PASSWORD

THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PASSWORD

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PASSWORD

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1981 HALL OF HONOR PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Gertrude Goodman
President, El Paso County Historical Society

What more can be said about the history of this area which has not been said during this fantastic year of the celebration of Four Centuries of El Paso's history? Truly, there has been an historical awakening throughout this country and especially right here in El Paso during 1981, which has been a year of historical celebrations. The grandest, of course, was the Four Centuries '81 celebration which culminated in the big Birthday Party in July. We also celebrated the 100th birthday of Clint's and El Paso's railroads, the State National Bank, the *El Paso Times* and the *El Paso Herald-Post*, and the 300th anniversary of the first Catholic settlement in the El Paso area. It has been a special year!

The Hall of Honor banquet serves as a kind of annual meeting when the president reports on the year's highlights.

For more than four years, the Historical Society has been the support group for the City's Museum of History. A room in the Museum became available this year in which the Society can store its archives, and quarterly meetings are held at the Museum. A five-year agreement to continue this relationship is under review. The Woman's Department of the Chamber of Commerce, under the direction of Grace Chope, added a towering windmill to the History Museum's picnic area which they developed last year. Trees were planted there in memory of three beloved and dedicated Society members. Many members have given their time and talent as Museum docents.

In the spring, the Historical Society hosted the opening reception at the History Museum for 500 delegates to the joint annual meetings of the Texas State Historical Association and the Historical Society of New Mexico. This was the first El Paso meeting for these two groups.

Our membership increased to 850, many of which are for couples, for an estimated 1,500 individuals. Some of our members attended the unveiling of San Elizario's historic Juan de Oñate monument to which the Society contributed when it was proposed by Dr. W. H. Timmons. Our members also participated in the rededication of the Magoffin Home as a Texas Historical Site and were guests of Maury Page Kemp at the dedication of the Martin Building as another such site.

Through the generosity of Evern Wall, president and board chairman of the El Paso Electric Co., our members received copies of Tom Lea's republished book, *Twelve Travelers Through the Pass of the North.*

Quarterly meetings provided excellent speakers. We appreciate the Gannett Foundation's provision of transportation funds for one of these

speakers. Cassette tapes of the meetings were placed in the society's permanent collections.

An article in the Fall issue of *Password* was the inspiration for a well-attended art exhibit on "Early El Paso Artists" at the El Paso Centennial Museum of the University of Texas at El Paso.

We continued our membership in the National Association of State and Local History and sent Barbara Ardus, the new Museum of History curator, to the association's annual meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia.

To encourage historical writing, we continued to sponsor the Frank Gorman Memorial Essay Contest for students and the Historical Memories Contest for senior citizens, as well as an annual award for the best article contributed to *Password.*

During the Four Centuries '81 celebration, the Society cast 2,550 official medallions, of which all but 25 have been sold. At the July Birthday Party, the Historical Society exhibited historic photographs and postcards in a booth at the Civic Center.

The October Tour of Historic Homes in Kern Place was a great success, due to the hard work of the chairman, numerous volunteers and the hospitality of eight generous home owners. Proceeds from this and other projects are returned to the community in meaningful support of history-related activities.

According to a recent survey by the El Paso County Historical Commission, there are now 20 groups in El Paso interested in historical preservation. When the Historical Society was founded in 1954, there was little focus on this. A plan should be initiated for coordinating the efforts of these groups with common goals in order to preserve structures of historical value. It is also hoped that these organizations may encourage the placing of an important piece of sculpture as a monument to El Paso's history.

Looking ahead to 1982, the first official observance of Women's History Week is planned. In the spring, this Society will be among Texas cities co-sponsoring "New Approaches to Community History," including a four-day workshop in El Paso. The Texas Sesquicentennial celebration is coming up in 1986.

To say the least, history has a future!

TRIBUTE TO HENRY C. TROST (1860-1933)

by Mary A. Sarber

Of all the professions, architects have left the most visible mark on our civilization, but ironically are among the least recognized. Few of us, unless we are architects or art historians, can name more than two or three throughout history. Yet we urbanites live much of our lives inside buildings, or walking and driving past buildings, or staring out of windows at buildings. We recognize immediately in paintings and photographs many famous buildings—the Parthenon, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Capitol Building, or Bassett Tower.

Yes, the Bassett Tower in downtown El Paso. I mention this particular building because it is nearly forgotten by El Pasoans. For 25 years it visually dominated the downtown skyline of the city, much as the Empire State and Wrigley buildings once stood out on the skylines of New York and Chicago. Larger and higher buildings constructed in El Paso since 1954 have almost completely hidden from view what art historian Clarke Garnsey has called the finest example of setback skyscraper in the Southwest, and one of the finest in the country.

I am here before you tonight to pay tribute to an architect, to the man who designed the Bassett Tower as well as hundreds of others buildings in El Paso and throughout our Southwest: Henry Charles Trost.

Henry Trost the man remains something of an enigma. He left behind no diaries, no letters, and only a few passages of his own writing on architecture. The meager facts and the form of his life are as follows:

He was born in Toledo, Ohio, on March 5, 1860. His parents were German immigrants, his father a carpenter and building contractor. In 1880 young Henry Trost headed west, moving to Denver and his first known training with an architectural firm.

Trost worked in Denver, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs for several years. His first known building, designed in partnership with Frank A. Weston, was the Colorado Springs City Hall, completed in 1883. Trost continued to move about restlessly, and is known to have worked in Dallas, Fort Worth, Galveston, New Orleans, and Dodge City during the 1880s. In 1888 he moved to Chicago, where he was to live for eight years, a period very important to his later career.

During the Chicago years, Trost made his living as a designer of ornamental metalwork. He was a member of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club, a group of draftsmen and artists who met regularly to sketch together and for lectures on architecture. Louis Sullivan was then

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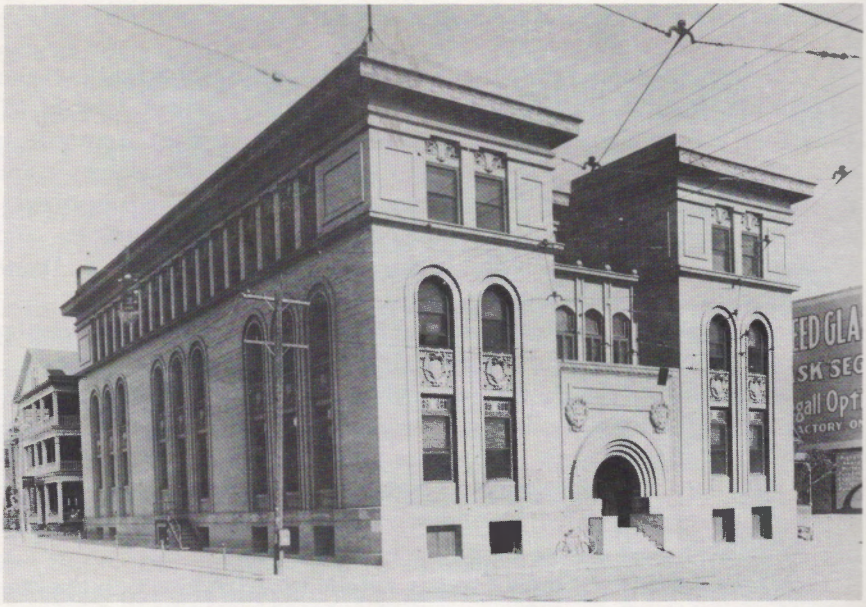
Mary A. Sarbar, a member of the Historial Society's Board of Directors, is coordinator of services and collections for the El Paso Public Library. She was named 1981 Librarian of the Year by the Border Regional Library Association and is a regular contributor to *Password*.



The Young Men's Christian Assocation, a buff brick building, was designed by Henry Trost in 1906 and was completed in 1908 on the southeast corner of Missouri and North Mesa. It was demolished in 1961.

at the height of his success, and Frank Lloyd Wright was a young member of his firm. Trost had contact with both these men, although how much and of what sort is difficult to document. It is known that Sullivan often participated in the acitivities of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club, and that Trost designed some metalwork for Sullivan buildings. The influence of both Sullivan and Wright on Trost's work is undeniable, as the evidence is clearly visible in the design of many of Trost's later buildings.

Leaving Chicago, he returned briefly to Colorado. In 1899 he moved to Tucson, accompanied by his sister Louise. He was successful almost immediately, and designed some of his best buildings there (e.g. the two Owls Club buildings). His clients included most of the successful businessmen of Tucson. It was also during these years that he closely observed the San Xavier del Bac Mission, another influence to be seen in his later buildings. The arid Southwest, as Trost himself termed our region, appealed to his aesthetic sensibilities and he became interested in designing buildings to suit both the terrain and the climate. He was probably the first Southwestern architect to do so consistently and successfully.

In 1902 Henry's brother, Gustavus Adolphus, or Gus, came to El Paso to supervise the construction of the El Paso Public Library's Carnegie building. It is said to have been at Gus's urging that Henry decided to move from Tucson to El Paso, which may have seemed the more dynamic city and hence a better location for an ambitious architect. Also, El Paso was more centrally located in the wide region Trost hoped to serve. At any rate, Henry and Gus, along with their nephew George Ernest Trost, established the firm of Trost and Trost in 1903. In 1905 Gus's twin brother, Adolphus Gustavus, known as Ad, and a sister, Matilda, also joined the family enclave in El Paso.

The question is occasionally raised as to why Henry gets all the attention and most of the credit for the buildings designed by Trost and Trost, Lloyd and June Engelbrecht, authors of the recently published book on Trost *(Henry C. Trost, Architect of the Southwest,* El Paso Public Library Association, 1981), have been researching the firm for 15 years. Their findings indicate that Henry was without doubt chief designer for the firm during his lifetime. Newspaper stories about Trost and Trost bear this out, and individuals who had first-hand knowledge of the operation of the firm have consistently named Henry as the designer. The firm could not have prospered, of course, without the work of the other members, and there is no intention of slighting their talents or efforts. Henry is singled out for his vision and for his ability to design pleasing and suitable buildings.

Trost and Trost's business in El Paso expanded at a phenomenal rate. El Paso was growing rapidly, its population doubling between 1900 and 1910, and again between 1910 and 1920. Contributing factors were the city's importance as a mining and railroad center, the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, and the completion of Elephant Butte Dam. Trost continued to receive commissions in Arizona, and sought out business in New Mexico by opening a branch office in Albuquerque. In Texas he designed buildings in Austin, San Angelo, Van Horn, Alpine, and Marfa.

