

PASSWORD



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PASSWORD

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IN MEMORIAM

Edwin H. Druley
Katherine (Mrs. Frank) Jones
John "Nemo" Cathcart Melby
Maren Jensen (Mrs. John G.) Oechsner



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A CHURCH IS BORN

by Verdon R. Adams

NOVEMBER 24, 1881, was a joyous occasion for a little group of Methodists who had been laboring diligently in El Paso. On that "windy, dusty, and coolish" Thanksgiving Day they witnessed the laying of the cornerstone for the building that was to represent the fruit of their labors and the beginning of today's Trinity United Methodist Church.

The little house of worship would be located on the southwest corner of Texas and Stanton Streets. The site had been acquired from Mr. J. F. Crosby at a cost of \$100, a substantial part of which had been provided by Major and Mrs. W. J. Fewel, who were always eager to help advance the cause of Christianity. In fact, no account of the development of the early Protestant churches of El Paso, or of the city itself, for that matter, can be undertaken without mention of the Fewels. They were always in the vanguard of any movement aimed at city improvement in its best sense, and the objects of their benefactions were many and varied. For Mrs. Fewel, however, the Methodist Church held the place of paramount importance. She

This article, an excerpt from the opening chapter of Mr. Adams' book *Methodism Comes to the Pass* (El Paso: Trinity United Methodist Church, 1975), is published with the permission of the author and Trinity United Methodist Church.

Mr. Adams, who retired from the Civil Service in 1970, is also the author of two other books: *Tom White, The Life of a Lawman* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1972) and *Peeks at the Past* (El Paso: 1982).

The title-page insignia was created by Vicki Trego Hill, *Password's* graphic artist. The scroll it depicts alludes to the El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor and to the 1984 inductees featured in this issue (pp. 12-25).



Trinity's first building, opened January 29, 1882.
(Photo courtesy Raford Hair, El Paso)

is said to have regarded a town without a Methodist Church as a ship without a port.²

The new building was to be a modest one. Of frame construction, it would be 36 by 60 feet and would seat 360 persons. Its 40-foot tower would contain a 600-pound bell. The total cost of the building was to be about \$4,000.³

The reporter for the *El Paso Herald*, in announcing the cornerstone-laying ceremonies, anticipated short speeches by the pastor, the Reverend J. R. Carter, and other ministers. He hoped the public would attend, since "This seems to be the first religious edifice to be erected in El Paso.⁴ It is not known how many responded to his urging, but it is not likely that they turned out in large numbers. From all accounts, the interests of the great majority of El Paso's citizens lay in directions quite different from that of building churches. The little city was already recognized as one of the four major centers of vice in the nation, sharing that dubious distinction with New York, New Orleans, and the Barbary Coast of San Francisco.⁵

Nevertheless, the cornerstone-laying ceremonies seem to have

been very successful. One observer described them as "imposing" and went on to say, "Mr. Carter delivered an able discourse and was followed by Mr. Merrill who made a few remarks appropriate to the occasion. The first \$500 which was contributed toward building the church was given by a number of Georgia ladies. The names of these ladies and the names of citizens of El Paso who contributed to the fund for building the church were placed in the box which was deposited underneath the stone."⁶

It had been a long time since that day in 1817 when William Stevenson preached the first Methodist sermon, indeed the first sermon of any Protestant denomination, in Texas. One of the small corps of intrepid Methodist circuit riders who never let the frontier get far ahead of them, while "The Congregationalists and Episcopalians snuggled close to the Eastern seaboard," Stevenson is reported to have crossed to the Texas side of the Red River at or near the location known as Pecan Point, and preached a sermon in the home of the Wright family. In this act, he and his little congregation were in violation of the laws of Mexico, to which Texas then belonged. The practice of any religion other than that of Roman Catholic was illegal.⁸

Seventeen years later, Henry Stephenson was placed in charge of all the Methodist missionary effort in Texas. At his direction, Martin Ruter entered the now independent nation in 1837, crossing the Sabine River at Gaine's Ferry. Joining forces with two missionaries who had been assigned to help him, he set about organizing a Methodist Episcopal Mission in the young country.⁹ Within three years, with the help of circuit riders such as John Clark, who had traveled a thousand miles by wagon to get to Texas and join in the work,¹⁰ Methodism was well established.

This success had not come easily. In addition to the hardships of life on any frontier, the work of the circuit riders was not without many physical dangers, including those from hostile Indians. H. G. Horton, preaching in the Uvalde circuit in 1858, reported that "At the hour of service, the men stacked their rifles in a corner but kept their pistols about their waists, for they might be called into play at a moment's notice. My dragoon pistol was placed on the wooden stand right by the side of my Bible."¹¹

About this time, the officials at the General Conference meeting in Macon, Georgia, instructed Bishop George F. Pierce to make an overland trip to San Francisco, in order to observe and report on

conditions in the little-known West. During a stopover in El Paso, the bishop "found several pleasant acquaintances, among them Judge Simeon Hart, whose kindness I can but commemorate. Intelligent, refined, and liberal, he has made a character as well as a fortune. He is a Catholic by education and profession, but generously proposed to aid me in building a South Methodist Church and in supporting a preacher."¹² The fact is that Mr. Hart gave Bishop Pierce \$100 in gold to assist in bringing a Methodist minister to El Paso, often referred to as Franklin to distinguish it from its sister community across the Rio Grande.¹³

The miller's generosity and the bishop's recommendations resulted in the assignment of a young lawyer who had only recently been ordained as a Methodist minister. At a conference meeting in Goliad, Texas, the Reverend J. H. Harper was directed to report to El Paso in 1859. Owen White says that he brought with him a young bride and a 500-pound bell, the latter to be stored under the bed of the former until it could be installed in the church he was to build.¹⁴ Other writers state that he built a Southern Methodist Church,¹⁵ or at least a Methodist American Mission.¹⁶ Unfortunately, these claims are largely speculative. We may presume that he did establish a mission, since that was his primary goal and he remained in El Paso about a year; but its size, location, and degree of activity are unknown. In fact, we must agree with the Reverend W. S. Huggett that "there....are no traces in the city of his work."¹⁷

There is even reason for questioning the statements of White and others that Harper was married. The records of U. S. Census Taker H. L. Dexter show that, on June 10, 1860, John L. Harper, age 33, Methodist clergyman from Mississippi, shared bachelor quarters with James Heaso (?), age 36, Wagon Master from Georgia, and William Mills, age 23, clerk, from Indiana.¹⁸ Despite the discrepancy in middle initials, there is little doubt that this refers to the minister sent here by the officials of the Goliad Conference. Of course he may have had a wife who left him and went back east, or died during the year, but neither of these possibilities seems likely. There were fewer than a dozen "American" women in the area at the time, except for a few army wives at Fort Bliss, and the arrival of a new one was a most newsworthy event. A letter from the Postmaster General to the postmaster at "Franklin City" may help one realize how small and far out on the frontier the little town really was. In discussing the need for better postal facilities, the P.M.G.

noted that the volume of mail had more than doubled, from four letters twice a week to an average of more than ten!¹⁹

In any case, we know almost nothing about Harper's activities in Franklin, although it is known that he later went to Bandera County. We are told of one incident where he was preaching near Live Oak and an attack was made by Indians on a nearby farm, resulting in the deaths of several persons.²⁰

Actually, this paucity of information isn't too surprising, and the young minister shouldn't be judged too harshly for his failure to leave a lasting imprint on the El Paso community. Owen White is quoted as observing in his wry manner that "the only use El Paso had for a preacher in 1859 was to bury the dead."²¹ Be that as it may, the Civil War was not far down the road, with its chaos and devastation. In the words of one historian of another church, "During the years which immediately followed the Civil War, Texas suffered under the many evils which attended 'Reconstruction.' Economic life was paralyzed; government amounted to little; and Texas was a prey to lawlessness and violence almost inconceivable."²² An El Paso historian describes the local situation in even more vivid terms: "For all practical purposes, El Paso was wiped out by the Civil War. After 1862 there was no law except military law; no travel except military travel. Everybody went away — to Chihuahua, to San Antonio and New Orleans and Richmond; to Saint Louis and Washington. Only a handful of these departed citizens drifted back to join another handful of newcomers who had decided for one reason or another to call El Paso home."²³

Aside from the abortive attempt of 1859-60 to establish Methodism in the geographic and spiritual desert of pre-Civil War El Paso, one historian claims that the Methodist mission to the Mexicans began with a sermon preached in El Paso in 1878. The preacher is not named but his sermon is regarded as the starting point for the mission effort in New Mexico, Arizona, California, and West Texas.²⁴ Another source discloses that a Methodist preacher, the Reverend Thomas Harwood, visited El Paso and preached several sermons in the old Rohman Hotel as early as 1870.²⁵ These reports need not be considered conflicting, since the first refers solely to the Mission to the Mexicans, and the other was no doubt an attempt to reach the few "Americans" in the community.

In 1881, the Reverend A. E. Sutherland, presiding elder for the district, asked his superiors at the San Antonio Conference to assign

a minister to El Paso. The man selected was Reverend Mr. J. R. Carter from Savannah, Georgia. Mr. Carter and his wife, an experienced mission worker from New York, arrived at The Pass on March 9, 1881.²⁶ Some accounts have it that they traveled by rail, but they could not have made the entire trip in that manner. The big day when the first railroad entered El Paso from any direction was still two months away. In any case, the Reverend Sutherland made his trip from the San Antonio conference on the old reliable stagecoach, describing it in later years as one of the more interesting experiences of his life.²⁷

The two ministers promptly invited the interested members of all religious faiths to a meeting in the old Masonic Temple, an adobe building with dirt floor and no windows, located on the northwest corner of Mesa and San Antonio Streets, where The Popular now stands. The first order of business was the organization of a Sunday School. Initial enrollment was seven pupils, but in no time it was up to ninety, and the preachers were looking for more teachers. Before the month was out, arrangements had been made for all the Protestant denominations to join in holding union services in a tent pitched on the northwest corner of Kansas and San Antonio Streets. This was the church home of the Methodists until their new building was completed in January of the following year.²⁸

The Reverend H. S. Thrall, Mission Secretary of the West Texas Conference in that eventful year of 1881, was quite impressed by his discovery of El Paso. In his report he observed that "El Paso is worthy of more than passing notice. Although in Texas, it has been until recently inaccessible as a city at our antipodes." He then went on to describe Mr. Carter's preaching in a tent and to praise him for his eloquent appeals for means with which to build a church.²⁹

Steps were also taken to acquire a parsonage. One was finally purchased on North El Paso Street, with the Ladies Aid Society assuming responsibility for the \$20 monthly payments. Pending its availability, the Carters made their home with the Reverend Joseph Tays, founder of the Episcopal Church in El Paso³⁰ and affectionally known by all El Pasoans as "Parson Tays."

Things were moving quickly at The Pass in 1881. Three newspapers made their appearance. The *Times* and the *Herald* began publication at almost the same time, if not on the same day. They were soon joined by the outspoken Mr. Newman and his *Lone Star*. New businesses were established every day. The State National

Bank was organized. Property values were zooming, with titles changing hands at a bewildering rate. A franchise was issued for a mule-drawn street railway. There was some grumbling at the lack of a public school,³¹ and some visionaries thought the town should have a library and perhaps even a telephone exchange, but with everyone so busy making so much money, these niceties could wait.

And then came the railroads. The Southern Pacific arrived in May, connecting the town with the far west. It was followed by the Santa Fe from the north, and in December by the Texas and Pacific from the east, while down south the Mexican Central was making its more leisurely way to Chihuahua City. Naturally all of this activity, especially the boom conditions created by the railroad construction, attracted some undesirable elements. One Southwest historian says, "The bad ones came in all grades and sizes — little crooks and big crooks, high-grade and low-grade fancy women, tin horns and big-time gamblers."³² Another has it that "El Paso was one of the toughest towns in the country — Abilene, Tombstone, and Dodge City rolled into one."³³

This, then, was the environment into which Trinity was born. There was no doubt about the need for churches, and the town was responding to that need in what quite clearly amounted to a race. At first the Methodists were well out in front and expected to open their church early in January, but were held up by construction difficulties. Their building was still unfinished when the *Lone Star* announced on January 18 that "Rev. Mr. Tays thinks the Episcopal Church (which wasn't begun until Christmas!) will be ready next Sunday if the windows arrive from San Francisco."³⁴ It was then announced that the Presbyterians were going to build their new church of stone! And now the Catholics reported that they were almost ready to begin building a handsome new church. The fighters of evil were indeed on the move.

