PASSWORD

THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PASSWORD

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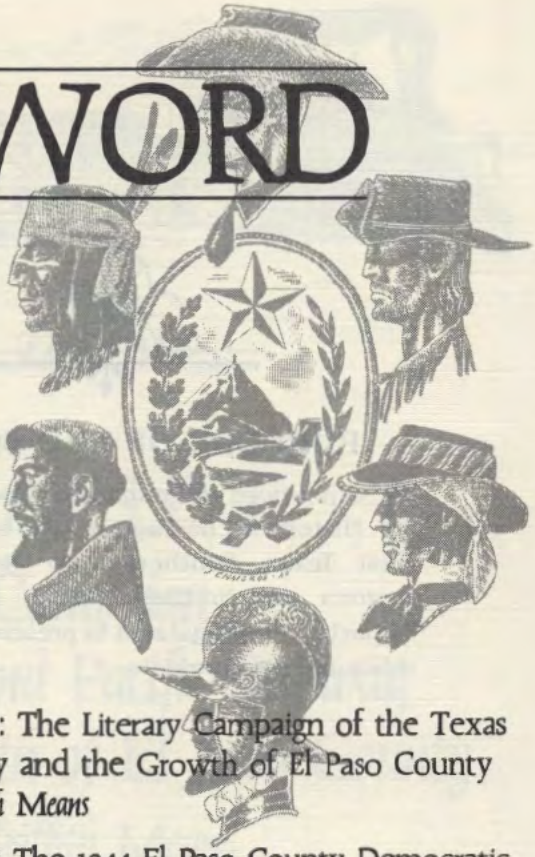

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PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

To promote and engage in research into the History, Archeology, and Natural History of West Texas, Southern New Mexico, Eastern Arizona, and Northern Mexico; to publish the important findings; and to preserve the valuable relics and monuments.

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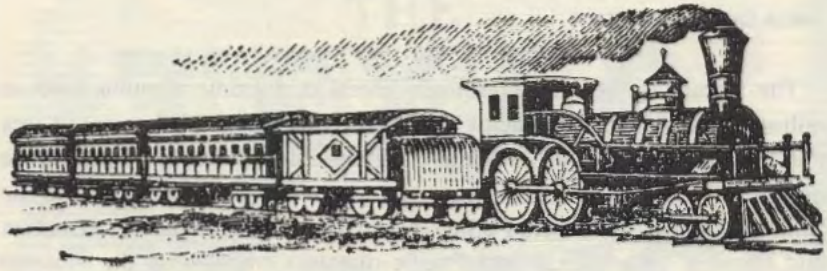

THE GREAT LINE

The Literary Campaign of the Texas and Pacific Railway and the Growth of El Paso County

by Emilia Gay Griffith Means

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THE TEXAS AND Pacific Railway played an important role in the settlement of Texas. As the Railway moved west, it became the principal carrier of pioneering families seeking new land and new opportunities. What is not so well known, perhaps, is the way in which the Texas and Pacific served as a kind of unofficial immigration agent for the entire portion of the state through which its lines passed, including El Paso County. Several years before its tracks were actually laid into the westernmost reaches of Texas, the Railway devoted sections of its promotional literature to the El Paso area—describing the "rich, deep soil" of its "narrow" valley, the evidence of "great mineral wealth" in the nearby mountains, and the "inexhaustible" potential of the entire region. As time went on, longer passages and entire pamphlets blazoned the attractions of the county in the hope of enticing settlers.

The Texas Legislature had been very liberal in its grants of public lands to railroads. Altogether the State of Texas gave away 32,150,000 acres, an area the size of Alabama, the Texas and Pacific proving to be the greatest single beneficiary with 5,167,360 acres.[1] Almost immediately, directors of the Railway, such as John Wein Forney, began to promote Texas. His pamphlet and those of other Texas and Pacific directors emphasized the material resources of the state as compared with its lack of human resources.[2]

One of the early pieces of promotional literature, and perhaps the first to mention El Paso County, was published in New York in 1872. Entitled *The Texas and Pacific Railway: Its Route, Progress, and Land Grants,* it was obviously written to acquaint potential emigrants with the land traversed by the Railway and with the opportunities these lands afforded. It declared that "The intrinsic value of the lands thus acquired is greater than that yet made to a single corporation" and proclaimed that "In climate, soil, and resources of minerals and precious metals, timber, and water power, [these lands] include the choicest regions of the continent." It defined the grant as "part of the famous grazing lands of Texas," but hastened to reassure ranching interests that "although agriculture is steadily encroaching upon them," Texas "will long maintain her preeminence as a stock-raising state."

Following this overview of the attractive and productive Texas land available for purchase along the route of the Railway, the pamphlet carried its readers to the western border of the state, announcing that "the Texas and Pacific crosses the Rio Grande at El Paso" and that "it will be intersected near this place by the Denver, Santa Fe, & Rio Grande Railroad." The readers were then given some information about "this place." They were told that "Territorially, El Paso is equal to ten ordinary counties," but that only a small part of it is hospitable to population: "a narrow section on the western border forming the Valley of the Rio Grande (on the east)." However, this "narrow section" received high praise: "Rain is rare during the growing season; but irrigation is easy and is generally practiced by the farmers. The rich, deep soil yields one hundred bushels of corn to the acre.... The vegetables are wonderful in size and excellence of flavor." Readers were also informed that "The population is chiefly Mexican and Indian, with a few hundred Americans," that "The inhabitants of the Valley

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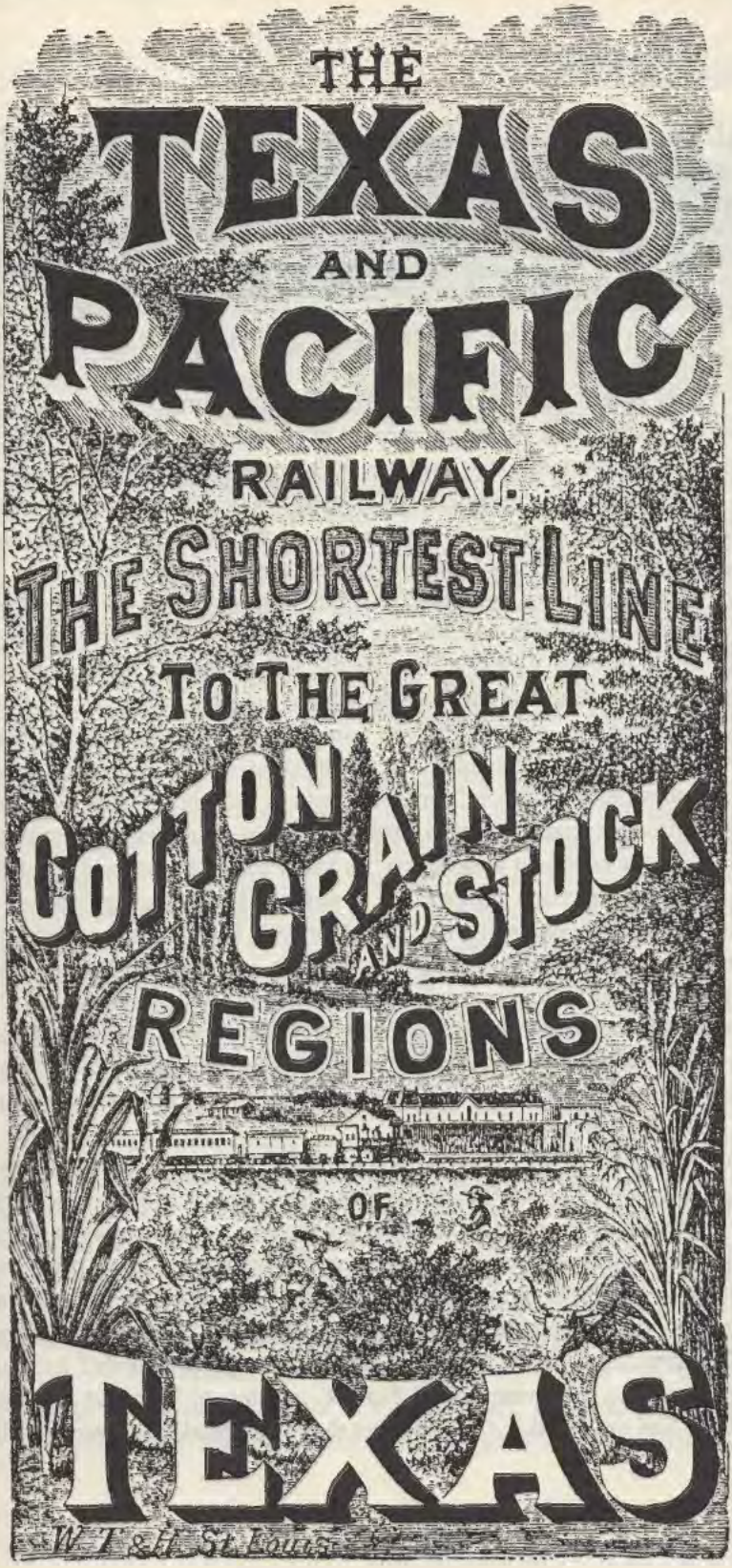
Emilia Gay Griffith Means, a resident of Dallas, Texas, is the editor of *The Guy Mannering Letters of Henry Watkins Allen* (Lafayette, Louisiana: Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1985) and author of numerous articles which have appeared in historical journals.

The headlines and illustrations appearing in this article are reproduced from Texas and Pacific promotional brochures released in the early 1880s. They appear here through the courtesy of the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas.


THE
TEXAS
AND
PACIFIC
RAILWAY.
THE SHORTEST LINE
TO THE GREAT
COTTON GRAIN AND STOCK
REGIONS
OF
TEXAS
W. T. & H. St. Louis

live in houses made of the Mexican adobe, or sun-dried brick," and that "the population of El Paso is 764, Fort Quitman, 361, San Elizario, 1,120, and Ysleta (Pueblo Indians), 799." The pamphlet further remarked that "Invalids resort to the region on account of its salubrity" and that "Salt is made by solar evaporation from lakes in the north and east of the valley, and conveyed thence to the interior of Mexico." It described the "plains east of the valley" as "sandy and unproductive," but added that "There are mountain ranges which are known to possess great mineral wealth."

Another promotional pamphlet, entitled *Notes on Texas and the Texas and Pacific Railway* and published in Philadelphia in 1873, devoted three pages to the El Paso Valley, addressing the agriculture and the settlements on both the American and the Mexican sides of the Rio Grande. It described "The American side of this valley" as being some 85 miles long and with an average width of about two miles." It admitted that "nothing is produced in this region without irrigation," but that "with it, the lands of this valley are of great productiveness." It even went so far as to claim that "There is no country on the continent superior to this valley for fruit, especially grapes, which attain a perfection in flavor and prolific yield not to be excelled by the most famous of the wine districts of California." It mentioned specifically "the delicious purple grape, which was perhaps originally the Isabella, but greatly improved by a congenial soil and climate," and the Muscatel, "a delicious white grape" which "grows in great profusion," beginning "to ripen about the middle of August." And the pamphlet added that "Very good wine is made by the Mexican vine growers, which commands a ready sale at $2.50 to $3.00 per gallon."

The Mexican side of the river received a favorable and quite extensive review in this 1873 promotional brochure. The town of El Paso del Norte and its environs, described as having a population "of ten or twelve thousand," were rendered in attractive and appealing images. The readers were treated to a delightful plaza featuring a church, a municipal building, stores and shops—and, extending along the main streets, the "houses of the principal citizens, each in the middle of ample grounds, surrounded by fruit trees, ...gardens, and vineyards." Further, an aura of long and honored tradition was presented in the statement that "Winemaking commences in

September, and is carried on in the same primitive fashion as in the days of Cervantes. The juice of the grape is expressed by no new-fashioned, complicated machinery, but literally 'trodden' by the bare feet of persons employed for the purpose."

Next, and logically, the pamphlet described the Mexican system of irrigation, explaining how the water was drawn from the Rio Bravo del Norte, "as the Rio Grande is called by the Mexicans," at a point fairly close to the main plaza and was led through the town by a main ditch, which each landowner then tapped opposite his property, "as ordered by the *alcalde del agua,* or water magistrate"—this system seldom producing "any disputes or law suits." Then, in seeming contradiction to the pamphlet's purpose of attracting settlers to the valley, this statement appeared: "Among the more disputatious Americans on the other side of the river, disputes and difficulties, growing out of water privileges, are not so unfrequent."

For a reason not clearly discernible, but perhaps to allay the fears of prospective settlers on the east bank, the politics of the Mexican community were addressed. El Paso del Norte was described as "the seat of the prefecture under the government of the State of Chihuahua"—an unarguable fact which was then followed by a not-so-unarguable disquisition:

> This portion of the republic has never been much affected by the frequent revolutions in the country further South; and the people have the very sensible and prudent habit of quietly recognizing the *de facto* "government," whether it be Liberal, Conservative, or Imperial, and of putting their gunpowder to no more hurtful use than firing salutes in honor of patron saints, and to celebrate the 16th of September, their Independence Day.

Now, the "unofficial immigrant agent" returned to the American side of the river to tell his readers about the scattering of settlements along the east bank. This passage stands in sharp contrast to the immediately foregoing description of El Paso del Norte and vicinity. Hardly more than a list, it contains none of the rhetorical flourishes or rich images employed in the presentation of the Mexican side. The modern reader may even conclude that the writer found the American side devoid of interest and that he was indeed hard pressed for material. He seemed frankly bored with "FRANKLIN (often improperly spoken of as El Paso, Texas), opposite the Mexican El Paso" and "a place now of perhaps 1,500 to 2,000 souls and

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TEXAS & PACIFIC RAILWAY

WITH ITS CONNECTIONS

OFFERS TO THE IMMIGRANT FACILITIES UNSURPASSED BY THOSE OF ANY OTHER LINE.

They are carried on First Class THROUGH TRAINS, in Commodious and Comfortable Coaches.

NO MIDNIGHT TRANSFERS!

CLOSE CONNECTION MADE AT ALL JUNCTION POINTS.

