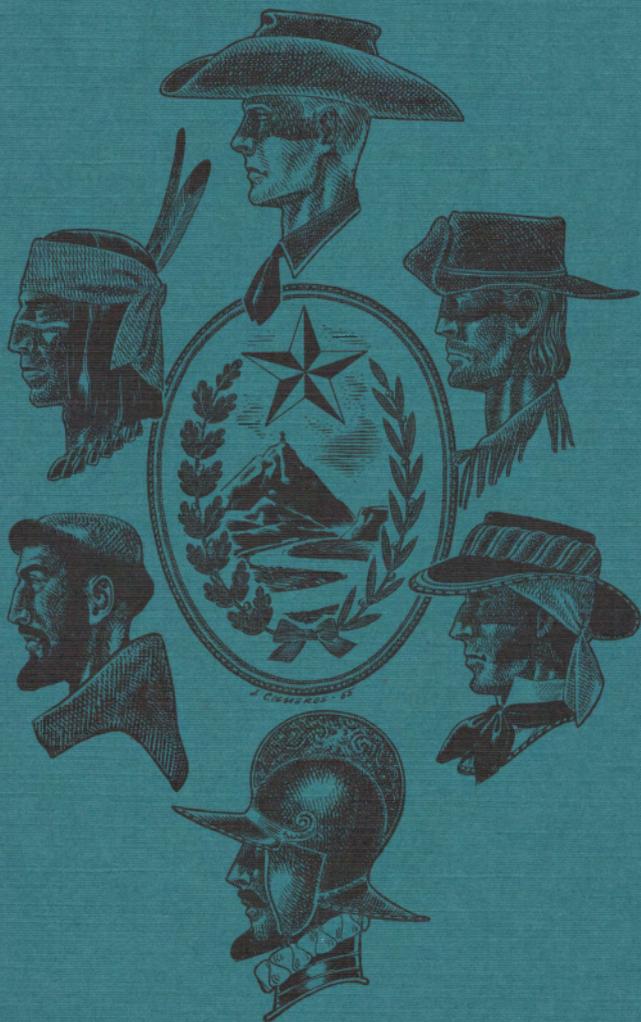


PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOL. XXXV, NO. 1 • EL PASO, TEXAS • SPRING, 1990



PASSWORD

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207 Maricopa Drive, El Paso, Texas 79912

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PASSWORD requests writers to send a query letter and self-addressed stamped envelope before submitting manuscripts. Manuscripts should be double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11" paper, one side only, with ample margins. Ideal maximum length is 20 pages including documentation. Shorter articles are welcome. For style and form, consult recent issues of the Quarterly. Please attach a brief biographical sketch. Photographs and illustrations should be accompanied by identifying captions. All articles or book reviews published become the property of the Quarterly.

The per-copy price of PASSWORD is \$5.

Correspondence regarding back numbers of PASSWORD should be addressed to
Membership Secretary, El Paso County Historical Society,
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

PASSWORD (ISSN 0031-2738)

is published quarterly by THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

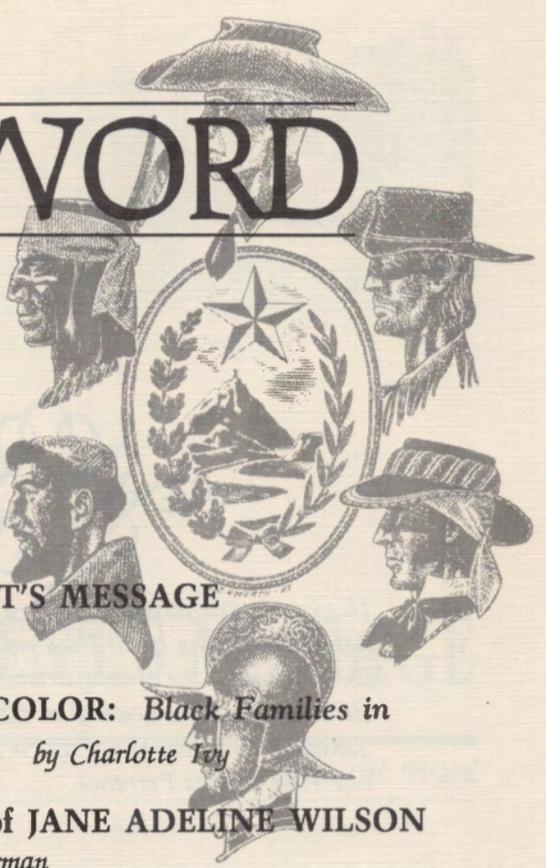
Membership of \$20.00 per year includes a subscription to PASSWORD
Second-class postage paid at El Paso, Texas

Postmaster: Send address changes to
Password, The El Paso County Historical Society
603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

ARTICLES APPEARING IN THIS JOURNAL ARE ABSTRACTED AND INDEXED
IN HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS AND AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE

Printed by Gateway Printing, El Paso

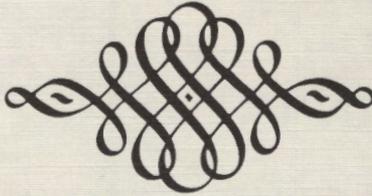
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SPRING, 1990

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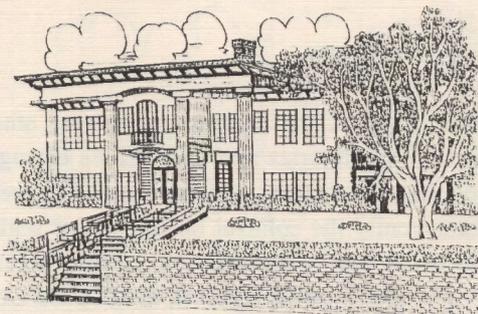


This issue's title-page insignia is a much-reduced reproduction of a drawing by El Paso artist "Ricardo." It depicts Burges House, the Headquarters of the El Paso County Historical Society. Located at 603 W. Yandell in historic Sunset Heights, the house was a gift to the Society by the late Jane Burges Perrenot.

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The PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by James W. Ward

AS WE ENTER THE decade of the 90s, our El Paso County Historical Society can look back on its thirty-six years of existence with considerable pride, for these years have seen great growth and achievement. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. There is still much to be accomplished.

Membership, the lifeblood of our Society, is not at an all-time high, but, after a lull in the middle 1980s, it now approaches 900. A respectable figure, to be sure; but for a city the size of El Paso, it should be double, or even triple that count. I urge you to let your friends know what they are missing. Let's not keep a good thing secret.

The Society's quarterly journal, *Password*, is the much respected



cornerstone of the Society, numbering among its subscribers a host of prestigious libraries and universities throughout the country. I know of no other historical publication which presents so attractively and so competently the colorful history of our region. *Password* alone is worth the small cost of membership in the Society.

In addition to *Password*, the El Paso County Historical Society offers a number of interesting activities which also promote the cause of historical preservation and which serve to advance our knowledge of the area's history. The annual Tour of Historical Homes, the Hall of Honor Banquet, the Historical Memories Contest (open to senior citizens), and the Frank Gorman Memorial Historical Essay Contest (open to middle-school pupils) are well-established programs and will continue. The popular quarterly membership meetings which feature outstanding speakers will be upgraded to bi-monthly affairs. The Historical Photo Contest, started last year by Barbara Dent, will continue this year, as will the Historical Tours of downtown El Paso, the lower-valley missions, and the historical section of Concordia Cemetery. The Brown Bag Luncheon Series of five lectures during History Week will continue under the direction of William I. Latham as an annual feature. All of this—plus the four issues of *Password*—for only \$20. It's the best bargain in town.

Over the years the Society dreamed of having a home. Now, through the generosity of the late Jane Burges Perrenot, our dream has come true. We are the proud owners of beautiful Burges House, located at 603 West Yandell in the heart of historic Sunset Heights. However, the cost of maintaining this Headquarters for our Society exceeds our income. Donations by members and profits from the recent Tour of Historical Homes provided enough funds to restore the gardner's cottage and to replace the roof of the House. Further repairs, renovations, and restorations are planned and will proceed as funds become available. The membership can assist in these projects by helping to increase membership and by donations and bequests.

I thank you for your confidence in electing me President for the coming year. With your support and the backing of an outstanding Board of Officers and Directors, our Historical Society will continue its growth and progress. ☆

James W. Ward, the Society's new president, is a retired Army Colonel with over thirty years active military service. After retirement he taught at Radford School, served as President of the El Paso County Historical Commission, as National Director of CAMP (military history society), and as Vice Commander-in-Chief of The Military Order of the World Wars (a veterans patriotic organization).



FORGOTTEN COLOR

Black Families in Early El Paso

by Charlotte Ivy

Editor's Note: Password is pleased to present the following article in celebration of Black History Month 1990.

Founded as Negro History Week in 1926 by historian Carter Woodson for the purpose of publicizing the contributions by blacks to United States society, the celebration was originally held during the second week in February, this week selected because it coincides with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln, February 12, and Frederick Douglass, February 14.

By 1980, the entire month of February was being declared Black History Month so as to accommodate the many programs offered in commemoration of the black citizenry's achievements.

IN THE MIDDLE DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH century, the pioneers of the far Southwest were trying to tame a desert land. The early Anglo pioneer families of Hart, Magoffin, and Stephenson were joined by the Woods, the Hendersons, and the Smiths. All came to build a life in the wilderness. For families like the Hendersons and the Woods and the Smiths, what they were able to accomplish depended not so much on how hard they worked or even on Lady Luck, but on the color of their skin. These families and others they would later welcome were black. Sharing the dreams and hopes of all those in the area, they put their roots down in El Paso. They were

CHARLOTTE IVY

determined to live in a civilized land and to make the most of the opportunities offered by the budding border town.

John Woods settled at the Pass of the North during the Civil War, and shortly after the War ended he married Mary Velar, an ex-slave from Missouri. By 1869 the Woods were beginning to prosper; they owned a saloon, a boarding house, a blacksmith shop located on the town square, horses, a buggy, and an ambulance service.¹ During the year 1880 Woods was employed briefly by the city, having been appointed on August 3 by the aldermen as assistant to the new marshal, John B. Tays. Woods and Tays were not salaried employees; they derived their income for their public service from fees collected from individuals arrested. On October 12, following a dispute with the City Council over maintenance of the city streets, both men were relieved of their offices.² Woods was an enterprising and able man who invested his time in many occupations. He was able to accrue a sizeable estate which he left to Mary at the time of his death in 1898. Mary in turn proved to be an excellent businesswoman. When she died sixteen years later, her estate was worth an estimated \$160,000.³

Joseph J. Smith, another of the early black pioneers, and his family had established themselves in El Paso by 1883. Their home was located at the corner of St. Louis (present-day Mills) and Stanton Streets, and Smith was employed by Hill and Palmer,⁴ a wool, hide, and skin company.

William Alexander Henderson arrived in the El Paso area as a guide for the United States Army during the Indian Wars. He was discharged in 1878 and took a job as guard for the Pony Express. He later worked as a brickmaker.⁵ He acquired several pieces of property, one of which is today occupied by Thomason General Hospital, and another by the Union Depot.⁶ In 1895 he left for a brief visit to Wharton, Texas, and returned with his bride, nee Lucinda Godfrey. They lived in a home that Henderson had built near the present Union Depot.⁶ Of their children, only their daughter, Blanche Ethel, grew to maturity. In 1896 Henderson joined the Second Baptist Church at the request of his wife and was baptized in the Rio Grande. He served his church as deacon and served his community through the local Masonic Lodge. In later years blacks were prohibited from participating in Lodge activities, but Henderson, a 33rd-degree Mason, faithfully paid his dues until his death in 1935.⁷

The Hendersons, the Smiths, and the Woods were not the only blacks

Charlotte Ivy is a graduate student in history at The University of Texas at El Paso, her area of specialization being the history of blacks and the civil rights movement in the El Paso region. She and her husband, Ray, and their three children have resided in El Paso since 1977.

to settle at the Pass in those early years. Among others who were drawn to the border town was James Willis Shanklin, a young man from Wichita, Kansas. In 1886, he read newspaper accounts of an impending war between the two El Pasos over the imprisonment of a newspaperman named A. K. Cutting.⁸ He promptly set out for the border to help capture El Paso del Norte; by the time he reached the Pass, the two cities had made their peace. Still looking for adventure, Shanklin joined the army and served until 1892. After his discharge, he returned to El Paso and took a job at the federal building. In 1899 he was appointed mail carrier No. 5 and was assigned to the section of town referred to as the Second Ward. Shanklin retired from the postal service in 1930 after having delivered the mail to the Second Ward for thirty-one years.⁹ Other black pioneers in El Paso worked as servants, barbers, porters, cooks, and laborers.¹⁰

In May, 1881, four railroad companies were laying track and making their way toward El Paso. The first train to reach El Paso was the Southern Pacific, which rolled into town ahead of the Texas and Pacific, winning a much-publicized race between the two companies. Soon these two lines were joined by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and by the Mexican Central Railroad. These railroads meant a new prosperity for all El Pasoans and a greater job variety for black El Pasoans.

