trost house is on Yandell Boulevard but the entrance is on Hawthorne Street. Twelve cement steps lead to a small porch and the front door with a leaded glass window. A small structure, with gabled roof covers steps and porch.

When one enters the house it is hard to know which way to look. There are no walls between the living and dining rooms, or the small nook-like recess, with a fireplace that makes a cozy place to sit. Instead of walls there

are chest high "islands" of masonry with dark wood tops which serve as room dividers. Fixed rectilinear, leaded glass lanterns are found on many of these "islands." All of the woodwork is dark and there are dark beams in the ceilings and corbels or brackets just under the ceiling line. The walls are a plane burnt-orange and there is a stenciled frieze of plant forms in dull reds, browns, and greens extending from room to room. All of the windows have leaded glass borders in angular patterns. Trost designed the furniture, too, and it is of Mission style, heavy and boxy, but with upholstered seats and back cushions. The dining room has a massive built-in buffet and a large, heavy table. The chairs are so heavy that it would take a strong man to pull one out to seat a lady at dinner, and if she weighed more than eighty-five pounds he probably would not be able to push back her chair. There is a good sized den reached by descent of six steps off the entrance area, before entering the main part of the house.

There is really a cloistered feeling to the house—dark, cool, peaceful, and with no feminine touches, such as ruffled curtains or soft draperies. They would look out of place in such a setting. It is a masculine house, designed by a man for a man to live in. As it happens three males live in the house now.

Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm McGregor bought the Trost house in 1958 from Mr. and Mrs. John Groesbeeck, who had bought it in 1952, along with all the furniture, from the Trost heirs. A good deal of the furniture went with the house when the McGregors bought it. Mr. McGregor owns another Trost house, the Ainsa house on North Mesa, it is used for offices for a group of lawyers, headed by McGregor.

Mrs. McGregor died in April of 1972. Presently living in the house are Malcolm McGregor and his two sons, Malcolm Jr. age thirteen and Robert age ten. They love the place, and are proud of owning the house that Henry Trost, architectural genius, built for himself, exactly the way he wanted it to be.

The celebrated gunfight at the OK Corral in Tombstone, Arizona Territory, took place on October 26, 1881. Those engaged in the fight were Doc Holliday, Tom McLaury, Frank McLaury, Ike Clanton, Billy Clanton, Wyatt Earp, Morgan Earp, and Virgil Earp.

El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río de Porciúncula is better known as Los Angeles, California.

SOUTHWEST ARCHIVES

The Judge R. Ewing Thomason Collection

by MILDRED D. TOROK

A bare-bones resumé of the public life of El Paso's Judge R. E. Thomason, whose scrapbooks, papers and photographs repose in six well-filled archival boxes on the shelves at the UTEP Archives, shows a public career spanning the years 1917-1963. The biographical outline tells without elaboration that this active, interesting, well-educated and public spirited man served two terms in the Texas House of Representatives from El Paso (1917); that he was elected unanimously as Speaker of the House (1919); that he ran unsuccessfully for governor of Texas (1920); was voted in as mayor of El Paso in 1927 and 1929; that he was elected to Congress from the 16th District of Texas in 1930 and was to remain in that capacity until 1947; and, lastly, that he was appointed to be Federal Judge of the Western District of Texas by President Harry Truman on June 5, 1947. He retired as full-time judge in 1963. But it is not until the researcher pursues the voluminous scrapbooks, thumbs over the photographs, and scans the correspondence with political and military figures of his day, and notes the important committees on which he served, that the story fleshes out. The collection returns an image not only of one man's lifetime but also of a chapter of American history as Judge Thomason helped to influence it.

One of the more dramatic points of his Congressional career was Thomason's emotion-packed war crimes inspection trip to Germany in 1945. Here in official form is the report he presented to the House of Representatives on May 15, 1945, in which he explains how he and a dozen congressional leaders and twelve leading editors were selected to make the investigation. These men went to Germany to look over the political prisoner (concentration) camps as they existed following World War II.