200 POUNDS

OF BAGGAGE FREE ALLOWED EACH EMIGRANT PASSENGER.

improving." Conspicuous by their absence are any details of how it was "improving," its only mentionable feature being a "United States Custom House." Next named was "FORT BLISS, generally garrisoned by two or three companies of United States infantry and cavalry" and located "two and a half miles below Franklin." The writer then added a sentence which can hardly be described as comforting to the prospective settler: "Formerly it was a mile nearer, but the Rio Grande, in the last twelve or fifteen years

has swallowed up a strip of two hundred yards or more of American soil, including the ground on which formerly stood Fort Bliss."

"YSLETA, 13 miles below Franklin," was dismissed as "a village of Pueblo Indians" who "are an industrious, inoffensive and honest people; have comfortable houses, and produce corn, wheat, vegetables and fruits...." "SAN ELIZARIO, 24 miles below Franklin, and next in importance to Franklin," was described as "a large agricultural village of some 1,000 or 1,200 inhabitants, most all of whom are Mexican, by birth and language, but citizens of the United States, by virtue of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which conferred American citizenship upon the original inhabitants of the ceded territory."

The bleak picture of the Rio Grande's left bank, relieved only by the confident claim of the region's agricultural potential, continued as the pamphlet carried its readers "From San Elizario to Fort Quitman, a distance of 65 miles," throughout which "there is but little cultivation, although the soil is exceedingly rich." With commendable honesty, the writer pointed out that the "want of the valley is a general system of irrigation, which will enable the man of small means to cultivate his fields and vineyards."

Circling back to El Paso del Norte, the pamphlet predicted that the locale of the Pass "must sooner or later become" an important railroad center accompanied by tremendous growth and prosperity.

This long passage on the El Paso area which appeared in the Texas and Pacific promotional pamphlet of 1873 is interesting in its vivid portrayal of the differences between the two sides of the river—the American side so sparsely settled and so greatly in "want" of development, the Mexican side so well established and so steeped in honorable tradition, its fields so richly productive, its "town and country" so attractively appointed. Clearly, a challenge was extended to those Americans who would dare the Herculean labor...and reap the glorious profits.

Through the next several years, the Texas and Pacific literature offered a number of general facts useful to the newly arrived immigrants and those contemplating emigration. Such topics as the laws of Texas concerning the homestead exemption, homesteads, pre-emptions, and marital rights were covered, as well as the natural resources of Texas. In other articles, prospective settlers were given practical advice: "What a Man of Small Means Can Do in Texas," "How to Select a Location," and "How to Reach Texas, and Rates of Fare," the latter being directed to residents of Liverpool, Bremen, Hamburg, Harve, Scandinavian seaports, and also to those of many American cities like New York, St. Louis, Chattanooga, and New Orleans.

During the remainder of the 1870s and throughout the 1880s, the railroad

continued to publish pamphlets promoting Texas. *The Texas and Pacific Railway: Memoranda of Surveys, Showing the General Features of the Line, and Character and Resources of the County Along Its Route* was published in Philadelphia in 1874.[3] In 1877 came a reprint from the January, 1877, issue of *Ware's Valley Monthly*. Published in St. Louis, it was entitled *The Silver and Gold of the Southwest in Connection with the Texas and Pacific Railway*. In the 1880s, promotional brochures advertised "Fine Farming Lands in Northern and Western Texas for Sale by the Texas and Pacific Railway Co." and "The Texas and Pacific Railway: The Shortest Line to the Great Cotton, Grain, and Stock Regions of Texas." Readers were told that "The Texas and Pacific Railway with its connections offers to the immigrant facilities unsurpassed by those of any other line." Bold-face type promised "No Midnight Transfers" and screamed "200 Pounds of Baggage Free Allowed Each Immigrant Passenger." An 1887 brochure carried such headlines as "Go West Young Man Via the Texas and Pacific Railway," "Take Your Family With You Over This Great Through Line," and "Procure Cheap Homes in Texas, The Garden State of America."

By 1890 every part of West Texas had been settled. Perhaps the best lands had been taken, but there was still plenty of room. And the railroad continued to promote the western part of the state. In 1896, *The Texarkana Gateway to Texas and the Southwest* was issued jointly by the Iron Mountain Route, the Cotton Belt Route, the Texas and Pacific Railway, and the Great Northern Railroad. Published in St. Louis, it was an attractive brochure which revealed the development of El Paso County not only in the text but also in pictures and illustrations of city scenes and country vistas.

Like many of its predecessors, the brochure described the topography of the county and its natural flora ("cottonwood, pine, mesquite and tornillo") and—unlike its predecessors—traced briefly and proudly the area's Indian/Spanish/Mexican history. Next, and predictably, the brochure waxed eloquent on the fertility of the Valley, describing its soil as "remarkably adapted to the production of grain and vegetables" and adding that all farming operations "are dependent entirely on irrigation." It gave special attention to the fruit trees, which "attain very large dimensions," and noted that the Valley's pear trees "are believed to be the largest of their kind in

America." Then followed a dazzling discourse on the county's mineral resources, which "though yet undeveloped, consist of nearly all varieties of ores": "Traces of gold have been found in most of the mountain ranges and in the ravines emptying into the Rio Grande," as well as "good silver ore in workable quantity," and a veritable alphabet of other minerals—from copper to zinc—including many kinds of marble ("fine white and rose-colored," "black and variegated") and, or course, salt, "found in the greatest abundance in the eastern part of the county."

Nor was the prospective immigrant rancher neglected: "The pasturage of the table lands of El Paso County is capable of sustaining many thousand animals, as nearly all the plains and many of the mountain sides are covered with gramma grass, ...which retains its succulence and nutritive substance during the winter months, even when, to outward appearance, it is dry and dead."

Unlike his 1873 counterpart, the writer of this brochure described El Paso as "picturesquely located between Mount Franklin on the American side and the Sierra Madre on the Mexican side of the river." And by now, 23 years later, it was the American town, not its Mexican neighbor, which received the rave review. Now, El Paso had "13,000 inhabitants" and could be described as "an active modern American city, with handsome business blocks, elegant brick residences, telephone and telegraph lines, street railways, electric light, waterworks, fire department, a magnificent court house unsurpassed for beauty of architecture, and two large smelting works." Further, added the writer, "Its fame as a health resort has made it the objective point of many wealthy tourists and travellers."

In 1897 came another Texas and Pacific promotional brochure, *Texas Along the Line of the Texas and Pacific Railway*. Published in Dallas and dedicated "to people seeking new homes, good health, an enjoyable climate, a fruitful soil, and new opportunities," it transported its readers "along the line" from east to west. Arriving at the Rio Grande, it described the region's history as "a marvelous compendium of romance" and pronounced El Paso as "now the most handsome and most substantially built city in all Texas, all of its structures being built of brick or stone" and its "streets...graded and macadamized." Then mention was made of "the city hall, opera house, the several church buildings, the military post Fort Bliss, the Sheldon block, the Vendome Hotel, the Pierson House." Also El Paso's "important manufacturing...and commercial...enterprises" were detailed, the writer not neglecting to direct attention to the city's "three national banks."

The author of this 1897 brochure concluded his discourse on El Paso in a resounding echo of the final paragraphs which had appeared in the

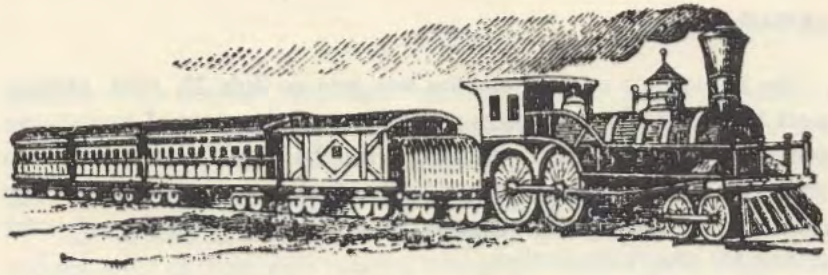
Railway's 1873 pamphlet, *Notes on Texas*. He justified that pamphlet's prediction that the EL Paso area "must sooner or later become" an important railroad center. El Paso, declared the 1897 writer, "is the terminal point of five of the great railway systems of the United States, and the most important city on the great southern route between the Gulf and California."

From the days of Stephen F. Austin, the cheapness of Texas lands had been an important factor in the settlement of the state. As the nineteenth century moved into its final decades, many forces promoted immigration to the western part of the state—the *Texas Almanac*, regional immigration bureaus, newspapers, and various corporations like the Texas and Pacific Railway. Between the years 1872 and 1897, the Railway spent considerable time and large amounts of money on publications extolling El Paso County —its agricultural advantages, its mineral resources ("though yet undeveloped"), its grazing lands, its enormous challenge, its rich promise. And today that body of literature stands as a fascinating commentary on a dramatic transformation: in that brief span of 25 years the community at the Pass, referred to initially as "this place" (population 764), had become—at least in the eyes of the Texas and Pacific beholder—"the most handsome ...city in all Texas" and "the most important...on the great southern route between the Gulf and California.[4]★

NOTES

1. For further information, see Joe B. Frantz, *Texas: A History* (Nashville: 1984) and *Charter and Other Legislation Relating to the Texas and Pacific Railway* (n.p., n.d.).
2. John Wein Forney, editor of the Philadelphia *Press*, was author of *What I Saw in Texas* (Phidelphia: 1872). Forney did much to promote the Texas and Pacific and compiled this pamphlet from editorials and features which had appeared in his newspaper during the summer of 1872.
3. Also published in 1874 was a pamphlet entitled *Texas and Pacific Railway Company. Report of Gen. G. M. Dodge, Chief Engineer, 1874* (New York: 1880).
4. Promotional pamphlets for the Texas and Pacific Railway are located in the Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas, and in the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. For further information concerning the Texas and Pacific Railway, the reader is encouraged to see J. J. Bowden, *Surveying the Texas and Pacific Land Grants West of the Pecos River* (El Paso: 1975); W. C. Holden, "Immigration and Settlement in West Texas," *West Texas Historical Association Yearbook* (June, 1929), 66-86; Edward A. Leonard, *Rails at the Pass of the North, A Centennial History of El Paso's Railroads* (El Paso: 1981); Robert N. Traxler, Jr., "The Texas and Pacific Railroad Land Grants: A Comparison of Land Grant Policies of the United States and Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXI (January, 1958), 362-367; and Charles Dabney Jackson, "Railway Land Grants to the Texas and Pacific Railway in the State of Texas" (Master of Arts thesis, Texas Christian University, 1933).

IN 1760, THE BISHOP OF DURANGO VISITED THE MISSION AT Socorro, located on the Rio Grande some few miles downriver from El Paso del Norte. He reported that there were about 600 people residing in the adjacent village and a nearby hacienda.



UPROAR IN JULY
The 1944 El Paso County Democratic Convention

by J. F. Hulse

THE ROWDIEST EL PASO CITY ELECTION was the one held in 1903. The most boisterous El Paso County Democratic Convention was the one held in 1944.

The pandemonium of that convention arose out of the fact that in 1940 Franklin D. Roosevelt had been elected to an unprecedented third term as President of the United States, and in 1944 he was a candidate for the nomination for fourth term. There was strong opposition to his nomination, and the anti-Roosevelt forces went to work in an attempt to prevent it.

In El Paso, R. E. Cunningham was the leader of the no-fourth-term group. He was a lawyer with a varied general practice and, politically, was a conservative, Jeffersonian Democrat. He had been chairman of the El Paso County Democratic Committee, and through that connection had a precinct organization he could call on for assistance. A few close associates helped do the leg work, their object being to control the precinct conventions, which were held at the precinct polling places as soon as the polls closed on primary election day. The precinct conventions were critical: at each one, delegates were elected to the County Convention.

The Democratic primary election was held on July 22, 1944. Diligent work by the Cunningham forces resulted in a good turnout of conservative democrats at the precinct conventions. When the list of delegates from each precinct was filed in the County Clerk's office, an examination of them showed that the no-fourth-term group had a substantial majority and would control the county convention.

The Democratic County chairman, J. C. Rodehaver, set the convention for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 29, 1944, in the 41st District Courtroom. Information was soon about that Rodehaver was ill and might not be able to attend the convention. This was significant, for it was the duty of the county chairman to call the convention to order and act as temporary chairman of the convention until a permanent chairman was elected.

Meanwhile, Cunningham and his supporters worked out the details of the convention. He would be elected permanent chairman; the chairman and members of the several committees were selected; the Resolutions to be presented by the Resolutions Committee were prepared; and a list of delegates to the Democratic Convention was made.

On July 29, I arrived at the 41st District Courtroom about nine o'clock in the morning and found that a considerable crowd had already gathered. I saw at once that the leaders of the Roosevelt group, R. L. Holliday and Ernest Guinn, had put Mrs. Edna Farris in the Judge's chair, on the dais, behind the Judge's bench. I soon heard that she had been sitting there since 7:00 a.m. The object, of course, was to hold the podium for Holliday and Guinn so that they could take over the convention. I looked around the room and observed that the twelve chairs in the jury box—near the front of the room—were all occupied by some local professional wrestlers and a few other strong-arm men, obviously placed there by Holliday. Cunningham had been on the State Wrestling Commission, and he recognized all of them. In addition to those in the jury box, there were others standing nearby, and Cunningham said to one of them, "Blackie, you lay one hand on me and I'll put you so far behind the bars they'll never find you." Chief Deputy Sheriff Jimmy Hicks was there to keep the peace, and he circulated among the crowd nearest the jury box.

The delegates continued to stream in, but Rodehaver did not appear, and the word was out that he could not come.

I was chairman of my precinct, and as such I was a member of the El Paso County Democratic Committee. Shortly before ten o'clock, some of our group reminded me that I should call the meeting to order. "You are a

J. F. Hulse, an El Paso attorney, is the author of *Texas Lawyer: The Life of William H. Burges* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1982) and *Railroads and Revolutions: The Story of Roy Hoard* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1987).

member of the County Committee," one of them said, "and in Rodehaver's absence, you have the right to call the meeting to order. Holliday and Guinn are not members of the County Committee, and neither one has the right to call the meeting to order or to act as the temporary chairman."

