

PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. XXII, No. 3

EL PASO, TEXAS

FALL, 1977

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THE GRAVE OF JOHN WESLEY HARDIN

by C. L. SONNICHSEN

Early in the afternoon on September 29, 1965, I picked up W. E. Narzinsky at the Pioneer Monument Company on Alameda Avenue in El Paso, Texas, and drove him out to Concordia Cemetery, where he had just finished installing a granite-and-bronze marker on the grave of John Wesley Hardin. I was acting as official inspector for the Hardin family.

We drove north through Five Points and out Yandell Avenue to a gate in the north wall leading into a bleak and barren portion of the old graveyard—a section which had been occupied for the best part of a century and abandoned for many years. It was a city of forgotten dead. A few battered headstones rose up here and there but no mounds or monuments showed where most of the inhabitants were resting or who they were. The place was kept clear of weeds but otherwise the desert had reclaimed it. For seventy years Texas' number-one gunman had been lying there, his grave lost and unremembered. Now his memorial was in place. I carried a check for \$102, signed by E. D. Spellman of Burnet, Texas, Hardin's grandson-in-law, acting for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I was to hand it over to Walter Narzinsky if the work was done according to specifications.¹

It was the end of twenty years of frustration. Marking a grave ought not to be a major undertaking, but this one resisted all efforts. John Wesley Hardin, dead and buried, made almost as much trouble for his friends and relatives who wanted that marker placed as he did for carpetbaggers, gamblers and assorted gunmen during his life. He was a legend in his own day. He is a legend now. And the last chapter in his legend is the story of that monument, for which Mr. Narzinsky was paid \$102 (his work was quite satisfactory) on that brisk but sunny afternoon in September of 1965.

Had Hardin been an ordinary person, installing his marker would have presented no difficulties, but he was no ordinary human being, living or dead. In his autobiography² he lists forty victims who went down before his six-shooters (he does not say how many of them recovered)—a record unapproached by any other Western pistoleer. He was not, however, just a handy man with a gun with only an educated trigger finger to give him status. He was, and continues to be, one of the most



(Photo by M. G. McKinney)

enigmatic characters of our heroic age—a gentleman in manners and appearance, a Southerner of good family background, intelligent and polite, a professing Christian who could and did teach Sunday school and tried to instill the highest ideals in his children. And yet he was always in the worst kind of trouble, always involved in shooting and gambling scrapes, always on the dodge until the law caught up with him and sent

him to prison, and in worse trouble when he got out.

Was he a victim of the bad times after the Civil War? Was he a frontier Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? Did the death of his brother, hanged by a lynch mob at Comanche, Texas, change him for the worse? Was it the death of his wife while he was serving his time or his failure in his first fumbblings for respectability after he got out? Did any or all of these things alter him and bring him to a bad end? It is still impossible to say, but historians and novelists in about a hundred books keep stirring his dust and probing his psychology. Glendon Swarthout won a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America in 1976 for giving the familiar story a new twist in *The Shootist*.³ Other versions no doubt await us in the years to come, but perhaps nobody will ever understand what lies under the concrete-granite-and-bronze monument which has identified Hardin's grave since September 29, 1965.

Part of the answer may lie in the mixed heritage he received from his father and mother. Keeping this possibility in mind, one has to go back to pre-Civil War days when twenty-two-year-old James Gipson Hardin (John Wesley's father) received his license to preach and became a circuit-riding Methodist minister based at Tyler, Texas. Among the churches he served was one at Corsicana. The only family in town with a house suitable for the entertainment of visiting clergymen belonged to Dr. William Dixon, and Dixon had an attractive daughter. The inevitable happened, and young Mr. Hardin asked for Mary Elizabeth's hand.

"And have her starve!" thundered her father. "No, you can't have her!"

Hardin came from sturdy stock himself, however, and he persisted. Eventually matters came to a head and a meeting was held in the Dixon parlor attended by one brother-in-law who was a doctor, two brothers who were doctors, and one brother who was a rancher. Mr. Hardin presented his case, discussion followed, and (according to family tradition) a vote was actually taken. The verdict was favorable, and as a result John Wesley Hardin, second child of James and Mary Elizabeth, was born at Bonham, Texas, on May 26, 1853.⁴

The family was poor but proud. James Hardin did not stay in the full-time ministry. He suffered (again according to family tradition) from the effects of a severe case of whooping cough contracted in childhood, and even when he was grown he would sometimes sound as if he were whooping, especially when he was excited or emotional. When he preached, and particularly when he prayed, he whooped mightily before the Lord. So he gave up the pulpit and took to school teaching and the law, neither of which was very profitable. He remained an earnest Christian gentleman, however, and tried to bring up his five children in the paths of righteousness.

His son John Wesley thus combined within himself the widely different temperaments of two interesting Texas families. The Dixons were Southern aristocracy, Texas style—proud, touchy, quick-tempered, sometimes violent. They would not back off from anything or anybody. They carried pistols, like everybody else in that time and place, and would shoot if necessary. In the troubled times after the Civil War, they and their many relatives were often embroiled with carpetbaggers and Yankee soldiers and ex-slaves. Half of Wes (as he was usually called—his mother called him Johnny) belonged to the Dixons, and that half kept him in trouble. The other half belonged to the Hardins, giving him his high ideals of personal conduct and his sometimes ostentatious piety. The two halves were held together by an unshakable conviction that every act of his life, including the killing of other men, was necessary and right and done on principle. He was not a split personality but all his life he was torn between the two warring halves of his nature.

It was a life of guilt and trouble. As his family tells it, his first escapade occurred when his father sent him with some legal papers to his Uncle Barnett Hardin, who lived at Bonham in a big white house with columns, as he became a gentleman farmer.⁵ When the papers were safely in Uncle Barnett's hands, Wes and one of his cousins wanted to have some fun. After they were supposedly in bed, they went out through the window and proceeded to the black section of town, where a wrestling or boxing match was going on. Wes, always "active," decided to take a hand. He threw the local black boy and then threw him again. The boy said, "No bird ever flew so high I couldn't bring him down. I'll get you tomorrow."

The next day a meeting occurred. Both boys had guns but Wes was quicker. Uncle Barnett gave him a gold piece, sent him back to his father and advised him, "Do what he says." The elder Hardin had always said he didn't want his sons to run if they got in trouble, but this time he knew that flight was necessary. It would mean a hanging if Wes were caught, so he sent the boy to his relatives at Corsicana. They got him a job teaching school and he held it for three months. Then he was in trouble again and once more he had to run.⁶ For the next ten years he was always on the move, always in danger from the State Police and the relatives of his enemies, always shooting it out with somebody. He had nerve and luck along with unbelievable quickness with a forty-five, and the list of his victims grew longer. He must have kept some sort of tally, perhaps a newspaper clipping file or a diary, or both, for when he wrote his autobiography (finished at El Paso in 1895), he was able to put down names and places in impressive detail.

As blood flowed and men died, however, he never once seems to have felt shame or grief or remorse. The losers, he believed, brought their fate on themselves, and often he viewed his acts in the light of public service.

"The best people said I did a good thing," he said of a killing which climaxed a disagreement over gambling, and added gratuitously:

Reader, you see what drink and passion will do. If you wish to be successful in life, be temperate and control your passions. If you don't, ruin and death is the inevitable result.⁷

It does not seem to have occurred to him that this advice could apply to John Wesley Hardin.

His luck ran out at Comanche, Texas, in 1877. On May 26, backed by his cousins Bill Dixon and James Taylor, he shot and killed Charles Webb, a deputy sheriff of Brown County. He got away and fled to Florida but his brother Joe, who lived at Comanche, was hanged by a mob of indignant citizens. Eventually he was captured, brought back to Texas and sent to the Huntsville penitentiary, where he spent fifteen years.⁸

Some of those years were used constructively. He says he studied law and theology and was superintendent of the prison Sunday school. After a rebellious beginning, he became a model prisoner and looked forward to leading a better and happier life on his release. His letters to his family have been preserved and they epitomize one side of his character. To his son John, Jr., he wrote on July 3, 1887:

Now my son your father's affection for you has not decreased with the advance of years but has rather grown brighter & brighter his love for you is as high as the thoughts of man, & they reach the heaven. I have no jewels to send you my boy to adorn and to deck your shapely form but I wish to speak to you of principles which if you observe and cling to them will be of far more value Truth, my son, is a rare and precious gem Justice is a gem rich & rare a full brother to truth Now my son there is but one way to protect the character, protect wealth, your possessions, & that is by a strict adherence to truth & justice.

Such conduct, he promised, would win for any boy "the respect and admiration of all who know him."⁹

That his children were moved by such high-flown admonition is doubtful. After so many years in prison Wes was a stranger in his own household and his voice was a voice from far away. To make matters worse, his wife Jane fell sick and died less than a year before his time was up, destroying his hope for a united family after his release. He did not despair, however. He had actually studied hard and learned a good deal of law during his confinement. He was allowed to leave the prison to take his bar examinations, and his close relatives say that he placed highest in a group of seventy candidates. When at last the prison gates opened in February, 1894, the governor gave him a full pardon. Hoping for the best, he settled in the town of Gonzales, where he had many friends, sent for his children, hung out his shingle, and tried to become a part of the community.¹⁰

He was frustrated on every side. His children were not at ease with him

or with his ideas. There was friction. He involved himself in a bitterly contested race for the sheriff's office, opposing the incumbent, Major W. E. Jones, and there was more trouble. Hardin wrote angry letters to the local newspaper which stirred up old resentments and started new ones. When Jones won the election, he decided to get out of town and try his fortune somewhere else.

He left his children with friends and rode west to Junction, a small county-seat town in the brush country west of Austin, where there was a nest of Hardin relatives. There in December, 1894, he opened a law office. One month later he married Callie Lewis, still in her teens and unprepared for marriage. Only a few hours after the wedding she left him and refused to see him again. Nobody knows what happened, but Wes knew he would have to move on. While he was wondering what to do an invitation reached him from "Killin' Jim" Miller, his cousin by marriage, to bring his legal talents to a trial that was about to begin in El Paso, 450 miles to the west. Miller had twice been too slow on the draw in a feud he was having with ex-sheriff Bud Frazer of Pecos and was suing Frazer for assault with intent to murder.¹¹ Would Cousin Wes assist? Cousin Wes would. And on April 1, 1895, he arrived in the little border town which would be his home for the last four and a half months of his life, and where he lies buried today under a marker which is the real object of this essay.

It was now sixteen years since Hardin had sent the citizens of a Texas town hunting for cover, but his fame was undiminished. As he journeyed westward, people gathered to shake his hand and look at him and speculate among themselves about his nerve and his speed. Wes took it all calmly. He was used to hero worship. In his autobiography he says that on his journey under arrest from Alabama in 1879 people crowded to see him. "One man named Roe actually rode from Memphis to Texarkana to see me . . . 'Why,' he said, 'there is nothing bad in your face. Your life has been misrepresented to me. Here is \$10. Take it from a sympathizer.'" ¹²

It was almost the same in 1895. Wes was well dressed, handsome, courtly in his manners, still ready to pray or to fight, still sure of his own virtue and honor, still convinced that no living man could make him back down. He lived up to his legend.

El Paso was not happy to see him. Somewhat embarrassed by its reputation as a six-shooter capital, the town had undergone a temporary spasm of righteousness. A reform-minded administration had been voted into office and Jeff Milton had been imported from Arizona to take the job of Chief of Police. He had proved extraordinarily effective but El Paso did not want anybody to rock the boat. Wes was thus regarded as a threat to the status quo and on April 2 the *Times* noted, for his benefit,

that "the day for man killers in El Paso has passed." About the same time Chief Milton called on Hardin and, according to his own story, made him take off his pistol.¹³ The episode evidently became the subject of barroom discussion and Hardin felt that a statement from him was called for. It appeared in the "On the Fly" column in the *Times* on April 17. It read in part:

Young Hardin, having a reputation for being a man who never took water, was picked out by every bad man who wanted to make a reputation, and there is where the 'bad men' made a mistake, for the young Westerner still survives many warm and tragic encounters.

Now the article continued, Hardin is "a quiet, dignified, peaceable man of business . . . but underneath the modest dignity is a firmness that never yields except to reason and law."

