

PASSWORD



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PASSWORD

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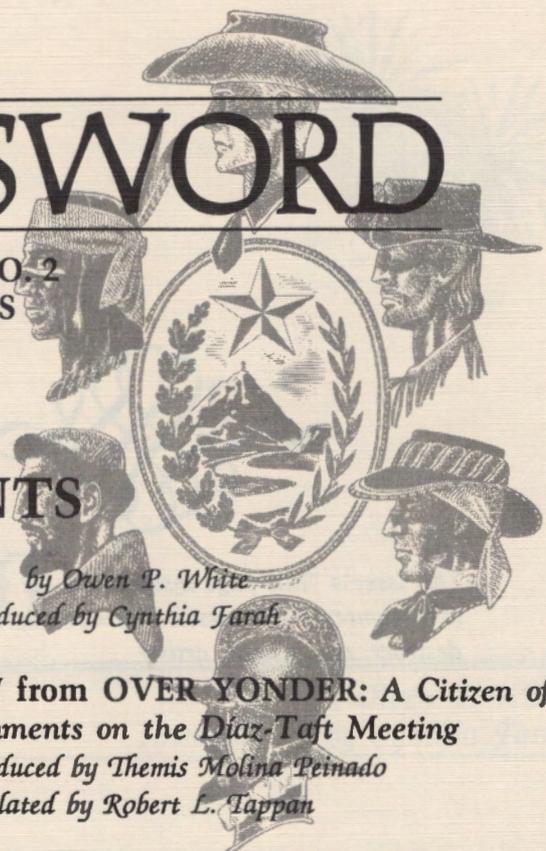
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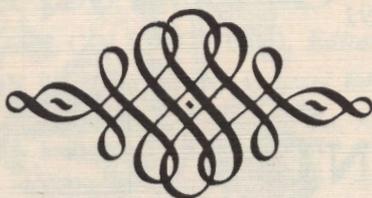


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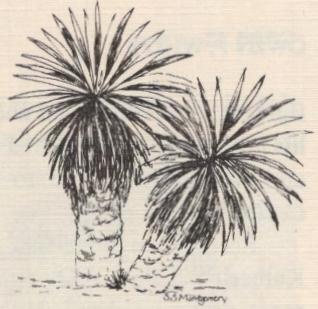
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EL PASO

by Owen P. White
Introduction by Cynthia Farah

S

SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO, AN ARTICLE BY Owen P. White entitled "El Paso" made its first appearance—in *The American Mercury*, Vol. II, No. 8 (August, 1924). In 1925, a slightly edited version of the article was included in *The Taming of the Frontier*, a collection of ten essays edited by Duncan Aikman and published by Minton Balch & Company of New York City. In that book it was entitled "El Paso: 'The Right Thing' on the Frontier," and it was accompanied by a biographical note describing the author as a native of El Paso, a frequent contributor to *The American Mercury*, and "now on the staff of the *New York Times*."

These biographical details, though few and terse, were accurate. Owen Payne White was indeed an El Pasoan and a professional writer. In fact, he was the first El Pasoan to establish a national reputation as a writer. Some contend that he "laid the foundation for a regional literature in the El Paso Southwest,"¹ while others deride his reputation as a historian who embellished the truth.² The fact remains, however, that he witnessed the growth of El Paso during its formative years and made a living writing nine books about that history. Further, his unique perspective on the gun-

fighters, the politicians, and assorted misfits of the Southwest resulted in his articles being published in the *New York Times*, *The American Mercury*, and *Harper's* and led to a thirteen-year career as associate editor of *Collier's* magazine.

Second son of the first Anglo physician in El Paso, Alward White, and Katherine J. Payne, Owen P. White was born on June 9, 1879, in a one-room adobe *jacalito*.³ He was a keen observer of the mores of El Paso's citizens, first as an errand boy sent by his father to collect on bills owed by local prostitutes, then as an employee of Hixson's jewelers where he witnessed respected gentlemen buying gifts for women other than their wives. Such episodes instilled in White a contempt for the hypocrisy of covert sin versus the candor of open sin, a perspective which served as the subject for many of his books and articles.

