

PASSWORD



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PASSWORD

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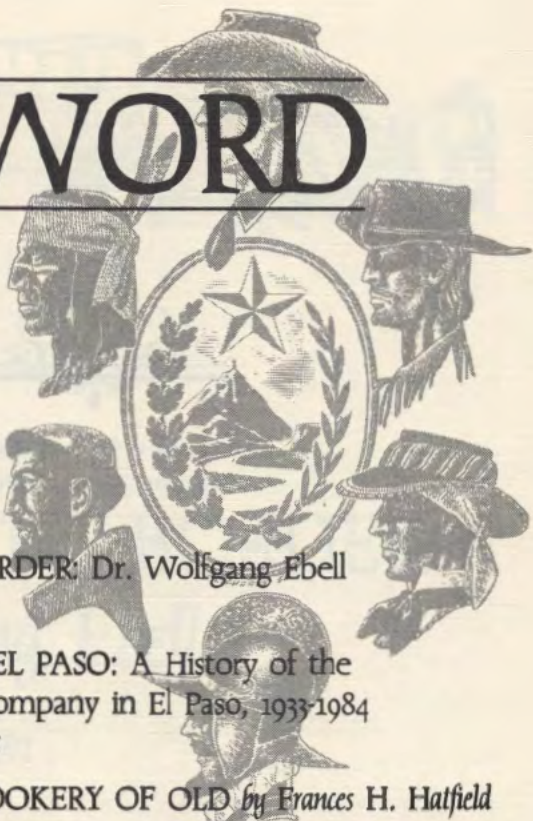
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SPY ON THE BORDER: *Dr. Wolfgang Ebell*

by Nancy Hamilton

LONG BEFORE THE UNITED STATES WAS drawn into World War II, the Nazis had established a complex network of secret agents throughout the United States and Mexico. Many of these agents were linked to the Abwehr, Germany's secret intelligence agency, through local support groups of the German American Bund, although during and after the war Abwehr officials denied any such involvement.¹ Bund members were former German citizens who had obtained United States citizenship.²

As the war escalated in Europe and as the United States manufactured increasing quantities of war goods for sale to Britain, the government became concerned about espionage at home. On September 6, 1939, just three days after Britain declared war on Germany, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a confidential directive giving the Federal Bureau of Investigation authority as the nation's top civilian counterespionage agency.³ British intelligence worked closely with the FBI in sharing information about suspected enemy agents.⁴

By late 1940, the United States had been infiltrated from coast to coast by a web of agents whose "various networks and rings extended to practically every Army camp, Navy Yard, and critical installation, as well as to the highest echelons of the American Government."⁵ The Abwehr was confident that its operations had gone undetected until unexpectedly, on June 29, 1941, J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI, announced "the greatest spy roundup in a series of sudden raids," with twenty-nine Germans taken into custody in New York City on charges of espionage for a foreign power.⁶ The FBI had been watching the agents for two years.⁷

The Germans, however, remained undeterred by that raid. They continued to plant more agents in the United States and "violated all the cardinal rules of espionage. Every member of one ring knew everybody in the other rings. The whole organization, the largest ever assembled in any one country, resembled a brotherhood..."⁸

One member of this "brotherhood," to the amazement of the community, was a member of the El Paso County Medical Society, a man with a reputation as a fine diagnostician—Dr. Wolfgang Ebell. Like a number of others who were eventually convicted as spies, he had served in the German military during World War I, had emigrated to the United States, and had married a United States citizen, thus expediting his own acquisition of citizenship.

Just ten days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, on December 17, 1941, Dr. Ebell was arrested in his home in El Paso's Lower Valley. He was charged with violation of Section 5, Title 18, of the United States Code, by conducting correspondence with Germany and its agents with alleged intent to influence that nation's actions in relation to the United States. The section of the Code specified is titled "Criminal Correspondence with Foreign Governments."⁹

During the weeks immediately after the United States entered the war, the FBI closed in on numerous German agents. In the previous summer, a primary source of names had come into the Bureau's hands during a raid of German American Bund headquarters in New York City. It was there that Dr. Ebell's name was found on address plates for two files, one of subscribers to the Bund's official newspaper, *The Free American*, and the other listing all Bund unit leaders in the United States.¹⁰

El Paso was important to the spy network for several reasons. It was the home of a major army post, Fort Bliss. Its local industries included two oil refineries, a large smelter, and a copper refinery. East-west rail travel moved through the downtown streets of the city; a spy could observe troop trains from a tree-shaded bench in San Jacinto Plaza. Moreover, El Paso was a

Nancy Hamilton, a former editor of *Password*, is Associate Editor of Texas Western Press.

gateway to Mexico, an important link in Nazi Germany's world-wide network. As the case against Dr. Ebell was made public, it developed that he had helped Gerhard Wilhelm Kunze, former head of the German American Bund, to flee to Mexico to avoid arrest.

Before moving to El Paso, Dr. Ebell had spent three years in Mexico as a salesman for a German firm.¹¹ He had resided in Monterrey before moving to the United States. Government officials, at the time of Ebell's arrest, said that he had been born in 1899 in Zabern, Alsace, France, of German parents. He had served in the German Army during World War I, earning the Iron Cross and other medals. His father, who had recently died, was described as a high-ranking German official; his mother lived in Germany. Of medium height, he had pale blue eyes, fair complexion, and thinning blond hair. After his marriage to an El Paso woman, Raquel Sepúlveda, he had filed a citizenship application on December 27, 1938. He became a naturalized citizen upon taking the oath from Federal Judge Charles A. Boynton on April 3, 1939.¹²

On the day after his arrest, the *El Paso Herald-Post* carried an article by Betty Luther, who had been acquainted with Dr. Ebell for several years. She had recommended him to her sister, who was pleased by his medical expertise. The reporter explained that two years earlier, hearing rumors that he was head of the German American Bund in El Paso, she had visited his office in Room 604 of the Abdou Building downtown and had confronted him on this question. "I have been the head of a German cultural society," he told her. "It is not as active now as it once was. I am not the head of any German Bund." In later years, Luther would recall that upon returning to the newspaper office from this interview, she was questioned by an FBI agent about what Ebell had said. She omitted mention of that encounter from her April 4 news report.¹³ Later she was asked to testify regarding Ebell's statements to her contrasting wasteful Americans and frugal Germans.

Once arrested, Dr. Ebell was held in the El Paso County Jail, where federal prisoners were housed, with bond set at \$50,000. The charges against him of correspondence with German agents carried a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine and three years in prison. His attorney, W. Joe Bryan, soon began efforts to get the bond reduced. United States Commissioner A. J. W. Schmid first changed it to \$35,000, then to \$20,000; but Dr. Ebell was unable to make bond.¹⁴

On the day of his scheduled hearing, January 6, 1942, Dr. Ebell was also indicted by a federal grand jury on a charge of carrying on correspondence—between the dates November 8 and December 4, 1941—with the German Reich and its agents in violation of the United States Criminal



Dr. Wolfgang Ebell (right) shortly after his arrest in El Paso on December 17, 1941. (Photo courtesy Nancy Hamilton)

Code. An alleged German agent, Gerhard Wilhelm Kunze, was named in the indictment.¹⁵ On January 10, Judge Charles Boynton approved a motion for continuance of the case to the April term of Federal Court. Meanwhile, the El Paso physician also was the subject of a complaint filed in the same court in late December requesting cancellation of his American citizenship because at the time he became a citizen he allegedly “actually held allegiance to the German Reich.”¹⁶

Dr. Ebell became the subject of two trials: the first in April, 1942, in the Federal Court in El Paso regarding cancellation of his citizenship, and the second on espionage charges, held during the summer of the same year in Connecticut, where he was one of a group of accused German agents. Because he pleaded guilty in the second trial, many details of the government's case against him were not made public. However, as his story unfolded at the first trial, there emerged strong evidence of his involvement with the Bund and its national leader, with Mexican Bund support, and with German officialdom.

Ironically, the same judge who had officiated at Dr. Ebell's naturalization ceremony was now preparing to revoke his citizenship. When the court convened on April 1, 1942, Dr. Ebell's attorney, Bryan, produced twelve character witnesses, among them Dr. Gerald Jordan, Dr. Oliver Smith, and a minister, J. J. Valencia. All testified that they had never heard the physician denounce the United States government or express a desire for a German invasion of America. Bryan also put Dr. Ebell on the stand, where he denied in clear, accented tones that he had been insincere in taking his citizenship oath. Questioned by his attorney about testimony by two prosecution witnesses that he had criticized the United States as "extravagant and wasteful," the doctor described his remarks as merely "comparisons on how things were used in the old country."¹⁷

The government case against Dr. Ebell made several strong points, including references to some evidence that would be used against his confederates in the Connecticut trial. First of all, the links between Ebell and Kunze, the one-time national Bund leader, were established through witnesses and confiscated documents. Clarence Stringer, a farmer from Berino, New Mexico, just north of El Paso, told of encountering Kunze and Ebell in January, 1939. He stated that they had invited him to dine with them after they completed an important meeting which they could not allow him to attend and that he had declined. He said he had known Kunze for about twenty years, having worked with him in Trinidad, British West Indies. Later, Stringer added, Kunze had lived for several months in Anthony, near Berino, and had driven a bus on a Las Cruces-El Paso run. Next, an El Paso FBI special agent, Louis Tremelling, strengthened Ebell's ties to Kunze. He said that Kunze, while visiting in El Paso, had held several meetings in Juarez and had been taken by Ebell in the doctor's car to Chihuahua to meet with countrymen. Additionally, the agent told the court, Ebell had told him that "90 percent of the people in Germany are backing Hitler and love him." Physical evidence mentioned by Tremelling included a letter signed by Kunze, dated December 8, 1941, and addressed to: "Dear Ferdinand, Dear Wolf." It had been sent to a Juarez post office. The letter

expressed thanks for "your very splendid assistance given to me on my recent visit in El Paso" and asked the addressee to forward another letter to Anastase Andreyevich Vonsiatsky in Thompson, Connecticut. That letter asked Vonsiatsky to forward money through Ebell for Kunze's exile.¹⁸

In his testimony, Ebell declared that he refused to join the Bund when Kunze visited his office in 1937 or 1938. Assistant District Attorney William Clayton questioned him on why he had turned down the membership. "Because," answered Ebell, "Kunze said we had to meet once a week and write to headquarters once a month, and I said that was impossible." Clayton then asked, "Wasn't American citizenship one of the requirements for eligibility in the Bund?" Ebell said that it was, but he did not know when the requirement went into effect. "You became a naturalized American citizen in 1939 and met the Bund's requirements, and then became a Bund member, didn't you?" "Yes," replied Ebell. Clayton also questioned the physician about Kunze, eliciting responses that Ebell knew the man to be "the national Bund leader." The accused man denied, however, that he was aware Kunze was fleeing from the United States when he (Ebell) took Kunze across the Zaragosa bridge into Mexico in November. Clayton read from a letter written to Ebell by Kunze and dated December 8, 1941:

I do not know yet whether the Yankee authorities know I have left the country.... Heil Hitler!