As the town grew into an important transportation center, many black families came to El Paso as railroad employees. On the trains they worked as day-coach porters, dining-car waiters, chefs, and sleeping-car porters. The day-coach porters made the shorter 300-mile runs to Tucson, to Albuquerque, and to Sanderson. The Pullman porters worked the longer runs to California, theirs being the most prestigious of all the jobs on the trains. Their nighttime duty was taken in shifts, usually three at a time sleeping in quarters near the sleeping passengers.¹¹ Black porters functioned also as brakemen, jumping off the trains to switch tracks and to help direct the flow of traffic.¹² The hours were long and hard. The men assigned to the California run worked a 240-hour month with no days off.

In the rail yard, men were employed as yard laborers, car repairmen and cleaners, boilermakers and cleaners, and locomotive inspectors, the boilermaker holding the most respected job in the yard. El Pasoan John Best, a boilermaker employed by the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Line, invented a tool that allowed the boiler to be cleaned from a safe distance, thus protecting the workers from being burned by the hot liquids pouring out of the boilers.¹³ The flushing commode for trains was invented by another black El Pasoan, Charles Moore, a concerned passen-

ger who wanted to improve sanitary conditions on the trains.¹⁴

The railroad was a popular means of travel for all El Pasoans. For the black traveler in the South, there was a special coach called the "Jim Crow" car which was supposed to provide separate but equal accommodations.¹⁵ This car was often situated behind the coal car, closest of all the coaches to the engine. The "Jim Crow" car was a day coach with no sleeping facilities for the passengers. Black travelers, having no dining car of their own, were usually allowed to go to the dining car to eat in a section that was separated from the other diners by a curtain. However, most black travelers took their own picnic lunches and stayed in their coach.

Western states had no laws designating separate seating arrangements and no "Jim Crow" coach.¹⁶ El Paso was a hub for the change to the "Jim Crow" coach for eastbound passengers heading into the South. El Pasoan Ruth King recalls that her father would go to Las Cruces, New Mexico, to purchase tickets for the family in order to avoid having to purchase "Jim Crow" tickets.¹⁷

"Jim Crowism," as practiced in El Paso in those decades, meant that black El Pasoans were not allowed to enter the socio-political-cultural mainstream of the city. As a consequence, they determined to "cast down their buckets"¹⁸ where they could and to make a world of their own.

The formation of a church community was a major concern to the black pioneers. The first denomination established was the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church shepherded by the Reverend Thomas Grigsby. It had been holding services for sometime when the Reverend E. M. Griggs, a Baptist missionary from Dallas, arrived in 1884. He found fifteen of the twenty-five black El Pasoans in attendance at the services, and a poll showed that five of these fifteen were Baptists. The congregation was then divided into two denominations. Reverend Mr. Grigsby established the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Mr. Griggs established the Second Baptist Church. The A. M. E. congregation met in the home of Joseph J. Smith until 1888,¹⁹ when the congregation moved into an abandoned blacksmith shop at Oregon and Main.²⁰ This was probably the shop formerly owned and operated by John Woods.

Grigsby continued as pastor and was also employed as a janitor for the El Paso National Bank. From the blacksmith shop the congregation moved to the second floor of an old fire department building. In 1900 the group was able to purchase a lot and construct an adobe building on South Florence Street which it named Visitors' Chapel. The trustees of the church included Joseph J. Smith and a Dr. Lewis, El Paso's only black

doctor at the time.²¹

The Second Baptist Church was organized with the guidance of the Reverend Mr. Griggs. The tiny congregation met in a small rented room on South Stanton between San Antonio and Overland. Mr. Griggs, whose job was completed upon establishment of the church, appointed Calvin Neal as temporary pastor. Mr. Neal's congregation consisted of Joe Pollard and his wife, Thomas Gaines, and George B. Duval. Gaines was employed as a janitor at the County Court House; Pollard was a porter for the Mexican railroad; Duval, who was employed at the time by The Austin House, later became the janitor for the Franklin Public School for blacks, which was built on property Duval had previously owned.²²

As in other communities in Texas, these churches were more than religious organizations. They became an important part of the everyday life of blacks, both men and women. It was to the church in particular that the black men turned in great numbers as they realized that they were to be denied political voice in the world at large.²³ In the memories of those reared in El Paso, the church was central to their lives.²⁴

In addition to the churches, the black men of El Paso formed benevolent associations. The first in the community was the Myrtle Lodge No. 10, Knights of Pythias. Organized by James Walker, porter at the Gem Saloon, and A. E. Graham, porter for the El Paso National Bank,²⁵ this lodge was a branch of a statewide organization which had been founded to provide "relief funds," a kind of insurance policy that paid a death benefit to the deceased's family.²⁶ The Sunset Lodge Number 76, Free and Accepted Masons (Prince Hall Affiliation), was organized by H. J. Daniels in the early part of 1892. Its purpose was also to serve as a relief agency and a charitable institution.²⁷ H. J. Daniels may have been the legendary Dan Daniels, a businessman who owned a hotel, a taxicab company, and a Chinese restaurant located in the Second Ward. Descendants of pioneer black El Pasoans recall their forebears' stories about the generosity of Dan Daniels, who was occasionally referred to as the "Second Ward's Godfather."²⁸ Lodges such as the Myrtle Lodge and the Sunset Lodge were common throughout Texas and the South and provided, along with the churches, a forum for leadership among the black population.²⁹

While laying the foundations of their religious and social community, black El Pasoans also began to work for the formation of a school for their children. In March, 1883, the year the white community opened the doors of its first public school, the blacks established Franklin School, under the leadership of Andrew Morelock, which met in the home of Joseph Smith.³⁰ At the beginning of the school term 1885-86, Professor Morelock moved

with 16 of the 23 black school-age pupils in El Paso to a church building on Seventh Street. His salary of fifty dollars per month was paid by the city. The seven other teachers employed by the city that year were paid seventy-five dollars per month.³¹ By 1889, the school, renamed Douglass in honor of Frederick Douglass, had been adopted into the city's school system, and a four-room structure for the black pupils was built at the corner of Fourth Street and Kansas. Alfred C. Murphy was the newly appointed principal. It was a difficult year for the students and for Mr. Murphy; the school board did not recognize any of the previous classes taken by the older students and required that all of the students begin their learning at the primary levels. The children were forced to comply, but in May, 1889, when the closing ceremonies were held at the County Courthouse, there was a feeling of optimism and joy for what had been accomplished both for and by the children.³²

By the end of the nineteenth century, El Paso's black citizens had built for themselves a community in which to worship, to learn, and to promote fellowship and benevolence. Some of these citizens were employed in skilled or semi-skilled railroad jobs, but most of them continued to be relegated to menial work, either in the railroad industry or in the community at large.³³ John Woods, in service as assistant marshal, had been a brief exception to the rule. There was also another exception. His name was Henry O. Flipper.

Flipper had spent his boyhood in Atlanta, Georgia, and graduated from The United States Military Academy at West Point in 1877 with a degree in civil engineering. He was the first black to graduate from the Academy and the first black United States Army officer. His initial assignment was at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where he completed a ditch that drained water off a breeding area for mosquitoes, providing relief in the fight to contain a severe outbreak of malaria. It is still referred to as "Flipper's Ditch."³⁴ In 1881 Flipper was assigned to the frontier post at Fort Davis, Texas. While on duty there, he was accused by his commanding officer of mismanagement of funds and was imprisoned at Fort Quitman. It is likely that Flipper had been careless with funds; but when the discrepancy was found, he had immediately replaced the missing money. After eight months in prison, Flipper was dismissed from the army for "conduct unbecoming an officer." He walked out of Fort Quitman a civilian, leaving behind an army career which had been his goal since his boyhood.

From Fort Quitman, Flipper went directly to El Paso in June, 1883, and began to work for the A. B. Greene Mining Company. He was first hired to find the lost mine of Tayopa. Later he spent most of his time

surveying south of the border, but also surveyed as far west as Douglas, Arizona. In 1908 he was employed by Albert B. Fall as a consultant for the Sierra Mining Company in Chihuahua, Mexico. In 1912 he was permanently assigned to the El Paso area and began to make frequent journeys to Washington, D. C., to report to the Justice Department on the political situation in Mexico. He left El Paso for good in 1919 when he took a position as interpreter and translator for Albert Fall, who had been elected to the United States Senate from New Mexico. In 1929 he was appointed assistant to the Secretary of the Interior.

Flipper was the first American black to gain prominence in the field of engineering. He also had many other interests and talents. He was a lover of history and contributed several articles to the *El Paso Herald*, as well as to out-of-state newspapers; and while he was in the Douglas, Arizona, area he had served briefly as the editor of an establishment newspaper.³⁵ He was a well educated and respected addition to the small black community in El Paso during the turn-of-the-century decades.

As in other parts of the state, El Paso's black professionals were primarily the ministers and the teachers. Businessmen in the area were few, perhaps only four;³⁶ but that was a disproportionate share of the 159 black businesses that existed in Texas at that time.³⁷ In El Paso the four businessmen were Texas John Clemons, who operated a barber shop in the Orndorff Hotel; Christopher Shelton, who owned a furniture store at 116 South Oregon; Charles W. Morrow, who owned a barber shop; and Mary Woods, the widow of John, who continued to furnish rooms and run long-term leases on her extensive property holdings.³⁸

The railroad was the hub of many black families' lives. As the families moved out of the Second Ward, they located their homes along the source of their livelihood. Their neighborhoods, which spread eastward along the tracks, were not segregated, nor were there any ordinances which designated all-black areas in the city. Blacks, Mexicans, a few Anglos, and Chinese lived side by side down by the railroad tracks. In the mornings, though, when the black children walked to school with their friends, they knew that there was a difference between them and their neighbors. They passed one segregated school and then another, dropping off playmates along the way. But after school, they all met again to share the fun and secrets of the neighborhood.³⁹

The school for black children had begun with an enrollment of seven pupils in 1883; by 1900 enrollment was eighty-seven, and by 1909 it had reached 260.⁴⁰ William Coleman arrived that year from a job as assistant principal of a Ft. Worth high school to take the position of principal at

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Douglass. One of this first concerns was with the inadequate facilities.

The school children were still meeting in the original four-room structure that had been built in 1886. Professor Coleman was able to obtain money from the school board to construct another four rooms, one of which contained a small laboratory. Graduation exercises were often held at a downtown theater or occasionally at the Myar Opera House. It was customary for a minister to deliver the graduation address, but at the exercises in 1916 a play entitled "The Pennant" was presented at the Texas Grand Theater by the graduating seniors. Following the play the El Paso School Superintendent, R. J. Tighe, delivered the graduation address, and E. M. Whitaker, President of the School Board, presented the diplomas.⁴¹ While Professor Coleman was principal, the school began to field teams in baseball, football, and volleyball. The Douglass teams competed with the Mexican schools in El Paso and in the outlying areas, as well as with other black schools which were within traveling distance.⁴² Their uniforms were those discarded by the white schools of the city. The situation with the schoolbooks was the same. The children were always learning with cast-off tools.⁴³

The location of the school became a problem as the black community began to move away from the downtown area. The Second Ward was a



Douglass School and its pupils, 1909. (Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)

far walk for many of the pupils. No transportation was provided, and on inclement days the children had to spend a nickel to ride the trolley to and from school. Finally, after ten years of exercising his persuasive powers, Professor Coleman convinced the school board to move the school to a new location. In 1920, a new building on Eucalyptus Street opened its doors to the excited children. Although the school was next door to a foundry, it was closer to the pupil's homes. The foundry cooperated by adjusting its stacks so that the children were not engulfed in smoke. The new Douglass School was "modern in every respect." It had ten rooms, one of which was an auditorium complete with a "moving picture machine" that had been purchased from a railroad company in Kansas. Films were borrowed from the State Education office in Austin and were the financial responsibility of the principal if damaged.⁴⁴

Douglass School continued to be a source of pride for the black community. Its early principals—A. C. Murphy, William Coleman, W. O. Bundy, and Olalee McCall—had provided the children with high standards and high ideals. Many of the Douglass graduates continued their education, earning bachelor's and master's degrees. Some returned to teach at the school in later years. Blanche Henderson, daughter of one of the early pioneers, completed her education, returned to Douglass, and taught there for twelve years.

