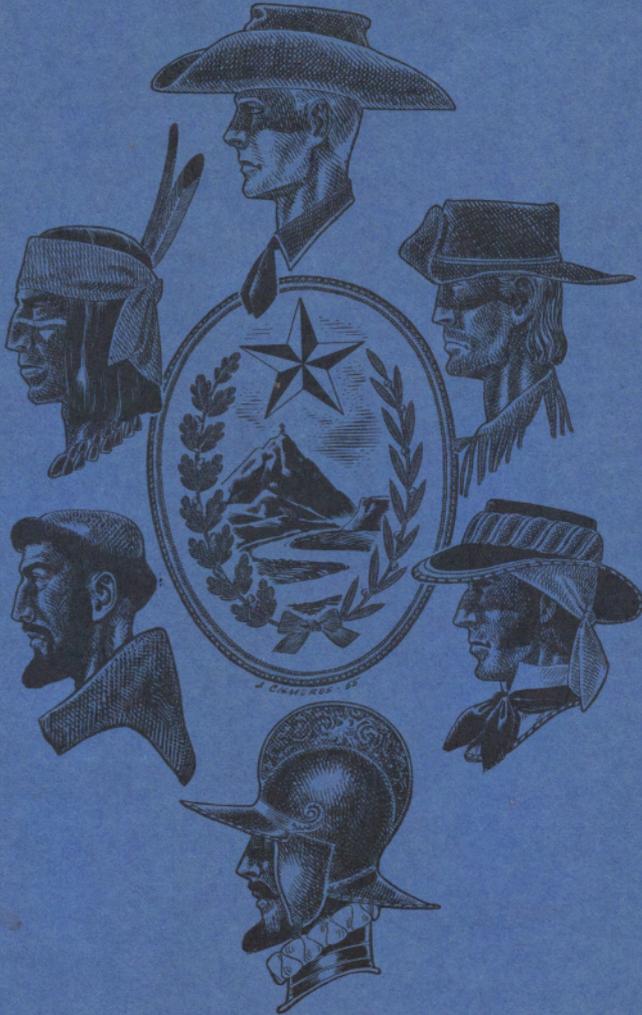


# PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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VOL. XXI, No. 3

EL PASO, TEXAS

FALL, 1976



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# PASSWORD

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CONREY BRYSON, *Editor*

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VOL. XXI, No. 3

EL PASO, TEXAS

FALL, 1976

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## IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Frank Feuille, Jr.

Dale Resler

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*Published quarterly by* THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
CONREY BRYSON, *Editor*

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## RED ROCK CANYON CROSS<sup>1</sup>

by DOROTHY WARD

On a cool March night in 1944, there was a sudden explosion which rattled the windows of the houses in northeast El Paso. The terrifying sound came from a B-24 Liberator Bomber, which had just taken-off from Biggs Field for a routine flight, crashing into the eastern slope of Mt. Franklin. Upon impact with the sheer face of Red Rock Canyon, the plane burst into flames which leaped high into the sky, dissolving the darkness with a glow for a half-mile radius. Residents of the northeast rushed out into their yards to watch the spectacle. A mass of people went in cars and on foot to the base of the slope. They watched the flames shoot into the sky, as if keeping time to the frenzied screams of sirens on emergency vehicles in the area.

The brilliant light danced along the mountainside, exposed the faces of the crowd and mirrored itself in every eye. Various reasons had motivated the gathering of the people at the bottom of Mr. Franklin: many were curious, some were thrill seekers, and a few came to help.

The crash was a tragedy but the world was full of tragedies then. Men were dying everyday in violent battles overseas. So, the accident cooled quickly in the minds of most El Pasoans, like the last embers of the burned bomber. But in one man's mind the crash did not fade. For Marcus Uribe, the flames remained intense.

Marcus was in his house at 2702 Porter when he heard the boom echo from the nearby mountain.<sup>2</sup> He saw the fire illuminating Austin High's big "A", above the end of Memphis Avenue, and he ran to the canyon to offer assistance. At first, the heat kept Marcus at a distance, then he was blocked by the Air Force crash crew and the city police. Still, he did not return home. He watched as the stretchers returned empty to the waiting ambulances, then silently returned to his house. One reoccurring thought haunted him, "People are dying for their country, and here I am safe and secure in my job as janitor at the Public Library." Marcus knew he must do something, but what?

The following evening, the bold print on the front page of the Herald-Post caught his attention, "Seven Killed In Crash Of Biggs Plane."<sup>3</sup> He read down to the line "The Dead," which stood in black capital letters. And beneath, the list of names like a roll-call, cold and impersonal:

1st Lieutenant Lyle R. Jensen  
2nd Lieutenant Benjamin C. Fricke  
2nd Lieutenant Robert Spears  
2nd Lieutenant Donald B. Harris  
Sgt. Richard J. Stoney  
Sgt. William T. Hinston  
Sgt. John H. House

Just a list of names, almost unknown in El Paso. The paper said nothing about Benjamin Fricke and Robert Spears growing-up together in Indianapolis and enlisting together. The paper said nothing about Donald Harris' wife giving birth to a son that very night, facts that Marcus would discover for himself much later. No, all that was given were stark details of their deaths. The emptiness of it bothered Marcus. He knew he must do something, but what?



*Marcus Uribe and the author examine one of the photos taken during the dedication ceremony, April 30, 1944.*

*Photo by Col. (USA Ret.) James W. Ward.*

That evening after supper, Marcus stepped out into his backyard. Beneath the waning light of the setting sun he saw the canyon which had been ablaze the night before. Now, the mountain stood quiet and still, impervious to the little dramas of man. Marcus studied the rugged face above Red Rock Canyon where seven lives had ended. Then silently, he started building a wooden form for moulding a cement cross.

After work at the library, the afternoon of March 25, Marcus shouldered his cement cross and started up the mountain, followed by a band of neighborhood boys. Loose rocks toyed with the limp Marcus had acquired from an accident that had left him temporarily paralyzed.<sup>4</sup> Being of slight build, Marcus weighed little more than his monument. The cross bit into his shoulder, but still he continued up the dusty mountain. He carried the load thinking about the men who were dying for America, a country which he became a citizen of only ten months earlier.<sup>5</sup> Stum-

bling and straining, by the time he reached the cliff, the March sun had soaked him with sweat. A religious silence dominated the hot work as he and the boys moved among the scattered wreckage of the plane. After a couple hours of back-breaking work, he had secured the cross to the face of the stone cliff, using cable from the plane. The cross hung in the middle of the blackened area. Burnt oil clung to the craggy surface of the rock, contrasting with his crude white cross.

A nearby resident watched the progress of the unusual activity. Fascinated, the observer called the newspaper. The following day, a reporter for the *Herald-Post* called on Marcus at work. "What exactly do you plan to do?" she asked Marcus. This question stunned him. He knew what he had done was not enough to memorialize the abrupt end of seven young lives. But what to do? It was a question that bothered his sleep the previous night. After a long pause, he sighed, "I will build a bigger cross." His accent weighed heavy on each word. He smiled, there was relief in just knowing what he was going to do.

The reporter studied Marcus. She could see how strongly he believed in what he was doing. Still, she was worried. "Do you have the money for a larger cross?"

"I have some." Marcus quickly added, "And I will get more." He already knew what the question would be.

"May I ask how much you have?"

"\$37.50."

Next day, the *Herald-Post* had a small article requesting donations for the monument to seven dead fliers. Margaret Scott, a civilian employee at Fort Bliss, acknowledged the request with a one dollar bill. No one else shared her generosity.

Marcus decided to ask for donations from his neighbors. They saw the destruction of the plane; they saw flames light the night. Less than a week ago, they too had smelled the oily smoke, the burning flesh from the wreckage. Marcus believed they would feel as strongly as he over the deaths of seven young men. Marcus was mistaken. He spent one afternoon going from house to house explaining his need. From one he received two pennies; from another a nickel. The truly sympathetic offered a quarter. By the end of the day, Marcus had succeeded in raising less than seven dollars. It was obvious that he must depend mainly on his own meager resource.

Marcus took two 4x4 timbers he had previously bought for the front porch of a house he was going to build and made them into a large cross.<sup>o</sup> He gave the cross to Riza Ascencio, a friend, who welded sheet metal around the wood. Then Marcus took what money he had and purchased some cement. Every day he and several friends would climb up the arroyo to prepare the base for the cross. Since there was no water and little

sand on the rocky slope, they would have to carry such supplies on their backs. Mrs. Jesus Morales, stationed at the bottom of the cliff, would mix the cement in buckets which Marcus and his young sons, Raymundo and Juan, hoisted up on cables.<sup>7</sup>

While on the mountain, Marcus would wander through the wreckage collecting pieces of copper and brass wire. This was melted down and used to make the plaque on the monument.<sup>8</sup>

One day during his searching, Marcus discovered an I.D. bracelet. Engraved on the front was "Sgt. John H. House, serial number 32837248." "With love, Janet" was on the back. Marcus wrote Janet, telling her of the bracelet. However, after sending the bracelet to Sgt. House, she had met and wed another man, and so she told Marcus to keep it.

The last week in April, the base was finally finished, ready for the cross. Six brothers from St. Anthony's Seminary shouldered the large crucifix and trudged up the mountain.

Attaching a safety belt to himself, Marcus swung in front of the monument to steady the cross as it was set. Suddenly, soft religious hymns from an organ drifted up into the canyon. Marcus smiled at the appropriate-



*High above the floor of Red Rock Canyon are some of the people who made the pilgrimage to Marcus Uribe's monument to the deceased fliers, at its dedication, April 30, 1944. On the right, below the large monument is the concrete cross which Uribe first made and suspended by aircraft cable on the sheer granite rock where the B-24 implanted.*

*(Photo from M. G. McKinney Collection)*

ness, "Do you hear the music?" They all nodded their heads in agreement. A few hours later, when they returned from the mountain, tired but pleased, they went into the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Alabama Street for refreshments prepared by Mrs. Uribe. There they asked about the beautiful organ music. "But no one was playing the organ," the priest insisted. "I have been here all day."