Asked whether that letter did not indicate that Kunze had fled the country, Ebell replied that it did not at the time. A second letter from Kunze was read, but Ebell still denied any contact with the man since Ebell had left him in Chihuahua City in November. As for Kunze's use of Ebell as a mail drop for others, the doctor protested, "I never intended that he do anything like that."

The government's case, as summarized by Assistant District Attorney R. Neill Walsh, made four strong points: (1) Ebell was tied closely to the Bund movement, as his letters from Kunze showed; (2) on November 8, 1941, Ebell took Kunze in his automobile into Mexico for a meeting at a Juarez brewery and then to Chihuahua City at a time when federal agents were seeking Kunze; (3) during his years in El Paso, Ebell had maintained his contacts with Germany, collecting funds for "winter relief" of destitute Germans but instead using the money to further Nazi propaganda in the United States; (4) Ebell was a member of the National Socialist Party, which Hitler led to power in March, 1933, and had in his home the official emblem of the party that branded him a "Nazi at heart."¹⁹

On April 2, Judge Boynton cancelled Dr. Ebell's certificate of citizenship after holding that Ebell had retained allegiance to the German government

when he took the oath of allegiance to the United States. This, said the judge, constituted fraud. Walsh told the press that his office was awaiting word from Washington on disposition of the case and that several other naturalized citizens in El Paso, known to be unfriendly to the United States, were under investigation for similar court action.²⁰ The actual cancellation of Dr. Ebell's certificate was executed on April 12, 1942, by J. N. Phillips, deputy United States district clerk. That document and Judge Boynton's decree were then forwarded to naturalization officials in Washington.²¹

While Dr. Ebell, now considered an enemy alien, remained in the county jail, with bond continued at \$20,000, government investigators in Washington and elsewhere were busy building their case against him and a group of his confederates. Already under one indictment charging correspondence with enemy aliens, the physician was one of five men indicted on June 10, 1942, by a federal grand jury in Hartford, Connecticut, on charges of membership in a spy ring that furnished military information to Germany and Japan. Also indicted were Kunze, whose whereabouts were unknown, Vonsiatsky, world leader of the National Russian Revolutionary Fascist party; Dr. Otto Willumeit, chief of the Chicago division of the German American Bund; and the Rev. Kurt E. B. Molzahn, Philadelphia clergyman.²²

The indictments charged that throughout 1941 until December 6, the day before Pearl Harbor, the five men had conspired to collect and deliver to the enemy governments information about army and navy bases, locations and numbers of personnel and equipment, airports and aircraft, shipping and other aspects of importance to the nation's defense. Kunze, it was charged, had been designated to carry information abroad, with \$2,800 provided by Vonsiatsky. The latter was accused of being in touch with Japanese government officials to find out what type of information they wanted. Ebell and Molzahn were, said the grand jury, allowing Kunze to use their home as mail drops.²³ Additionally the grand jury charged that Ebell had conferred with Kunze and Willumeit in El Paso during the previous September, that Kunze had then rejoined Ebell in El Paso in November and had been driven by him to Chihuahua City, Mexico, and that thereafter Kunze had written letters to Vonsiatsky from Chihuahua in care of Ebell.²⁴

Vonsiatsky and Willumeit were arraigned in Hartford, pleaded innocent, and were held in \$25,000 bond, awaiting a trial date. Kunze reportedly was still in Mexico, his abandoned automobile having been found in Chicago.

Anastase Andreyevich Vonsiatsky, a teenager at the time of the Bolshevik revolution in his native Ukraine, had fought with the White Russians, had fled to Paris, and there had met and married an American heiress, Marion Ream. A self-styled count, he was employed in Philadelphia for a short

period at the Baldwin Locomotive Works. The couple then moved to the Ream estate at Thompson, Connecticut, where he busied himself spending his wife's money on his cause, the International Russian Fascist Party. He formed this group and was elected its head in 1934 at a meeting in Manchuria in which the Japanese secret service had an interest. At the Ream estate he began collecting an arsenal with the goal of deposing the Soviet government by force. German agents, Kunze among them, were attracted to Vonsiatsky and encouraged his group to join them in espionage activities. When the Abwehr encountered increasing problems in getting funds to its agents, the Ukrainian provided Kunze loans from his wife's fortune. He steadily became involved with Kunze and other German agents in plans to sabotage the American aircraft industry.²⁵ An FBI raid of his estate had provided records that were reviewed by the grand jury from May 14 until the indictments were returned.²⁶

Willumeit, a German-born American citizen, was head of the Chicago division of the Bund and president of the Teutonia Publishing Company, publisher of the Bund Journal, *Free America*.²⁷

Molzahn was pastor of a 200-year-old Lutheran church, Old Zion and St. Michael, located on historic Franklin Square in Philadelphia. Born in Germany, he had in 1913 entered a Lutheran seminary where pastors were trained for American parishes. When called to the colors in November, 1914, he served as an officer in the German army on the Russian front, was wounded in the head, and was decorated with the Iron Cross. He had come to the United States in the 1920s and had attained citizenship in 1940.²⁸ Two others of the group had connections with Philadelphia: Kunze had lived there from 1916 to 1937, and had been a chauffeur there before moving to New York City; Vonsiatsky, before his marriage to the heiress, had worked as a mechanic at the Baldwin Locomotive Works.²⁹ Originally from Camden, New Jersey (although he refused to state his birthplace), Kunze had been convicted in 1940 on charges of "promoting hatred against people of the Jewish religion," and was sentenced to 12 to 14 months in prison, but was freed after the New Jersey Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the statute under which he had been charged. Before becoming head of the Bund, he had served as its public relations director and at one time headed a Bund at Yapank, Long Island.³⁰

As Dr. Ebell was en route to Hartford for his arraignment, another Bund leader, George Froboese of Milwaukee, was found dead under the wheels of a passenger train, an apparent suicide, at Waterloo, Indiana. In his pocket was a subpoena to appear in federal court in New York City.³¹

The first of the five to enter a guilty plea was Willumeit on June 19. His

sentencing was deferred until after the trial of his co-defendants, in which he would testify on behalf of the government. Ebell, brought to court at the same time, was described as being without funds for an attorney. Judge J. Joseph Smith postponed his case until counsel could be appointed.³²

By the time Kunze surfaced in Mexico in early July, Vonsiatsky also had pleaded guilty. He was sentenced to a five-year prison term and a \$5,000 fine. Willumeit's sentence was deferred until after the trial of the others, slated July 15 in Hartford.

Mexican officials cooperated in the arrest of Kunze and in his extradition to stand trial.³³ He was apprehended in a small coastal town near Vera Cruz, the port where two Mexican tankers had been torpedoed a week earlier. News reports said Kunze described himself as a "third-generation American aiming for the establishment of a white man's United States."³⁴

At first Dr. Ebell entered a plea of innocent, then changed it to guilty on July 14.³⁵ This left only Kunze and Molzahn to stand trial.

Dr. Ebell's name came up repeatedly during trial testimony. On August 3, for example, Dr. Willumeit testified that he had accompanied Kunze on a trip along the Pacific Coast to gather military information two months before Pearl Harbor and that they had then proceeded via Salt Lake City and Santa Fe to El Paso, where they met with Dr. Ebell before continuing on for a brief stay in Mexico.³⁶

Some of the items confiscated during Dr. Ebell's arrest were introduced in evidence on August 4. One was a military map of Vera Cruz. Another item described to the court was a photograph found at Ebell's house which Kunze had inscribed to the doctor.³⁷ A note from Kunze asking Ebell for funds was excluded from evidence because it was dated after the period of alleged spy activity cited in the indictment.³⁸

Defense counsel for Molzahn wanted to question Dr. Ebell, but at first was denied access to him by Judge Smith after intervention by Thomas J. Dodd, special assistant to the United States Attorney General.³⁹ Finally, however, special court permission was granted for the defense lawyers to interview the three who had entered guilty pleas. Ebell, put on the witness stand on the fifteenth day of Molzahn's trial, denied that he knew of any connection between the accused and the Nazi conspiracy or that he was himself considered an "underground railroad" for helping Nazi agents cross into Mexico. "I don't know the meaning of the term," he protested.⁴⁰

His testimony did Molzahn no good; an eight-man, four-woman federal jury returned a guilty verdict on August 22. Judge Smith immediately sentenced those who had entered guilty pleas: Kunze to fifteen years; Dr. Ebell to seven years; and Dr. Willumeit to five.⁴¹ Three days later, Molzahn

was sentenced to a ten-year term. Vonsiatsky already had begun serving a five-year sentence.⁴²

After being imprisoned, Dr. Ebell applied to the Federal Court in El Paso for restoration of his citizenship, but no action was taken.⁴³

The spy's name returned to the news in February, 1946. Imprisoned at Milan, Michigan, he was scheduled for deportation to Germany. Immigration Service officials told the press that as soon as he was released from prison they would take him into custody and return him to his homeland. His wife and two children were reportedly living in Los Angeles. She had rented out their Lower Valley home. Under Texas law, she would receive sole title to the property upon his deportation.⁴⁴

More than a year later, his name again surfaced when it was reported that he was in the Dallas County Jail awaiting deportation. He had most recently been confined at the Seagoville Federal Correctional Institution.⁴⁵ A week later he was taken to New York City, then was returned to Germany.⁴⁶

The Ebell case last made headlines in El Paso in 1948, when Federal Judge R. E. Thomason did some tidying up of court records. At the request of the United States Attorney General and Assistant United States Attorney Frank Hunter, the judge dismissed an espionage indictment dated June 2, 1942, based on Ebell's correspondence with Kunze. He had been tried instead on the indictment brought in Connecticut.

"The Ebell case is ended," proclaimed the *Herald-Post*. "An old envelope full of Nazi badges and ribbons and pictures of Hitler is the only reminder to United States District Court attaches of Dr. Wolfgang Ebell...who was convicted of espionage during World War II."⁴⁷★

NOTES

1. Paul Leverkuehn, who was a senior officer of the Abwehr during World War II, wrote a history, *German Military Intelligence* (New York: Praeger, 1954), in which he denied support for the Bund in America: "Abwehr II's only preparation for acts of sabotage in the event of war with the United States were confined...to its activities at the so-called 'Mexican base'.... For the swift and secure transmission of reports the base was dependent on the wireless installation of the German Legation in Mexico, and this led to sharp friction with the Foreign Office and a demand from the latter that this Abwehr activity should cease at once," 59. Leverkuehn quoted an unnamed Naval intelligence officer who stated that, after an Abwehr agent was discovered by the Americans in 1938 or 1939, "The F.B.I....increased its vigilance very considerably, and its interest was focused primarily on the 'Bund der Freunde des neuen Deutschlands' (the Association of Friends of New Germany). My office and its employees had been warned again and again against this organization and against making any contact with any of its leaders," 96. At the time this book was written, the assumption was that the Abwehr's records had disappeared after the war. In 1967 a researcher, Ladislav Farago, found them on microfilm in a military footlocker that had been placed in the National Archives in Washington and forgotten. Farago's book, *The Game of the Foxes* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1971; Bantam, 1973), is based on these documents in which the Abwehr's involvement in America is made clear.

2. *El Paso Herald-Post*, April 1, 1942.