In total the firm's output must have exceeded 1,000 buildings. Some day we will have a catalog of his buildings, though it probably will never be complete. One newspaper article of the 1920s refers to Trost and Trost as having designed 250 school buildings alone.

But it is the El Paso buildings which understandably interest us the most. Trost designed at least 300 in El Paso. Such a concentration of buildings by one architect is rare, not only in the Southwest but anywhere in the world. By 1980 the El Paso chapter of the American Institute of Architects compiled "A List of 15 Most Architecturally Significant Older (50 Years or More) Buildings in the El Paso Area."

Eight of these buildings, more than half, were designed by Trost and Trost.

These are the reasons for which Henry C. Trost, representing the firm of Trost and Trost, deserves to be inducted into the Hall of Honor. No other single person has had such a visible and lasting influence on our city. Some of his major buildings are regrettably gone—the old YMCA, the Posener Building, the Brazos Apartments—and some at present have uncertain futures—the Roberts-Banner Building, the Paso del Norte and Cortez hotels—but many are alive and well in central El Paso. Bassett Tower has been well maintained by the Bassett family. The exterior of the old Temple Mount Sinai, recently purchased by El Paso Community College, is to be preserved as Trost designed it. Home Mortgage Company has successfully converted the old State National Bank Building to modern use. The old White House Department Store is now a complex of small shops and restaurants. The Mills Building, although somewhat modified, is still handsome and vital under the stewardship of the El Paso Electric Company. Many residences designed by Trost have been maintained or recently returned to their original design. Trost's own home has been beautifully preserved by its previous owners, Blanche Groesbeeck Foster and the late John N. Groesbeeck, and by its present owner, Malcolm McGregor.

Henry Trost and the firm of Trost and Trost were well known nationally and even internationally during his lifetime, as evidenced in the number of articles and photographs of their buildings to be found in architectural journals of the day. By 1970 that reputation was virtually forgotten. I am happy to say that it is now once again growing. In addition to the recent book about him, Trost's name is appearing in new histories of American architecture, and papers on his buildings are being read at meetings of architectural historians. The growing interest in historic preservation throughout the Southwest brings the El Paso Public Library's Southwest Collection almost weekly calls or letters from architects and historians throughout the region seeking information or photographs or plans.

A number of Trost's buildings have been successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. It is not yet generally known in El Paso, but last March fifteen of Trost's downtown El Paso commercial buildings were added to the National Register as a group in the first thematic nomination submitted to Washington by the Texas Historical Commission.

As you can see, Henry C. Trost and the firm of Trost and Trost are once again coming into their own. I am pleased and gratified to have had a small part in furthering the recognition which is due the Trost family.

Henry C. Trost, an architect whose buildings we El Pasoans see and enjoy every day, deserves to join the company of other distinguished El Pasoans in the El Paso County Historical Society's Hall of Honor.

Taking part in the Hall of Honor recognition for the late El Paso architect Henry C. Trost were, from left, Malcolm McGregor, who now resides in the Trost home; Ernest Trost of Oakland, California, nephew of the architect; Miss Gertrude Goodman, Society president; and Mary Sarber who gave the tribute address.

(Photo by Frank Hunter Jr.)

TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM CHAVEZ JR.

by Conrey Bryson

The Rio Grande, nearly dry at this season, forms a bold blue line on the map, separating two nations, peoples and cultures. Often it divides them, but on some precious occasions, it unites them. Tonight, we invite you to look back to the 1930s, when El Paso was emerging from the depression. An 11-year-old-boy, his violin case in hand, would board a streetcar on Saturday mornings on Alameda Avenue. The streetcar would often be crowded with soldiers from Fort Bliss who learned that, for a few dimes, the boy could be induced to open the violin case and play some wondrous music. He would ride downtown, transfer to the Juárez streetcar, and ride across the Rio Grande to receive his weekly violin lesson from Professor Diéguez. At the bridge, immigration inspectors would ask the usual questions, then would ask the boy to prove that he was really a violinist. His music became a key that brightened the daily toils of these men, and formed a mystic bridge that is still a bond between neighbor nations. That 11-year-old boy was Abraham Chávez Jr.

He was born in El Paso on March 6, 1927, in a tenement house on South Stanton Street, the last house before you came to the river. It was long ago torn down when the river was moved northward to settle the Chamizal dispute.

When was Abraham first interested in music? His mother thought it was before he was born, and his recognizable gift for music developed early. Abraham remembers but dimly the early years in El Paso. His father, having difficulty finding employment in the United States, moved to Ciudad Juárez in order to provide for his family. Times were hard, but young Abraham could not be called "underprivileged"; he was most privileged by having devoted parents who loved him and cared about his future.

Abraham Chávez Sr. was an untrained but gifted musician. He loved the company of musicians, and often instrumentalists from Juarez cabarets and restaurants would gather at the Chávez home to play informally after their work was done. Night after night, the boy would be lulled to sleep by the sounds of good music. Sometimes the men would leave their instruments there, and early in the morning, the awakening 3-year-old Abraham would try to make sounds with them. Mrs. Chávez found herself telling her husband, "Would you believe it? Our little boy can play! He can make music!"

Conrey Bryson served a record three terms as president of the El Paso County Historical Society and for five years was editor of *Password*. He has published three books about El Paso history and has just completed another.

Unbelieving, the father listened. Yes—the boy could make music! "If you can make so much music with one finger," he suggested, "let me show you how to use all four. Then, instead of just one string, you can use all four."

The next step was to get the boy his first violin, made just the right size by a good Juárez carpenter. It served him until he grew large enough for a full-size instrument. Tonight we celebrate the 50th anniversary of that little boy's first performance on a violin, at the age of 4, using an instrument fashioned with great care by a Juárez craftsman, tuned with superb skill by a loving father. Characteristically, he gave away that violin years ago, to a boy who could not afford his first violin.

Mr. and Mrs. Chávez decided to move back to the United States in order to give their children the best education possible. Because he had a prospering business, this meant tremendous financial sacrifice. Much of his property would be confiscated, and he would have few prospects of employment in El Paso, with only money enough to buy a modest home.

The next few years were difficult but happy. The father and son would go from restaurant to restaurant and bar to bar, playing music for 10 cents a tune, from a list of 600. Patrons could select from the list what they wanted to hear—waltzes, mazurkas, tangos, two-steps, ballads—for a dime and an occasional treat of Coca Cola.

Every day young Abraham was polishing his skills. He took lessons in Juarez from a wonderful teacher, Edmundo J. Diéguez, who, lacking formal training himself, had developed his skills sufficiently to compose a violin concerto and a symphony. In later years, his apt pupil had the pleasure of conducting that symphony at a concert in Juárez.

Abraham outgrew his small violin, secured another at great sacrifice, and began studies with a new teacher, Robert Semon, violinist with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. At age 13, Abraham Chávez Jr. was accepted as a violinist with that same orchestra. He had entered a new world of music, and seized every opportunity to gain more knowledge and sharpen his skills. While a student at El Paso High School, he was invited to teach band and orchestra at Dudley School.

During his senior year in high school, as a member of the Student Council, he brought together eight public and parochial high schools into what was called an "eight-ball concert," with each school bringing its own musical organization to present a mass concert and dance. Each school had a princess, and the one from St. Joseph's Academy was lovely Lucy Villegas. Before the year was out, on November 18, 1945, she and Abraham were married. For 36 years she has shared his struggles and his successes, along with their four children, two of whom are musicians.

In that same year, the 18-year-old high school graduate accepted a position as music director at Ysleta High School, instructing the band, orchestra, drum corps and choir. He thus laid a solid foundation for a life-long career as teacher and leader in the boundless realm of music.

After a semester at Ysleta High, Abraham was called into military service. The war had just ended. Gen. G. Ralph Meyer, who had followed young Chávez' career with great interest in El Paso, suggested him for director of the Army Ground Forces Orchestra and Chorus, which later became the United States Field Forces Band. Along with the Army, Navy and Marine Bands, this organization toured much of the country, presenting entertainment to encourage the purchase of government savings bonds. The venture was highly successful and gave young Chávez valuable experience.

Two years later, back in civilian life, he resumed his place in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra and a busy schedule of teaching private lessons. During this period, El Pasoans could hear some excellent music on KTSM Radio, and we who were there still remember with affection the Strings of Melody with Ruth Lewis, Robert Semon, Russell Barrett and Abraham Chávez.

In 1949, at age 22, Chávez became concertmaster of the El Paso Symphony. He still felt the need of more formal training and enrolled at Texas Western College, now the University of Texas at El Paso. As both student and teacher, he had a fruitful career at the college and received his degree in music in 1959.

His career took a new turn in 1961 when Dr. E.A. Thormodsgaard, chairman of the college's Music Department, introduced him to Warner Imig, dean of the College of Music at the University of Colorado. As a result, Abraham spent the next five summers as a visiting lecturer in music at that university. Much as he loved El Paso, he was made an offer in 1966 that he could not refuse. He was given a full professorship, with tenure, at the University of Colorado, and was made a member of the Executive Committee of the College of Music and head of the string and orchestra department.

The next eight years found Abraham Chávez a name honored in musical circles throughout the West. He was elected president of the Colorado-Wyoming String Teachers Association, was in yearly demand as guest conductor for all-state, all-region and all-city orchestras in several states, and was invited seven times to conduct the New Mexico All-State Orchestra. Similar appearances were made in San Antonio, Dallas, cities in Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming, and at the Golden Spike Memorial Concert in Utah. A respected and loved teacher, he was chosen by students of the University of Colorado to receive the Thomas

Jefferson award, given to the teacher who best exemplified and promoted the democratic ideals of Thomas Jefferson.

These were golden years, but the Chávez family was yearning for golden sunshine. Lucy insists there were 29 snowstorms in one year. She counted every one!

As its 1974 season approached, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra was facing a crisis. Its longtime director, Orlando Barera, had died. His successor had resigned. The board decided to bring in eight different directors for the eight-concert season.

The first performance of the year was a memorable event, the opening one for the new Civic Center Theater. The man chosen to conduct, Abraham Chávez Jr., was given a fitting welcome in his home town. He achieved an artistic and personal triumph, and was recalled to the stage again and again in a testimony of appreciation.