The dedication was held on April 30, 1944, a little over a month after the plane crash occurred. It began with high mass in Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. Father Raymundo Garcia, in his sermon in both English and Spanish, said solemnly to the crowd of five-hundred, "It is worthy that we give manifestations of our appreciation . . . the cross is a symbol of the dead as well as a victory of Christ. It is our way of honoring boys who have died for God and Country."

At the end of the service, the people formed a silent line for the pilgrimage to the cross. Flag bearers, with a flag for each allied nation and a white flag for the Papacy, led the procession up the two mile climb. They were followed by seven girls dressed in white, carrying wreaths. Wearing sashes with the name of a dead flier, seven young boys in khaki marched solemnly in front of Father Garcia and two other priests who participated in the ceremony.

Talk was replaced in the crowd by deep thought. Some remembered the night of the crash as they studied the wreckage still strewn among the rocks, many thought of their loved ones overseas in a bloody battle. A few wept—all prayed.

May 2, 1944, a poem Marcus had written about the accident appeared in a Juarez newspaper. It was entitled *La Triste Historia, 7 Aviadores*. It was composed from the heart, for Marcus never had any formal schooling.

None of the fliers had relatives among the throng on the day of the dedication. However, Mr. Fricke later came several times to visit the monument, and Mr. and Mrs. Spears came once. While climbing to the site, Mr. Spears stumbled into the spines of a yucca plant. Seeing that his arm was bleeding badly, Marcus tried to bandage it. Mr. Spears refused saying "No, I'm all right. What is a little of my blood when this is where my son died?"

Marcus used to return to the cross every month for the first year, then he slowed to once or twice a year. Every couple of years Marcus would paint the cross to cover the senseless graffiti of irreverent people. Now seventy-five years old, Marcus has not been to his cross for four years. Still, he has masses said for the seven men he never met.

Often, he sits on his front porch studying the mountains. He remembers how the flames illuminated the Franklins and melted the cool March night. The mountainside has changed little from that night in '44. A few

yucca and cactus burned, but they grew back. And El Paso has grown larger, less friendly. The deaths of seven fliers had little effect on the city—thirty-two years have brought two more wars and the deaths of too many hometown boys. But still, Marcus sits on his porch alone and remembers that night. He felt the loss of the seven men and he mourns. He sits in solitude, but he knows he is never by himself, for “no man is an island.”

After thirty-two years, his cross still stands on the cliff above Red Rock Canyon. Few know about its existence and even fewer go to see it. Still, it stands, a monument to seven dead fliers, a monument to Marcus Uribe.

#### NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated, the information for this narrative is from an interview with Mr. Marcus Uribe on July 30, 1975 and subsequent meetings.
2. Mr. Uribe presently lives at 2522 Porter Avenue.
3. *El Paso Herald-Post* March 24, 1944.
4. Mr. Uribe injured his left hip and back in a fall while working at a building construction.
5. Mr. Uribe was born in Sierra Mojada, Coahuila, Mexico on November 15, 1901. He became a citizen of the U.S. on June 29, 1943.
6. Mr. Uribe built his present home himself.
7. Raymundo and Juan were 12 and 13 years old, respectively.
8. The plaque was cast by Darbyshire-Harvie Iron and Machine Company, located at 1800 E. San Antonio Street (Avenue today) in El Paso, at a cost to Mr. Uribe of about \$10.
9. *El Paso Herald-Post*, May 1, 1944.

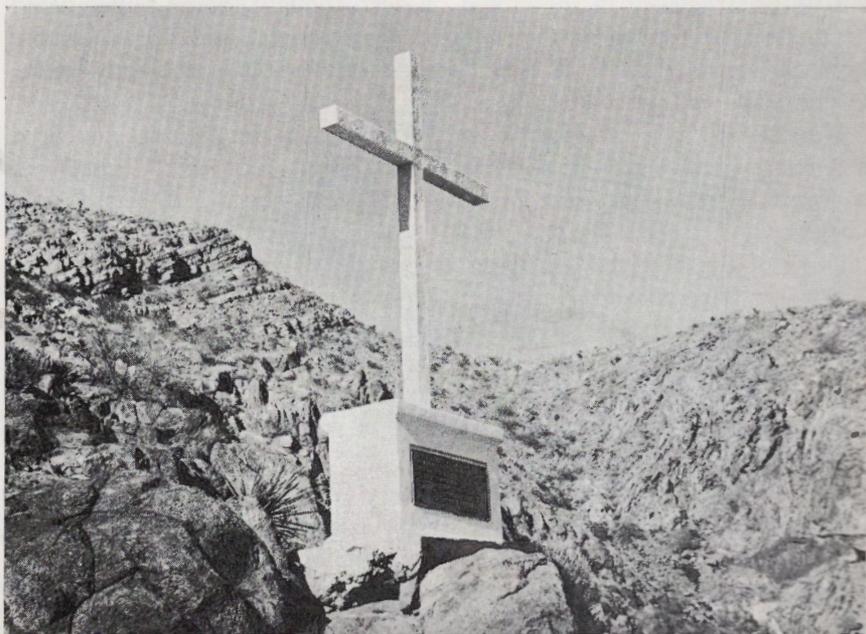


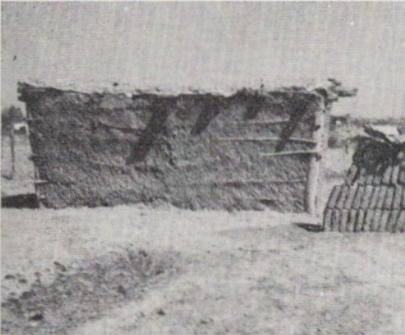
Photo taken after Marcus Uribe's monument was recently repaired and repainted by the author and her father, Col. (USA Ret.) James W. Ward.  
(Photo by James W. Ward)

## MI JACALITO

by FRANCES SEGULIA

Disappearing from southwestern horizons along with the dugouts and sod shanties of pioneer days are the *jacales*, the primitive huts once quite prevalent along the southern trails west. Native to Mexico and originally the habitation of the Mexican Indian, the mud and timber dwellings once dotted the settlements in the Southwest on both sides of the Rio Grande. At the turn of the century most of the occupants of the *jacales* on the north bank of the river were cattle or goat herders and woodcutters. Later, many of these crude huts housed American farmers until more permanent houses of adobe could be built. Today, no more than a few isolated crumbling shells, the last signs of the early housing, can be found.

The *jacal* could be built quickly and at little expense beyond the "sweat of the brow." Necessary tools were limited to work-hardened hands and a machete or some other cutting tool. Slender poles cut from available timber, usually desert willow or mesquite (the thorny ocotillo has been used), were placed upright, close together, stockade-style, to form the



JACAL at *Guadalupe*, across *Rio Grande* from *Tornillo*. Adobes adjoining the one room dwelling are for a more substantial dwelling in the future.

(Photo by author)



UN JACAL in early *Tornillo*. No trace of a JACAL or a bake oven can be found in *Tornillo* today.

(Photo courtesy Mrs. Hope Flores)

walls. Additional poles were placed horizontally at strategic points and laced securely with small willow branches if no bailing wire was available. The roof was made by using several strong poles or *vigas* (beams) criss-crossed for added strength. On top of the *vigas* small brush was compactly sandwiched with layers of mud and slightly pitched toward one edge of the roof. In large rooms a stout pole was placed in the center of

each to support the center timber. Sometimes handy pegs were attached to the upper section of the support. The cowpunchers may have hung *chaparejos* (chaps) on the pegs. Perhaps the native Indians in earlier times put them to a similar use by also hanging skins of one type or another.

The outer walls of the *jacal* were chinked or completely covered with mud. On the inside dirt was scraped up from the center of the room—probably with bare hands—and made into a mud plaster. An expert job of applying the plaster to both inside and outside walls left little sign of timber. Dirt floors were hard-packed by a daily sprinkling with water, if possible.

Some *jacales* were similiar to condominiums inasmuch as several rooms were joined by common walls without connecting doorways, although each room had a door leading to the outside. Closings varied from doors made of native timber, scrap lumber, or a temporary covering such as a blanket or colorful serape. Windows, if included, were roughly squared and set high in the walls. Here again, closings were of rough or crude materials. Window glass was rarely used. In more recent years a window might serve as an outlet for a stovepipe though most cooking was done outside the *jacal* over a campfire or in a clay bake oven.

When a *jacal* happened to be vacated for a time, field mice and gopher snakes were apt to move in to keep the ever-present gray spiders company. When man returned to the premises, the invading pests might shift their positions though they seldom were known to leave voluntarily. As long as the quiet atmosphere within the primitive habitat remained reasonably undisturbed, a system of "live and let live" prevailed.

From a personal observation the *jacal* in the El Paso area is now no more than a memory. The Rio Grande Rectification Project engineered by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation dealt specifically with confining the erratically flowing Rio Grande to a fixed course. In the process, the timber necessary for erecting *jacales* was destroyed, and new growth is discouraged, especially on the north bank of the river.

While some Southwestern museums are restoring and preserving the dugout and sod shanty of American pioneer days, replicas of the *jacal* may be overlooked. Yet, occasionally found gracing the entrance of modish and comfortable dwellings throughout the Southwest are the enduring words, "*Mi Jacalito.*"

## BICENTENNIAL EL PASO

*Edited by* W. H. TIMMONS

The relentless Apache and Comanche attacks against the northern frontier of the Viceroyalty of New Spain in the 1760's compelled the Spanish crown to re-examine its defensive structure extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California. The Marqués de Rubí, after a general inspection of the frontier presidios, submitted his *Dictámenes* to the Spanish crown, which subsequently became the nucleus of the Royal Instruction or Regulation of September 10, 1772, a comprehensive reorganization of Spain's defensive system. Specifically, with regard to the El Paso area, the Instruction recommended that since its population of more than 5,000 was sufficient to support its own militia, the El Paso presidio should be moved to Carrizal, some eighty miles to the south.