3. Farago, 576.

(Continued on page 204)



THE SCOPE *of* EL PASO

A History of the W. R. Weaver Company in El Paso, 1933-1984

by Ralph H. Hellums

HE HAS BEEN CALLED THE HENRY FORD OF the rifle scope industry. Actually, Bill Weaver (1905-1975) was more important to his industry than Henry

Ford was to the automobile business. And he developed his world-class operation not in Detroit or in some other great city of the industrial Midwest or East, but in El Paso, Texas—a setting which obviously provided ample “scope” for his abundant energy and engineering genius.

It can probably be safely said that William Ralph Weaver came by his engineering genius naturally. His father, John Weaver, had a small factory making road signs and automobile license plates in Fort Thomas, Kentucky, across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. While Bill was in high school, he worked in his father’s factory during the summers. After graduation, he decided to work full time for his father rather than go to engineering school. He left his father’s factory in 1928, at the age of 23, and started his own business in Newport, Kentucky.

Like many young men, Bill Weaver enjoyed the sport of hunting. He could not understand why a good scope should cost two or three times as much as a good rifle. During the depression years, a good Winchester or Remington

bolt-action rifle cost about \$40, while a good scope cost from \$60 to \$200. The best scopes were made in Germany, and they worked very well; however, Bill found that they were over-engineered and highly complicated. His dissatisfaction with them (and their cost) led him to a choice which shaped his life: he decided he would build scopes for his own use and for a few friends. In a very short time, he knew that he had a commercial product.

His first scope was a model 3-30. The model number probably came from the fact that it was a three-power scope designed in 1930. It sold for \$19 complete with mount. At the same time he manufactured a machine rest for sighting-in rifles that sold for \$10. These were the only two products he made at that time.

Meanwhile, Bill had developed a respiratory health problem—one which led him to another critical choice: he decided to leave the Ohio River Valley sinus belt and move to the Southwest. He loaded most of his equipment on a truck, and with two workmen, he set out in search of a new home. He took a look at New Mexico and Arizona, then moved on to El Paso.

The first Weaver factory was located at the corner of Franklin and Campbell streets in what had been an automotive repair garage. As the business grew—and it grew rapidly—larger quarters were required. He located his second plant at the corner of Missouri and Ochoa streets. Then, outgrowing that one, he moved to a third location, the old Kohlberg Cigar factory at Second and Santa Fe. His fourth was at 1800 First Street just off of Paisano Drive, across from the Franklin Canal. The fifth and final plant—a modern, one-story building—was at 7125 Industrial Avenue.

In El Paso, the Weaver factory started with seven employees. And it wasn't long before the popularity of the 330 model (the dash was dropped shortly after the move to El Paso) and its attractive price (\$19) created an enormous demand. The factory soon became the world's largest scope manufacturer. Indeed, there were times when the Weaver Company was reported to be making as high as 80 percent of the scopes sold in the United States. Bill Weaver, often called the father of the scope industry, will best be remembered by the shooting fraternity as the man who produced a good scope at a price the average hunter could afford.

Visionary and enterprising, Bill taught himself optics and became an expert in the field. He wanted to make lenses in a volume that had never been done before. To do this, he designed a system which allowed his factory to build its own mass-produced lens-grinding equipment and also other

Ralph H. Hellums was Manager of Marketing Services for the W. R. Weaver Company from 1970 until the plant closed in 1984. He and his wife, native El Pasoan Mary Jackson, are charter members of the El Paso County Historical Society.



William Ralph Weaver (1905-1975), founder of the W. R. Weaver Company. (Portrait by Giddings of Dallas, courtesy Barbara Weaver Voss)



The Weaver Scope Factory, located at the corner of Franklin and Campbell Streets in El Paso, c. 1935. (Photo courtesy Ralph H. Hellums)

machines. At peak production, the company made millions of lenses a year.

In addition to scopes, the factory engineers designed and made scope mounts for most rifles. Weaver mounting systems dominated the market.

During World War Two, the army decided to equip a sniper with a scoped rifle in every infantry company. During this period, the Weaver Company shipped thousands of military model M73B1 to the United States Army.

In the period between World War Two and 1984, many thousands of Weaver products were used by the military for such applications as bore-sighting battleship guns and cannons on tanks, sighting of guns and rockets on aircraft, alignment of helicopter blades and laser equipment, aiming high-speed cameras in low-flying aircraft, and also for infantry training games and for small-arms competition.

In the early 1960s, Japanese manufacturers, supported by the Japanese government, started sending in large quantities of low-priced scopes. With this problem on the low end of the line, and other quality American manufacturers giving strong competition on the high end, the workers at the Weaver Company went on strike. And now, Bill made another decision: in 1968, with the factory on strike, he elected to sell his factory to the Olin Corporation.

Under Olin, the factory continued to expand. In the early 1970s the company reached its highest employment with over 600 people working three

shifts. Weaver scopes were sold all over the world. There were strong marketing organizations in Canada, Western Europe, Africa, New Zealand, Australia, South America, and Southeast Asia. Weaver scopes were shown at one sports convention in Moscow. And when President Nixon visited the Soviet Union, he presented Winchester Model 70 Super Grade hunting rifles to Soviet Premier Alexei N. Kosygin and Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny. One was equipped with a Weaver "Classic 400" four-power scope, the other with a "Classic 900" three-to-nine-power variable scope.

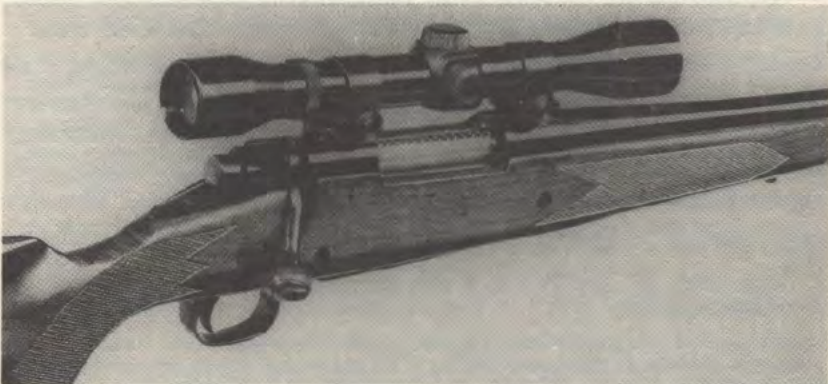
Most of the advances in scope manufacturing in the world today were developed by the Weaver Company—as, for example, the constantly centered reticle, the focusing objectives, the nitrogen-filled scopes to prevent fogging, the larger scope tubes, and the expanded oculars and objectives.

At the time the factory was closed (in 1984), the mount manufacturing machines and equipment were sold to Omark Corporation and were moved to Wisconsin, where a complete line of Weaver Mounts is made. The Weaver scope patents were also sold to Omark, and this corporation is now marketing Weaver Scopes manufactured in Japan, using these patents.

The Olin Corporation was careful to see that there would be adequate service available for the millions of Weaver Scopes that are now in use. In El Paso, excellent service is available from Weaver Scopes Repair Service, which is owned and operated by Frank Ruiz, former Service Manager at the Weaver factory.

The Weaver Company maintained a mini-museum with samples of all of the products that had been manufactured over the years. In May of 1984 this collection of 132 scopes, samples of some mounts, and a display case were given to the El Paso Museum of History, where a small part of El Paso's manufacturing history will be preserved. ★

PHOTO COURTESY RALPH H. HELLUMS



A Model K-4 Weaver Scope mounted on a bolt-action rifle.



SOUTHWEST COOKERY OF OLD



by Frances H. Hatfield, guest editor

The December holidays are a season of giving. And good cooks take advantage of the season by making a variety of concoctions to share with others. A favorite concoction is the fruit cake, one of the oldest sweets. We read in the books of the Old Testament about cakes made with figs and honey and with dates and nuts. Through the centuries, fruit cakes have always been served at special times—betrothals, weddings, or holiday celebrations.

Offered here is a recipe for Dark Fruit Cake from an untitled, undated cookbook that long ago belonged to a grandmother of El Pasoan Marcia (Mrs. Jimmy) Sivils. The book was probably published in the 1860s or '70s, and the reader should hold in mind that making a fruit cake was no easy chore at that time. All the fruits and nuts had to be "processed" by hand, and the heat in the oven had to be maintained at the desired temperature without benefit of thermostat. The best cooks developed the skill of testing the oven heat by putting their hands inside the oven. When the heat seemed just right, it was time to start the baking. Then, throughout the several hours of baking, the heat had to be frequently tested and sustained through the prudent addition of kindling, which the cook had previously chopped and stacked nearby.

• DARK FRUIT CAKE •

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 cups butter | 2 pounds chopped nuts (pecans and walnuts) |
| 2 cups sugar | 1 12-ounce jar blackberry jam |
| 2 teaspoons each of nutmeg, cinnamon, & allspice | 1 pound dates |
| 1 pound crystalized cherries | 1/2 teaspoon each, vanilla, lemon, orange extracts |
| 1 pound crystalized pineapple | 1 cup dark rum |
| 1 pound raisins | 1 teaspoon baking powder |

Seed dates and soak overnight in rum. By morning, the tough skin of the dates can be removed, the fruit chopped, and ready to add to the cake mix.

Cream butter and sugar. Separate eggs, and beat the yolks in, one at a time. Add jam, and then, slowly, the flour, spices, and baking powder that have been sifted together. Blend well. Add chopped fruits and nuts and rum. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites and spoon into loaf pans. The pans should be lightly greased and covered with parchment paper, lightly greased and floured. Cover and bake for 3 hours in a slow oven. Remove cover for last hour. When done, cakes should be removed from oven and allowed to cool thoroughly. Wrap in wax paper and then in toweling. Keep in a cool place and unwrap weekly to moisten with a tablespoon of rum.

When ready to serve, ice with a dark chocolate frosting and decorate with whole pecans.

Frances H. Hatfield, an enthusiastic collector of old recipes, is at present writing a book, *From Maise to Mousse, Cookery in El Paso County, 1598-1986* (to be published under the auspices of the El Paso County Medical Society Auxiliary).



THE SEARCH *for* *our* "PARISH ORIGINS"

by S. H. Bud Newman

HISTORY, TO BE UNDERSTOOD, SHOULD BEGIN at the parish level!" This was a favorite quotation from Arnold Toynbee that was drummed into the ears of

Texas Western College history students by the late Professor Rex W. Strickland, and it is particularly appropriate for those employees of the Special Collections Department of The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

When the Department was opened in 1967, under the direction of Leon C. Metz, practically the only old records held by the Library were the Municipal Archives of Ciudad Juárez, which had been microfilmed by the Library under the auspices of the Pan American Round Table some four to five years earlier. These documents had been filmed by James Fulton using a portable camera without a light meter. The documents were old, without doubt, and they brought to light many facts not previously known. However, in estimates by scholars, almost fifty percent of the documents turned out to be illegible because of the poor equipment used, the lack of proper lighting, and the trying conditions (an absence of heating and air conditioning in the old Juárez Municipal Building) under which Mr. Fulton had labored. But it was a step in the right direction.