The report quoted a memo from General Eisenhower to General Marshall, Chief of Staff, dated April 20, 1945, which reads in part: "From my own personal observations I can state unequivocally that all written statements up to now do not paint the full horrors."

The group left at noon on Sunday, April 22 by air transportation arranged by the War Department and arrived in Paris in the afternoon of Monday, April 23. They visited Buchenwald, Nordhausen, and Dachau, arriving only days after these infamous camps were liberated by the Americans. Upon his return to the United States, Congressman Thomason's description to his fellow legislators of what he had seen were not presented to play upon already supercharged emotions but nevertheless, reflected his shock and disgust.

The legislator explained what the German political prisoner camp system and policy were during Hitler's Reich. He said the camps were places to house slave laborers who worked in munition factories, and to punish and eventually liquidate civilians who were opposed, or suspected of being opposed, to Hitler's regime. Ever since 1933, and as the Germans later overran Poland, parts of Russia, France, Holland, etc., the camps, numbering about 100 at the time of the liberation by the American Army, were expanded to

"accommodate" hundreds of thousands of political prisoners from these countries. The purpose of these political concentration camps was a systematic "extermination factory" by means of starvation, beatings, tortures, crowded and unsanitary sleeping conditions, and infectious sicknesses.

The report made clear the difference between concentration camps and prisoner-of-war camps, the latter not to be confused with the installations inspected. Presumably, conditions were more normal for the prisoners captured in war action (perhaps not quite so adaptable to the comforts of the inmates as portrayed in *Hogan's Heroes* of TV fame, but none-the-less, not unspeakable).

Not to spotlight with too concentrated a glare upon this one event in Thomason's long career, dramatic as it was, a riffle through the folders in his collection turns up a carbon copy of a four-page statement, dated June 11, 1947, by a familiar name in the news, A. A. Gromyko of Russia. As a member of the United Nations Atomic Commission, Mr. Gromyko was not happy with the lack of progress made by the Atomic Energy Commission of that day which governed the reduction and prohibition of atomic weaponry. In thirty-two short paragraphs aimed at limiting the power of the United States, he proposed a series of checks and balances to ensure "the use of atomic energy only for peaceful purposes".

There is also a copy of "The Democratic Digest" of June, 1945, which was dedicated to the memory of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and summarized in words and pictures his public years.

In a letter to Congressman Thomason written in 1942 by Captain John R. Hughes of Texas Ranger fame, Captain Hughes reported to his friend that he was 87 years old and "in fairly good health". He complimented Mr. Thomason on his good work in Washington, and commented at length on a bill in Congress proposing a pension for "parties who worked in the Catarina Garza War." Hughes related a bit of early-day western history when he wrote of arresting Catarina Garza in the summer of 1888 when Garza tried to start a revolution. The old Ranger's remarks that he would have saved the United States and Texas a lot of money if he'd only killed the trouble-makers involved in that incident instead of sparing them to cause trouble later denotes, perhaps, a harder day.

In the period of some 17 years when Judge Thomason served as a Federal judge, he presided at several cases that attracted national attention. A manuscript copy of "Noted Cases I have Tried", authored by Judge Thomason, recounts a few. In a brief explanation of his views on capital punishment, it is seen that he was a humane man, more relieved than not when a higher court reversed the death penalty he imposed on two young, very drunk Fort Bliss soldiers convicted of murdering a taxi driver for his money. "I believe in capital punishment," he wrote, "although there is considerable argument against it . . . but I think the principal reason to keep the law is as a deterrent to others. I am not chicken-hearted or over sympathetic, but I would prefer not to have any man's blood on my hands or anything to do with depriving him of his right to live . . . I hope and pray that if in the days to come my record of sentences is investigated it will be found that if I have erred it was on the side of mercy."