In addition to the teachers and the ministers, there were also a few black doctors, pharmacists, dentists and nurses. Two black women, referred to as nurses, had been in the area since the 1880s. The memoirs of early-day El Pasoan Mrs. Hugh S. White mention "two fine Negro nurses, Eliza Grigsby and Amanda Quarles, who...had no training," but who were tireless in helping the sick in the community along with "a few horse and buggy doctors."⁴⁵ Dr. Lewis and Dr. L. A. Nixon were El Paso's first black physicians. Dr. Lewis was one of the early pioneers; Dr. Nixon arrived in 1908⁴⁶ from Cameron, Texas, and established a practice which lasted almost sixty years.⁴⁷ Dr. Nixon purchased a house at 2031 Myrtle Avenue which served as his home and office. It was also the location of Dr. M. C. Donnell's drugstore and soda fountain. Dr. Donnell was a graduate of Douglass School, and he had returned to El Paso after his graduation from Northwestern University. He was very successful and operated two drugstores until he left the area in the 1940s.⁴⁸ Another of the early physicians was Dr. Vernon Collins, Sr., a 1913 Douglass School graduate who returned to El Paso after training at Howard University Medical School. His son Vernon Collins, Jr. was a later Douglass School graduate who also became a physician.⁴⁹

In 1910 there were 1562 blacks in the El Paso area;⁵⁰ in 1920 only 1330; and in 1930, 1855.⁵¹ From within this small population came significant political activity and interest in civil rights. The community's first political leader was L. W. Washington, who had received a degree from Alcorn A. & M. College, Alcorn, Mississippi. For a time he had worked as a school teacher, but later he took a position with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service; in 1910 he was assigned to the office in El Paso. Washington promptly discovered that black people were not welcome in the library or in any of the city parks, including the Plaza park, which was located directly across from his office. It was with these issues that he began his career in behalf of civil rights in El Paso. Shortly after his arrival, he helped to found the El Paso branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and he served as its president for many years.⁵²

An example of L. W. Washington's dedicated service to the cause of civil rights was the encouragement and tireless support which he gave to Dr. L. A. Nixon. In July, 1924, Dr. Nixon challenged one of the rules of the white community: the all-white Democratic Primary.⁵³ With the backing of the NAACP, Dr. Nixon took the case to the United States Supreme Court, which eventually ruled the all-white primary unconstitutional. This action did not immediately result in blacks being allowed to vote, for the white establishment instituted other means to deny blacks that right in the primary elections. It was, however, an important proceeding that finally resulted in unrestricted vote for Texas blacks, and it had been initiated in El Paso's small black community.

Black families came to El Paso, built homes and a school, held jobs in various fields, and worked for their rights. In the opinion of many descendants of El Paso's black pioneers, it was a good place to call home—perhaps because the Chinese, the Mexican, and the Lebanese contributed an international flavor to the community and diluted prejudice. Color and culture differences, these descendants attest, were a way of life in the border town at the Pass. The proximity of Juarez may have been another positive social factor. Blacks, denied the opportunity to entertain in fashionable El Paso restaurants, were always able to take their friends across the river, where dining establishments in Juarez encouraged their patronage. Also, El Paso was a gateway to the West. For the black people it was where the "Jim Crow" coach disappeared and where forty miles to the west a college education was a possibility. Many of the Douglass teachers made the trip in the afternoons to the college at Las Cruces to

work on advanced degrees.⁵⁴ This educational opportunity may help to account for the high literacy rate of El Paso blacks as compared with that of other Texas cities. In 1920, blacks in Austin experienced an illiteracy rate of 11.5 percent; those in Dallas were recorded at 12.5 percent rate of illiteracy; San Antonio blacks were recorded at 7.5 percent. El Paso's illiteracy rate for blacks was only four percent.⁵⁵

In El Paso the lines of segregation were not always strictly enforced—a few examples will illustrate. Mrs. Bruce Taylor remembers vividly an incident that happened many years ago. She had gone into the drugstore across the street from the post office, where her husband worked, to order take-out ice cream. She was mistakenly given a place-setting and a menu; she was so taken by surprise that she ordered and ate while her husband waited outside the store. It was an opportunity she was not about to pass up and one which did not cause a scene in the drugstore.⁵⁶ Viola Strait remembers days when she met her father at the San Jacinto Plaza and went with him to the segregated library, never experiencing unpleasantness there.⁵⁷ Further evidence of the relaxed attitudes toward blacks in El Paso is reflected in the fact that some state laws were often ignored, especially those concerning mixed marriages. Early attempts to control the area's



L. W. Washington, left, with his daughter (Viola), his wife, and his son (LeRoy, Jr.), as the family posed for a snapshot c. 1935. (Photo courtesy Viola Strait and Dr. Sara Watley-Beal)

marital relationships were thrown out of court.⁵⁸

However, black El Pasoans did experience discrimination and segregation.⁵⁹ At the train station, there were signs that designated separate waiting areas, separate drinking fountains, and separate restroom facilities. The school, as has been pointed out, lacked modern equipment and current materials for its students. Further, Douglass teachers were sometimes paid less than the other teachers in the El Paso School System. For example, on June 1, 1932, Blanche Henderson Grundy signed a contract for the coming scholastic year which required her to accept a 25 percent reduction because she was black. She earned \$625 for the 1932-1933 year.⁶⁰ The Ku Klux Klan tried for a brief time in the 1920s to establish its organization in the city, but its efforts were defeated. It should be noted that at the height of the Klan's activity in the area, Catholics and Mexicans were the focus of its interest, not the blacks.⁶¹

On the whole, black El Pasoans were "happy with the balance" they found in a town in the South which was not Southern.⁶² El Paso resident Leona Washington states that she always had the feeling that El Paso was only waiting for the laws to be changed. There was no one who would fight to keep the signs in place and the laws in force. The law would be repealed, and "that would be that. It would be easy." It very nearly was.

Blacks had come to a desert land and they had stayed. They had made a home, a place where they could rear their children and where life could be lived in relative safety—important considerations in the turn-of-the-century decades. The names and accomplishments of these black people have largely been ignored in the recorded history of El Paso. But let it be emphasized that their presence on the far frontier of Texas helped to shape and build a thriving, multi-racial community.☆

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article was initiated in 1985, and in December of that year its original version was submitted to Dr. David Hackett in partial fulfillment of the requirements of History 3410 at The University of Texas at El Paso.

A large part of my research for the article consisted of interviews with El Pasoans who are either natives of the area or who came to the El Paso region in the early 1920s. I gratefully acknowledge all of those people who were so gracious and helpful, not only by giving me their time for interviews, but also by giving me leads and ideas: **Grant Berry, Bea Bragg, Sara Watley-Beal, Giles Bundy Grimes, Frances Hills, Ruth Nash Kling, Bruce Mathis, Ralph Smith, Viola Strait, and Bruce and Lula Mae Traylor.** I am deeply grateful to **Leona Washington.** From the beginning of my research, she encouraged my efforts, and for several months she withstood many telephone calls to help me learn the facts. I owe a special debt to **Rebecca Craver** of the University's Oral History Institute. She helped to make the interviews successful and assisted me in locating pertinent material in the Institute's library.

NOTES

1. Marilyn T. Bryan, "The Economic, Political and Social Status of the Negro in El Paso," *Password*, XIII, 3 (Fall, 1968), 75.
2. Leon C. Metz, *Dallas Stoudenmire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 2-3.
3. Bryan, 77.
4. *Directory of the City of El Paso 1889* (El Paso: El Paso Directory Company, 1889), 121, 67.
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8. See Art Leibson, "Our Town—One Century Ago," *Password*, XXXI, 3, (Fall, 1986), 152-154.
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28. Interviews with Frances Hills and Bruce Mathis.
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31. Elaine Lewis Morrell, "The Rise and Growth of Public Education in El Paso, Texas" (unpublished Master's Thesis, The University of Texas, 1936), 46.
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38. *Directory of the City of El Paso 1900*, 321, 336; Bryan, 77.
39. Interview with Bruce Mathis.
40. Fullmore, 22.
41. *Ibid.*; Interview with Frances Hills.
42. Interview with Bruce Mathis.

CHARLOTTE IVY

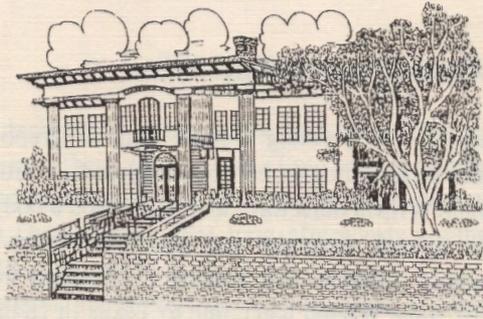
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50. *Negro Population in the United States 1790-1915* (Washington: Kraus Reprint Company, 1969), 784.
51. *Negro Population in the United States 1920-1932* (Washington: Kraus Reprint Company, 1969), 65.
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58. *El Paso Evening Tribune*, September 9, 1893; October 18, 1893.
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60. Blanche Henderson Grundy, teacher's contract with the City of El Paso 1932.
61. Shawn Lay, *War, Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan, A Study of Intolerance in a Border City* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986).
62. Interview with Viola Strait.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. A. Title of publication: *Password*
B. Publication No. 931760
2. Date of filing: October 3, 1988
3. Frequency of issue: Quarterly
A. No. of issues published annually: 4
B. Annual subscription price: w/\$20 membership
4. Location of publication: 603 W. Yandell, El Paso, TX 79902
5. Location of headquarters of publisher: 5159 Sterling Place, El Paso, TX 79932
6. Publisher: El Paso County Historical Society, 603 W. Yandell, El Paso, TX 79902; Managing Editor: N/A
7. Owner: El Paso County Historical Society
8. Known bondholders, mortgages, etc.: none
9. The purpose, function, and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal Income Tax purposes have not changed during the preceeding 12 months.
10. Extent and nature of circulation:
A. Total no. copies printed: average no. copies each issue preceeding 12 months, 950; actual no. copies of issue published nearest to filing date, 1,000
B. Paid Circulation
1. Sales through dealers, carriers, etc.: average, none; nearest filing date, none
2. Mail subscriptions: average no. copies preceeding 12 months, 858; issue preceeding filing, 901
C. Total paid circulation: same as B/2
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier, etc.: average preceeding 12 months, 57; issue nearest to filing, 60
E. Total distribution: average no. copies preceeding 12 months, 915; issue nearest to filing, 961
F. Copies not distributed
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted for, spoiled after printing: average no. copies preceeding 12 months, 35; issue nearest filing, 39
2. Return from new agents: none
G. Total: average preceeding 12 months, 950; issue nearest to filing, 1,000
11. I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete.

Lillian Collingwood, Editor



The ORDEAL of JANE ADELINE WILSON

by Wayne R. Austerman

IN THE MELLOW LIGHT OF A LATE SPRING DAWN in 1854, a government quartermaster train prepared to take the road from El Paso. The teamsters and soldiers who hurried about their chores showed even greater than normal deference to the young woman who would be traveling with them on the trail to San Antonio. She had already endured a brutal pilgrimage of over a thousand miles, and had found only suffering and tragedy along the way. This was her third visit to the Pass in the span of a few months.

The widow Jane Adeline Wilson had earlier ridden down the *Jornada del Muerto* from Santa Fe with an escort of United States Dragoons. Now an equally dangerous and far longer journey lay ahead before she could return to her home in eastern Texas. Jane was seventeen years old, but she was a girl only in terms of her years. She had spent most of the past several months astride the back of a Comanche mule, among companions who were a good deal rougher than the most uncouth muleskinner of the government train about to depart for San Antonio. Described by one

admirer as a young woman with a "prepossessing appearance...modest and unassuming in her manners, and...[with] a remarkably strong mind," Jane Wilson must have also possessed a body and spirit to match her mind. In several ways she was typical of many Western women of the time, whose gingham and homespun sheathed the steel within.

Jane Wilson had come to Texas in 1845 from earlier homes in Illinois and Missouri. Her father, William Smith, was a former ferryman who had been lured beyond the Sabine by the promise of cheap land and a new start to prosperity in the young state. The Smiths had not been long settled near Paris, in Lamar County, when three of their sons sickened and died. Within weeks the illness claimed the mother and father together, leaving the surviving four children as orphans. An older brother, who was serving with the Texas Rangers, found foster homes for the brood before he, too, died of what Jane called "the winter fever."¹

In February, 1853, she had married nineteen-year-old James Wilson, an ambitious local farmer. He was determined to settle farther west, because, as Jane put it, "We had heard that people became rich very fast in California." Seeking the dream, the entire Wilson family joined Captain Henry Hickman's emigrant company. The eighty-odd people and twenty-two wagons left Hunt County for El Paso on April 6, 1853. They trekked southwest to Dallas and Fort Worth before fording the Brazos and striking out for the thin margin of greasewood that marked the course of the Pecos. In June they were going through Guadalupe Pass when the Mescalero Apaches attacked and drove off some of their stock. Six men pursued the raiders, but were soon driven back by the Indians. By July the weary travelers had reached El Paso without further trouble.²

They found the valley settlements in an excited state. The Indians were plaguing travelers on the southern road to San Antonio, and a dispute between Governor Trias of Chihuahua and Territorial Governor Lane of New Mexico threatened to explode into war as the two officials argued over the proper course of the international boundary. The contentious atmosphere must have affected the Wilsons, for they let the Hickman train proceed to California while they remained in El Paso to await the arrival of another emigrant party. This proved to be a disastrous decision. Thieves stole much of their stock and provisions, and within a few weeks the

Dr. Wayne R. Austerman, a frequent contributor to *Password* and other historical journals, is also the author of *Sharps Rifles and Spanish Mules: The San Antonio-El Paso Mail, 1851-1881* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1985). He resides in Colorado Springs and is employed by the Office of History, United States Air Force Space Command.

discouraged fortune-seekers decided to return home to Lamar County.³ But they chose a poor time to start their journey east. Late in July another band of westering Texans had reached Ysleta after losing most of their horses to the Apaches in the Guadalupe. Not long afterwards another party was wiped out in the Guadalupe.⁴