The accompanying document, the original of which may be found in the Archivo de Indias in Sevilla, Spain, reveals the defensive arrangements for the El Paso area drawn up by Don Antonio Daroca, lieutenant governor of New Mexico, on December 7, 1773. As the plan indicates, six companies were to be organized—four for El Paso del Norte, one for Senecú and Ysleta, and one for Socorro and the Tiburcios property. Each company was to have one captain, two lieutenants, one ensign, four sergeants, and six corporals. The total number of personnel was to be 857, of whom only 179 were to be armed. Salaries would be paid by the Spanish crown, but most of the armament and equipment would have to be supplied by the local citizenry. It will be noted that this copy of the document carries the signature of Juan Bautista de Anza, who in 1778 was ordered to review the El Paso militia on his way to Santa Fe to assume the governorship of New Mexico.

In the ensuing years, Spanish officials discovered that to draft a military plan was one thing, but that to implement it was a different matter. At length, largely because of the lack of funds, the number of companies was reduced to four, then to two, and finally to a single squadron and sixty Indian auxiliaries. An adequate system of defense for the El Paso settlers was never realized, and their experience of the 1770's simply illustrates the insurmountable difficulties faced by Spanish officials in their attempt to solve the larger problem of frontier defense from Gulf to Gulf.

The document presented here is being published for the first time. A microfilm copy may be found in Special Collections and Archives at the University of Texas at El Paso.

# Pasadel Rio del Norte

**Estado** que manifiesta los Oficiales Soldados y Milicianos Armados y desarmados de las Compañías que se han formado nuevamente en este Pueblo y las de su Jurisdicción con expresión de los que se han retirado en esta de volver a sus casas, el día hecho p. m. 8<sup>to</sup> de Nov. Donde se ven p. m. 10 de 1764 1772

Plana Mayor  
H. de Gobierno..... 1

Pueblos de donde son las Compañías.	Número de compañías		Alfereses	Sargentos	Cabos.	Armas		Totales de Personas.	
	1 <sup>ra</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>				de guerra	de paz		
Paso del Norte	1 <sup>ra</sup>	1	2	4	6	30.	72.	98.	155
	2 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	30.	72.	117.	117.
	3 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	30.	70.	117.	117.
	4 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	30.	74.	118.	118.
	5 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	30.	78.	142.	225.
	6 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	22.	84.	108.	125.
R. Seneca y Seneca como Compañías de Indios	6 <sup>a</sup>	1	2	4	6	175.	445.	293.	857.

4dm.  
Ayudantes... 2  
Dr. Hem. noriega  
Dr. Jofre de Vuelta

Paso del Rio del Norte The Quintero el 1773. Año de D. N. E.

Es Copia de Original que se me envió de Superior con sus Señ. Com. Fed. Cas. e Cruzes de Certificación  
Juan de los Rios de la Cruz

Defense plan for El Paso area, December 7, 1773.  
(From Archivos de Indios, Sevilla, Spain—Microfilm in UT El Paso Library)

## HISTORICAL MEMORIES CONTEST

In its first Historical Memories Contest (PASSWORD XX, 162), the El Paso County Historical Society awarded three cash prizes and named six honorable mention articles. The final two of these articles follow:

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### BELOVED MECHANICAL HORSES

by JULIA N. BRECK

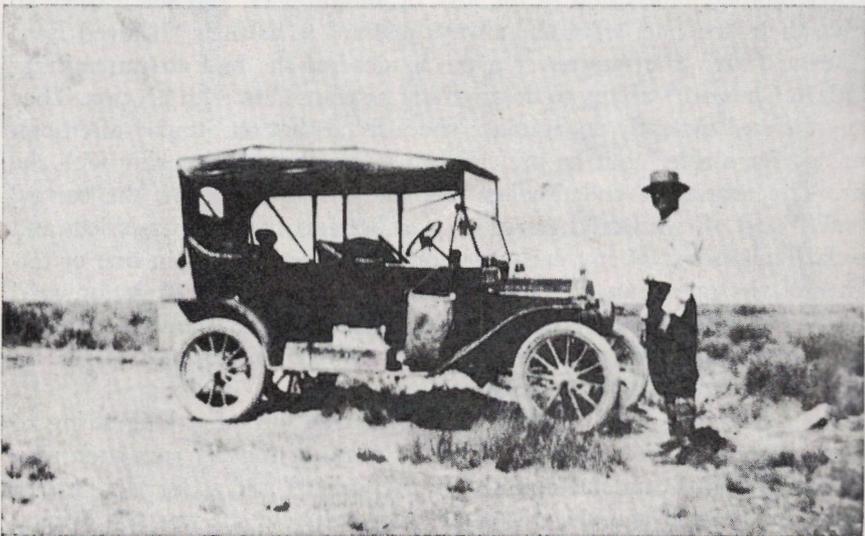
Today, when a young man spends hours washing his car, raising its wheels in back or front, adding fancy hub-caps or lights, then riding around showing off, it is said that the car is his horse. He loves the car. One of the first such young men in El Paso was my father, Clarence L. North. Although he liked horses and drove a team with a fine flourish, he really loved cars. Some of my earliest recollections involve automobiles and I can not remember any time when my parents did not have at least one mechanical horse in their garage. But he was not the first person in El Paso to buy an automobile; his economic situation, which required him to work at any job he could find, automatically put ownership of one of the earliest beauties out of his reach. In fact, it was not until he settled down to married life that he finally purchased one of the new-fangled machines.

My mother joined him in the love of automobiles, and she learned to drive their first one, what she always referred to as their "beloved Ford Touring Car." She was never a mechanic, but she had an unremitting faith in Clarence's ability to do anything he wanted to with his cars. They only differed violently on Sunday: she insisted that on Sunday afternoon we "go for a ride," but he preferred to stay at home, puttering with the car. The argument ended when she said, "But *you* have the car *all week!*" and off we would go, usually on her favorite drive to Ysleta and back. Thus, some of my early memories involve driving, in one or another of the open cars they owned, beneath huge limbs of cottonwood trees, waving at other families driving up and down Alameda Avenue, and, on occasion, when a sudden shower caught us, stopping to put up the curtains with "isinglass windows."

Their "beloved Ford Touring Car" was the first of a long string of these mechanical horses which included some of the big cars such as a Packard, the first Studebaker with "free-wheeling" and a Chrysler, as well as smaller ones. When she was eighty-two years old she was still driving the last one, a grey Dodge two-door sedan. Much to the consternation of

her children and grandchildren, after Clarence could no longer drive because of his failing eyesight, she was still primly guiding her "beloved" little car to and from the grocery store, the beauty shop, and sometimes to Five Points and "downtown." As far as we knew she did not break her promise to stay off the freeways, but she loved to go up and park the car at the El Paso National Bank Building, then come gaily down the winding ramp to the street.

I was born after they had been married about a year, then my sister followed eighteen months later. Sometime before my fourth birthday my father took a job running the El Paso Brick Plant, across the river from Smelertown, and we moved to a house there. Since there was no bridge, in those days, from Smelertown to the brick plant, we had to cross the river on a bridge where the road to Anapra now goes. I had a real fear of the drive after crossing the bridge because there was no automobile road to the brick plant. We had to use the lower level of railroad tracks, and my parents' actions did not give me any confidence that we would not be run down by a train. They would "stop, look, and listen" as we all kept very quiet. Clarence would drive a way down the track, then Ruth would get out and walk ahead around a curve to see if a train were coming across the bridge over the river. It was always a tremendous relief when she waved, we drove on and picked her up, and then went bumping along the track, the hard tires of the car striking the ties almost all the way to the plant.



*Clarence L. North in front of the Ford, packed and ready to go, Julia and Ruth Ceil in back seat.*

What ever gave my father the idea of taking what my mother always referred to as an "overland trip" in their "beloved Ford" was never explained, but when I was three and a half years old plans for the wedding of my father's sister, Florence, to Harold Courtice, in Springfield, Mo., were being made, and he decided to drive the car to Springfield, some 1,100 miles from El Paso. During that summer, in his spare time, he turned the Ford into what must have been the first camper. The front seat was hinged so that it would drop back to make a bed when joined to the rear seat. Crossways close to the high canvas top he made places to hang two tiny hammocks above the seats, for my sister and me; I remember what fun it was to peek out of this high lookout, down at my father, who was laughing up at us. On the back of the car he built a sturdy, water-proof storage box for clothes and supplies. The car had the wide running boards of the early designs, and on one he made a tool box for automobile and hunting supplies. On the other side he installed a "fire-less cooker." This was a well insulated box with a heavy lid. In it were two round holes much like a "deep well" burner on a modern stove. There were two heavy round disks to be heated in the oven, dropped into the holes, with the pots of food to be cooked on top of them, and the heavy lid locked closed. The idea on the trip was to heat the disks on the morning campfire, then cook the evening's supper as the car went along. I remember seeing my mother use this cooker in her kitchen after the trip.



*Ruth North preparing a meal at her "fireless cooker." Julia and Ruth Ceil watch from their hammocks.*

Clarence bought a new gun to shoot rabbits and birds along the way. Ruth made matching caps for herself and my sister and me, to keep our long hair free from dust, then started her diary. The first page, written in ink (the rest is in pencil) says: "An account of our first overland trip taken in our beloved Ford. Clarence Lupfer North, Ruth Spaulding North, Julia Spaulding North age 3 yrs. 10 mos. 18 days, Ruth Ceil North age 2 yrs. 4 mos. 12 days." The first night, to get the feel of things, we went to Anthony and stayed at the farm of my Grandfather, George North. I remember the farm well, with its barn and chickens, and a fierce dog, but do not recall that night. Her little diary gives a brief description of what turned out to be a short but arduous trip:

"Aug. 20—1914, left El Paso 5 P.M. Camped at Father North's ranch. Had fine chicken supper—slept in our car in pouring rain. Our beds are *fine*."