Mr. Thomason was the Federal Judge at the trial which, in his words, was "the most sensational airplane hijacking case in American history." His claim was true in 1961, although the record of hair-raising skyjacking since

then renders that first one rather tame. It was a national sensation of its time, however, being especially interesting to El Pasoans since the drama unfolded at our own airport. The FBI at that time seems not to have come in for criticism for flattening the tires of the highjacked plane with bullets, even though in a recent and dangerous case it was roundly accused of misjudgment for doing exactly that. Because of this case, the Congress passed new legislation covering the theft of airplanes in interstate commerce or the kidnapping of the passengers in any plane.

The Billie Sol Estes trial in 1963 involving mail fraud and conspiracy was another celebrated one. Judge Thomason wrote that probably the reason for the case receiving national publicity was because of Estes' claims of intimate friendships with prominent politicians in Washington. True or not, and the Judge claims they were not, Billie Sol did have autographed photographs of President Kennedy, Vice President Johnson, Speaker Rayburn and Senator Ralph Yarborough hanging in his Pecos office. Judge Thomason wrote that the trial lasted about three weeks, and was the longest, hardest and most tedious case he ever tried, "and I think I barely escaped a nervous breakdown." Billie Sol received a sentence of fifteen years in the penitentiary from which no subsequent appeal saved him. Thomason's final comment on the case was that he regarded Estes as one of the biggest swindlers this country has produced, and he thought the penitentiary was where he belonged, at least for a reasonable time. And a "reasonable time" is what it proved to be since not long ago a slimmer, older, less owlsh version of the promoter of non-existent ammonia tanks appeared briefly in the news as he was whisked away from penal servitude to sin no more on his brother's farm.

A nostalgic dip into the recent past as documented by Judge Thomason is a reflective experience. Accounts of skyjackings, miscalculation by the FBI, the pros and cons of capital punishment are still topics that you read in this week's news magazines.

BOOK REVIEWS

METAL UNIFORM INSIGNIA OF THE FRONTIER U. S. ARMY 1846-1902

by SIDNEY B. BRINCKERHOFF

(Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1972, \$2.50.)

This monograph is a revision and an enlargement of the 1965 edition published by the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. It is a study of metal objects from army uniforms found at twenty-four abandoned western posts and camps in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Texas. It should be noted, however, that not all types of such objects are treated, only the more common finds—buttons, branch insignia, buckles, and epaulettes.

Button designs, the author notes, originated in the office of the Commanding General of Purchases but in the 1840's were transferred to the Quartermaster Department. The author also notes that there are variations in the buttons, due partly to the fact that there were different manufacturers and partly to the slight modifications in designs that were made from time to time. These variations often add to the difficulties in identification. Incidentally, two of the most common of the manufacturers were Scovills and Horstmann.

Branch insignia ordinarily came from the hats and denoted, as the name implies, the branch of service of the wearer. A trumpet after 1850, for instance, denoted Mounted Rifles; the hunting horn was the symbol of the Infantry until 1875 when it was replaced by crossed rifles; crossed sabers were first worn by the Dragoons and later by the Cavalry; crossed flags by the Signal Corps; the crescent by the Commissary Corps; crossed cannons by the Artillery; and a two-turreted castle by the Engineers. It is interesting to note but not unexpected that there have been very few discoveries at western forts of crossed cannons and two-turreted castles.

The most common of the belt buckles found at deserted desert posts is the large lead-backed oval design with a raised "U. S." in the center. These were first authorized by regulation in 1839 for enlisted men in the cavalry and the dragoons.

Brass scale-type epaulettes have been found in large numbers at abandoned western posts. They cover largely the period from 1833 through 1872. In 1851, they were specified only for sergeants, chief musicians, and chief buglers of mounted regiments. Beginning in 1854, however, they were issued to all enlisted men of all branches for field and dress wear. From 1862 until 1872 when they were abolished, epaulettes were worn only for dress occasions.