As far as the symphony board was concerned, its search was ended, if the position could be made sufficiently attractive to lure Chávez away from Colorado. Negotiations were opened whereby he could return to the University of Texas at El Paso as professor and director of instrumental music, and also take the position of musical director of the symphony. Fortunately for us all, he accepted.

His seventh season as director is now under way. I asked him how he would summarize his efforts. His quick reply was: "Take the music to the people." This he has done in many ways. He instituted the summer concerts, unfortunately eliminated in this lean year of 1981. He restored the El Paso Youth Symphony, many of whose graduates are now members of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. There would be many more, he says, if El Paso's financial support for music were great enough to keep more of the best students here.

You have to find musicians where they are, and bring them to the world's finest music. The El Paso Symphony, under Chávez' direction, has performed with rock and roll groups, country and western singers, and stage bands. It has integrated its performances with ballet, with mime performers, and with mariachis. As community support has increased, the Symphony last year, celebrating its 50th anniversary, inaugurated a new program, performing each of its concerts on two successive nights. This was an approach to becoming a full-time professional orchestra. Achieving that goal will require much more community support, but we are well on our way, and the name, character, and skills of Abraham Chávez Jr. constitute a major force in that progress.

His home town has honored him in many ways. He was named the outstanding ex-student of El Paso High School, received the Rotary Club Achievement Award and the City of El Paso Conquistador Award.

Abraham Chavez Jr., left, was honored as the living recipient of the Hall of Honor distinction. His award was presented by Society president Gertrude Goodman, with the tribute by Conrey Bryson. *(Photo by Frank Hunter Jr.)*

The League of United Latin American citizens named him its outstanding citizen, and the MacDowell Club and the El Paso Music Teachers Association gave him awards of merit.

History, if it is to be more than an interesting pastime, must look to our future as well as our past. It is with utmost confidence in many grand and glorious accomplishments yet to come in the bright career of Abraham Chávez Jr.—and in the lives of the many young boys and girls brought into the world of music to follow the road he has charted—that we proudly inscribe his name on the roll of the El Paso Hall of Honor.

EARLY EL PASO ARTISTS — 1900-1940
(Part II)

by Carol Ann Price

El Paso may have lagged behind Taos and other exclusive art colonies of that type in national recognition for its artists, but our town had something they never had: a very strong movement of Depression Art, as it is now known. As the shadow of depression lengthened over men out of jobs and in breadlines, artists especially felt the economic strain. By 1934 the depression was in full swing, even out West.

As the unemployment lines lengthened, the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP) was born as President Roosevelt recognized that the fine arts suffer during any depression. The far-reaching master idea of the PWAP program had two main goals: to support the artists in financial need and to encourage the development of a truly American art. President Roosevelt decided to "pay craftsmen's wages to relieve the unemployed conditions of artists...the sum of $1,039,000 to be disbursed under the supervision of the U.S. Treasury for the purpose of alleviating the distress of the American artist, and of carrying on the proposed plan to embellish public property."[34]

Practically any medium used in the production of art was to be subject to remuneration—murals, oils, watercolors, prints, sculpture, Indian arts, ceramics, iron works, etc. Eventually some 3,749 U.S. artists benefited under the program, producing 15,683 works of art including 706 murals and 3,821 oil paintings. Of those, 511 works were displayed in Washington, D.C.

Two rules for artist employment were: 1) that the artist is actually in need of employment and 2) that he qualifies as an artist to produce work which would be an embellishment to public property. The general theme was simply American Art.

Due to the PWA Program, there were more artists at work at the same time, and working toward given goals, than ever before in the history of the country. Younger artists were working with older artists, each in turn receiving valuable help. Art works were placed in schools and public buildings throughout the country. "The public may grasp within a few minutes," one writer said of the massive exhibition in Washington, "the history, story of industry, war, peace, inventions, etc., of the Americans. The best art is not from the New York schools, but from Iowa, California, and Texas."[35]

Carol Ann Price holds a Master's degree in history from the University of Texas at El Paso and is pursuing a doctorate at UT Austin. The first article of this series appeared in the Fall 1981 issue of *Password*. Her grandfather, artist Eugene Thurston, was a primary resource person for this article.

El Paso was among large cities in the country listed as having outstanding works in the government program. The PWAP gave rise to many beautiful murals and paintings in the Federal and County courthouses, public schools and other public buildings. Contracts went to El Paso artists for portraits, murals, stained glass work and stage settings. Mrs. Leola Freeman was commissioned to paint portraits of Judges Joseph Magoffin and Allen Blacker, pioneers who figured prominently in the development of the city. Ralph Baker, under a PWA commission, created stained glass windows for Crockett and Coldwell schools.

Floyd Crews and his helper, Edwin Jones, painted modernistic stage scenery for Bowie High School. Crews also executed a large mural of a western scene at the YMCA. Audley Dean Nicols completed a mural of mountain scene for Austin High School. Mrs. Beth Blake, an El Paso artist who later moved to Phoenix, was commissioned to do a set of six watercolors and lithographs of local industries for the city schools. Mrs. Hazel Wilson painted the El Paso smelter, the Smeltertown houses, and beyond, the International Monument marking the boundary of the United States and Mexico at Mount Muleros, later called Mount Cristo Rey.

Irving Schwartz, a fine charcoal artist and etcher, executed etchings of southwestern subjects for El Paso High School. The College of Mines was blessed with six large frescoes at Holliday Hall, the only ones painted in watercolor on plaster under the PWA program in Texas and Oklahoma. The murals, whose titles included "Mining" and "Metallurgy," were done by Emilio García Cahero, who had been painting frescoes in Mexico for many years, and a group of artists working under him. "True fresco is a watercolor process," said Dr. John S. Ankeny, regional PWAP director and Dallas Museum of Fine Arts director, during a visit to El Paso, "since it is done while the plaster is still fresh; thus the painting is permanently fixed. If the artist doesn't finish before the plaster sets, the unfinished part must be chipped away and the wall replastered before the artist can finish." A newspaper photo showed Cahero on his scaffold dwarfed by the vast drama of men and machines that he was painting. Some local artists objected to giving the work to a Mexican citizen, but Cahero replied that art has no nationality. He liked El Paso and eventually married a local woman, Leila Price.[36]

Another monumental project for the PWAP was accomplished by Ruth Augur, formerly registrar of the College of Mines. She attempted the largest mural painting project in America—measuring 1,136 square feet—for the Enid, Oklahoma, courthouse. After painstaking research, she depicted early days in Oklahoma in panels entitled "The Home-

seekers' Trail," "Commerce Trail," "Cattle Trail," "Explorer's Trail," "Hunting Trail," and "Ranchers' Trail."[37]

Elliott Means, who had left El Paso for New York, was lured to Washington by a commission to make two 10-foot sculptures for the Government Printing Office. A *Herald-Post* photo in December, 1937, shows him dwarfed by the sculpture he called "The Printer." "America," he said, "is beating out its own art, with less and less influence from abroad."[38]

Unable to get a PWAP commission, sculptor Don La Marr worked for the Works Progress Administration (WPA), mixing mortar for the city and county parks. Eventually he was engaged to model a white plaster figure he called "The Fish Girl" for Memorial Park's Hilltop Garden. "The beauty of this fountain piece," observed a 1936 writer, "is the modeling of the child's body. The lines of the back, the shoulder blades, the ripples in the young muscles are startlingly realistic and have a poetic quality. The child's bobbed hair is blowing back from her ears. The figure is alive and well proportioned."[39]

José Aceves, who as a schoolboy had been inspired by Audley Dean Nicols, at the age of 28 was among seven Texans recognized as muralists for Federal government projects. He was commissioned to paint murals of the old Pony Express for two U.S. post offices. Another was Tom Lea Jr., who had already painted several murals in the East and two in the Texas Centennial building in Dallas. He won a much-publicized contest to see who would paint the large mural of El Paso history for the U.S. Court House. The fee was to be $3,700. Forty-nine artists from six states sent color sketches of proposed subjects. Among El Pasoans entering with Lea were Hari Kidd, Floyd Crews, Dr. Horst Schreck, Vic Quintana and Ruth Augur. Irving Schwartz chaired the selection committee for the PWA. Lea's proposal was to depict early Southwestern history with conquistadores, plainsmen, Indians, an old prospector, a sheriff, and the setting of the Pass of the North with the Franklin Mountains beyond the Rio Grande. Articles in the *El Paso Times* and the *Herald-Post* detailed every step of his work. Charles Ewing Waterhouse built his scaffold. A search for authentic costumes led Lea to basements and attics of many El Paso homes, and even to Mexico and Hollywood, "the only place where I can get the authentic armor for the conquistadores," he explained. His grandfather's buckskin was suitable, and he chose his father, an attorney, as model for the sheriff's stern profile. A charro from Juárez posed for the Mexican figure, and a Franciscan friar from a local seminary posed, holding a cross. It took Lea more than a year to complete the mural, which measured 42 feet long and 11 feet high, with 9-foot-tall figures. Entitled "Pass of the North," it is still a major feature of the U.S. Court House.[40]

El Paso had been graced with a set of outstanding murals by an Eastern artist for the previous Federal Court House that stood at Mills and Oregon. These "Texas Under Six Flags" murals were saved and moved to the old First National Bank until it closed, then later found a permanent home at the El Paso International Airport.[41]

Muralmania

All this mural making was part of a national fad, and many artists were making murals on their own. Eugene Thurston spent a year doing a set of large murals, 6 by 11 feet, at home in his garage. "I didn't try for a PWAP commission," he said, "because I had a job and I didn't need it." Because of the depression, however, his employer had reduced the work force and he was doing two men's work at the same wage as before. His greeting card and lithograph business helped pull his family through hard times. One of his later murals, "West Texas," hung in the Southwest National Bank on Mills Street, predecessor of the First City Bank.

In the middle 1930s businesses commissioned artists to do murals, reliefs and sculptures to beautify their establishments. Floyd Crews was persuaded to leave northern New Mexico long enough to paint murals in the Hotel St. Regis showing a Pueblo Indian ceremony, and a western scene for the YMCA. José Aceves' series of murals depicting the history of Mexico, was displayed in the show windows of the Popular. His brother, Bártolo (Bert) Aceves, was inspired by this to produce a bronze statue of Hernán Cortez, conqueror of Mexico, for the lobby of Hotel Cortez. Edmond Senn, a sculptor who had moved here from Hollywood, was paid to do a lifesize statue of golf champion Bobby Jones for the Municipal Golf Course. He also executed the ornate ceilings of the El Paso National Bank, the new addition to the First National, and the figures and friezes for First Baptist Church and the Loretto Academy chapel.