Wes had indeed become an El Paso businessman. When Miller's case was postponed until the following November, he rented an office in the First National Bank Building and made a valiant effort to establish himself in the practice of law. Very little legal business came in, however, perhaps because potential clients shied away from a lawyer who could be dangerous. With time on his hands, Wes spent more and more of his hours in saloons.

Another diversion became available to him on May 1, a month after his arrival. El Paso could not remain pure for very long and on April 9 the citizens voted the reform administration out. Ed Fink replaced Jeff Milton as chief of police and on the first of May a number of gambling rooms opened cautiously for business. Wes was among those who attended a poker session at the Acme. In the course of the evening he objected to the way the game was being run, took his money out of the pot, and walked out unmolested. The next night he did it again in a crap session at the Gem and invited anybody who did not like his play to step up and "show his manhood." He replied to actual and potential critics in another newspaper piece, explaining that the dealer had "grossly insulted" him.¹⁴

The two gambling houses filed suit but his standing among his peers was seemingly not impaired. Misfortune was approaching, however, in the person of Mrs. Beulah Morose, companion and confidante of one Martin Morose, a bad man from Eddy (now Carlsbad), New Mexico, who had got ahead of a charge of cattle theft and was hiding out across the river in Juarez. Beulah stayed in El Paso, riding herd on most of Martin's bankroll. She roomed at Mrs. Herndon's boarding establishment on Overland Street, where Wes also found quarters. Beulah asked Wes to do what he could for Martin and Wes agreed, but he soon became more interested in doing what he could for Beulah. Word went round that they were living together. Morose and his friends heard about it and

were understandably unhappy. There were threats and confrontations in Juarez but nobody got hurt.¹⁵

All this time something was going on in El Paso among ex-police chief Milton, Deputy U. S. Marshal George Scarborough, Constable John Selman and, in all probability, John Wesley Hardin. There was a \$500 reward out for Martin. The problem was to get him back to El Paso. The upshot was the death of Morose, who was ambushed as he tried to cross the railroad bridge between the two towns. He may have been carrying a considerable sum of money, and that money may have found its way into Hardin's pocket. There may have been hard feelings when Wes refused to divide. John Selman complained about it to saloonkeeper George Look and said in conclusion, "He has to come across or I'll kill him."¹⁶

Just before midnight on August 19, 1895, Selman did kill him. Hardin was rolling dice at the bar of the Acme when the constable came through the swinging doors and shot him in the head. Opinions still differ as to whether the bullet entered in front or in the back. Either way, Nagley's Undertaking Parlor took charge, conducting the funeral two days later and the burial in Concordia Cemetery not far from the grave of Martin Morose and not much farther from the spot where John Selman was later deposited. And there John Wesley Hardin lies today.

As this portion of the cemetery filled up and new areas were opened, the older graves were neglected and finally abandoned by the caretakers. Old Concordia became an eyesore and remained that way until the city built a wall around it in 1958 to keep it from public view. A few pioneers knew where Hardin rested but there was no marker, no mound, no identifying feature at all, and the caretakers of the cemetery wanted to keep the location secret. Their experience with vandals and souvenir hunters convinced them that if anybody ever found that grave, Hardin would be in danger of removal, bone by bone.

I came into the picture in the 1940s. Following the trail of Texas feuds, I found myself tracing the footsteps of Wes Hardin, who had been involved on the side of the Taylors in the thirty-year Sutton-Taylor trouble. On a sultry day in July, 1943, I stopped in the little town of Smiley, Texas, where Hardin's granddaughter lived with her husband Elmer Spellman. Elmer was big and serious with an eye which said that no liberties were to be taken with him, but he was a kindly man and he and his quiet wife were gentle folk in the best sense of the word. They talked with me about the Hardins and gave me an introduction to "Aunt Mattie" Smith of Fort Worth, John Wesley's sister, who told me more. I learned, among other things, that the family had long wanted to place a marker on the grave in El Paso. I promised to look into the matter when I got home.

I did so, and ran into a real hornet's nest. When I called on Mr.

William R. Walker, the caretaker, in his office, he was aggressively hostile. He seemed to have a real obsession about the Hardin grave. The cemetery, he said, was constantly harassed by vandals who would destroy anything for the sake of a souvenir. People were constantly inquiring about the Hardin grave but they got no help from him. While he lived, the location would not be revealed. He felt that I was interfering in his business and he suggested that I walk out and stay out. By the time he finished, I was as upset as he was, and our angry voices could have been heard some distance away. Later I heard that he kept a pistol in his desk and I was surprised and relieved that he hadn't used it.

Though I pursued the matter with some persistence, I found that there was nothing I could do while he was in charge. Even his brother-in-law A. B. Poe of the Poe Motor Company, who owned the cemetery and was a man of property and power in El Paso, said he could not help me. Mr. Walker was too much even for him. As a result, nothing more was done for fifteen years.

The curtain for the next act was raised by the late Lewis Nordyke of Amarillo, a journalist and free-lance historian. He decided to write a biography of John Wesley Hardin and asked what I could do to help. I put him in touch with the Spellmans and they established a good relationship. Mrs. Spellman died in 1957 as quietly as she had lived, but Elmer continued to represent the family. The idea of burying Wes beside his wife came up and on April 8, 1958, Nordyke wrote to Spellman as follows:

I'd still like to see the family move the remains of Wes Hardin to the grave of Jane. I see no reason why the cemetery people at El Paso should be so secretive about a man's grave.

The letter reminded Elmer of our abortive attempt to put up a marker in 1944. On May 1 he sat down and wrote me a letter about it:

As you know, we have wanted for years to mark this grave, but just never did get around to it. I have been wondering if you knew the location of the grave. You remember that you looked into the matter years ago and ran into trouble with the caretaker. We have just about decided that owing to the condition of the cemetery that perhaps we had better bring him back and bury him by Jane. If you think we can find the right grave and get by without a lot of publicity, I would like to come out some time next month and bring him back. We could put whatever is left in a chest that would fit in the back of a station wagon and we can get by on this end of the line without any fanfare or publicity. Please write and tell me what you think.

I discussed this letter with two men who were interested in Hardin and the result was the formation of an informal but active John Wesley Hardin Commemorative Association with three members: Dr. S. D. Myres of the history faculty of Texas Western College, a seasoned his-

torian and editor, Landon C. Martin, an energetic drug salesman and history buff, and myself. We agreed that Hardin's grave ought to be marked and we met repeatedly to discuss ways and means. One possibility was to move the body back to the Asher Cemetery near Coon Hollow in "the Sandies," where Wes' wife Jane was buried. Martin thought we ought to put him in a metal box and install him, with appropriate inscription, in the wall of the county courthouse, then being remodeled. He would thus be constantly in the public eye and might be of as much interest to the present generation as he had been to his own. Martin reminded us that a similar honor had been extended to King Fisher in a county farther east.

These alternatives were still under discussion when Mr. Spellman arrived on July 30, 1959. He brought with him Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Corder of Robstown, Texas, and their small daughter Caroline. Mr. Corder was a six-foot-five-inch high-school superintendent. Mrs. Corder was John Wesley Hardin's great-granddaughter. They seemed like the best kind of Texas people, and thus the best kind of people anywhere.

By this time the belligerent and intransigent Mr. Walker had retired and moved to a house directly across the street from the cemetery headquarters. We suspected that he had positioned himself so he could intimidate Mr. Tom Dooley, the new caretaker, and see that nobody got to Wes Hardin's grave. Dooley was almost as obsessed as his predecessor. We met him on the morning of July 31, 1959. He was a short, dark, worried-looking fellow in khakis with a red face, a hook nose, and a watery eye, the result of seeking relief from his burdens at Tony's bar a few steps away. He came out on his porch to see what we wanted. Mr. Spellman told him.

At first Tom played dumb. "That was a long time ago," he said. "There aren't any records and I would have no way of locating the grave." Then he began on the consequences that would follow if a marker were put up. The stone would not last two weeks. It would be chipped away and maybe removed bodily. He couldn't be responsible for all that vandalism. He couldn't kill all of the vandals. It had been the policy for fifty years not to reveal the location of the graves of such people. He had promised to keep it that way (we knew to whom). If he stopped being cautious, "they" could tear the cemetery to pieces. "I'll tell you the truth . . ." he would say; "I'll be honest with you . . ." And the poor fellow would go off on another flight. I never saw a man suffer more. He worked himself up into a terrible state.¹⁷

He admitted that if the family demanded it, he would have to do what they said, but he hoped they wouldn't urge him. "I knew this would happen some day," he said mournfully, "but I hoped it wouldn't be while I was here."

He brightened up when Mr. Spellman remarked that the family had

some idea of moving the body to East Texas. Yes, they could locate it and be absolutely sure of getting the right one. He had records going back to 1876 and complete records from 1885. They were locked up in a steel safe, but he was doing exhumations all the time and could guarantee that the job would be well done. All that was necessary was to get one of the forms from a mortician, send it off to Austin with the necessary signatures, wait for it to be approved, and then go ahead.

"Well," said Mr. Spellman, with some asperity, "if you can find the grave, you can show it to us—now. That's part of what we came for."

Realizing that he had overplayed his hand, Mr. Dooley changed his tactics. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "If you will promise me that you won't put up a marker, I'll try to find it."

"I can't do that," Mr. Spellman told him. "I would have to consult the other descendants."

At that moment Dooley was called to the telephone. "Somebody stole a big faucet last night," he told us as he departed in haste, "and when the men turned on the water, they flooded the street."

Half an hour later he walked in without a word and went into a little office off the living room where we could hear him talking to himself, groaning and grumbling. "Well, I don't know . . ." Finally he appeared with a little rolled-up map and a piece of yellowed paper.

"I'll see if I can find it," he mumbled, obviously suffering from inward turmoil.

"It's too far to walk," he said as we left the house. "Is this your car?" So we all got in and I drove the party to the abandoned part of the cemetery and we stood around and waited while he located landmarks and measured distances, all the time lecturing on his favorite subject.

"In this dry earth," he confided, "bodies stay well preserved. If they bury them six feet down, the water doesn't get to 'em. I dig up lots of people and there is always plenty left."

Finally he started from a particular tombstone, one of the few to be seen, looked right and left to establish rows, took half a dozen steps and made a big cross on the ground. "This is within a foot or two of it," he said. "A man came to me a week or two ago and offered me a hundred dollars to show him this spot so he could take a picture."

"And I didn't even bring my camera," said Mrs. Corder wryly.

This concluded our business and we returned Mr. Dooley to his quarters. He was still in considerable distress and hardly took leave of us. He did say that if the grave were marked, he would recommend putting down a concrete slab and attaching the marker to it so firmly that a jackhammer would be needed to get it off. "They will take anything," he warned us, "and then dig into the grave and see if they can find anything there—including bones."

Then he almost ran into the house.

Mr. Spellman went off for a visit to the Big Bend, confident that there would be no further problems. He underestimated Mr. Dooley, who had lost the battle but not the war and was about to begin a series of delaying actions which nearly defeated us.

On August 16 Elmer wrote that he had consulted with the other grandchildren and "it has been finally decided that the body will not be removed from its original and present resting place." Then he added:

This will be your authorization to erect a marker over the grave of John Wesley Hardin. Please contact Dr. Myres and Mr. Martin and proceed with the erection of the marker as discussed and agreed upon by us in the event the Grand Children decided that the body should not be moved.

Our first thought was to get Dave Crockett, an old and reputable contractor whom we all knew, to do the work. Dave was willing, and said he would do it at no charge for the sake of El Paso history. Then he had a change of heart and we approached Mr. Dooley. On October 1 I wrote to Mr. Spellman:

You ask about our decision to let Dooley do the concrete work on the JWH marker. The decision was more or less taken out of our hands. Mr. Martin's friend Dave Crockett had promised to do the job free of charge but when it came time for us to move, he backed out. He said he has had many dealings with Mr. Walker in the past and might have more in the future and doesn't want to get into a hassle with him.

All three of us thought it would be just as well to turn the whole job over to Mr. Dooley

We were left without much recourse when he said he wanted to write to you about it If you don't hear from him within a week or ten days, let me know and I will go out and twist his arm.

Dooley never wrote. The months went by and it became clear that he did not mean to write. On March 9, 1960, I commented to Mr. Spellman, "I am not surprised to hear that Mr. Dooley hasn't written to you. I thought he might but he was too involved emotionally in the business to be very reliable." I added that we were thinking about asking the El Paso County Historical Society to take the matter up and assume responsibility for making the grave. They might sponsor a reburial at another El Paso cemetery.