The author warns that the importance of military insignia found in the field should not be underestimated: "Insignia contributes information to the historian, archaeologist, and layman alike. Accurately identified, a single item may convey information about the period of occupation, troop units, and equipment."

The author has done a good job. Moreover, the many photographs and the excellent bibliography which includes official publications, books, and articles add immeasurably to the book's value as well as to its interest. For

a copy, address your letter to the Arizona Historical Society, 949 East Second Street, Tucson 85719.

University of Texas at El Paso

—EUGENE O. PORTER

THE OLD WORLD BACKGROUND OF THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

by THOMAS F. GLICK

(El Paso: Texas Western Press, Southwestern Studies Monograph Number 35, 1972, \$3.00)

Thomas F. Glick, an Associate Professor of History and Geography at Boston University and a student of the environmental history of western man, presents in this recent Southwestern Studies monograph a number of historiographical assumptions about the development of irrigation systems in the San Antonio area. His study traces the migration of fifteen families from the Canary Islands, who came to San Antonio in 1731 from the island of Lanzarote in the Canary chain, and their impact on the irrigation system of San Antonio.

The four major islands in the Canary chain had a complicated system of gullies that supplied the *guesa* or communal water to the farmer for irrigation purposes. During the fifteenth century the pastoral *guanches* developed these canals for water drainage. When the Spaniards arrived in the late fifteenth century, they helped inaugurate an irrigation system that improved on the natives' primitive method for supplying water to the sugar crops. Oddly enough, however, the island of Lanzarote had no such system of irrigation because of the terrain and the meagre water supply. For those fifteen families the terrain of the San Antonio area with its copious water resources—the San Antonio River and the San Pedro springs—must have resembled a paradise.

In order to link the irrigation practices of these settlers with those used throughout the Gran Canaria, Professor Glick does some fascinating detective work. He relies on meagre documents, many characterized by vagueness and lack of detail, to show how the settlers shifted their irrigation practice from gully to river irrigation. The history of the water rights struggles, the quarrels with mission fathers, the battles involving prejudice, the granting of water rights by Juan Antonio de Bustillo, then Governor of Texas, the adaptation and modification of Canarian customs to the water problems of the San Antonio area—all of these make for reasonably interesting reading for a student of geography and the early history of Texas. That six to eight farmers could introduce a water distribution system which survived well into the twentieth century suggests the tremendous imagination of these early settlers and their talent for adapting for the San Antonio area such Canarian practices as the use of the *dula* or turn in the San Pedro Canal and the careful accounting system set up to control water distribution.

Even though this document will have limited appeal to students of El Paso history, it is well researched, well documented, and concisely written. Professor Glick's style moves one along through this history. Indeed, this handsomely prepared monograph is a fine addition to the Southwestern Studies series.

—ROBERT M. ESCH

HISTORICAL NOTES

MISS BESSIE LOVE

A couple of years ago your editor published an article in *PASSWORD*, xv, No. 3 (Fall, 1970), 89-95, about a movie made in West Texas in 1924. The name of the movie was *Sundown* and the title of the article was "*Sundown in West Texas.*" The star was Miss Bessie Love.

While researching the article your editor sent Miss Love a list of questions, believing that she would be happy to supply some personal data. The letter was dated January 12, 1970. It was not until August, 1972, however, that an answer was received.

Below are copies of the two letters along with Miss Love's answers to some of the questions. Also included are a few criticisms of some of Miss Love's answers:

42 Henderson Road,
Wandsworth, S. W. 18,
LONDON, August 21, 1972.

Dear Mr. Porter:

You will not feel slighted in the date of my answer to your letter of 1970 when I tell you that I am now catching up to the more important letters of that time.

Much of your information, I am afraid, is incorrect. I shall answer on your own letter. I think it will be simpler, providing that you can read my hand-writing. And I know you will forgive my reluctance in answering anything which I feel is too personal. Many people ask these questions and I do not answer them.