Camille Kibler Craig, who had already painted several murals for Fort Bliss, completed a stage setting for the Little Theater and a mural which she entitled "Stormsville." A specialist in portraits and desert scenes, she was noted for clever drawing technique as well as artistic handling of color. The picturesque little settlement of squatters on what is now Rim Road was a popular subject. The settlement was populated by refugees from Rio Grande flood waters and was named after the owner of the land, D. Storms. Groups of adobe houses surrounded a mission.

Xavier González, a recognized art authority from San Antonio, liked to sketch the Stormsville mission when visiting in El Paso. With watercolors and a bucket of water, he would hike up the mesa with Eugene

Thurston and Urbici Soler, who had come to El Paso in 1933. Soler was invited by his friend, Father Lourdes Costa of Smeltertown, to construct the statue of Christ the King on Mount Cristo Rey. The monument, of which Father Costa had dreamed for years, began with a limestone rock Soler located in Austin. He chiseled off about 100 tons of it with a jackhammer and brought it on railroad freight cars to El Paso. After seven years' hard work by Soler, the monument was dedicated in 1939. The sculptor had, besides creating the statue, supervised the hauling of the giant blocks up the narrow, winding path to the mountain top.[42]

Some Were Left Out

It is apparent that Depression Art fostered many a creative effort on the part of native and visiting El Pasoans. Some were left out of the breadbasket, however. The PWAP could not support everybody, nor could the private businesses do so in depression times. El Paso had many young painters and others interested in art who were unable to pursue careers in art, and often their talents became neglected and wasted. One such artist was Robert Pavía, who was 25 years old in 1933. His talent had been discovered when he was jailed on a vagrancy charge. Police Sgt. John Ott got him a job painting landscapes on signboards for the McClintock Outdoor Advertising Co. Pavía practiced during lunch and after hours painting scenes he remembered from childhood in Mexico, using pencils, crayons, charcoal and oils. He was laid off when times got hard. Around police headquarters he could sometimes get $1 to $5 for pictures of offices. "Some day I hope to go to an art school," Pavía said. "Then I'm going to be a great artist and paint great people and great scenes."[43] But apparently he never got there.

Ricardo Díaz, 20 in 1933, fared a little better. He loved painting character studies, such as a tortilla maker, a serape maker, a horseback rider and a pulque maker. He also made the frames for his pictures, carving ordinary wood with a rustic look. Helping to suport a family of eight relatives in South El Paso, he lacked money to study art, but was discovered by Emilio Cahero, the Holliday Hall muralist. Cahero gave the young man free lessons and Díaz in turn held classes of his own, teaching six children twice weekly at the Associated Charities. The idea of working to help the less fortunate develop their talents, and of sharing one's talent with others for the good of all, was one of the positive results of the "red" art movement.[44]

Painting "Red": Politics in Art

Perhaps because the depression brought about the crash of so many

hopes and dreams, not only in the U.S. but around the world, people—especially young people who saw no promise of a future for themselves—started questioning the ideals of capitalism and democracy. Bolshevism, with its promise of a better future for all, was on the rise. In Mexico especially, the idea began to grow that communism was the answer. It affected the art because it intrigued the artists. Politics, rather than appreciation of beauty, began to dominate artistic expression, more in Mexico than here, but it was felt in the U.S. as well. Many artists played politics with their paintings, showing suffering and need in an effort to shock the viewer into recognizing the realities of society and awakening to the need to change to a system that promised a better future.

Diego Rivera in Mexico was among the leaders of this school of political art. Emilio Cahero, one of his students, left Mexico because he felt that the Bolshevist influence was ruining Mexican art, "Art should be a thing of beauty;...a connoisseur of art does not have to be an artist, but he must have an appreciation of beauty," he said, adding that much of the political art "does not even show talent, and is encouraged by artists, in the main, who are incapable of producing a more advanced type of work." Most modern political art, he felt, was reverting to the "infantile, slate drawings of childhood." Showing his indoctrination by the trend in Mexico, however, Cahero also said that art showing real talent is more often found on prison walls than on canvases. "Solitude and separation from one's strata of society tend to develop artistic temperament," he noted.[45]

Another of Rivera's students who came to El Paso during the depression years was Carillo González. He had studied at the National School of Fine Arts and had worked under Rivera when the famous frescoes were painted there, and also under Adolfo Maugard, another revolutionary painter. Arriving in El Paso in 1934, he established himself as an exponent of modern Mexican art. In a shabby studio on Magoffin Avenue with inadequate equipment and no market for his work, González turned out drawings, pencil sketches, oils, clay models, wood carvings, and relief panels showing remarkable talent. His surroundings little indicated that this accomplished artist sent pictures to exhibit in Italy, France and Spain, and that he was one of Mexico's most accomplished muralists as well as an architectural designer. (He designed the Stahmann ranch house near La Mesa, New Mexico, with its magnificent carved doors and heavy beams.) His ordinary black-and-white studies included subjects ranging from the Immaculate Conception Church to power plants and adobe huts. To have a steady income, González revised movie posters for American movies that were shown in Mexico. "Viva Villa" was among films whose posters he adapted for

Mexican distribution, toning down the depiction of Americans shooting at Mexicans. He also prepared a large exhibition for Loretto Academy. His political leanings were evident in paintings such as one showing seven priests hanged from telegraph poles along the road to Mexico city under President Calles' government.[46]

He also painted pictures of action and color that told the story of the church in the New World, paintings of the classical school and the modern, showing the Christian-Indian foundation in Mexican art. He painted happy Mexican villages, full of playing children. Fond of helping children, he started classes in painting and drawing for tots, just as Rivera had done in Mexico City. González's children made puppets, clay models, engravings, and wood carvings. One of their favorite subjects was the alligators in San Jacinto Plaza. Soon González became established in a permanent job teaching art at Radford School, remaining on the faculty until the 1970s. "Our Southwest has become another recognized center that attracts many painters," he said in 1937, showing that although an exponent of modern Mexican art, he had indeed made El Paso his home.[47]

The "red scare" was the downfall of some of the more modern artists. Often they were accused, sometimes unjustly, of "painting red" if they were too revolutionary in their art. Communism was frightening to Americans, whose own political system was fighting to weather the political storms of the depression era. The "red" paintings were unwelcome in many exhibits. Xavier González of San Antonio, who came to El Paso often, taught many El Paso artists, and also started the Sul Ross State Teachers' College art "colony," came under attack. Murals that he completed in 1934 depicting "Industry, War and Peace," acclaimed as the best of their kind in Texas under the PWAP, were removed from the San Antonio city auditorium. An American Legion council had proclaimed them communistic because a clenched fist was in the foreground. "It was to show a protest against ruthless taking of lives by war, and had no reference to communism," González insisted. A frequent El Paso visitor, he had sketched the missions and other scenes at Socorro, Ysleta and San Elizario, and once said he found more inspiration here for painting than he did anywhere else, even California.[48]

In a 1935 speech to the Woman's Club, El Paso High School art teacher Eula Harlacker talked of the "abortive influence of Mexican revolutionary artists on students' work. The art we need to know is that which has endured through the years without being influenced by Bolshevism." After discussing the work of such revolutionary artists as Diego Rivera, Orozco and Maugard, she contrasted their work with

more conventional artistic examples, indicating that "red" art was not welcome in the Southwest.[49]

Hari Kidd Returns

The new political art was attractive to some Americans, however, because it was modern. Hari Kidd returned to El Paso at this time after having been away since his high school days, and made it evident to El Pasoans that his once realistic and beautiful portraits had become even harsher in line and color, like ugly caricatures. "I'm depicting life as I see it and trying to jolt the individual out of his complacent attitude toward everyday problems" His picture "Despair," for example, showed monster human figures roughly resembling an utterly beaten-down father and mother holding a starving child and trying to hitchhike down an endless road. Kidd dealt with modern problems such as the "coming maelstrom" of war, the homeless and hopeless, and the poverty stricken.

Although in his lighter pieces Kidd was able to capture the happy moods of Mexican life in engaging little village scenes, he was also receiving excellent notices on his modern paintings. Back in El Paso to regain his health after suffering a breakdown, he had another idea for painting in his home town. That was to improve the appearance of downtown buildings by painting them in various soft colors, suggestive of Spanish-Mexican influence, especially those nearest San Jacinto Plaza. He suggested WPA labor, under artist supervision, but since the proposal involved private property, it became a losing battle. The building owners and merchants were skeptical about turning their structures into tourist attractions, and about the only building that was restored in the manner he suggested was the Union Depot.

Kidd became a center of attention, dubbed El Paso's first bohemian artist. The *Herald-Post* carried an account about him:

> Several of the natives around town were surprised and delighted the other day to see El Paso's own artist, Hari Kidd, stroll across the street and into the post office in a pair of wamsutta pajamas of poudre blue with an edging of white silk. With his startling downtown dress, Mr. Kidd wore a pair of woven sandals of varicolored hue.[50]

Nonconformist Art and Social Reform

For a while El Paso had a bohemian art studio on Porter Avenue. The El Paso Art Alliance, once the site of a goat ranch, now was a school offering art classes taught by Captain Geoffrey Galway, post exchange officer at Fort Bliss and art critic for the newspapers. Amid animal hides draped from rafters, mattresses and nude models, Galway taught aspir-

ing art students, some of whom he thought showed promise. The school did not last long, however.

Another sign of the times was a change in the El Paso del Norte Art and Craft Guild. The non-profit guild was reorganized under philanthropist Roland Harwell, with the help of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Paul Harvey and Karl Hatfield. Its purpose was to create employment and to give poverty-stricken artists and craftsmen of ability a place to display and sell their work, thus keeping them off the relief rolls. Handcrafted furniture, musical instruments, crafts and paintings, and other home industry products—all made from materials donated by local businesses—were shown there. Employment was provided for several hundred artists and artisans whose very poverty cut them off from marketing their works. "We cannot afford to let our artists go when El Paso has all the advantages necessary for the development of an art center," said Harwell. Backed by José Gándara and with the assistance of the Fine Arts Shop, the new guild opened its headquarters at 413 Texas Street. Carillo González busied himself with developing a frieze for the building.