The Wilsons had weathered one Indian raid on their trip west, and they may have been foolishly overconfident when they departed the Pass in late July. They were only a few days east of the Rio Grande when tragedy struck. On August 1, James and his father departed the train to scout ahead for Indians. "I saw them no more after this," Jane later reported. "I was told that they had been murdered. You may perhaps be able to imagine my feelings when I found myself thus bereaved and destitute in a land of strangers. My misfortune seemed greater than I could bear, but I knew not that heavier trials were in store for me."⁵

The widow, three of the young Wilson boys, and four other men returned to El Paso and remained there until September 8, when she and the boys joined Simeon Hart's freight train bound for the eastern settlements under his protection. The train rolled steadily east and northward, leaving the Mescalero range behind and entering the heart of Comancheria. The caravan was within three days' ride of Fort Phantom Hill when three of Hart's men stole horses and deserted. The angry merchant started in pursuit of the thieves, taking Jane's oldest brother-in-law and all of his hands except a Mexican teamster, who was left behind to guard Jane and the two boys, aged twelve and ten. Hart should have known better, but he must have thought that he would return shortly and that all would be well during his absence from the train.⁶

The next day the four nervous pilgrims pressed on for the fort, only to meet a Comanche war party. What followed was the beginning of a long nightmare for Jane Wilson. The braves shot and stabbed the Mexican, jerking his hair from his head while he was still alive. A laughing brave seized the teamster's hat, tossed the bloody scalp into it, and then clapped it atop his own head to the cheers and hoots of his comrades. After plundering the wagon, the Comanches put the three whites astride the mules from its team and headed northeast at a leisurely pace, seemingly contemptuous of any threat from the troops at Phantom Hill. That night the braves divided the loot and captives. Their chief adopted the older boy, another warrior claimed his brother, and Jane became the chattel of the third brave. The dazed young woman was bound and thrown to the ground between two guards to sleep if she could. The Mexican's scalp was stretched on a stick and placed by the fire to curl and dry before her

sickened eyes.⁷

The next day, the Comanches continued their course to the northeast. The two boys were mounted on good horses and were given bows and arrows. The Indians daubed their faces with warpaint. "They appeared to enjoy this new mode of life and were never treated with excessive cruelty," Jane noted, while she was forced to ride astride her mount and was soon chafed and bleeding on her thighs. Other humiliations followed. Her lush mane of hair was roughly cropped and the braves plaited the shorn locks into their own scalps, leaving the bareheaded prisoner cruelly exposed to the sun. The next eleven days blurred together for the girl in an unceasing round of fear and abuse, "so severe as to take from me all desire to live." When a squaw and several other braves joined the band in its seemingly endless journey, things grew even worse for her.⁸

The horse she rode was exchanged for an unbroken mule that was skittish and rough-gaited. The Comanche chieftain delighted in waving the Mexican's scalp in the animal's eyes, which always sent it into a fit of rearing and bucking. Jane was constantly being thrown from her mount. One fall knocked her senseless for a time, and she was revived by being prodded with the point of a lance and blows from quirts. "You may understand one object the Indians had in view in putting me on this wild animal and causing me to be thrown so often," she wrote, "when I tell you that I expected to become a mother in a few weeks."⁹

Starved, beaten, and worked to exhaustion as a camp slave, Jane could only strive to live from day to day. "They seemed to study every method of putting me to death by piecemeal," she wrote. "Every indignity was offered to my person which the imagination can conceive. And I am at a loss to know how I lived through all the barbarous treatment which was inflicted upon me." The terror and suffering she bore left their marks, but they also nurtured in her a life-sustaining hatred of the chief, "and I thought if I could only cut him to pieces I could die content."¹⁰

On the dawn of her twenty-fifty day in captivity, the Indians ordered her to start ahead of them while they finished their breakfast in camp. If they thought her body and spirit had been broken, they were badly mistaken. Jane bolted from the trail and sought a hiding place. Perhaps the Comanches expected her to die soon, for they made no determined effort to find her. She was free again, but lacked so much as a blanket or a piece of flint to kindle a fire.¹¹ After remaining hidden for three days, the starving fugitive built a brush shelter and lived for nine days on a diet of hackberries and springwater. It rained for seven of those nights in succession, and she spent many sleepless hours watching packs of prairie

wolves circle the flimsy hut. On the twelfth day of her escape she hiked to the crest of a nearby hill and saw a group of Mexican traders, who quickly took her under their care. However, she had unknowingly placed herself in terrible danger. Her presumed saviors were Comancheros.¹²

The Comancheros were practitioners of an ancient and illicit trade of the Plains. As early as the 1640s, enterprising, if unscrupulous, merchants had ridden east from the New Mexico settlements to seek out the Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches to trade for slaves and stock taken in raids below the Rio Grande. Regular rendezvous sites were soon in use, and the rutted trails cut by the merchants' ox carts can still be seen in many places above the caprock escarpment of the Llano Estacado. The coming of American sovereignty over the region changed nothing. In 1849, Indian Agent John S. Calhoun wrote from Santa Fe to his Washington superiors: "it is through the medium of these traders that arms and ammunition are supplied to the Indians who refuse submission to our authority. These traders go where they please without being subject to the slightest risk."¹³

The men who found Jane Wilson probably did a rapid mental calculation of the profit to be made in each of the options available to them concerning her. Their leader had not prospered in his trade through philanthropy or sentiment. He knew that returning the girl to her captors might well sweeten his dealings with the tribesmen. On the other hand, a ransom or a reward might also be gained for her in Santa Fe. Luckily for Jane, he decided to take her back to civilization.

Clad in men's clothes and a serape, the girl traveled with the caravan for several days until a Comanche village was sighted in the distance. The Comancheros hid her in a ravine and promised to return for her that night. At midnight she was still waiting, and fearing abandonment or betrayal, she started out for the Mexicans' camp on foot. She had gone only a short distance when an Indian passed within twenty yards of her. Seeking cover, she waited nervously for the dawn. In the morning she encountered the train's stockherder, a Pueblo Indian named Juan Jose, who quickly made her stretch out on the ground while he piled a mound of dried grass atop her. She passed that day and another night there, hearing the Comanches pass within a few paces as they traded with the camp. The herdsman kept her fed and hidden for another day, and then told her that the caravan was moving on in company with the Indians and that she would have to remain there for another eight days before they could return for her.¹⁴

"I saw the party disappear the next day, and it seemed as if my hopes of rescue disappeared with them," Jane recounted. "But I resolved to wait until the appointed time was up." A cache of bread, the shelter of a hollow

cottonwood stump, and the ubiquitous hackberries kept her alive through the cold days and freezing nights until the Comancheros returned on the ninth day. She was then given a good horse to ride and was treated with the "utmost civility and kindness."

After another five weeks on the trail, the caravan reached the settlement at Pecos, New Mexico. Major James J. Carleton of the First United States Dragoons took her into the local garrison's care. The white woman's safe return from Indian captivity was cause for great excitement and celebration among the settlers. Governor David Meriwether sent his son and an official escort to bring her into Santa Fe. She was shown all possible aid and kindness there as she recovered from her ordeal. The Comancheros had seen her young brothers-in-law among the Indians, but had not been able to buy their freedom. While Jane hoped that "the strong arm of the Government" might yet rescue them, the odds were that she would never see them again. For herself, she could only tell the Santa Feans that "the past seems like a horrid dream."

Battered and exhausted as she was, Jane Wilson must have realized that she was fortunate to have survived. Her arrival in Santa Fe stirred memories of other white women who had been slain or abducted by the Indians. Only a year before, one traveler had reported meeting a Mescalero Apache chieftain in the mountains east of El Paso whose lance was decorated with the long, blond scalp of an emigrant woman.¹⁵

After a lengthy rest in Santa Fe, the widow journeyed down the Rio Grande to El Paso. When the quartermaster's train carried her away from the Pass for the last time, she must have wondered what terrors might await her on that journey. However, she arrived in San Antonio after a safe passage, and then took a stage to Bonham to reach her old home.¹⁶

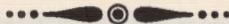
By a remarkable stroke of luck her two young brothers-in-law were located by a group of Indian traders and subsequently were ransomed by the government. The boys' transition back to civilized life was most probably a good deal easier than Jane's. With luck and the balm of time, her physical and emotional scars may have healed. Perhaps she married again and found lasting happiness. More likely than not, though, a shadow covered the rest of her life. While all of her rescuers and the journalists who penned her story were unanimous in praising her breeding and character, few women who returned from Indian captivity ever achieved full acceptance by their peers again. Jane Wilson had never spelled out the details of her degradation by the Comanches, but rape and the cruel gossip it could engender often made a woman both pitied and shunned. The social mores of the period were not always kind, fair, or understand-

ing to women who had endured her sort of experience.¹⁷

The suspicion lingers that Jane Wilson's spirit survived intact. Somewhere on the course of that brutal odyssey between the Pecos and Santa Fe, she had learned a salient truth of the frontier: to endure was to survive, and to survive was to triumph.☆

NOTES

1. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854; *Texas State Gazette*, October 7, 1854, quoting the *Bonham Advertiser*, n. d.
2. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854.
3. *Texas State Gazette*, April 16, 1853; *Clarksville Northern Standard*, May 7, 1853; *Missouri Republican*, October 6, 1853.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854.
6. *Ibid.*; *Texas State Gazette*, October 7, 1854.
7. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854; *Missouri Republican*, January 26, 1854.
8. *Ibid.*; *Texas State Gazette*, October 7, 1854.
9. *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*; *Texas State Gazette*, October 7, 1854.
13. *Ibid.*; W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo New Mexico and Her People* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), 248-49. For useful studies of the Comancheros see J. Evetts Haley, "The Comanchero Trade," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII, No. 3 (January, 1935), 157-76; James M. Foster, Jr., "Fort Bascom, New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XXXV, No. 1 (January, 1960), 30-62; J. D. Rittenhouse, *Maverick Tales* (New York: Winchester Press, 1971), 135-54, 234-36.
14. *Texas State Gazette*, October 7, 1854.
15. *Ibid.*; *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 2, 1854; Davis, 248-51; Julius Froebel, *Seven Years Travel in Central America, Northern Mexico and the Far West of the United States* (London: n. p., 1859), II: 462; *Missouri Republican*, September 27, 1854; January 26, 1854.
16. There were some discrepancies and omissions in the various newspaper accounts of the incident. In her narrative published by the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, Jane Wilson allegedly said that the Indian attack took place near Fort Phantom Hill, Texas. The later versions appearing in the Austin and Bonham journals placed it in the vicinity of Fort Belknap, a post considerably farther to the north. The Mexican teamster who was stabbed, scalped, and left for dead amazingly survived and reached Fort Belknap.
17. For comments on the treatment of captives, see T. R. Fehrenback, *Comanches The Destruction of a People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 177, 211-13, 253-58, 286-90, 325-26, 329-30, 339, 375, 490-91, 526; Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Comanches Lords of the South Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 241 f., 259, 261 ff., 271, 321. Excellent first-person accounts of Comanche captives can be found in Nelson Lee, *Three Years Among the Comanches* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), and A. C. Greene (ed.), *The Last Captive* (Austin: Encino Press, 1972). The best work on the subject remains Carl C. Rister, *Border Captives The Traffic in Prisoners by Southern Plains Indians, 1835-1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1940). Rister's account of the Wilson incident occupies pp. 88-97.



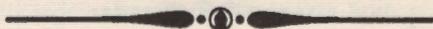
❧ The YEAR'S BEST ❧

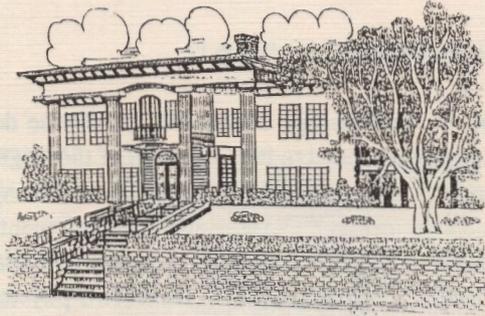
The *Password* editorial board takes this opportunity to thank all of the writers who contributed articles and reviews to the 1989 issues. And it is pleased to announce that the 1989 Eugene O. Porter Memorial Award has been presented to **Mary Bowling** for her article "Linclon Park School: A Brief History and a Fictional Memoir," which appeared in the Spring issue. This \$100 award was established by *Password* editor Conrey Bryson in memory of Dr. Eugene O. Porter, the journal's founding editor. Financed by gifts to the Historical Society, it is given annually to the author of the article which, in the opinion of the editorial board, constitutes the year's especially outstanding contribution to the record of this region's history. Mary Bowling, who presently resides in Cambria, California, spent her childhood and youth in El Paso. She is a graduate of El Paso High School, and she holds a B. A. degree from Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy (now The University of Texas at El Paso).

Several other articles were cited by the board for their excellent scholarship and interesting presentation: "Letters to Jenny: A 'Self-Portrait' of Benjamin Franklin Coons" by **Myra McLarey** (Summer), "Lydia Patterson Institute: A Living Memorial" by **Clinton P. Hartmann** (Fall), "The Missourians and the Battle of Brazito" by **Phillip Thomas Tucker** (Winter), and "The Cemetery Trail: A Tour of History and Tradition in the El Paso Valley" by **Marta Estrada** (Fall).