At last the construction problems were overcome, and Trinity was ready to open. The *Herald* of January 25, 1882, announced that the big day would be the following Sunday, January 29:

ANNOUNCEMENT
Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church
Rev. J. R. Carter, pastor
Services Sunday Morning at 11:00 o'clock

This church will be organized at the morning services. The Pastor requests a full attendance of all those wishing to unite with the above church, with or without letters. Union Sabbath School at 3:00 P.M., preaching in the evening at 7:30 by Rev. Merrill of the Presbyterian Church.

Regular weekly prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings at 7:30. People are cordially invited and the Church will be heated and made comfortable for all those who attend.

Thirteen names were inscribed on the rolls of the new church on that memorable January morning: Mrs. W. B. Blacker, Mrs. Rebecca Bonadaile, Mrs. Harriet Carter, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Davis, Mr. and Mrs. George Dillard, Mrs. W. J. Fewel, Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Major, Dr. and Mrs. J. A. McKinney, and Mr. C. Q. Stanton.

The new church building made a very favorable impression on the people of the community. A lady known only as "Elia," who had apparently moved to El Paso from Houston, wrote a letter to the *Houston Post* in which she described it as "a much handsomer and finer church than Sheran Church in Houston ever was in its finest day." She also said that large congregations had been present at both services on the opening day and that the church was "a vast improvement over the old weatherbeaten tent for the afternoon Sunday School."³⁵

The *El Paso Times* also gave the fledgling church high praise and showered its "energetic, plucky, earnest pastor and his open-hearted liberal congregation" with commendations for their faith and untiring efforts. The enthusiastic writer of this article provides us with a great deal of information about the building itself. After observing that it was the first religious edifice to be built in El Paso, he reported the bell tower to be 50 feet in height, instead of the 40 claimed by others, and as being surmounted by four spires of 20 feet each. The building was of frame construction on a brick foundation, finished on the outside with redwood. Doors and windows were Gothic in style. The pews were stained redwood and the altar corresponded in design with the interior finishings. Heating was supplied by "two handsome stoves, the generous gift of Messrs. Beneke and Pierce." The overall effect was declared to be that of an architectural ornament to the city.³⁶

But this "first religious edifice to be built in El Paso" provided more than ornamentation — as another *El Paso* newspaper had recognized. In November, 1881, this newspaper had asserted that the anticipated opening of Trinity signified the ending of a momentous chapter in the pioneer history of the young metropolis of the Rio Grande — important because insuring spiritual glory as the handmaid of temporal advancement.³⁷ A few days later, it proudly declared that "We shall soon have four churches, a Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Episcopal one, in this city. Then, in ad-

dition to our title of 'future immense' we can call ourselves the great religious hub."³⁶ An extravagant claim, no doubt — but indicative of the joy and hope which attended the birth of Trinity. ☆

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14. White, *Out of the Desert*, 181.
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33. R. G. McCubbin, *The Life of John Wesley Hardin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), xiv.
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35. *El Paso Herald*, February 8, 1882.
36. *El Paso Times*, January 1, 1882.
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38. *Ibid.*, November 30, 1881.



HALL OF HONOR ADDRESS:

An Ongoing Construction

by Ross O. Borrett

WE ARE PRIVILEGED this evening [November 18, 1984] to honor two El Pasoans—one, a nineteenth-century pioneer, builder, and visionary who took important initial steps toward the development of our region; the other, a twentieth-century artist who has given of himself and of his art in the interest of the people of this area.

The El Paso County Historical Society believes that "History is the foundation upon which the future is built." Acting on this belief, it seeks to identify those "men and women of outstanding merit and accomplishment" who have significantly contributed to that foundation. It hopes thereby not only to recognize and record great achievement, but also to inspire an ongoing construction of strength, beauty, integrity, purpose.

On each of 23 previous evenings such as this, we have inscribed upon our Roll of Honor the names of two El Pasoans—with the exception of 1962, when three names were entered. As part of this ceremony each year, we review the lives of our selected honorees, focussing our attention upon their respective "singular achievements" which "have brought honor and recognition to the El Paso community." In addition to paying tribute where tribute is due, we have discovered, over the years, that our Hall of Honor

Mr. Borrett, president of the Society in 1984, assumed the office for a second term in January of this year. A former president of the Ysleta School Board and the Texas Association of School Boards, he is a Life Director of the National Home Builders Association.

Ceremonies offer a splendid opportunity to view the unfolding of the El Paso drama as one by one its leading characters play their commanding roles. Since 1961, when the Hall of Honor was initiated, we have watched in fascination the various heroes and heroines who dominate our stage—ranchers and musicians, clergymen, legislators, and soldiers, educators, homemakers, judges, and doctors, librarians, merchants, engineers and scholars—each one of them a builder whose unique talents and generous public service have enriched the quality of life in our city. By this act of honoring excellence, we have witnessed our heritage, we have proclaimed our values, and we have defined our goals.

Certainly, as you will see, the achievements of this year's honorees point to goals worthy of emulation. The life of our nineteenth-century pioneer testifies to the power of faith in a region which many people of his time dismissed as hopeless and futureless—a forbidding, rocky Pass cut by a capricious river and surrounded by barren desert. And our twentieth-century artist shows us the power of love which, combined with great talent, has opened our eyes and our hearts to the diversity of our people and the flowering of our sunlit valley.

In paying tribute to these two citizens at this 24th annual Hall of Honor Ceremony, we are again privileged to celebrate our past—not as disembodied fact, but as it has been lived and breathed in joyful, constructive accomplishments—accomplishments which have helped to endow our present and which, in turn, predict a bright future for this El Paso we cherish. ☆

But we, the later marchers in Oñate's long parade, are determined that the impersonal hand of time shall not erase forever all the names...that deserve to be inscribed in our permanent lore. As members of the El Paso County Historical Society...we take the years 1850 to the present as a period for special attention. We take it as an aim that the men and women of outstanding merit who have lived among us during these years *shall* be remembered, that their names and their contributions *shall* be known by us..."

— Joseph Leach, Ph.D.
Hall of Honor Address, 1961



TRIBUTE TO ANSON MILLS

by Leon C. Metz

ALTHOUGH WE RARELY GIVE thought to Anson Mills, his genius is historically etched upon this Pass where we live. In a very real sense, he was a first Mr. El Paso.

He started life at Thornton, Indiana, on August 31, 1834. At the age of 19 he entered West Point but failed because of deficiencies in mathematics. Then he heard El Paso described as a "promising Mexican settlement," a crucial stopover for the Butterfield Overland Stage, and a town "eventually to be a place of some importance." He arrived at the Pioneer Plaza on May 8, 1858.'

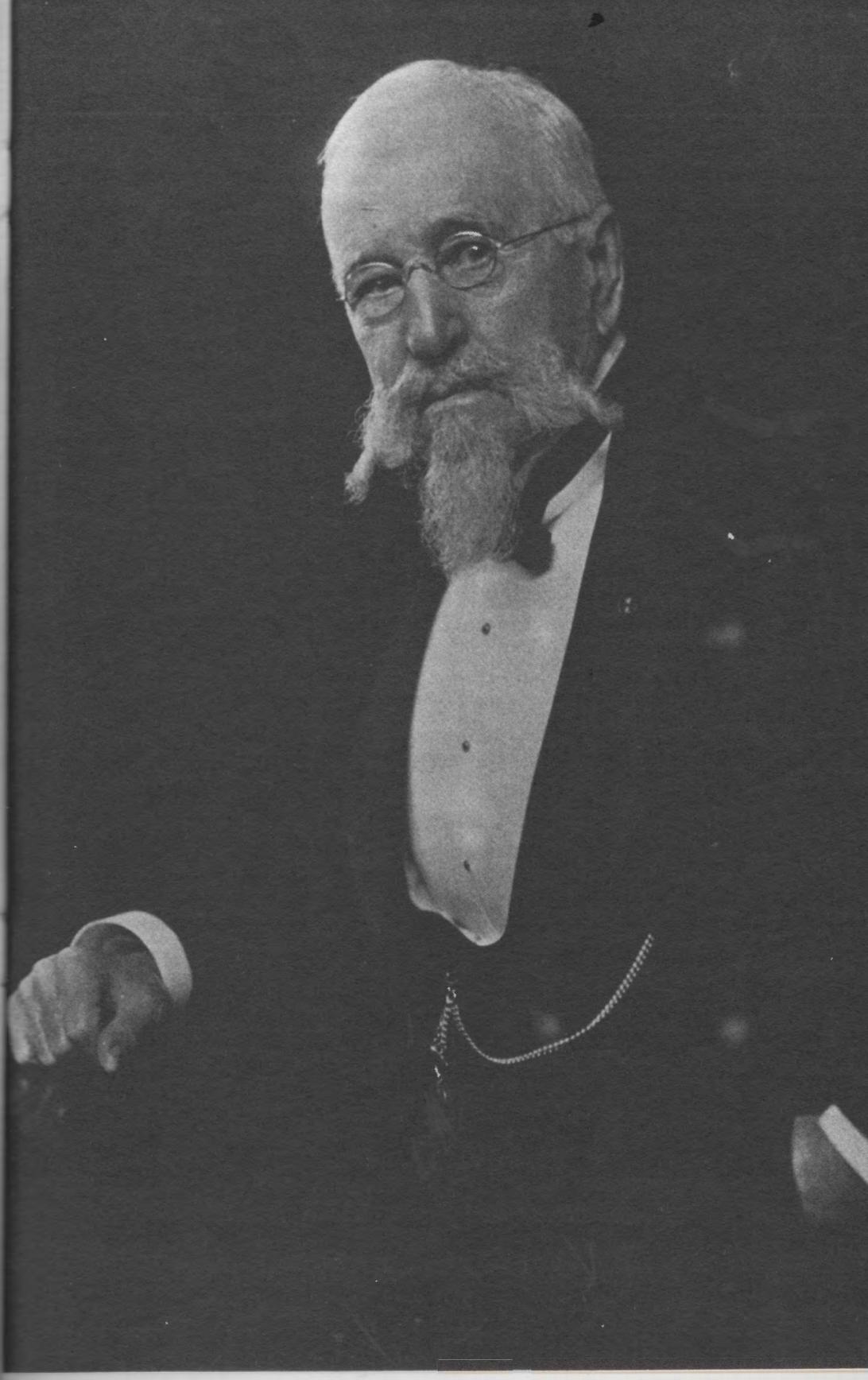
On the recommendation of several Fort Bliss officers who had been classmates, Mills was appointed District Surveyor. He surveyed the military posts of Quitman, Davis, Stockton and Bliss. The Butterfield company retained him to design and construct the Overland Building, for 30 years the largest structure in the community.

Observing that the town's streets resembled cow paths, Mills suggested a development corporation consisting of District Judge J. F. Crosby, J. S. and H. S. Gillett, W. J. Morton, Vincent St. Vrain, and William T. "Uncle Billy" Smith. The firm was duly organized and then engaged Mills to survey a town. Immediately he ran into problems: few owners donated sufficient land for streets, and several of Mills' sketches were rejected. However, on February 28, 1859, everyone

Mr. Metz, a past president of the Society and the author of six books on the history of the El Paso Southwest, is Public Affairs Officer at MBank El Paso.

Anson Mills (1834-1924) ►

(Photo courtesy El Paso Museum of History)



agreed on a specific design, and the townsite was surveyed.²

In 1858, Mills became the Texas Boundary Commissioner and surveyed most of the Texas-New Mexico border. His cantankerous nature asserted itself, though, and he resigned because of disagreements.³

Meanwhile, Anson encouraged his brother William Wallace Mills to migrate to El Paso. Later, after the arrival of the youngest brother, Emmett, the three men built a ranch near Anthony, New Mexico/Texas, dubbing it "Los Tres Hermanos" (The Three Brothers). It served as a Santa Fe mail station.