Both Aceves brothers supported the guild and were protégés of Harwell. José painted a large mural on the wall near the entrance, picturing western riders at sunset, and another with Mexican figures and burros against a background of sandhills, both showing his typical sharp effects with light and shadow which stamp his work with individuality. His brother Bert created a large wall plaque in relief of the Juárez mission, with figures of Indians hefting a large beam, and an oxcart and a conquistador in the background.

At least 3,000 visitors attended the grand opening in 1934. They found a building with beautiful iron grillwork and magnificent ceiling beams. Prices of handicrafts ranged from 20 cents for a pottery vessel to $15 for a shirt of intricate needlework or for intricate pieces of woodcarving. In telling the Rotary Club about this new home industry, Harwell pointed out that, unlike northern New Mexico, "El Paso has never awakened to the possibilities which lie in the wake of developing the color and atmosphere of the border." While tourists, even during the depression, were pouring money into the Santa Fe region for art works, he said, "There is real gold in the midst of El Paso—an uncultivated field...an unconsolidated industry...Let us keep our money at home, especially when things made here are just as fine as those made anywhere." These arts and crafts were mainly wares of hereto unknown artists, largely of the South El Paso Artists' Colony whose dean was Agusto Medina.

Despite Harwell's valiant efforts, the new Art Guild lasted only two years; lack of business and inability to obtain material and equipment

needed for the artists and craftsmen caused it to close in 1936. Several newspaper articles scolded El Pasoans for not supporting the endeavor.

One other philanthropic El Pasoan, José Ruiz, ended up in Chicago with a studio and shop at the famous Hull House founded by Jane Addams. There he taught sculpture and Mexican and Indian styles of pottery making. Born and raised in San Elizario, he now helped immigrants in a large city in a time when the economy made it difficult for everyone to survive.[51]

The call of social reform became attractive to many young border artists who went to Mexico to study with the leaders of the revolutionary art. Elicia Salazar, for example, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Salazar of El Paso and Chihuahua, studied in Mexico, learning to create silver jewelry and other works of art. When she returned to El Paso in December 1938, Hari Kidd, a fellow exponent of modern art, held a reception for her in his studio on Upson Avenue.[52]

Artists Visiting in Late 1930s

One artist still visiting El Paso was Urbici Soler. He had studied at the University of Madrid with another artist who came here, Carillo

Urbici Soler, left, applies finishing touches to a bust of Father Lourdes Costa who persuaded him to move to El Paso to create the figure of Cristo Rey that looks down on Texas, New Mexico and Chihuahua. *(Photo by Darst-Ireland)*

González, exponent of Mexican art who was now teaching at Radford School. Soler, a sculptor who said he "followed no 'isms' in design," taught several years at the College of Mines. According to Art Leibson of the *El Paso Times,* "Soler had hopes of some day seeing a lively art colony thriving in El Paso." But he was appalled that there were so few museums and art galleries: "There is not even a small well-lighted room where I can display my bronze and stone busts," the Spaniard lamented before he left for New Orleans, taking his new wife, artist Betty Binkley of El Paso and Santa Fe, with him to his new job at Tulane University.[53]

José Cisneros, born in Durango, Mexico, came to El Paso to study at Lydia Patterson Institute. He was doing pen and ink drawings of Spanish and Mexican subjects, and quickly received the favorable attention of Tom Lea, muralist, artist and writer; Carl Hertzog, book designer and publisher; and Maud Sullivan, supporter of the arts and head librarian of the El Paso Public Library. His first exhibit was at the library in 1938, some 40 drawings of figures from Mexican, Spanish and Indian history, with much detail in their costumes. A self-taught artist, Cisneros went on to beome one of the best known and most skilled illustrators in the Southwest. His talent earned him a six-month fellowship at J. Frank Dobie's Paisano ranch, under a program of the University of Texas at Austin. He has illustrated scores of historical books and articles.[54]

Another renowned portrait artist who visited El Paso in the 1930s found the Mexican-American atmosphere inspiring. Robert Genung stayed to establish a quaint little studio on Upson Avenue, where he held classes and painted Spanish señoritas and landscapes. In 1939 he wanted most of all to paint the Socorro Mission: "I have had that church and its setting on my mind ever since I was here before." He said only three types of portraits were worth painting: "Children, in whom the painter is personifying innocence; girls of 15, who have all their future before them and whose faces have a mysterious quality; and old people, whose faces express character."[55]

Oscar Stroebel, who had left El Paso to spend many years studying art in Europe, returned with strong idea about his specialty, portraits. The major drawback, he admitted, was this:

> When men are the subjects, their wives don't like the result of my painting the husbands as I see them. And when women are the sitters, their husbands say the likenesses are fine, but the wives do not like them. And if I paint the women as they want me to see them, then the husbands say there is no resemblance to their wives. So I prefer nature, especially the desert, which remains calm, whatever my interpretation.[56]

He used several mediums to capture the moods and colors of the desert, and developed an unusual technique in blacks and whites. After operating an art shop on Texas Street across from the Popular, he and

his wife moved to Phoenix. He held an opinion that was to become unpopular as war approached: He felt that Munich, Germany, was the art center of the world.

Artists from California who showed their work in El Paso included George Frederick of Palm Springs, who painted Southwestern scenes and people, and Harry Stuart Fonda, a member of the Bohemian Club and an instructor at Mark Hopkins Institute of Art and the California School of Fine Arts. From Woodstock, New York, came landscaper Ivan Summers with paintings to exhibit in the Crouse Galleries. An older artist, J.H. Sharp of Taos, who devoted most of his time to painting Indians, came to join Gustave Krakauer in an exhibit in the Crouse Galleries at Stanton and Mills. Sharp's work also included desert flowers and landscapes. Krakauer brought "Cuernavaca," studies of jungles, deserts and flowers, and "Submarine," based on his own valuable collection of tropical fish.

Ruidoso artist Gerald Perry also showed canvases at the Crouse. He pictured missions, mountains, desert scenes and other views of the Southwest including Juárez from the canal bank, and a vista of Soledad Canyon. Portrait painter Royal Stowell came all the way from England to visit El Paso, after stopping in New York to paint members of the Metropolitan Opera and in Washington to do President Roosevelt. His portraits were in the masterful 18th Century French style, using red chalk or crayon rather than oils. His works were realistic as well as flattering; he did not like modernistic art because he felt it was not done with sincerity.[57]

The young son of the manager of Standard Oil in El Paso, Keith Martin, visited here often, showing his works at Hotel Paso del Norte. A Harvard graduate who painted Indians, Mexicans and all types of Southwesterners, he made his home in Hollywood and married his favorite portrait study, movie star Jeanne Madden.[58]

As the 1940s approached, Harry de Young, cowboy artist from San Antonio and teacher at Sul Ross College, showed his work at El Paso's exhibit of Southwestern artists, bringing a collection of pictures he had done in the Big Bend. He loved the outdoors and rode with cowboys as well as painting them. Everywhere he went he was "continually thinking of the color, texture, and form of each object in view." While displaying his still lifes, landscapes and figures, he remarked, "There is a great deal of interest shown in art here." And indeed there was more and more.[59]

Endings and Beginnings - 1940

The 1940s brought many endings and beginnings to El Paso's art world. The coming of World War II brought new life to the economy.

The patriotic Bundles for Britain shop was opened at the International Museum (now the El Paso Museum of Art) on Montana Street, to help raise money for the people of wartorn Europe. Clothing, handicrafts and other items donated by El Pasoans were for sale, and artists generously loaned their paintings for exhibit there. Among them was Audley Dean Nicols who provided a painting that had hung in the State National Bank for many years, a brown-eyed woman under pink fruit blossoms, reminiscent of the Gibson Girl style.

Nicols' paintings of desert scenes that had influenced the style of photographic detailing of Southwestern landscape had gained a reputation in Texas and other western states. His health was fading now. In the rock home he had built at the foot of his beloved Mount Franklin, he died in November of 1941. An inspiration to desert landscape artists, he was described by Fremont Ellis as "very good at what he did...better than any of his imitators." Although while he was alive his paintings never sold for more than $300 or $400, they later became extremely valuable.[60]

With him passed an era. He had begun the style of art for which many El Paso artists became well known, the desert landscape. The trend in local art had always been against modernism, helping to solidfy El Paso's colony of artists as they struggled to gain a foothold in their own genre of American art.

A quartet of local artists came to the fore to carry on, each in his own style, the tradition of desert art. Eugene Thurston, G. Harris Shelton, Elmer Boone and Lewis Teel were now receiving some national recognition for their Southwestern landscapes.

Thurston in 1940 became a full-time art teacher at El Paso Technical Institute, a position he was to hold for 22 years. He had succeeded Kate Krause Ball there. His desert and mountain scenes were being exhibited in galleries from San Antonio to Taos, Los Angeles to Chicago, regularly winning prizes and being sold. At the same time he operated a successful lithograph and engraving business, making greeting cards at his home in Kern Place and sometimes teaching special classes on weekends. When he taught, he said, "I'd start them out and they would paint the picture. But when they would get near the end I'd have to go around and touch them all up and finish them." This is also the way he teaches his grandchildren to paint these days.

In 1940 he and his mother were displaying their paintings in the Bundles for Britain—later Bundles for America—gallery. Fern Thurston was producing large flower still lifes and miniature landscapes in oil. Some of the miniatures utilized tiny seashells for floral effect, a technique she had learned in the East. A widow, she lived to be in her 80s and left a house full of paintings when she died in the 1950s.

Like Nicols, Eugene Thurston gathered most of his material on sketching trips around the Southwest, hiking or on mule back in the earlier years, then in his Model A Ford when roads were passable. Showing in every picture his abiding love for the Southwest, he captures the beauty and meaning of the country in his magnificent many-shaded clouds hanging like feathers over the purple-shaded mountains with mists and hazes in blue and green pastels at the horizon and warm earth tones and desert cacti in the foreground. "A painter generally starts with landscapes, then develops figures," says this artist who began as a cartoonist; then, echoing what Fremont Ellis of Santa Fe recently said, "I don't enjoy painting portraits or figures—for me they are the most difficult thing to paint."