John Neff, then president of the Society, was interested. He asked Colonel Albion Smith (U. S. A., Retired) to organize a committee to consider the matter, and the colonel called to ask me to be one of the group.¹⁸ I said I would and he promised to get me an invitation to the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society so I could present my case.

The Executive Committee met for lunch and business at Hotel Paso del Norte on April 26, 1960. Colonel Smith introduced me. I sketched the background of the Hardin affair and read Mr. Spellman's letter in

which he expressed his willingness to let the Society handle the matter. My note on what came next reads as follows:

After my presentation the fireworks started. Mrs. Enrique Flores and Mrs. Harry Varner were terribly opposed. They felt that this was a bad man and that the Society should not honor him.

Dr. Eugene Porter said he didn't think we had to honor him. We could put on the marker, "This is where the SOB lies."

Mrs. Flores said that while there were all these fine citizens whom we hadn't honored, she couldn't bear to have anything done for such a man.

President Neff remarked that it was true people like Juan Hart had done much to build the town, but tourists never asked to see the grave of Juan Hart.

I told them I thought we had no right to pass moral judgments in a matter like this. The man was famous—had killed over thirty men (a great distinction, said Mrs. Flores) and that people all over the world were curious about him. They ought to know that he was a two-sided character. He never saw anything bad in what he did—was superintendent of the prison Sunday school, etc.

Chris Fox, ex-sheriff and PR man at the State National Bank, made a sensible little talk in which he disclaimed admiration for Billy the Kid, John Wesley Hardin, *et al*, but said we couldn't argue that they were not of historical interest. He thought we ought to do something about the grave. Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Varner shook their heads violently.

I said that although I knew of two of the members who would stay away, I could see quite a ceremony at a reburial—national publicity—maybe a photographer from *Life* (Mrs. Varner and Mrs. Flores thought that would be awful).

Finally President Neff said he thought the Society ought to declare itself for or against keeping Colonel Smith's committee going. A vote was taken and the ayes had it. Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Varner dissented and asked that their votes be recorded.

Then Otis Coles of Coles Brothers Realty, a real old timer, got up and said he thought he was the only living El Pasoan who had known John Wesley Hardin and his advice was, DON'T DISTURB HIM.

The meeting adjourned and I made my peace as best I could with Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Varner, both of whom I loved. Mrs. Flores said there was nothing personal in her stand.

At the door retired U. S. Army Major Dick McMasters stopped me and said he had an idea: put a plaque on the wall of the cemetery saying, "Near this spot in an unmarked grave . . ." I said it might turn out to be the only way. Albion Smith said he would call a committee meeting soon and Otis Coles had an anecdote about a friend of his who worked as a clerk at the Pierson Hotel and got in bad with John Wesley Hardin. Hardin said this man had not treated one of his friends right and announced he was looking for him. Coles scrambled around fast to get to his friend before it was too late, found him and persuaded him to get out of town. He went back to Indiana and stayed there.

Colonel Smith made the next move. On May 1 he called me and said he favored placing the marker on the cemetery wall. "I don't want to get into this thing too far," he said, and went on to point out that the Society was "a talking society and not an acting society." When the vote was taken at our meeting, "only seven people voted to keep the committee. The rest kept their hands in their laps. They always get some sucker like me who *will* do something, and if things go wrong, I get the blame."

When he asked me for my recommendation, I said I favored moving the body to some place where the grave could be cared for — a move which would need a court order.

"I don't want to get mixed up in any legal shenanigans," he said.

"A court order will be necessary," I reminded him, "no matter where the body is taken, or by whom. But if Tom Dooley could be convinced that we would go that far, he would probably make no further objections to marking the grave. Elmer Spellman will come out again if there is any prospect for real action."

"Why," Smith demanded somewhat plaintively, "if the family wants something done, don't they do it themselves?"

"They tried once," I reminded him, "and nothing happened."

The colonel shook his head sadly. He obviously felt that he was holding a *potato which might become hot and wished he could drop it*. He promised, however, that he would confer further with President Neff.

The result was a letter, dated May 2, to Neff, with a copy for me. Smith proposed that we choose between two plans: a bronze marker on the wall at Concordia Cemetery; a marker at the grave, if the site could be determined. He cited advantages and disadvantages of both plans. Among the disadvantages of Plan Two were the "hostile attitude, already known to exist, on the part of the custodian of the cemetery," the need for a court order, and the fact that a marker "would assist vandals seeking to disturb the grave." He preferred Plan I.

Neither plan was adopted. In cases like this where there is a division of opinion, the easiest thing to do is to do nothing, and that is just what the Historical Society did.

The effort, however, did bear some fruit. The grave remained unmarked but a marker was placed on the building in which John Wesley Hardin died. Chris Fox's State National Bank, largely at Mr. Fox's behest, had embarked on a program of placing bronze markers at historic points in El Paso, and in November of 1962, the bank unveiled a plaque attached to the wall of Lerner's ladies-ready-to-wear store on the site of the Acme Saloon, where Hardin rolled dice for the last time. The build-up was impressive — newspaper publicity, television interviews, invitations. The ceremonies began at noon on November 19. A fine rain was falling but a rather large crowd had assembled, including visiting celebrities and

home-town pioneers. Sheriff "Dogie" Wright of Sierra Blanca was there (his grandfather was a participant in the Sutton-Taylor feud). Mrs. W. D. Howe was there. Her husband was a justice of the peace in 1895 and conducted the hearing for John Selman. Jane Burges Perrenot was there. Her father was a young El Paso lawyer, recently arrived, at the time of the shooting. Mr. and Mrs. Joe Clements of Carlsbad were there. The Hardins and the Clementses were cousins and Joe as a small boy had gone hunting with Wes Hardin. Mayor Ralph Seitsinger was there, as were George Matkin (president) and Hal Daugherty (top vice-president) of the State National Bank. Chris Fox took charge and told us why we were assembled. At the conclusion of his remarks Lieutenant Jim Parks of the El Paso Police Department, on signal from the speaker, cut loose with three resounding pistol shots which startled the assemblage according to plan.¹⁹ When it was over, a select group of dignitaries enjoyed a steak-sandwich lunch at the International Club at the bank's expense, and that concluded the celebration.

I could not help wondering what Wes Hardin's feelings would have been had he been present. He would probably have been puzzled and incredulous. Most of the people involved did not really know what we were commemorating and the curious bystanders must have been completely in the dark. The only really intelligent reaction that I heard came from Conrey Bryson, of KTSM. He said he had a program coming up in which he intended to make the point that we all like direct action and envy a man who had the nerve to pull his gun and settle his problems once and for all. I felt that the idea made sense.

Futile though the gesture may have been, it was the best we could do for the moment, and nothing more was attempted in Hardin's behalf for three years. Then the family decided to try again. Elmer Spellman called me from his home in Burnet and said the descendants wanted to go ahead with marking the grave, even if it took a supreme effort. It would be my job to find somebody who could and would do it.

"We want a marker with only Hardin's name on it," he said, "with dates, set in a heavy slab of concrete. Jane's stone is that way, and the grandchildren say, 'The simpler the better.'"²⁰

I mentioned a story, which was coming out of Tony's bar, where Mr. Dooley sometimes became eloquent over his beer, that one of the Hardin descendants had got a court order to stop all proceedings. Mr. Spellman was amused at that. He was in touch with all the descendants, he said, and they wanted the marker installed. About September 1 he planned to come to El Paso himself to make sure the job was done. In the meantime, would I look for somebody who could and would do it? I said I would. We discussed the fact that Mr. Walker had passed on, leaving Mr. Dooley under considerably less pressure. The result was a commission to Mr. Narzinsky of the Pioneer Monument Company, conveyed in a letter to

me, "to erect a marker of Georgia grey granite over the grave of John Wesley Hardin, located in Concordia Cemetery, El Paso, Texas."²¹ A check accompanied the authorization, to be delivered when the monument was in place.

Mr. Dooley made one last attempt to halt the proceedings. He told Mr. Narzinsky he could not come in without a court order and Mr. Narzinsky called me. "Tell Tom Dooley," I said, "that we are going ahead and he might as well give in. The court order will be forthcoming if we have to get Mr. Spellman out here to apply for it."²²

That took care of the caretaker and on Friday, September 24, 1965, the work began. Five days later Mr. Narzinsky and I made our final inspection. As we walked up to the grave, Mr. Dooley appeared in his pickup for a final interview, straw hat, khaki pants, red face, watery eyes and all. I trained my camera on him and he shied off at once. "I don't want to get in on anything like that," he protested, but he seemed to be in a good mood. "I had the grave located in three books," he told us. "I bet I have had 500 cousins and relatives of his out here looking for that grave. Some of those people would dig it up looking for a pistol or something. When Mr. Walker turned the cemetery over to me, he said, 'There is one thing I want to tell you. I swore years ago, and the man I took over from swore [here Mr. Dooley put his hands together as if in prayer], and I want you to swear that you will never reveal the location of that grave. If you do, they'll tear up your cemetery.'"

Both of us assured him that we hadn't told anybody about the marker—and that neither of us was going to talk.

"Chris Fox called me," he said. "He had heard a rumor. I told him I couldn't say a word until something was laid down. I wish you would let Chris know, but nobody else."

I promised I would call Mr. Fox at the State National Bank (and I did later). As we were getting ready to break up, I said to Dooley, "I hope we can be friends now," and to Narzinsky, "Tom doesn't have a very good opinion of me."

"It wasn't you," Dooley protested. "It was that fellow with the black, curly hair" (meaning Landon C. Martin of our commemorative committee, who may have seemed a little persistent). He then launched into an account of "that policeman," meaning Leon C. Metz, who was getting ready to write his book on John Selman and had brought Selman's granddaughter out to the cemetery to look for the grave.

"He threatened to put me in jail if I didn't dig up the records on Selman. I went over every record we had here and there was nothing on him."

His last words to me, just before he drove off—the last words I ever heard him speak—were, "Yes, we're friends." Not long afterwards he went to the hospital and the doctors found gangrene and blood clots

inside him. I hope we were not even partly responsible. We were glad to hear that he had recovered, retired, and moved to Farmington, New Mexico.

On October 14 I sent snapshots of the marker to Mr. Spellman with the remark, "Here is the evidence!"

There is a postscript. Marshal Hail, staff writer for the *El Paso Herald-Post*, got wind of the transaction four months after the event and on February 25, 1966, he ran a feature story in his newspaper with a picture of John Wesley Hardin and another of Mr. Narzinsky pointing to his handiwork. By this time Bob Narzinsky, Walter's son, was in charge at the cemetery and he brought a new deal to old Concordia. Many people in the course of a year make pilgrimage to Hardin's tomb, but nobody has disturbed the grave.

"Since I seem to have status as the El Paso gunfighter authority," says Leon Metz, "everybody in town refers queries about the grave to me. I average three or four phone calls a month and maybe a couple of letters. One lady got me out of bed at 5:30 on a Sunday morning—said she was a tourist on her way through and wanted to see the grave."

"In my judgment," he adds, "Hardin's grave is the top tourist attraction. And it could be better exploited. We have the only *genuine* Boot Hill in the country."²³

So the pilgrims are coming to the shrine, but not a one of them will ever know what it cost in time, travel, hope deferred and emotional stress to put that monument where it is today and where, one hopes, it will remain for the foreseeable future.

NOTES

1. C. L. S. Hardin file contains correspondence noted hereafter and records of interviews along with accounts of episodes described, usually written down the day they occurred.
2. John Wesley Hardin, *The Life of John Wesley Hardin, from the Original Manuscript, as Written by Himself*, Seguin, Texas: Smith and Moore, 1896.
3. Glendon Swarthout, *The Shootist*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1975.
4. Interview with Mrs. Mattie Hardin Smith (JWH's sister), Fort Worth, Texas, June 17, 1944.
5. "Hardin Home Torn Down," *El Paso Times*, July 11, 1965.
6. Mrs. Mattie Smith, interview.
7. Hardin, *Autobiography*, p. 11.
8. *Galveston News*, September 20, October 7, 1877; Mollie M. Godbold, "Comanche and the Hardin Gang," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 68 (July, 1963), pp. 55-57.
9. John Wesley Hardin to John Wesley Hardin, Jr., letter in possession of C. L. S.
10. Lewis Nordyke, *John Wesley Hardin, Texas Gunman*, New York: William Morrow, 1957, pp. 241-255; Mrs. Mattie Smith, interview.
11. C. L. Sonnichsen, "A Gentleman from Pecos" in *Ten Texas Feuds*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951, 1971, pp. 200-209.
12. Hardin, *Autobiography*, p. 121.
13. J. Evetts Haley, *Jeff Milton: a Good Man with a Gun*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1948, p. 228.