Thank you very much for your interest. By now your article must have long since been written and published without my help.

At present I am finishing my autobiography, *LOVE FROM HOLLYWOOD*, which will answer many questions. But I am also in a play so have not as much time to devote to it as I might. And that is the reason I have either not answered letters at all or had to wait until I could sit down properly and make sense at the typewriter.

I was born in Texas and always loved the idea but never knew it until I made *SUNDOWN* there. My family moved away when I was quite small.

Included in this parcel is a hand bill of the play I am in at Drury Lane. Also a still from *ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE*—a James Bond film made recently.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

[signed] Bessie Love

Miss Bessie Love

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

12 January 1970

Miss Bessie Love
 c/o *The Christian Science Monitor*
 Boston, Mass.

Dear Miss Love:

In doing research for an article on the movie "Sundown" which, as you will remember, was made in West Texas in February-March, 1924, I became interested in YOU as a "former" El Pasoan. Would you kindly answer some questions? But first, allow me to tell you what I have learned.

You attended El Paso's Sunset School in 1905-06 when you were eight. At the time you lived at 416 N. Oregon Street. [Editor's note: Miss Love underscored "El Paso's Sunset School" and "lived at 416 N. Oregon Street" and in the margin opposite the two phrases wrote "No." to each.] Thinking that some classmates might remember you, I asked the editor of the *El Paso Times* to publish in his column a request for information concerning your life here. The response in 'phone calls and letters was astounding. Not one person, however, remembered you as living in El Paso. Almost all, however, were readers of the *Christian Science Monitor* and at least five persons sent me copies of your *Monitor* article of December 5, 1969, "Grease Paint and the Rent" which I already had, as I am a subscriber to the *Monitor*.

A Myrtle Laessing Hamrick phoned that she was one of your classmates in the sixth and seventh grades at Griffith Avenue school in Los Angeles. At that time you lived at 39th and Central. She further stated that Tom Mix "discovered" you and that your first role was that of an understudy or standin for Mary Pickford in either "Broadway Melody" or "Poor Little Rich Girl." [Editor's note: Miss Love's marginal notation: "I began with D. W. Griffith, 1915." She underscored "Tom Mix 'discovered'" and "Standin for Mary Pickford" and wrote "No" to each. Opposite "Broadway," she wrote: "I made it in 1928."]

Also, a good friend of mine, Mr. Steve Aguirre, now retired from the U.S. Consular Service, phoned. He said that he was stationed in our Embassy in Mexico City in 1929 when you and your husband, Howard Hawks, stayed at the Embassy on your honeymoon as guests of Stanley Hawks, your husband's cousin. [Editor's note: Miss Love noted that her husband was Wm. B. Hawks, brother to Howard. She underscored "honeymoon" and noted, "married two years" which may be interpreted as not having been on her honeymoon when she stayed at the Embassy but as having been married two years at the time.] Mr. Aguirre asked that I send his kindest regards, should I write you. [Miss Love here noted, "Please thanks him."] [Mr. Aguirre has since passed away, 19 November 1972.]

I also located Mrs. Glorian Leavitt, the mother of five-year old Helen who played your sister in Sundown." (Helen died at the age of nine.) Mrs. Leavitt loaned me your autographed picture: "To Helen My Little 'Sundown' Sister." Mrs. Leavitt also loaned me a picture of Helen and one of the late Ben Alexander who played your twelve-year old brother in the picture, and



*A recent photograph of Bessie Love.
(Courtesy of Miss Love)*

a card postmarked March 11, 1925 and sent by you and "Mrs. Love" to Helen from Miami, Florida where you were living on a boat and making a picture. Do you remember its name? [Editor's note: "Soulfire" with Richard Barthelmess.]"

Now for some questions:

1. Why was your birth certificate not recorded in Midland, Texas until July 17, 1944?

2. The certification was made by "Chas. Savage." Was he your maternal uncle?

[Editor's note: Miss Love circled these two questions and noted in the margin: "This cannot concern anyone but me and my family.]