Although also receiving national recognition for his Southwestern scenes, Ellis was not among El Paso's quartet of prominent artists, having lived in Santa Fe for nearly 20 years. He had founded the Santa Fe art colony in 1920 with Will Schuster, Josef Bakos and others, and resided at Rancho San Sebastian. "I have a warm spot in my heart for El Paso, and I have a lot of friends there," he says, after nearly 60 years of living away. He had come here to spend the summer of 1916 and stayed four years. He was here when Harry Wagoner came to open his Fine Arts Shop, the first art shop in El Paso, in 1918. Wagoner by the 1940s was living in California and still painting. Completely relieved of the tuberculosis he had come to the Southwest to cure, he and his wife traveled about the West in a camper-type automobile so he could paint and show his works.[61]

Another outstanding landscape artist was G. Harris Shelton, whose studio was in Hotel Cortez. He also had come here for his health, an ex-lawyer from Ohio. He was instrumental in establishing the Sun Carnival Parade and the Sun Carnival Artists' Exhibit in the late 1930s. The exhibit was held in the hallways of Technical Institute at Oregon and Rio Grande, a building now part of El Paso Community College, in December-January 1938. For years Shelton held the title of official Sun Carnival artist because of his dedication, sponsorship and help in organizing. A poster contest was held in 1938 to advertise the event and the winner was Kate K. Ball. Her Cinderella coach and gold lettering became the official logo for the annual exhibit. Having left her teaching post at Tech to Eugene Thurston, Mrs. Ball was devoting full time to her studio. Working in a wide range of subject matter, she still loved to copy "nature, and the fleeting light effects of the slanting rays of the sun in early morning and late evening."[62]

The first Sun Carnival Art Show was organized by Shelton, Thurston, Lewis Teel and most of the other artists who later founded the El Paso Artists (now Art) Association. With the approval of the Sun Carnival

Association, they sent notices to other artists and art supporters in the El Paso area and acquired 300 paintings for the show. Its purpose, said Thurston in a newspaper article, was for the pleasure of the people of El Paso and the out-of-town Sun Carnival visitors. The exhibition in El Paso Technical Institute turned out to be the largest yet held in El Paso.

The suggestion that admission be charged was turned down. The artists paid entry fees and shipping costs themselves. "We cooperate in as many civic projects as any other businessmen in the city," said Thurston, "and we get our bread and beans just like everyone else does, by hard work—creative painting is no lazy man's work." He noted also that "El Paso could have the largest artists' colony in the Southwest, with the full cooperation and backing of the people of El Paso."[63]

Official Sun Carnival Artist G. Harris Shelton designed many of the floats for the Sun Carnival parades, winning prizes for the companies that entered them. He was soon to be a member of the Texas Chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters, the Texas Fine Arts Association and the El Paso Artists Association, illustrating a major trend in the 1940s toward more local support of the arts, more art shows and more art organizations. Shelton's production in his summer studio in Ruidoso and his El Paso studio in Hotel Cortez, featured desert and mountains and typical Mexican scenes. They were soundly constructed, with color completely balanced within the frame. He always took the time and effort to carefully detail the desert wild flowers in the foregrounds of his paintings. He combined a bold touch with some Nicols-type fine details and impressionistic touches to get the right effect in a picture. Unlike many artists, he would tailor pictures to fit the shape and color decor of the rooms where they would be hung. He studied the lighting of the room, its contours and furnishings, its mood and atmosphere, the personalities of the owners, then painted the picture to fit. "This kind of painting sort of puts you on the spot," he admitted, "but it brings a deep satisfaction when the desired results are achieved."[64]

The third nationally-famous landscape artist of the quartet, Elmer Boone, was also widely known for his vast deserts with expanses of sky, his cowboy studies, and his Mexican folk scenes. He was instrumental in beginning, in the 1940s, another popular annual exhibit, the Library Park Artist Curb shows. Sponsored by the Art Department of the Woman's Club of El Paso, the exhibits were held on the wide expanse of tree-shaded lawn fronting Oregon Street, in front of the old El Paso Public Library. Maud Sullivan, head librarian, was a most supportive member of the sponsoring group. The City Parks Department obligingly built the framework on which pictures were hung. Artists sat on park benches during the weekend shows, answering questions of spectators. The show was held annually for several years and, after construction of

the present library building, was relocated to San Jacinto Plaza. Boone was a frequent exhibitor, along with the others in the famous quartet, Eugene Thurston, G. Harris Shelton and Lewis Teel.[65]

Lewis Teel's pastels, portraits and Southwestern landscapes represented El Paso's art colony in statewide exhibitions in San Antonio. He won first prize in the notable Texas Wildflowers event in 1936, and now was the only native Texan in the Far Southwest Artists organization. His pictures all went into handsomely carved frames of his own making, with much thought and effort used to make each frame suit the "pastel tones so definitely characteristic as to make the beholder stop and say, 'It must be a Teel.'" His son, Lewis Teel Jr., was following him in art and had become an art teacher at Austin High School in 1940, also showing his own sculptures in exhibits around town.

Teel was among artists who founded the El Paso Artists Association in 1948 with Eugene Thurston, who invited exhibitors at the Library Park shows to join, and Lavora Norman, who recruited the Lower Valley artists. A well-publicized meeting was held at Technical Institute and about 40 artists joined. The name later was changed to Art Association in order to include supporters as well as producers of art work. The first exhibit was held in the new Cotton Memorial Building at Texas Western College (now UT El Paso), which had opened in 1947 as the first fully-equipped home for the growing Art Department. Vera Wise, department chairman, arranged for the exhibit and asked that an out-of-town judge be brought in to screen entries and to assign prizes. The Arizona jurist turned down many local artists' pictures, among them Teel's. After avoiding the association for awhile, Teel returned since many other important local artists had also been disappointed by the outcome of the show.

In 1940 the most extensive display of Hari Kidd's work ever seen locally was presented, then was divided and sent to galleries all over the country. "There is nothing pretty in subject matter, color, or lines of the new Kidd show," commented the *El Paso Herald-Post,* "but it will make you think about the problems of the 1940s world...and the war that is enveloping the world." Kidd, having spent many years painting and studying in the East and in Europe, was interested in making his home town the art and cultural center of the Southwest. "El Paso should live up to its unprecedented skies and climate," he said before departing to live in Key West, Florida.[66]

Besides the landscape art and the expressionistic art being done by Hari Kidd and others of the modern school, El Paso also had its very talented portrait artists. Seth Floyd Crews, for one, was painting numerous portraits along with desert scenes; the desert was often the background for a portrait, such as those of Buster Erwin de Graftenried,

pioneer cattleman, and Mrs. Barry Hagedon on her mount, Joe. "Portrait painters have to get acquainted with the personality of the sitter," he cautioned, in order to do a good portrait. About the quality of art in El Paso, he pointed out that "although far from the big centers of art, El Pasoans are doing a diversified amount of creative work." He said the outlook for artists had been changed "by the vast new avenues opened for artistic work—magazine story illustrations, billboard advertising, magazine advertising, newspaper drawings, comic strips, fashion illustration, and so on....The present-day artist must combine talent with an idea; when both are balanced, they draw income."[67]

Leola Freeman also was painting portraits of El Pasoans at her studio in Hotel Paso del Norte. Her favorite subjects were young women of society, like her sister-in-law, Frances Warnock, and children, including her own four and those of her friends, done in soft pastels or delicately blended oils. When she painted the portrait of author Anna Brand, she pointed out that "the artist is only a tool seeking to interpret the personality of the sitter. Background in the picture is subordinate to the personality of the person posing." Lois Denton also was often at her easel painting a prolific number of portraits and Southwestern scenes, in pastels or oils. She also liked painting flower still lifes, believing that nothing could brighten a dull room like a flower painting. Teaching an advanced class in portrait painting at her studio was Robert Genung, back again in El Paso as artist and art critic.

Another portrait artist, young Eloise Hobble, arrived in El Paso with her parents in 1940. Escaping the war in Spain after living there all of her 21 years, Miss Hobble had only 55 minutes to pack a lifetime of possessions and dress before being evacuated. Having studied with some of the greatest artists of Spain, she was a valuable addition to El Paso's art world. Her portraits had the fine quality of European old masters. After getting settled in a home on Blacker Street, she completed some sketches started in Barcelona and held a well-attended exhibition at the Woman's Club. Two of her best pictures were of Spanish peasants, based on sketches made before her departure. Several young El Pasoans soon were favored with portraits by Miss Hobble, in which they looked like little Spanish princes and princesses. She soon started portrait classes for artists interested in learning the techniques she had studied with Enrique Claraso and Francisco Pausas of Catalonia and Borras Abella of the Spanish Fine Arts Institute of Barcelona.[68]

Another El Paso artist in the news, Elliott Means, returned to his home town about 1940 to regain his health; he had suffered a burst blood vessel while executing seven 11-foot figures for the Westinghouse exhibit at the New York World's Fair, working with Tom Lea. Deeply disturbed by the coming war, he sat in his room on Montana Street day after day model-

ing his "Buzzard of War" sculpture in clay. He had started the bird because there were so few carvings of that species. Then, "as the hunched up figure of his bird took shape, war clouds gathered over Europe...Today as the vulture's greedy beak and cruel claws were completed, German bombs were bursting in Warsaw....What the war situation will be when the bird is finally finished," stated the *Herald-Post* in September of 1939, "Mr. Means does not predict." As the war situation worsened, young El Paso men were going off to war, among them Tom Lea and José Cisneros, both of whom became involved in making illustrations of battle scenes. To honor the servicemen, Bert Aceves, who had made the statue of Hernán Cortez for Hotel Cortez, now started working on a large casting of an American soldier for the City of El Paso. It was modeled after a toy soldier from a dime store.[69]

After the war the economy was still booming, good news for artists wanting to sell their work. Although never as progressive an art community as Santa Fe or Taos, El Paso supported the arts at an all-time high degree in the post-war years. There were more galleries in which to exhibit, with Cotton Memorial available at Texas Western and the Maud Sullivan Gallery in the new El Paso Public Library building that opened in 1954. More people were collecting works of art, among them businessmen R.E. McKee and Maurice Schwartz who specialized in work by local artists. The El Paso Art Association also began in the late 1940s.

The history of El Paso art showed significant change during the first half of the 20th century. The growth of the art colony had been gradual, starting from almost no artists and little public support in 1900 to the nucleus for an art center they had looked forward to for so long.