14. *El Paso Times*, May 14, 1895; C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968, pp. 327-329; John Middagh, *Frontier Newspaper*, El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1958, p. 66.
15. *El Paso Times*, April 24, 1895.
16. George Look, *Reminiscences*, Ms., copy in possession of Wyndham K. White; Leon Metz, *John Selman, Texas Gunfighter*, New York: Hastings House, 1966, p. 178.
17. Sonnichsen notes, Hardin file.
18. Telephone interview with Col. Albion Smith, April 1, 1960.
19. *El Paso Times*, November 2, 1962.
20. E. D. Spellman, telephone interview, July 14, 1968.
21. E. D. Spellman to Pioneer Monument Co., September 16, 1965, copy to C. L. S.
22. Sonnichsen notes, Hardin file, September 20, 21, 1965.
23. Leon C. Metz to C. L. S., February 2, 1977.

A permanent reminder of stagecoach days in El Paso is preserved in the titles of the downtown streets, some of which were named for the destinations of one or another of the stage lines. The westbound coaches left town by way of San Francisco Street. By the same process, San Antonio, Santa Fe, and St. Louis (now Mills) Streets were labeled.

—SONNICHSEN, *Pass of the North*

On October 11, 1875, Ernst Kohlberg wrote from El Paso to his family in Germany: "A petition is being circulated asking for the construction of a railway line through here. They are not asking for much; only the little stretch from St. Louis via San Antonio, Texas, El Paso, to San Francisco, California."

Letters of Ernst Kohlberg, 1875-77, Southwestern Studies #38, El Paso, Texas Western Press.

The block of granite standing in front of El Paso's Memorial Park Library as a memorial to El Pasoans who gave their lives in World War I, was originally used in a miners' drilling contest in 1903. The holes made by the champion drillers are clearly visible.

Password, XV, 56

THE FEDERAL SMELTER

by PATRICK RAND

The mining men of El Paso, who had been looking forward to competition for the El Paso Smelting Works which enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the area, welcomed the announcement for the formation of a new company on June 9, 1899.

Articles of Incorporation were filed on that day in Austin by a group of men, headed by George M. Jacocks of New York City to organize the Federal Copper Company, whose purpose would be the mining, smelting, production and sale of copper in the southwest. The amount of capital stock in the corporation was set at \$500,000, divided into shares of \$100 each.²



The Company immediately began the buying of mines in Arizona and Chihuahua to supply the copper ore and decided to locate its smelter in the El Paso area, about midway between the two mining regions. Arrangements were made with David W. Payne, receiver for the bankrupt East El Paso Town Company, to buy a site for the smelter. Forty acres of land lying next to the tracks of the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad, which is now a part of Southern Pacific, were purchased for the sum of \$1,600³ (See Map—Parcel No. 1). At the same time, Jacobs himself bought 60 adjacent acres of land which he held until June of 1900 and then sold to the Company⁴ (See Map—Parcel No. 2).

By January of 1901, plans for the new smelter had been completed and Samuel A. Barron became the new manager in charge of its construction and operations. Barron went rapidly about the task of getting prices and awarding contracts. In April, the masonry contract was let to J. T. Teufenthaler.⁵ The stone for the smelter was then contracted to John W. Eubanks, a civil engineer, who shortly began the building of a tramway to carry the material from Mount Franklin to the smelter.⁶

Originally it was announced that the new smelter would only treat its own ore but, in July of 1901, the Board of Directors had a change of heart and decided to add another furnace to do custom smelting in addition to the processing of the Company's own material.⁷ Also in July of 1901, the Company added to its real estate by purchasing a one-half acre tract of land near the southwest corner of the Fort Bliss Military Reservation from Wyndham Kemp, acting as executor for the estate of B. H. Davis and Lucille Davis Ely.⁸

On July 19, 1901, the delivery to the smelter of ore from the Company's mines began and material for the second furnace was ordered.⁹ By August, the railroad yards and side track were complete and the 200 ton furnace was ready for testing. Only the sampling works required completion.¹⁰ In addition to the smelting construction, Manager Barron contracted with William H. Ward of the Ward Consolidated Brick Company to erect a number of houses and a store for company employees on nearby land. The new smelter was officially blown in on September 10, 1901 and crews made up of over 100 men began working day and night processing the tons of ore.¹¹

Another piece of property was purchased by the Company on December 6, 1901 from the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad. The 11.26 acre tract, which cost \$614.25, was bought to provide additional railroad siding for the smelter operations¹² (See Map—Parcel No. 3).

In spite of such an auspicious beginning, the Company soon began to have financial difficulties. Organized at a time when copper prices were high, the Company had temporarily made a good profit. With the price

of copper rapidly falling, the margin of profit dropped until the Company not only found itself in a financial squeeze processing its own materials, but also lost the business of other mines which began using those smelters closer to them. On January 29, 1902, in an economy move, the local offices of the Federal Copper Company that had been situated in the Morehead Block in El Paso were moved out to the smelter, which continued in operation.¹³

Immediately rumors began to spread that the smelter would be sold, probably to either the El Paso Smelting Works or to Phelps - Dodge. President Jacocks quickly announced that there was no truth to these rumors. Ore was coming in from the Company's Arizona and Chihuahua mines and the smelter would continue with its custom smelting operations. He even suggested that lead smelting would probably be added to copper.¹⁴

In an attempt to raise additional capital and pay off the Company's debts, the Board of Directors at a meeting in New York City on August 1, 1902, voted to issue 300 bonds of \$500 each, totalling \$150,000. To secure the bonds, they delivered to M. B. Freeman of Tucson, Arizona, Harold H. Jacocks of New York City and Harry L. Dessar of El Paso, acting as trustees, a deed of trust on the smelter and Parcel No. 1 on which it was located. Lea C. Dessar as President and George M. Jacocks as Secretary signed the deed for the Federal Copper Company.¹⁵

Some of this money was then used to purchase two 62 acre parcels of land in October of 1902 from the Highlands Realty Company. One tract was situated adjacent to the previously owned smelter land and one was located at the base of Mount Franklin¹⁶ (See Map—Parcels No. 4 & 5).

The Company received a severe financial blow when a restraining order was issued on September 12, 1903 at the request of the Torpedo Mining Company, one of the Company's suppliers, asking for payment of debts by the Federal Copper Company and its trustees — Jacocks, Freeman and Dessar.¹⁷ This order shut down all operations of the Company and the smelter became an idle giant.

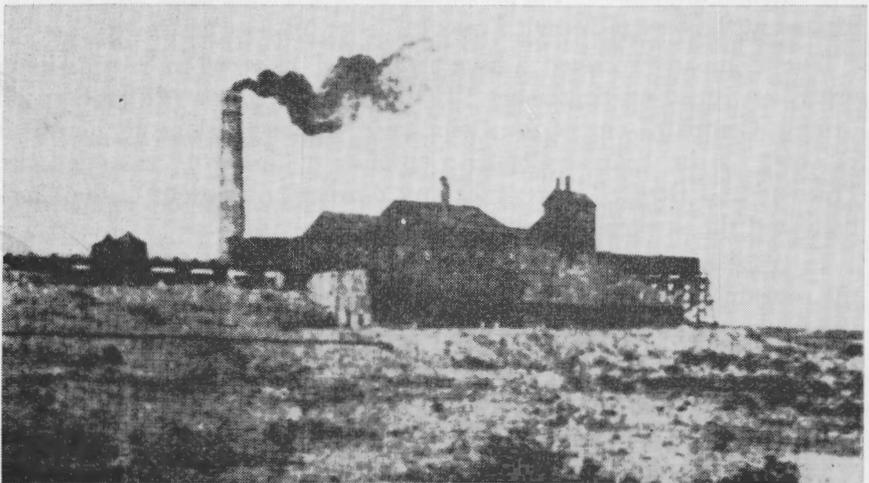
In April of 1904, following discussions that created hopes of having the restraining order vacated, the Company dispatched 15 employees to the smelter to make the necessary repairs to put it back into operation.¹⁸

The negotiations to restart the smelter were concluded by a resolution of the Board of Directors on May 11, 1904 to secure the Company's debts by giving to J. C. Lackland, as trustee, a deed of trust on Parcels No. 1 through 5, the smelter with all of its equipment and the following material which carried a value of \$13,000: 3000 tons of rich slag, 30 tons of furnace barrings, 550 tons of flue dust, 5 tons of matte sweepings, 4 tons of furnace bottoms, 350 tons of iron ore, 50 tons of coke and 360 tons of copper bell ore.

The deed was given to cover debts totalling \$41,955 to the following creditors: C. N. Bassett—\$23,402.64 (balance of a note for \$25,000 dated August 3, 1903), El Paso and Northeastern Railroad—\$2,370.12 (payment on an open account for freight and coke), Southern Pacific Railroad—\$871.62, Torpedo Mining Company—\$12,500. J. H. May—\$1,000, El Paso Foundry and Machine Works—\$373.83, J. W. Eubanks—\$364.44, Krakauer, Zork and Moyer—\$237.54, Waters and Pierce Oil Company—\$111.59, Mine and Smelter Supply—\$144.50, Western Union Telegraph—\$125.05, T. E. Shelton \$88.32, Santa Fe Railroad—\$90.05, El Paso Fuel Company—\$59, Burton Lingo Lumber—\$37.40, El Paso Ice and Refrigeration—\$41.50, Edwards and Edwards, assignees of Longwell Transfer—\$80.40 and Lesinsky Grocery—\$57.

The Company was to operate the smelter and give Lackland a running account. All debt payments were to be made within a 12 month period which could be extended for an additional 6 months. If full payment was not made by that time, the trustee had the right to sell the property to the highest bidder.¹⁹

October of 1905 brought the announcement by Louis Straus, president of the Southern Smelting and Refining Company, which was owned by a group of New York capitalists, that his company had made a lease-purchase arrangement with the Federal Copper Company to take over its operations. The new firm had mines in Mexico and required a smelter for its ore.²⁰ The El Paso Foundry and Machine Works was hired to make building repairs and began restoring the furnaces and machinery.



FEDERAL SMELTER

As pictured in El Paso Herald at time the property was sold to Col. W. C. Greene.
(Copied by M. G. McKinney.)

Bad news came out in January of 1906 that a disagreement had arisen between President Straus and his New York backers. Straus resigned his position, the man hired to be the superintendent of the smelter for the new company, W. H. Kinnon, returned to his home in Tucson and the lease-purchase plan evaporated.²¹

In April of 1906, Judge A. B. Fall, a spokesman for the Col. William C. Greene Enterprises, announced the impending purchase of the smelter by Greene, a former cowpuncher in Arizona who had become one of the largest mine operators in the southwest, with operations in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico.²² The Board of Directors of the Federal Copper Company approved the sale on October 10, 1906 and it became official on November 14, 1906 when the transfer of title was filed with the El Paso County Clerk.