Further, each of the year's three articles in the "A Time to Remember" category was commended for its sensitive evocation of a local bygone ambience: "Growing Up in Five Points" by **J. Harry Miskimins, M. D.** (Summer), "EXTRA! EXTRA! World War II Hits the Streets of El Paso" by **Robert L. Reid** (Fall), and "That Magic Land: A Kern Place Boyhood" by **David W. Tappan** (Winter). As for the biographical pieces, the board was unanimous in its selection of "William Michie Coldwell: Pioneer Lawyer and Civic Leader" by **Ida W. Coldwell** (Fall).

The editorial board also expresses its special gratitude to **Damon Garbern** for his spirited quarterly reports on "The News at the Pass—One Century Ago" and to **Art Leibson** for illuminating some of the dark corners of the area's history in his series of articles on unsolved crimes. ☆





The EL PASO MEDICAL CENTER

by Henry D. Garrett, M.D.

SOON AFTER WORLD WAR II, THE AGGRAVATION of a trip to the office of a physician or dentist made patients feel worse than they had felt before leaving home. The vast majority of such doctors occupied offices in the central city, not only in El Paso but in most urban areas. Because planning had not kept pace with the population explosion of the 1940s, traffic congestion and inadequate parking plagued almost all cities of any considerable size. In 1950 a group of physicians and dentists in Albuquerque solved these problems by constructing professional offices outside the central city. Adequate parking was provided as well as limitation of the buildings to one-story structures, thus obviating the need for elevators.

In 1951 several local doctors formulated a goal for a similar plan in El Paso. Two physicians led this sharp departure from the past—Maurice P. Spearman and Leigh E. Wilcox. Other trail-blazing participants were Robert F. Boverie, M. D.; Wickliffe R. Curtis, M. D.; J. Leighton Green, M. D.; Brice W. Schuller, D. D. S.; O. J. Shaffer, D. D. S.; Leslie M. Smith,

HENRY D. GARRETT, M.D.

M. D.; and George Turner, M. D. These doctors are commemorated on a plaque attached to the front wall of the original Medical Center Pharmacy and commending "their vision and untiring efforts in creation of this medical center." Additional special mention should be made of the advisory building committee chairmen—Robert B. Homan, Jr., M. D., and Orville E. Egbert, M. D. These two physicians were in the forefront of a group which first took a critical look at possible sites for the center and recommended Golden Hill Terrace, the eventual choice.

All physicians and dentists practicing in the El Paso area were invited to participate in the project. Some were skeptical about making such a bold move, but the persuasive enthusiasm exhibited by the pioneering group resulted in genuine interest by some 75 doctors. After several open meetings of doctors with advisory architectural and construction experts, many hours of frank discussion, and frequent mailings of information to interested parties, 51 physicians and dentists eventually became stockholders in the resulting Medical Center Corporation and were thereby entitled to occupy offices in the original complex. Within the next few years, as the success of the project became evident, a sizeable additional number of professionals joined the corporation and moved to the center.

Preparation of the site chosen by the architects at 1501 Arizona Street began in early 1952, the land having been purchased from J. E. Morgan



Leigh E. Wilcox, M.D. (Photo courtesy Mrs. Leigh E. Wilcox)

and Sons. The site was selected because of its central location to the city's population and to local hospitals. Powerful earth-moving machines were used to convert the rugged southernmost slope of the Franklin Mountains into a 19-acre plateau. Bounded on the south by Arizona Street, on the east by Golden Hill Terrace, and on the north by Cliff Street, the larger 16-acre area was the site for the one-story buildings of the complex. The smaller portion lying north of Cliff Street became known as "the Panhandle," and the Medical Center Plaza was built on this plot

Dr. Henry D. Garrett, a retired El Paso physician, is a frequent contributor to Password. He and Mrs. Garrett are charter members of the Historical Society and currently serve the organization as its Membership Secretaries.

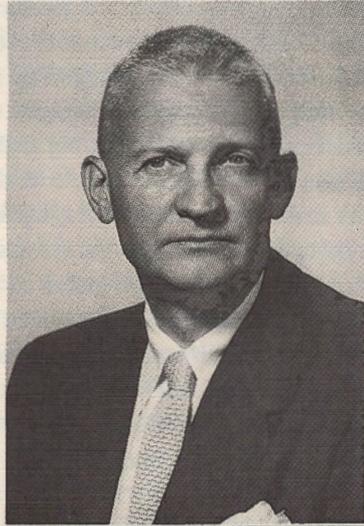
several years later.

An attorney of wide corporate experience, Louis A. Scott, Sr., served as legal counsel for the Medical Center Corporation and wrote its charter. Financing on an interim basis during construction was furnished by the State National Bank and the long-term financing by a loan from Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. The initial cost was approximately \$1.2M, and the capital investment increased over the years as more doctors became stockholders.

Pereira and Luckman, Los Angeles architects with extensive experience elsewhere in developing medical/dental facilities, designed the buildings in a distinctive southwestern character. From the beginning of construction, a representative of the firm was present at the building site to supervise construction and to make any changes requested by prospective tenants. R. E. McKee General Contractors, Inc., of El Paso built the complex. Mr. McKee took a personal interest in the enterprise, attending many of the planning sessions to give advice and also frequently visiting the site to insure proper construction. Paul F. Deisler, a management consultant, performed valuable service as executive secretary to the corporation, both before the center was constructed and for the first years of its existence.

El Paso architects Davis and Foster designed the commercial section which contained a pharmacy, an orthopedic brace shop, an attractive cafeteria, and a maintenance shop. W. U. Paul and B. A. Harris, Pharmacists well known in El Paso, operated the pharmacy; and Gerald Wolfe was in charge of the cafeteria. The shop building housed the Center's business office and a well-equipped facility for maintenance of all the mechanical, plumbing, and electrical functions in the medical center.

The ground-breaking ceremony to begin construction of the original complex took place on January 29, 1953. The nine buildings were occupied and officially opened on May 15, 1954. Constructed of concrete block stuccoed on the outside, all single-story and air-conditioned, the buildings were widely separated so as to accommodate additions to the



Maurice P. S. Spearman, M.D.

suites if desired at a later time. Parking for more than 600 cars was provided, and buses with convenient schedules served the new medical center. Each suite had been tailored to the needs of the individual doctor-tenant, the suites then arranged by the architects into individual buildings according to the square footages and configurations to create the best overall design. Each building had a large central lobby into which the individual suites opened. Two of the buildings were occupied entirely by x-ray and clinical laboratories, one by Drs. Mason, Hart and associates and the other by Dr. George Turner and associates. In all, 51 physicians and dentists occupied the 36 suites in the original center.

Stockholder-tenants purchased stock in the Medical Center Corporation represented by the square footage of space occupied by the respective tenant, and rent was paid to the parent corporation which served as landlord. Annual elections by the stockholders chose the directors for three-year terms. The directors in turn elected the officers for the corporation from the members of the board. As is true in all corporations, the diversity of opinions expressed by stockholders absorbed many hours of consideration by the directors, and great tact was required to preserve the rules of proper management and yet maintain friendships and good professional relationships between the tenants and the board members.

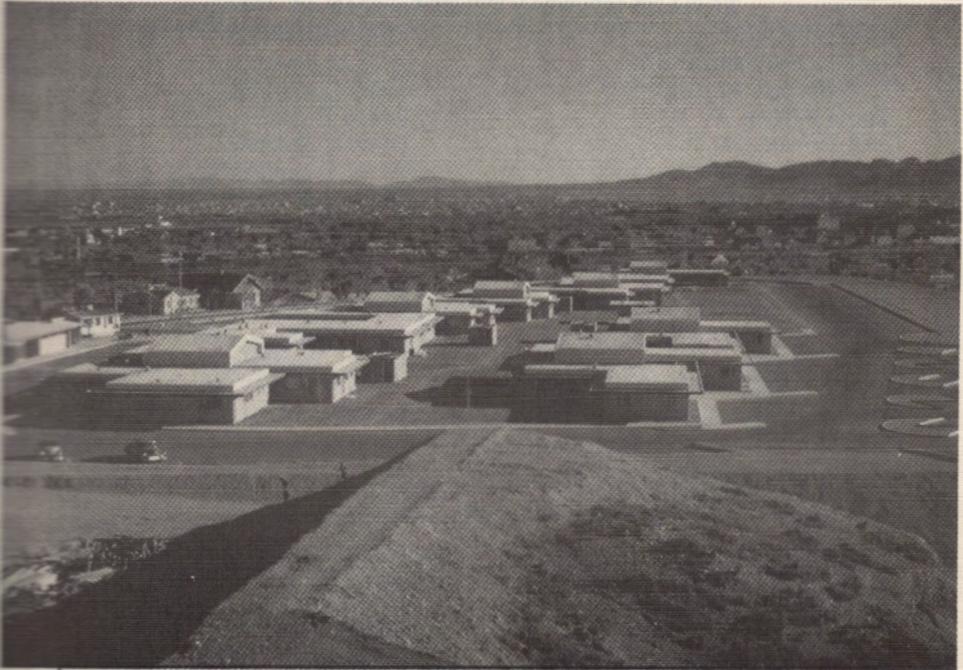
Notable among those making significant contributions to the success of the El Paso Medical Center was Lyon Francis, building engineer and general superintendent. In addition to his maintenance duties and keeping everyone in the center happy, he beautified the bare hill remaining when the dirt had been moved. His planting preserved the southwestern atmosphere by use of hundreds of cholla, sotol, yucca, Spanish dagger, and barrel cacti, as well as greasewood. Palo verde, Russian olive, juniper, Balm of Gilead, Italian cypress and poplar trees were scattered around; and every available space exhibited flowers, such as roses, zinnias, sweet peas, petunias, and chrysanthemums in seasonal rotation. Brilliant bougainvillae brightened many of the lobbies. His greenhouse on the grounds facilitated the planting and in itself was a thing of beauty.

By 1958 four new buildings had been added to the original complex and in the next few years two more were constructed, making a total of 15 single-story buildings in use by professionals in the original 16-acre area. The parking space was enlarged to accommodate over 900 cars, and some of the original suites had already been enlarged. The need for additional office space prompted the erection of a five-level, four-story Medical Center Plaza on the "Panhandle" property at a cost of \$1.3 M. Ground was broken for the building on May 17, 1971. Construction was

completed and the dedication occurred on December 10, 1972. Pellati and Herrera designed this building, and R. D. Lowman and Company performed the construction, both of them El Paso firms. Adequate parking was assured by the creation of a garage beneath the surface parking area east of the building. Thirty doctors occupied this new building when it opened; this number, added to the 79 in the original complex, made a total of 109 physicians and dentists practicing in the El Paso Medical Center.

The success of the Center in its favorable location attracted so many related medical facilities that most of the available land in that area is now covered with buildings and parking spaces. A cancer treatment center, two general hospitals, several office buildings for doctors and ancillary medical services, and a rehabilitation center are some of the numerous facilities now occupying the outskirts of the original 19-acre plateau. From this concentration of medical functions, the nickname "Pill Hill" for this section quite naturally arose.

Because of the increasing disparity in the ages of the stockholders of the Medical Center Corporation, marked differences in financial goals and attitudes about management became apparent in the 1970s. After much



El Paso Medical Center immediately after completion in 1954.

(Photo courtesy Henry D. Garrett, M.D.)

debate, the corporation's entire properties were put on the market, and several offers were forthcoming. By action of the stockholders on October 20, 1976, sale of the properties was made to Equity Associated Incorporated, represented by John Carson, for \$3.6 M. This sum represented a reasonable profit to stockholders, who then became renters.

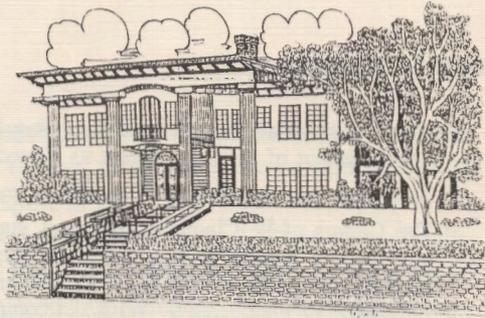
During the 24 years of its existence, the Medical Center Corporation accomplished most of its original goals by creating a medical center with adequate, convenient parking and located in a spacious, accessible area. Further, the variety of medical specialties practicing in the center allowed the doctors easy access to most consultants, unless the patient chose to visit consultants elsewhere. As one of the youngest physicians to practice in the medical center from its beginning, the author feels privileged to have been part of this medical history in El Paso. ☆

NOTE: Special thanks are due **Maurice P. Spearman, M.D.**, who contributed not only personal knowledge of these events in conversation, but allowed use of a scrapbook in which he preserved every bit of information about the El Paso Medical Center Corporation from the time the idea was conceived until the termination of ownership by the stockholders.