El Paso had seen its own innovations in art, yet the tradition had always gone against modernism. In spite of lagging behind northern New Mexico in the promotion of its artists, El Paso had become a major center of the Depression Art movement, whereas Taos and Santa Fe did not. Visiting artists were drawn to the city, made welcome, and gave well-attended workshops, but El Pasoans made pilgrimages elsewhere when they were serous about continuing with art. Many El Paso artists had studied in New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis and Chicago, believing all that is good in art is learned in the East, but El Paso artists developed their own genre after all.

As modern society made the country of the cowboy, the Mexican bandit, the town sheriff, the rustler, the cattleman, and the last outpost of the Texas Rangers obsolete, the Southwest became an ideal place for an artist and observer to view the colorful heritage of the past in the shadows of El Capitán, Guadalupe Peak, the Organ Mountains, the Sandías, Mount Cristo Rey and the Franklin Mountains.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

New officers of the Society were elected at the October business meeting, with James M. Day heading the slate for 1982. Others elected are Ross Borrett, Mary Ann (Mrs. Charles) Dodson and Colbert Coldwell, first through third vice presidents; Sandra (Mrs. R.T.) Hoover, recording secretary; Janet (Mrs. Hans) Brockmoller, corresponding secretary; Freeman Harris, treasurer; Mrs. Robert Heyser, membership secretary; and Jack D. Redman, historian. Directors elected are Newcomb Brunner, Francis Fugate, Betty Ligon, Herbert Marsh Jr., K.B. Shover, Mrs. L.A. Velarde, Col. (Ret.) James Ward, and Barbara (Mrs. Rhys W.) Rees.

Preceding the tributes at the annual Hall of Honor Banquet, the Society's president, Gertrude Goodman, gave special recognition to three members: Janet Brockmoller, the Award of Appreciation for many services to the organization including direction of the 1981 Tour of Homes; Dr. W.H. Timmons, the Award of Excellence for suggesting and developing the Four Centuries '81 celebration, editing the Four Centuries history book, and many other achievements; and Millard G. McKinney, the Distinguished Service Award for continuing activities in support of the Society, including the direction of the book sales.

Those attending the banquet were delighted that Henry Trost's nephew, Ernest Trost of Oakland, California, a former El Pasoan, was able to be there to share in accepting the award honoring his uncle. He spoke briefly about his Uncle Henry, "a tall, quiet man, reserved, with a big moustache and smelling of good cigars, who would see that any wish I might have would be carried out immediately—even over my parents' objections." He accepted the award in the names of himself and his sister, Marion Trost Doherty, and their children, especially his son, Henry Trost. The formal acceptance of the award was made by Malcolm McGregor, who lives in the home the architect designed for himself. Abraham Chavez Jr. accepted the award conferred upon him.

The Society presented Four Centuries '81 official medallions, which carry the emblem of the Society designed by Jose Cisneros, to governors of the U.S. and Mexican border states when they convened in El Paso recently. Letters of appreciation were received from the governors. A medal also was sent to Mrs. Ruth Rawlings Mott, member of the Society's Board of Trustees, with a group of El Paso friends who attended her special birthday celebration recently in Flint, Michigan.

The Society's annual Historical Memories Contest deadline was November 15. Winning entries will be published in future issues of *Password.*

The October 4 Tour of Homes involved eight homes in Kern Place, with participants receiving a souvenir document replica describing the original deeds to property in Kern Place. Owners cooperating were Dr. and Mrs. Haskell Monroe, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Smith, Dr. and Mrs. Jose Roman, Mr. and Mrs. Reed Leverton, Mrs. Edna Jennett, Col. and Mrs. Edward J. Walsh, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Jennett, and Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Schwartz.

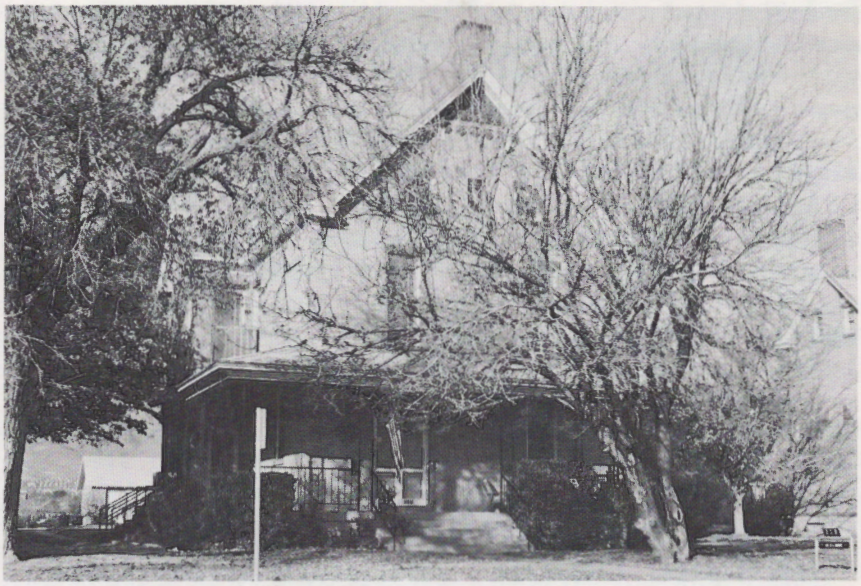
The El Paso History Museum held a workshop on November 17 to train volunteers in various tasks to help the Museum. More volunteers are needed at all times, to serve as docents and in other capacities. A quilt exhibition is scheduled through January, with many historic items for display from the collection that was acquired when the present Art Museum was the International Museum.

New members since the last listing are Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ash, Col. (USA-Ret) and Mrs. E.W. Breese, Mr. and Mrs. Tom J. Coulehan, Mr. and Mrs. Dwight M. Deter, Mr. and Mrs. Joe C. Disselkoen, Elizabeth P. Fischer, Miss Louis Gates, Mrs. Edna Jennett, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Jennett, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey B. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. John V. Ladner, Mr. and Mrs. W. Reed Leverton, Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Manigold, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Moskos, Frances K. O'Leary, Nick Perez, Steven Rosenberg, Roy C. Ruggs, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Reuss, Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Saunders, Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan D. Schwartz, Mr. and Mrs. Wallace J. Spolar, LTC (USANC-Ret) Bertha I. Tiffany, Sunnye C. Ward, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas N. White, and Mr. and Mrs. William E. Wood Jr.

All five members in this issue's In Memoriam listing were charter members of the Society. Dr. E.W. Rheinheimer was the 1978 living recipient of the Hall of Honor recognition.

HERITAGE HOMES OF EL PASO

by Harriot Howze Jones



(Photo by M.G. McKinney)

THE OLDEST QUARTERS AT FORT BLISS

This handsome two-story tan brick residence at 230 Sheridan Road was the first to be completed of 14 similar sets of quarters built at Fort Bliss in 1892-93. Lt. Colonel and Mrs. Ronald L. Baker and their three children are the present occupants.

When constructed on Lanoria Mesa, overlooking El Paso from the north, Fort Bliss was a long way from the town of El Paso, but over the years the city spread to the north, east and west and now well nigh engulfs the military post.

There have been five previous posts located in or near El Paso since the first one in 1849, when the primary mission of the Army was to protect settlers on the frontier from marauding Indians and bandits. The first post endured until 1851 in what was then the adobe village of Franklin (named El Paso in 1873) and was near the present Civic Center. The second post was on the Magoffin Ranch, 1853-68, near present Magoffin and Willow Streets; the third was on the Concordia Ranch, 1869-76, near present Durazno and Hammett Streets south of Concordia Cemetery; and the fourth was in downtown El Paso, 1878-79, where the soldiers lived in rented warehouses and drilled in the public square that became San Jacinto Plaza.

With four competing railroads laying track toward El Paso, the Army foresaw a population boom and the need for a larger military post. Instead of leasing land as previously, the Army purchased a tract of 135 acres from the Simeon Hart estate, and the fifth post was constructed north of Hart's Mill and paralleling the Rio Grande. Fort Bliss was at that site from 1880 to 1893 and my grandfather, Major Hamilton Smith Hawkins, commanded the post in 1884-85.

Construction on the present post started in 1892 under the supervision of Captain George Ruhlen, Quartermaster Corps, USA. Initially, Captain Ruhlen and his civilian assistants, E.H. Offley and F.A. Gartner, lived in El Paso while buildings were being erected on Lanoria Mesa. In early 1893 the progress of construction enabled Captain Ruhlen to set up his on-site office in a warehouse. Later he moved his family into one of the larger quarters, No. 5 (now 230). His civilian assistants moved into one of the staff non-commissioned officers' quarters, located near the on-site office.

The new Fort Bliss was officially opened in October 1893 and included the following brick structures: a water pumping building, two enlisted barracks flanking an administration-messhall building, a hospital, a subsistence warehouse, a guardhouse, quartermaster stables, three double sets of two-story quarters for staff NCOs, six sets of two-story "quarters for captains" and eight sets of "quarters for lieutenants." Nine of the officers' quarters were of tan or yellow brick and five of red brick. Though similar in appearance and size, the "quarters for captains" had more floor space than those for lieutenants and also had larger porches. (This designation by rank has long been abandoned and quarters are now assigned by need and availability.)

Quarters 230 (old No. 5) interests me more than the others because I lived there in 1917 when my father, Major General Robert L. Howze, was in command of Fort Bliss (for the first of two times). It was wartime when he was assigned to the post and the commanding officer's designated quarters (now the Pershing House, at 228 Sheridan) had been converted to Bachelor Officers Quarters. Therefore my family moved into old No. 5 and lived there until my father went overseas with the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe.

Like all the other officers' residences built in 1893, quarters 230 has a Gothic style high peaked roof, a finished attic, a basement, and stone trim on the windows. Its raised first floor is approached by short flights of steps to a porch that was originally supported by wood colonnades, now of wrought iron. The windows are extremely tall since the ceilings measure about 15 feet, and pose quite a problem in finding curtains or drapes to fit.

Inside the entrance, to the left of a square hall rises the staircase to the second floor. To the right is a good-sized living room and behind that the dining room, dinette and kitchen in an ell. There are four bedrooms and three baths on the second floor. Fireplaces, with tile surround and marble hearths, are in the living room, dining room and master bedroom. The oak woodwork has been painted in white enamel.

Thanks to a 1969 monograph by Lt. Col. Arthur V. Crego, USA, and a 1974 article in *Password* by Major General George Ruhlen, USA-Ret (grandson of the QMC captain who supervised construction of the post), there is a record of the first occupants of many of the oldest quarters on Sheridan Road. After Captain Ruhlen vacated quarters 5 (now 230), the next occupants were senior officers of the 18th Infantry. Captain Robert F. Bates lived there in 1893-94 and Captain William H. McLaughlin in 1894-95.