When the position of District Surveyor became elective, Anson considered campaigning for that office. But the clash of frontier personalities decreed otherwise. His former friends in the El Paso Corporation, now his bitter enemies, chose this moment to describe Mills as an abolitionist, a term of anathema in the political climate of El Paso. Infuriated by their cheap (but effective) "name-calling," he nailed a response to the Plaza's newspaper tree:

I have just been informed that J. S. Gillett, W. J. Morton, and J. R. Sipes stated last night to R. Doane and F. Remy that I was an abolitionist, for the purpose of injuring my character. As I have never cast any other than a Democratic vote or expressed other than Democratic sentiments, I denounce these three above-named persons as wilful and malicious lying scoundrels. Sipes and Morton owe me borrowed money for the last two years. I would like to have a settlement. I never asked any one to vote for me as surveyor and I now withdraw my name as a candidate and will not serve if elected.

A. Mills⁴

Anson's affiliation with the Democratic party notwithstanding, his loyalty—and that of his brothers—belonged to the Union cause. At this very time, for example, El Pasoans voted on the issue of secession. Only Anson and W. W. Mills opposed it. Anson in particular displayed a large sheet with bold letters: NO SEPARATION. Then, when the Civil War started, W. W. fled into Paso del Norte (present-day Juarez) and became a Union spy. Emmett caught the last stage for California, and was killed during an Apache ambush led by Mangas Colorado near Cook's Peak in New Mexico. Anson asked Colonel V. D. Reeve, the Fort Bliss commander, to abandon the post and enter New Mexico, which was Union territory. Reeve refused and surrendered Fort Bliss to the state of Texas. Anson left for Washington, D. C., and enlisted as a lieutenant.

After the Civil War he remained in the army, his most notable service occurring in 1878 when he took part in the Big Horn and Yellowstone Expedition. He also put his creative mind into design-

ing a woven-web ammunition belt, an invention which made him wealthy.⁵ In the 1880s he arranged his transfer to Fort Bliss and Fort Selden, where he became an authority on water problems, was promoted to Colonel, and assigned to the American Boundary Commission. In his 60th year Mills was retired from the army as a Brigadier General. Shortly afterwards, on January 8, 1894, he took the oath of office as American Boundary Commissioner.

He gave his initial attention to the Island of San Elizario, where the exact position of the Mexican border had been virtually "lost" as a result of the Rio Grande's erratic behavior. By August, 1896, commission surveyors had identified and marked the original channel with 21 monuments.⁶

Another difficulty involved *Bosque de Cordova*, a horseshoe curve in the river which so slowed the passage of water during floods that El Paso would become inundated. After the disastrous flood of 1897, boundary commissioners suggested severing the Cordova neck in order to shorten the flow, increase the grade, and straighten the river. After the cut, Mills wanted Cordova for the United States. But Mexico refused to relinquish jurisdiction, and Cordova became an island of foreign soil protruding into El Paso, an obstacle causing as much resentment as the Chamizal did in Juarez.⁷

As for that Chamizal controversy, it essentially involved channel changes in the river. In 1895, Mexico claimed that the Rio Grande, in a violent change of channel, had "transferred" 600 Juarez acres to El Paso. The United States admitted that Juarez had indeed lost territory, but defined the process as gradual erosion and therefore legal according to a mutual understanding which the two nations had earlier agreed upon. The two boundary commissioners attempted to resolve the issue between themselves, but the dispute remained deadlocked.⁸ Following the El Paso meeting of Presidents William Howard Taft and Porfirio Diaz in 1909, the Chamizal went to arbitration. When the proceedings ended, the arbitrator, Canadian jurist M. Eugene Lafleur ruled that the Chamizal should be divided between the Mexicans and the Americans along the 1864 Rio Grande channel. Mills rejected the findings, claiming that Lafleur had authority to give away all or none of the Chamizal, but no authority to divide it. Mills also accused Lafleur of so distorting various terminologies as to make his ruling meaningless.⁹

From a historical point of view, Mills probably did the United States and Mexico a favor in rejecting the arbitrator's ruling.

Washington lacked a financial commitment and the sense of social justice necessary to relocate hundreds of residents. Law suits would have buried the court systems. A boundary line on the ground would have thrust Mexican jurisdiction into the city limits of El Paso. That strip would have divided streets and parks, jobs and workers, friends and neighbors, families and relatives. Law enforcement, customs and immigration would have been maddening. During those troublesome times, with cannon balls crashing across the river even as the arbitration ran its course, and with revolutionaries capturing Juarez six times during the next two decades, American public opinion would never have permitted guerrilla forces to shoot their way to within blocks of downtown El Paso. So considering the time and place, as well as the fuzziness of the arbitrator's language, Anson Mills had made the correct decision.

Since those days, Anson Mills has been remembered primarily for stonewalling an arbitrator's findings. Yet his Commission achievements were far-reaching. He advocated two landmark treaties with Mexico, and both have had an enormous impact upon El Paso. If they are seldom remembered, it is because Mills was ahead of his times. He believed potential problems should be identified and solved before they escalated into international conflicts.

One such potential problem involved *bancos*, bends in the Rio Grande similar to Cordova. Where the river flowed straight, it usually remained in its channel. Where it sharply curved and twisted, however, it oftentimes cut numerous channels and created confusion regarding the exact international line. Largely through the efforts of Anson Mills, both countries signed a 1905 treaty for the Elimination of Bancos. Engineers severed the banco necks, those in Texas falling to the jurisdiction of the United States, the ones in Mexico to that country. By 1970, 241 *bancos* had been eliminated, and 30,000 acres had changed hands.¹⁰

An even more troubling issue arose when Mexico blamed New Mexico and Colorado for water shortages in the Rio Grande at Juarez. Mexico demanded a guarantee of specific water amounts, and it sued the United States for \$35-million to underline its displeasure. Mills investigated and recommended an international dam at the Pass near Mt. Cristo Rey. He argued that Mexico should be guaranteed 60,000 acre feet of water each year from this reservoir. The proposed Mills dam proved unfeasible, but as a result of treaty language dictated substantially by Anson Mills, Mexico

received its 60,000 acre feet guarantee in a treaty called "An Equitable Distribution of the Waters of the Rio Grande." It was signed in Washington on May 21, 1906. Most of us have never heard of this agreement, but it was of more practical significance than the highly publicized Chamizal settlement of the 1960s."

On July 1, 1914—a little more than twenty years after taking office—Mills resigned his position as Boundary Commissioner. He was prompted to do so because of politically-motivated accusations that he was paying exorbitant salaries to his assistants. His resignation, however, did not save him from a 1915 congressional grubbing; but the committee hearing that consumed 65 pages of testimony found no wrongdoing.¹²

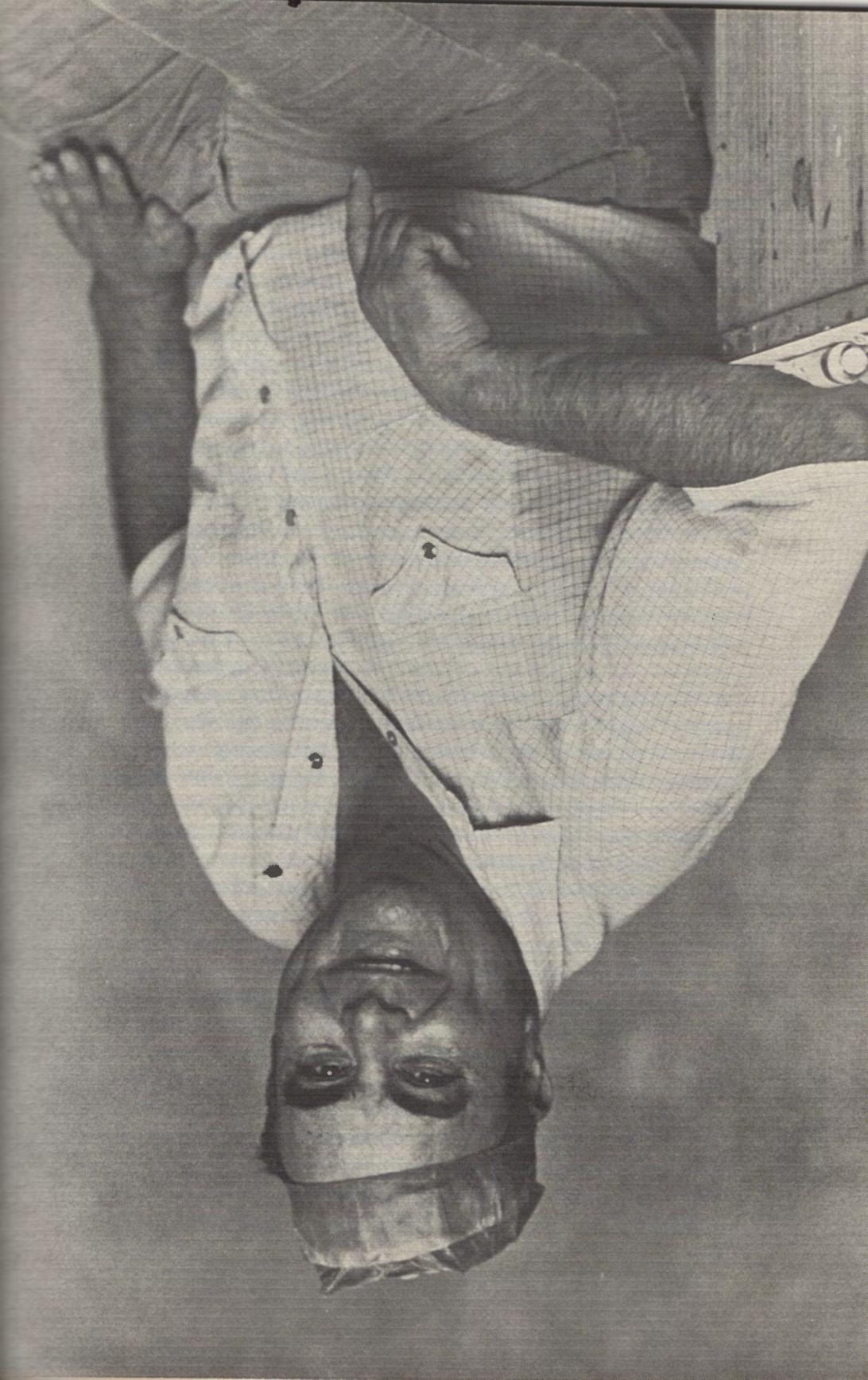
Now 80 years old and in excellent health, Anson turned his attention to improvements on the Bills Building in El Paso. He and J. F. Crosby had built the Grand Central Hotel in 1883, and after it burned in 1896, Mills had erected the Mills Building, the largest concrete monolith in the world. He had begun construction in 1909, and by 1911 it had eight stories. During 1915, he added four more floors. Today the Mills Building, sometimes called the Electric Building, is no longer the highest structure in town. But it is still *the* landmark in El Paso.

This surveyor, engineer, politician, Indian fighter, builder, inventor, developer, businessman, military officer, feisty individualist, and boundary commissioner died on November 5, 1924, at the age of 90. He was buried with honors in Arlington National Cemetery.

Anson Mills was not a likeable person. We might have choked on his arrogance and insufferable vanities. But his achievements prove his courage, drive, and foresight. His autobiography, *My Story*, admittedly as much a tribute to his ego as it is a valuable outline of historical events, reveals his character and convictions. He believed progress could not be made by holding the line. He believed ways must be found to control war, which he called the most "cruel, barbarous and destructive" of all man's evils. He took a strong stand on the issue of voting rights for women, marching in their parades, publicly applauding their leaders. He was appalled by acts of racial prejudice, and his writings suggest that true peace would never come until the eradication of this failing.

Anson Mills deeply loved his country and this community. He epitomized frontier El Paso. When you see this city, you see his monument. ☆

(Notes continued on page 43).





TRIBUTE TO MANUEL GREGORIO ACOSTA

by Gertrude Goodman

TONIGHT WE PAY TRIBUTE to Manuel Gregorio Acosta, a prolific artist whose paintings eloquently portray the feeling and warmth of the man himself, of his traditions, his people, the life around him. The world of Manuel Acosta has been an important and representative part of El Paso's past. It is a vital part of El Paso's present. And his art will provide a rich and valuable heritage for future generations.

Manuel was born in the mining town of Aldama near Ciudad Chihuahua in northern Mexico. When he was a year old, he crossed the border into El Paso with his parents, Ramon P. and Concepción Sanchez Acosta. In the ensuing years, five more children were born to the Acostas. Life was not easy for the family, but their little house in the Barrio del Diablo reflected a wealth of love and respect for people, an appreciation for the beauty of their culture and their traditions, and a delightful levity. These qualities of life and living,

Miss Goodman has served as president of many local boards of directors — among them, the El Paso County Historical Society, the Woman's Department of the Chamber of Commerce, the Pan American Round Table, and the El Paso Public Library Association. She was also the organizer and first chairman of the Members Guild of the El Paso Museum of Art and of the El Paso Chapter, Texas Social Welfare Association.