"Aug. 21st—Left ranch 8:10 A.M. Wanted to start earlier but waited for rain to stop. Good road to Cruces and I drove. Reached Las Cruces at 9:40. Left at 11:10. Had to stop on steep grade for wagons—engine boiled. Stopped for lunch in the middle of the *worst* stretch of wet sand. 12:45 started again and after what seemed a long time found a little better road. Reached Organ City at 1:20. Made the trip over St. Augustine Pass safely, but the road is terrible—all washed out and full of ruts. Reached Cox's Ranch" (now White Sands Proving Ground Headquarters) "at 2:40. Had good road for about 10 miles, though quite full of ruts. After that for 3½ hours we 'bucked' the worst roads in the country. Mud holes, long stretches where we had to leave the road and ride over the sage-brush, then stretches of 'wavy' roads where the car started bumping and couldn't seem to stop. We were thrown up and around most terribly and Clarence had the hardest kind of time steering. We finally camped at 6:30, had supper and all went to bed. Woke up in the night to find it raining. It stopped soon but started in at 5:30 and rained hard for sometime. We have now decided, Sat. Aug. 22nd to give up going any farther. Ruth Ceil isn't very well and the trip will be too hard for her. We are all tired out too so think it time to stop. Shall probably stay in and around Alamogordo for a few days, so Clarence can use his new gun, then we'll go on the train to Auntie's."

"Thus endeth our first attempt at an overland trip. I hope our next trial, if we ever make one, will be more successful. Aug. 22, 1914. R.S.N."

And make them they did! Before I was eighteen we had made "overland trips" to California several times on the plank roads across the desert. We went up the west coast to Canada and to the east coast and across southeastern Canada. We visited many national parks in various parts of the country and crossed the United States several times; nearly every summer we drove some place.

But this first trip did not really end in the middle of the desert between Las Cruces and Alamogordo. We did go on to Alamogordo, then up into the mountains, and it is snatches of this trip which I remember vividly. They bought supplies in Alamogordo then went on to La Luz where we camped under a big tree all night. During the night it rained again, but Sunday morning, Aug. 23rd "We wakened under our lovely tree to a glorious morning." Clarence hunted and got two rabbits which they started cooking, then, apparently deceived by the beauty of the day they went to Tularosa, bought gasoline, and started into the mountains. We reached the Mescalero Indian Reservation after going over "roads that are not bad, and the scenery was simply beyond description."

We left the Indian Reservation and started across the top of the mountain at 4 P.M., toward Cloudcroft where Clarence's sister, Alma (Mrs. George Ferguson) had a cottage. Camping by a "wonderful running stream" we ate the rabbits for supper and went to bed. She says "Clarence says the new gun is right there—but so is he."

The next day proved their wisdom in giving up driving a long distance. We woke to a grey day. My father lost the way, and had to turn back to find the right road, then it began to rain, and, strangely, they had run out



*Clarence wraps rope around wheels to keep car from sliding off the muddy road above Mescalero Indian Reservation.*

of water. She says it was a case of "water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink." The car slipped so badly in the mud that Clarence had to wrap the tires with rope to stay in the road. Finally they stopped, and while she fed us lunch he went to try to find "civilization" which she thought was just eight miles from where they were. I can remember the "side curtains" on the car, and my little hand hanging onto a tin cup, stuck out to try to collect a few drops of rain. I can also remember the relief when my father returned, how wet he was, and that he had to change into dry clothing.

How they finally found Cloudcroft I do not remember, but her diary has one terse sentence, "Left this place at 2." The rest of the trip is described in one short paragraph, the final one in the diary: "Finally reached Cloudcroft safely. Stayed with Alma all night. Drove back to El Paso the next day, and took the train to Missouri." When asked in later years how they could get back to El Paso in one day they laughed and said, "Well, it was all down hill and it didn't rain!" And they stoutly defended the "beloved Ford Touring Car." "It was not the fault of the car. The roads and the rain were to blame."

# SAN ANTONIO STREET AS IT USED TO BE

## A BIT OF NOSTALGIA

by FRANCES CLAYTON

My father, Walter S. Clayton, came to El Paso to live in May 1901. He had been agent for the Mexican Central Railroad in Chihuahua City for ten years, and I suppose he thought it time to bring his family to the United States. He had been in El Paso many times and chose this city in which to establish his home and business. He opened a hay and grain warehouse at Ochoa and First Streets.

The family at this time consisted of my mother, my sister, Rose, my brother, Walter, and my mother's aunt, Frances Brittin, and me—the baby. My great aunt had gone to Chihuahua in 1898 to visit my mother and to be present at the birth of my brother. She remained with the family until the time of her death in El Paso at the age of 93.

My father had already bought the house at 1103 E. San Antonio Street from Mr. W. G. Roe. Mr. Roe had bought the property, which was part of the Magoffin Estate, from Judge and Mrs. Joseph Magoffin in December 1898. My two younger brothers, Frank and Bill, were born in this house and it has been the family home since 1901.

Lighting was furnished by gas chandeliers in each room, supplemented by kerosene lamps. The chandeliers are still in the house, but have long since been converted to electricity. I don't remember just when this was done as my earliest recollections are of electric lights. The house was heated by a coal-burning fire-place in the "parlor"; a coal-burning stove in the large hall; and the kitchen stove, which burned wood. The other rooms were never very warm and we huddled around the hall stove for comfort. Later we had oil stoves to give additional heat, but which smoked frequently and were a great nuisance. Electricity and gas have replaced the heating and cooking systems and are much cleaner and less work, but somehow don't seem as cozy as the old ones did.

San Antonio Street was so named as it was the route of the "Jackass Mail" stage coach from San Antonio to San Diego, the service having been inaugurated in July, 1857.<sup>1</sup> At the time the family moved here the western boundary of San Antonio Street was El Paso Street and the eastern boundary was Cotton Avenue. The street was unpaved until 1907<sup>2</sup> and was either very dusty or exceedingly muddy when it rained. I remember a small hill across from our house, but don't recall when it was removed. There is still a vacant lot on that corner.

I don't recall seeing the mule car which "paddled along for some twenty years from 1882 to 1902"<sup>3</sup> but my aunt recounted many incidents

about it, including that of a housewife who ran out to ask the driver to bring her a spool of thread when he made the return trip. Electric car service was inaugurated in 1902. The car tracks ran in front of our house and all the cars went by to the car barns on Cotton Avenue just around the corner from San Antonio. The cars are no longer in use, unfortunately, but the Juarez cars are still housed with the buses in the car barns.

Before automobiles came into general use many families had horses and buggies and I have many pleasant memories of our buggy rides with old Prince. Our father had stables in conjunction with his warehouse where he kept Prince and the horses which pulled the delivery dray. Occasionally I see a hitching post or stepping stone in front of an old house as a reminder of the "good old days."

In the early 1900s San Antonio was considered one of the most exclusive streets of the city along with Magoffin street and Myrtle avenue. One of the families I remember as our neighbors were the Edger Fewels at 917 San Antonio Street. In an interview several years ago with Mrs. J. Frank Coles, who was Adele Fewel, she told me their house was the first frame house in El Paso, built in 1882 of redwood from California. At that time the old "acequia" ran in front of their house, meandered down the street and in back of the old Magoffin home, between it and San Antonio street. The Fewel home was razed several years ago and El Continental Publishing Company now takes its place.

Across from the Fewel home, at 910 San Antonio, was the two-story W. H. Austin home, built in 1888. It was sold to the Mexican government in 1922 for the Mexican Consulate. It was remodeled but still retains the hardwood staircase and many other elegant features. The building is no longer used as the Consulate but is still owned and maintained by the Mexican government.

Our closest neighbors and friends were Mr. and Mrs. Nick H. Carson and their son Dewey. Their home was across the alley from us, at 1019 San Antonio. Mr. Carson was a plastering contractor and many of the sidewalks in the old parts of town still have his name embedded in the cement. Our homes had sleeping porches in back and were directly across from each other. In those days children went to bed early and we used to talk back and forth from our porches before going to sleep. During the Mexican Revolution when Juarez was being besieged we lay in bed and listened to the firing, which came dangerously close. We later found a bullet imbedded in one of the bricks of our house. After Mr. and Mrs. Carson died Dewey moved to California and their house was torn down and apartments built on the site.

The Waters Davis home was at 1280 San Antonio. It was occupied by the Davis family from 1896 until 1935, when it was sold. It was allowed to deteriorate and was finally razed. A Dairy Queen now oc-

cupies the site. It was said that the house was built by Sam Hing "El Paso's most famous Chinaman,"<sup>4</sup> and was believed to be the first two-story brick residence in El Paso. According to city directories Sam Hing lived in the house from 1888 to 1889.

San Jacinto School was built in 1906 at 1210 Olive street just around the corner of San Antonio and Noble streets. All of us went to school there, I starting in kindergarten. I have fond memories of Miss Lula Jones, the kindergarten teacher, and Mrs. Mamie Sexton, the principal. We walked to school as a matter of course, and there were many interesting and tempting places along the way. The one from which we got the most pleasure was Camozze's Ice Cream Parlor at 1213 San Antonio, owned by Mr. Antonio Camozze. The ice cream was made in the back of the building, and there were large vats of different flavored ice cream, the best I think I have ever tasted. There were tables and chairs where we could sit and have a dish of ice cream for a dime; or, more likely, we would get a cone for a nickel and eat it on the way home from school. The Sun Plaza complex now occupies that whole block.

Other merchants on San Antonio street at that time were Mr. Samuel W. Fant and Mr. John B. Watson. Mr. Fant's store was at 611 and his specialties were coffee, tea, and extracts. We bought the coffee beans and ground them in our little coffee grinder. That *was* really delicious, fresh coffee, and what an aroma. Mr. Watson had a grocery store at the corner of San Antonio and Stanton streets, but later moved to Texas street. The spindle on which our bills were kept still hangs in the pantry of our home. It advertises "Watson's groceries are famous for quality" and indeed they were. Mr. Watson was a very genial man, and at the end of the month when our bill was paid we children were always given candy.