It is regrettable that each of the quarters does not have a plaque inside listing the occupants and their years of residence. Such plaques are presently maintained in the Pershing House and the commanding general's quarters at 302 Sheridan Road. Though the oldest quarters have little architectural beauty, they were very well built, are comfortable to live in, and are an important part of the Fort Bliss heritage.

The arrow points to the quarters now numbered 230 Sheridan Road, one of eight newly built officers' quarters at Fort Bliss when it moved to the present location in 1893.
(Photo from M.G. McKinney Collection)

BOOK NOTES

by Mary Ellen Porter

The Prisoners of Perote. William Preston Stapp. Austin: University of Texas Press. $8.95.

The Mier Expedition of 1842 has probably attracted more attention than any other event of Texas history. It is a story of endurance, starvation, disease, brutality, pathos, pain and death. It is the story of 300 Texas adventurers who sought to invade Mexico without government sanction and who suffered humiliation and defeat. Many of the survivors kept diaries and probably the best and most readable was that of William Preston Stapp, whose story is presented in this outstanding volume. Preface, tables, essay on sources and index.

Impressions of the Texas Panhandle. Michael Frary. College Station: Texas A & M University Press. $24.50.

Few people know, first-hand, the very special place that is the "Texas Panhandle." Artist Michael Frary is one of those persons who characterized the Panhandle as "too hot and dirty, too cold, and just a lot of flat land." However, after he had spent a few days there, visited with residents and painted a few pictures, he reversed his opinion. This volume is the result. Sixty-four color plates and numerous black-and-white illustrations. Frary's impressions transferred to watercolor and magnificently reproduced.

Legendary Ladies of Texas. Presented by the Texas Folklore Society, edited by Francis E. Abernethy. Paper, $12.95; cloth $24.95.

Twenty-six essays, divided into five sections: Early Days, Settlers, Texas Gets Culture, Early 20th Century and Modern Times. Forty-five photographs and line drawings. Authors include El Pasoans John O. West and H. Gordon Frost.

Dark and Dashing Horsemen. Stan Steiner. New York: Harper & Row. $13.50.

An intriguing journey into the past from the Old Testament Hebrews, who may have been the first cowboys, to the more recent ancestors of today's cowboys, all the way to the contemporary ranchers with their faithful steeds, the "Tokyo Quarterhorse." The heroes on horseback have become a symbol of something unique in the history of the American West and these horsemen and their horses have an ancestry as rich and complex as any history.

Trees and Shrubs of the Southwestern Deserts. Lyman Benson and Robert A. Darrow. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. $49.50.

Fifty full-color plates, more than 500 illustrations and nearly 250 maps make this a rare identification guide to 487 kinds of trees and shrubs found in the deserts of the American Southwest. Forty-six years of field work have gone into making this the most complete and unbeatable edition of its kind.

The Modern Cowboy. John Erickson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. $15.95.

The cowboy is changing. One of America's most authentic folk characters is becoming modern and updated. The horse is still as important to his trade as it ever was, but the working cowboy today may well be seen cutting cows with a feed truck, dressed in a baseball cap instead of the traditional broad-rimmed Stetson. However, today's cowboys tools of trade are still his horse and rope. The economic realities of the cowboy's life and a general view of the beef business are also presented.

Fifty Years on the Old Frontier as Cowboy, Hunter, Guide, Scout and Ranchman. James H. Cook. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. Soft Cover, $8.95. Hard Cover, $14.95.

First published in 1923, the book contains a foreword by J. Frank Dobie, who described Cook as "a man with perspective who wrote with strength and vitality." The book is a veritable encyclopedia of life in the open before the Southwest and the Northwest closed in on the prairies and mountains and before modern conveniences took the excitement out of living there. The author was born in Michigan in 1857, was a cowboy and rancher in Texas, a big game hunter in the northern plains and Rocky Mountain areas and an Indian Scout for the United States Cavalry.

The Tejano Community, 1836-1900. Arnold de Leon. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. $19.95.

The Tejanos—the Mexican Americans who lived in Texas in the 19th century—have long been a misunderstood lot. Literature, both scholarly and popular, has portrayed them as complacent, passive and irresponsible. De Leon, however, shows that such views are wrong and he has carefully marshalled his extensive evidence from primary sources. This volume represents the first history of the political, social and economic activities of the Tejano. Thoroughly examining the daily lives of the ordinary people, De Leon reconstructed just how the Mexican Americans lived and worked from 1836 to 1900. He describes the "biculturation" of the Tejanos—the evolution of a matured Mexican culture into one that was simultaneously both American and Mexican. This biculturation, however, did not present uniform and fixed attributes for the Tejano community. Instead, their culture remained diverse and changing.

Boom Town Newspapers. Journalism on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier, 1859-1881. David Fridtjof Halaas. Foreword by Ralph Looney. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. $8.95.

Publishing a newspaper in the rough and explosive mining fields was a turbulent, troublesome and dangerous business—moreso than claiming and working a placer mine. Many of the editors of these boom town newspapers were young journeyman printers who attempted, through their publications, to bring law and order to the mining camps. However, many readers did not accept the words of these moralists and frequently duels and brawls ensued between the editors and the readers. Rivalry between publications was rife and editors were more often than not engaged in violence. This is an engaging book and will undoubtedly delight its readers.

Over the Chihuahua and Santa Fe Trails, 1847-1848. George Rutledge Gibson's Journal. Edited and annotated by Robert W. Frazer. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. $7.95.

In the late 1840s merchants and armies followed the same routes into the far Northern Mexico territory—west over the Santa Fe Trail and south down the Chihuahua Trail. The land was rough and harsh through unfriendly areas. George Rutledge Gibson's acccount, published here for the first time, is probably the most complete account of a soldier's observations of a land considered strange and alien. Robert W. Frazer enhances the reader's appreciation of Gibson and New Mexico in the 1840s with a preface, introduction to each section of the diary, notes and references.

BOOK REVIEW

THE AMBIDEXTROUS HISTORIAN: Historical Writers and Writing in the American West by C.L. Sonnichsen. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, $9.95.

When Charles Leland Sonnichsen served as English professor, English department chairman, and graduate dean at UT El Paso, there were vicissitudes in his career that few outside the academic life knew about—or would understand, if they had known. Here was a University of Minnesota graduate (major in English, minor in Italian), and Harvard Ph.D. (English Philology) who had written his dissertation on a suitably obscure and rarified subject. (It was a study of Bishop Thomas Sprat, a minor 17th century literary and clerical figure whose chief gift to the world was a biography of Abraham Cowley, the poet.) Here was a man who had won the coveted Bowdoin Prize at Harvard, a prize with a cash honorarium of $300 attached, money which enabled Sonnichsen to buy train fare for El Paso where the College of Mines had an opening for somebody to teach "The English Novel" and "American Literature."

Here, in brief, was a man of English, of literature, possessing the best doctorate available in America for the purpose of teaching English and literature. And teach he did, as well as anybody ever taught at the College of Mines (and TWC and UTEP).

But there is a law that governs successful academic persons and the law is "stick to your discipline." This means that if you teach English, you do your research and writing in some aspect of English. A chemistry professor does not write on political science; an English professor does not write books of history.

Almost from the beginning of his long and distinguished career at UTEP, Sonnichsen broke the law. At first, he was interested in doing something scholarly on Samuel Butler, the 17th century satirical poet and author of "Hudibras." But Butler materials were a long way from the College of Mines' modest library and so he turned to what was available in his territory: Texas feuds, Mescalero Apaches, Tularosa, ranchers and cowmen, Roy Bean, Billy King and Baldy Russell. In other words, he turned to history, and at some point along the way, Sonnichsen stopped apologizing for breaking the law of "stick to your discipline." With every new book he was proving the fallacy of that law and in *The Ambidextrous Historian,* his 20th book, he buries it deeply and finally, and even provides it an epitaph: "What does he know of history who only history knows?"

This book is a delight in many ways. In the first place, it is a collection of "reflections on history, historians and historical writing...directed at the non-professional to whom history is at least a joy, and perhaps a passion." To those of us for whom history is at least a passion, Sonnichsen provides fuel for that passion, and the hope that we amateurs are not working entirely in a vacuum but that what we are doing might just be valuable.

It is impossible for me to believe that anyone other than an academic basket-case will not find great joy in Sonnichsen's lightly iconoclastic, always

gentlemanly, words of wisdom. Here are examples from a few of the 10 essays making up this book.

In "The Poetry of History," Sonnichsen comments on life in the academic straitjacket in which every light touch of writing is considered suspect, imagination is handcuffed, and the god of objectivity delivers the commandment "Be Thou Dull": "Even scholars need to remember that there is no profit without risk—and there is no real history unless a man will ask what it all adds up to..."

From the title essay: "One might say that scholars are like a group of Indians sitting around a kettle of stew. Everybody is interested in the contents, which is dog meat, but each one reaches for whatever portion he finds most interesting." The ambidextrous scholar, Sonnichsen says, is curious about the entire contents of the stew.

In "Caveat Scriptor," Sonnichsen writes of the difficulty historians have in seeing their work published, but advises close attention to the alternatives to the New York trade houses—including regional publishers and self-publishing. "Historical writing seldom approaches romance or pornography in popular appeal," he says, but it does have a market. Let the author beware, however, of setting his sights too high. It is better to be content with the lower rungs of the ladder than to aim high and fall flat.

And, in "The Fine Art of Plagiarism," are found Sonnichsen's famous six rules for productive scholarship: Think Big ("If you get all your information from one book, you are a plagiarist and can expect to be sued. If you use material from 50 books, you are a scholar and worthy of respect"), Be Bold (Great scholars sometimes have more notes than text"), Be Cautious ("You can be sued for verbal borrowings but almost never for borrowing ideas"), Be Thorough ("A good thief—that is a good researcher—gets it all"), Remember Where You Got It, and Be Dull ("Scholarship...must be boring, just as medicine must taste bad and virtue must be painful.")

Throughout all these essays, taken individually or as a whole book, Sonnichsen's passion for history is paramount. What he does is what he did for himself many years ago—he makes history available to all of us and not the private domain of a self-named and self-selected few.

There is courage in these essays, and wit and wisdom and common sense.

El Paso *Dale L. Walker*

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