This article is a shortened, edited version of the address Miss Goodman delivered at the 1984 Hall of Honor Banquet.

◀ **Manuel Gregorio Acosta**
(Photograph by Cynthia Farah)

instilled in Manuel during his youth, have manifested themselves throughout his career in his interpretations of life as seen in his art and also in his relaxed, subtle sense of humor.

During his grade school years, drawing was Manuel's hobby. Then, after entering Bowie High School, he began to study art. His art teacher, Octavia Magoffin Glasgow, remembers his unusual talent and believed, even then, that he intended to devote his life to art. Manuel was also an avid reader. Librarian Elizabeth Kelly recalls vividly young Manny Acosta who frequently visited the El Paso Public Library and took home stacks of books. When Manuel was 15 years old, the Acosta family moved to 121 South Hammett, an address now famous.

Although not yet an American citizen, Manuel was drafted, at his request, during World War II and was sent to Europe. There he saw an original portrait for the first time. And a seed of curiosity was planted. Throughout his remaining four years in the service, he visited every gallery he encountered.

Following the war, Manuel became an American citizen. He returned to El Paso with a desire to paint and to paint seriously. In 1947 he trained at Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. Then, the El Paso Chapter of the National Society of Arts and Letters endowed his further study of art at Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso), where he became a student—and also a friend— of the noted Spanish sculptor Urbici Soler.

Through his friendship with Soler, Manuel was introduced to Peter Hurd, the illustrious artist of San Patricio, New Mexico, who immediately appreciated Manuel's talent and wit. Before long, Hurd requested Manuel to serve as his assistant on two fresco-mural projects which Hurd was commissioned to paint—one in Houston, the other at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The companionship from their work initiated an enduring, loving friendship between Manuel and the Hurds—both Henriette and Peter.

After the experience with these murals, Manuel considered moving away from El Paso to benefit his art career. But Peter Hurd, who was to become his mentor, convinced Manuel to stay in El Paso. "Everything you might want to paint is in your backyard," said Hurd. Manny looked at his yard and agreed: "A treasure lies here."

As a result of this decision, Manuel, with help from his family, neighbors, and friends, built his first studio behind 121 South Hammett. I was an early visitor to that studio because of our very special

mutual friend, the late Byron Merkin, who at that time was actively associated with Manuel in the El Paso Players.

It was in this studio that Manuel became a professional artist. On canvas, he captured the color, feeling, intensity, and mood of what he saw. He painted portraits of his father, of nieces, nephews, neighbors, friends. He painted the flowers which grew in the patio. He painted the old adobe buildings which typified the architecture of the area. Mostly, he painted the Spanish-speaking people whom he loved. Constantly he looked for the spirit of man. His work was sensitive and individual and immediate in its warm appeal. The studio was his link to his heritage and his ever-deepening appreciation of what his family had left behind in Mexico.

And it was in this studio that the now-legendary Manuel Acosta gatherings of friends and neighbors began. Any excuse prompted a party—an unveiling of a painting, a tequila christening of a new friend, a wedding, a baptism. Always, there was music, dancing, and laughter. Always, there were Ramon and "Concha" Acosta present to add their warm hospitality.

Meanwhile, Manuel was maturing as an artist—and gradually attaining recognition. In 1962, the Bank of Texas in Houston commissioned him to paint six fresco murals depicting "Texas Under Six Flags" to hang in the bank's lobby. Later, the First National Bank in Las Cruces commissioned him to paint murals depicting the history of the Mesilla Valley for the walls of their bank. *Life* magazine listed these spectacular murals as a Southwest tourist attraction. Another recognition came in 1969, when Acosta's strong portrait of Cesar Chavez appeared on the cover of *Time*. This portrait now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in the Smithsonian Institution. (It should be noted that Manuel never paints from photographs.) During this time Manuel was represented by the Twenty-Two Gallery in El Paso and by the Baker Art Galleries in Lubbock. And his paintings were being exhibited in the Belles Artes in Mexico City as well as in the Museum of Arte e Historia in Ciudad Juarez and the Chihuahua Museum in Ciudad Chihuahua.

In 1972, the North-South Freeway project forced the Acostas to abandon their house and studio at 121 South Hammett. The last work to be completed at this beloved, nostalgic studio was a portrait of Dr. Roger B. Corbett, retired president of New Mexico State University—a gift to the University by Corbett's friends.

Once again, family and friends joined Manuel in building a new

adobe studio at 366 Buena Vista, known as "Tres Jacales." When it was completed, Manuel started to paint again—and with overwhelming enthusiasm. He painted portraits of charming young girls, of pregnant women, of mothers, and of older men and women. Energetically he brought forth angels, doorways, snow, cowboys and saddles, birds, giant paper flowers from Mexico, pottery. Also came still lifes of corn, squash, melons, as well as serene landscapes frequently including the Rio Grande at various hours and seasons.

Once again the parties started. Now, Manuel promoted all the arts with musicals and readings and dance recitals. And, at Christmas, his traditional Posada—the invitation bearing a request of canned goods for the San Juan orphanage. One special evening was dedicated to Don Pedro and Doña Henriette Hurd. The honorees sat at the center of the patio on a seat which had been removed from an old automobile. The entertainment—in grand style—took place on a stage constructed at one end of the patio.

These parties were spectacular—well planned, yet seemingly spontaneous because of the host's creative hospitality. In *The El Paso Times* Barbara Funkhouser wrote that "His guests bask in... the brilliance of his wit." Betty Ligon, in an *El Paso Herald-Post* column declared: "A visit to Manuel Acosta's studio...is much like a skull session for a Bob Hope special, with one-liners ricocheting off the plaster walls, punctuated by the artist's visceral chuckles."

In 1974, his first lithograph portfolio, "The Cycle of Life," was published. Aimed at promoting an understanding of Mexican-American heritage, it included seven masterfully executed works and also a text of Manuel's thoughts about each lithograph.

One of the first paintings purchased by the Members Guild of the El Paso Museum of Art was Acosta's "El Jorongo Rojo," a striking portrait of a young boy. Later, this museum presented Manuel's first one-man exhibit, the largest of its kind ever mounted there. The galleries burst with the vibrant colors and vitality of 89 of his paintings, which represented Acosta's people, his bulls and bullfighters, his flowers and fantasies, his wonderful children, the barrios and the revolution. Describing the works in this exhibition, Henriette and Peter Hurd wrote: "Skillfully Manuel creates his paintings in which he seems to say, 'Come in—this is my world. Come in and enjoy it with me—for it, like much else in our lives, is fleeting.'"

John Meigs, Manuel's good friend and noted artist, gave meaningful interpretations to Manuel's work in the exhibit catalogue:

"Manuel, the painter, is a complex personality behind his warm, generous facade. He has many facets to his art and this exhibition is built around these different views of his world.... They all derive their strength from the Mexican people.... They are imbued with mystical qualities as no other painter today portrays them. They are at once realistic and haunting while over them a mixture of vital life and unknown depths broods."

Yes, Manuel Acosta *is* a "complex personality." He sees beauty in all. He makes jokes of insurmountable problems. He is an incurable punster, but also wise and serious. Underneath his rascally wit is a devout man of sincere religious convictions and profound respect for each individual. "The main thing," he says, "is to be yourself."

A few years ago, after the death of Manuel's close friend, Jeanne Sadlo, and the loss, later, of his beloved parents, in whom he had seen the dignity and serenity of the Mexican people, 366 Buena Vista became very quiet. When this period passed, Manuel's art took on a new dimension: he began to paint delicate, exquisite water colors—mostly of flowers.

In 1980, Manuel contributed a chapter entitled "Awakening" to a Macmillan Reading Project called "Catch the Wind." Included in this chapter is the beautiful portrait of Manuel's mother, "Concepción Sanchez," who will live forever in this textbook which is used by sixth grade students throughout the United States.

Even though he has taught art to all ages, Manuel remains a student in that he constantly is searching and experimenting, reading and delving into the souls of people and ideas, always looking for new directions, new techniques and new meanings in his art and in his being. In February of 1984, El Paso's Americana Museum opened an Acosta exhibit, "Barrio Sin Fronteras," displaying 35 new paintings and three pieces of sculpture. At present he is working on a maternity series of sculpture which he has titled "Gift of Love" or "Miracle of Birth." And just recently Manuel has been chosen by the El Paso Natural Gas Company for the Burlington Northern Foundation and the City of El Paso's Art Resource Department to represent this community in an exhibit entitled "The Art of the People of El Paso," which will tour the United States for two years.

One of the paintings in this exhibit depicts a rocking horse but no rocker. Manuel explained earlier that he had freed the horse from its rocker. This free spirit exemplifies Manuel Gregorio Acosta—a star in our horizon who has made a place in our hearts.

This man "of character, vision, courage, and creative spirit," whose paintings have preserved a way of life and the strength of our bi-cultural community has "made El Paso County better for having lived here." He has "brought honor and recognition" to El Paso, and he will be remembered "as an exemplary guide to our future." Deservedly, the name of Manuel Gregorio Acosta has been added to the El Paso County Historical Society's Hall of Honor.

Felicidades, mi amigo, Manny. Congratulations, my friend, Manny. ☆



THE EUGENE O. PORTER MEMORIAL AWARD

THE *PASSWORD* EDITORIAL BOARD is pleased to name **Bud Newman** as the recipient of the 1984 Porter Award for his article "Fray García de San Francisco, Founder of El Paso: A Syllabus of Errors," which appeared in the Winter issue. The \$100 Award is presented annually in memory of Dr. Eugene O. Porter, the founding editor of *Password*, to the author of the year's best *Password* article, as determined by the board. Also cited by the board for excellence are the following works: John H. McNeely's "The Tarahumaras of Chihuahua and the Agrarian Problem" (Spring), Martha Patterson Peterson's "Up to a New High: Pioneer Years of El Paso High School" (Fall), Robert Crippen's "Celebration on the Border: The Taft-Díaz Meeting, 1909" (Fall), and Bob Miles' "Hueco Tanks: Desert Oasis" (Summer).

The board also commends Emilia Gay Griffith Means, of Dallas, for submitting Laurence Oliphant's "Western Wanderings: The Newest American Railroad," originally published in the March 1882 issue of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. Reprinted in two parts (Summer and Winter), the article is deemed a valuable contribution to *Password* — a fascinating and unique insight into the El Paso Southwest of December, 1881.

The Eugene O. Porter Memorial Award is financed by gifts to the Society. Contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to the Porter Award Fund, c/o the El Paso County Historical Society, P.O. Box 28, El Paso, Texas 79904. ☆



ONE CENTURY AGO

(January-March, 1885)

by Art Leibson

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1885, *The El Paso Times* put out a special edition with column after column, spread across three pages, extolling the progress that had been made on the local scene since the arrival of the railroads less than four years earlier. There was a heavy accent on the commercial, educational, religious and cultural development here on the border, and no Chamber of Commerce could have done a better job of promoting the town. Running through the columns, we find that a new carriage factory was under construction, that fine new homes were being built as the town began spreading out, that a visiting theatrical company was offering *Hamlet* in the Schutz Opera house, and that the exciting new game of baseball was producing teams in uniform. Bell Telephone Company had installed a telephone exchange over the Lightbody Dry Goods Store on El Paso Street, and by the start of 1885 the company had 81 subscribers in El Paso and 13 more across the river. According to the *Times*, business was looking up all over town, although the rest of the country was sunk in one of its periodical depressions.

Dr. C. T. Race, serving as city physician, looked over the city and offered his educated opinion: "El Paso is well organized and presents every characteristic of refinement and high culture, a well-governed

Mr. Leibson, the author of this regular *Password* feature, also writes a weekly column for *The El Paso Times*, from which organization he retired in 1974.

community upon the highest plane of moral worth, intelligence, hospitality...." Not to be outdone in its report on the great wave of progress, the *Times* boasted that "our facilities for gathering telegraphic news are equal to those of any paper in the U.S."