I agreed, keeping close watch on Holliday and Guinn. At exactly ten o'clock, both of them were standing behind the Judge's bench, poised for action. The room was jam-full. Every seat was taken and several people were standing. Holliday started to say something, calling the meeting to order. This was my cue. In front of the Judge's bench, and pushed up against it, was the table used by the Court Reporter. It was small, the top being about 40-by-30 inches. I mounted it, turned to face the crowd, and shouted: "As a member of the El Paso County Democratic Committee, I call this meeting to order." Before I had uttered the whole sentence, the pro-Roosevelt group began hollering and yelling, one woman pounding on counsel's desk with the heel of her shoe, someone else beating on the other counsel's table with a book. And right at that moment Ernest Guinn, who was standing behind me, yelled, "Get that Republican down from there," at the same time giving me a hard shove. I realized that I could not maintain my balance on the small table, so I turned around to step down. I was facing Guinn, and to avoid falling I grasped the lapels of his coat, pulling him down across the Judge's bench. Somehow I managed to land on the floor feet first just as Cunningham was boosted onto the counsel's table. In another instant, I was boosted up beside him.

No sooner was I on the table than I saw my senior partner, W. H. Burges, 76 years of age and slightly built, climbing over the seats in a valiant attempt to get to the front of the room. At the same time an elderly woman and her daughter began plucking at the cuffs of my trousers and saying, "Get down from there." I had no intention of getting down. I was determined to proceed with the business of the meeting even though I knew I couldn't be heard above the din of the Roosevelt forces. I called for the election of a chairman, waited a few seconds, and then announced that Cunningham had been nominated and was elected. Cunningham thereupon appointed his committees amidst the bedlam.

The El Paso Times later reported these happenings in this way:

> At the crest of the uproar and while Mr. Cunningham was going through the motion of reading something to the crowd, deputies (sheriffs) went into action again to prevent greater disorder.
>
> A pro-Roosevelt partisan attempted to overturn the table on which Mr. Cunningham and State Rep. S. J. Isaacks and Mr. Hulse were standing. W. O. Hicks, chief deputy sheriff, intervened. Balked in their move to overturn the table, the pro-Roosevelt men crashed the anti-Roosevelt speaker's table and stood behind Mr. Cunningham, booing over his shoulder. Mr. Cunningham continued reading.

Dan T. White was chosen Secretary, and the Chairman appointed the following committee chairmen: Credentials, Ben Swain; Resolutions, S. J. Isaacks; Delegates, Wayne Slaughter.

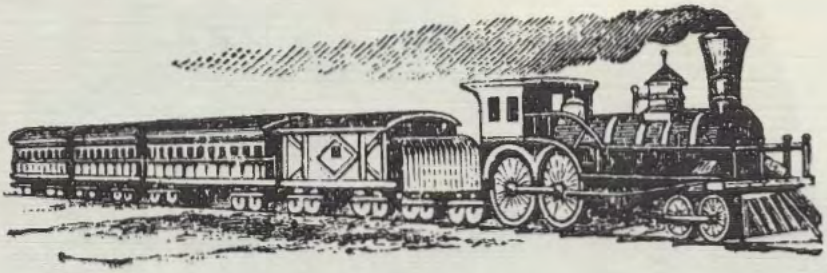
The report of each committee was received in the midst of the pandemonium created by the Roosevelt crowd: the report of the credentials committee was adopted; the resolutions reported by that committee were approved; and the delegates were named to the State Convention as recommended by the committee on delegates. The list included R. E. Cunningham, S. J. Isaacks, Dr. Orville Egbert, Louis Scott, Allen Grambling, Ben Swain, William Blair, T. Hardie, J. E. Quaid, Dexter Mapel, W. B. Clark, Grover Neeley, R. F. Conder, Homer Hirsch, Mrs. B. F. Stevens, Cecil Trigg, E. T. Lewis, Dan White, and W. H. Fryer. Also Floyd Smith, Idus Gillett, L. N. Shafer, Paul Huchton, Bus Gillett, Mrs. Leroy McGrady, Mrs. Conrey Bryson, Mrs. William Flournoy, and Mrs. Don Thompson. The list was lengthy, and it also included John D. Williams, Jules Carlin, Claude Olney, Glenn Bixler, W. C. Burgie, and Mrs. Felix Martinez, among others. The delegates chosen were quite representative of the business and professional people of El Paso.

The anti-Roosevelt contingent left as soon as its business was finished, and the pro-Roosevelt crowd then held its convention. However, at the State Democratic Convention it was determined that the anti-Roosevelt forces had had a majority at the county convention, and it was they who were seated as the delegates to the State Convention.

Following the county convention, Ed Pooley, editor of the *El Paso Herald-Post*, wrote an account of it in his personal column, "Side Bar Remarks." After a description that gave the setting for the facts of what occurred, he wrote:

> Neatest trick of the day was when the regulars took the convention away from Ernest Guinn and Bob Holliday.
>
> They had put a lady in the Judge's chair at 8 o'clock to hold the fort. It was a good idea. Nobody tried to unseat her. She did her job well.
>
> But when Bob Holliday, who like Ernest, wasn't a member of the committee, nor even a delegate—started rapping for order, the regulars took over.
>
> Jim Hulse mounted a table, and I'll never forget the leap Ernest took at him. It was like an enraged wildcat jumping at the dogs who had treed him.
>
> Ernest didn't expect it. He was happy in his possession of the bench. "We beat you again," he said. "We got up early and got here first."
>
> Well, they say the early bird gets the worm, but if the Fourth Termers ever had it the worm was swiftly taken away from them.
>
> Up on another table went the regulars and held their convention with Ernest and Bob, back on the bench, leading the shouting against them.
>
> The Fourth Term claque here was even better than the CIO claque for Henry Wallace at Chicago. It was louder and, I'm told, had a few "bodyguards" scattered around just in case. Which seems to indicate that the local Fourth Termers not only took lessons from Sidney Hillman, the CIO's flaming torch, but from Boss Ed Kelly of Chicago.

(Continued on page 144.)



SCENIC DRIVE
A Road With a View

by Clinton P. Hartmann

SCENIC DRIVE, THAT SHORT STRETCH OF winding road that hugs the southern tip of the Franklin Mountains, connecting east and west El Paso, was started in March, 1920, and was completed by the end of the year. A scenic drive following the rim of the mesa, just north of town, was the object of early proposals, but for reasons to be explained later, the present Scenic Drive was completed first.

There had long been talk about ways to exploit the mesa and the mountain for scenic attractions, especially by the real estate owners. After the railroads came in 1881, land sales became a prosperous business and were advertised in newspapers throughout the country. In 1884, landowner J. Fisher Satterthwaite drew two maps of El Paso, advertising land north and west of the frontier town. He mapped in a road along the high mesa north of town and named it "Mesa Drive," noting that it was a "Two Mile Road to Mount Organ."[1] How or why he confused Mount Franklin with Mount Organ is not known. A. P. Coles and his two brothers, who had migrated to El Paso

A picture postcard labeled "Scenic Highway, El Paso, Texas." The date is circa 1933. (Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)

before 1900, were also real estate dealers and owned a large portion of the mountain. In 1901, Coles was named in the *El Paso Herald* as "the authority for the statement that a move is on foot to build a pavilion on the summit of Mt. Franklin and a cable railway to haul pleasure-seekers to the top."[2]

Judge Frank E. Hunter recalled in 1915 that "the town was too small [in the early 1900s] to think of building a scenic route," but he remembered that a "newspaper reporter by the name of W. A. Hawkins talked of building a steam-operated cable line to the top of Mount Franklin." A suggestion was also made that platforms for adventurous riders could be attached to the lines.[3]

Hughes D. Slater, who arrived in El Paso in 1899 and was later the editor and owner of the *El Paso Herald*,[4] also became a promoter of scenic drive, as did his wife, Elsie P. M. Slater, an enthusiastic collector of native flora.[5] Both he and Elsie maintained that a road along the mesa, appropriately landscaped, would add beauty to El Paso and would serve as a tourist at-

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traction. Slater worked with a civic group, the "Committee of Fifteen," to promote the drive. In later life, Slater reminisced about the many evenings he spent relaxing and enjoying the view from the mesa.[6] As chairman of the City Planning Commission, organized in 1923, Slater praised George E. Kessler, landscape architect, engineer, and author of the *City Plan for El Paso,*[7] for his role in promoting and making Scenic Drive a reality.

In 1913, Mayor C. E. Kelly and the city council recommended the appropriation of $10,000 to be set aside to build a mesa drive, further recommending that future administrations set aside $5,000 annually until $50,000 had been accumulated to pay for the road. However, none of these recommendations materialized. Kelly later appointed W. S. Clayton as chairman of a committee to help secure the right-of-way from the property owners who might wish to "dedicate the property to the city as an act of civic betterment."[8]

During the summer of 1914, Peter E. Kern, pioneer resident and developer of Kern Place, drew a map of the proposed route. The drive would begin at Currie Street (now Rim Road) and continue along the rim of the mesa on to the mountain.[9]

To gain further support, Mayor Kelly proposed a city-wide celebration on the mesa. Kern served as head of all the arrangements and was assisted by executive committees made up of prominent citizens. The committees organized a free barbecue, described by a local reporter as a "big feed...to advertise proposed scenic drive," for the evening of October 9, 1914.[10]

What a celebration it turned out to be! Six thousand loaves of bread, 4,000 pounds of meat for barbecue, and four barrels of pickles were ordered. Various businesses donated materials and labor for stands and benches. A 75-foot trench was dug to barbecue the meat. People were asked to leave on all the lights in their homes and businesses that evening, and "pull up the shades to convey the full possibilities of a metropolis." Activities began at five o'clock with a volley of 25 shots, and two Fort Bliss bands played concert music. Four adding machines counted noses as crowds arrived at the picnic grounds. Grown-ups ate barbecue sandwiches and drank beer; school children spent their "special" tickets for free candy, ice cream, and "sodapop." Electric lights were strung along the first section of the proposed drive, and red lanterns outlined the remainder. Prominent El Pasoans made appropriate speeches, among them Mayor Kelly, who credited H. D. Slater with "the idea of a scenic drive around the rim of the mesa.[11] Peter Kern and W. T. Hixson presented the mayor and city council a silver loving cup inscribed, "in commemoration of their Inauguration of the Scenic Highway and Park on the Mesa for the Use and Pleasure of the People of

El Paso for All Time."[12]

But the scenic drive celebration turned out to be somewhat premature. Securing the right-of-way presented more of a problem than anticipated. Peter Kern, one of the property owners, did not grant the easement until the next year,[13] and D. Storms, a lawyer who owned considerable land along the rim, evidently never did. Storms had founded a settlement along the rim known as Stormsville. He had built some adobe homes on the property, and when the raging flood of 1897 destroyed many homes of residents in south El Paso, he invited the homeless people to move to Stormsville. The area became less than desirable to many El Pasoans, and eventually it was declared a public health nuisance. It was said that Storms refused to sell the land until the 1920s, when he suffered financial losses.[14]

Between 1915 and 1917, efforts to complete the development of the mesa drive were minimal. R. M. Dudley, a contractor who later became mayor, purchased most of the land now comprising Tom Lea Park for $10,000 and sold it to the city for the same amount. Smaller pockets of land within the park area were eventually obtained by the city.[15]

During this time, the Rotary Club continued its efforts to get a scenic drive built.[16] However, much of El Paso's attention was focused on the activities of the Mexican revolutionary Francisco Villa. In January, 1916, Villa was responsible for the San Ysabel massacre which killed sixteen Americans. Infuriated El Pasoans started to take revenge on residents in south El Paso, making it necessary to call out Fort Bliss troops to quell the riot. In March, Villa crossed the border and raided Columbus, New Mexico, where additional American lives were lost. President Woodrow Wilson shortly thereafter sent General Pershing from Fort Bliss on a punitive expedition into Mexico to give chase to Villa.[17] These affairs were just beginning to settle down when the United States declared war on Germany in April, 1917. Almost immediately, the young men of El Paso began leaving for "over there," among them Hughes Slater, who had been the scenic drive's most ardent supporter. He did not return to El Paso until the work on the Franklin Mountain scenic drive was just beginning.[18]

After the Armistice was signed in November of 1918, El Pasoans celebrated with banners and parades, began welcoming home their heroes, debated vigorously the pros and cons of prohibition,[19] and then could turn their attention to domestic concerns.

Streets were paved at a rapid rate, including the one to the School of Mines. This widespread civic project was directly related to the phenomenal growth of the automobile industry. One motor car dealer reported that his sales quadrupled in the six months following the Armistice. A 28-page

special section of *The El Paso Morning Times* was devoted to advertisements and articles about the motor car industry. A huge auto show displayed the variety of makes and models.[20] Soon there would be over 10,000 motor cars and eighty miles of paved streets in El Paso. People were anxious to go "joy riding," and their resistance to paying taxes for good roads vanished: no longer were roads regarded as "speed-ways" for the aristocracy; now, good roads were for everyone.

Newspapers began to emphasize El Paso's picturesque and historic places and to point out that good city planning should include "parks and lagoons and drives" that would add to a city's attractiveness. So many tourists were arriving in El Paso by train and auto that the mayor asked the city council to make "provisions at once for tourists to camp at Washington Park," requesting such facilities as "gas meters, small stoves, garbage cans, water and light."[21]

As tourism boomed, interest in building a scenic drive began to revive. The city fathers, the Chamber of Commerce, and other civic groups had become aware that cities in other parts of the country were building a variety of drives in and near their cities to provide attractions for tourists. Finally, the mayor and city council decided to take action. On May 17, 1919, an article in the morning newspaper announced that R. E. Hardaway, a civil engineer, formerly with the Southern Pacific, had been employed by the city as the consulting and locating engineer for a mountain drive.