Parcel No. 1 and the smelting plant and equipment sold for \$67,500, of which \$25,000 was paid in cash and the remainder was to be paid within an 18 month period. L. J. Morrison as President and Peyton Edwards as Secretary signed for the Federal Copper Company. J. C. Lackland as trustee, released the deed of trust upon promise of payment to the various creditors.²³

Following the purchase, one of the furnaces from the smelter in El Paso was dismantled, removed and sent to the Guaymas, Mexico smelter of the Greene company. At the same time Greene purchased the smelter, he also acquired the Peabody Mine in Arizona and the Columbia Mine near Terrazas, Chihuahua.²⁴

The Federal Copper Company, in an attempt to settle some of its indebtedness, sold the one-half acre parcel of land purchased from Wyndham Kemp in 1901, "complete with all improvements, fixtures, machinery and appurtenances," to Warren N. Small, president of the El Paso Foundry and Machine Works, for \$5,000 on April 12, 1907.²⁵

In spite of such efforts, the Company's financial situation continued to crumble. Forty-first District Court in El Paso decided in favor of Trustee Leo C. Dessar in a court proceeding on May 12, 1907 and ordered Sheriff F. J. Hall to seize the estate of the Company on June 28, 1907. After the necessary notices, Parcels 2, 3, 4 and 5 were sold to the highest bidder, who happened to be Trustee Dessar, on August 6, 1907 for a total of \$30,000. Parcel No. 2 was sold for \$12,500, Parcel No. 3 went for \$2,500, the price on Parcel No. 4 was \$9,000 and Parcel No. 5 sold for \$6,000.²⁶

Trustee J. C. Lackland died on July 9, 1908 and J. D. Campbell was appointed as trustee to replace him. Forty-first District Court in November of 1908 found in favor of Campbell and foreclosed against William C. Greene and the Federal Copper Company on the 40 acre parcel purchased by Greene in 1906. The sheriff seized the property on November 4, 1908 and at 2 p.m. on December 1, 1908 sold Parcel No. 1, together

with what remained of the smelter and a stockpile of ores and slag to the highest bidder, Edward Gerrard of Indianapolis, Indiana, for \$26,000.²⁷

With this final sale, the Federal Copper Company as such ceased to exist. The property, however, continued to be of interest. The ruins of the old smelter stood until 1912 when, with the development of residential property extending towards the area, demolition was begun. The remains of the machinery and equipment were sold to the Darbyshire-Harvie Iron Works.²⁸ Parcel No. 1, purchased by Gerrard in 1908, was in turn sold to J. F. and O. C. Coles on January 2, 1913 for \$32,000.²⁹ Coles Building and Real Estate Company then subdivided the land, part of which became the Castle Heights Subdivision and part eventually became the Memorial Park of the City of El Paso.

Leo C. Dessar, who purchased Parcels 2, 3, 4 and 5 from the Federal Copper Company at sheriff's sale in 1907, helped organize the Manhattan Heights Company³⁰ which purchased parcels 2, 3 and 4 from him, combined them into one tract and then subdivided the property into blocks, lots, streets and alleys. The area was then designated as the Manhattan Heights Addition to the City of El Paso. On April 12, 1912, the property was sold for \$85,000³¹ to Dr. James B. Brady, an El Paso dentist who was also the president of both a paving and a construction company.³²

Because of the original presence of the smelter, the developers named streets in the area appropriately as Federal, Copper, Silver, Gold and Bronze. Mining towns in the southwest were also recognized with Bisbee, Douglas and Morenci streets. Possibly this was because the civil engineer and surveyor who drew up most of the plats for the new subdivisions in the area was the same John C. Eubanks who had done the civil engineering work for the Federal Copper Company.

Thus, even though the dream of the officers of the Company lasted but a short time, the Federal Copper Company and the materials it processed continue to live through the names of the streets in the areas it formerly occupied.

FOOTNOTES

1. Leo C. Dessar, George M. Jacocks, Pierre de Peyster Ricketts and James W. Tappin, all of New York and Leigh Clark, George F. Fitzgerald and H. B. Hamilton, all of El Paso.
2. Texas, Secretary of State, *Articles of Incorporation, the Federal Copper Company*, June 9, 1899.
3. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 37, Page 452.
4. *Ibid.*, Deed Book 52, Page 18.
5. *El Paso Herald*, April 13, 1901, Page 1, Column 3.
6. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1901, Page 1, Column 1.
7. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1901, Page 1, Column 4.
8. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 56, Page 301.

9. *El Paso Herald*, July 29, 1901, Page 1, Column 1.
10. *Ibid.*, August 14, 1901, Page 1, Column 3.
11. *Ibid.*, September 10, 1901, Page 1, Column 6.
12. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 56, Page 602.
13. *El Paso Herald*, January 29, 1902, Page 1, Column 2.
14. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1902, Page 4, Column 4.
15. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed of Trust Book 21, Page 33.
16. *Ibid.*, Deed Book 61, Page 415.
17. *El Paso Herald*, September 12, 1903, Page 7, Column 2.
18. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1904, Page 1, Column 3.
19. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed of Trust Book 21, Page 436.
20. *El Paso Herald*, October 28, 1905, Page 1, Column 5.
21. *Ibid.*, January 5, 1906, Page 1, Column 6.
22. *Ibid.*, April 11, 1906, Page 4, Columns 1 and 2.
23. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 88, Page 220.
24. *El Paso Herald*, November 14, 1906, Page 6, Column 5.
25. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 102, Page 285.
26. *Ibid.*, Deed Book 88, Page 548.
27. *Ibid.*, Deed Book 125, Page 425.
28. *El Paso Herald-Post*, April 28, 1956, Section C, Page 3.
29. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 212, Page 425.
30. Texas, Secretary of State, *Articles of Incorporation, Manhattan Heights Company*, May 12, 1910. Capital Stock—\$50,000 (500 shares of \$100 each). Leo C. Dessar, New York City, New York—495 shares, Eugene E. Spiegelberg, New York City, New York—1 share, Joseph B. Dessar, Nyack, New York—1 share, Peyton J. Edwards, El Paso, Texas—1 share, Peyton F. Edwards, El Paso, Texas—1 share, Oscar L. Bowen, El Paso, Texas—1 share.
31. El Paso County, County Clerk, Deed Book 189, Page 574.
32. *Worley's Directory of El Paso, Texas* (Dallas: John F. Worley Directory Company, 1912) Page

The first white man to set foot in the Big Bend of Texas was Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, the Spanish adventurer. Forty-three years after Columbus discovered America, de Vaca discovered the Big Bend. He found a great region of lofty peaks and deep canyons, magnificent valleys and wind-swept plains—a region which is an empire in itself, three times the size of Belgium, and equal in area to Ireland, South Carolina or Maine.

—RAHT, *The Romance of Davis Mountains and Big Bend Country*

HISTORICAL MEMORIES CONTEST

In its second annual "Historical Memories Contest", the El Paso County Historical Society awarded three cash prizes and named five honorable mention articles, the authors to receive one year memberships in the Society. The final three articles of the contest follow. Chairman E. Haywood Antone has announced October 15 as the closing date of the 1977 contest.

October 16, 1909 . . . A Day To Remember

by JANE BURGESS PERRENOT

On the morning of October 16, 1909, I was one of the more than four thousand school children, marching four abreast, who — to quote the *El Paso Herald* of that date, "the girls in white and the boys in their Sunday best," marched to their respective places in San Jacinto Plaza to see President Taft and President Diaz ride by. Every student from the fourth grade up had been *taught* the Mexican National anthem. Being only a fourth grader, I never mastered more than "Mexicanos al grito de guerra—" and all were provided with an American and a Mexican flag to wave at the proper time.

To me, waiting in the sun on the St. Louis (now Mills) street side, it seemed that the proper time would never arrive, and becoming thirsty I made my way to a water fountain in the center of the Plaza. Just then a shout rang out, "here they come!" I ran back only to discover that I had lost my place in the line. Seeing my despair, my teacher Loretta Brick lifted me up in her arms. First came President Taft, looking enormous in a slowly moving automobile. Then, after what seemed like a very long time — and must have seemed longer to Miss Brick — President Diaz dashed by in a carriage drawn by two galloping horses. They turned the corner toward the St. Regis Hotel and quiet settled on our section.

But on Oregon Street, directly across from the hotel, where the children of San Jacinto School were stationed, an altercation had broken out over who could see and who couldn't. As President Taft's car approached, one boy dropped with a scream to the ground. A teacher pushed a bench over the fallen boy and ordered the children to face front and wave their flags, while a man in the group slipped out after a boy who seemed to be running away. When the doors of the St. Regis closed on the Presidents, a doctor in the crowd examined the first boy, Lawrence Wimber, age 15, and pronounced him dead. The second boy, Noel Morgan, age fourteen, was brought back after a four block chase.

On October 18th, a hearing was held at which a bloodied knife, found by a girl at the corner of Stanton and St. Louis streets, was introduced; and five students, including Ernest Myles and Charlie Wilcox, testified

that they had seen the boys scuffling. Another boy asked, "Shall I tell what Noel called him?" No one had actually seen the knife thrust. Noel Morgan was released to his father, who posted a \$2,000 bond.

On October 25th, an indictment was returned and a new bond for the same amount was posted; but a few days later, before Judge James Harper on the affidavit of his father that the boy was fourteen years old, Noel was released and the case was closed.

But for the children who lived near the corner of Kansas and Boulevard, the case remained open a long time. A rumor went around that the new boy hired to drive Eyster's grocery wagon "was the boy who killed the other one." We were thrilled to think that there was a killer so near, and in groups of three or four, never one kid alone because he might hit us with the buggy whip—or he might even pull out his knife!—we would wait for him to walk up to Eyster's or to drive off in the wagon. Daring each other to stand a little closer—some of the bigger boys even muttered "murderer" under their breath—we watched and waited until the circus or Thanksgiving or something gave us another interest.

Oldsmobile Model 1903

by LEOLA FREEMAN

The year was 1906. The car was second hand but when the opportunity presented itself while my mother, my brother, and I were visiting in San Antonio, my Father couldn't resist. He bought it.



*1902 Oldsmobile
(Identical with 1903 model driven by author's father)*

When the train halted at Stanton Street as it used to do, Dad met us with a sheepish grin and led us toward the contraption parked in a vacant lot. There it stood. A replica of a small buggy even to a place for the whip. The one-cylinder engine was tucked under the seat. The gear shift consisted of a small handle at the right of the seat. Steering was done with a bent stick in front of the driver. A horn with bulb attached was handy to warn unwary pedestrians to clear the way. No need to warn dogs or horses. They bolted at the sight of the thing.

Dismay and disapproval on my mother's face changed to terror as she mounted the strange vehicle. My father turned a crank at the side of the engine and after repeated efforts a resounding roar burst forth from under the seat and violent convulsions shook the whole car. With my brother sitting on the floor, feet dangling over the side, and with me wedged safely between my parents we lurched forward and into the street. Our first trip to our home in Mundy Heights was uneventful. At that hour horses were dozing under the tattered cottonwoods gracing the streets. Conversation was impossible which spared my father a wifely dressing down until the safety and quiet of the marital chamber was reached. This was the beginning of an unforgettable period in my young life. Each trip was an adventure in endurance, patience and ingenuity. Only a true pioneer like my father could have endured the ownership of several years of that frightful contraption.

On weekdays my father used the car to come home from his dental office for mid-day dinner. My mother kept an ear cocked in the direction of the south and when she heard the approaching explosions she popped the biscuits into the oven. Each trip was a challenge. Horses reared, drivers cursed and called down maledictions.irate citizens scattered tacks on the roads so the fragile tires, slightly larger than those of a bicycle, went down with a sizzle. A puncture meant a half hour or more delay. The tire was taken off the wheel, the hole sought out, a patch applied with rubber cement under the pressure of a small vise. Then after replacing it a hand pump was used to inflate the tire. Jeering passers-by shouted a familiar slogan, "Get a horse!"

In 1906 El Paso County boasted thirty-six automobiles. Licenses were issued by the county instead of the state and our Oldsmobile was No. 2. Streets and roads were unpaved, rough and dusty. My father had attached a small rickety seat behind the driver's seat to accommodate us two children in more comfort if less safety. We sat perched precariously, a hand clutching the side for safety and the other holding for dear life to wide-brimmed hats. We ran a continual risk of being catapulted high into the air with each bump.

To the scandal of our neighbors, my father, who was not a church-goer, spent Sunday mornings tinkering with his engine. Sunday after-

noons hopefully were given over to a trip to Ft. Bliss to hear the Band Concert. A regiment of Negro troops was stationed there and their band supplied the music. This was the highlight of the week. Silent prayers were offered on the trip home that we might reach our destination before dark. If darkness overtook us this entailed another crisis, Lamps of acetylene gas had to be coaxed into flame. I remember the singular stink of the things.

That car had the singular habit of starting its engine by itself. If the trip home had required more than the usual amount of effort after the car was run into the small garage, it would begin to chug after we had gone into the house. My father discovered that he could discourage this habit if he left the car in gear. After bumping its front against the wall it would finally give up the ghost and sleep peacefully during the night.