3. The certification gives your birthday as September 10 whereas the El Paso public school record of Juanita Horton gives September 19. [Editor's note: Miss Love underscored "El Paso public school" and noted in the margin: "Does not know me."]

4. How did you get in the movies? Is Mrs. Hamrick's version correct? Would you enlarge? [Editor's note: Miss Love stated in the margin that Mrs. Hamrick's version was not correct. To the second question, "Would you enlarge"?, she wrote: I suggest you wait a while and get the book I am now finishing, "Love From Hollywood."]

5. How many pictures did you make? In how many did you star? [Editor's note: to the first question Miss Love wrote: "From 1915, I am still making them." To the second, "I have no idea."]

6. Was "Sundown" well received? I understand that it was intended to compete with "The Covered Wagon." The critics, however, were not too kind. The *New York Times*, December 1, 1924, after praising your work, stated: "As we heard some one say, this picture is all very well if you like cows." [Editor's note: Miss Love made no comment.]

7. What was the name of the last picture you made and the date? [Editor's note: Miss Love noted marginally, "Catlow," 1971.]

8. Are you a Christian Science Lecturer? Some who called me thought so. [Editor's note: Miss Love wrote that she is not a lecturer and she added: "But thank them for the compliment."]

9. Do you remember the names of any of your El Paso classmates? And do you have a class picture which I might use? [Editor's note: Miss Love crossed out both questions without making any comment.]

10. What is your present marital status? And do you have any children? If so, what are their names and ages? [Editor's note: Miss Love crossed out the question but commented: "This is personal. I have a married daughter."]

11. Do you have a recent picture of yourself that I may use? [Editor's note: Miss Love wrote "enclosed" under "recent picture." She sent the photograph which accompanies these notes.]

12. Will you kindly include any other information concerning yourself that you think may be of interest to the public?

My article will be published sometime this year in *PASSWORD*, the quarterly of the El Paso County Historical Society. I shall be very happy to send you a copy of the magazine. [Editor's note: I sent the *Monitor* a copy of *PASSWORD* that contained the "Sundown" article and asked that it be forwarded.]

Please forgive me for intruding upon your time with such a long letter.

Sincerely,

[signed] Eugene O. Porter

From the information I gathered while researching and writing the "Sun-down" article, I cannot "for the life of me" understand why Miss Love insists that she never lived in El Paso. The only alternative is the ridiculous premise that there were two Juanita Hortons, both born on the same day in Midland, Texas; that one stopped long enough in El Paso to attend the Sunset Heights school for a year and then moved on into oblivion; that the other by-passed El Paso for Hollywood where she became a movie star.

The El Paso public school records show conclusively that a Juanita Horton was registered at Sunset Heights school for the school year 1905-06 and that she lived with her parents at 416 North Oregon Street. Moreover, when Miss Love arrived in El Paso to make *Sundown*, she was interviewed by a reporter for the *El Paso Times*. He quoted her as saying: "It is just like coming home to be here now." She was further quoted: "I remember I started to go to school here." (See the *Times*, February 15, 1924.)

Surely, Miss Love, you have not forgotten.

* * *

Mr. Robert N. Mullin, a native-born El Pasoan now living in Laguna Beach, California, and a valued member of our Society, sent me the following item. It was taken from the *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1972:

57 YEARS AS ACTRESS
BESSIE LOVE SHINES IN 'GONE'

By Zander Hollander
UPI Staff Writer

LONDON—Young Juanita Horton sacrificed her lunch one day back in 1915. It paid off: At 74, Bessie Love is still wowing audiences in a screen and stage career encompassing leading men from Douglas Fairbanks Sr. to Yul Brynner.

Bessie Love—the almost legendary D. W. Griffith renamed her because "nobody east of the Rockies knows how to pronounce Juanita"—sprawled in a bright blue pant-suit and silver slippers on the floor of her London theater dressing room and recalled the fateful morning she went for a vacation job in Hollywood's early days.