Hardaway, who had specialized in reducing grades over steep mountains for railroads, made his initial survey. He told the city council that he had become inspired by the views which the drive could offer. He compared the proposed drive to the one along the coast in Monterey, California. He also directed attention to the fact that the "real scenic point of the drive" was not located on the "little projection above the high school, known as scenic point," but rather at the southern tip of Mount Franklin, where "you will be able to see a hundred miles into old Mexico, ...far westward into New Mexico, and far to the eastward into Texas."[22]

The final surveys of Scenic Drive were made between August and October, 1919. W. E. Stockwell, chairman of the City Plan Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, walked over the entire route with Hardaway when only stakes marked the site.[23]

On August 28, the city council adopted seven ordinances authorizing the issuance of "coupon bonds...for the purpose of borrowing money upon the credit of the city." Known as the El Paso Park and Scenic Drive Bonds of 1919, they were approved by an election on October 4 by a vote of 378 to 156.[24]

Securing the right-of-way for Scenic Drive did not seem to pose a problem. On November 1, 1919, A. P. Coles and his brothers, O. C. and J. F., deeded a 100-foot easement to the city for the sum of one dollar. On the same day, C. M. Newman, president of the Highlands Realty Company, did the same, granting an easement "over and through his property for a scenic highway to be built." In March, 1920, Edward A. Caples and James L. Marr, executors of the Margaret Ann Caples estate, and John P. O'Conner donated the right-of-way over their respective properties.[25] For some unknown reason, the right-of-way for one hundred square feet of the Dudley quarry was never obtained.

On February 11, 1920, the city council adopted the following resolution:

> Be It Ordained by the City Council of the City of El Paso, Texas: That the Scenic Drive be constructed according to plans and specifications on file in the office of the City Engineer.
>
> (s) R. C. Semple
> Mayor Pro Tem

Since no graded road ran over the mesa to the mountain, the city awarded J. C. Wright a contract to grade one from a point on Stanton Street to what is now the west entrance to Scenic Drive. Wright was to furnish the teams of horses, labor, tools, and equipment, while the city furnished the powder, dynamite, caps, and fuses.[26] On February 12, the council authorized the city clerk, Nathan Lapowski, to advertise for bids to build Scenic Drive. One bid called for the construction of the western portion, beginning at Station 22+50 and ending at Station 76+50, which included the highest and rockiest part of the drive. The second bid pertained to the easternmost portion of the drive, beginning at 76+50 and ending at Station 115 near Richmond Street. (See map, pp. 130-131.)

On March 5 the two contracts were awarded, the first to R. M. Dudley and W. E. Orr, and the second to J. C. Wright. As the work proceeded, the contractors submitted reports to the city engineer, who made inspections and then gave the estimates to the city council for approval and payment. Dudley and Orr turned in their first estimate on March 31 and their last on July 23. For removing over 25,000 cubic yards of solid rock, loose rock, and caliche, they submitted bills amounting to $48,072.95. Additional charges were made for concrete, retaining walls, and for building a bridge. Wright's costs on the east side were less.[27]

During the construction, two wooden bridges were built, one below the Dudley quarry on the east side and one spanning a deep arroyo on the west side. The one below the quarry was necessary to allow small ore cars on tracks from the quarry to pass under the bridge and proceed to a rock crusher below. Both bridges were later removed and replaced with fill and

drainage pipes. The rock quarry was closed and eventually became the location for the El Paso Police Academy.

When the roadbed was almost finished, a third contract was made with J. C. Wright to grade and surface the road. Wright hauled over 4,000 tons of gravel, screenings, and rocks to smooth over the roadbed. He finished the work about September 23, 1920.[28]

Realizing that the drive could be dangerous, the council hired P. F. Brick to build rock guard walls along the most hazardous sections. Between late August and November 12, Brick raised over 4,000 feet of walls at a cost of one dollar per linear foot.[29] He was then given a contract to extend Scenic Point by building a high rock wall around its perimeter and then filling in the space with rocks and earth borrow to provide a parking area. On December 30, he completed this job at a cost of $7,122.[30]

Although not totally completed, Scenic Drive was formally opened on October 6, 1920. As part of an International Exposition and Military Carnival being held during the week, an automobile caravan, carrying visiting dignitaries, left Hotel Paso del Norte, crossed Scenic Drive, and ended at Fort Bliss. Among the dignitaries were Mayor Charles Davis, Jr., President-elect Alvaro Obregón of Mexico, the governors of Chihuahua and Sonora, and Governors O. A. Larrazola and W. P. Hobby of New Mexico and Texas respectively. Although there is no record of a "summit" ceremony, it can be safely assumed that no champagne christened the event. Prohibition was in effect.[31]

On October 7, a newpaper editorial recognized the opening: "[Scenic Drive]"...provides El Paso with another notable attraction for tourists and a constant source of pleasure to its residents.... Few cities are so fortunately situated as El Paso, few have a mountain in their vicinity, much less right in town."

Earlier that year, in July, five adventurous motorists boarded a Maxwell touring car, and with Roy A. Lester and J. B. Rickerson taking turns at the wheel made the first "run" over Scenic Drive. When they reached the quarry bridge and found that the approaches had not yet been completed, they laid two planks across the gap and then proceeded. For a split second, the planks sagged dangerously low, but "expert driving" took the auto and its passengers safely across. A few days later the city council warned all motorists to stay off Scenic Drive until it was completed.[32] On October 3, signs designating the speed limit at 10 m.p.h. and prohibiting all heavy traffic were posted.

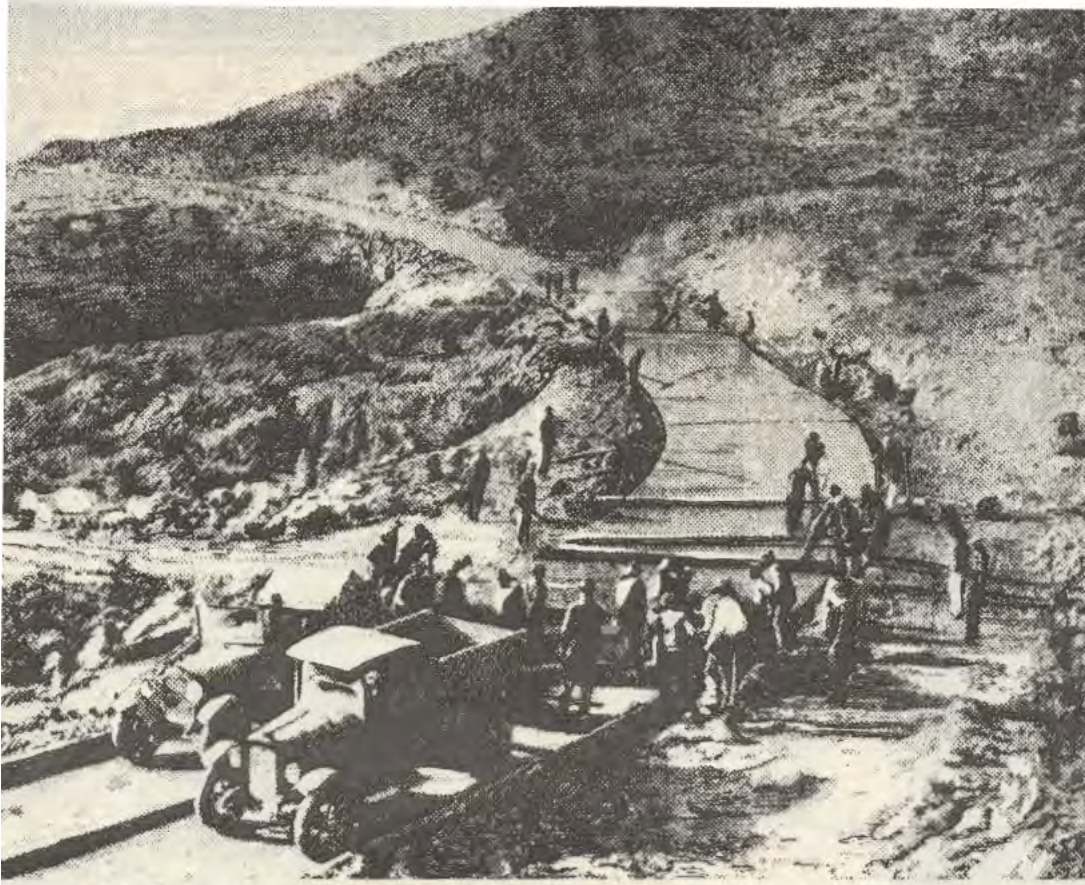
El Paso now had its Scenic Drive—built as a tourist attraction and intended as a "constant source of pleasure" to the city's residents. From the

beginning, it served its purposes well, although in 1922 the Drive became the setting of a quite unpleasurable incident. On March 10 of that year, over one thousand Klansmen gathered near Kern Place to hold an initiation ceremony. Afterwards, six Klansmen drove to Scenic Point, where they erected and burned a wooden cross in the parking area. They were frightened away by an armed man who was parked in an automobile nearby. A few days later, the Klan lit red lanterns in the form of a cross on the mountain,[33] reminiscent of the lanterns that had lined the mesa for the inaugural celebration in 1914. Needless to say, the purposes were far different.

By 1932 Scenic Drive had not yet been paved. The rough, graveled road was difficult to negotiate and even hazardous at those places which did not have guard rails. In October, 1932, in the depth of the Great Depression and in the final months of the Hoover administration, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation decided to release funds for relief projects.[34] These funds were loaned to county governments and could only be used to pay for labor costs, the local governments being required to furnish materials and equipment for the projects.

The administrator for the El Paso County RFC committee was Robert L. Holliday, a respected lawyer and member of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas.[35] A special projects sub-committee, headed by L. E. Saunders, made recommendations to the county commissioners. This committee along with local civic groups and both local newpapers supported paving Scenic Drive as one of the projects. Some of the county commissioners opposed the project on the grounds that projects in their own precincts should have preference. One commissioner, C. J. Milner, voted against the project because he thought there was not enough traffic over the drive to warrant paving it.[36] In the end, the court approved the paving, and the city passed a resolution permitting the county to do the work. The commissioners court raised the needed funds by issuing time warrants;[37] and it placed J. W. Carter, the county engineer, in charge of the entire project. The RFC granted a loan of $110,000 to El Paso County to cover projects to be completed between October 1 and November 16. Before the funds actually reached El Paso, the county had already put men to work on the Mountain, grading and preparing the road for paving. The West Texas Construction Company of Fort Worth, locally managed by Jack C. Vowell (Sr.) of El Paso, received the contract to supply the concrete; and Hugh McMillan was contracted to furnish the trucks to haul the concrete to the drive.[38]

With the funds from that RFC grant, the east end of Scenic Drive, from Richmond Street to Scenic Point, was paved.[39] Toward the middle of November, as funds began to dry up, men were laid off and it became



This photograph, which appeared in The El Paso Times *on January 1, 1933, shows workers laying the last stretch of concrete paving on Scenic Drive. (Courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library).*

doubtful whether more RFC funds would become available. Finally, on November 21, the county received the second grant of $110,000. Again, the West Texas Construction Company was awarded the contract, and the RFC hired the workers to lay the concrete. The final construction report was filed by County Engineer Carter in December, 1932.[40] The paving had cost around $87,000, making the total cost of building and paving the drive less than $200,000.[41]

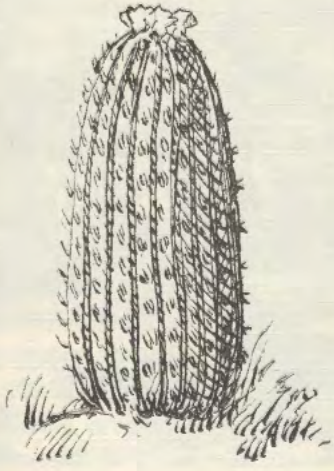
On Sunday, February 19, 1933, Scenic Drive was again opened to the public. Streams of cars clogged the newly-paved road, and at "Inspiration Point," now Scenic Point, motorists honked their horns impatiently as they tried to move through the traffic jam. In the words of a *Times* editor, "The journey this time [however] was a wholly different experience than the trips formerly negotiated over a rough and unsatisfactory dirt thoroughfare."[42]

In 1934 three small dams and spillways on the east side of the drive were built by Company 855, Camp FE 69T, of the Civilian Conservation Corps

CENTERFOLD: (next page) "Scenic Drive: El Paso's Enduring Landmark," a drawing by José Cisneros.