My father had a good friend who was Mexican Consul. His name was Cesar Canseco and he too had fallen victim to the lure of the machine. His car was, as I remember, a Packard. It was a bit more pretentious than our Oldsmobile and its engine was attached to the front of the body. Señor Canseco was a fastidious gentleman and on Sundays he always dressed in immaculate white linen. Unfortunately for his raiment, the car was driven with a chain drive. Occasionally this chain would become out of fix and that meant a crawl under the car for repairs. Señora Canseco and my mother commiserated each other over the resulting grease spots.

My father and Señor Canseco were the unsung heroes of that early age of the automobile. Could they have imagined the crowded streets with the traffic problems I wonder if they would have embarked so enthusiastically upon that new adventure.

Incident at Easter

by HERMINIA GONZALEZ

It was the evening of Good Friday and we were on our way to the *Tinieblas*, the Penitente ceremony of the *Tenebrae*, the darkness before the resurrection.

I had come to this mountain village in northern New Mexico as a new schoolteacher. It was two hours by Ford from Las Vegas, New Mexico, and two hundred years into the past.

The other teacher was a Miss Alderete from El Paso. She was connected with the Armijo family in Las Vegas and had been a teacher in the village the year before. Her mother had come to stay with her and they had made a cozy colorful home in the two-room adobe they rented.

One of my former schoolmates from the convent at west Las Vegas had married the son of the "rico" of the village and they had taken me in as boarder for the school term. The young couple had a modern little house apart from the parents rambling adobe which was also a general store, the post office and lodging house for travelers.

Some of the Las Vegas families had ranches in the area and had sent their young married children out to manage them and to stake out homesteads for themselves. We all knew each other from Las Vegas so there was a lot of visiting back and forth.

We organized a club which included all the young people in the village. We gave dances and invited the "Americans" from Cherryvale, a village on the prairie, settled by Anglos, or judging from their names, by Scandinavian families.

They invited us in turn to their dances, mostly square dances with wonderful fiddlers and callers. All in all we got along very well and I can't remember any hostility or ill feeling among us.

Our two room school was like all New Mexico schools of that time—1922. The children came from three miles around. Most of them walked, their feet wrapped in burlap when there was snow, and it was always snowing.

Miss Alderete started a hot lunch system of a sort. We each put up a small sum of money and the parents contributed what they could, for there was pride about such things. We bought the new canned soups and heated pot fulls on the wood heaters, along with cans of water for hand washing. Sometimes the parents sent us milk and we made hot cocoa. It was a welcome addition to the beans, chili, flour tortillas and dried beef which the children took for lunch. One of the teachers before us, an Anglo lady, had taught the children all the old Gospel hymns. Since I could never carry a tune, I felt most grateful to her, for the children loved to sing. I can still hear them, all those little Penitente children, lustily singing "When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder" and "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".

As the lenten season approached, my young host said to me one day, "If you should hear strange noises in the night, don't be frightened, it will be the Penitentes out on their processions. My family does not belong, but most of the villagers belong to the Brotherhood. They are in dead earnest in their belief, but if you don't pry into their affairs, they aren't going to harm you." This was a most astounding announcement, for in my family we had ever regarded the Penitentes as an element of ignorance and superstition, something in our society to be vaguely ashamed of. And now here was young Delfin telling me that these sincere, kindly folk were Penitentes. The cowboys, the young men at the dances, all of them were Penitentes and I had visited their homes and eaten at their tables! Per-

haps I had a lot to learn!

Actually, our Penitentes have a high-born ancestry. Knights and nobles, and even one Valois king of France were members of the Penitential societies of Medieval Europe.

We read of the Flagellants at Avignon wearing the identical garb, or lack of it, as our New Mexican Penitentes. Somehow the idea survived through the years to take form in our somber mountains. In our mountains there is none of the music and gaiety of Mexico. Rather, the people live there in the shadow of our austere Spanish forebears.

And so through Lent we heard the flutes and dirges as the Brothers walked unseen in the darkness, until at last we were at Holy Week. On Monday we went to nearly empty school rooms. The families had moved to the upper village where the chapel of the Brotherhood, the *Morada*, was situated. Around it were several houses which were occupied only at Easter time.

The women had to get everything in readiness before Thursday, when no more work could be done. There was food to be cooked, bread to be baked in the outdoor ovens, and quantities of woolen mattresses to be arranged in the newly swept rooms. There would be many visiting Brothers and families from other villages, and all had to be fed and bedded down in the unbounded hospitality of those days.

Aside from the Brotherhood's services there would be no religious observance of Easter. A week before the priest from another village had come to say Mass and to hear the Easter confessions.

Surveying the empty schoolrooms, Miss Alderete and I decided to go to the Holy Week services, if we were permitted at the *Morada*. Our host's family and a lot of our friends were going to the Stations of the Cross in the afternoon and we could stay on for the wake at night. Mrs. Alderete said she would go with us rather than let us go alone, so properly hatted and gloved, she led us and three neighbor girls, non-members all, up the road to the chapel.

We got to the upper village in time for the Stations. These were marked by crosses set at intervals in a mountain path. On level ground, many new Fords and wagons had been parked, and the people followed the Brothers from Station to Station, joining reverently in the prayers.

There were no flagellants. The Brothers wore dark suits and black skull caps, the women wore the all enveloping black *tapálo*, shrouding them from head to foot.

The *Hermano Mayor*, who was also a school director, headed the procession and recited the prayers.

Only old Don Sereno walked as a penitent, he had stuck cactus leaves on his bald pate, but walked serenely indeed, showing no evidence of pain. When we had completed the Stations, the Brother invited the peo-

ple to the wake, the culminating *Velorio*. Eyeing our unorthodox group, he said all were welcome, as long as the proper respect was observed.

Velorios or wakes were held in New Mexico for the dead or in honor of some saint. The latter were social occasions. Friends and relatives traveled for miles to attend and there were good things to eat and drink, as well as prayers and hymns for the saint. This Good Friday wake would be a most solemn *Velorio* for the Dead. There were prescribed *Alabados* or dirges sung in sustained high notes, reminiscent of the Arabic and Flamenco style of song.

After stopping at one of the houses, where long tables were set with bread and coffee, we went on to the *Morada*. This was quite a large hall, white-washed and partitioned with canvas. Behind this curtain the flagellants would conceal themselves. On our side of the curtain was a small altar with a native-made Christ on the Cross. Candles and kerosene lamps burned on shelves and on the altar. On a bench by the only door sat three of our erstwhile Club friends.

They wore the black skull cap and gave us no sign of recognition. They were there to keep order in the Chapel, if necessary.

A chair was provided for Mrs. Alderete, and the rest of us disposed ourselves on benches or on the floor as best we could.

One of the village women beckoned me quietly from the door. I went as if for a breath of air and looked outside. A long line of hooded flagellants, escorted by Brothers of the Light were stumbling up a path. There was no noise, the disciplines fell slowly on bleeding shoulders as they went into the forest.

Inside the hours wore on to midnight. At intervals a Brother would lead us in prayers and *alabados*. The huddled people spoke in low tones. There was one man who stood out among us. He was a tall, powerful man, blue-eyed and red-headed, a throwback perhaps, to some fair Conquistador or to some roving Mountain Man. From his isolated ranch he had brought his family to this grim festival and how he was enjoying the companionship of people! He prayed with gusto and loudly sang the *Alabados*. He was the only one who knew all the verses of "The Miracles of Saint Anthony" and the quavering high notes rose easily from his throat.

Then in an interval he started to talk. He told of other wakes, and of how, on the way they had met a curtained Ford car going into a further and most secret *Morada*. In the car, he said, were a certain politician and his aide. The man who was known as the king of the "Little Kingdom of San Miguel." His political opponents had taunted him with being a secret Penitente.

Perhaps the gasp in my throat was echoed by others, but the women's *tapálos* were drawn up to their eyes, the Brothers at the door seemed unmoved, everyone sat quietly as before.

Then the *Hermano Mayor* came in and arranged thirteen lighted candles on the floor, in the form of a cross. Next all the other candles and the lamps were put out. The *Tinieblas*, he said, were about to begin, anyone who cared to leave could do so.

A few girls and women scurried out, but we settled ourselves around Mrs. Alderete, like bees around a queen and prepared to stay.

Now the Brother began a long series of prayers. After a certain segment, a candle was extinguished until at last we were in darkness.

After this came a bedlam of noise, seemingly all around us. There was thunder and dragging of chains, the shrill notes of the flute and behind the curtain, the swish of disciplines on bare flesh.

At last a single candle was lighted and there was only a stunned silence. The *Hermano Mayor* came in with a lighted lamp, the *Velorio* was over, he thanked us for our company.

The tension lifted and everyone stood up, stretching cramped limbs and making for the door.

As we left, our red-headed companion spoke again softly, as from some mystic second sight, he said, "I wonder how many of us here will be alive the next *Velorio*?"

Our little party started down the moonlit road, for we would walk the two miles to the lower village. The *Hermano Mayor* caught up with us, he had to see to the stock, and would accompany us home.

Mrs. Alderete, a lady who should have been in the diplomatic corps, thanked him for letting us attend the services. She was herself a Presbyterian, but she respected all creeds and beliefs. Then the Brother told us about the Society, how the ritual had come down through generations; that aside from the yearly penance, the Brothers took care of their own, of the widows and orphans and the destitute among them.

And so the darkness ended and we came into the dawn of Holy Saturday.

That night there was the dance of Holy Saturday, when confetti filled eggshells were broken on the heads of the women, and there were a lot of *Valses Chiqueados*, where the young men spouted poetry to their girlfriends. In fact, the dance was very sedate and the music ran mostly to slow waltzes. We laid fingertips lightly on our dancing partner's shoulder, (unless one had a grudge against him.)

At some time through the dance a disquieting story started. The red-headed man had gone to fetch his horses in order to bring his family to the dance and he had not returned. At dawn the men would search.

The next day, Easter Sunday, a group of horsemen drove into the village and sought out the justice of the peace. They had found the body of the red-headed man at the bottom of a ravine, walking in unfamiliar terrain he had fallen to his death.

And so, of these matters I shall write no more, lest I too, fall into a ravine.

HERITAGE HOMES OF EL PASO:

by HARRIOT HOWZE JONES

THE A. B. FALL HOUSE



Photo by M. G. McKinney

The large house at 1725 Arizona Street has seen better days, but is still impressive. Built in 1907 by Ernest Krause for Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Fall, the house is of natural brick, on a white stone base. The Fall mansion was under construction at the same time as the Turney mansion, later enlarged to become the El Paso Museum of Art (see *Password*, XVIII, 75). Old timers recall there was something of a contest between the two Senators to see which home would be completed first. Together, the two led the way for a procession of fine mansions northeast from the downtown area to the Fall home at the top of Golden Hill.

The house may be described as modified Greek Revival. It has a two-story white wood portico, with Ionic pillars and pilasters. Under the portico, at second story level, a balcony extends across the full width of the house. From this balcony one may have a superb view of El Paso and the mountains and plain of Mexico.

Albert B. Fall was born in Frankfort, Kentucky. At the time the house was built he was a Senator from New Mexico, and later was Secretary

of the Interior under President Harding. Incidentally, when the house was built the pillars were brought from Mr. Fall's childhood home in Kentucky, which had been almost destroyed during the Civil War, and used in his new home.

Albert Fall was married to the former Emma Morgan, of Clarksville, Texas. The Falls lived for some years on a ranch at Three Rivers, New Mexico, but as the children grew Mrs. Fall felt that it would be of advantage to them to have the better schooling and social contacts which El Paso afforded, so the house was built and the Falls divided their time between Three Rivers and El Paso. For about a year the house was occupied by General Terrazas of Chihuahua, who, with his large family, had fled the revolution in Mexico. As a friend, Mr. Fall was glad to offer refuge.

The Falls died within a year of each other, and their estates, including the house, were left one fourth share to each of their children, or their heirs. The only son, Jack, had died in 1918, during the "flu" epidemic. He had married Anna Holman, of Fayetteville, Tennessee. He had left a four year old daughter, now Mrs. Philip Bethune. A second daughter was born after his death. Alexina Fall married Clarence C. Chase, they had five children; Carolyn Fall married Mahlon T. Everhart, they had three children; Jewitt Fall married Brant Elliot, they had one child. All these Fall grandchildren have happy memories of the beautiful, spacious home.

The house was sold to the Catholic Church in 1946, and occupied by Jesuit Brothers, who produced and distributed a paper, "La Revista Catolica".