She and a Mrs. Delano, who roomed at the Horton home with her butcher husband, talked their way past gate guards and secretaries to the great Griffith himself and were invited to return in the afternoon to be extras in his monumental epic, "Intolerance."

Juanita, then 16, and the butcher's wife didn't dare leave the set for lunch for fear of not getting back in. So it was on an empty stomach that Bessie Love played a Babylonian slave girl at the feet of King Belshazzar.

She went on from there to become a star, sparkling through roles she calls "sunbonnet girl next door," "sequined and spangled showgirl" and "glamor-

ous leading lady and all that stuff" on screen and stage.

She shone more recently as a not-too-bright American tourist in the London production of John Osborne's play, "West of Suez," as a busybody telephone operator in the film "Sunday, Bloody Sunday," and as a sweet little old lady who holds up a stagecoach in "Catlow," a western starring Yul Brynner.

Aunt Pittypat

She now shines in the hit musical version of "Gone With the Wind" which opened in London in May.

A small pert lady with her grey hair rolled in a tight bun, Miss Love firmly declines to "talk scandal." So she has not "dwelled on people getting killed and raped and things" in the autobiography she is working on.

It will tell the story of a girl from Midland, Tex., whose bartender father moved the family through Arizona and New Mexico to Los Angeles and the rest of Bessie Love's fairytale story, but "no scandals, I can assure you."

Move to London

Clearly keeping some things personal, Miss Love glides over the events that brought her and her daughter Patricia to London in 1935. She and her husband, William Hawks, brother of director Howard Hawks, were divorced a year later.

"I came here on holiday, liked it and stayed—it's as simple as that," she said.

Her daughter, who married a Briton, has made her a grandmother and Miss Love became a British subject a few years ago. But she still refers to America as "home" and she writes occasional letters lobbying U.S. senators and congressmen.

Her face is lined but Miss Love keeps a figure that Marlene Dietrich might envy and moves with the spring of a physical training instructor. She attributes her septuagenarian snap to keeping busy all her life and attending dance movement classes "whenever I've got the time for it."

CONTRIBUTORS to this ISSUE

JAMES J. CROOK was born in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard W. Crook. The family moved to Florida and then, in 1948, to El Paso. James was graduated from Austin High School in 1956. He attended UTEP for two years and then transferred to the University of Texas at Austin where he was graduated with a BBA degree. He then attended law school at Tulsa University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he received his Juris Doctor. He has been a member of the Bar of Oklahoma and of Texas since 1966.

Mr. Crook has held a number of important positions in the El Paso area. He is, for instance, past first vice President of the El Paso Jaycees; he is presently Associate Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the El Paso County Historical Survey Committee, to name only a few such honors.

Incidentally, Mr. Crook along with Colonel H. Crampton Jones, at the time president of the Historical Society, conducted a money drive and were able to save Engine "Old No. 1."

BURTRAM ORNDORF PIERCE is the widow of Major General James R. Pierce.

ALZINA ORNDORF GAY is married to Lt. General Hobart Gay who was General Patton's Chief of Staff.

CHRIS P. FOX is a frequent contributor to *PASSWORD*.

HARRIOT HOWZE JONES, in addition to writing "Heritage Homes," compiled and edited the Society's recent publication, *El Paso: A Centennial Portrait*.

MILDRED D. TOROK recently retired from the University of Texas at El Paso where she worked in the Archives.

ROBERT M. ESCH is Asst. Professor of English at UTEP. He has contributed several book reviews to *PASSWORD*.

HELEN HICKS who writes the feature "PASSWORD SALUTES," was taken ill and spent time in the hospital. She is now recuperating in Hawaii. Her column will be back in the summer issue.

Several Society members have asked about you, Helen. All are praying for your rapid and complete recovery.

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