The German Lutheran Church, built in 1900, was at 1109 San Antonio. The building, though small, was attractive. It was of red brick with stained glass windows in front and on the sides, and a bell tower above. There was a small porch in front and a lawn and flower beds. The congregation moved in 1923 but the building remains as a home, without the bell tower and somewhat run-down, but otherwise as it was in 1923.

Four blocks west of us at 717 San Antonio the Toltec Club building was erected in 1910 at a cost of \$100,000. It was a magnificent structure of five stories. The Club was organized in 1902 and was an exclusive club for men, but they entertained the ladies with elegant balls, which were strictly full dress. My father was a member and it was always a grand occasion when my mother and father went to one of the balls. On the third floor of the building were rooms for the bachelor members and Mr. Carl Beers lived there off and on for many years until his death in 1974 at the age of 93. The building is still standing, occupied by various concerns, but unhappily has been allowed to deteriorate.

In the little triangle where San Antonio street and Magoffin avenue meet, just west of the Toltec building, stood a distinct El Paso land-mark—a drinking fountain for horses and dogs, which was donated to the city by the National Humane Alliance in 1909. The fountain is of Maine granite trimmed with bronze and is over six feet high. There is a bowl three and one half feet from the ground for horses, and a smaller one a foot from the ground for smaller animals.<sup>6</sup> My father was one of the aldermen who accepted the gift with the proviso that it would be maintained by the city. The fountain was moved in 1969 to the little park called "La Placita" at the intersection of San Antonio, Myrtle, and Stanton streets.

One of our chief amusements when I was about ten or eleven was going to the Airdome Theater, which was located on San Antonio in the block where the Federal Courthouse now stands. I believe the admission was twenty-five cents and the entertainment was a sort of variety family show of which we never tired. One evening stands out in my recollections particularly. Mr. C. E. (Henry) Kelly was mayor at the time, and on this night he and his family had just entered the theater when the chorus burst into song with "has anybody here seen Kelly, Kelly of the Emerald Isle," which brought down the house. The theater closed about 1913, much to our regret.

At this time the City Hall which was built in 1899 was at the corner of San Antonio and Kansas streets, and I sorrowfully watched the quaint old building demolished in 1960. The old Court House, built in 1885, was across the street but in 1917 it suffered the same fate as the City Hall was to do later. Both are now replaced by a modern City-County building, which does not have the uniqueness or personality which the old buildings had.

None of the people whose names I recall are now living in this area, although many of the old houses are still standing, among them the house where Mr. Chris Fox was born at 1210 San Antonio street. The architecture is quite varied and interesting. Many of the homes are well-cared for, but a number are in a state of sad disrepair. "Time marches on."

## FRANK W. GORMAN MEMORIAL ESSAY CONTEST

(Winners of the annual Frank Gorman Memorial Essay Contest for Seventh Graders are announced and pictured elsewhere in this issue. The first and second place essays follow.)

### MONSIGNOR HENRY BUCHANAN, PIONEER CLERGYMAN

by JOHN FRANCIS EVELER

The El Paso area has become famous over the years for six "C's": Cavalry, Cotton, Clothing, Cattle, Copper and Climate. Another "C" I would like to add to this list is Clergy. In its long history, El Paso has produced some very fine clergymen representing several different religious groups. One clergyman in particular, who has contributed a great deal to the spiritual growth of this area for a span of more than fifty years, is a Catholic priest, Msgr. Henry Buchanan, who is known and loved by most old time El Pasoans.

He is a tall man, large and strong, with a full head of white hair and bright blue eyes. Even now at eighty-eight his mind is clear and sharp, and it is fascinating to hear him talk about the past. But unlike most older people I have talked to, he spends a lot of time talking about the future. To add his bit to our bicentennial celebration, he is making plans now to teach classes in church history and the part it has played in the shaping of our country. He is a very devout man, very kind and friendly. He has a good sense of humor and a sharp wit. It is easy to see that he "practiced what he preached" because all about him is a kind of goodness.

Father Buck, as he is fondly called, was born in Socorro, New Mexico,



*Msgr. Buchanan in active, productive retirement, (July, 1976).  
(Photo by M. G. McKinney)*

on December 30, 1887, eighth of nine children. His father Francis, a distinguished lawyer, was Territorial Judge of New Mexico.

Back in the days when Father was going to school, education standards were very low. By fifth grade Father had learned about everything his teacher knew, so he quit school. However, his mother encouraged him in reading, and the rest of his life has been one long experience in learning. He attributes his full, happy, successful life to much reading, hard work at any job he did and his great love of music.

In his early life he worked first in a drugstore, then later as a grocery clerk, assayer, chemist, smelter worker and salesman, traveling into Mexico, all over the United States and into Canada. In a sense Msgr. Buchanan can be said to be a "jack-of-all-trades."

It was in Montreal that he suddenly decided that he definitely wanted to be a priest. He applied to Bishop A. J. Schuler, S. J., of El Paso, who earlier had been his pastor in Socorro. He was sent to St. John's Seminary in San Antonio, then completed his studies in Theology at St. Mary's in Baltimore. He was ordained in New York in June, 1921, the first native of this area to become a priest of the El Paso Diocese.

After ordination he was assigned to St. Patrick's Cathedral where his biggest accomplishment was the organization and building of the Catholic Community Center. This was a place where, for a flat membership fee, a whole family could participate in social, educational, recreational, religious, dramatic, musical and athletic events, very much like family memberships at the "Y" today. This sort of program was really something new for that time. It was very popular and the Center became the hub of El Paso Catholic family life.

Father was later assigned to St. Genevieve's Parish in Las Cruces, New Mexico, for fourteen years. Here he opened the first Catholic school in Southern New Mexico and also set up youth and family programs. He believed in having lots of activities available to keep everyone busy.

During these years he joined the New Mexico National Guard as chaplain. When the Guard was called up in 1940 he got permission to go with them. He was sent to serve first in England and later took part in the invasion of North Africa. While serving in Oran, he received a knee injury and was sent to a hospital in Cambridge, Ohio. Soon the war ended and he was discharged.

Back in El Paso he was assigned to the growing lower valley area. Here he organized a new parish, Our Lady of the Valley, having Mass at first in an old landmark dancehall called "Cherryland." Later he built a church and organized a school.

In 1950 he was transferred to St. Joseph's where he remained as pastor for twenty-one years. While there he built a beautiful new church to replace the old one, which the parish had outgrown. Because El Paso

was growing by leaps and bounds during these years, Father Buck organized two new parishes and schools, Our Lady of the Assumption and Blessed Sacrament. He also set up a parish in the small farming community of Dell City, which was named for San Isidro, patron saint of farmers.

Because of his old knee injury, he fell in April, 1962, and broke his hip. While recuperating at Hotel Dieu Hospital, he designed a physical therapy tank which helped him heal faster. This tank is still being used to help others with the same kind of injury.

Msgr. Buchanan celebrated his Golden Jubilee in 1971 and retired in September, 1972, becoming Pastor Emeritus of St. Joseph's Church. He has been blessed with a long full life, and in turn he has been a blessing and an inspiration to four generations of Southwesterners.

#### SOURCE MATERIAL

Vertical file, Southwest Reference Section.  
El Paso Public Library

#### Interviews:

Msgr. Henry Buchanan  
1926 Murchison  
544-1406

Msgr. G. W. Caffery  
1118 N. Mesa  
544-5334

Miss Julia Buchanan  
3828 Bliss  
565-1035

Mr. and Mrs. Julius Ratermann  
4108 Hueco  
565-1604

Mrs. Arthur J. Hall Jr.  
4420 Chester  
566-2234

Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Vetter  
8032 San Jose Road  
598-7383

Mr. and Mrs. Pete V. Eveler  
8026 San Jose Road  
598-7230

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## THE SHOWPLACE OF THE SOUTHWEST

by MARK JUVRUD

Monday I stepped through a door into a part of El Paso's most interesting history. The Plaza theater was built in 1930 in a Spanish style of architecture, and it is still as beautiful today as when it was built.

When you walk into the lobby, it is rather dark, but if you look closely at the walls and ceilings, you will see brass work and terrazzo tile and plaster beams so carefully done that they look like wooden beams. As you

enter the foyer at the top of the stairs you see an original painting of Vivien Leigh in her role as Scarlett O'Hara in "Gone With the Wind." Manuel Acosta donated the painting.

At the bottom of the stairs is an old brass fixture with a marble stand, an intercom, which was used for ushers to communicate with each other on opposite sides of the theater. In 1930 the devices were worth \$850 apiece.

The lower auditorium holds 1158 people. The glass fixtures are the original ones and are made of Tiffany glass and brass. All of the seats are the originals, and the ceiling is full of "stars" that are astronomically correct.

The trees are real cedar trees that have been treated with a fire retardant mixture. Ivy and vines are all over. They are made of lace. There is a cloud machine too. The theater used to have an organ, but it was sold to a collector for a large sum when ABC sold the theater in 1972. The theater organ cost \$6000 when it was bought in 1930. It was played at vaudeville shows and during intermission at the movies.

The entire seating is 2400. The Plaza was the first theater in the U.S. to have refrigerated air conditioning. It was billed as the "Showplace of the Southwest."

First built as a vaudeville theater, the Plaza has shown such stars as John Wayne, Lynn Fontaine, Mae West, and Blackstone the Magician. A trap door was cut in the stage floor for the magician so that his horse could disappear. I went under the stage and saw the trap door.

My teacher, Mrs. Clement, says she remembers going to the Plaza as a teenager. Part of the attraction of this glamorous setting for her and her friends was sitting before the large lighted mirrors in the ladies lounges, primping and pretending to be "stars" as they redid their makeup and rearranged their hair. Soft carpets and the "Hollywood atmosphere" made the place enchanting, according to Mrs. Clement. I guess it hasn't changed much.