The glowing picture of our border community, shining out of the pages of its daily newspaper, was one side of the coin. There was another and much seamier side. Utah Street was fast giving El Paso a nickname, "The Sin City," where visiting miners, cattlemen, gamblers and adventurers—all with money in their pockets—swarmed into town. They were generally relieved of their excess cash one way or another, mostly in the fleshpots from which it filtered down to the business and individual level. El Paso was a wide-open town, and the businessmen liked it that way. Owen White, who lived through the period and wrote extensively about it, said, "The thing that brought customers from afar into El Paso's stores was an invitation to step right up to the sinners' bench, and the storekeepers took advantage of it. They even encouraged it."

White credits C.R. Morehead, the quiet little newcomer who had arrived in 1881 and opened El Paso's first bank, with keeping vice under control. Morehead had become El Paso's political boss and ruled the community with an iron hand. The gamblers, prostitutes, saloon keepers, and dance hall operators knew that Morehead could put them out of business any time he wanted to, so they helped keep vice on a high level compared to other frontier towns.

C.L. Sonnichsen, in his *Pass of the North*, tells us that Sin in El Paso was not only big business and a magnet for well-heeled visitors, but also a financial mainstay of the local government. The city helped balance its budget by demanding, and collecting, regular payoffs from prostitutes and by instituting heavy license fees for gamblers and saloon keepers, dollars that went to pay the salaries of the policemen on the beat who kept the girls and the gamblers in line.

With so much cash floating around, it was inevitable that graft and corruption should move in on the political scene. The *Times* began sniffing out scandal, and early in 1885 it backtracked into the county's history to dig up a story about the proposed construction of a courthouse. That had been while Ysleta was still the county seat. Out of \$60,000 raised for the planned new building, all but \$5,000 had somehow disappeared. The *Times* demanded an explanation, and a grand jury looked into the matter, finding that

there had indeed been some fraud. But the jury never got around to naming any suspected perpetrators of the fraud.

It was also alleged that the contractors who were building a courthouse in El Paso had revised the construction plans, after being awarded the contract, to their considerable extra profit. A petition was circulated, egged on by the *Times*, demanding that the county bring suit against the contractors to recover money not rightfully theirs. One of the leaders in the battle against the partnership building the courthouse was former Alderman J. P. Hague, who received a mysterious message asking him to be in his office late one night. Rightfully suspecting the purpose of the visit, he had two highly respected citizens, J. H. White and J. P. Dieter, hidden in a closet where they could observe the proceedings.

Into the office came one of the contracting partners and some of his workmen. They placed \$2,000 in cash on Hague's desk and a check for \$400 in an outright bribe attempt. What they wanted was the only existing copy of the original construction plans that had been traced by one of the competing and disgruntled builders. At that point the two witnesses burst into the room and the would-be bribers fled, leaving their money behind. The money eventually would be given to a local charity.

The incident was somewhat embarrassing to the *Times* editor, who was a personal friend of one of the contracting partners. Apparently, this partner had not known what was going on. He quickly resigned from the partnership and finished the construction as planned in the first architectural drawings. A case was filed against his ex-partner that would drag on for years and result in a not-guilty verdict. But the *Times* and the community were satisfied.

A reform movement had taken root and was spreading. The businessmen and bankers, well aware that vice was drawing heavy money into the city, understandably dragged their feet. But the churches, and individuals on the side of morality, began attacking the vice that was at the very heart of the community. In those times every saloon and gambling house stayed open 24 hours a day, every day of the week. As Owen White pointed out, El Paso could well have advertised—as Creede, Colorado, did—that "It's day all day in the daytime and we have no night at all." There was one drawback to reform: without the revenue from vice, taxes would have to go up to replace that easy money. But reform was on the way, slowly to be sure, and would eventually prevail. ☆



A DECADE OF DISRUPTION

by Louise Gates

NOVEMBER 20, 1910. It was a Sunday — and probably began in an ordinary way as far as our family was concerned. I was eight years old at the time and have no clear recollection of the day, but I imagine that I accompanied my parents to early Mass at the church near our home — a beautiful old church with quarried stone floors found in all the churches originally built by the Spaniards. My older sisters (Leonor, 13, and Laura, 10) went with us, I'm sure, our infant brother, Walter, no doubt remaining at home under the watchful eye of a servant. We were living in a small community called Sierra Mojada, located in the Mexican state of Coahuila. My father, Walter Benjamin Gates, originally of Shawneetown, Illinois, was superintendent of mines owned by the American Smelting and Refining Company, now ASARCO. My mother, Guadalupe Varríos Gates, a native of Sombrerete, Zacatecas, was a wonderful homemaker for her family. After our return from church on that particular Sunday, Mother undoubtedly served one of her excellent dinners. Then, in the afternoon, did we girls play with our dolls as we normally did on cool fall Sundays? Probably we didn't. For that day marked the beginning of disruption in our

Miss Gates, who at present lives in Albuquerque, is a former resident of El Paso, where she was employed for many years as secretary to District Attorney Roy Jackson and, later, to Sam D. Young, Sr., President, El Paso National Bank. Her sister Laura, frequently mentioned in this article, is Mrs. William J. Reynolds, Sr., of El Paso.

household — and indeed, throughout all Mexico. On that day, the revolution began under the leadership of Francisco I. Madero against the Central Government of General Porfirio Diaz, who had been President for over 30 years.

Before long, we began to hear a stirring *corrida* that was to become a rallying song of the revolutionaries, its opening line still vivid in my memory: "El día 20 de Noviembre la revolución estayó para tumbar al tirano que 30 años nos mandó." But not for a while did the revolution reach Sierra Mojada, which was rather off the beaten track. It was located approximately 80 kilometers northeast of Escalon, Chihuahua, a station on the main railroad from Juárez to Mexico City, and was served by a branch line from Escalon. This line, which was owned by the family of Dr. Henry Safford of El Paso, was used mainly for hauling ore from the local mines. But it was also a means of travel — in fact, the only way out of Sierra Mojada, other than a primitive wagon road.

By 1911, revolutionary armies led by Gustavo Madero (brother of Francisco) had reached the northern states and were approaching Sierra Mojada. Before they actually arrived, our small detachment of Federal troops had stationed themselves on the roof of the schoolhouse (the tallest building in town), where as the days went by and no revolutionary army arrived, they nearly died from sunstroke. They were so few (about 30) and their situation so hopeless that their captain decided to leave Sierra Mojada to join other Federal troops in Torreon. I clearly remember their departure: a pathetic troop in uniforms made of "manta triguena" (unbleached muslin) with their faces swollen from exposure to the sun and on foot, carrying a large white flag emblazoned with the word "Paz" (peace) in black letters. I doubt that they reached their destination because by then Pascual Orozco had rebelled against Madero and with his troops, known as the "Colorados," was operating in Chihuahua and Coahuila. By this time, under various leaders, the entire country was engulfed in revolution.

Not long after the Federal troops had quietly left us, our branch railroad became inoperable: the revolutionaries burned the bridges. As a result, food became scarce, and though only a few Maderista troops had reached us, Father knew that he had to get his family to the United States. Late in the summer of 1911, we left in a buggy and a buckboard carrying a tent, baggage, and what little food we could gather (mostly potatoes, I think). Our party consisted of the



Walter B. Gates, Sr., and his four children at their Sierra Mojada home shortly before the family departed for El Paso in the late summer of 1911. Seated, l. to r., are Laura (now Mrs. William J. Reynolds, Sr., of El Paso), Louise (the author of "A Decade of Disruption"), Leonor (who died in El Paso in 1912), and Walter B. Gates, Jr. (Photo courtesy Louise Gates)

six of us and two drivers. The vehicles were drawn by mules because the Maderistas had confiscated our horses. Horses and guns were requisitioned first — and then money, for which the people were given an IOU payable "cuando triunfe la causa" (when our cause is victorious). These Maderistas were not unfriendly, and they scrupulously respected our home which had a red, white, and blue ribbon nailed to the gate. This ribbon was the only symbol of his American citizenship that Father had at that time.

Our destination was Presidio, Texas, the shortest distance directly north from Sierra Mojada to the United States. We spent one night in a small ranch house whose owners were friendly. We slept on the dirt floor just as they did and were bothered all night by fleas. We spent the following night, or nights, sleeping on the ground along the road. I remember a constant rain and my mother boiling potatoes at our campsites. I also remember meeting small bands of men, not too unfriendly, but nevertheless frightening because

they were heavily armed — with German weapons, Mausers — and sometimes drunk. I vividly recall one of them offering his bottle of Sotol to my mother. Mother, a very dignified lady, politely took the bottle and pretended to drink from it.

We crossed the Rio Grande into the United States at Presidio, where we were rowed across in boats, the men leading our mules through the swiftly running water. In Presidio we were hospitably received by a Mr. Kline, who had a general store there. And we had the pleasure of taking a bath, but we had no clean clothes. From Presidio — after a short delay — we traveled by carriage to Shafter, Texas, arriving there late at night and again spreading blankets on the ground for our beds. That night, however, we felt safe — protected by the comforting presence nearby of a United States cavalry troop, one of many encamped all along the border. The next morning we were treated to a wonderful breakfast of hot cakes and eggs by the soldiers, to whom we must have presented a sad sight: an American family — the father incidentally suffering from a severe case of shingles, the mother with a baby, and the three small girls in disgustingly dirty clothes — just arriving out of a country torn by revolution. That morning we went on to Marfa, Texas, where we boarded a train to El Paso. Arriving in El Paso, we went to the Hotel Linden, then a quiet, family hotel — preferred no doubt over the more fashionable hotels until Father could arrange for salesladies from the White House Department Store to bring a selection of clothes so that Mother could make her family presentable.

Father lost no time getting his family settled in El Paso. He rented a house on Virginia Street, enrolled us girls in Bailey School, and then returned alone to Sierra Mojada. We would have perhaps remained in El Paso until conditions stabilized in Mexico had tragedy not struck our family the next spring. My sister Leonor became seriously ill — and died on March 19, 1912. At the beginning of her illness, Mother had wired Father, but as the telegraph lines had been cut by the revolutionary armies, Father did not arrive until after Leonor's death. Griefstricken, my parents then decided that our family must try to remain together — come what may.

That summer we returned to Sierra Mojada, this time by train to Eagle Pass, Texas (travel south from Juarez was impossible because one or another of the opposing armies was always in control of the railroads, which were used only for military purposes — when they ran at all), then into Mexico by train to Cuatro Ciénegas, Coahuila,

the end of the railway at that time. From there, we traveled by carriage to Sierra Mojada with one overnight stop at an abandoned ranch called "La Vibora" because the area was said to be rattlesnake country. Our drivers kept a fire burning all night to ward off the snakes. This trip was uneventful, but our life in Sierra Mojada during the following two years certainly was not.

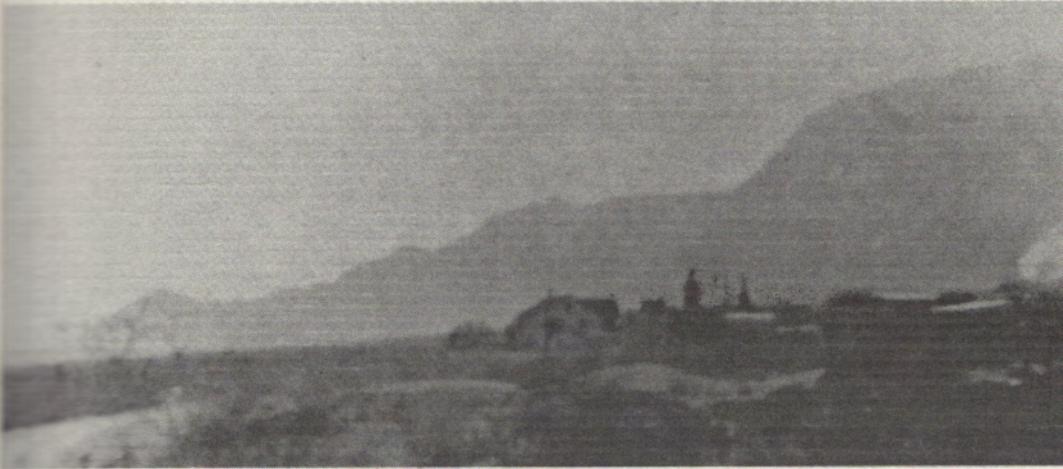
Shortly after our return to Mexico, several rebellions were complicating the revolutionary politics of the country. Earlier, as we knew, Orozco had rebelled against Madero; then in February of 1913, General Victoriano Huerta seized control of the central government, imprisoning Madero and his vice president, and later executing them; then the governor of Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza, turned against the Huerta government. Pancho Villa was an officer in the Carranza army, but not yet the force he was later to become. With Carranzistas, Orozquistas, and Huertistas, there were more than enough *revolucionarios* to make our lives tumultuous.