Scenic Dri

El Paso's enduring lan



Mount S

Bridge at Sta. 14

Sta. 22+50

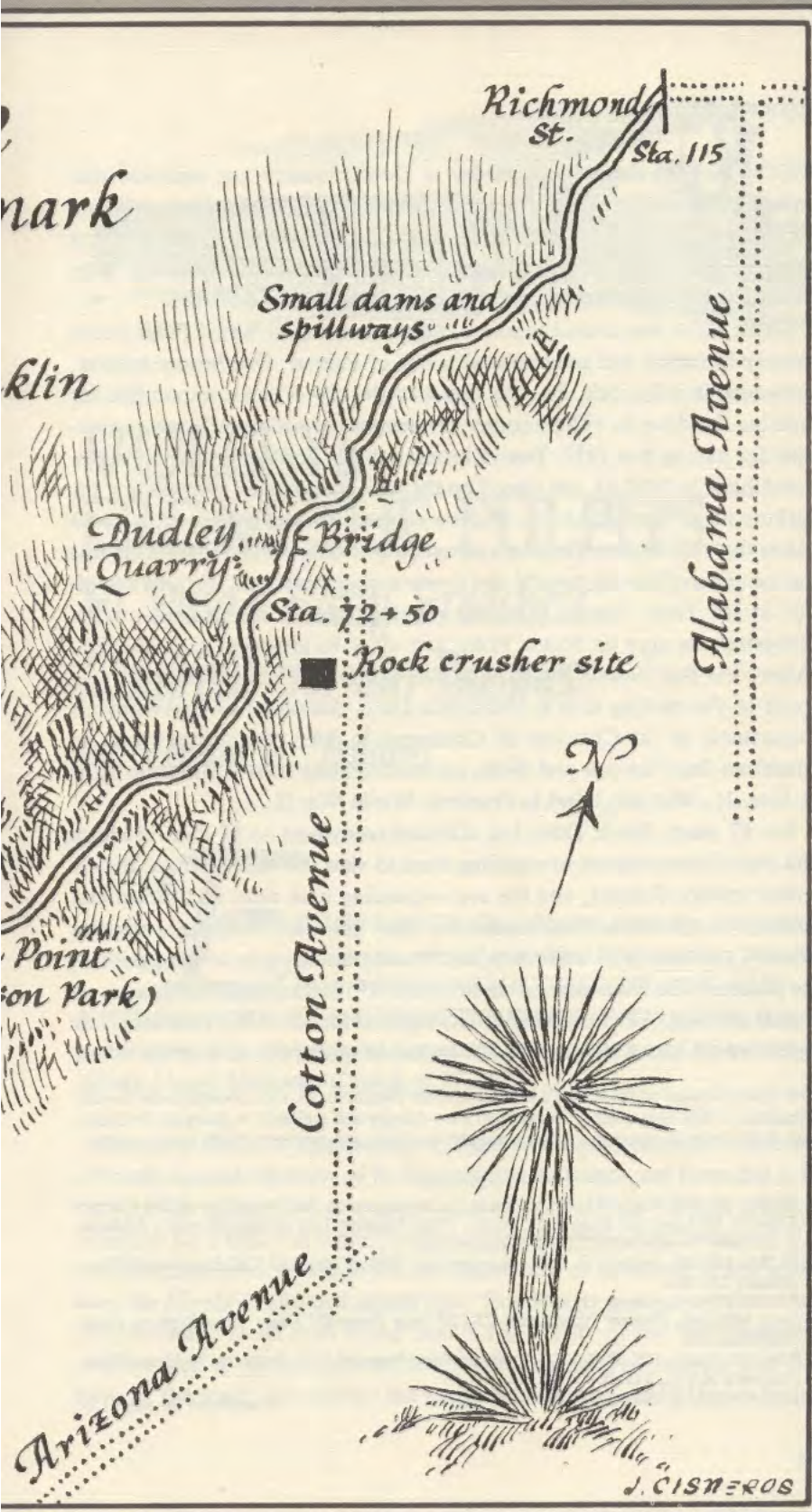
Robinson Boulevard

Rim Road

Brown St.

Art Woods Reservoir

Tom Lea Park


nark
klin
Point
on Park)
Richmond St.
Sta. 115
Small dams and spillways
Alabama Avenue
Dudley Quarry
Bridge
Sta. 72+50
Rock crusher site
N
Cotton Avenue
Arizona Avenue
J. CISNEROS

(CCC). In 1948 the wooden bridge at Dudley quarry was removed and replaced with earth fill and drain pipes, this part of the drive being slightly relocated and paved.[43] In 1963, under the sponsorship of the Special Projects Committee of the Women's Chamber of Commerce, rock gateways were constructed at both the east and the west entrances to the drive.[44]

Scenic Drive has several markers and monuments at Scenic Point which identify historical and geographical points of interest. One bronze marker, embedded in solid rock, lists the names of the city officials responsible for building the drive in 1920; another one names the county officials responsible for paving it in 1932. Twelve bronze tablets, donated by the State National Bank in 1962-63, are placed on the rock wall parapet surrounding the parking area. Each of eleven of these tablets provides information about places that can be seen from the vantage point, while the twelfth marker lists the members of the city council and the commissioners court who were in office at the time. Across from the parking area, a red granite marker designates the spot as Scenic Point and gives its elevation as 4,222 feet. (Above the Rio Grande Valley it reaches a height of about 500 feet.) Just south of the parking area is Murchison Park, developed by the Women's Department of the Chamber of Commerce in 1963. Within the park, an American flag flies day and night, commemorating First Lieutenant Chris P. Fox, Jr., who was killed in France in World War II.

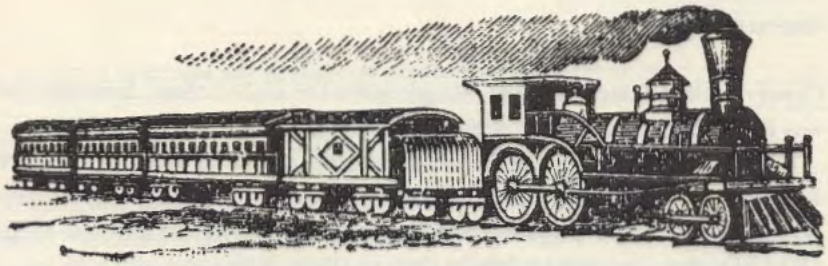
For 67 years, Scenic Drive has afforded enjoyment to El Paso residents and out-of-town visitors by enabling them to view the valley terrain, the extensive sweep of desert, and the ever-expanding twin cities of El Paso and Juarez. On Christmas Eve, luminarias often grace the retaining walls that skirt the two-mile drive and cast a soft, warm glow along its winding path. If the pioneers who were responsible for Scenic Drive could stand at its apex on a clear evening, when millions of city lights shimmer in the distance, their hearts would skip a beat or two at the marvel spread before them.* ★

*This article is based on the author's History Seminar Paper No. 83, 1951, located in the Special Collections of The University of Texas at El Paso Library and entitled "A Study of the Scenic Drive." The original paper has been completely rewritten and augmented with new material.

NOTES

1. *El Paso Herald*, August 13, 1915; a copy of the map was in the library files of *The El Paso Times* in 1951; see also Eugene O. Porter, "Map Number Two of Satterthwaite's Addition to El Paso," *Password* I, 2 (May, 1956), 68-69.
2. *El Paso Herald*, January 11, 1901, as quoted in "Forty Years Ago," *El Paso Herald-Post*, January 10, 1941.
3. *El Paso Herald*, August 13, 1915.
4. John Middagh, *Frontier Newspaper: The El Paso Times* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1958), 223-224.
5. John M. Slater, "E. P. M. S., A Biographical Note of Elsie Pomeroy McElroy Slater, *Password* XXIII, 3 (Fall, 1978), 96
6. Interview, H. D. Slater, December 26, 1950.

(Continued on page 156.)



VOLLEYS FROM THE PULPITS

El Paso's Early Preachers Confront the Sin Business

by Verdon R. Adams

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is a composition of excerpts, selected and edited by the author, from his book METHODISM COMES TO THE PASS: A HISTORY OF TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF EL PASO, published in 1975. The material is reprinted with permission of the publisher, Trinity United Methodist Church of El Paso.

In July of 1882, six months after El Paso's Trinity Methodist Church had officially opened the doors of its first building, its pastor, the Reverend J. R. Carter, was quoted in a newspaper column as pleading, "A bell, a bell, a kingdom for a bell."[1] It is gratifying to be able to report that his fervent plea was soon answered, although it is not known how or by whom. A few weeks later the *Herald* proclaimed simply that "Rev. Carter now has the finest bell for his church by all odds in the city."[2] The brevity of this announcement and the lack of further information can be explained by the fact that this issue of the paper also carried the story of the murder of El Paso's famed

Deputy United States Marshal Stoudenmire the night before. Nothing else was likely to get much local attention for the moment.

Even after making allowance for the fact that stories of violence are more widely read—hence more profitable to write—than those concerned with constructive endeavor, it is evident from any account of the El Paso 1880s and 1890s that the town had more than its share of violence and vice.

It would not be accurate to say that vice in El Paso was rampant, in the sense of being uncontrolled. Far from it. The sin business was recognized, organized, and controlled very strictly, with its license fees and payoffs going to pay much of the cost of running the town. And even the proponents and nominal followers of the paths of virtue were far from presenting a united front to the widespread marketing of debauchery. Many respectable businessmen carefully looked the other way when confronted with some of the more sordid facts of life at The Pass. This was due only in part to the traditional frontier code of not messing in the other fellow's affairs. After all, the license fees and "fines" paid by the owners of the gambling joints, saloons, and bawdy houses kept their own taxes down, and these undesirables and their clientele did buy shoes, groceries, and real estate. The general attitude of the community in this regard seems to be pretty well illustrated by S. H. Newman, editor of *The Lone Star*, in his pithy comment that "the frail ones were again before his honor one day this week and contributed something for the benefit of the city."[3] This despite the fact that Mr. Newman was well known as a reformer and staunch advocate of virtue in all its aspects. And, if we may borrow from C. L. Sonnichsen's delightful description of conditions in town, "The good women and the preachers were against liquor and vice, of course, but their voices were almost inaudible above the clink of glasses, the click of poker chips, and the seductive notes of the daughters of joy."[4]

More than zeal and dedication on the part of the preachers was required to speak out against the city's lucrative vice industry. These good men also needed such homely qualities as determination, courage, the ability to adapt to the rude conditions of the frontier, and a sense of humor. The Reverend Carter obviously had the first of these characteristics in abundance, and there is evidence that he was also endowed with a good sense of humor. *The Lone Star* of January 23, 1884, carries this Card of Thanks:

> Editor, *Lone Star:*
> Permit me through your columns to tender my sincere thanks to my unknown friends who so generously enclosed me $5.50 with "Compliments of Fashion

Verdon R. Adams, is the author of *Tom White: The Life of a Lawman* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1972) and *Peeks at the Past* (El Paso: 1982) in addition to *Methodism Comes to the Pass.*

Saloon." I hope to be able to thank my friends in person. Come to church occasionally, boys, and let me see you, and keep on giving as often as you wish. I shall not feel at all mad with you.

J. R. Carter, Pastor
Methodist Church, South

Some believers objected to the acceptance by the church of such "tainted money," but their number didn't include the Reverend Mr. Andrew Potter, a missionary who often visited El Paso in the interest of his Mexican charges and the Methodist movement generally. Known as the fighting deacon, Mr. Potter was famous for his eccentricities as well as his zeal. One afternoon while making his rounds soliciting funds for the church, he encountered the proprietor of a saloon who refused to contribute to the cause. When the fighting deacon persisted, the saloon keeper explained that he never went to church, cared nothing about it, and saw no reason why he should support it. Mr. Potter replied in his best pulpit manner, and in a voice that could be heard by everyone in the place, that the preaching and other services were there for his benefit as much as for that of anyone else. If he didn't take advantage of them it was his own fault, for which he should ask forgiveness, but he could blame no one else. This was a convincing argument and the saloon man gave him $5.00. The minister thanked him, once more invited him to come to church, and left.

Having discovered this source of wealth, Potter returned some time later for another donation. Instead, he was presented with a carefully prepared bill showing that he owed the saloon proprietor $5.00 for whiskey. The fighting deacon was indignant. He never used alcohol in any form and had no intention of doing so. The owner of the saloon listened patiently to the preacher's remonstrations and then explained to him, clearly and distinctly, so that all of his patrons who had been waiting for this moment could hear, that the whiskey was there for him and he could come and get it any time he wished. If he failed to do so, he had no one but himself to blame. Without another word, the minister handed over his $5.00, to the laughter and cheers of the spectators. The saloon keeper then took up a collection from his customers, insisting that every man contribute, added his own donation, and sent Mr. Potter away with a generous gift for his cause.

Another story circulated around town about the doughty deacon had it that he had been known to fill his mourner's bench, or "anxious" seat by threatening the unrepentant sinners and laggards with his pistol. He never actually admitted going this far, but he did not deny that he kept his gun with him while in the pulpit, either on his hip or lying beside the Bible, a not unusual practice. In his enthusiastic urging, he may have picked it up and waved it about now and then, but this was never meant as a threat.[5]

The Bishop of the Methodist Church, South, the Reverend George F. Pierce, was an occasional visitor to El Paso in the early 1880s. He, too, was a colorful personality and a man who did not hesitate to make his opinions known. The general news column of the *Herald* discloses, for example, that Bishop Pierce did not approve of dancing. He considered it, in fact, "The silliest and most nonsensical amusement that rational human beings, so-called, ever engaged in. He also said that it had its origin in heathenism, being a pastime of savages; that it is lewd, sensual, and obscene, appealing to the lower instincts of humanity, and being the chosen sport of the vilest and most imbruted of the human race."[6]

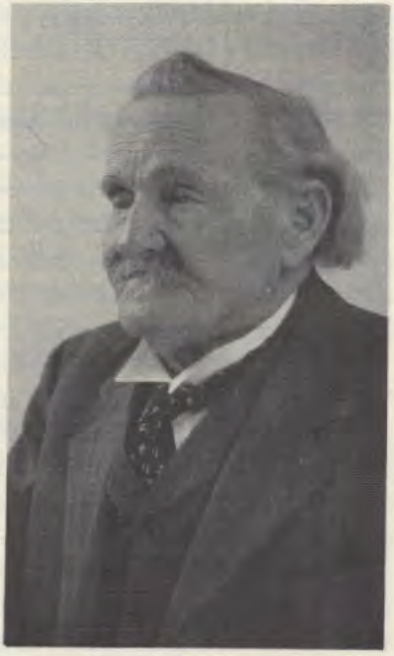
Early in 1882 the saloon keepers held a conference to explore ways of circumventing a city ordinance that prohibited Sunday opening of their establishments. The solution they hit upon was a model of simplicity. They would just lock their front doors and open the back ones! However, to guard against overzealousness on the part of a greedy (or maybe even an honest) policeman, a "legal defense fund" of $1,000 was established, with provisions for its maintenance by contributions as required.[7] Trinity Methodist Church countered by inviting the Reverend H. W. Read, a well known missionary of the Baptist church, to deliver a temperance lecture in its new building.[8] This was followed by a series of regular temperance meetings. One of them, reported in some detail by the local press, must have been a truly stirring experience. Mr. Carter was joined in the pulpit by the Reverend Messrs. Joseph Tays, founder of the Episcopal Church in El Paso, and Read in what was advertised as a Temperance Rally, with the theme and slogan "Hold the Fort." It is reported that the three preachers all made rousing protests "against the demon of intemperance to more than a hundred ladies and gentlemen."[9]

Soon the "Blue Ribbon Temperance Association" was formed. At one of its weekly meetings in August of 1882, the regular preaching staff was reinforced by the Reverend Mr. Baines, a Baptist minister who had just arrived