Ray Peralta, a tour guide for the "Save The Plaza" Committee, showed me the theater and helped me understand the character of the Plaza. This committee has daily tours and will give special tours for school children and other large groups. I hope that this beautiful old building will last forever.

# HERITAGE HOMES OF EL PASO

## HART'S MILL—HACIENDA CAFE

by HARRIOT HOWZE JONES

The building at 1720 West Paisano, about two miles from down-town El Paso, was begun in 1850, making it twenty-five years older than the famed Magoffin Homestead, which has just become a historical museum. The house was known as Molino, the Spanish word for mill, and it was adjacent to the first industry to be established in El Paso, a flour mill built and run as a profitable business by Simeon Hart. The mill itself has all but disappeared, and the mansion is now known as *La Hacienda Cafe*, but if anyone speaks of "Hart's Mill" any old-timer will know what is meant.



*Hacienda Cafe*  
(Photo by M. G. McKinney)

The large one story house is of plastered adobe and has a flat roof, with a parapet. There is a wide arched gallery or porch across the front and one side. There are 10 or 12 rooms opening from a *Salon Grande* which runs the depth of the house with a massive fireplace at the end, flanked by two very large windows. The ceilings are 15 feet high. Several of the rooms opening from the great hall have fireplaces.

Simeon Hart was born in 1816 in Highland, New York. His family moved to St. Louis when he was very young. Hart became a civil engineer. In 1847 he saw service during the Mexican War, and was commended for bravery in the battle of Santa Cruz de Rosalia. In Chihuahua Hart met Señorita Jesusita Siquieros, daughter of a wealthy Rosales man. They were married in 1850. The Harts were parents of three sons, Juan, Leonardo and Antonio, and four daughters: Clara, Corinna, Carolina and Pauline. All the children had Siquieros as their middle name. Juan Hart was probably the first child of an American father and a Mexican mother born in El Paso.

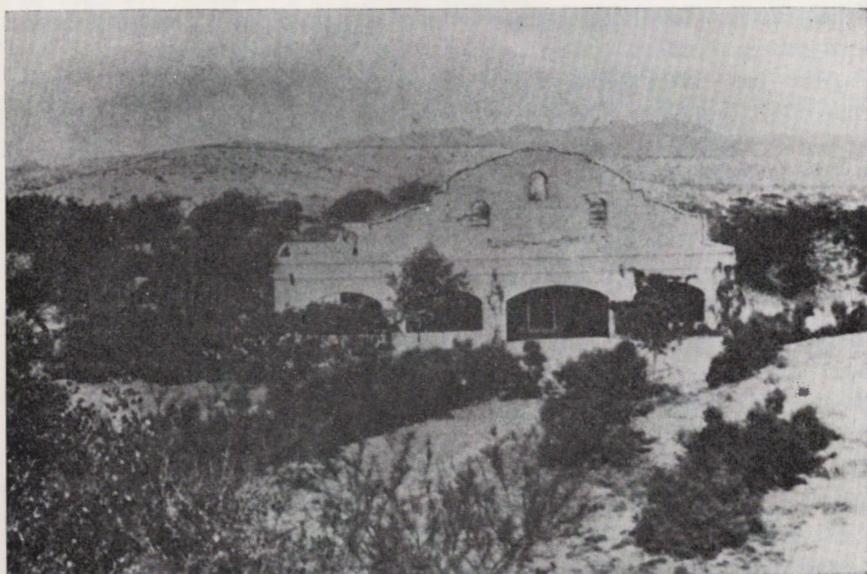
The mill had been built of adobe, with walls three feet thick. The roof was made of beams of sycamore branches, and small peeled branches of willow. On top of this was plastered adobe mud four inches thick. Mexico had built a dam across the Rio Grande in the 1840's. Simeon Hart was permitted to take the water he needed for power for his mill. The output of the mill was 100 barrels of flour a working day. Hart's Mill supplied most of the flour used in a very large area: from San Antonio to the east, Santa Fe to the north, Tucson on the west and as far south as Rosales, Mexico.

Molino—the hacienda and the mill—was the center of a small community. The 1860 census listed 49 residents on the estate of some 600 acres. These included Hart and his family, Charles Merritt and Oscar Blakesley,



*Salon Grande, Hacienda Cafe with Mrs. Virginia Lopez.  
(Photo by M. G. McKinney)*

millers; two negro slaves, with their children and grandchildren, and several families of Mexican servants and laborers. In addition to his mill business Simeon Hart owned a stage line and was concerned with other ventures, all profitable. In 1860 his real and personal property was reported to be worth \$350,000. The spacious and beautiful home was a center of hospitality for many years, particularly for prominent travelers coming through the Pass of the North. Hart supported the Confederate cause, and this resulted in serious losses for him, which he began to regain after he was granted amnesty by President Andrew Johnson.



*Front entrance to the Hart home (East side) about 1900. Entrance to La Hacienda Cafe is now from the south.*

*(Mrs. E. F. Flores Collection)*

Simeon Hart died in 1874 at age 58. Mrs. Hart had died a year earlier. Juan Hart, the eldest son, became head of the family. Juan Hart had graduated at age 18 from Christian Brothers College in St. Louis, with degrees in civil and mining engineering. It became his responsibility to care for and educate his sisters. He enrolled them in schools in St. Louis and accepted a teaching position at Christian Brothers College to help support them. In 1878 he engaged in the practice of engineering in Colorado, but in 1880 he returned to live in Molino and to take charge of the mill and the rest of the Hart estate. Leonardo Hart had been living there until that time. Molino was home for all the Hart children and grandchildren, to come back to, through many years. Juan Hart never

married. He was one of the founders of the *El Paso Times*, and was active all his life in worthwhile civic affairs. He was inducted to the Hall of Honor of the El Paso County Historical Society in 1973. (see PASSWORD Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Winter, 1973).

In 1880 part of the Hart estate became Fort Bliss, and so remained until 1893 when the post was moved to its present location on the mesa.

The mill went out of business in 1895, but Juan Hart made his home in the hacienda until his death in 1918. The home was a refuge for various people fleeing from the Revolution in Mexico. In 1913 the J. J. Flores family lived there. Mrs. Flores was a first cousin of Juan Hart (their mothers had been sisters). General Abram Gonzales and family also took refuge there.

After Juan Hart's death his brother-in-law, General Thomas F. Davis, class of 1875 at West Point, lived there. Davis had married Corinna Hart, who died in a short time, and he then married Pauline Hart. They had three children. From 1921 to 1925 the Flores family again lived in the house; they rented half of it. General Davis died in 1935. For a short time the place was used as a New Deal Transient Camp Hospital, and after that it was unoccupied, except by a caretaker.

In 1940 Molino was bought by Mrs. Virginia Mendez and her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Alfonso Lopez, and since that time has been known as *La Hacienda Cafe*, specializing in Mexican food. Half of the house, which includes the Salon Grande, and five other rooms are occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Lopez and their daughter and granddaughter. When they acquired the property there was no electricity or gas. The heating was done only by fireplaces, and there was very little plumbing. All this has been improved. The gallery has been glassed in and dining tables placed there, also several other rooms are used for dining, and a bar and modern kitchen for the cafe have been added. The place is well patronized, and it is intriguing to have your *enchiladas* and *chile con carne* served in colorful surroundings in the oldest home in El Paso.

## SOUTHWEST ARCHIVES

### "LOVE IN RETURN": THE DUDLEY COLLECTION

by LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD

Pursuing my pleasurable duties as "official" reviewer of the various archival materials available to the public in the El Paso area, I get to "know" a number of interesting people—powerful personalities, you might say—who in one way or another and at some time or another made a significant impact on El Paso. One such person, and the subject of this discussion, is Richard M. Dudley, Mayor of El Paso from the spring of 1923 to the spring of 1925.

Compelling as Mr. Dudley's character was, I could never have come to "know" him were it not for a set of fortunate circumstances—among them, that his wife donated his papers to the El Paso Public Library and that said Library, in turn, knew what to do with those papers: to arrange them and catalogue them and store them so as to make them instantly available and easily readable to snoopers like me.

"The Dudley Collection," proclaims a card in the Southwest Room's shelf catalogue. "Wonder what that's all about," thought I. Less than a minute later I was escorted into the shelf area and stood gazing at four huge scrapbooks and two sturdy boxes: the Dudley collection, which was then transferred to a cart and wheeled to a convenient study table. I didn't know it, but actually during these moments I was being "introduced" to a person—one of the most forceful El Pasoans I have ever "met": a man of courage and compassion and integrity and leadership.

I opened the first scrapbook. And, to tell you the truth, this "Mr. Dudley" didn't look like much: I mean, what can you infer from a bunch of newspaper clippings pasted into a scrapbook? Fortunately my prejudices did not prevail. I began to read—first, the "title page" inscription ("Presented to the El Paso Public Library by Mrs. Frances M. Dudley in memory of Richard M. Dudley"), then, a note, written most probably by Mr. Dudley, on his personalized stationery ("Richard M. Dudley—711 Cincinnati Street—El Paso, Texas"): "These records were compiled day by day by Mr. George N. Gorham, Deputy Clerk."

The first several newspaper clippings, each inscribed with a date and some initials—such as "EPT" (*The El Paso Times*, no doubt) or "EPH" (*El Paso Herald?*)—report, in the characteristic journalistic styles of the day, the inauguration of Richard M. Dudley as mayor of El Paso on April 23, 1923. At this early stage of my reading, my interest quickens a bit, and I'm not sure why. Maybe because of one Bob Chapman's rather restrained description of that so-long-ago mayoral inauguration. Or maybe because of some of the new Mayor's words which are quoted—his quite sincere-sounding "feelings of fearful responsibility" as he assumes his office. Anyway, I soon settle down to read seriously — with ever-deepening absorption — the clippings which, presumably, the new mayor asked his Deputy Clerk to compile "day by day."

And I find out, to my great surprise, that a man's character can emerge—that is to say, an extraordinary man's character can emerge—from the newspaper clippings which have been selected and retained as per his instructions.