For starters, we had returned to a looted home. All that remained of the furnishings were the kitchen stove and a dresser without the drawers. Even the bathtub was gone. Also, the schools were closed, the teachers having fled for safety — or because, in the absence of a municipal government, there could be no pay. Father was somehow able to engage a tutor for us girls, an energetic young woman from Torreon, Doña Jesusita Cuellar, who taught us at home and also organized religion classes at the church. Because this was a relatively peaceful period, the three of us would walk every Wednesday afternoon to the church for these classes. It wasn't a long walk, maybe three or four miles, but it took us through an isolated area where we had to be constantly watching for soldiers from one or another of the armies, quickly hiding on the far side of the railroad embankment should we see any.

Sierra Mojada is situated in a valley surrounded by mountains. The majority of the people lived at Esmeralda, a town on the eastern end of the valley, where the railroad station was located, as well as the main marketplace, the church, and the school. At the western end of the valley was Sierra Mojada proper, the original settlement and, before the revolution, the site of the municipal government and military garrison. Between these two communities was the American Smelting and Refining Company compound, called "El Volcan," which consisted of our house, another residence, the office building, a larger house used as bachelors' quarters, and —

behind these buildings — a number of adobe houses for the mine workers and their families. Thus, our location required us to venture through lonely and sometimes dangerous territory whenever we needed to go into either of the two towns.

Also during this time our lives were interrupted by occasional demands from the Huertista captain for sugar and coffee, which were not available locally. The captain knew that my father obtained these commodities for his workmen by sending wagons flying American flags to Cuatro Cienegas. This captain often sent for Father and a Mr. Conklin, who was manager for some other company there. With great relish, the captain repeatedly told my father

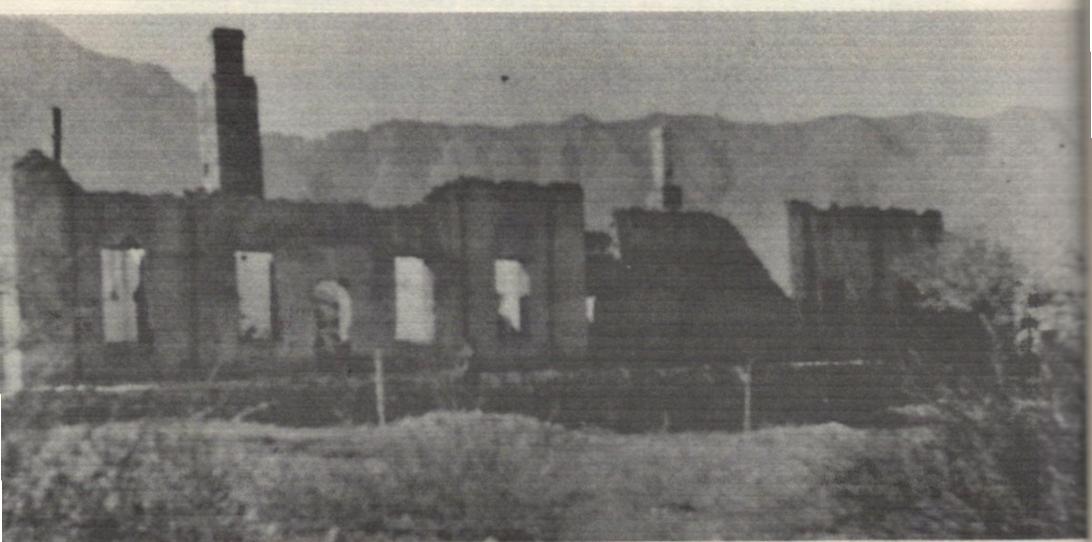


A view of the Gates home, c. 1910, in the A. S. and R. Compound, located between the communities of Sierra Mojada and Esmeralda in Coahuila, Mexico. (Photo courtesy Louise Gatés)

and Mr. Conklin that he did not like Americans and that he intended to shoot them both before he left. Because of this threat, my mother would always send one of us children with Father when he was ordered to see the captain, hoping, I'm sure, that the captain would not harm Father as long as one of his children was with him.

This period of relative quiet ended when we heard that a large force of Orozquistas was advancing on our town. The capture of Sierra Mojada by the Orozquistas was our first experience with the cruelty and bitterness of the struggle among the various factions. From an attic window of our house, my sister and I watched as they swarmed into "El Volcan." They seemed to number thousands (in reality probably only a few hundred) as they passed around our

house shooting at fleeing Huerta troops — including the American-hating captain, whom they shot. On their way through the compound, they took prisoner the Chinese cook from the bachelors' house. (These Chinese were very industrious and saved their money so they could "someday go back to China." Because of this they were fair game for the revolutionaries, who would ransack their rooms in search of money.) We saw the cook in his yellow and black striped shirt and still wearing his apron, running ahead of a group of men on horseback, this uneven race ending with his capture.



The A. S. and R. office building, adjacent to the Gates residence in Sierra Mojada, as it appeared after it was burned by Villista forces, c. 1917. (Photo courtesy Louise Gates)

Later that day, Father persuaded the commanding officer to release the cook on condition that he leave town on the next train. However, Father had no success arguing the case of José Herrera, the company paymaster, who had also been taken prisoner. Summarily, the undisciplined Orozquistas, responsible to no one, shot José Herrera. They would also have taken his brother Antonio, the bookkeeper, had Antonio not gone into hiding. The sole crime of the Herrera brothers was that they were nephews of Venustiano Carranza.

During that day so filled with frightening sights and sounds, I remember Mother calmly preparing a meal for us and for the family in the other residence. I even remember that she made English muffins. Another memory I have of this day is the sight of the

bodies of the paymaster and another friend of father's lying in the bed of a buckboard passing by our house and the young son of one of the dead men sitting by the driver and crying.

Nothing was the same after that day, even when the Orozquistas were replaced a little later by Carranzistas. Doña Jesusita left for her home in Torreon. Mother continued our schooling. We were restricted to the compound, though we knew (without speaking of it) that every night Father carried food to someone hiding in the hills nearby. Frequently, soldiers came riding around our house yelling and shooting. In the fall of 1914, we heard that Huerta had left Mexico (he later died of cancer in the old Providence Hospital in El Paso). But whatever changes took place in the central Mexican government, Sierra Mojada was governed strictly by whatever faction happened at the moment to be occupying the town.

We were particularly molested by a Captain Mancha, a Carranzista with a volatile temperament. At one point, this captain developed a grudge against the company doctor, an interesting character by the name of De Medici de Viron, who in some way had offended the captain and had gone into hiding. The outraged captain was looking everywhere for the doctor, even pounding on our gate in the course of his relentless search. That very night Father decided to spirit the romantic doctor out of Sierra Mojada: he arranged for the doctor to board one of the company handcars at the mine shaft in the hills above, then coast noiselessly through town and start the motor when well out of earshot.

On Saturday afternoons the miners came to the office for their pay. I still wonder how and from where the silver pesos came through for the payroll. Except for payday, Father kept only a small sum of money in the office safe. I remember one occasion when he sent two canvas bags of money over to us with instructions to bury them in the chicken yard. (We had learned early that this was the best place to bury valuables as the chickens' scratchings covered all traces.) By now it was especially imperative that valuables be well hidden, for Villa was in complete control in Chihuahua and Coahuila. His troops were feared by everyone — rich and poor. Villistas did not pay us a visit while we were in Sierra Mojada, but later it was they who burned down the office building.

After American forces occupied Veracruz in April, 1914, American citizens were not welcome or safe in Mexico. Toward the end of that year Father was advised by the United States State Department to

return to the United States as soon as possible. Once again, we hastily packed a few belongings and started north. From Sierra Mojada to Escalon we rode in a caboose, but on the main railroad to Juarez, we had Pullman accommodations, for which Father had paid 4,000 Villa pesos (each such peso worth about one cent in American money). Though our train was repeatedly sidetracked to allow military trains to pass, the trip was comfortable — except for the uneasy feeling one always had in Villa territory. This feeling became downright fear when we reached Juarez, where many Villista officials boarded the train for inspection (all such trains going on through to El Paso at that time). Outwardly we remained calm, hoping they wouldn't guess that we were carrying our valuables in small bundles pinned to our underwear. Our inner anxiety increased when one of the guards stopped at our seat and ordered my sister to unwrap a bundle she was holding. It was a figure of the Christ child (the only thing Mother could bring which had been in her childhood home). We hand-carried all such personal possessions because no one was certain that checked baggage could be retrieved.

All the southbound troop trains which had passed us on our way north carried Villista forces. His army was moving south in a bold bid to capture Mexico City — Villa no doubt intending to become president. But his troops were met and twice defeated by the forces of General Alvaro Obregón in the state of Guanajuato. After that, Villa was no longer a national threat, though he and his followers continued raiding and pillaging in the northern states.

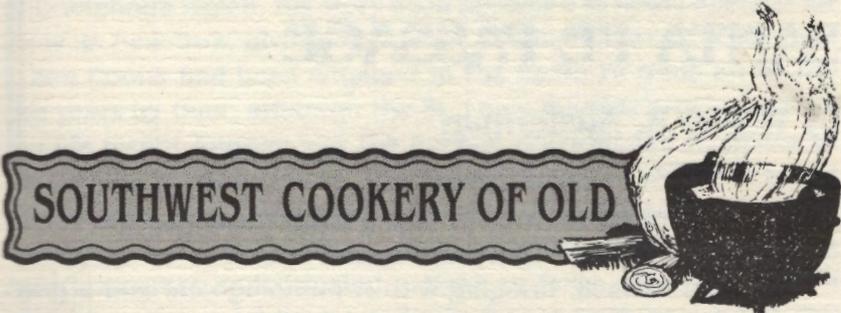
Father returned to Sierra Mojada to carry on the operation of the mines — and under very difficult conditions, the rest of our family remaining in El Paso. Not until 1920 did we go back to Sierra Mojada. Order had been restored, at least in the larger cities, although trains still carried military escorts and ran only during the daytime as travel at night was too dangerous. On my trip home with Father, I saw the bodies of two men hanging from telephone poles. Later, as we approached Torreon, we observed that the telegraph lines had been cut — always a bad sign. Cautiously, the train continued to Torreon, with the conductor and some of the soldiers walking ahead to make sure there were no tracks blocked or torn up.

During the early 1920s, Villistas continued to make periodic raids on ranches in the area of Esmeralda and even on the eastern section of Sierra Mojada, but the nationwide revolution was practical-

ly over. One way or another — after the long decade of ceaseless disruption — the people in our valley mended their broken lives and turned their attention to the process of rebuilding. ☆

“To say the least, history has a future.”

—Gertrude Goodman
Hall of Honor Address, 1980



SOUTHWEST COOKERY OF OLD

Martha Patterson Peterson, a frequent contributor to *Password*, remembers her mother's lemon pie as “tangy, taste-tingling and tempting to all and sundry” and “moreover B. C. (Before corn-starch).” Her mother, Leila Milam Patterson, a member of a Texas pioneer family, began making the pie before the turn of the century. It was a great family favorite — and came in time to be called...

Gram's Lemon Pie

Custard (as written in Gram's “own nice Spencerian handwriting”):

Grated rind and juice of one lemon.

One cup sugar (not quite).

One heaping tablespoon flour.

Yolks of three eggs (save whites for meringue).

Lump of butter, size of a walnut.

One cup of milk.

Stir over low flame, stirring constantly until thickens. This is a relatively “soft” custard. You can boil very slowly after thickening to make it a little thicker. Set aside for cooling.

Meringue (“as told to granddaughter Judy Peterson Mangan”):

Beat whites of 3 eggs till stands stiffly in peaks. (Use a hand beater, and you will have a fluffier meringue.) Add two tablespoons cold (like from refrigerator) water. Whip or beat until meringue stands again in peaks. Add 3 level tablespoons sugar. Whip again till smooth and in peaks.

Into a cooled crust (no instructions as to crust), pour the cooled custard. Top with meringue. Bake pie in slow oven 10 to 15 minutes or a little longer. Check for browning and little gold beads.