White graduated from high school in El Paso on May 27, 1896, and attended the University of Texas for a short while until he dropped out and returned to El Paso. He later studied law at New York University, but never graduated.⁴ Explaining his writing success in his *Autobiography of a Durable Sinner* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), he wrote: "It was all because before I was sixteen my father had given me as rigorous and interesting a course in memory training as a youngster had ever had. Couple my memory with my experience and my insatiable curiosity, and there I was, a walking encyclopedia with an indexed mind from which I could extract at any time I wanted them items relating to almost everything under the sun, from the lore I had gotten out of the books clear on through the antics of the girls in the bagnios, the caperings of the politicians in Washington, the cavortings of the capitalists of Wall Street and Mexico, and the indecencies of war, with all of whom and which I had immoral personal relations."⁵

The publication of White's first book, *Out of the Desert*, in 1923 brought his talents as an observer and a writer to the attention of H. L. Mencken, one of America's most influential critics. According to Carl Hertzog, who worked for William S. McMath, the publisher who encouraged White to write *Out of the Desert*, "As soon as the first copies came off the press, Mr. McMath sent a copy to H. L. Mencken whose *American Mercury* was then the most distinguished magazine in the country. Mencken was intrigued and did a two-column review." White himself said of the review, "It wasn't complimentary and it wasn't damning. It was just honest. He had my number. He said I was no master of English, but

Cynthia Farah, a graduate of Stanford University, is a photographer and author currently working toward a Master's Degree in American Literature at The University of Texas at El Paso.

that I could tell a story, and...as a climax to my relief that he hadn't slaughtered me he wrote and asked me to contribute an article or two to the *Mercury*.”⁶

In 1925 White moved to New York, where he lived for twenty-two years, returning to El Paso only for brief visits.

After working as a free-lance writer and producing two more books about the “wild west”—*Them Was the Days* (1925) and *Trigger Fingers* (1926)—White was hired by *Colliers* as an associate editor. For the next thirteen years he attracted national attention as a muckracker and outspoken critic of corrupt politicians. Before the advent of television and before the term “Watergate” entered the lexicon, *Collier's* and White were instrumental in uncovering scandals and creating a few.



OWEN PAYNE WHITE
(1879-1946)

Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library, and James W. Ward

At the time of his death in New York on December 7, 1946, White was working on still another book about the Southwest, this one titled *Western Trails*. The ten-chapter manuscript tells the story of the major routes of travel west of the Mississippi from the sixteenth century until 1836. Virtually completed, that manuscript along with thirty-three letters of correspondence between White and H. L. Mencken and numerous other letters and articles are located in the archives of The University of Texas at El Paso Library.

The essay “El Paso,” reprinted here from *The American Mercury* of August, 1924, is not as well known as his books. But it is an excellent example of White’s work. Whether described as embellished history or regional literature, it is a typical rendition of his very own...

El Paso

As I look back over the few short years that intervene between the reign of Ben Dowell, El Paso’s first potentate, and that of Dick Dudley, its present dictator, and compare the paved, pious and stolid city of today with the rough, uncouth...town in which I was born, I cannot refrain from heaving a deep and comprehensive wheeze of regret. Where life was once cheerful, filled with alarms and worth living, it is now flat, decorous and

commonplace; where men were once publicly and delightfully naughty and openly bellicose they are now only surreptitiously so; where the leading citizens once wore six-shooters and Winchesters they now wear wrist watches and golf sticks, and where—God save the race!—the communal sports, in days past, were wont to drink hard liquor out of the original carboys and to play poker with the North Star as the limit they now absorb coca-cola with a dash of *tequila* in it, and bet on mah jong at a twentieth of a cent a point.