TWO OF EARLY EL PASO'S PREACHERS WHO VIGOROUSLY denounced the city's "sin business." Opposite, the Reverend J. R. Carter, first pastor of Trinity Methodist Church; below, the Reverend L. R. Millican, pastor of the First Baptist Church in the mid-1890s, as he appeared in later life. (Photo of Mr. Carter courtesy Trinity United Methodist Church; photo of Mr. Millican courtesy First Baptist Church of El Paso)

in El Paso. One of the features of this meeting, after exhortations by all of the preachers on the subject of temperance, was the musical number, "Come, oh, Come With Thy Broken Heart," sung very sweetly by half a dozen little girls.[10] Several months later, the El Paso Council, No. 151, of the United Friends of Temperance was established. Mr. Carter, one of the founders of the organization and also its secretary, arranged for meetings to be held in the Odd Fellows Hall over the Post Office.[11]

On the surface, these efforts at reform seemed to be having some effect. The editor of the *Times* actually complained on one occasion that there hadn't been a single arrest the day before to report upon, and Mr. Newman of the *Lone Star* announced that there had not been a case before the Mayor's court during the week.[12] Even Marshall Manning and his deputies complained because things were dull, the marshall observing that "El Paso is not worthy of the name of frontier town—there are never any rows going on."[13] But this did not mean that the town was "getting moral," as the *Times* editor concluded.[14] On the contrary, it simply showed how firmly the political bosses had the business of sin under their control by this time. As long as the vice lords paid their dues and followed the rules (which they themselves had largely formulated) they were left alone. When they didn't, they were put out of business.[15]



However, the last decade of the nineteenth century saw a pronounced change in the attitude of many El Pasoans toward life in their town. No longer did they accept unbridled vice and raw violence as necessary accompaniments to life on the frontier. An increasing number of them were questioning the very great, if indirect, in-

fluence of the gamblers, saloon keepers, and bawdy house operators on the political and economic decisions of the city's leaders. Here and there an influential politician now openly espoused the cause of reform, either as a result of his own sincere convictions or as a matter of political expedience. As a result, some reform measures were taken. The "taxi" dance joints were put out of business, the closing hours of the liquor establishments were put under scrutiny, large fines were imposed for carrying concealed weapons,[16] and, incredibly, the gambling houses were closed. This last step, however, was too much too soon. As Owen White observes, all too aptly, public sentiment is governed largely by the state of the public pocketbook, so the gamblers were allowed gradually to reopen their establishments.[17]

But we cannot agree with White when he tells us that the reform idea was born in El Paso in 1894.[18] It had been there for a long time. White, like too many others, had simply not been listening to the leaders of the churches. Who would deny that Trinity's thirteen charter members, the twenty-two at First Baptist, the sixteen at First Presbyterian, and Parson Tays' little group of Episcopalians had not wholeheartedly dedicated themselves to social as well as individual reform? And certainly the devout Catholics and some citizens with no church affiliation had been working toward civic improvement in its best sense.

In the decade of the 1890s, a particularly enthusiastic worker toward civic improvement was the Reverend C. J. Oxley, who became the pastor of Trinity Methodist Church in October of 1892.[19] He quickly earned the respect and admiration of his congregation for the excellence of his preaching and the quality of his leadership. And it didn't take him long to make his presence felt throughout the entire community. On February 15, 1893, the *Herald* noted that the revival services at Trinity were being attended nightly by large numbers and that the church had completely overflowed the preceding Sunday night. In a later issue, the *Herald* informed its readers that all Christians in the city had joined in the revival and that "there is certainly an upward move in the morals and religion of the city."[20]

Mr. Oxley probably became best known in the city at large for his vigorous and unrelenting opposition to the proposed heavyweight championship fight between Bob Fitzimmons and Peter Maher. Prize fighting was illegal in most states, including Texas, and was generally considered brutal and totally depraved. Wherever held, though, either clandestinely or in open defiance of the casually enforced law, such fights attracted large crowds of big spenders. Therefore, when promoter Dan Stuart announced that he proposed to hold this "fight of the century" in or near El Paso on February 14, 1896, the business community was delighted. The prospects of thousands of

visitors who would come and leave hundreds of thousands of their dollars, and really put El Paso on the map, made fight fans of many who had been indifferent to the sport or perhaps even opposed to it in principle.

Not so the fiery Reverend L. R. Millican of the Baptist Church, the Reverend Oxley, and two or three other ministers who made up what Sonnichsen calls a "far mightier force than governors or militia."[21] The *Herald* reported on February 3rd that "Pastor Oxley denounced the fistic carnival without mincing words." Since New Mexico law did not prohibit prize fighting, it was assumed that the fight would be held in New Mexico, or across the river in Juarez. The ministers first obtained assurance from Governor Culberson that the Texas law would be strictly enforced, by Rangers if necessary. Governor Ahumada of Chihuahua also said that he would have Federal troops standing by to insure that no such spectacle was held in his state. When the governor of New Mexico told the ministers that he was powerless to prevent the fight from being held in the Territory, the ministers wired their Representatives in Congress and requested immediate passage of a Federal anti-prize fight law. This was done, with the bill being approved in a near-record three minutes by the Senate, and immediately signed into law by the President.

After a great deal of confusion and several postponements, Judge Roy Bean invited the promoter to bring his fighters to Langtry. The fight was finally held on the Mexican side of the river, in the state of Coahuila. It attracted about three hundred spectators instead of the twenty-five thousand or so who were expected in El Paso. They didn't get to see much fighting for their money, by the way. Fitzimmons knocked Maher out after less than two minutes of the first round.

The loss of all that money and publicity for El Paso was more than some could bear, and the few ministers who were responsible were berated from all quarters for meddling in an affair that was none of their business. Mr. Millican reported that his life was threatened, and a number of Methodists withdrew their financial support from Trinity, and some pulled out of the church completely. Oxley's answer from the pulpit was characteristic: "Let them go. I can live on cornbread and water if necessary. As for supporters of the church withholding their money; if they wish to do this, let them keep their money. I don't want it and can get along well without it."[22]

In spite of the abuse heaped upon the heads of the ministers as the controversy raged across the state and the nation (there were more than fifty news correspondents in El Paso from all over the country), we detect a reluctant note of admiration here and there for Millican, Oxley, and their stubborn little group of fellow clergymen, even from some of their opponents. The

Times continued to revile them in scathing terms, referring to them editorially as "puffed toads, asses, putty-headed sky pilots, and pulpit pounders who tire of minding their own business and court notoriety by dabbling in government affairs." The editor declared emphatically that "their business is to minister unto the spiritual welfare of their flocks and not intrude themselves in matters of government where their influence has always been pernicious." And he had help from his readers and advertisers. One prominent merchant was quoted in the columns of the paper as saying, "Only two or three preachers are doing all this mischief. They floated in here and have no interest in the town outside of the salary paid them by their congregations; and if we are bankrupt by their doings and El Paso becomes too poor to support them, they can float away to some other town."[23] Some of the scars left by this controversy were long in healing. For months afterward, we find little mention of the churches' activities in the columns of the *Times*.

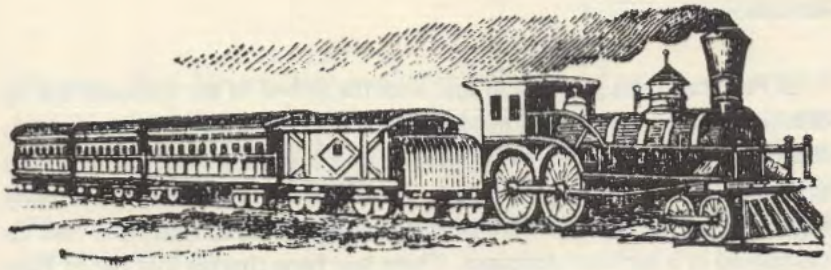
The *Herald*, on the other hand, which had also promoted the Fitzimmons-Maher fight on behalf of its regular advertisers, maintained a very commendable tone of fairness and neutrality—and showed a nice sense of humor. It reported on one of Oxley's sermons just after he had signed a vigorous protest against the fight (which it had printed on its front page), in these words: "Rev. Oxley preached to a large audience as usual last night. He announced at the beginning that he...had a bad headache, but there was general agreement...that if he could preach that way under the inspiration of a hard headache, he should keep a basket or two of them on hand all the time!"[24] The editor of this paper continued to report favorably on Oxley's sermons, even while good-naturedly chiding him and his colleagues on their unwavering stand against prize fighting.[25]

They were men of firm convictions and plain words, those preachers in the frontier town of El Paso. One by one they courageously fired their volleys of protest against the pillage by the vice merchants. And faithfully they rang their church bells in a steady call to reform and civic cleansing. For the better part of the decade and a half following the arrival of the railroads, they were virtually ignored—at best; or—at worst—they were regarded as a "pernicious" influence "in matters of government." But finally, as the 19th century drew to a close, a change in El Paso's social environment was taking place, and the voices of the preachers began to be heard above the brazen rattle of the Sin Business. ★

NOTES

1. *El Paso Herald*, July 26, 1882.
2. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1882.
3. *Lone Star*, February 3, 1883.
4. C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1968), 345.

(Continued on page 151.)



OUR TOWN— ONE CENTURY AGO *(July-September, 1887)*

by Art Leibson

FOR SOME UNACCOUNTABLE REASON THERE are no copies of El Paso newspapers available anywhere for the third quarter of 1887 except for the last several days in September. To fill in the gap, I have borrowed some of this quarterly report from books on early El Paso in my personal library.

Town and country had gone crazy over baseball in the 1880s, with many leading citizens participating in the games and much betting taking place on the outcome of exciting contests, usually in the gambling halls. It was something of a shock when a scandal suddenly broke out late in the summer of 1887 after the local team lost to Santa Fe, a game they had been expected to win easily. The scandal consisted of reports that there had been considerable drunkenness on the part of El Paso's players that might well have affected the outcome. In an effort to settle the raging controversy, every member of the local team signed a letter denying that insobriety had been the cause of their losing. The letter did not go so far as to deny there had been any drinking, only that liquor had not played a role in the team's defeat.

El Paso had been growing so fast since the arrival of the railroads that its drinking-water supply could not keep pace with the growth. The water was drawn entirely from the river, pumped into a settling reservoir and then syphoned off into the city's system. The reservoir was cleaned out fairly regularly, but El Pasoans were nevertheless disturbed to find what had accumulated in it between drainings. There had been charges that the El Paso Water Company, holders of the water-supply franchise, had so allowed pollution to creep into the water that it had caused an outbreak of typhoid. The *Times* angrily called upon the utility to fulfill its obligation to provide pure and clear water. "That's your duty," the *Times* editorialized, "so let's have it."

That was the opening gun of a drive for municipal ownership of the water works which would be turned down twice by the voters before they finally agreed, nearly a quarter-century later, to buy up the system and issue bonds to purchase and expand the water works. In the meantime the first artesian wells had been sunk to supplement the river supply.

The year 1887 was a period of numerous train robberies in the west and southwest, and such incidents were moving closer to El Paso. It was also a year when an effort was being made to upgrade the cultural facilities in the border town. F. E. Hunter, Joe Pollard, and others decided to add their contribution to the uplifting movement by organizing a music and dramatic club, "The Howlers," that had a single civic goal, raising enough money to buy a town clock. "The Howlers" didn't last long, but they provided the groundwork for the McGinty Club, which started two years later and which would become highly popular through its colorful parades and its excellent band.

Mayor R. C. Lightbody, who had come to the border to open the first men's clothing store in town, took an extended vacation in California. Returning, he gave the *Times* a report on his visit to the west coast: "The boom continues but I cannot see what sustains it. The California people are all sellers and they sit down and wait for strangers to buy their properties at fabulous prices. California is a nice place to spend a few weeks in." Having relieved himself of those sentiments, Lightbody for some unexplained reason proceeded to resign from his office, and Alderman Allen Blacker was named mayor pro tem. Then, in a highly irregular procedure, G. E. Hubbard was named mayor, not in any election but at a mass-meeting, and took over the duties without any objections being voiced.

A big and very questionable silver find was reported from nearby

Art Leibson, formerly the border correspondent for the *Time-Life* organization, authors this regular *Password* feature as well as a weekly column in *The El Paso Times.*

Kingston, New Mexico, that inevitably drew large crowds of prospectors looking for a bonanza. According to the published reports, a single nugget had been found weighing 38 pounds and with a $27,000 value, while six more had been found within 50 feet. The silver rush could be expected to end as quickly as it had begun, and the *Times* reported the find tongue somewhat in cheek.

On the Court docket for the fall season was an array of cases which showed that crime had kept pace with the growing city: pending were four cases charging horse stealing, one of passing counterfeit money, another of smuggling, one of forgery, one of assault to murder, and one of running an opium joint. El Paso could tolerate vice in the gentler forms, but it had to be home-grown.

El Paso was in serious danger of losing Fort Bliss in 1887, as Leon Metz tells us in his *Turning Points in El Paso, Texas.* Then located in the area of the present Hacienda Cafe, where some of the post buildings still stand, the fort was troubled with several problems: the water was unhealthy; trains were disruptive; the smelter emitted "poisonous" fumes; there was no room for expansion; and the position in a bowl surrounded by mountains made the fort vulnerable to artillery placed on the heights.

Meanwhile, General Sherman visited Fort Bliss and decided to support its continuance in the El Paso vicinity. He agreed that the fort was small but suggested that infantry be stationed there while cavalry be located at Fort Cummings, near Deming, New Mexico. Sherman needed civilian assistance if he were to save the fort for El Paso, and the Chamber of Commerce was quick to respond. It issued a pamphlet, "El Paso as a Military Post," pointing up the statistical advantages of keeping Fort Bliss on the border. It listed El Paso's 10,000 population, up from 700 in the seven years since 1880, a property valuation of $5 million, its 150 businesses, three banks, two smelters, six churches, two stockyards, four public schools, even its $80,000 opera house. Finally Congress agreed to provide funds to build a new Fort Bliss but only on condition that local residents would provide the needed land. With that, 100 men pledged $9,235 for the purpose, later increased by several thousand dollars as the demand for land was stepped up and as the need for sinking a well to supply adequate water became apparent.