ROSTER OF PHYSICIANS AND DENTISTS
EL PASO MEDICAL CENTER - MAY 15, 1954

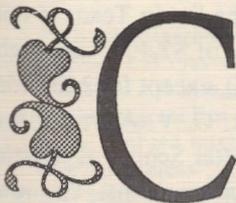
Chester Awe, M. D.	M. S. Hart, M. D.
Herbert Bell, M. D.	H. D. Hatfield, M. D.
R. J. Bennett, M. D.	Ralph Homan, M. D.
Travis Bennett, M. D.	Robert B. Homan, Jr., M. D.
Jack Bernard, M. D.	Edmund P. Jones, M. D.
Gordon Black, M. D.	W. A. Jones, M. D.
Clement C. Boehler, M. D.	Gerald Jordan, M. D.
Robert F. Boverie, M. D.	A. E. Lockett, M. D.
J. D. Bozzell, M. D.	Truett Maddox, D. D. S.
Ira Budwig, M. D.	Howard Marshall, M. D.
Basil Byrne, M. D.	C. H. Mason, M. D.
David M. Cameron, M. D.	Robert Parkins, D. D. S.
Arlin B. Cooper, M. D.	Jack C. Postlewaite, M. D.
Branch Craige, M. D.	Philip M. Prieto, M. D.
C. L. Cunningham, D. D. S.	John Puckett, D. D. S.
Wickliffe R. Curtis, M. D.	S. Perry Rogers, M. D.
H. W. Demarest, M. D.	W. W. Schuessler, M. D.
Russell L. Deter, M. D.	Brice W. Schuller, D. D. S.
Orville E. Egbert, M. D.	O. J. Shaffer, D. D. S.
Harold Eidinoff, M. D.	Roy Slack, D. D. S.
D. W. Ewalt, M. D.	Leslie M. Smith, M. D.
Joe R. Floyd, M. D.	M. P. Spearman, M. D.
H. D. Garrett, M. D.	George Turner, M. D.
Frank C. Golding, M. D.	Delphin von Briesen, M. D.
J. Leighton Green, M. D.	Charles E. Webb, M. D.

Leigh E. Wilcox, M. D.



The NEWS at the PASS— ONE CENTURY AGO (January-March, 1890)

by Damon Garbern



CONTRARY TO THE BELIEFS OF MANY UNINFORMED persons in the east, El Paso is not without its refined society and religious advantages," trumpeted the *El Paso Times* in its January 1 issue of 1890. In a special New Year's edition, the *Times* journalists had produced a panegyric to the city hoping to overcome the "bad rep" El Paso had as a haven for outlaws because of its proximity to Mexico and its "Wild West" atmosphere engendered by the arrival in the 1880s of so many notorious gunslingers. Here at the beginning of the new decade, the newspaper tried to show El Paso's saintlier side by listing the churches and statistics about each one:

The Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1882, has 113 members with 120 in Sunday School...and an elegant building costing \$9,000 and almost paid for.

First Baptist Church has 91 members with 100 in Sunday School.

First Presbyterian Church with a membership of 50 and 150 in Sunday School is out of debt and meets its financial obligations promptly.

The Christian Church has 22 members and is planning...a building.

The Church of St. Clement, Episcopal, started in 1887, has had natural and healthy growth having increased membership 70%. While dispensing aid to local charity, it also embraces most of our prominent citizens in its membership. With 124 communicants, its income in 1889 was \$3,218.00.

The Catholics have a substantial, well-located church with a good membership in charge of Father DePalma. It has always been the forerunner of civilization, especially here in the southwest.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church and Second Baptist Church, colored, are small but active congregations.

It does not appear that a total church membership of some 500 could do much to leaven the influence of, say, a dozen sharpshooters, assorted "soiled doves," and countless saloons and cantinas. But the *Times* did try to remove the tarnish:

The idea that this border town is altogether one of lawlessness and disorder is hereby disputed. The law abiding tendency of its citizens compares favorably with cities of similar size in the not over moral east.

The paper next tried to display the school system to its best advantage. In the school year which had begun on September 2, 1889, the schools would expend the staggering amount of \$20,901.65 with the average teacher's salary an astounding \$886 "which heads the list in Texas if not in all the US." The superintendent received a salary of \$2,400; the high school principal, \$1,200; teachers from \$750 to \$900, except for Miss Ida Arnold, music teacher, who received \$450, and Mr. O. V. Aoy, teacher of the Mexican preparatory school, \$450. The Central School at Myrtle and Campbell boasted five classrooms and three recitation rooms. The new Mesa Building, clear out of town at Montana and Ochoa (site of the YMCA today), would begin with four classrooms—and more to be added soon. The Mexican school had rented room at San Francisco and Chihuahua, and the black pupils had rented room on South Stanton Street. The value of all school property totaled \$50,600. In addition to the usual readin', writin', and 'rithmetic, El Paso schools offered bookkeeping (required to insure that all students would be able to function in the business world) and calisthenics "to impart graceful movement." Drawing, vocal music, higher

Damon Garbern, a native of El Paso and a graduate of Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso), serves the El Paso Independent School District as Consultant, Vocal Music-Theatre Arts.

mathematics, Latin, Greek, and Spanish were available to interested students, and Cadet Guard was offered to the larger boys who wanted to pursue activities in the manly sport of war.

Culture and philanthropy were not neglected in El Paso at the beginning of the new decade. The El Paso Benevolent Society began a hospital in cooperation with the County and the Smelter: one ward for county patients; one for Smelter patients; one for charity patients, and two wards for paying customers. The *Times* also reported that Adelina Patti, the great diva, would be passing through El Paso on her private train, which was composed of Madame Patti's boudoir car, her private car, two hotel cars, a smoking car, a baggage car, and three tourist cars for the chorus. She would make a stop in El Paso and would sing if the city fathers found \$8,000 to pay her. The city fathers did not have any such funds, and El Paso citizens could only wave to the diva should she deign to look from the window of one of her cars. And thus were the citizens of El Paso exposed to Culture in the early days of 1890.

The El Paso women were not backwards nor backwoods. They had ample opportunity to keep abreast of current fashions and fashionable customs, especially if they were readers of the *Times*. Olive Hayes, the New York correspondent, was featured in regular columns to report on the latest fashion finds. However, in the New Year's special edition, the *Times* editor took exception to a fashion idea that was then receiving acclaim in Europe:

Perfumed cigarettes are advertised in the Parisian market....this is an evil fashion and one which we hope will not be adopted this side of the Atlantic.... A kiss is the most delicious thing in the world if administered by the fragrant lips of a pretty woman and if unadulterated by ought save love. But we might as well kiss a cigarette as press the pretty mouth of a "smokeress".... We are confident that none but predestined old maids will yield to this Parisian seduction.

Fortunately, the El Paso of a hundred years ago was not solely concerned with Parisian cigarettes and greedy divas. In spite of the hype offered by the press concerning the wonders of the city (climate, agriculture, mining), the El Paso citizen at the dawn of a new year was concerned with the mundane matter of taxes—and the avoidance thereof. With the city in debt (all of \$20,000) and a new school to finish paying for plus new school construction needed to care for all varieties of scholastics (white, black, and brown), the city property owner was facing a rather bleak future. The yuppies of that day, eager to build a metropolis in the desert, felt their chances to develop the city would be handicapped by high

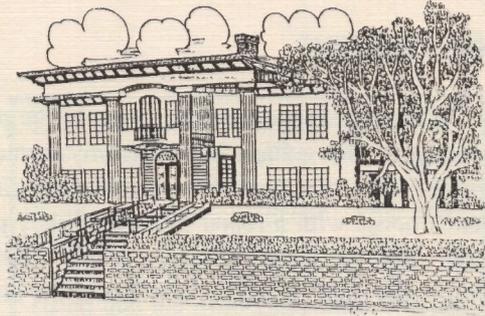
taxes. Yes, a taxpayers revolt one century ago! The movers and shakers of the time felt the only solution lay in a bond election, "the cheapest and most effective mode to advancing the city's prosperity."

Several citizens spoke in favor of the bonds. Judge Magoffin: "That is the only way we can do anything for the city without burdening the people with taxation." Mayor Rand: "I do not think the entire cost of permanent improvements should be saddled upon the present tax payers but should be distributed as to make future beneficiaries of such improvement pay something towards the cost." G. E. Hubbard: "I want to see the city own its own water and gas works and not be dictated to by a corporation."

The bond election included three propositions: Public School building, facilities, and administration - \$30,000; City indebtedness - \$20,000; and a Waterworks - \$75,000. The results of the election showed 166 votes for the bonds and 29 votes against. However, the election did not resolve the issue. According to some city officials, the city charter was interpreted to mean that a bond election could be decided only by a majority of the eligible voters. These officials pointed out that there were 537 eligible voters and that therefore 269 votes—for or against—were needed to settle the outcome. This argument was followed by the usual brouhaha concerning any El Paso election. To be safe, a second election was held and the bonds passed handily, 323-22.

The tax question settled, El Paso entered a fairly routine period. Not too much excited the average citizen in February. Jay Gould was in town for a few days, an event which caused all sorts of rumors about speculation, new businesses, another boom. However, the "cultured, unassuming, and entertaining gentleman" was only in town on some personal business. Coincidentally, street evangelists arrived about the same time as Mr. Gould and could be seen "laboring with El Paso sinners in front of Kohlberg's store last evening."

Then March arrived, and with it not just the first robin (sparrow?) of spring, but the coming of municipal elections. The current group of council members were just beginning to warm their council seats after the double election of 1889 when the new mayor and aldermen didn't get seated until late summer. However, the city charter stood firm: March was the time to prepare for the forthcoming election. The loyal party regulars began gearing up for another typical "non-partisan" El Paso election. In the little west Texas town of El Paso, things definitely were lively in the third month of the Gay Nineties. ☆



• A TIME TO REMEMBER •

The VALENTINE

by Mary Bowling

“London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down,
Falling down.”

W

THE CHILDREN, WERE SIGNING IN A GAME as we wound under the arm arch of two who clasped hands. We were of various sizes, from little Pedro in his blue overalls to Estella, tall and gangly. How many were we that noon in front of the school so long ago? Ten? Fourteen? I don't know, but it was St. Valentine's Day and we were happy with expectation of the party to come that afternoon.

Our world at Finlay, Texas, was small but infinite. Small, in that it was composed of the school, a tiny railroad station painted deep yellow, the train tracks, and on the other side of these, the corrals of the Norsworthy's ranch, sheds for cow, chickens, pigs and horses, and the ranch house of raw wood with a steep roof made as though for alpine snows. Scattered not far away were adobe houses with flat roofs where families of the ranch hands and railroad-section workers lived.

Our world was infinite, in that outside the ranch structures extended the desert, vast and desolate to the horizon's ring of pale blue mountains.

Our songs were the only music in the place. I don't recall a cowboy singing or any guitar. In reality, my memories of cowboys are few and vague. One is of thin, bronzed men wearing gray hats, riding up to the ranch house with a roped calf which they proceeded to brand with a hot iron. Another is of a Saturday night. Through the window of the ranch house, the odor of coffee, and below the oil lamp with its painted flower base and amber shade suspended from the ceiling were the cowboys seated around a table eating beans with their knives! Behind them, Estella was frying tortillas on the black stove. Outside, the murmur of their voices was dissipated in the silence of the desert from which came only the sound of wind, the creaking of wood, and the sad whistle of a distant train.

My recollection of the school is clearer—a large shed of weather-raked planks. Did it have a door that would shut? It had to have one, but the door was always open to admit light when we were inside the single room. Light from the door revealed the teacher's desk, a great chart, a reed organ, and across from these, in the shadows, the pupils' desks (wooden tops joined by a configuration of wrought iron to wooden seats) and a large rear window with sand-powdered panes.

The great chart, suspended from a wrought iron pedestal, was a thick sheaf of leaves mounted on linen containing illustrations for lessons in geography, botany, anatomy, geometry, history, penmanship, and art. Perhaps in its heavy pages was the sum of all human knowledge.

We especially liked the small organ with its rococo form and mys-



Some of the children who attended the school at Finlay, Texas, as they posed for a snapshot in 1921. George Norsworthy is on the extreme right, back row. The oldest pupil, named Clara, is in the sunbonnet. The little girl wearing a sombrero is Mary Rita Chang, later Mary Bowling and the author of "The Valentine." (Photo courtesy Mary Bowling)

terious buttons each inscribed with faded script—*violin, flute, choir, bass*.... With the rancher's wife in blue sunbonnet playing (she alone understood the intricacies of foot pumping the instrument), we gathered around it to sing of "frost on the pumpkin," "white and drifted snow," "My Bonnie," and "America, O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, For

EDITOR'S NOTE: The railroad community called Finlay was located 22 miles west of Sierra Blanca on what is now the Southern Pacific railroad. The 1952 edition of the *Handbook of Texas* reported Finlay's population as 100 and stated that the hamlet had been founded in the late 1890s by J. R. Finlay, an early settler. Today the population is 0, and all that remains of Finlay—except for soda pop lids, rusty shards of tin cans, and broken glass—is a tiny railroad house containing switches and signals operated by remote control from Houston.

purple mountain majesties...." In the large print of worn books, we read stories of "The crooked little old lady who lived in a crooked little old house on a crooked little old hill," and of "Chicken Little" who said that the sky was falling.

We lived in America the beautiful, with spacious skies and purple mountains, and we believed that on the other side of these—and faraway—were "the frost," "the snow," "the pumpkins,"—perhaps in the wavy space colored pink on the great chart map with the unpronounceable, too-large name S W I T Z E R L A N D.