It should be borne in mind by those who are unfamiliar with local history that El Paso, Texas, today, is an outgrowth of two cultural traditions—the Spanish/Mexican and, arriving much later, the Anglo. The Spanish/Mexican tradition began with a mud-and-thatch hut which covered the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe first erected in 1657 by Fray García de San Francisco as a focal point for the conversion of the various Indian tribes who paused for refreshment on the banks of the Rio Grande in the course of their hunting and gathering. Agriculture was unknown to these primitive peoples, and until the Spanish conquerors taught them, they lived naked, nomadic lives filled with hardships. It was the Spaniards who brought civilization to them; it was the Spaniards who recorded these events; and it is among these records that the search for this region's documented history begins.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, Herbert Eugene Bolton, Adolph F. Bandelier, Charles Wilson Hackett, Agapito Rey, France Scholes, and others have all described this conquest of the Southwest in general; but it was Dr. W. H. Timmons, a former student of Hackett and a professor of history of The University of Texas at El Paso, who first led the Archives staff at the Library on the search to find these "parish origins."

In 1969, armed with grant money from the University vice-president's office, Dr. Timmons and Leon Metz travelled to Chihuahua to the home of Dr. Francisco Almada, former governor and distinguished historian of that state. Through his offices and courtesies, Dr. Timmons was able to approach then-Governor Oscar Flores and also the mayor of Cd. Chihuahua, Ramón Reyes García, where he obtained official permission to microfilm the municipal archives there. Mr. Roy Johns of Southwest Microfilm Company (later, Comgraphix, Inc.) rented a small portable microfilm camera to Dr. Timmons, and with the help of Sr. Roberto Pérez, a local cameraman hired by the team, filming began in the basement of the municipal building.

The conservation of these records was important not only because Chihuahua is the largest state in Mexico (and one of the original nineteen), but also because the State Archive there had been destroyed by fire in 1946, leaving the municipal archives as the best source for 18th- and 19th-century records. In addition to these documents, the official newspaper collection of Dr. Almada was filmed as an adjunct to the collection. All of these Chihuahua records comprise 656 rolls of 35 mm microfilm and required three years to film. The earliest record from this collection is dated 1712, and the most recent is dated 1941.

By the middle 1700s, Apache Indians had begun raiding mines and set-

S. H. Bud Newman, a descendant of a pioneer El Paso family, is Assistant Head of the Special Collections Department at The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

tlements in the northern vice-kingdom of New Spain, having formerly confined their activities to the northern plains of British-American territory. They cared little for either the British or the Spaniards, and considered all of them as invaders of Indian territory and a threat to their established way of life. These raids became so uncontrollable in Mexico that King Charles III of Spain sent a commission headed by the Marques de Rubi and Captain Nicolas de Lafora to investigate. In 1766, this commission recommended that a chain of military forts be established across the northern interior provinces, 120 miles apart, and stretching from one coast to the other. This recommendation was followed with a report by the *Visitador* to Mexico, Jose de Gálvez, urging the King to reorganize the government of New Spain. The Royal decree was issued in 1776, and these northern provinces were called the *Provincias Internas*, headed by a Captain General who had all the authority of a viceroy and reported directly to the King.

It had been known since Professor Bolton's time that one of these presidios was located in Janos, Chihuahua, and that the records and correspondence of Captain General Hugo Oconor, among those of other notables, had been removed to the sacristy of the Church in Janos. In fact, some years before Dr. Timmons' trip to Chihuahua in 1969, Dr. Rex Gerald, archaeologist and then-Director of the El Paso Centennial Museum, had been permitted to film about 3,000 of the documents located there. Now, with his larger budget, Dr. Timmons dispatched Archivist Metz and technician Roger Flores of Southwest Microfilm Company to Janos to investigate and film whatever was available. They discovered that thieves had made off with a great many documents, but they were able to film some 37 rolls (about 35,000 documents) using a portable generator and suffering the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune before they were finished. These documents provide a record of affairs which took place during the years 1810-1858 (approximately).

Encouraged by the success in Chihuahua, the team turned their eyes to the state of Durango. And again they met with success. They located several bundles of records (called *legajos*) which were housed in the Palace of the Governor, and a happy arrangement was made: the filming of the documents would be done by a special department set up by the governor, and The University of Texas at El Paso would furnish the film and its processing. To date, the University has received from the historian and municipal librarian, Mr. José Ignacio Gallegos, 443 rolls of microfilmed documents covering the period from 1578 to 1860. And the filming continues.

Mr. Gallegos additionally made a side-project of filming the Cathedral of Durango archives (1635-1820), but before this project could be completed,

the usual differences between ecclesiastical and state authorities served to terminate the enterprise. Twenty rolls were all that could be had; however, it is hoped that the filming might be continued later, at a more favorable time. Church archives play an important role in the gathering of history, not only because such records tell who was born, married, and buried (and the dates), but also because they provide information about the times through the correspondence of ecclesiastical authorities. It may not be generally known, for example, that the Bishop of Durango held authority over a wide area—including El Paso and all of Arizona and New Mexico—until his diocese was divided following the war between Mexico and the United States (1846-1848).

While all this was taking place, the Special Collections Department of The University of Texas at El Paso Library was also attempting to microfilm the documents in the nearby mission churches. First on the list was the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Cd. Juárez. No difficulty was encountered in obtaining permission from Monsignor Isidro Payan, and many of the records were successfully filmed, except for those documents which had disappeared from the church over the course of the years (which merits another story). Also, during this period, the records of the mission churches of Mt. Carmel in Ysleta, Nuestra Señora de la Purísima in Socorro, and the chapel of the presidio in San Elizario were all committed to microfilm.

In 1978, the opportunity arose to refilm the Cd. Juárez Municipal Archives, and Dr Timmons (who had meantime retired) graciously lent his support to this project. By that time, unfortunately, some of the earliest records from there had disappeared; but to make up for their loss, Cesar Caballero (by then Head of the Special Collections Department) and his team were allowed to film records which had previously not been available—up through the period 1910 and beyond. The work progressed for the next two years, and in the end the Department completed what it had set out to do.

The Special Collections Department had been searching for origins—the origins of this country—and although it had accomplished a great deal with the documents at its disposal, it did not have the written records of the true founders—only those of their successors. The records of the founders were in Spain. In 1979, therefore, Dr. Timmons and his wife, Laura, journeyed to Spain to complete the search for documents.

There, in the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville, the search was completed. In the Records Group of the *Real Patronato* (the Royal Patronage), the earliest papers relating to the site of El Paso were found, photographed, and brought back to El Paso. These were the papers relative to the Rodriguez-Chamuscado Expedition of 1581 and the Antonio de Espejo Ex-

pedition of 1582, expeditions which aroused interest among Spanish officialdom to seek out the lands north of the Rio Grande, namely, New Mexico and Arizona. This interest culminated in the great colonizing expedition of Don Juan de Oñate in 1598.

Oñate and his followers arrived at the site of present-day El Paso on April 30th of that year, and took formal possession ("La Toma") in the name of the King to the land to the north, calling this precise place "El Paso del Rio del Norte." This was the first use of the name "El Paso," and it applied to locales both north and south of the river. This taking of the land in formal possession by Oñate was, as Dr. Timmons has pointed out, "one of the great events in North American history, comparable to the work of Menendez de Aviles in Florida, Champlain in Canada, La Salle in Louisiana, the London Company in Virginia, and the Pilgrims in Plymouth, yet he [Oñate] has never received the recognition in this area which he deserves." Nor has the event itself, it might be added.

Although the search for the major documents concerning the origins of El Paso has been completed with the acquisition of the copies of these last-named documents, there still remains much to be done in the way of locating documents that will fill the gaps left by time and circumstance. Particularly these gaps occur during the era of Spanish colonial events, which ended in 1821.

For those of us employed by the Special Collections Department, this search for origins has taken on a special character not unlike the search for the Holy Grail by Sir Galahad (lacking, unfortunately, some of Galahad's special virtues). Indeed, the comparison has foundation, for we know that the Spanish have long recognized what must be called the sanctity of the written word. Every scheme of conquest, every exploration, and every settlement by them was accompanied by a tremendous amount of paperwork, generated in order to satisfy the demands of their bureaucracy, which in turn serves to document their every step and thus becomes evidence, or proof, of their activities. Copies of the documents made during the period which concerns us were deposited in many places, such as the *Archivo General de la Nación* in Mexico City and the *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville. Sooner or later, every researcher of Spanish trade and conquest in the Americas—or the Indias, as they were called in Spain—must turn to these great warehouses of documents for final answers.

(At this point, if the reader will indulge me, the story must continue at a personal level.) Having occupied, during 18 years of employment in the Special Collections Department of The University of Texas at El Paso, nearly every position from bottle washer to chief cook and having been engaged during this time in the collection of Spanish documents as outlined above, I had

long ago decided that I needed to visit the Archives of the Indies in Seville in order to make my presence known to them and to cement the bonds of friendship between our institutions, bonds which had been established by Dr. and Mrs. Timmons upon the occasion of their visit there in 1979.

Preceded by a letter of introduction through diplomatic channels kindly arranged by Mr. Sheldon Hall, Honorary Consul of Spain in El Paso, who had brought Sr. Carlos Abella, the Spanish Minister of Culture to the United States, to visit our library some two years previously, my wife, Pilar, and I were received at the *Archivo General de Indias* by Dra. Rosario Parra, the director, on May 18, 1987.

Dr. Parra greeted us with an old-world graciousness and, after pleasantries had been exchanged, asked me which documents I wanted to see. She appeared pleased when I told her that she herself was the principal object of our visit, and she began to engage us with her stories about the place. She has been director for twenty years and confesses that she has spent practically her entire adult life in the Archives, since she is a paleographer by profession and had worked there as an assistant during her graduate studies. Like many government agencies, the Archives is underfunded and has only 42 employees (including the janitorial crew) to take care of 40 million folios of material collected during the past 400 years. On top of that, Dr. Parra must deal with hundreds of letters of inquiry which arrive every day from people in all parts of the world, who expect her to answer their questions connected with historical research; and, further, she must manage the personal visits of a horde of scholarly investigators who swarm to the Archives every working day.

Dr. Parra is constantly bothered by researchers who appear without the proper training in paleography or history and who expect to be able to read handwritten documents of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as easily as today's newspaper. Of even greater concern to her are the number of requests she receives for copies of certain documents from professionals who never bother to pay the nominal copying fee. Speaking of copies, the *Archivo General de Indias* provides the serious historian with beautiful photographic copies of specific documents, an entire department being devoted to this work. It also has a department of restoration.

Beside Dr. Parra's desk was a large ornate wooden box the size of a steamer trunk, and upon my exhibiting curiosity about it, she explained that it had been the treasure chest of King Carlos III, during whose reign the Archives had actually been built.

Dr. Parra also told us that, in addition to scholars, treasure hunters are great users of the Archives of the Indies today, since the Board of Trade documents account for a considerable number of the holdings. Using

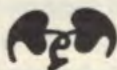
material from these folios, an expert treasure hunter can follow the history of the ships which plied their trade in the Indies, often traveling in convoys as protection against English pirates. The records contain the ships' bills of lading and, sometimes, the approximate locations of where they sank in stormy weather.