In return, the Army gave up the old post cemetery, at what is now Cleveland Square, and the library block also was presented to the city. That is why the park was named in honor of President Cleveland. ★

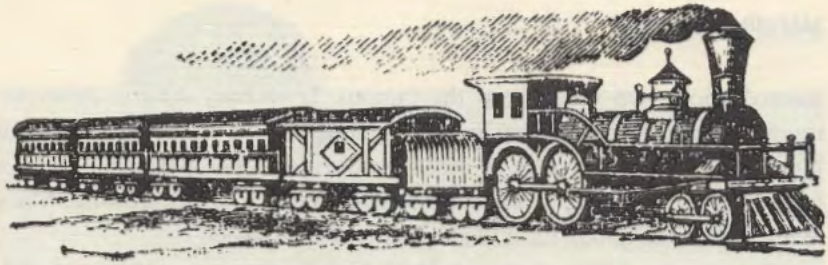
UNPOPULAR PRESIDENT

HIRAM HADLEY, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE agricultural college located near Las Cruces (now New Mexico State University), was dismissed in 1894—partly because of a change in the political composition of the Board of Regents and also because he was considered too strict on the students and faculty members. He allowed no alcohol or tobacco to be used on the campus; and—worst offense of all—he forbade the students to carry guns, declaring that anyone who carried a gun was either "a coward or a desperado."

UPROAR IN JULY...*from page 120.*

> At any rate, the technique was good, the production of noise very satisfactory, the confusion almost 100%. And the results were just the same as the CIO obtained by the same tactics in Chicago—defeat for their side.
>
> The regulars went ahead, had their convention, passed their resolutions, named their delegates, and adjourned.... And when it was over, the regulars went out in the halls and grinned at each other and went away looking for cool, dry places.
>
> And on the floor below, the Republicans went ahead with their convention business, chuckling a little now and then as the Democratic noise came pouring down the stairway.

An aftermath of this Democratic County Convention was that in 1959 Ernest Guinn filed suit against Standard Oil Company of Texas on behalf of Manuel Cedillo and a number of other plaintiffs. I represented Standard, and upon trial, Judge R. E. Thomason entered judgment in favor of my client. Guinn appealed to the United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, at New Orleans. The Court of Appeals heard arguments in the case at Fort Worth; and as Ernest and I left the Court, he turned to me and said, "Jim, I was always sorry about what happened at the county convention." I replied, "Forget it, Ernest, We all know that things will come up in politics—so forget it." With that, an old friendship was renewed. Incidentally, the Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment in favor of Standard. (291 F.2d 246, cert. den. 368 U.S. 955, 7. L.Ed. 2d 387)★



• PIONEERS IN THE SOUTHWEST •

DON JUAN
John Humphris on the Rio Grande Frontier

by May Humphris Gillett

A few years before her death in 1956, May Humphris Gillett wrote the story of her father's life. She intended the account as a record for her descendents; and in it she described her father's youth and marriage in England, the emigration of the young family to Texas in 1870 (when she herself was an infant), and her father's activities during the next 30 years or so as a rancher and businessman along the Rio Grande.

Mr. I. W. Gillett, the author's son and a longtime resident of El Paso, graciously shares with Password *readers his mother's account, which is presented here in a shortened and edited form.*

May Humphris Gillett was the wife of Frank Gillett, a lumberman in Alpine, Texas.

My father, John Humphris, was born at Eyford, a village in Gloucestershire, England, and was brought up in a house called Abbott's Court,

located about two miles from the famous Tewksbury Abbey. After his mother's untimely death when he was a young boy, he was sent to school in Northleach, a nearby village whose lovely old stone church was said to have been built in A.D. 800. It was here that he first met his future wife, Mary Walker. He was about 12, and she was two years older.

John left school when he was only 14. He was very large for his age and, by all reports, quite good looking. He lived for a short time with his paternal grandfather, assisting the elder Humphris in managing the farm. This experience gave young John many valuable lessons in sheep-raising and in business affairs.

Some years later, John's father died; and with his part of the inheritance, John was able to marry his childhood sweetheart, Mary, whom he had courted through the years. He immediately began looking toward America as a favorable prospect. He made several trips alone to Virginia, where he showed fine sheep and hogs, taking many prizes and then selling his stock. On one of his trips he bought some tobacco land in Maryland, but knowing nothing of the culture of tobacco or the management of negro labor, he was forced to sell the land at a loss.

Meanwhile John's family was growing. Mary had borne John a son, and she was expecting another child. John now began to make plans to emigrate to Texas, where he hoped to establish a ranch, stocking it with the best breeds of English sheep and hogs. These plans were put into effect about six weeks after I was born, when my mother was strong enough to travel. The young family (and a faithful servant named Sarah Hunt) took passage on a sailing ship, which after about three weeks, docked at Indianola on the coast of Texas. This was in the summer of 1870.

All had gone well up to this point, but suddenly misfortune struck. Another ship was carrying the valuable livestock and some of the family's furniture and household goods. John had intended bringing his family on that same ship, but for some reason they had changed their minds at almost the last minute and sailed in the other vessel. The ship with the livestock sank in a tropical storm off Key West, and everything was lost.

John tried one thing and then another and finally had sheep on shares with the famous Captain King of the King Ranch. For a year or so, the family lived in Corpus Christi, where the second son was born.

Word got round in England that John was doing well, and he had several letters from old friends wanting him to make investments for their sons, thinking probably that they would get rich in Texas almost overnight. A copy of my father's response to one of these friends, Thomas Walker of Howell Park, reads:

May Humphris Gillett (1870-1956), elder daughter of "Don Juan" Humphris, pioneer in the Big Bend Country.

PHOTO COURTESY I. W. GILLETT, EL PASO

I an told that the western states are much better for young men of energy and some capital but as far as my experience goes, anywhere in this country, a man to do any good must be a thorough business man posted on all points and as sharp as a needle. I know we English men have an idea that we are superior to the rest of the world but I tell you, sir, there are men here that can (as the saying goes) buy us up today and sell us again tomorrow.

About 1878, my father formed a partnership with Charles Murphy, a retired sea-captain from Maine. They moved their stock to the old Indio ranch about 25 miles below Eagle Pass and just three miles from the Rio Grande. The sheep were driven overland, grazing as they went. It took them nearly all winter to get there. Meanwhile, father got the family located in San Antonio.

In the summer, he came with a hack and a chuckwagon to take us to the ranch. Father drove the hack, and a Mexican drove the wagon containing the bedding and provisions. It took us a week to make the trip—and it was a great adventure. As evening approached, father would start looking for a good camping place, a spot with grass for the horses and water if possible. When we stopped, the Mexican driver would unhitch the horses and "hobble" them so they would not graze too far. Then he would gather lots of wood, which was plentiful, and make a good fire. Each of us helped spread the beds and do various other chores. Sometimes, if we had no fresh meat, father took his gun and went in search of wild turkey, which were plentiful there too.

The Mexican made good camp bread; and when everything else was ready, he dragged some coals out of the fire, set the skillet on them, put in the bread, placed more coals on the lid (which was made especially for that)

and in a jiffy we had delicious hot biscuits.

The Indio ranch was situated on a long lake, the several buildings arranged in a line above the high water mark of the lake. The first building to meet the eye was a store and warehouse to supply the needs of the ranch. It also served quite a few Mexicans who came from across the river to buy. About 15 or 20 yards farther along was a kitchen with a brush porch which we used as a dining room. Some 15 yards beyond that were two bedrooms, divided by a brush porch and fronted by a similar verandah, which served as a general sitting room.

In the spring of 1883, several armed Mexicans attemped to rob the store. They arrived in the early evening, tied their horses at the hitching post, and entered the store. They proceeded to tie and gag the two men who were in the store at the time, but they didn't see my brother, John, Jr., about 14, who was behind the counter filling his pockets with candy. John was frightened, of course, but he quietly slipped out through a nearby door and ran to tell father—to the accompaniment of two shots whizzing past him as he rounded the corner. A clipping found among my father's papers describes the incident in detail. The article, which was written by my father soon after the attempted robbery and published, I think, in a San Antonio newspaper, reads as follows:

MEXICAN ROBBERS

Their Attack on a Store in Maverick County

Special Correspondence—Indio, Maverick County, March 18, 1883

Knowing that you always wish to get the correct facts of any matters of interest that occur in this section of the country and wishing that my friends may know also, I send you a description of the raid on our store on Saturday last.

About 7 P.M., a party of men rode up to our store at Indio...and drew six-shooters on our clerk, Mr. Edward Walker, and a Mr. Henry Young, who was in the store at the time, and called on them to surrender. My little son, who was in the store, then ran out, upon which they fired two shots at him, and called on him to stop. However, he paid no attention, and ran to my house...I understood the situation at once, and wasted no time in getting my shotgun and some cartridges loaded with buckshot.

In the meantime one of our customers rode up in front of the store and was disarmed and taken inside...and tied with his hands behind his back together with Mr. Walker and Mr. Young. The customer, Don Luciano Garcia, not getting down on his knees as quick as they wished him to do, received two or three ugly blows on the top of his head with a sixshooter. The thieves then asked for the money. The clerk replied he had not got any besides what was in the drawer.

About this time I had gotten close up to the store...and saw a group of six or seven men standing together, having a consultation.... Immediately they commenced to scatter about and as I could see none of my own party amongst them, I opened fire with both barrels. I saw one fall, and some

horses ran off. I then...fired two more shots from the other corner. By this time the party had become demoralized, and most of them ran off, some on foot, some horseback, and some riding double. The other men that were inside the store then ran out, two of them getting on one horse and passing in front of where I was. I fired two more barrels at them, and that ended the fight.

After the fight was over we found the three men tied in the store and turned them loose, dragged the dead man inside an outhouse and waited further developments. At daylight we found trails of wounded men and horses in every direction. In the course of the morning our vaquero brought in one dun horse branded VE C (Spanish brand).... Later a sorrel horse was brought in, branded SS, and afterwards another horse that we know very well, belonging to a man that has traded with us some time.

Capt. Oglesby [Sheriff of Maverick County] and myself went out to Presidio Rio Grande to see the authorities, but...they did not seem disposed to do anything about it. A Mexican friend of mine that went out the morning after the fight with a letter to the Juez Primero came and said...there were two or three wounded men in town, but the authorities advised him to leave and not mix himself up in the business. Capt. Oglesby and myself fared but little better, although they treated us politely. Finding that we could not accomplish anything, we came back to this side of the Rio Grande.

The dead man, after having his face washed, turned out to be...a resident of the Rio Grande and a customer at our store.... Such is life on the Rio Grande frontier; one day come to trade, and the next to rob and murder.

I would advise all my friends doing business on the frontier to provide themselves with a No. 10 double-barrel shot-gun, and keep it loaded with buckshot, where they can get hold of it quickly. As I have found out, it is a good thing to have in a case of this kind.... From the looks of things, we have no chance of protection either from the American or Mexican authorities, and a man must be prepared to defend his property himself or leave the country. (Signed) JOHN HUMPHRIS

In the fall of 1883, after a severe drought, my father began looking for 'pastures new." He said to my mother, "Mary, there are great possibilities in Mexico. I would like to get a ranch over there." Mary looked up at him and said very seriously, "John, I have followed you to the Rio Grande; if you cross over, you go alone." And John knew she meant what she said. So he turned his steps westward, but still following the Rio Grande (on the American side).

He arrived in Marfa, Presidio County, when the whole country was looking its very best. Rain had come early and had continued all the summer; grass was so high that sometimes the owner could not find his calves. It was delightfully cool and looked like Paradise to John after the intense heat and dryness of Indio. He took up some land about 18 miles south of Marfa and also bought the only store in town. Marfa at that time consisted of a depot, two saloons, and a few residences.

My mother's brother, James Walker, came out from England about this

time, and the firm there with Mr. Murphy became Humphris & Company. Mr. Murphy managed the store, James Walker the old Sauz ranch, which later became the Fisher ranch, and Father managed the outside interests. Which were numerous indeed.

The 1938 edition of *The Mexican Border* contains a description of some of Father's business activities:

> There was a great influx of English, Scotch, and Irish men. The most active of this group from Europe was John Humphris. Fifteen years after his arrival in Marfa he had built up the largest general merchant business that ever existed in West Texas. His business included everything, a bank, stage line, drug store, horse ranch, cattle ranch, and...he had branch stores at Shafter, Presidio, Poloo, San Carlos, and Camp Schryver. His trade territory extended out 200 miles north, east, south, and west. He carefully saved all papers that came; and Don Juan, as he was called by his Mexican friends, with typical English thoroughness preserved them all.

In the same article, the editor calls my father "this amazing dynamic man" and offers from "among the Humphris collection of letters which were found long after his death" this letter "showing how busy he was":

> Dear Murphy:
>
> Yours of September 3rd to hand this A.M. by Porter with Durants Act. I will go to Abilene as soon as I get through at the coal mines [at Chispa] which will be about the 9th and go to Sierra Blanca on the 10th, Abilene on the 11th, stay there the 12th and start back on the 13th to arrive at Allamore the morning of the 14th. Please see that the money for Camp Schryver payday goes to Allamore on the night of the 13th.

Don Juan drove a pair of fast-stepping horses, and he was going constantly. I remember when he would start off. Two men, having harnessed the horses to a buckboard, stood at their heads till Don Juan got in and gathered up the lines; then with a rear and a plunge they were gone. As children we never missed that scene.