The school had a closet beside the teacher's desk guarded with a rusty padlock. Inside were the precious supplies for the whole year: pencils, tablets, crayons, paste and things for parties—all sent for months ahead of time from the mail-order catalog. The form attached to the center of the catalog was filled out after much deliberation, then placed in the leather mail pouch picked up by the train; and after many weeks stretched long by anticipation, a huge box covered in brown paper would be delivered from the train into the upreaching arms of adults from the ranch.

The teacher had opened the closet door several mornings before St. Valentine's Day, which day had been marked on the cough syrup calendar with a red heart on the month leaf below the black numerals 1921. The materials for making decorations and cards had been distributed amongst us. The furious activity began. We were shown how to pleat paper to cut into lace, to make hearts from the folded backs of our red "Big Chief" tablet covers saved for this occasion, and to ruffle crepe paper for edging.

Mary Bowling is an artist who lives in Cambria, California. She holds a B.A. degree from Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy (now The University of Texas at El Paso) and an M.S. degree from the University of Southern California.

During these endeavors, I saw *IT*. The heart for the base had been made from a sheet of pencil paper with the blue lines running vertically and in absolute symmetry with its round and perfect form. In the center was pasted a colored illustration cut with great care from the label of a tin can. The picture was of a crystal compote containing a fruit salad crowned with a cherry. Printed in pencil block letters around the salad was BE MY VALENTINE. I was overwhelmed with desire to possess this treasure. The image of it filled my thoughts, and it seemed impossible that THE VALENTINE should not be destined for me.

Finally! The afternoon of the party!

The teacher rang the bell. What joy! Our magic dancing chain broke, and we rushed into the schoolhouse, a few pausing for a drink of water from the tin cup chained to the hand pump. How beautiful the classroom was, festooned with twisted crepe paper streamers! There was also a "Post Office" constructed out of an old sheet tacked to wooden framing with a hole cut out for the window. Here, into a carton covered with white crepe paper which had a red heart on the front and a slot in the top, we were instructed to mail our valentines.

There was a postmaster, the most advanced student in reading, and a postman, George, the Norsworthy's only child, who was age ten and knew everyone's name. The Postmaster opened the carton and the Postman approached the window to ask, "Is there any mail for me today?" The Postmaster looked into the box and answered, "Yes, there is some," and handed over a few cards calling out the names on them. The mailman then delivered the cards to the appropriate desks and returned to ask again for the mail. And so the afternoon continued. Occasionally, to heighten the suspense, the Postmaster pretended that the box was empty. "Oh! Oh!"

But then, a miracle! Feeling around inside the box, the Postmaster would come up with another fistful of cards.

I had watched vigilantly every card delivered for THE VALENTINE of my desire and had received a sufficiency of valentines, some readymade from the faraway and printed with gold. But the afternoon light shifted to shadow on the dusty window glass, and the final real emptiness of the box was announced. The impossible had happened! THE VALENTINE was not to be mine.

I demanded to look into the mailbox and felt around in its interior. Nothing! Nor was I to see THE VALENTINE again, for if I had been able to find its possessor, what I would have given in exchange! All of my cards, an orange celluloid button, a tin snapper cricket, and even my best shiny rock. ☆



TRAGEDY in SMELTERTOWN

by Art Leibson

IN MODERN THINKING, LITTLE ATTENTION IS PAID BY the news media to the niceties when reporters get hold of a rape case chockful of melodrama. Everything goes, including graphic descriptions of the circumstances. But in the early part of the century, when Victorianism still held a rather tenuous grip on our public and private lives, the subject was strictly taboo. The police did their job when such cases occurred, while the press dutifully looked the other way and never reported such unspeakable activities.

That all changed very suddenly when an El Paso County rape was coupled with such a horrible murder that it could not be ignored. It was so brutal that the case was blazoned across the front pages of the local press for several days and was also carried in big black headlines by the nation's news media.

For weeks the search for suspects brought more headlines. Each day new suspects were questioned as ten separate squads of investigators were assigned to work on the crime. Years later, when Chris P. Fox was sheriff, one suspect was kept in jail for nearly a year before he finally was released for lack of evidence. For many years, in a back room of the Sheriff's Department, there existed a massive file of reports on the investigation continuing in the case. El Paso Smelter posted a \$1,500 reward to spur the search. It was never claimed.

The year was 1924. Rowena Robinson was the attractive daughter of Jackson Robinson, a partially disabled foreman at the smelter who had a home on the smelter grounds. Rowena attended El Paso High School at night, studying to be a secretary, while also acting as her father's housekeeper. She was not known to have had any special boy friends. A teacher said the lovely girl was very quiet, orderly, and well-behaved.

On the morning of January 7, she had been given \$1.75 by a married sister, Alice Brown, for a Sunday outing. About 2:30 p. m. she left home, and it later was learned that she had attended the Grecian Theater on South El Paso Street, alone, and then had boarded the Smelter streetcar, which ran between the highway and the river. At 7:30 p. m., well after dark,

Conductor O. L. Green let Rowena off at her stop. To reach her home, she had to climb a steep flight of stairs, cross a wooden bridge, and then walk a long path. She never got more than fifty feet beyond the bridge before she was grabbed, choked and dragged into a dark gulley near the bridge where her body, still partly warm, was found the next morning.

When Rowena did not return as expected, her sister Mary became worried. She asked her brother-in-law to search for Rowena, but he found nothing. By midnight Mary felt certain that her sister was dead. Later she was to tell sheriff's deputies of how a few days earlier Rowena had related a dream in which she had been attacked by a Chinese. Early the next morning Mary walked down the smelter hill, passing within a few feet of where her sister's body lay half-stuffed in a culvert. The body was discovered a little later by an employee of the smelter assay office.

The County's top law officers all rushed to the scene, including Sheriff Seth Orndorff, Deputy Alan Falby (who later became sheriff), Deputy D. H. Guinn, Detective Captain Tom Armstrong, and County Attorney Will H. Pelphey. An autopsy indicated that the girl had been alive when her unconscious body was crammed into the culvert.

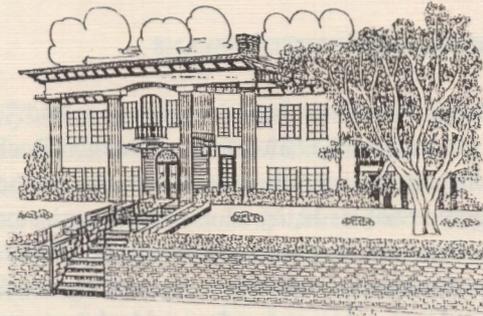
An unknown motorist immediately became a prime suspect. At the end of the bridge there was a road that ran a short distance before reaching a dead end. Car tracks showed that a small car had stopped near the bridge, headed toward the dead end, and then had turned around. At one point, where the car had halted, there were two faint parallel tracks leading back to the bridge. They were thought to have been made by the girl's heels as she was dragged from the area, possibly after having been attacked in the car. A search went out immediately for a Ford automobile, a coach with its curtains down, reported seen in the area.

A revenge motive was discarded after it was determined that the girl had no enemies. Despite the conclusiveness of the automobile evidence, there was a round-up of freightcar bums who might have dropped off a nearby train to seek refuge from the cold under the bridge. The parade of suspects also included a youth who appeared at the undertaking parlor to view the body, but the main search still centered on the cartracks as every small car in the area was stopped and searched.

One thing the grim evidence made certain was that there had been a furious struggle in the bridge area. There were tell-tale marks on the girl's face and scuffle marks on the ground. A close examination of the ravine

(Continued on page 47...)

Art Leibson, a retired journalist and former border correspondent for the Time-Life organization, writes a weekly column for the El Paso Times.



PASO DEL NORTE, 1883— *As a New Yorker Saw It*

by Emilia Gay Griffith Means

A CERTAIN L. D. LUKE OF KIRKLAND, NEW YORK, departed his home in September, 1883, for a railroad journey to the Pacific coast. On his return trip in October, he visited the El Paso area. In 1884, a description of his journey was published in Utica, New York, under the title *A Journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast by way of Salt Lake City returning by way of the Southern Route*. Based on the voluminous notes he took throughout his long trip, the book deals predominantly with the Far West, which Luke found picturesque in some parts and forbiddingly unattractive in others.

His trip homeward to New York took him first to Yuma, where he commented on the "Indians from the Reservation," who "are daily seen walking or sitting about the streets of Yuma, with painted faces in barbarous styles." From Yuma, Luke's train followed the course of the Gila River "for the first 20 miles," then "struck directly out into the vast expansive Gila Desert," from where "In the distance all the way on the right and left, sombre, bare and naked mountains raise their rocky desolate

heads, as monuments to a forsaken land.”

At a track station labeled Painted Rock, Luke departed the train and walked out into the desert in search of the painted rocks described in a guide book as being adorned with prehistoric figures. He didn't find the painted rocks, but he did find “two Chinamen,” who gave him some tea as fortification for a twelve-mile hike into Gila Bend. Still anxious to see the local sights—and undaunted by his recent thirsty trek over the “forsaken land”—he walked from Gila Bend to Casa Grande, where the “cactus rear their heads like mighty specters.” After a visit in Tucson to “old adobe huts and shanties of mud whose sombre appearance added darkness to the scene,” he was “glad to retire to the cars again.” He found Pantano and Benson to be collections of mud and adobe huts “promiscuously thrown together where the old Mexicans live a miserable dirty life.”

After leaving Dragoon Summit, Luke's train began the approach to the El Paso area. His description of that approach and his comments on his visit to the Pass* merit attention because they constitute a reaction by a conventionally-minded Easterner to a land and a culture entirely different from anything he had ever seen. It will be noted that he made only one (superficial) remark about El Paso and that his only apparent reason for traveling to the Pass was to cross the Rio Grande for a quick survey of Paso del Norte.

Rolling on 15 miles from Bowie we crossed the line into New Mexico. Thence on to Lordsbury [sic], a shipping point to the celebrated Clifton Copper Mines, 80 miles north, and also, for its own mining products....

Not a green plant is seen here, and as we pass away we cross the bed of the third dry lake. The prairie now opens out entirely level on one broad ocean of grass, with here and there a cactus rising above the bunch of grass around it.... Deming is...at the junction of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, with the Southern Pacific.

The road now takes a north easterly course, 58 miles to Rincon, on the Rio Grande River... and strikes a branch that runs directly south about 90 miles to El Paso. Rincon is nearly all adobe, one-story buildings. I stayed here over night, was shown a room adjoining the bar room, which had an arsenal appearance from the guns and cartridges stored therein.

*The lengthy excerpt from Luke's travelogue is published with the permission of the DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.

Emilia Gay Griffith Means, a resident of Dallas and a frequent contributor to Password, holds a Master's degree in history from Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

Thursday, October 18th, I left Rincon at 5 A. M., took the branch road directly south to El Paso, following the valley of the Rio Grande all the way. Some portions are irrigated but not cultivated, and show a miserable apology for a crop. Little mud cabins from 12 to 16 feet square, are scattered along the river banks, some of which have a small place for light, others have none except the doorway, and yet a second class, that are poorer still, mere kennels, a few planks or sticks forming a tent, and bits of canvas thrown over them, or covered with bark, and broken bits of boards picked out of the river.

A few cotton-wood and willows lined the banks of the stream, and in the distance, to the east, the barren serrated peaks of the mountains reared their naked heads. We arrived at El Paso at 9 A. M., and the first object that met our view was an hundred goats before the station. The Rio Grande was nearly dry, I crossed the pontoon on two or three small boats and found my self in Paso Del Norte, Old Mexico, really a city built of nothing but mud, streets, walls, yards, enclosures and floors, all the same. Inhabited solely by Spanish Mexicans, with whom I could not talk.

The city was built in a manner to ensure defense against Indian attack. On one of the principal streets a block of mud buildings, one story high, with dirt roofs, stretch off at some length, with 18 doors facing the street, but not a pane of glass through the entire length. In the rear is an opening in the wall a foot square with a few slats across it, also a back door opening into an enclosure made of mud 16 feet high.

The water is mostly taken out of the Rio Grande into an irrigating ditch, and carried through the city. It has a muddy, cream colored appearance, yet they all use it. And women were lugging it home in urns on their shoulders. The different trades and merchandise shops have their signs out as in other cities. I noted one read Cassa-de-Jesus Barela Amado-barela. The cathedral is a large adobe building with a spire, in which, on ropes hang three bells. The ascent is by spiral steps composed of flatted logs, the outer ends fast in the wall, the central resting on each other. There are but five small windows in the edifice, and they are high up in the walls.

Over the entrance are the words "Haec-est-domus Domine." The church has no slips or seats, the congregation of course remain standing during service.

The altar is in the farther end of the building, where candles were burning and before it devout women were on their knees in prayer. Round beams carved in the most ancient style extend from one side to the other overhead, being placed 18 inches apart. On top of these, in a diamond

shape, laid close together is a covering of cane break reeds which forms the ceiling overhead. The supporting posts to the gallery are carved the same as the beams, in diamonds, with a rose in the centre.