Many of the clippings describe his daily activities as mayor—and therefore constitute a kind of record of his official life, an editorialized record, you might say: some of the accounts obviously approve of what he's doing "day by day," while others obviously disapprove. It is interesting to observe, though, that as the early months of his administration pass, the city's two major newspapers gradually reveal increasing respect for El Paso's vigorous new mayor: by November of 1923, one encounters no negatively "loaded" words, no snide innuendoes, nor other such slings and arrows as the flesh of politicians is heir to.

These particular clippings, the ones I'm labeling "the mayor's record," reveal several facets of the character of the man I'm getting to know: first, he can look steadily at—and listen carefully to—his critics; second, he can earn the respect of many who at first oppose him; third, he assumes his "fearful responsibility" with purposeful direction and with an energy surprising in a man of his age (he was sixty-one years old when he became mayor). During his first weeks in office, I watch him balance the city's budget—through careful reorganization and the judicious pruning of the political creeping vine. Next, and very quickly, he addresses several pressing issues: mosquito control, Rio Grande flood control, and the mushrooming traffic problems as El Paso really takes to wheels. Regarding this latter problem, Mayor Dudley and his advisors (among them, one Richard Burges) come up with some innovative ideas: "stop" and "go" lights at busy intersections, traffic lanes, an ordinance which will "Bar Children Under 16 From Driving Automobiles," widening the main arterials. And then there is the school problem—a really head-cracking financial problem in those innocent days before state and federal support when each school district had to support itself. But Dick Dudley doesn't flinch: he and his aldermen roll up their sleeves and work out a solution—and the teachers get paid, too. One by one, he slays the dragons as they come roaring and fuming toward him.

And in these scrapbooks there is another category of articles. At first, they puzzle me greatly, for they make no mention of Mayor Dudley. They're just newspaper articles on a variety of subjects: the idea that "Eventually the river will have to be straightened," the notion that before long the city will have to extend one of its north-going streets (Mesa or Stanton or Kansas) "through the foothills to connect with the upper valley roads near the Country club," the decision by the Southern Pacific Railroad to raze its "Stanton Street Station" ("once the pride of the pioneer village booster"), the activities of the Ku Klux Klan.

At first, as I say, I can't figure these articles. But gradually their meaning emerges: they articulate issues or happenings or ideas which interest Mayor Dudley or give him to ponder or command his immediate action. At the lowest level of their significance, they interest him personally—like the story about the "Stanton Street Station" (Mr. Dudley was a railroad-building contractor before he entered politics). At their highest level of significance, they present issues which lie at the very heart of his political life.

Take the Ku Klux Klan articles, for example. As I follow Mayor Dudley's early months in office, I'm not paying particular attention to the "EPT" and the "EPH" articles on the Klan—though I am gratified to learn, on July 6, 1923, that Mayor Dudley and his Council have refused a request signed by three Klansmen (two of whom are County officials) to use Cleveland Square for a meeting. As I continue to turn the pages of these scrapbooks, I keep

noticing—in ever increasing numbers—lengthy articles, clipped from newspapers all over the state, on Klan activities; lynchings and assorted other violence. I'm surprised, in all my naivete, to discover that as late as the third decade of this century the K K K is very active west of the Pecos—and even sort of socially acceptable. I mean, El Paso County officials signing their names! Well, really!

And on August 8, 1923, I'm stunned. In *The El Paso Times* of that day is a long article which quotes in its entirety a letter sent to "an El Paso man," soliciting his membership to K K K at the new cut-rate subscription of five dollars and emphasizing "the many business and social advantages of being a Klan leader in your community" and duly signed "Yours, in the Faith Transcendent." Stunned, yes, but then tickled by the satirical and contemptuous tone with which the (unidentified) *Times* writer treats the letter. And by now I know that Mayor Dudley is tickled, too. Because by now Richard M. Dudley has made clear that "El Paso elected me Mayor on a strictly anti-Ku-Klan ticket by a tremendous majority" and that he proudly writes a letter to one Judge J. D. Goodloe, presiding in Mr. Dudley's native Kentucky county, to compliment the Judge for convicting several Klansmen and to assert: "We do not allow them to parade in El Paso nor do we allow them to use the public parks."

As the months and years go by, I am fascinated to behold Mayor Dudley's tireless, unrelenting, outspoken opposition to the Klan, a "hell-born organization," he calls it, "a breeder of strife," "everything but American." In September of 1923, he becomes deeply distressed at the "insult," indeed, the "atrocious" which the Klan has committed in destroying a Mexican flag hanging in Liberty Hall to honor the recent recognition of Mexico by the United States. I am also enormously impressed by his diligent study of his enemy: here among his loose papers are many copies of two local Klan newspapers: the *Frontier Klansman* and *The Klan Courier*, subtitled "Successor to *The Fiery Cross*." I can feel the stillness as he reads these two rags, vomiting their hate for "Dick the Dud," and as he grieves his inability to dispatch forever this most odious of dragons.

Naturally, in this enlightened city, Richard M. Dudley was re-elected in April of 1925. A few days later, he entered a hospital for sudden surgery. Six days after that, on May 1, 1925, El Paso's beloved mayor died.

I won't catalogue the glowing obituaries or detail the throngs of El Pasoans—black, white, brown—who lined the streets as his funeral procession went by. I'll just say that El Paso had a fortunate hour when Richard Dudley resigned his seat in the Texas Senate in order to serve his adopted city as its mayor and that *El Paso Times* of May 2, 1925, found the words to epitomize this human being I "know" so well: "Seldom in one man's life is the opportunity given to bestow such benefit upon a community simply by the act of cordially loving his fellow man and awakening love in return."

## BOOK REVIEWS

### BEN DOWELL, EL PASO'S FIRST MAYOR

by NANCY HAMILTON

(El Paso: Texas Western Press, Southwestern Studies, No. 49, \$3)

Nancy Hamilton, my colleague on the El Paso Herald Post, is about the most researchingest gal in these parts. She is forever poking around in our old files ferreting out a forgotten bit of history for one of her informative and entertaining feature stories.

During the city's 100th anniversary in 1973, she discovered Ben Dowell's great granddaughter, Chella Phillips, had some family papers that held great promise. She was quick to follow up the lead. On examining the memoirs, written in pencil by Mrs. Phillips' grandmother in the early 1930's, Mrs. Hamilton saw she had not only the feature story she was looking for, but the material for a small book.

The next two years her spare time was spent carefully following every source she could think of to verify and flesh out the story of the colorful pioneer. That she succeeded nobly is evident in this scholarly but easily readable story about Dowell.

Born in Kentucky in 1818, Dowell was married at 20, joined the Kentucky Volunteers at 27, was captured and imprisoned in Mexico. He returned to Kentucky to lay plans for a new life in the Southwest but his wife did not share his enthusiasm. They divorced and Dowell headed west in 1850.

His first job here was on the Ponce de Leon ranch which lay along the river and bounded by the present El Paso street. Shortly after he married Juana Marquez, a Tigua Indian. Dowell succumbed to gold fever and struck out for California with his new wife. Their first child, Mary, was born there in 1854, but the parents decided their fortune and future was back in Texas and soon returned.

Dowell took up managing the Ponce ranch again and expanded into business of his own. He is best remembered for his famous saloon at El Paso and West San Antonio streets. He also operated a grocery and billiard parlor in the same adobe building.

During the next several years Dowell was postmaster, ran a hotel and operated the stagecoach stand. He bought a ranch in the Upper Valley, where the Country Club is now, and raised beef to supply Ft. Bliss.

But it was his saloon where most of the recalled stories took place. One of the more famous shootings there was politically motivated when A. J. Fountain was shot, Benjamin F. Williams killed Judge Gaylord J. Clarke and Captain Albert French killed Williams.

When Civil War broke out, Dowell sided with the Confederacy, as did most of the local residents. After Union troops arrived in 1862, Dowell and others operated a resistance movement from across the river in Paso del Norte, now Juarez. Eventually he joined the Confederate Army and served as recruiting officer.

Dowell seemed to be in danger of having to start over again after the war, but W. W. Mills, who had sided with the North, was instrumental in helping him regain his property.

One of the better chapters in Mrs. Hamilton's book is the one about social

life in the 1860's on both sides of the Rio Grande. She also touches on schooling for the Dowell children, particularly Mary.

The City of El Paso was incorporated on May 17, 1873. In an election two months later Ben Dowell was chosen by 105 voters as the first mayor. He was succeeded by M. A. Jones, whose term of office was largely ignored and El Paso was forced to reorganize in 1880.

Although Dowell had no direct part in the infamous Salt War of 1877, he hung on the fringes and gave valuable testimony during the state's investigation. Toward the end of his life he served as county commissioner. Shortly before his 63rd birthday, Dowell caught pneumonia and died Nov. 8, 1880.

The book is augmented by family portraits and pictures of early El Paso from the El Paso Public Library and the Millard G. McKinney collection. Another valuable chink in El Paso's history has been admirably plugged!

—BETTY LIGON

## ROUGH TIMES—TOUGH FIBER

### *A Fragmentary Family Chronicle*

by J. EVETTS HALEY

(Palo Duro Press, Canyon 79015, \$15)

Forty years ago Haley's *Charles Goodnight—Cowman & Plainsman* was published and immediately recognized as a masterpiece of biography. Since that time Haley has written four full length biographies and dozens of biographical sketches, all the while operating three ranches and taking an active part in politics. In the last issue of *Texas Monthly*, under the heading "Best Old Coot" we read, "Haley has been raising hell for fifty years." But on July 5th, Haley's 75th birthday, something else was raised, a handsome building containing a million dollars worth of books and manuscripts. The rare books, manuscripts and interviews with old-times, enhanced by artifacts and paintings, were contributed by J. Evetts Haley in memory of his wife, and called the Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library. The building and funds for its maintenance were contributed by friends and given to the city of Midland, Texas, Haley's stomping grounds for many years. He and his brother operated a ranch near there for fifty years, "come hell or high water"—what water?