BEN COONS' SANTA FE PASSAGE

by Wayne R. Austerman

THE WINTER OF 1846-47 was a bitter season on the Santa Fe Trail. A wind with a wolf's head howled down the plains from Canada, bringing with it numbing cold and a gray shroud of snow that obscured the ruts cut in the land's surface by the caravans that had plied the great trade route for over 20 years. Earth and sky merged into a sullen monochrome at the horizon that blurred both time and distance for those unfortunate enough to be caught in mid-passage between New Mexico and Missouri.¹

The citizens of Independence, Missouri, watched that dreary expanse to the west with a mixture of foreboding and expectation. Some were impatient for the weather to clear so that they could begin the journey themselves. Others worried about caravans that might be trapped and starving on the trail. All were anxious to learn what had befallen the little American army that had marched out from Fort Leavenworth seven months before to seize Santa Fe following the outbreak of war with Mexico.

They knew that Colonel Stephen W. Kearny's First Regiment of Dragoons and Colonel Alexander Doniphan's Missouri Volunteers had reached and occupied the old Spanish settlement by mid-August, 1846. The news of that bloodless victory had delighted the Missourians and had prompted more native sons to enlist and go

Dr. Austerman, a frequent contributor to *Password*, is employed by the Office of History, United States Air Force Space Command, and also teaches a course on American military history at the University of Southern Colorado.

west to aid the conquerors. Late in September Kearny's cavalrymen had struck out across New Mexico to invade California, while Doniphan's troopers prepared to march south against El Paso and Chihuahua. By late January, 1847, all of Missouri was straining to hear how the volunteers had fared as their lawyer colonel led them down the Rio Grande to the Pass.²

The people of Independence were thus keenly interested on January 25 when three haggard, gaunt-framed men stumbled into the teamsters' camps on the edge of town. The trio was wracked by hunger, fatigue, and exposure, but its leader, a young St. Louis merchant named Benjamin Franklin Coons, brought cheering news of Doniphan's legion. His story soon appeared in newspapers as far away as New York, giving the nation another victory to celebrate.

Ben Coons had been engaged in the Santa Fe trade for nearly five years by then, although the St. Louis *Reveille* article describing his recent journey was the earliest documented reference to his activity in the business. The closing weeks of 1846 had found him in Santa Fe as Doniphan's militiamen marched south along the route taken by Oñate over two centuries before. When the Americans met and defeated a Mexican force above El Paso on Christmas Day, a jubilant courier had sped back across the *Jornada del Muerto* to carry the news to the garrison in Santa Fe. Thomas Forsyth, the express rider, informed Coons of the great triumph and entrusted him with a packet of letters and dispatches to be taken to Missouri.

Coons was relieved to learn of Doniphan's success as he prepared for his journey back to St. Louis. Things had hardly been tranquil and secure in Santa Fe during the army's absence, for on the night of the great battle downriver some of the town's native population had plotted an uprising that was only narrowly averted by the small force of occupying troops.

On January 14, 1847, Coons and two companions departed Santa Fe astride saddle mules, leaving the main trail at La Junta to take the Cimarron Cut-Off, a secondary route that angled south of the primary trail for over a hundred miles before rejoining it in southwestern Kansas. Under normal circumstances the cut-off might have aided his rapid passage, but Coons quickly found that the winter weather had turned it into a frozen wasteland. Most of the trail east of Santa Fe for better than 200 miles lay buried beneath two feet of snow. In the low ground and at the creek and

river crossings the powder had drifted even deeper, demanding a constant struggle by men and mules as they fought to clear a path.

Coons was not surprised when he and his companions met a government freight train that was stranded in the snow. It had left Fort Leavenworth early in December and was caught on the open plains by the harsh winter. The twenty teamsters had exhausted their rations, and for the past ten days they had been subsisting on the meat from dead mules. Coons could do little for them besides wish them luck and promise to report their situation to the authorities in Missouri.³

The trader was soon deeply immersed in his own troubles. They were still over 200 miles west of Independence when their mounts began dying beneath them. As the mules collapsed in quick succession, the men discarded all their spare clothing and gear, retaining only their food and weapons along with the letters from Santa Fe. They then began a brutal march eastward to the settlements. Fighting the cold and treacherous ground, they also had to keep watch for the hunger-frenzied packs of wolves that haunted the plains that winter. Fear prodded them to ignore their fatigue when they found the frozen bodies of two luckless travelers sprawled beside the trail. "The march for that distance at this inclement season," remarked the admiring *Reveille*, "was certainly equal to anything we can conceive of hardship, and it requires men of great nerve to accomplish it."

The fifteen punishing days on the road had not dulled the edge of Coons' excitement when he related the story of Doniphan's victory to the people of Independence. His account of the battle was embellished with all of the colorful details relayed to him by Forsyth. When the merchant told of how the Americans had picked up three wagonloads of discarded Mexican caps and infantry shakoes after the fighting, each with a bullet hole through the ornamental brass plate on its front, the *Reveille* exultantly crowed, "This is some evidence of the skill of Missourians as marksmen." His account of the attempted revolt in Santa Fe confirmed the journal's suspicion of the enemy's low cunning. The news that Coons carried, and his heroic journey to deliver it were all the proof Americans needed to confirm their belief in the nation's expansionist destiny.⁴

It did not take Coons long to recover from his arduous trip. By June he was back in Santa Fe, and early in August a traveler met

him on the trail, returning from still another journey back to St. Louis. In eight months Coons had made at least four journeys over the plains with his caravans, proving himself to be among the most energetic of all the men in the trade.⁵

Ben Coons' subsequent career as a merchant and leading citizen of the Anglo community in El Paso has been well documented in a variety of studies. While enduring success and fortune eluded him, he repeatedly demonstrated that he was a man of vision and courage. Doubtless El Paso would have grown without his presence on the border, but the marks of his sojourn still endure, and it is interesting to speculate on what course the settlement's history might have taken had the young adventurer been claimed by the wolves or windlashed snow along the Cimarron in January, 1847.⁶☆

NOTES

1. For comments on the winter of 1846-47 along the Santa Fe Trail see Lewis H. Garrard, *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 100-13.
2. Otis A. Singletary, *The Mexican War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 57-62.
3. St. Louis *Reveille*, February 26, 1847; New York *Tribune*, March 10, 1847; Walker D. Wyman, "Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting, 1846-1865," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, I, No. 3 (November, 1931), 419, n. 15.
4. St. Louis *Reveille*, February 26, 1847.
5. Rex Strickland, *Six Who Came to El Paso* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1963), 13; Donald Chaput, *Francois X. Aubry Trader, Trailmaker and Voyager in the Southwest 1846-1854* (Glendale, California: A.H. Clark Company, 1975), 211; *Daily Missouri Republican*, September 1, 6, 1847.
6. Strickland, *Six Who Came*, 12-19; W.H. Timmons, "The El Paso Area in the Mexican Period, 1821-1848," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXXIV, (July, 1980), 1-28; *idem*, "The Merchants and the Military, 1849-1854," *Password*, XXVII, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), 51-61.

Anson Mills...from page 19.

NOTES

1. Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington: Press of Byron S. Adams, 1921), 48.
2. C.L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968), 144.
3. Mills, 52-53.
4. *Ibid.*, 58-59.
5. *Ibid.*, 310-327.
6. Proceedings of the International Boundary Commission, Vol. I, 101-116.
7. *Ibid.*, 14, 149-171.
8. *Ibid.*, 52-67.
9. *Chamizal Arbitration, Minutes of the IBC: Award; Dissenting Opinions; Protest of the Agent of the U.S.*, 3-5.
10. "Convention Between the US and Mexico for the Elimination of Bancos in the Rio Grande..." proclaimed June 5, 1907; also, information furnished by the International Boundary and Water Commission.
11. House Document 359, "Report of the American Section," 410-411.
12. Congressional Record, 63 Congress, 2 Session, March 23-24, 1914, 5279-5289.



QUILT DAY IN EL PASO

by Barbara J. Arduş

DOWN FROM THE ATTICS, up from the basements, out of the cedar chests came some of the most precious family heirlooms in the El Paso area. The occasion was Quilt Day in El Paso. It took place on Saturday, January 26, at the El Paso Museum of History, and it was one of about 20 such Days scheduled in various Texas communities by the Texas Sesquicentennial Quilt Association.

Organized in 1981, the non-profit TSQA is an official Texas Sesquicentennial group. Its purpose is to discover the quilt treasures in the state, to call to the public's attention the contributions made to Texas history by the quilt artists of the past and present, to educate quilt owners about quilts and their care—to celebrate, in short, quilts in Texas. Part of this celebration will appear as an exhibition of the state's choicest quilts, slated to open in the rotunda of the Capitol in Austin on San Jacinto Day, 1986.

The method devised by TSQA for locating the state's trove of historical quilts is the series of Quilt Days. On each such Quilt Day, the people of the given area are invited to bring their handmade quilts to the designated place for display and evaluation. A prize of \$100 is offered to the owner of the quilt judged "the oldest, best preserved, most beautiful quilt made in or brought to Texas prior to the State Centennial Celebration in 1936." The prize money for El Paso's Quilt Day was donated by the local sponsoring organizations: the El Paso County Historical Society, the El Paso Quilters' Association, the El Paso Chapter of the Embroiderers Guild of America, and the El Paso Museum of History.

Miss Arduş, a graduate of the University of Arizona, is curator of the El Paso Museum of History.

Quilt Day in El Paso

Karey Bresenhan, a TSQA quilt expert from Houston, Texas, examined the quilts brought by area residents. As the quilts were hung one after the other, she announced the name of the pattern, estimated the date when the quilt was made, commented on its workmanship and condition, and conducted a short dialogue with the owner as to the quilt's origin and history. At the end of the day, she announced the winner: Anne Boone, whose Wild Rose quilt was made of hand-dyed, homespun fabrics in North Carolina during the Civil War. It was brought to Texas in the 1920s after a "checked" career: it had been buried for a time in a tow sack to keep it hidden from looting Yankees, and later it had survived a disastrous fire.

While most of the quilts brought to Quilt Day were not made in the region of the Pass, some do lay claim to an El Paso Southwest historical connection. For example, there is a charming "crazy quilt" owned by Mary D. Brown of El Paso. Pronounced "a remarkable example of Victorian quilting," it is made of velvets, silks, and satins; and it carries an embroidered date of 1884. Mrs. Brown inherited the quilt—via her parents—from her grandfather, General Edmund Kirby-Smith, who served the Confederacy for a time at San Elizario, Texas, and who was "the last Confederate general to surrender in the state of Texas." In the early part of this century the quilt traveled through northern Mexico with the junior Kirby-Smith, a mining engineer, and then it became a "resident" of Texas when the family settled in El Paso in 1924.

Another beautiful "El Paso" quilt, and the winner of the Quilt Day's second prize (a year's membership to the Historical Society), belongs to native El Pasoan Barbara Rees, the daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs. Harry Leigh of El Paso. The quilt, fashioned in the Feathered Star pattern, was estimated to have been made "between 1850 and 1860." Mrs. Rees inherited the quilt from her mother's sister, Adeline Neighbors of San Marcos, Texas. She believes that a great aunt of Miss Neighbors made the quilt and that it was brought to Texas "before the turn of the century."

Altogether, Quilt Day in El Paso was a stunning display of an American art form derived from need and a readily available medium (the scrap bag). It was also a testament to the skill, patience, resourcefulness, and imagination of generations of homemakers. It was a colorful spectacle of history, a very special history crafted at the hearth and preserved through the years with love and respect. ☆



RIDERS ACROSS THE CENTURIES: HORSEMEN OF THE SPANISH BORDERLANDS by José Cisneros. El Paso: Texas Western Press, \$36.

A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words. But we all know that a drawing by José Cisneros is worth considerably more than that. Imagine, then, the value astronomical of these 100 drawings which present "the history of horsemanship in Mexico and the southwestern United States" from "the arrival of the first equines in Veracruz in the year 1519." In his Foreward, Mr. Cisneros tells us that his objective has been "To follow their hoofprints along and across the land" and "To restore, visualize, and depict the physical appearance of their riders." He has achieved his objective superbly—blending his masterful artistry with scrupulous research and providing, besides, a short, informative text with each drawing.

One by one, the horses and their riders leap to life—a few in color, most in black-and-white; every one a marvel of accurate detail. A "Soldier With Cortés, c. 1519" inaugurates our journey—by horseback, you might say—an action-filled journey which will carry us through 465 years in time and thousands of miles in space.