It is quite true, as the editor of *The Mexican Border* said in 1938, that my father carefully kept all the letters he had received after the move to Presidio County and all the papers pertaining to his businesses.* These documents are a treasure trove of poignant insights into the lives of the people in that part of frontier Texas. Many of these letters contain a plea for money or extended credit. Others include expressions by the pioneers of their search for water and their struggle for its possession. All of the letters communicate, in one way or another, that comforts were few and luxuries non-existent, but that the people's faith and courage were dauntless. The letters also reveal that the development of this section of Texas was due in large part to Don

*Editor's note: In her *History of Marfa and Presidio County, Texas, 1535-1946* (Austin: Nortex Press, 1985), Cecilia Thompson notes (on p. 298 of Volume I) that "The Humphris Collection, donated by Mrs. L. C. Brite and on deposit at the El Paso Public Library" contains "an estimated 20,000 documents...covering the period 1890 through 1907."

Juan's system of credit, a system which ultimately destroyed Humphris & Company. Topheavy with overdue accounts, the company fell in the early part of this century. However, out of its ashes rose another big business, the Murphy Walker Company, which continued to supply the surrounding country until 1932, when it too was forced to close because of overdue accounts.

In his later years, father visited England again. The news of the bandit raid at Indio had been written to relatives, and his friends had him tell it again. As they sat listening between sips of the English "nightcap," one man leaned over his nearest neighbor and said, "I say, John draws a long bow, doesn't he?" The one addressed responded, "Rather! But, I say, where were the Police?"

My father had suffered for a good many years from what was thought in those days to be an incurable disease. He was in bed for several weeks, then died rather suddenly of a heart attack in 1904.

The editor of the small town newspaper said this of him: "[John Humphris] was a man of remarkable character. He forged his way from boyhood with a vim and courage displayed by few.... He was a methodical, careful businessman, and it could be depended on that anything he undertook to do would be well done. He was highly respected and beloved by a large number of people in this county."

This was my father, John Humphris, affectionately known as Don Juan by his friends and associates along the banks of the Rio Grande during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. ★

VOLLEYS FROM THE PULPITS...*from page 140.*

5. Rev. W. S. Huggett, "History of Trinity Methodist Church," *The El Paso Times*, 50 Years of Progress Number, May, 1923.
6. *El Paso Herald*, January 24, 1882.
7. *Lone Star*, January 25, 1881.
8. *El Paso Herald*, March 15, 1882.
9. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1882.
10. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1882.
11. *The El Paso Times*, June 15, 1883.
12. *Lone Star*, April 9, 1884.
13. *The El Paso Times*, July 3, 1883.
14. *Ibid.*, May 2, 1883.
15. Owen P. White, *Autobiography of a Durable Sinner* (New York: Putnam, 1942). 71.
16. *The El Paso Times*, September 6, 1890.
17. Owen P. White, *Out of the Desert* (El Paso: McMath Company, 1923), 217.
18. *Ibid.*, 205.
19. *The El Paso Times*, October 23, 1892.
20. *El Paso Herald*, February 17, 1893.
21. Sonnichsen, 360.
22. *El Paso Herald*, February 6, 1896.
23. *El Paso Times*, February 6, 1896.
24. *El Paso Herald*, January 20, 1896.
25. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1896.

BOOK REVIEWS

TEXAS MYTHS
Edited by Robert F. O'Connor for the Texas Committee for the Humanities
College Station: The Texas A & M University Press, $17.95

Mark Twain once noted that the difference between the right word and the almost right word was like the difference between *lightning* and *lightning bug*. The word *myth* as used herein is like that. To a folklorist, *myth* means stories of creation, of world causes, of gods and goddesses, of religions fallen into disbelief; assuredly, to the vast public, the word means simply *false*. But in this book (after umpteen pages of reference-loaded explanation, citing everybody from Freud on down) the reader finds that the word means *tradition, legend, custom,* the "communal self-image," the way folks do things or think about themselves, in short. The book is not bad, bringing together thirteen articles of substance about those varied applications. But MYTH it ain't.

Richard Bauman, folklorist, talks of legends and tales—intelligently. He notes that J. Frank Dobie's passing on of Texas tales was not mere repetition of collected stories. Rather, Dobie improved on the stories he collected—which is quite natural, since he was basically a tale teller who took 'em where he found 'em and told 'em like they shoulda been told! Bauman also points out that the folk festivals that spring up all over Texas are not folklore, but self-conscious imitations. "Performers" and spectators alike are "on holiday," he says, not working at their trades.

William Newcomb comes close to concerning himself with myth when he discusses the Indians of Texas. Certainly their attitudes toward themselves, the land, and the world around are different from the attitudes of the European/American immigrants who filled up Texas and mostly ran the Indians out. And Juan Ortega y Medina does a good job of showing such divergencies between Mexicans and Anglos in the state, maintaining that the basic difference lies in the Catholic-Protestant orientations that separate the races

and have done so since colonial times.

William Goetzmann describes the genus *redneck*, noting its basic nature for Texas, and even goes as far as pointing out that the legends of the Alamo are sacrosanct—nobody dast even whisper that maybe Davy Crockett didn't go down swinging ole Betsy; nor should one mention that there were Mexican names among those who died at the Alamo and elsewhere for Texas liberty. Sterling Stuckey's piece on Afro-American formative myths comes across well, showing essentially that tales and beliefs from Africa seem to have shaped customs and folk narratives of an entertainment sort rather than what the folklorist would call *myth*.

The book is a good one for opening eyes to the rich tapestry that is Texas —and Texans. Texas *is* big, and I reckon it takes a heap of explanation, especially if a Yankee wants to know about us. Of course, us *native-born* Texans don't need to be told we're special. If fact, some might even be disturbed by this revelation that Texas is *many things, many ways, many peoples*. Try it and see where *you* fit in!

JOHN O. WEST
Professor of English
The University of Texas at El Paso

DOCTORS OF MEDICINE IN NEW MEXICO: A History of Health and Medical Practice, 1886-1986 by Jake W. Spidle, Jr. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, $29.95

Professor Spidle has done a superb job of collecting the information for this comprehensive history of health care in New Mexico, researching archives and gathering together many oral histories. His work will be appreciated not only by physicians in general and physicians in New Mexico in particular, but also by everyone interested in Southwest history. Overall, his book tells of the origins and labor pains and birth of the New Mexico Medical Society and of the Society's growth and development—a remarkable achievement—from 1886 to 1986.

An especially interesting aspect of the book's general subject is the contrast between past and present medical practices. In New Mexico, physicians of the early era could practice with or without a medical school diploma. Many entered New Mexico from the east, seeking excitement and adventure or because they came west to be cured of tuberculosis. The treatment then was a high and dry climate. The chapter on "The Army of Tubercular Invalids" must be read, if only to contrast the treatment between then and now. New Mexico advertised its climate, its facilities (sanatoriums), and its doctors who were specialists in the treatment of this disease. To our way of

thinking today, this meant no treatment at all, except rest and sunshine.

The struggle to surmount obstacles by women physicians in the early 1900s is another fascinating topic which the author treats. Many of New Mexico's "las doctoras" appear in the book, Evelyn Frisbia most prominently. Against astronomical odds in a male-dominated profession, this woman worked tirelessly in the cause of public health and eventually won recognition as a stateswoman in New Mexico medicine.

The initiation of a statewide public-health program was a major and time-consuming undertaking. To pass the necessary laws to protect the drinking water and the milk supply was frustrating at first because of the cost. The reporting of births and deaths, the regularizing of burials, and the notification of diseases—all of which we take for granted today—were unknown. It took World War I and the 1918 influenza epidemic to produce the desired results.

This thoroughly enjoyable book appears as a special project by the University of New Mexico Press in celebration of the state's Diamond Jubilee.

J. HARRY MISKIMINS, M.D.
El Paso

FOUR FIGHTERS OF LINCOLN COUNTY
by Robert M. Utley
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, $19.95

During the last decade, the Lincoln County War has undergone an intense re-evaluation. It is almost as if everyone wants to get in the last word before the whole subject permanently closes down.

Robert M. Utley, former Chief Historian for the National Park Service, and the nation's outstanding authority on the frontier army, has shucked his normal field of expertise and invaded Billy the Kid country with a book composed of essays on Alexander McSween, Billy the Kid, Colonel Nathan Dudley, and Lew Wallace: his "Four Fighters of Lincoln County."

Alexander McSween was an attorney who must share guilt for the Lincoln County War. Billy the Kid, of course, is better known than Mother's Oats. Colonel Dudley commanded the military post of Fort Stanton and was largely responsible for McSween's losing the Five Day Battle of Lincoln. And Lew Wallace, the harried governor of New Mexico, balanced his career between trying to keep peace in Lincoln County and writing his classic novel, *Ben Hur.*

Utley's strength lies not in fresh details that he has uncovered, for he adds little that is new. Nor does it lie in the balanced view he presents of the issues

and personalities. Utley's strength resides in his instinctive, intelligent perceptions and in his flowing, eloquent writing. He is a master of what television used to call "the big picture": he makes the reader see and understand all that is happening. Herein lies the mark of a professional and the basic explanation of why some writer-historians, like Utley, are great and others merely good.

LEON C. METZ
Member, Western Writers of America

FORT GRIFFIN ON THE TEXAS FRONTIER
by Carl Coke Rister, with a foreword by William H. Leckie
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, $7.95

First published in 1956, this book by the distinguished historian of the American Southwest relates a crucial segment in the history of Clear Fork County, Texas.

With its streams, grasslands, tree-covered hills, and abundant game, the region had been a vital part of the Kiowa and Comanche hunting domain. Small wonder that these tribes resisted encroachment by land-hungry white settlers, a resistance which sent military troops to the area in the mid-19th century and prompted an attempt at an Indian reservation. These efforts ceased during the Civil War, when all United States troops were withdrawn from area. But when the War was over, troops (both black and white) were again ordered to the troubled land.

In 1867 a military post was established at Clear Fork. Initially called Camp Wilson, it was shortly afterward renamed Fort Griffin, after General Charles Griffin, Commander of the Military Department of Texas, and was garrisoned by four companies of the Sixth Cavalry. Duty consisted of hauling wood and lumber, escorting mail or passenger stages, patrolling the area, or chasing predatory Indians. New unrest stemmed from buffalo hunters killing off the vast herds simply for their hides. This slaughter ultimately forced the Indians onto reservations by eliminating their commissary.

With the Indians subdued, frontier forts such as Fort Griffin were no longer necessary. On May 31, 1881, the United States flag was lowered, and Fort Griffin became history.

This account of Fort Griffin and its environs typifies Rister's work (13 books altogether) in the thoroughness of its research and in the clarity of its telling.

JAMES W. WARD
Colonel (Ret.)
Director, Council of America's Military Past

SCENIC DRIVE...*from page 132.*

7. City of El Paso, *The City Plan for El Paso, Texas* (El Paso Texas: 1925), Foreword.
8. *El Paso Herald*, December 30, 1913. Property owners along the rim at this time included D. Storms, Kerbey estate, J. J. Mundy, El Paso Commercial Co., Loomis estate, Ullman estate, George Sauer, J. C. Rous, C. J. Maheny, P. E. Kern, Caples estate, Powers and O'Connor, and C. M. Newman.
9. *Ibid.*, June 3 and 4, 1914.
10. *Ibid.*, October 1, 1914.
11. *Ibid.*, October 2, 7, 9, 10, 1914. Details of the celebration are reported in these issues.
12. The loving cup was in the collection of the International Museum (now the El Paso Museum of Art) in 1951.
13. *El Paso Herald*, August 28 and 29, 1915.
14. C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, II (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1980), 15; Interview, Otis C. Coles, Sr., January 6, 1951.
15. *El Paso Herald*, July 8, 1916; December 2, 1916; July 25, 1918.
16. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1915.
17. Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1985), Chapter II. Mexican revolutionary activities affecting El Paso are covered in detail.
18. *The El Paso Morning Times*, March 3 and 11, 1920.
19. *Ibid.*, April 14, May 1, 4, 6, 1919.
20. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1919.
21. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1919.
22. *Ibid.*, May 17, 1919.
23. Interviews, W. E. Stockwell, November and December, 1950. Mr. Stockwell also authored an article entitled "Unusual Scenic Drive Built Near El Paso, Texas," published in the August, 1921, issue of *The Highway Magazine*. Later he became the City Planning Commissioner.
24. *El Paso Herald*, August 27, 1919; *The El Paso Morning Times*, August 29, October 3 and 5, 1919.
25. County of El Paso, Deed Records, Book 350, 323-326. Deed Nos. 22295, 22296, 22297, 22298. El Paso County Court House.
26. City of El Paso, *Minutes of the Council of the City of El Paso*, Book K-2, 142, 452. El Paso City Hall.
27. *Ibid.*, Book K-2, 501, 583, 649, 722, 756, 828.
28. *Ibid.*, Book K-2 775, 801, 815, 828; Book L-2, 3, 25, 46, 53, 57, 65, 81, 89.
29. *Ibid.*, Book L-2, 57, 65, 81, 89, 107, 133, 202.
30. Ibid., Book L-2, 202, 237, 257, 269, 305.
31. *The El Paso Morning Times*, October 4-11, 1920. Lengthy articles covering the exposition appeared daily in the newspapers.
32. *El Paso Herald*, July 17 and 18, 1920. Besides the drivers, J. C. McNamara, "Tex" Griffin, and G. G. Bradley made the trip. Accompanied by six photographs, rare for the times, the trip was probably a publicity stunt.
33. Lay, 106-107.
34. *Encyclopedia Americana*, XIV (New York: Americana Corporation, 1965), 370.
35. Interview, Robert L. Holliday, November, 1950.
36. *The El Paso Times*, October 28, 1932.
37. County of El Paso, *Minutes of the Commissioners Court*, Book 15, 626, 630, 633-634. El Paso County Court House.
38. *Ibid.*, Book 16, 9-16, 27-28, 35, 37-41, 52-53, 73-79.
39. *El Paso Herald-Post*, November 21, 1932.
40. *Minutes of the Commissioners Court*, Book 16, 35-37, 73-79.
41. The *Audit Reports of the City of El Paso* for 1921 record that the entire cost of Scenic Drive up to 1921 was $97,463.81. Adding the $87,000 estimated by the county for paving it, the cost was well under $200,000.
42. *The El Paso Times*, February 20, 1933.
43. *El Paso Herald-Post*, January 28, 1948.
44. *Ibid.*, November 21, 1963.

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