This church has stood 308 years. The Paso Del Norte Railroad House is large and beautiful, the only thing in the city that shows modern enterprise, and sets off in vivid contrast with the surroundings of mud huts, earth floors, mud chimneys, little open fires, latticed windows.... The place has no manufactures or commerce, and a starved market... The chief business seems to be a little mercantile trade; saloons and drinking. A little fruit is raised.

At the close of the day, I left this scene of Mexican enterprise, recrossed the Rio Grande, into Uncle Sam's Dominions, got on board the cars, and followed back the road to Rincon, where it struck the main road again, and continued following up the course of the Rio Grande all night, arriving in Albuquerque.



An engraving of Paso del Norte as an artist saw the town at about the time of L. D. Luke's visit to the El Paso area in 1883. (From *Guide to El Paso, Texas: A Complete History of the City and Review of its Business*, published in El Paso c. 1887 by McKie and Edwardy. This reproduction of the engraving appears through the courtesy of Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library.)

Luke continued on to Glorieta and to Las Vegas, New Mexico, where he took note of the baths of every variety and the lack of trees, shrubs, or any vegetation—finally asking, “How do these people live?” He traveled on to Raton, New Mexico, where he bade farewell to “rugged massive towering cliffs, dingy mudbuilt Mexican towns, and sagebrush” and launched out into “that vast ocean of grassy prairie” on through Topeka, Kansas City, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Utica to his home. ☆

TRAGEDY IN SMELTERTOWN... *from page 42*

disclosed pieces of a thornbush with spots of blood on them as well as small strands of fur from the jacket Rowena had been wearing. Halfway to the top of the ravine the girl's purse was found, with sixty cents remaining from the money she had started out with on the Sunday afternoon.

Helen Burch, an eighteen-year-old acquaintance of the dead girl, provided headlines for a day when she told deputies that two days before the killing she had been approached on the smelter streetcar by a man who asked if she was one of the Robinson girls. “What impressed me was the peculiar texture of the skin of his face,” Burch said. “It seemed to be scaly. I never saw anything like it before. His face was a strange color too—sort of a bright pink. His hair was dark and streaked with gray.”

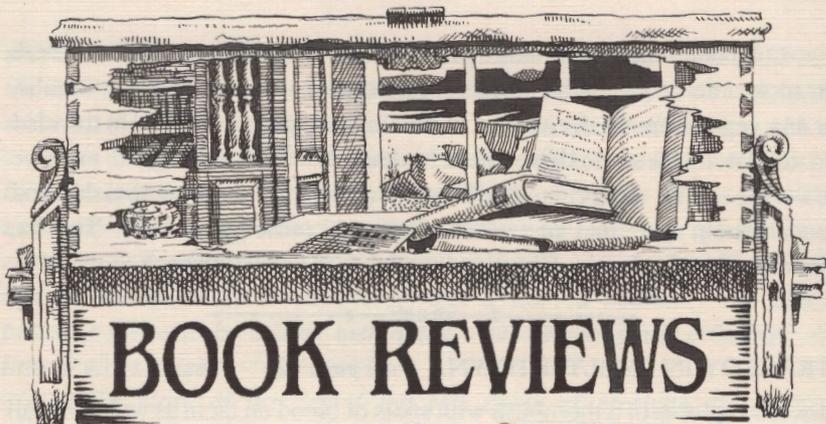
Burch's statement contributed many more pages to the record assembling of material in the sheriff's office, the first recorded rape-murder case in El Paso County and one that has never been solved in the intervening sixty-six years. ☆

ANOTHER HONOR FOR DON JOSE

Several El Pasoans attended the annual awards banquet of the Doña Ana County Historical Society in Las Cruces on Sunday, January 21, 1990. In the Tularosa Room of the Las Cruces Hilton, brilliantly adorned with Cisneros paintings and drawings, José Cisneros received the Society's prestigious “Pasajero del Camino Real” award given annually to outstanding chroniclers of history of the Doña Ana County area. The award was for Cisneros' *Riders Across the Centuries*. This is the most recent of numerous honors which have been conferred upon Don José through the years, one of them being his induction into the El Paso Historical County Historical Society in 1974.

A second winner of the “Pasajero del Camino Real” award presented on January 21 was Darlis A. Miller for her latest book, *Soldiers and Settlers, Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1865*.

—Conrey Bryson



THE PUEBLO INDIAN REVOLT OF 1696 AND THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONS OF NEW MEXICO: *Letters of the Missionaries and Related Documents* translated and edited by J. Manuel Espinosa. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989.

J. Manuel Espinosa, a distinguished scholar of the history of the Spanish Borderlands, presents his collection of more than 90 documents and letters which pertain to the second of the 17th-century revolts by the Pueblo Indians against their Spanish conquerors, the Revolt of 1696. He gathered the documents from archives in Mexico, Spain, and the United States; and he prefaces them with an Introduction which traces the Spanish exploration and the founding of the first missions in New Mexico. It also explains the circumstances leading to the Revolt of 1680—the cultural clashes, the constant quarreling between the civil and the ecclesiastical authorities, and the suffering among the Indians because of crop failures and consequent food shortages. The Introduction then goes on to summarize the 1692 reconquest of the territory by the Spaniards, the shaky peace that followed, the second Revolt, and the final peace, which saw the rebels punished without mercy.

The documents themselves clarify and vivify many of the details of these historic events, especially those concerning the 1696 Rebellion. In a section dealing with the period 1694-1695, for example, there appears a list of ten questions which the Franciscans were required to answer in their reports. Some of the answers indicated a reluctance on the part of many Pueblos to yield to basic Christian concepts. Other of the documents, as another example, reveal that the Rebellion of 1696 lacked unity and reflected the factional leadership of the Indians.

Overall, Espinosa's impressive collection of letters and documents attests to the difficult role that the Franciscans had as the vanguards of

Spain's far-flung frontiers, especially when those missionaries tried to serve as diplomats of peace.

J. MORGAN BROADDUS

Department of History, The University of Texas at El Paso



BORDER: THE U. S.-MEXICO LINE by Leon C. Metz. El Paso: Mangan Books (6245 Snowheights Court, 79912), 1989, \$29.95

The border between the United States and Mexico stretches for 1,951.36 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. The border was won by the Mexican War, 1846-1848, but the exact route remained a source of contention between the two countries until the "Treaty With Mexico Resolving Boundary Differences" was signed in late 1970.

It took El Paso historian Leon C. Metz fifteen years of research to trace the story from America's early westward expansion to today's problems of water rights, pollution, immigration, illegal aliens, smuggling, and drugs. The narrative does a remarkable job of bringing to life the participants in the long and complicated history.

The history chronicles the initial survey of the boundary and the petty squabbles among the members of the boundary commission. It then goes on to discuss the negotiation of the Gadsden Purchase, which provided the United States with a southern railroad route to the Pacific Coast and brought Mexico's Santa Rita copper mines north of the border. Also included are accounts of the activities of filibusters along the border and of Indian troubles which continued to plague relations until almost the turn of the century.

Moving into the 20th century, Metz details the incidents leading to General John J. Pershing's abortive punitive expedition into Mexico and provides the words to the song called "Tipperary," which summed up the expedition's troubles:

We started to the border and we charged to Parral,
 We were after Pancho Villa and Lopez his old pal;
 Our horses were starved and dying;
 We lived on parched corn.
 Oh, it's damn hard living in Chihuahua,
 Where Villa was born.

The longtime view by Mexican peons of the United States as a gold-streeted promised land combined with the American farmer's view of Mexico as a pool of cheap labor has generated a succession of problems

involving illegal aliens. Additionally, smuggling has always presented difficulties along the border and, more recently, drug traffic has introduced aggravating issues for officials on both sides of the line:

Even without federal interference, neighboring cities seem uncertain and edgy when officially dealing with one another. It is not unusual for elected officers to be unfamiliar with the other's language. Politicians and business leaders tend to approach discussions as if negotiating with an antagonistic foreign potentate, instead of a friend who lives next door.

This handsome volume gives a comprehensive, well-documented picture of activities which have led to the present often uneasy truce between the United States and Mexico. It is sprinkled with illustrations and informative maps. For a student of the Southwest and United States-Mexico relations, the comprehensive bibliography alone is worth the price of the book.

FRANCIS L. FUGATE

Professor Emeritus of English, The University of Texas at El Paso



EATS *A Folk History of Texas Foods* by Ernestine Sewell Linck and Joyce Gibson Roach. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1989, \$23.50

Eats is a large, beautiful book profusely illustrated with photographs of persons, places, and local celebrations. It is also full of comments by the many travelers, critics, historians, and pioneers who wrote about and remarked on Texas foods. Less cookery than history, it nevertheless contains more than 150 recipes, from ambrosia to "poke sallet."

"Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you where you live." The authors devote the first section of their book to the history of Texas foods. They divide the state into five food backgrounds: Northeast Texas, where the state's famous cornfields were developed by pioneers from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Oklahoma searching for good farmland; Deep East Texas, settled by drifters from Louisiana who brought their creole and cajun recipes with them; Central Texas, settled by Stephen F. Austin's people (whose many hardships led to the development of fried chicken, soups, and stews) and by German emigrants whose native dishes gained wide popularity; South Texas, along the Rio Grande, which was and remains Mexican; and West Texas, most of its food ways taken (with due credit) from Dr. John O. West's book about chuckwagon cooks.

The second section of the book is about holiday celebrations. These follow the calendar and include the traditions and customs kept by the early

settlers—as, for example, the Black Eyed Pea Festival in Athens and the Yamboree (Sweet Potato) Festival at Gilmer.

A quotation from James Ward Lee's Foreword speaks to the values within this unusual and thought-provoking book: "Folklore, which delves into the culture of peoples, may be a more important study about real life—private life—than standard, formal history.... One of the lessons that we have learned—or are beginning to learn—from the study of folklore is the importance of food and eating customs in unravelling the history of people."

FRANCES H. HATFIELD
El Paso



PAPERS CONCERNING ROBERTSON'S COLONY IN TEXAS,
VOLUME XV: *July 23, 1835 through August 9, 1837 - "The Gentleman from Milam."* Compiled and edited by Malcolm D. McLean. Arlington: The University of Texas at Arlington Press, 1989. \$35.00

Sterling Clark Robertson, a native of Tennessee, arrived in the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas in 1825 to explore the territory assigned to him and other North Americans for the purpose of settling families from the United States. But not until 1834 was he recognized by the Mexican government as *empresario* of the land grant that covered an area 100 miles wide and 200 miles long (westward from the Brazos River) and that today includes thirty counties in central Texas.

Dr. Malcolm McLean, Professor of History and Spanish at the University of Texas at Arlington, and a descendant of Sterling Robertson, began in 1974 the task of "compiling, transcribing, translating, and editing" the original manuscripts of the Robertson Colony collection, which is now housed in the UTA Library. The editor believes the completed work will be "the most intensive and extensive study that has ever been published concerning any colonization project in the United States."

Volume XV covers two major themes: the organization of the Texas Rangers and the role of the First Senate of the Republic of Texas. The material edited by Professor McLean indicates that Robertson played a major role in each, wearing his "long silver spurs and a brace of Castilian pistols on his belt." Robertson's gathering together the first company of Texas Rangers and later representing the "District of Milam" (Robertson's Colony) in the Senate of the Republic indicate that indeed he was an authentic, perhaps even heroic, Texan of the old school, until his death in

Nashville-on-the-Brazos in 1842 at the age of fifty-six.

Reading through the documents, one senses the extraordinary courage and endurance of Sterling Robertson and his like as they fashioned an Anglo-Hispanic civilization out of the wilderness. Professor McLean has made a vital contribution to what had been a largely neglected subject in Texas history, and every serious student interested in that period and area would profit from a study of Volume XV—and, I would confidently assume, of the earlier volumes as well—of Robertson's Colony.

ROBERT L. REID

Professor of History, Baylor University



ROADSIDE HISTORY OF NEW MEXICO by Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1989, \$15.95/\$26.95

Don't take another trip into New Mexico without a copy of this book on the seat beside you. Even though most of the readers of this review will have a better than average knowledge of the history of our neighboring state, even the most erudite will pick up some new facts from this book.

Divided into eleven sections—Don Juan de Oñate Trail, El Camino Real, The Santa Fe Trail, Land of the Anasazis, Old Spanish Trail, Domain of the Mountain Men, The Cattle Country, "Main Street 66" Is Now I-40, The Beefsteak Trail, Butterfield Overland Mail, and In Pursuit of Quivera—the reader is taken on tours of all these areas of the state. In addition to discussions about the towns encountered on these routes, a number of historical sidebars detail a variety of places and topics, ranging from Brazito Battlefield to Navajo Code Talkers to Trinity Site: the First A-Bomb.

The illustrations are excellent and include modern photographs and maps, as well as historical drawings, photos and maps.

Francis Fugate, a prolific author, taught writing at The University of Texas at El Paso for 25 years. Roberta retired from teaching elementary school to work with her husband on many of his writing projects. The couple has travelled the roadways described in this book for some 40 years. Their efforts, shared in the pages of this guide, have been worthwhile and edifying, although this reviewer would like to see a little more information on some of the scenic attractions—I would still like to know how the Loco Hills got their name!

BOB MILES

Park Superintendent, Hueco Tanks State Historical Park

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