In 1965 the house was purchased by Mrs. Ignacia S. Samaniego, who had come from Mexico in 1913. Mrs. Samaniego had three sons and three daughters, now all married. She deals in real estate.

One enters the house through a wide door, with leaded glass fan-light, into a small vestibule, and then into a very large reception hall. From this hall rises a handsome staircase of polished oak, the balusters delicately fluted. The wainscot and all other woodwork is of polished oak. There are no doors from the hall leading to the parlor and another small hall on the right, nor to the dining room on the left. Instead the entrances are flanked with small oak columns, with Ionic capitals, and portieres may be drawn across the openings. These portieres are the original ones, of imported hand-loomed wool, the edges trimmed with embroidered braid. There is a massive fireplace in the hall, of light brown terra-cotta. The floors are parquet style, of several colors of wood, the ceiling fifteen feet high, the chandelier is a combination one of glass shaded gas light and electricity.

The parlor, and the library, across a hall from it, on the right, and the

large dining room on the left, all have the same high ceilings, dark wood-work and parquet floors. They each also have a fireplace, although smaller than the one in the reception hall, and the openings are filled in with a Franklin stove effect, of metal.

There is a leaded glass window at the landing of the stairs. Upstairs there are five or six bedrooms, with adjoining dressing rooms, and two baths. The house has a full basement and a semi-finished attic. Of course there are the usual kitchen, pantries, laundry room. It is a very large house.

The house is in fairly good condition, but some work and money could well be expended on it, to restore to its former glory what must have been considered the show-place of El Paso in its time.

SOUTHWEST ARCHIVES

FROM THE MISTS TO THE SUBSTANCE: THE RECORD OF A CONTROVERSY

by LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD

It's easy to succumb to the romantic spell of San Elizario. I myself did it not long ago as I stood in the tiny plaza at twilight: with no effort at all, I "saw" a Franciscan missionary push open the front doors of the church; at the "sound" of the melodious mission bells ringing the hour of vespers, I "watched" the approach of the worshippers; I even "heard" the proud, arrogant step of the viceroy as he strode across the plaza from his nearby "palace." But then the light changed—or perhaps a motorcycle revved up in the distance—and I was recalled to reality, not merely the reality of a summer evening in 1977, but the reality that San Elizario had never been the stuff my dream was made of . . . in spite of the legends and the local belief in San Elizario's three-hundred-year history.

This belief was called into question in the Fall, 1964, issue of *Password* (Volume IX, No. 3) with the appearance of Dr. Eugene O. Porter's article "The Founding of San Elizario." In that article, Dr. Porter told us how it was with San Elizario—or, as some interpreted it, how it wasn't. His paper, based upon his research of newly available materials from the Juarez Archives, explained that the old San Elizario mission, supposedly established in 1683, had never existed, that other founding dates given by various writers were wrong, that the first San Elizario was a valley some thirty-five miles down the river from present-day San Elizario and moved to the present site after 1780, that the existing church was built about 1870, that no viceroy had ever lived in the home which carries the proud designation of "viceroy's palace."

So real had been my vision of Franciscan friar and mission bells and haughty Spanish viceroy that I began to wonder about the impact of Dr. Porter's article upon other dreamers, the citizens of San Elizario for instance, who had lived with their dream for years—indeed for lifetimes, for generations. I wondered whether there were any records of the initial repercussions of Dr. Porter's "bomb," if I may so call his scrupulously documented paper, and whether it had succeeded in laying to rest the delightful ghosts of San Elizario. Curious now about the drama which must have developed out of the conflict between Dr. Porter's facts and the prevailing beliefs of past grandeur and ancient "roots," I decided to investigate. A few days later, I paid a visit to the Southwest Collection of the El Paso Public Library and was rewarded with a sizeable group of papers, labeled, "Controversy over History of," in the "San Elizario" vertical file.

A clipping from the October 2, 1964, issue of the *El Paso Herald-Post*, which must have been published immediately after the appearance of the Fall, 1964, *Password*, describes the San Elizario citizens as being in a state of "shock." It quotes Mr. Lorenzo G. Alarcon, Superintendent of the San Elizario Independent School District: "Right now three people are in my office asking what we can do to save our history," and, further, "We are proud of our cherished heritage. Our history has been passed down from generation to generation." Another *El Paso Herald-Post* clipping, dated January 23, 1965, refers to the "anguished cries from old timers proud of the community's past." It calls the present state of affairs "the second San Elizario war," reminding readers that the first war had been fought over salt and that this one ("a mild war of words") is being fought over history.

An article in the *Southwest Catholic Register* of October 9, 1964, attempts to clarify the issue: "Both sides concede that San Elizario was a fort (presidio), that the present church was built about 1870 to 1880, that a Spanish viceroy could not have lived there, and that a presidio of Nuestra Señora del Pilar y Glorioso Señor San José was founded in the El Paso area about 1683. But agreement comes to a screeching halt here." Another article in this same issue of the *Southwest Catholic Register* quotes El Paso historian Cleofas Calleros as saying that Dr. Porter had contributed "nothing new . . . except that he added more to the confusion and errors." Cleofas Calleros, it may be unnecessary to remark, was the man most instrumental in the (1936) placement of a state historical marker in the old San Elizario cemetery, which marker designates 1683 as the founding date of the Presidio ("near Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in present Ciudad Juárez, México") and 1773 as the date when the Presidio was relocated "on this Site" and "renamed Presidio San Elizario."

Also in this issue of the *Southwest Catholic Register* appears a defense by Mr. Calleros himself of his position on the time and place of San Elizario's origin and the nature of its earliest function. Responding to Dr. Porter's findings that the San Elizario church had never been a mission, Mr. Calleros argues that "a presidio in those days . . . had a chapel known as *capilla*, *santuario*, *misión*, *iglesia* . . . and many other religious terms." Responding to Dr. Porter's findings as to the original location of what ultimately became Presidio San Elizario, Mr. Calleros contends that the Spaniards moved their presidios as circumstances warranted, sometimes carrying the name of the original presidio with them, but not always. He maintains that the Presidio San Elizario had originally been named Presidio Señora del Pilar y Glorioso Señor San José and that it had served "the military, the Spanish settlers, the mestizos . . . at El Paso del Norte [present-day Juárez, México], Carrizal, El Porvenir, Guajuquilla, Hacienda de los Tiburcios [present-day San Elizario], and probably as far south as Moctezuma."

It may be seen, then, that at the outset the defenders of the San Elizario legend made virtually no concessions to Dr. Porter's evidence—outside of an admission that the Presidio San Elizario may have at one time been located in the (original) Valle de San Elizario at the present site of El Porvenir. Such a response was perhaps to be expected: the legend was long, and the facts were sudden.

Well, actually they weren't so sudden. Among the papers I examined is a typed manuscript headed "Overman—MISSIONS" and dated "1936." It was probably prepared (by somebody named Overman?) in connection with the placing of the state historical marker in 1936. It is a carefully documented history of San Elizario, citing the reputable sources which were available to the author at the time—among them Church Record Books, Bolton's *Exploration of the Southwest: 1542-1706*, O. T. White's *Historical Romance of El Paso*, and Commissioners' Court Minutes, Books 1 and 2, El Paso County Court House. Whether or not this history was ever published I have been unable to determine, but its date, its format, and the care that it displays in its documentation suggest that it may have been "commissioned" by those preparing for the 1936 ceremony in the old San Elizario cemetery.

In plain language, this manuscript says that the date of the founding of San Elizario "is uncertain." It quotes one Father Francisco G. de Ovedo, S.J. thus: ". . . in the year 1773 the Presidio system was reorganized and . . .

the presidio of Huajuquilla was removed to Valle de San Elizario." (This statement alone should have cushioned Dr. Porter's 1964 "blow"—except for the fact that most people did not know the 1773 location of Valle de San Elizario: fifty-four miles down the Rio Grande from El Paso del Norte.¹) The article also speaks of the *legend* of the "viceroy's palace," remarking the nonexistence of any documents whatsoever which would indicate a viceroy's residence in any San Elizario. It even speculates on the possible origin of the legend—attributing it, maybe, to the fact that an early commander-in-chief of the Presidio San Elizario had been one Luis Rey, that residents had later associated this Rey with *the Rey* (King) of Spain, and had deluded themselves with the notion that His Spanish Majesty had actually sent a regal representative to this far-flung outpost. But these remarks are only introductory. Substantially the article deals with the "recent"—and documented—history of San Elizario: its abundant grapevines from which fruit the people made so excellent a wine, its importance as a stopping place for caravans of merchants who plied between Santa Fe and the towns in Chihuahua and Sonora,² its hospitality as a stage stop along the Santa Fe trail, its "undisputed sway" (in O. T. White's words) "over the other towns in the country from 1849 to 1878."

Altogether this manuscript struck me as a remarkable document, and I was surprised to observe that no part of it was included in the "official" pamphlet commemorating the placement of the historical marker. Had the residents of San Elizario been exposed to its contents back in 1936, they may have reacted with less dismay, less "shock," fewer "anguished cries" to Dr. Porter's article in the fall of 1964.

And what has happened in these subsequent thirteen years? Has time eased the anguish? Dr. Porter's *Password* articles have been expanded into a book, handsomely illustrated by José Cisneros, (*San Elizario*, Austin, Pemberton Press, 1973.) Two historically important ceremonies, at least, have been held at San Elizario during the period. In November, 1972, the *El Paso Herald-Post* announced the forthcoming dedication "of the beautiful old San Elizario Mission as a National Historical Site." In reporting the ceremonies, *The El Paso Times* quotes a master of ceremonies as perpetuating the legend: "The mission was established in 1683 near the Mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe," and "in 1773 the mission was transferred to its present site and renamed Presidio de San Elizario." This statement by a master of ceremonies who evidently followed the legend on the 1936 marker is offset in some measure by a statement of James J. Crook, President of the El Paso County Historical Society, also quoted by the *Times*, that the building had been a chapel, not a mission, that this presidio chapel had originally been located at El Porvenir, and moved to its present site in 1780.³

In September, 1974, the El Paso Bi-Centennial Commission celebrated its organization by observing the 200th anniversary of San Elizario's birth. The Texas Historical Commission placed a new plaque on the old San Elizario Church, the facts thereon confirmed with Dr. Porter, and on all principal points in accord with his research. The community, too, was apparently in accord and the *Times* headline said "San Elizario 200 Years Old—Kicks Up her Heels for Fiesta."

But the legend on the 1936 historical marker refuses to die. On May 14, 1975, the *El Paso Herald-Post* printed a story about San Elizario's annual Fiesta de San Isidro, remarking that "The mission was first established . . .

in 1683" etc. etc.

Despite contradictions and controversy, there are abundant and undisputed facts to bolster our twilight dreaming around the old San Elizario plaza. On this spot there stood a Presidio of the Spanish crown, with its church, at least as early as 1788, the year that George Washington was elected President of a new nation. Here, in 1807, the first American to visit the Pass, Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike stopped at the old church and told in his memoirs of the village's "great hospitality."

Even the present structure has stood as a village church for more than a century. In 1877, one hundred years ago this December, it witnessed the grim climax to the El Paso Salt War. Twenty seven years earlier, San Elizario had been named the first county seat of El Paso County. Long before the coming of the railroads, it recorded the comings and goings of thousands of travelers. Out of the dusk of our reverie, there steals a train of Jefferson Davis's camels, proving their adaptability to the great American desert in 1857. San Elizario was an important way station in the great panorama of southwestern history, and the number of ghosts we can conjure up around the old church and Plaza is limited only by the depth of our research.

REFERENCES

1. In "The Founding of San Elizario," *Password* IX No. 3 (Fall, 1964), Dr. Porter wrote: ". . . the Reglamento of 1772 provided that the presidio at Cuajuquilla (sometimes written Huajuquilla and also Guajuquilla) be moved to the 'Valle de San Elizario,' but the Valley of San Elizario was not the present San Elizario but a stretch or block of the Rio Grande river at the present site of El Porvenir.
2. Cf. Eugene O. Porter, "San Elizario—Bower of Eden," *Password* XII, No. 1 (Spring, 1967), p. 11.
3. Dr. W. H. Timmons, Professor of History at the University of Texas at El Paso, states that Dr. Porter's research established 1780 as the date of the removal order, but that the removal was not completed until 1788.