Some of the more important papers held by *Archivo General de Indias* are the documents of the *Real Patronato*, which are papers relating to the discoveries in the new world and the governance of countries, and of the *Secretaría*, which contain the correspondence of the Viceroy and of the *Audiencias*. These, naturally, contain material not only from Mexico, but also from the Central and South American countries that were once part of the great Spanish empire.

Altogether, my visit to the Archive of the Indies answered many questions that I had in mind concerning methodology and policy and afforded me the opportunity to see the place which houses the "sacred" documents attesting to our "parish origins." Moreover, it enabled me to establish a level of personal communication between the prestigious *Archivo General de Indias* in Seville and our own Special Collections Department at The University of Texas at El Paso. ★

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WEATHER WISE

The greatest recorded annual rainfall in Texas was 109.38 inches at Clarksville in 1873. The least annual rainfall was at Wink, where only 1.76 inches fell in 1956.

—information from *Texas Highways*, Vol. 31, No. 7 (July, 1984)



PROGRESS REPORT

A Letter from Dr. L. A. Nixon to the NAACP, 1952

introduced and edited by Conrey Bryson

ON FEBRUARY 8, 1987, I WAS AMONG THE platform guests at a banquet bearing the challenging title "All My Children." The community-wide affair honored posthumously an El Paso physician, Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon, for his work over a period of half a century—from 1910, when he arrived in El Paso, until 1966, shortly before his death. The tribute concentrated on his kindness and generosity, and particularly upon the number of children he had assisted into the world. El Paso County Clerk Hector Enriquez, himself one of Dr. Nixon's "children," led off the evening of tributes with eloquent testimony of Dr. Nixon's service to poor families. Mr. Enriquez declared that Dr. Nixon had never charged his patients excessively and, indeed, that many times a fee was never mentioned and often was never paid. A great many other community leaders joined in the tribute at the Westin Hotel Paso del Norte, a hotel in which Dr. Nixon would not have been admitted as a guest forty years ago.

My presence at the banquet was to call attention again to the service which Dr. Nixon had rendered to all members of his race and to Americans generally by his two Supreme Court cases to help give to Blacks the right to vote in Democratic Primaries. I had reported details of these cases as a radio newsman in the 1940s, when the last case was decided by the Supreme Court. More than thirty years later, after my retirement, the story was published in a monograph I wrote for Texas Western Press of The University of Texas at El Paso.¹

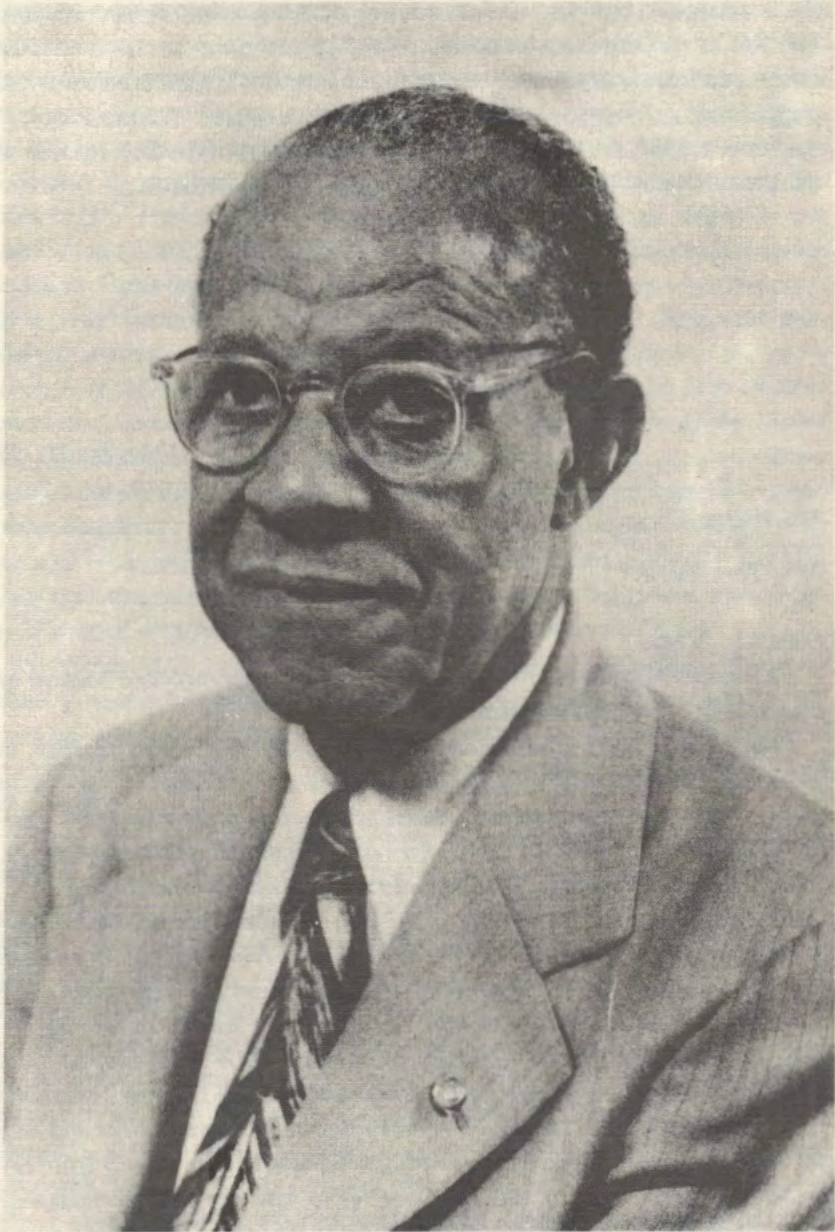
One of the great joys of researching and writing this work was that of getting better acquainted with the Nixon family. Mrs. Nixon had given all of the doctor's papers pertaining to the cases to the Lyndon B. Johnson Library in Austin. After perusing the papers, I had many questions for Mrs. Nixon. She was thoroughly cooperative and most gracious, and I learned much about the admirable Nixon family. I learned, for example, that the older daughter, Dorothy, had been a successful and popular El Paso nurse, that she had married Myron Davis, a builder, and that together they had established and operated the only quality motel in El Paso which was open to black travelers.

In 1970, a few years after the death of Dr. Nixon, tragedy struck the family. Dorothy and Myron Davis, their three children, Mrs. Nixon's brother, his daughter, and her two children were traveling in a camper near Palm Springs, California. A myterious explosion destroyed the camper; and of the nine occupants there was but one survivor, Dorothy and Myron's son, Mike Davis. He was quickly adopted by the Nixons' younger daughter, Edna, and her husband, Dr. W. J. McIver, a prominent surgeon in Albuquerque. Prior to her marriage, Edna had been an honor student at The University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. McIver had received his medical degree from Meharry College, in Nashville, on the 56th anniversary of Dr. Nixon's medical degree from the same college.

With Mrs. Nixon and other members of the family, Edna was present at the banquet honoring her father. She told me that among the family papers was a letter which her father had written in 1952 to Walter White, Executive Secretary of the NAACP. When I expressed great interest in the letter, she offered to send me a copy.

In 1924, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had carefully chosen Dr. Nixon to be the man who would contest the 1923 Texas law stating that no negro could vote in a Democratic Primary. In 1952, and in the perspective of those 28 years, Dr. Nixon was reporting to

Conrey Bryson, a former editor of Password and the past president of the El Paso County Historical Society, retired several years ago from a distinguished career in the news media.



Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon, El Paso physician, 1910-1966

(Photo from *Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and the White Primary* by Conrey Bryson and published by Texas Western Press of The University of Texas at El Paso in 1974. It is reproduced here with the permission of Texas Western Press.)

the Association. His purpose was not only to summarize his own mission, but also to present his viewpoints regarding the place of the individual citizen in a free society, under a constitution intended for the protection and progress of all those contemplated under the statement "We the People." And now in 1987, the bicentennial year of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States, Dr. Nixon's words seem especially pertinent.

L. A. NIXON, M. D.
103 Willow Street, cor. Myrtle
El Paso, Texas

February 25 '52

*Mr. Walter White
Secty, N.A.A.C.P.
New York, N. Y.*

Dear Mr. White:

I have been delayed in answering your letter of some days ago because of a great deal of work at this season....

I was born 18 years after the end of slavery in the U. S., Feb. 9, 1883, in Marshall, Texas. My early childhood was spent in New Orleans, La. I went to a private school for colored children and lived in a neighborhood composed of colored people and descendents of German and Italian immigrants. It was a clean, thrifty neighborhood and we were all good neighbors.

My father was ten years of age at the end of slavery and my mother was born the "year of surrender" as she used to say. When my father married my mother, he owned his own home, the house where my older sister and I were born. All the years of his adult life he worked for the same corporation, the Texas and Pacific Railroad Co.—as a laborer when the road was building and later, up to the time of his death, on the General Manager's private car. My mother handled the family funds. She made clothes and hats for herself and my sisters, shirts, red flannel underwear and pants from my father's discarded ones for me. I did not like to wear the pants because they were too tight, and very often the seams would rip when I stooped to stop a grounder while playing baseball. My mother loved flowers and, after we moved back to Marshall, she grew the most beautiful flowers I have ever seen.

I can't imagine a more happy childhood than my two sisters, my brother and I lived. We came up knowing how to work. A great deal of the joy of my

boyhood came out of the work I did. My father disliked people who were ashamed to work with their hands. He had no respect for a Negro Democrat.

In 1910, I came to El Paso. I had been out of Meharry four years. At that time, we were voting in the Democratic primary. I voted in every election up to 1924. Candidates sought our votes, and those of us who thought it was our duty to vote had no other choice but to vote with the Democrats. The Democratic Primary has always been the election in Texas. Many people here do not bother to go to the polls in the general elections. Republicanism exists in Texas, many of us think, only to control patronage when the party is in power in the nation. It was natural that we should fight the vicious, conceited, suicidal measure hatched by the [1923] Texas legislature. We had a branch of the N.A.A.C.P. here. The Negro in El Paso, as well as in all other localities, means to fight always to preserve the Constitution of the United States and to make democracy a fact in this land.... Our people were almost solidly behind this new movement for freedom. There were some, of course, who thought as my father did back in the years: that a negro would not want to vote with the Democrats. A few were apathetic and a number had that fear that always makes impotent a large number of Americans, leaving actual control of affairs, local and national, in the hands of a few.

Wherever slavery exists, all men are slaves, master and bound. Whenever slavery weakens its grip, it is because the acknowledged slave moves to correct the condition. Historians show that slavery in this land was always a weak and shaky structure. The bound African has hammered against it from the beginning.

Since the 15th century, Negroes have been at school in this western hemisphere. We saw slaves of Europe free themselves by coming to America.... A good student learns from his teacher, preserving those things which his mature mind deems worthy, discarding those that are worthless. Comes a time when the master has nothing to teach, and, if he is free of conceit, realizes that he may learn from his former pupil. The N.A.A.C.P. is waging a fight for the enfranchisement of the American people. We are encouraged by what has been accomplished in this direction, but the problem is by no means solved. We do not have a secret ballot in Texas; the poll tax still stands; and there are various means of intimidation that might keep voters generally from using their own judgment when casting their ballots. Everywhere people seem dissatisfied with certain political practices all the way from the local to the national scene. What is the matter with majority rule? Do people generally sanction murder and thievery in their government?