It's pathetic. It really is. And it began in 1873. Before that calamitous year, from time immemorial, all the residents of El Paso, of both sexes, had been in the habit of bathing freely, openly and nakedly, in the sight of God and anyone else who cared to look, in the irrigation ditches that ran hither and yon through the adjacent fields and vineyards. It was a delightfully primitive and intimate custom; one which everybody enjoyed and indulged in without thought of evil or blush of shame. And then, in the year mentioned, suddenly and with no adequate reason, El Paso, with its three combined saloons and gambling houses, its one hotel, its two stage stations and horse corrals and its three stores, took unto itself the idea that it would some day become a great city, and in anticipation thereof held an election. As was right and proper, Uncle Ben Dowell, whose saloon was the biggest in town, was chosen mayor, and to assist him he was given a board of six aldermen whose secular occupations ran all the way from the unprofitable one of an Episcopal minister out of a job to the lucrative one of a Jewish merchant. Immediately these seven men, newly intrusted with legislative control over the liberties of their fellow citizens, proceeded to commit a deed of imperishable shame by writing in large, flaring letters on page one, in book one, of the Ordinances of the City of El Paso the words "Thou shalt not!" It became a high crime and misdemeanor for any person, male or female, brown or white, married or single, to wade, paddle, dive, duck or swim in the waters of any irrigation ditch within the corporate limits of the city! Civilization had arrived with a bang. The old days were no more.

II

El Paso, in those years, was not much to look at. Mud, mere primitive mud, mixed with straw and baked in the sun, was all that the town was made of, and although all the other settlements along the Rio Grande had their mission churches, it had none, and so there was no belfry on the sky-line to break the monotony of the low, flat-roofed houses.

But the location of the town, even though it was forgotten by the men of God, made it important in the eyes of certain other men. Standing in

the doorway of his saloon and looking to the North and South, Uncle Ben Dowell, in his leisure moments, could allow his gaze to wander along a trail—the oldest in the United States—which wended its adventurous way through the two thousand miles of perils that separated Santa Fe in New Mexico from the City of Mexico down in the old country. And looking in the other direction, to the East and West, he could see the celebrated Butterworth [sic] stage route, which meandered along over its sandy and sinuous course clear through from San Antonio to the Pacific Coast. Thus El Paso stood exactly, to the very inch almost, at the cross-roads formed by two great continental trails. It is due to this one unassisted fact that the town owes its origin and...its present existence. Over these two great trails came the stages by which El Paso kept in uncertain touch with the rest of the world, and from one of these stages, every now and then, some stranger would descend.

Those were the days when no man in the Southwest asked any other man where he came from or what his business was. El Paso, indeed, had no credentials of her own to exhibit to strangers and so she asked none from them. Any visitor who dropped in was free to go as far as he liked so long as he paid his way, restrained his curiosity, and refrained from



This engraving, "An Old El Paso Landmark," is reprinted from *Guide to El Paso, Texas: A Complete History of the City and Review of its Business*, published in El Paso by McKie and Edwardy c. 1887. (Courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)

entering into an alliance with the private soul-mate of a permanent resident. For those who...disregarded these proprieties, there was a cemetery provided....

During this period of its life El Paso, under the rule of Ben Dowell, J. F. Crosby, Joseph Magoffin, Sam Schutz, Parson Tays, and James Hague, was hard but it was not vicious. Men lived loose, irregular lives because they lived natural ones. There were some laws, true enough—those of the State, the nation and God—but inasmuch as none of these authorities kept a representative on hand to enforce them the duty of preserving his life and protecting his property devolved upon each individual. The result was that men...read each other's eyes and not the Book, and a word was as good as a bond. But Utopias, of course, never last, and an end had to come to this one. Ever since 1859 El Paso had been marked on the map of progress as a railroad centre. Fremont and even the great Baron von Humboldt had forecasted a great future for the little cluster of mud huts. But it was not until 1879 that any thing of a definite nature occurred. In that year, suddenly and thrillingly, four great railroad trunklines—not merely one, but four—began to build feverishly in the direction of Ben Dowell's saloon, and the moment it became generally known that his bar was to become an important junction men of all classes, from all parts of the United States, began to hasten to it. These newcomers, alas, were not like their heroic predecessors. They were of a lesser and ignobler breed. They were border parasites coming in to prey upon the railroad payrolls. At first these men, and the women who were with them, came in slowly, but as the railheads gradually drew nearer and nearer the influx increased, until by the middle of 1880 people were arriving at the rate of hundreds a day. They came in ambulances, in buggies, in wagons, on foot and on horseback; they ate what they could get; they slept any and everywhere; they worked during the day erecting adobe houses to live in and caroused joyously through most of the night. In short, El Paso had a boom and everybody was happy and hilarious, especially the old-timers who had waited so long.