Early on, we meet a Conquistador, his visor raised, his eyes fixed on the awesome task ahead; we meet Don Hernán Cortés himself, commandingly astride his richly caparisoned horse; we meet an *encomendero*, his whip lifted against the native "barbarians"; also—among others in the 16th century—a Magistrate dressed "pompously in doctor-at-law robes," the Lord Archbishop of Mexico "bestowing blessings and prayers," the Viceroy on a steed as noble as himself. And we also meet Don Juan de Oñate, as he "reached the Rio Grande on April 29, 1598," and "executed, with...pomp and dignity...the *toma de posesión*."

The 17th century begins to show the vicissitudes of frontier life. We observe an earnest Physician of New Spain pressing his mount forward on a mission of urgency. And here is a Spanish Soldier in Trouble, his horse thrashing, wounded by an Indian arrow. Now a Spanish Pioneer Woman rides into view, household belongings dangling from the saddle, a simple rope serving as a bridle. But Renaissance finery nevertheless persists—in the haughty Hidalgo, for example, and even in the “grave elegance” of Don Diego de Vargas, Reconqueror of New Mexico.

Moving into the 18th century, we are greeted by that “practical frontiersman” Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, who established “the first Spanish settlements in...Arizona.” Later, our travel companions include a stern-visaged Presidio Inspector, “wise in the ways of the frontier”; a Spanish-Mexican landowner, in an outfit presaging “the country’s national costume”; a gentle Franciscan, on foot and leading a mule; a Mission Indian learning the intricacies of horsemanship.

Next come horsemen who show the cataclysmic events of the 19th century: a Jesuit riding into exile, “ostentatious” Antonio López de Santa Anna leading Mexico to Independence, the U. S. Army Mounted Rifles arriving to establish forts along the new border, an aristocrat of the Maximilian interval, a Texas Gunfighter, the sartorially innovative *caballeros* of the Díaz regime, a Texas Ranger.

Shortly after the 20th century arrives, a Villista heads straight toward us, his rifle hoisted, his eyes ablaze. Then, the Revolution completed, we see workaday cowboys dressed as their respective terrains and climates require. Our journey now ends with a hearty welcome by an amiable *charro*, “the culmination of a...great love for the traditions and customs of his country.”

Introduced by John O. West, Professor of English at The University of Texas at El Paso, and dedicated to the late Carl Hertzog, who worked with Texas Western Press on the book’s page designs, *Riders Across the Centuries* is a spectacular achievement of enduring beauty and impeccable scholarship.

LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD

Professor Emerita of English
The University of Texas at El Paso



JEFFERSON AND SOUTHWEST EXPLORATION: THE FREEMAN AND CUSTIS ACCOUNTS OF THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION OF 1806 edited by and with an introduction and epilogue by Dan L. Flores. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, \$48.50

The journals written by Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis during their 1806 exploration of some 600 miles of the Red River provide considerable insight into the accomplishments of Jefferson's "Grand Excursion." When presented in combination with a thoughtful interpretation of the ill-fated project, they pay proper tribute to the adventure and also fill a heretofore gap in the literature of Southwest exploration.

The author-editor, Assistant Professor of Environmental and Texas History at Texas Tech University, begins with an Introduction describing the background of the expedition. He traces the early European exploration of, and claims to, the Red River lands. He then makes clear that at the time of the United States purchase in 1803 of the Louisiana domain from France no well-defined boundaries separated the French and the Spanish claims to the Texas-Louisiana frontier. Next, he describes Jefferson's burning desire to seek knowledge of this newly-acquired, vast land area—a desire which prompted the President immediately to send the Lewis and Clark expedition into the northern regions and which (according to Flores' thesis) motivated his formal request to Spain for permission to explore the southern area that had been declared "off-limits" until formal boundaries were agreed to.

While waiting for a reply, Jefferson selected the Red River valley as the area to be explored and Freeman and Custis as the expedition leaders—the proceedings meanwhile becoming all the more complicated by the double-dealers and masters of intrigue who were operating on this frontier. When Spain rejected the request for passports, Jefferson then ignored protocol and launched the expedition. Spanish officials responded by ordering a military force to intercept and turn back the invasion.

Flores now presents the Freeman and Custis journals, which contain the interesting comments by Freeman, whose main duties were to observe topography, and the valuable data on flora and fauna recorded by Custis, the first true naturalist to explore the west. Also included are the passages which describe the party's contacts with the Indians, the most rewarding of which were its experiences at

the Alabama-Coushatta Village and the conversations with Indian chiefs.

The epilogue explores the alleged motives of the expedition and evaluates its achievements. Flores provides evidence that Jefferson had no desire to violate Spanish land claims nor to invade Texas nor to seek war over the boundaries. As for the expedition's accomplishments, Flores names several. Of immediate importance was a regional boundary and buffer zone worked out by officials. Of longer-range value was the body of scientific materials that had been collected. Above all other consequences were the ethnological materials and the establishment of friendly relations with the Indians, which proved decisive in tilting the balance of power over this region in favor of American control. In reality, the Red River was opened by this expedition as a waterway west that would be followed in the near future by American settlers.

Flores' unique format is a sound editorial achievement, and his extensive footnotes show his comprehensive knowledge of the Red River region. Furthermore, his interpretations of this controversial historical event will surely raise some conjecture among scholars and inspire further study.

J. MORGAN BROADDUS
Department of History
The University of Texas at El Paso



PORTALS AT THE PASS, AREA ARCHITECTURE TO 1930
edited by **Evan Haywood Antone**, design and drawings by
Morris A. Brown. El Paso: El Paso Chapter, American Institute
of Architects, \$25.

Thirteen buildings in the El Paso area provide the subject matter of this handsome book. Selected by committee from a large initial list, the final thirteen chosen for discussion include an interesting variety of public edifices and private dwellings: Socorro Mission, San Elizario Church, the Magoffin Home, the Merrick Building, Sacred Heart Church, the Trost residence, the Banner Building, Pershing House, the Mills Building, Hotel Paso del Norte, El Paso High School, Old Main Building on the campus of The University of Texas at El Paso, and the Bassett Tower. Each of these

buildings represents a step in the development of various styles of architecture in this region, from the mid-nineteenth century through the first three decades of the twentieth. All of them have special characteristics making them particularly suitable for the climate of the El Paso region.

The indigenous adobe mode is well represented in the two churches and the Magoffin Home. The churches maintain much of an earlier Spanish tradition, while the Magoffin Home reflects the retardataire Greek Revival as applied to Spanish colonial adobe buildings in the Southwest—a style that has come to be known as "Territorial."

Six of the buildings dealt with are from the boards of Trost and Trost, a firm which this reviewer feels stands very tall among our nation's more imaginative eclectics. Its work runs the gamut from the High Beaux-arts style of the El Paso High School to the elegant Art Deco Bassett Tower.

The short articles on each building are marked by a sprightly style and make one wish for more. Supplementing the text are a number of photographs, superb in their quality and reproduction. Young Frank Hunter is to be congratulated for his part in this endeavor. Morris Brown's drawings of various architectural details further enrich the book's texture. They give a clear, concise indication of the three-dimensional qualities of the details—particularly of the cast concrete dingbats on the Banner Building.

This is a thin book, page-wise, but it carries a wealth of information. And also, by implication, it reveals an important segment of history in the region of the Pass—the transformation from mission-centered adobe villages along the Rio Grande to a skyscraper-dominated city poised for growth-explosion.

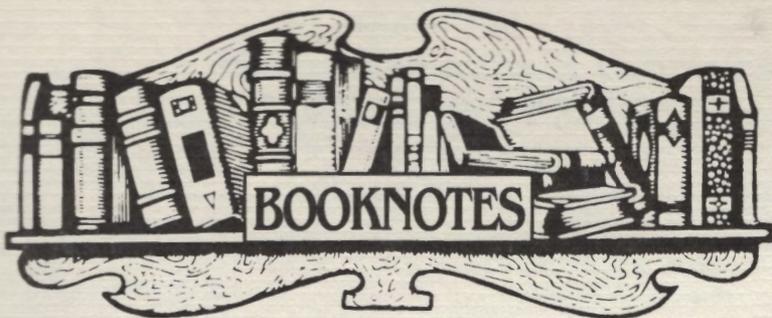
CLARKE H. GARNSEY
Professor Emeritus of Art
The University of Texas at El Paso



ALIVE AND WELL



Your editor humbly apologizes for listing in the Winter 1984 *Password* Colonel (Ret.) Edward J. Daley as deceased. Happily, Colonel Daley is very much with us.



CABEZA DE VACA'S ADVENTURES IN THE UNKNOWN INTERIOR OF AMERICA
translated and edited by Cyclone Covey. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, \$5.95

In a new Epilogue for this edition, William T. Pilkington of Tarleton State University describes Cabeza de Vaca as "not only a trail blazer," but "the Southwest's first writer." The writing, he asserts, is the most important product of the eight-year odyssey which took the Spaniard and his three companions from the Florida coast over 6,000 miles, ending in Mexico City in 1536. While the Epilogue is new, the remainder of the book is the 1961 translation and annotation by Cyclone Covey of Wake Forest University.

Covey's interpretation, which drew on the 1930s research by Carl Sauer and Cleve Hallenbeck, has Cabeza de Vaca arriving at the Rio Grande somewhere south of El Paso and following the river northward to Rincon, then moving westward through New Mexico. Various descriptions by the chronicler, however, offer some puzzles under this interpretation and have led others to different conclusions as to the Spanish party's route. For example, the late Tom Charles of Alamogordo, after long study of *La Relación*, as the narrative is called in Spanish, felt that the Spaniards followed the Pecos River to Artesia, then moved westward through San Agustín Pass to reach the Rio Grande, following it northward from Las Cruces to Socorro, then west once more. Thus the explorer would have missed El Paso.

Whatever Cabeza de Vaca's route, his narrative is exceedingly important. As Pilkington observes, its "similarity to the canon of American writing suggests that our literature is what it is because, given the nature of our national experience, it could be nothing else. The exploration and settlement of vast tracts of 'empty' land are crucial components of the American's (and especially the Westerner's) heritage...."

Covey's is the third English translation of Cabeza de Vaca's record and has won wide approval for its lack of archaic terms and the helpful notes woven into the narrative. This paperback edition makes it easily accessible to persons interested in Southwestern history.

NANCY HAMILTON

Associate Director, News and Publications
The University of Texas at El Paso

AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL: THE LIFE OF J. FRANK DOBIE by Lon Tinkle.
Austin: University of Texas Press, \$8.95

If asked to identify a real Texan, most of those who know will choose J. Frank Dobie (1888-1964), renowned folklorist and author of more than two dozen books on the Southwest.

Lon Tinkle's biography of Dobie, entitled *An American Original* and first published in 1978 by Little, Brown of Boston, was recently reissued in paperback by the University of Texas Press in connection with the centennial celebration of The University of Texas at Austin, where Dobie taught English for almost fifty years and where his "Life and Literature of the Southwest" course attracted large numbers of students.

Known for his occasional orneriness, Dobie frequently clashed with academicians and politicians, but his popularity as a lecturer and writer grew through the decades

Booknotes

of the thirties and forties when *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver* and *The Longhorns* (both illustrated by Tom Lea, Jr.) were published by Little, Brown in 1939 and 1941 respectively. The reappearance of Dobie's biography will be welcomed both by his fans and those of Lon Tinkle, a Southern Methodist University professor, best known for his *13 Days to Glory*, story of the siege of the Alamo.

EVAN HAYWOOD ANTONE

Department of English

The University of Texas at El Paso

LONGHORN COWBOY by James H. Cook. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, \$14.95

Originally published in 1942, *Longhorn Cowboy* is a first-hand account of what it was like to be a cowboy in Texas. It is also a report of the difficulties encountered by 12 hands driving 2500 longhorns up the Chisholm Trail. If Cook's memories don't convince you it was a tough life with little resemblance to the cinema depictions, keep in mind that these tales were filtered through a youth's endurance, optimism and romanticism and that the hardships were probably much worse than described.

James H. Cook was a frontiersman, rancher, big-game hunter, and Indian scout. He was 15 years old when he hired on as a brushpopper in the Llano Estacado country in 1872. *Longhorn Cowboy* describes that portion of his life.

F. THOMAS STARKWEATHER

Chief of Data Sciences Division

White Sands Missile Range

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Lillian Collingwood, Editor

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