Black men have learned from their experiences on the American continent that the things we want we must fight for, using methods of peace and

perseverance. We know the futility of riot and murder. We will never ally ourselves with enemies of our country. We will continue to fight for the Constitution of the United States. We will never sanction discrimination against ourselves or any other people.

*Sincerely yours,
R. A. Nixon.*

Edna McIver's letter, transmitting the copy of her father's 1952 communication to the NAACP, is revealing as to the heritage from Dr. Nixon and his accomplished wife, Drusilla, to their descendents:

Bill Junior will finish graduate school next spring and will be getting married next summer. Beth is working in New York City and was the photographer for the city's summer camp and recreation program. Stephanie received a full fellowship to Ohio University to enter a doctoral program in clinical psychology. Angela is a third-year history and economics major at Hampton University, and Ben, our only "child" left at home, is in his senior year of high school and is applying to colleges for admission. My nephew and adopted son, Mike Davis, and his wife have a beautiful baby boy. Besides running a successful business in El Paso, Mike has become a mini-rancher, raising three horses, a cow, a cat and two dogs.

It has really been good for my mother to have been closer to them, these past six years, to see them grow up. Of course we all wish, so much, to have my father here. He would be so proud.²

NOTES

1. Conrey Bryson, *Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and the White Primary* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1974)
2. McIver to Bryson, April 3, 1987



According to researchers at The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, the custom of Christmastime tree-trimming was introduced in Texas by German immigrants. Records show that settlers in Prince Solms Braunfels' colony spent most of Christmas Eve, 1845, their first Christmas in the state, decorating native cedar trees. The idea quickly spread, and by the early 1900s the practice was quite common.



OUR TOWN— ONE CENTURY AGO (October-December, 1887)

by Art Leibson

IN THE FALL OF 1887 THERE WAS AN OUT-break of train robberies in the West and Southwest, but none close to El Paso until two bandits died trying to hold up a train as it was leaving the city eastbound for San Antonio.

The train was just outside the city limits when two masked men came over the tender where they had been hiding, drew revolvers, and ordered the engineer to stop the train. Forcing him to accompany them, they dynamited the express car, blowing open the locked door. Then they ordered the Wells-Fargo agent, J. E. Smith, to alight and be searched, after which they sent him back into the car to light a lantern. That was a tactical mistake which would not have been made by more experienced train robbers. Smith had left a pistol near the door; he seized it and fired pointblank at the first of the pair, dropping him instantly. As the other robber began to run, Smith grabbed a second loaded weapon, a shotgun, and fired at the retreating figure. It was thought that the bandit had escaped, but a search party sent out the next day found his body not 50 yards from the tracks. It would never be known whether another man was waiting near the spot with the horses to facilitate an escape. If so, he probably fled across the river to Paso del Norte.

There is more to the story, all centering around the name *Smith*. In El Paso a woman by that name identified the pair as former patrons of her boarding-house. Police files showed that one of them, a man named Jack Smith, had murdered a man in Paso del Norte over two years previously and had shot an El Paso police officer in the spring of 1887.

Shortly after the aborted robbery in El Paso, another attempted train robbery in Tucson resulted in the capture of two more men. One, who confessed, was named Smith and turned out to be the son of the El Paso boardinghouse keeper. Evidently the place had been a rendezvous for a local criminal element.

In the meantime, J. E. Smith, the hero, was awarded \$1,000 for his bravery by the State of Texas and another \$2,000, along with a gold-headed cane, by his employer, Wells-Fargo. It was hoped that his action might put a quietus on the current rash of train robberies.

As for the national news, the front page of the *Times* was filled with reports of the pending execution and then the hanging of the condemned anarchists, convicted in the Haymarket rioting in Chicago, on November 12. Louis Lingg, accused of being the bomb-maker, escaped the hangman's noose by shooting himself with a gun smuggled into his cell despite special vigilance set up over all the convicts.

Locally, the growth of municipal business had the City Council looking for new quarters. It was considering one building offered at \$200 a month or at \$165 a month if the City decided to buy it. Across the river, \$155,000 was being spent on a new customs house to take care of the big increase in goods flowing between the two border cities. One week's list of imports included (among other items) over a million pounds of silver ore, a million dollars in Mexican gold and silver coins, 3,000 cigars valued at \$150, 110 empty beer kegs, 1,000 pounds of grapes worth \$20, and a pony valued at \$38.

But the biggest news locally was the long-awaited opening of the Myar Opera House, the first performance taking place on December 15, although the building wasn't fully completed. For the initial production a full house was present to view *The Count of Monte Cristo*, received with wild enthusiasm. Attorney J. P. Hague delivered the dedicatory address to the 1,200 guests.

The *Times*, always ready to look away from what was going on along Utah Street and in the gambling saloons, decided to lift its voice against the corruption of the English language: "The era of slang is upon us with a breadth that is most appalling.... It will not do to apologize for it by saying that slang is probably as old as human speech.... The worst fact about it is that it is not confined to the low and the illiterate but has invaded the public

Art Leibson, an attorney-turned-journalist and now retired from the staff of *The El Paso Times*, is the author of this regular *Password* feature.

schools, cultured society and the literature of our books. Slang is the fungus on the stem, it is not the grafted fruit. It is the scum of the language. It often belittles, it never beautifies.”

So there.

The burgeoning metropolis had much good news to report. For the current school semester there were 506 students enrolled, served by fifteen teachers, nine having had previous teaching experience, under the direction of Superintendent C. Esterly, a West Point graduate with considerable schoolroom experience. On the business front, a building site at Sixth and Cotton was acquired by C. C. Fitzgerald, a wealthy industrialist, for the location of a second smelter in the city that would have access to his own mines for its ore. Fitzgerald also was talking of buying up coal mines in outlying areas and shipping the life blood of local industry into El Paso at a rate cheaper than the present cost.

Out at the other smelter a strike was called. The 20 “American” and 80 “Mexican” workers walked out mainly because of low wages but also because of poor working conditions. They claimed they were forced to work twelve hours a day for eight hours pay. There were threats of violence that brought out police protection; but after a deadline was set, to return to work or be fired, the strike was broken.

An overflow crowd turned out at the ball park to see the El Paso Browns whip the Santa Fe Reds. The *Times* gave two full columns to report the game, including a box score that listed seven errors for the local team and ten for the New Mexico players. And the following week, the Browns defeated the Reds 7 to 1. The *Times* also informed its readers that players in uniform were being carried free by the street car to the ball park.

That courtesy to the contrary notwithstanding, the El Paso Street Railway Company was not in good grace in the fall of 1887. An effort was being made to revoke its franchise, granted with no payment to the City, because the company had reneged on an oral promise to lay tracks along Stanton Street.

Two “firsts” occurred that fall. The county tax valuation crossed \$10 million for the first time, with a tax levy of \$75,000 that included \$538 in poll taxes. And state taxes would take another \$41,000 bite out of local property owners. Also, El Paso resorted for the first time to chain-gang labor. City Council ordered one dozen balls and chains to be used on tramps serving jail time who would be working on rock piles and on the streets in the future. At the same time the Council was considering adopting the practice used in Dallas of dealing with its transient bums, simply giving them one hour to get out of town—and stay out—or, if caught in El Paso after that time limit, to be consigned to the chain gang and the rock pile. ★



THEY CALLED IT... "TORNILLO"

by Frances Segulia

SOME OF THE CITIZENS OF TORNILLO REMAIN A LITTLE touchy about the omission of their town from among those named after trees in John Randolph's *Texas Brags*. One of several small towns that dot the road map southeast of El Paso where Texas Highway 20, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Rio Grande appear to form a concurrent line between the Lone Star State and the Republic of Mexico, the little town of Tornillo has existed for almost 80 years as a verbal reminder of a once dense thicket of tornillo trees indigenous to the area.

The tornillo, a member of the mesquite family, is native to Southwestern United States and to parts of Northern Mexico. A scattered range of tornillo growth extends from Central New Mexico along the banks of the Rio Grande and south through the Big Bend area of Texas. Tornillo bosques were prevalent throughout the Tornillo section of this route before the land was cleared for cultivation in the early 1900s. Like the mesquite, the tornillo is often referred to as a bush rather than a tree. The species has been known to grow quite large, reaching up to 30 feet in height with a trunk sometimes measuring over a foot in diameter.

Tornillo wood, especially hard and durable, was used extensively in the Southwest for fence posts and tool handles during the pioneer days. Its intense flame made it a good firewood, and it is still considered a choice wood for barbecuing. During the early part of the century, some El Paso businessmen bought up land around Tornillo for the purpose of cutting and marketing tornillo wood. One early report lists the selling price as \$7.00 a cord for four-foot pieces.

Instead of the bean-shaped pods that distinguish the true mesquite, the tornillo produces a tight spiral curl about two inches in length, resembling a screw. Hence, the name *tornillo*, the Spanish word for *screw*. These curiously shaped pods grow in small clusters and were used for food by the early desert Indians, who also brewed the trees' roots into a concoction for healing wounds.

Early railroad records indicate the area was known as "Tornillo" long before the town was officially named. When, in 1909, the townsite as well as the post office was established, there was apparently no other thought than to allow the tree to name the town.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article, revised and edited by the author, originally appeared in the SUNDAY Magazine of The Dallas Times Herald on December 19, 1971.



• PIONEERS IN THE EL PASO SOUTHWEST •

ANNIVERSARY of an ARRIVAL Samuel C. McVey of El Paso by Winifred McVey Middagh

SHRILL STRAINS OF "IN THE GOOD OL 'SUMMERTIME' echoed up and down saloon-lined El Paso Street as a 17-year-old lad, carrying a battered telescope, marched boldly down San Antonio Street The month was May. The year was 1887." These were the opening sentences of a story in *The El Paso Times* on September 26, 1937.¹ The occasion was Sam McVey's being named the 27th member of the *Times* Fifty-year Club.

Fifty-year Club in 1937! Thus, 1887! And this is 1987! It dawns on me at last that this year is the 100th anniversary of the arrival in El Paso of my father, Samuel C. McVey. Certainly it is high time that I commemorate the event by reviewing as best I can who he was, where he came from, and what he accomplished during his 57 years in El Paso.

Samuel Clauselle McVey was born on November 28, 1870, in Oktibbeha (later Clay) County, Mississippi, of Scotch-Irish and English ancestry. Orphaned by the deaths of his father, Civil-War veteran William Carson McVey, in 1873 and his mother, Harriet Elvira Peterson McVey, in 1877, Sam made his home with his sisters, Flora Lofton and Virginia Clark. While still very

young, he went to Texas to join his brother, Dr. Bruce Peterson McVey. Bruce died in 1893, but long before that, Sam had been making his own way.

He worked at whatever jobs came along, one of which—that of butcher boy on the Texas and Pacific Railroad—brought him to El Paso in 1887. According to the *Times* story, Sam's adventurous spirit carried him on briefly to Silver City to investigate the legend that "silver grew on trees and bushes." Upon learning that he was too young to work in New Mexico mines, he returned to El Paso to stay.