But their joy was soon mixed with sorrow. Within a few months after the beginning of the rush, and almost a year before the first railroad finally reached the town, the city fathers found that they were up against a new and hard proposition. The former bad men, the gun-toters, the Mexican bandits, the Apache Indians and the ...señoritas who loved for cash were species which they knew how to handle. But when it came to managing the new element in the population, made up principally of crooks who had taken their Ph. D. and LL. D. degrees in the great metropolises of the East,

they found themselves stumped. Murders...became too frequent to be tolerated, and petty criminals, a class heretofore unknown to the Southwest, began to operate enormously. Life and property thus became unsafe, and so El Paso once again organized itself for the protection of its honest citizens, and a newly elected council set about looking for a man upon whom to wish the job of city marshal.

The gentleman finally honored with this office was a warlike character by the name of Campbell and, in order that his administration might be made a complete success, he was given an assistant in the person of one Bill Johnson. To the two was intrusted the business of putting the fear of God and a respect for the Constitution into the hearts of El Paso's new and unregenerate citizenry. Meanwhile, the town had begun to grow in size as well as in population. In place of one short street and three saloons, it now had two pretentious avenues and between twenty and thirty drinking resorts.... And now it boasted, too, of several new dance halls with dirt floors, and two variety theatres, one of which, the coliseum, owned by the Manning brothers, was the largest in the West.

Over the social activity for which these suddenly acquired municipal improvements furnished a background, Marshal Campbell and his able assistant were supposed to exert a restraining influence. But they never did. On the contrary, under their control the town went from bad to worse, until at the end of a month or two a condition prevailed which made Ben Dowell and Joseph Magoffin and Samuel Schutz, who had been on the border since '59 and who thought they knew something about real wickedness, blush for shame at the contemplation of their own innocence. Campbell struck up an intimate friendship with the Manning brothers and with the proprietors of the other resorts and would arrest none of their patrons, and Johnson stayed drunk all the time; in consequence, the new town lock-up stood untenanted. The new element in the population, in brief, did as it pleased, and since its tastes ran largely to robbery, riot and bloodshed, it soon became apparent to all right-thinking men that something had to be done. Finally the mayor sent for the marshal and demanded a show-down. Campbell replied by declaring that his salary was not large enough to justify him in wasting any more energy on his job than he was already putting into it, but he assured his Honor that an increase in pay would bring about an increase in the number of incarcerations. Whereupon, much to his surprise and disgust and to the chagrin of his friends, he was promptly fired and his badge and baton transferred to his inebriated assistant. Then the whole town, with the new marshal and his former chief in the van of the drinkers, went on a spree. This lasted for about a month

and then, as a wind-up, ex-Marshal Campbell proceeded to carry out a plan they had formed for restoring him to his old dignity. Shorn of its detail, this plan was to shoot up the entire town at one great blast and so scare the mayor into hiring Campbell again, and at his own figure.

Accordingly, at two o'clock one morning, when all communal festivities were at their height,...the word was given and hell was let loose.... No place was spared. Every light in El Paso went out under a fusillade of shots and in the ensuing darkness, as men cursed and women screamed, all sorts of herculean deviltries were engaged in. Men were assaulted and robbed, girls were pinched and kissed, and many an eminent citizen was sent home on the run with six-shooter bullets kicking up the dust under his heels. Nowhere in the West had the shooting up process ever been carried out with such scientific thoroughness. When it was over, the conspirators relighted a few kerosene lamps in the least damaged of the saloons, pulled the bartenders out from their holes, and, soothed by their ministrations, sat around and waited for daylight to arrive, confident that the mayor and all others concerned were by now convinced that Campbell, and Campbell alone, could handle the situation.