After contributing many biographies to the Literature of the West, Evetts finally got around to doing his own. With all the interruptions of ranching and politicking and writing other books and articles, his friends were afraid he would not be able to finish it. However, he got together his research of twenty years and a truck load of old pictures and letters and concentrated, still with interruptions like making speeches for Ronald Reagan and appearing on the David Suskind show to raise hell with the liberals who bankrupted New York. His friends in El Paso also concentrated on the design, printing, binding, sidetracking other work so that they could deliver the finished books in Midland for the birthday party and the dedication of the library also known as the J. Evetts Haley History Center.

Originally Evetts referred to this book as "My People" but later he changed the title to *Rough Times—Tough Fiber—A Fragmentary Family Chronicle*. The word "fragmentary" is misleading because the author has

done a tremendous job of research, taking both sides of his family back before 1800 with David W. Haley going down the Natchez Trace to live among the Choctaws, and Jim Evetts fighting in the battle of San Jacinto with a machete that he made himself.

To those of us who have known and worked with J. Evetts Haley this book is a revelation. Although he often talked about his mother who exemplified Evetts' ideas of hard work, integrity and patriotism, he never alluded to his ancestors of three and four generations back. And they were really something, when you meet them in this book. We thought Evetts just came out of the ground, like all good things. But now we know why he is cantankerous though solid, explosive though reserved and thoughtful, opinionated but not without careful consideration.

The first chapter sets the stage with Evetts' thoughts about the *Land* and what it does to people, especially his brother John who fought the elements with "make-do" equipment and supplies always short. Then in subsequent chapters the author uses the flashback technique and tells of his antecedents. Some were friends with Andrew Jackson and the Indian chiefs involved in the "Trail of Tears" migration. Both Evettses and Haleys were in the Confederate Army. The trail goes from Tennessee to Mississippi, and then to Texas. First in North Central Texas, then to the Pecos, and finally to the Midland area where the author and his brother and sisters developed with the land, the frontier, and circumstances.

In the last part of the book Evetts philosophises with his friend "Jackass" Williams, the bone gatherer, and his burros. When a curious cowboy, noting Williams' incredibly slow pace, reined up his horse and remarked to him in passing:

"Mr. Williams, you must have to give those burros a lot of time."

"No," he said. "I give them hell and they takes their time."

After thirty years of collaboration with J. Evetts Haley, I have learned to let him give me hell and then take my time. But it didn't work this time. The heat was on because of his birthday and the dedication of the Haley Memorial Library in Midland on July 5, 1976. The book had to be finished in record time. Thanks to Lyman Dutton and the Guynes Printing Company and Gerhard Schermer of the El Paso Bookbindery the books were delivered in Midland a few hours before the celebration.

*El Paso, Texas*

—J. CARL HERTZOG

## EL PASO DEL NORTE

by WILLIAM M. HARDY

(Editor's Note: This is a review of the unpublished manuscript for the outdoor drama, *El Paso del Norte*, an annual presentation offered for the first time this summer in El Paso's McKelligon Canyon. It is not intended as a dramatic review of the presentation.)

In the writing of *El Paso del Norte*, William M. Hardy, a former instructor in the drama department at Texas Western College, has drawn in spirit and content from one of the great classics of southwestern historical lore, *Historia de Nuevo Mexico*, published in Alcala, Spain in 1610, and written by the poet historian of the Oñate expedition of 1598, Gaspar Perez de Villagra. Just as poetry is used by Villagra to introduce and interconnect the episodes of Oñate's historic journey through the Pass of the North and

into New Mexico, so does Hardy utilize the voice of the poet to set the stage and give continuity to his narrative.

Villagra opens his story with the words:

Of arms I sing, and of that heroic son,  
Of his wondrous deeds and of his victories won.  
Of his prudence and his valor shown when,  
Scorning the hate and envy of his fellow men,  
Unmindful of the dangers that beset his way,  
Performed deeds most heroic in his day.

The poet narrator of Hardy's drama opens his narration similarly:

I sing of arms, and of heroic men.  
Of wondrous deeds of victories won.  
And of the glory of these mighty Spaniards  
Who strove so nobly in this new land,  
Defying the world's most hidden regions,  
Daring the blaze of sun, the burning heat,  
Conquerors of nameless deserts and great mountains  
Towering to the sky.

Written after the author had visited the McKelligon Canyon amphitheatre, *El Paso del Norte* was written to match the spectacular granite cliffs that become a part of the McKelligon Canyon stage.

Hardy is a disciple of Paul Green of the University of North Carolina, and has contributed to the production of such Green productions as *The Lost Colony* on Roanoke Island, *The Common Glory* in Williamsburg, and *Texas*, in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. More than a score of such outdoor dramas are now showing, coast to coast, and Hardy has personally written three of them. He has utilized the time tested skills of this specialized field of drama. While following the facts of Villagra's story, he takes fictional license to introduce a boisterous comedy character, and a tender love story.

The author is on sound historic ground when he makes "El Paso del Norte", the Pass of the North, a climactic spot in his drama. The name "El Paso", referring to the very place we call home, was in print in Spain ten years before the landing of the Pilgrims. It was the place, according to Villagra, which the Spaniards were seeking "like Magellan searching for the strait which would lead him through the pathless seas." It was in the pass than Juan de Oñate formally took possession of the lands to the northward in 1598. As a part of the celebration a group of Oñate's soldiers entertained their chief with a drama, probably the first ever presented by Europeans on what is now American soil. It is fitting that this drama and the mighty exploits that inspired it, should be memorialized in this annual presentation at the Pass of the North, a landmark and a point in time in the history of our continent.

*El Paso, Texas*

—CONREY BRYSON

# ACTIVITIES OF YOUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HISTORICAL TOURS

The Society sponsored a series of historical tours, each Sunday afternoon, July 11 through August 15. The tour, under the chairmanship of Harvey Meston, included the Tigua Indian Pueblo, the Ysleta and Socorro Missions, San Elizario, and the Cavalry Missions. Members of the Society served as volunteer guides.



*Frank W. Gorman Memorial Essay Contest Winners.  
(Photo by M. G. McKinney)*

## FRANK W. GORMAN MEMORIAL ESSAY CONTEST

The late Frank W. Gorman, for a number of years, financed anonymously a historical essay contest for seventh-grade students of the El Paso area. Since his death, his family has continued support of the contest as a memorial to Mr. Gorman. Janet Y. Brockmoller was chairman of the 1976 contest. Winners recently announced were as follows:

- 1st Place, John Francis Eveler, St. Joseph's School
- 2nd Place, Mark Juvrud, Eastwood Knolls School
- 3rd Place tie, Belinda Montoya, Blessed Sacrament School and Catherine Yhap, Radford School for Girls.

## AUGUST QUARTERLY MEETING

The regular quarterly meeting of the Society, by vote of the members, was

set for Thursday night, August 19, as a theatre party. Members were to be seated as a group at the regular performance of the outdoor drama, *El Paso del Norte*, in the McKelligon Canyon Amphitheatre.

### BOOK SALES INFORMATION

As a courtesy to its members, your Society stocks a limited number of books pertaining to the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. Included are new publications and so-called "rare books" many of which are now, or will become, collector's items.

The Society's newsletter "El Conquistador" lists the books which are offered, tax and postage free, together with a ten percent discount on books retailing for more than six dollars each. Books may be ordered from Sales Chairman, M. G. McKinney, telephone 565-8784, or by mail from El Paso County Historical Society, P. O. Box 28, El Paso, Texas 79940.

### HISTORICAL MEMORIES CONTEST

Chairman Leonard Goodman, Sr., has announced that the 1976 Historical Memories Contest for Senior Citizens opened August 1 and will close October 15. The Society offers prizes of \$100, \$50 and \$25, and five honorable mention prizes of annual memberships in the Society, including subscription to *PASSWORD*. The contest is open only to persons over 65. Manuscripts should be mailed to Historical Memories Contest, El Paso County Historical Society, Post Office Box 28, El Paso, Texas 79940.

### HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS

Nomination forms have been mailed to all members for the nomination of two persons, one living and one deceased, for admission to the El Paso Hall of Honor. James Peak is Chairman of the Selection Committee. The two persons selected will be honored at the annual Hall of Honor Banquet, Sunday, November 21. Mrs. Ellis O. Mayfield is banquet chairman.

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## HISTORICAL NOTES

The United States Capitol Historical Society has revived its scholarly historical journal *Capitol Studies* after a lapse in publication of almost two years. The publication is to be issued twice yearly, Spring and Fall. The subscription price of \$10 yearly automatically enrolls the subscriber as a life member of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.

*Capitol Studies* is seeking new authors of interesting, documented studies of Art and Architecture, History, or Political Science pertinent to our nation's Capitol Building, or our Congress, past, present and future. The Society will recognize the author of each article selected for publication with an honorarium of \$200. Interested writers should contact Editor, *Capitol Studies*, 200 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, D. C. 20515.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

DOROTHY WARD graduated from Burges High School, El Paso, in 1971 and from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1975 with a degree in English. She is a part time instructor while working on her Masters Degree at UTEP. She is the daughter of Col. (USA Ret.) and Mrs. James W. Ward.

FRANCES SEGULIA will be remembered as the author of "Shalam Revisited" in the Winter, 1975 issue of *PASSWORD*. She is currently researching an extensive work on the history of Tornillo, a community in the El Paso lower valley.

W. H. TIMMONS, a Director of the Society, is a Professor of History at the University of Texas at El Paso.

BETTY LIGON, a graduate of West Texas State University, came to El Paso eight years ago to work with Carl Hertzog, then Director of Texas Western Press. A year later, she joined the staff of the *El Paso Herald Post*, where she is now Entertainment and Book Editor.

J. CARL HERTZOG, one of America's great printers and book-designers, was admitted to the El Paso Historical Society Hall of Honor in 1969 (*PASSWORD*, XIV 106). He has collaborated with the celebrated Texas historian J. Evetts Haley, author of the book he here reviews, in several important publications.