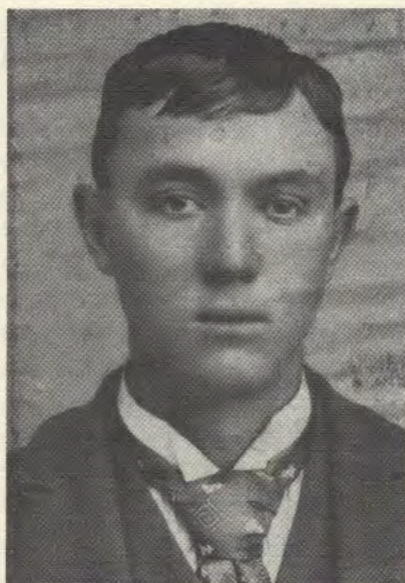
Sam wasn't too young to fall in love, however. In 1892 he met black-eyed fifteen-year-old Concepcion Real y Vasquez, who had come from Mexico with her family in 1884, crossing the Rio Grande on a ferry.² He often waited for her outside Franklin School, where she was a student. They were married on April 21, 1894, in St. Mary's Chapel on North Oregon Street. Father C. M. Pinto, S.J., officiated, with Charles and Andrea P. White acting as witnesses. When Sam informed his family in Mississippi that he had married a "Spanish gal," his brother spread the news and wrote Sam that his kin wondered why he had not found an "Irish gal." And Sam responded: "Tell them to raise all the Cain they want to. But it will not be one-half as much as her folks are raising because of her marrying a gringo."

Parental Cain-raising to the contrary notwithstanding, the marriage was an exceptionally happy one and in the course of time produced four daughters: Elma (later Mrs. Hiram Hammond House, now deceased), Elsie (later Mrs. Walter Olney Beltz, who resides in El Paso), Daisy (later Mrs. Roy D. Chitwood, now deceased) and Winifred Marie (later Mrs. John Judy Middagh, Jr.)

Now a family man, Sam settled down to work with even more diligence. A yellowed Certificate of Service, dated March 12, 1903, states that Sam was in the service of the G.H. and S.A. Railway Company from February, 1893, to February 28, 1901, as a machinist helper and stationary engineer. The certificate is signed by G. R. Drodge, A.M.M. Following this employment, Sam worked at Consumer's Ice Company until his transfer in 1903 to the El Paso Brewing Company located at Stevens and Frutas Streets. While employed at the Brewery, Sam successfully completed an engineering-related correspondence course from Columbia University, no small feat for a man with a grammar-school education. He became Chief Engineer of the El Paso Brewery.³

Papa enjoyed working at the Brewery. He was proud of the machinery in his charge and was dedicated to its upkeep. In 1906, in order to be within walking distance of the Brewery, he bought a house for the family at 4118

Winifred McVey Middagh, an instructor retired from El Paso Community College, is a member of the *Password* editorial board and a frequent contributor of drawings to the journal.



Samuel C. McVey (1870-1944) and Concepcion Andrea Real y Vasquez (1877-1955) as they respectively appeared shortly before their marriage on April 21, 1894, in St. Mary's Chapel, El Paso, Texas. (Photos courtesy Winifred McVey Middagh)

Rosa Street, on the north side of the tracks, which ran close to the Brewery. He arose every morning at 4:00, cooked a hearty breakfast, and arrived at the Brewery in time to get the steam up and blow the 6:00 a.m. whistle which called the employees to work. This was an unailing practice six mornings a week.

In the convivial atmosphere of the Brewery, genial Sam did not lack friends. The free cold beer flowed, and someone always had a story to tell. Papa himself told one about a white bulldog that hung around the engine room. According to the story, the men poured their flat beer into a bowl on the floor and the dog eagerly lapped it up, sometimes getting a little tipsy. One night Papa was walking home alongside the railroad tracks, the dog staggering behind him. A train came down the tracks, and the dog, with drunken bravado, charged it. Papa looked up to see him flying by the headlights of the train and thought he had seen the last of that dog. A day or two later, the dog came limping into the Brewery. After that, when he heard a train go by, there was a growl from deep down in his throat, but not a muscle moved.

There were some Brewery hijinks, too. In our family photo album is a picture postcard of S. C. McVey and P. Bradley, two paunchy members of the "Classy B Association," El Paso Brewery, November, 1913. In it Mr. Bradley is sitting on a horse, and Papa, wearing a huge Mexican sombrero,

is astride a spraddle-legged grey burro. The picture is labeled "Two Big Beautiful Dolls." In spite of this label, my surmise is that the "B" in "Classy B Association" did not stand for "Beauty."

Another keepsake from the Brewery is a handwritten letter of recommendation, dated September 21, 1917, which S. C. McVey, Chief Engineer, wrote for Antonio Valdez, a worker who moved to California. Valdez wrote Papa that this letter never failed to get him a job, that he carried it everywhere he went and was proud of it. When Valdez returned to El Paso years later, he had the letter framed and sent to Papa. Of interest is the letterhead of "El Paso Brewing Ass'n, Sucr's" with an ornate seal above the name and a drawing of the Brewery in the upper left-hand corner.

All of these good ol' days ended in 1919 when the El Paso Brewing Company was closed by ratification of the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors.⁴ Its machinery was moved to a brewery in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, and Sam went with it as Chief Engineer. He resigned from the Juarez brewery in about 1925 to try a new project.

Sam had carried on a sideline in real estate from about 1903. In the 1937 *Times* story, he is quoted as saying, "Land is worth just as much now as it was in 1904, because I distinctly remember buying lots at \$150 each.... Three blocks from the courthouse, in any direction, was out in the sticks." Sam McVey had watched the city develop, and he believed in its future. He had joined the trend himself, buying lots in the Lincoln Park Addition, where he built houses for refugees from the Mexican Revolution in 1912-1915. And he also bought and renovated old properties for resale. Now, in retirement, he purchased a worked-out forty-acre farm in Socorro, Texas, and proceeded to restore it until he was able to raise crops of alfalfa and cotton on it.

Prohibition ended in 1933, and Sam was called away from the farm to return to engineering. The Harry Mitchell Brewing Company was preparing to open on the site of the old El Paso Brewery, and someone was needed who "knew where everything used to be." Thus, S. C. McVey, the Chief Engineer who had turned off the pumps fourteen years previously, now had the honor of turning the water on again for the new Brewery. He remained with the Harry Mitchell organization until shortly before his death on January 16, 1944.

Throughout his long career in the business world, Sam had built a reputation for integrity and trustworthiness. He earned the respect of both his employers and his colleagues.

In his personal life, Sam was a devoted husband and father. A practical

man, he cared little for appearances; more important were "a good roof over our heads" and "good food in our stomachs."

A "good roof over our heads" meant more than security and comfort, although we had plenty of both. It was an integral part of Papa's character that no one who came to our door in need should be turned away. Knowing this, the Mexican people and others in our neighborhood, who called Papa "Don Samuel," a title of respect, brought their troubles to him. A lasting impression of this consideration for others was made on my young mind when one rainy night we were awakened by a pounding at the door. A terrified woman stood there, pouring out her fears to Papa. Mama brought her into the house, and Papa marched off into the night to talk some sense into the woman's husband. Papa, standing six feet tall and weighing 210 pounds, was a figure who inspired confidence and who obviously was able to cope with almost any situation.

"Good food in our stomachs"? To say the least, Papa was a bountiful provider. In the early days of their marriage, he taught Mama how to cook, southern style, of course. She eventually surpassed him in skill, and there was always something aromatic simmering on the back burner of the stove. On holidays, a groaning board was the rule, with the dining table stretched to its fullest to accommodate my married sisters and their families. Christmas mornings were the best, though. Papa continued his habit of rising at 4:00 a.m. and, from my earliest memories, on that morning he always had a large pot of tamales or menudo ready for hungry friends who dropped by for an early Southwestern-style breakfast. This Christmas-morning tradition is still carried on by my family, although with a little more variety.

The most lasting of Sam McVey's accomplishments might well be the family which he and Concepcion R. McVey founded in 1894. Now numbering 55 members and including four generations, they form a flourishing and close-knit group. With few exceptions, they make their homes in El Paso.

Like young Sam McVey one hundred years ago, his descendants have found El Paso a good place in which to live. ★

NOTES

1. Hereafter referred to as "the *Times* story" or "the 1937 *Times* story."
2. Concepcion Andrea Real y Vasquez (1877-1955) was one of eight children of Andres and Refugio Carrasco Real y Vasquez. The family was forced by repeated flooding of the Rio Concho and the Rio Florido to abandon its farm in Santa Rosalia (now Camargo), Chihuahua, Mexico. They moved to Juarez, where Andres worked for the Mexican Reclamation Service. Sons Manuel and Andres, Jr., obtained jobs at the Kohlberg Cigar Factory in El Paso, and in 1884 they instigated the family move across the Rio Grande to El Paso, Texas.
3. "In Old Paso—20-40 Years Ago," *The El Paso Times* of October 31, 1976, names R. Walter Long as owner in 1914 of the El Paso Brewery. It incorrectly calls S.C. McVey the Brewmaster.
4. One of Sam McVey's jokes about Prohibition was told to family friend and then-Harry Mitchell employee Ed Wingo in 1935: "A German brewmaster was called before the Court and asked the question: 'Is beer intoxicating?' He replied, 'For men, no. For hogs, yes.'"

AND GOD SAID, "BUILD FENCES"



In the Atlas of American History
I follow my people's progress on this continent.
Black arrows shoot across from England.
Small dots huddle on a ragged line between the sea
and a giant cross-hatching of native tribes.
Bold, solid lines move westward across the page,
cutting jigsaw patterns in the cross-hatching,
erasing most of it,
allowing the dots to spread into each part
like tumbleweeds into a vacant lot.

Vacant.

Vacuum domicilium.

Land without walls, fences, palisades
or, at least, surveyor's flags
is, in my heritage,
empty.

Unstaked land

demands the ax and the posthole digger,
cries out for split rail laid zigzag,
for barbed wire, chicken wire, chain link.

In the Atlas of American History

I watch my people play a game
of pen the sheep
all alone,

and I know that if the Indian had understood
the white man's fixation for fences
he could have mended the situation
there at the start.

—MARY CALDWELL

Mary Caldwell, a graduate student in the Interdisciplinary Studies Program at The University of Texas at El Paso, is the author of several published works: a children's book and two short collections of drama material. Her poem "And God Said, 'Build Fences'" originally appeared in the *Rio Grande Review*, Volume 6, Number 2 (Spring, 1987) and is published here with the kind permission of the *Rio Grande Review*.



BOOK REVIEWS

THE WOMAN'S WEST

edited by Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson

Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, \$24.95/\$12.95

The introductory comments and the 21 essays in this collection emphasize the thesis that the women of the 19th- and early-20th-century American West were a varied lot: the stereotype of the pioneer woman as helpmeet and domesticator simply does not match the diversity of women's lives and their contributions throughout the frontier era. The essays are based on papers presented at the Women's West Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, in 1983, the first national meeting devoted to western women's history.