BOOK REVIEWS

A GUIDE TO ANCIENT MEXICAN RUINS

by C. BRUCE HUNTER

(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, \$9.95, 261 pp.)

This is another welcome addition to libraries of the western world, and especially the libraries of our own border town, El Paso del Norte, the ancient pass to the ancient lands about which this book is written. Our guide, C. Bruce Hunter, has led archaeological expeditions into this wonder world over a period of more than twenty years for the American Museum of Natural History and New York University.

His introduction to this volume is outstanding and should be read thoroughly, no matter what the category of the reader—beginner, researcher, professional, or casual reader. He will gain a wonderful insight into these ancient peoples and their great civilizations. This section takes one back before 8,000 B.C. and down through the ages and on into the future and the extensive unknown ruins yet to be uncovered.

The principal part of the book is a guide to the ruins of several great civilizations of ancient Mexico, extending outward from Mexico City. Dr. Hunter has documented his findings with many beautiful colored plates, black and white illustrations and maps. An excellent photographer, he is personally responsible for the wealth of pictures. Even for those who use it as a fireside tour only, what a great way to spend some fascinating evenings!

As a researcher of a few years, this reviewer was happy to find Dr. Hunter had not been too narrow in his thoughts. He has not found every large building to be a temple or some other religious building. Surely such a people, with their vast knowledge of astronomy, mathematics, architectural design and other fields too numerous to name, had to have seats of learning. Why might not some of these buildings be characterized as universities?

This author has the foresight to indicate "I think it was this or that—but could have been used for some other purpose." This I admired in his writings.

The book is by no means a complete guide even to the known Mexican archaeological sites, and should be considered a companion volume to the author's previous work, *A Guide to Ancient Maya Ruins*. As a useful guide to the understanding and appreciation of specific ruins, or as a beacon to guide future exploration of ancient America, this book is highly recommended.

El Paso, Texas

FAY G. BRYSON

DICTIONARY OF THE OLD WEST

by PETER WATTS
Knopf, \$12.95

TOUR GUIDE TO THE OLD WEST

by ALICE CROMIE
Quadrangle, \$12.50

Did you know that a burro was a "Rocky Mountain canary" in the parlance of the Old West? The "Dictionary of the Old West" is filled with hundreds of these definitions: A two-gun man was one foolish enough to wear two guns; Lincoln shingles was a military word for hard-bread; badlands were lands literally bad from a cattleman or farmer's point of view. It meant they were savagely eroded, usually forming buttes and mesas.

That's just a sampling of 400 pages of meanings and explanations, all of them clearly stated and well defined. Many words we already know and understand: brand, critter, range, rodeo, cattle baron. Terms run the gauntlet from 1850 to 1900, and discuss cattlemen, frontiersmen, scouts, cowboys, gamblers.

"The Tour Guide to the Old West" outlines historic places to visit, special attention being paid to settlements, forts, museums, battlegrounds, landmarks, relics, cowboys, Indians and characters.

Alice Cromie organizes the book by states, then breaks each one down into villages and counties. Towns and states are in alphabetical order, easy to locate. Under each site there is a brief description, and from what I know about many of these places, the research is remarkably complete.

Under the heading of El Paso, we find Mt. Cristo Rey, the missions, Chamizal National Memorial (not a monument as listed in the book, the Centennial, the Cavalry and the El Paso Museum of Art, the Tigua Indian Reservation and the aerial tramway. I was impressed by a thorough listing of former Fort Bliss locations.

On the error side (and this amounts to nit-picking), the El Paso County Historical Society is not at the public library, although it formerly met there. And an obviously doctored photo of Billy the Kid refers to the young outlaw as "tiny" when he actually came close to being of average height, or maybe slightly shorter.

Both books deserve an A+. With the travel season, you wranglers should be getting copies of "Tour Guide to the Old West" and "Dictionary of the Old West." Then you will know not only where to go, but what to say.

University of Texas at El Paso

LEON C. METZ

ACTIVITIES OF YOUR SOCIETY



*Lt. Col. Bert C. Wright (ret), co-chairman, presents awards to Shar Stephens, Mrs. Catherine Reynolds, representing Nelle Hall, and Theresa Flores.
(photo by M. G. McKinney)*

Mrs. William A. Burgett, Chairman of the Frank W. Gorman Memorial Essay Contest has announced winners of the 1977 contest: 1st place, Shar Stephens, Morehead School, Kenneth George, Principal, Mr. Maguire, teacher; subject: Magoffin Home; 2nd place: Nelle Hall, Radford School, Principal Dr. Sherry Robertson, teacher Catherine Reynolds; subject: "Mr. El Paso." 3rd place: Theresa Flores, Blessed Sacrament School, Sister Patricia Ann, Principal, Mrs. Patricia Quinn, teacher; subject: "El Paso my home." The annual contest, for seventh grade students of southwestern history, was financed anonymously by Frank W. Gorman, a Society Board Member, prior to his death and is now financed by his family as a memorial.

SOCIETY BECOMES SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATION OF CAVALRY MUSEUM

At its June Board Meeting, Officers and Directors of the El Paso County Historical Society gave formal approval to an agreement under which the Society becomes the official supportive organization of the Cavalry Museum, located at 12901 Gateway West, in El Paso. For the City of El Paso, the agreement was signed by Dan M. Ponder, Mayor Pro-Tem, and for the Historical Society by James M. Peak, President.

In summary, the agreement provides that the Society will assist the City

in enlisting broad public support for the Museum, will explore means of expanding and funding, and through an appropriate committee of its members will assist in preparing the annual budget.

The Society will promote special educational projects at the Museum, co-operate in arranging facilities for distinguished visitors; assist in lectures, demonstrations and programs at the Museum, and work closely with the Museum Director to make available to Museum patrons books and publications compatible to further a general public knowledge of the Museum and its purposes.

The Directors of the El Paso County Historical Society will constitute the Cavalry Museum Board of Trustees, and the Officers of the Society will be officers of the Museum Board. The Board of Trustees will give advice and make recommendations to the City Council of El Paso on all matters concerning the Cavalry Museum.

The City, in consideration of the support by the Historical Society, will provide library space for bookcases, files, and records of the Society and desk space in the Museum office room. Space for displays will be provided when the Society desires to exhibit its collections and historical articles. It is understood that the Society does not, by this agreement, transfer to the City or the Museum ownership or title to any properties of the Society.

The Society and its members will have free access to the Museum at all reasonable times, including night meetings at least twice a month. The Society will be entitled to install its own telephone service, list the Museum as the Society address and have a suitable sign or marker for information of the public.

The agreement is to be in force for a period of five years, provided that either the City or the Society may elect to terminate it upon six months notice to the other party.

HISTORICAL MEMORIES CONTEST

Chairman E. Haywood Antone has announced October 15 as the closing date of the third annual Historical Memories Contest for Senior Citizens. The Society again offers \$100 first prize, \$50 second prize and \$25 third prize for the best historical memories essays by persons over 65 years of age. The essays, limited to 2,000 words or less, should be mailed to Historical Memories Contest, El Paso County Historical Society, P.O. Box 28, El Paso, Texas 79940.

HALL OF HONOR BANQUET

August 15th was the closing date for nominations to the El Paso Hall of Honor. The Hall of Honor Banquet, Sunday, November 20 at the El Paso Country Club, will honor two El Pasoans, one living and one deceased, who have made outstanding contributions to the history of the El Paso Southwest.

HISTORICAL DRAMA

For its August quarterly meeting, your Historical Society is again sponsoring an evening at the annual historical drama, *Paso del Norte*, in McKelligon Canyon. Details concerning reservations for the occasion, August 25th, 8 P.M., are being forwarded to all members in the Society news letter, *El Conquistador*.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

DR. CHARLES LELAND SONNICHSEN, author of the landmark history, *Pass of the North* and more than a dozen other historical works, is widely regarded as the number one historian of the southwest. He was admitted to the El Paso Hall of Honor in 1971 (*Password*, XVI, 146.) After a distinguished career of more than forty years at the University of Texas at El Paso (and its predecessors), he retired and began a new career as Editor in Chief of the Arizona Historical Society.

PATRICK RAND, First Vice-President of the El Paso County Historical Society, is a well known El Paso architect. A member of a pioneer El Paso family, he is the author of a previous article, "An Early Trip to Elephant Butte" (*Password*, XX, 111.) Curiosity about his own neighborhood prompted the thorough research for the current article.

JANE BURGESS PERRENOT is the daughter of pioneer El Paso lawyer Richard Fenner Burges, who was named to the El Paso Hall of Honor in 1962, (*Password*, VIII, 9). Mrs. Perrenot lives in the historic Burges home at 603 West Yandell Drive. (See *Password* XVIII, 181). She is a charter member and a Director of the Society.

LEOLA FREEMAN is a well known El Paso portrait artist. (See her portrait of Mrs. Otto Nordwald, *Password*, XXI, 138). Her father, portrayed in the current sketch, was Dr. W. S. Warnock, a leading El Paso dentist. Her brother W. Sheeley Warnock is a retired El Paso banker.

HERMINIA GONZALEZ will be remembered as the author of the delightful sketch, "The Mistletoe Tree," one of the winners in the 1975 Historical Memories Contest. (*Password*, XX, 172).

FAY G. BRYSON, born in North Carolina, has lived in El Paso since 1952, and has been an eager student of ancient America during most of that period. She was an active El Paso real estate agent prior to her marriage to the *Password* editor in 1974.

LEON C. METZ, El Paso's foremost chronicler of the era of the gunman, is Editor of the *El Paso Times* weekly book section. He is a member of the *Password* Editorial Board.

LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD has edited the Southwest Archives feature of *Password* since 1973. She is Assistant Professor of English at U-T El Paso, where she earned her BA degree. Her MA is from the University of Michigan.

HARRIOT HOWZE JONES is the wife of former Society President Col. H. Crampton Jones, and is editor of the Society Publication, *El Paso, A Centennial Portrait*. She is a past director of the Society.

SOME OLD FRONTIER HINTS AND REMEDIES

For burns, try glycerine and bay rum, equal parts. A burn will not blister if this is put on at once.

A sure cure for eczema. Five cents worth of red precipite, five cents worth of venus turpentine; make a smooth salve by mixing with unsalted butter. Apply freely to parts afflicted—it will turn dark and appear to be worse after two or three applications, but this is a sure sign that the germs are coming to the surface and will be killed. The skin will then become soft and white as any other part of the body.

To cure cancer. Make a strong tea of red clover blossoms. Drink the tea freely and make a poultice of some of the blossoms and apply directly to the cancer.

A bag of hot sand relieves neuralgia.

Warm borax water will remove dandruff.

Nervous spasms can be relieved by dissolving a little salt in the mouth.

Eggs are considered one of the best remedies for dysentery; beaten up slightly and swallowed they tend to lessen the inflammation of stomach and intestines.

For a sprained ankle the whites of eggs and powdered alum made into a plaster is almost a specific.

Do not approach contagious diseases with an empty stomach, nor sit between the sick and the fire, because the heat attracts the vapor.

To exterminate bedbugs, put ten cents worth of corrosive sublimate into ten cents worth of alcohol and when dissolved add ten cents worth of oil of cedar and one-half pint of turpentine. Apply with brush once or twice if necessary.

For toothache or pain in the face, mix salt with a beaten egg until about the consistency of mustard. Use same as a mustard plaster. This is also good for sprains.

A linen towel heated as hot as can be borne and applied to the throat will stop the worst case of nausea.

Sure cure for pneumonia. Saturate a ball of cotton one inch in diameter with spirits of grain alcohol, and three drops of chloroform to each ball of cotton, place it between the patient's teeth (after first using vaseline on the gums to prevent burning) and let the patient inhale the fumes in long deep breaths for 15 minutes; then rest for 15 minutes or more, inhale again and repeat the above for 20 times. Change the cotton every seven minutes, else the saliva will dilute the alcohol. The result is that the lungs will relax and expand to their normal condition; in 24 hours the patient is out of danger and in 48 hours the patient is cured, although weak.

Cure for worms. Take pumpkin seed, remove the hull and eat kernel same as candy. Eat as many as you like. They will destroy any kind of worm, also tapeworm.

Potpourri of Yesteryear.

Cambray Enterprises, Deming, New Mexico
E. Gretchen VanderMeer, Ed., 1974