In the first section, "Myths," Corlann Gee Bush in "The Way We Weren't: Images of Women and Men in Cowboy Art" examines how separate messages about men and women are codified, conveyed, and reinforced in western art. Paintings that portray men outnumber paintings of women ten to one. Those of men, such as Frederic Remington's "The Fight for the Waterhole," display action and adventure, danger and violence. In contrast, W. H. D. Koerner's "The Madonna of the Prairie" shows a beautiful young woman posed passively on the seat of a covered wagon with the canvas of the wagon forming a halo around her head. White women were frequently painted with children in their arms, but were never portrayed as pregnant, while native women were presented as more "natural," less civilized and civilizing.

In "Beyond Princess and Squaw: Army Officers' Perceptions of Indian Woman," divergent attitudes toward American Indian women and white women are further examined by Shery L. Smith, who taught during the past two years in the history department at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Although most of the research is based on factual evidence, the section "Emotional Continuities" relies on literary testimony. Kathryn Adam

presents a delightful study of "Laura, Ma, Mary, Carrie, and Grace: Western Women as Portrayed by Laura Ingalls Wilder." On a darker note, Melody Graulich cites novels by Mari Sandoz, Agnes Smedley, Meridel Le Sueur, and Tillie Olsen to suggest that violence against women was commonplace in the American West. The taboo against admitting the prevalence of wife-beating, for example, made it difficult to work for change in any public or widespread way.

The necessity of women joining together in common cause is emphasized in "Networking on the Frontier: The Colorado Woman's Suffrage Movement 1876-1893" and in other essays. A particularly interesting example of a group with similar work-related concerns is Mary Lee Spence's account of "Harvey Girls," the waitresses who staffed the lunch counters and dining rooms which Fred Harvey began establishing along the Santa Fe railroad in 1876.

Perhaps the most important essay in terms of theory is Rosalinda Mendez Gonzalez's "Distinctions in Western Women's Experience: Ethnicity, Class, and Social Change." Gonzalez traces the forces that concentrated land and wealth in the hands of a few entrepreneurs and uprooted native peoples. She reminds us that the majority of women in the 19th-century West neither read nor wrote English. Indeed, all the essays serve to remind us that we need to write all women into western history, not just to understand our past but to change the ways we see ourselves and envision our future.

LOIS MARCHINO

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JOHN RINGO: THE GUNFIGHTER WHO NEVER WAS

by Jack Burrows

Tucson: University of Arizona Press, \$21.95

Was John Ringo the classic gunfighter, one of the fastest and deadliest in the West? Was he hell on wheels, completely unafraid of man or beast, and so vicious that even his own kind withdrew from him? Was he related to the Youngers and Daltons, yet a cultured, genteel and handsome outlaw who read the classics and possessed the honored virtues of trust, loyalty, and courage? In short, does John Ringo deserve the more extravagant claims made for him than have been made for Earp, Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, and Buffalo Bill combined?

After 20 years of careful research, including access to sources no other writer has had, Jack Burrows has produced a full-length treatment of the

myth and the man Ringo that cuts through the misconceptions and legend.

Burrows gives Ringo his appropriate place as part of the Curly Bill, Ringo, Clanton band, who stalked through Tombstone with the faction that opposed the Earps. He gives Ringo his due credit for the two documented instances of gunplay in his outlaw life: his open challenge and near shootout with Doc Holiday and Wyatt Earp, and the incident when he shot an acquaintance through the neck for preferring to drink beer instead of the whiskey Ringo offered him.

But all the credible evidence, Burrows concludes, reveals Ringo at his worst to have been a mere cattle rustler, a drunk, and a wastrel, for whom a better case is made for his cowardice than his courage.

To Burrows, the overriding question is why Ringo is even considered at all among the great figures of the old west. The answer and the blame for that, in his opinion, rests with other writers, who have simply preferred the myth to the truth. And why did these writers feel so compelled to immortalize this ne'er-do-well badman? They were not latching on to the man, Burrows argues, but only to the name. That name *Ringo* has a built-in gunslinger sound to it, perfect for literary imagination. It has the *ring* of heroism, while *Earp* and *Hickok* just sound like a hangover. To Burrows, therefore, it is all in the tonal quality of the name; and his argument on this point is fairly convincing.

This is probably the closest thing to an "authorized" work on Ringo that readers are likely to come across, inasmuch as certain family descendents of Ringo saw fit to help and collaborate with Burrows, which they had not done with other writers. Through his diligent efforts, Burrows has produced a superbly documented, persuasive work. The title of the book foretells his conclusion, but the fun is in reading how he arrives at that conclusion.

The work is not without flaws, however. It suffers, for example, from an overuse of big words when small ones would do and from needless repetition. But I register my greatest complaint at what I see as the author's unprofessional and tactless affronts to other writers. Whether he agrees or disagrees with them, calling them "frauds" or "liars" serves little purpose and is no way to handle professional differences.

Nevertheless, Ringo is put into proper perspective here. Not as the deadliest gunfighter in the west, but instead as an alienated, anti-social, unhappy, and suicidal alcoholic with a catchy name. This does blow the myth, but it also solves some of the mystery.

HERB MARSH, JR.

El Paso



HENRY HOPKINS SIBLEY, Confederate General of the West
by Jerry Thompson**Natchitoches, Louisiana: Northwestern State University Press, \$25**

The subject of this biography was born in the delightful and historic town of Natchitoches, where the book was published. However, if you seek paeans for the home town boy who became a dashing Confederate general, look not here.

Students of El Paso history know that General Henry H. Sibley set out from Fort Bliss in early 1862, hoping to capture New Mexico and Arizona for the Confederacy. They also know that Sibley's forces defeated Union troops under General Canby at the Battle of Valverde, near Socorro, New Mexico, and captured an entire battery of federal artillery which they took with them on their way toward Albuquerque and Santa Fe, where they hoped to complete their conquest.

But where was General Henry Hopkins Sibley during this victory? Citing abundant testimony, the author says Sibley was at Fort Thorn, eighty miles from the scene of battle, and quite drunk. The Sibley command advanced to Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and fought a series of engagements against Union forces in the Glorieta area, east of Santa Fe. Here the Confederates were soundly defeated, suffering a loss of all their provisions. And where was Sibley? He was seventy miles away, in Albuquerque, drunk again, evidently so inebriated that he misunderstood the reports of defeat and celebrated a victory.

Sibley joined his retreating forces as they began a bitter retreat through the mountains west of the Rio Grande, lugging with them their only symbols of victory, the captured Valverde battery.

Stopping only briefly in El Paso, Sibley's forces traveled all the way to Louisiana. There the General faced a court-martial for neglect of duty in the New Mexico campaign. Many of his own command testified against him. Perhaps the bitterest testimony was delivered by a fiery and rebellious captain, Alfred S. Thurmond, who not only repeated the charges that Sibley was drunk at Fort Thorn and Albuquerque, but also accused the General of cowardice, of abandoning sick and wounded soldiers, and of seizing captured property for his own personal use.

Sibley's personal staff rallied to his support. One of these, volunteer aide-de-camp Captain Joseph Magoffin, then thirty years old, would later serve three terms as Mayor of El Paso. His aides all swore that Sibley was not drunk during the critical battles, but was seriously ill. The author ponders whether Sibley was drunk because of his illness or sick because of his continued drinking. In any case, his court-martial was decided by the personal

intervention of Confederacy President Jefferson Davis, who dismissed the charges on the grounds that the papers had not been preferred properly. The book leaves few trails of glory for General Henry Hopkins Sibley.

El Paso readers may search vainly for the answer to two questions: What finally happened to the Federal artillery captured at Valverde? Is the cherished McGinty cannon, now on display at Eastwood High School, really one of the guns in the famed Valverde battery?

CONREY BRYSON
El Paso



**FOLLOWING THE SANTA FE TRAIL: A GUIDE FOR
MODERN TRAVELERS** by Marc Simmons
Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, \$10.95

"All's set" "Fall in!" "Stretch out!" "Catch up!" "Ho, for Santa Fe!" These were some of the commands of the wagonmasters who directed the caravans from Missouri to New Mexico over the first of the great trans-Mississippi-west trails. Author Marc Simmons displays his talents as a masterful modern trail empresario in this second edition of his book.

An introduction provides the reader with some general histories respecting the Santa Fe Trail, as well as references and maps to aid the modern traveler in identifying significant geographic locations. The text also includes descriptions of museums, cemeteries, markers and memorials related to the historical significance of the trail. Interwoven are short historical sketches of important dwellings or campsites along the route and also of organizations that have been active in preserving or identifying local references.

Simmons divides the route into segments, starting with communities in Missouri and Kansas and continuing as far as Chouteau's Island, where the trail split. From this point, he first traces the Mountain Branch, transporting his readers from Kansas to Colorado as far west as La Junta, then south through Raton Pass to Springer, New Mexico. Returning to Lakin, Kansas, the author next treats the Cimarron Cut-Off, where the trail traversed the Oklahoma Panhandle and continued to Springer. Then he describes the last segment of the route, from Springer to Santa Fe. And throughout his account of the extensive thoroughfare, he scatters descriptions of locations where the traveler may view the actual ruts of the wagon wheels.

Readers will find this journey over the Santa Fe Trail a fascinating experience, one which brings to life an important era in American history.

J. MORGAN BROADDUS
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SPY ON THE BORDER...from page 168.

4. William Stevenson, who headed the British Intelligence Service's cooperative efforts with the United States in counterespionage, described a German agent who "recruited subagents through the German-American Bund." (*A Man Called Intrepid*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976, 176)
5. Farago, 569.
6. *Ibid.*, 579-80.
7. Frederic Sondern, "The Spy-Catchers," in *Secrets and Spies: Behind-the-Scenes Stories of World War II* (Pleasantville, New York: The Reader's Digest Association, 1964), 46-52.
8. Farago, 580-81.
9. *El Paso Herald-Post*, December 18, 1941; *The El Paso Times*, December 19, 1941.
10. *Herald-Post*, April 1, 1942.
11. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1942.
12. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1941.
13. Personal interview with Betty Luther, January 7, 1976.
14. *Herald-Post*, December 29 and 30, 1941; January 3, 1942.
15. *Ibid.*, January 6 and 7, 1942.
16. *Ibid.*, January 10, 1942.
17. *Ibid.*, April 1, 1942.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, April 2 and 3, 1942.
20. *Ibid.*, April 3, 1942.
21. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1942.
22. *New York Times*, June 11, 1942.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Herald-Post*, June 10, 1942.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.* The weekly newspaper in New York City, *The Free American*, was published from 1935 until December, 1941, by the A. V. Publishing Corporation, Inc., which listed G. Wilhelm Kunze as president. *New York Times*, December 16, 1941.
28. *Herald-Post*, June 10, 1942; *New York Times*, August 12, 1942.
29. *New York Times*, June 11, 1942.
30. *Herald-Post*, June 10, 1942; Associated Press, July 4, 1942.
31. *Herald-Post*, June 17, 1942.
32. *Ibid.*, June 20, 1942.
33. Associated Press and International News Service, July 4, 1942.
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43. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1946.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, October 10, 1947.
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