But the mayor was made of harder stuff. Next morning...he sprung a surprise of his own. Instead of sending for the discharged marshal and reinstating him in office, he did something that was entirely unheard of. He sent down to Ysleta, ...where a camp of Texas rangers was located, and asked that a detachment be sent up to police the town until he could make some arrangement to handle it himself. His call was promptly answered. Capt. J. B. Gillett, than whom no better man ever stuck foot in a stirrup, came galloping in at the head of his men, and...peace and quiet prevailed. But as the rangers were State officers whose business it was to patrol the frontier and not to do police duty in towns, they were lent to the mayor for the period of the emergency only, and so the council found itself under the necessity of finding a man to fill Campbell's place permanently. He appeared almost at once and, as it seemed to the harassed burghers, almost providentially. His name was Dallas Stoudenmire. Accompanied by his brother-in-law, Doc Cummings, he came down from New Mexico, called upon the mayor, presented his credentials, asked that he be made custodian of the peace, and was forthwith given the job and told to go to it.

III

Stoudenmire was a German blond, six feet four inches in height, weighing two hundred pounds and carrying two six-shooters. When he was told to go to it, he went. Bill Johnson had never been removed from

office officially, even while the rangers were in town, but this trifling omission made no difference to the new head of the *Polizei*. The moment he pinned on his badge of office he called upon Johnson and demanded the keys to the jail. The drunkard, not being acquainted with Stoudenmire, and also, perhaps, still thinking that he had some legal rights, refused to deliver them. Thereupon the giant seized him by the collar, turned him wrong side up, and shook him until the keys dropped from his pocket. For a day or two after this, everything was serene. Then, presumably when Stoudenmire was not around to take a hand in the fray, his brother-in-law, Doc Cummings, was killed in a gun fight following an altercation with the Manning brothers. This killing, for which Jim Manning...was tried and acquitted on a plea of self-defense, resulted in an enmity between Stoudenmire and the Mannings which brought bloody results.



The first trouble, coming within a week, presented itself to the new marshal as a fortuitous opportunity to display his prowess... An inquest had been held over the bodies of two Mexicans, found murdered on the outskirts of the town. At its conclusion a quarrel arose between Johnnie Hale, an old resident and a close friend of the Manning brothers, and a man named Gus Krempkau. For the purpose of terminating the argument, and probably desiring to get home for lunch, Hale pulled out his artillery and shot Krempkau dead. Immediately Stoudenmire...went into action. With his

Entitled "there came also many bad men," this Tom Lea line drawing is reprinted from W. W. Mills' *Forty Years at El Paso, 1858-1898* (El Paso: Carl Hertzog, 1962) with the permission of Mrs. Carl Hertzog and Mr. Lea.

first shot he killed a Mexican who looked as if he was about to pull a gun, with his second he sent Johnnie Hale's soul winging to the angels, and then, turning just in time to see ex-Marshall Campbell, who was directly behind him, reach for his weapon, he killed him too.

This spectacular masterpiece at once established his reputation. Three men with three shots, anywhere in the Southwest in those days, constituted an almost perfect score and thereafter, for a few weeks, the marshal was allowed to lead an uneventful and undisturbed life. During those

weeks...the town's lock-up, unused during the Campbell-Johnson administration, nightly sheltered swarms of felons upon whom the hand of the law, as represented by the mighty grip of Dallas Stoudenmire, had been ruthlessly laid. This activity, however, only served to increase the hatred that the sporting element harbored against Stoudenmire. It was bad for business to have men put in jail who still had money in their pockets and were drunk enough to spend it. Therefore, combining the high motive of business expediency with the more archaic one of revenge, the Campbell crowd...decided to put Stoudenmire out of the way. For that purpose they *made use of Bill Johnson. Bill was filled with fighting whiskey, and it was suggested to him that he ought, in common decency, to kill Stoudenmire....*

Bill...was given a double-barreled gun loaded with buckshot, and led to a point across the road from Ben Dowell's saloon. At this place...stood a pile of bricks to be used in the erection of the town's first brick building, and behind it Johnson secreted himself to await his victim.... Stoudenmire, whose movements were being closely watched, was down at the Acme Saloon, but...would soon make his evening round of the town. It was not long before his enemies, a number of whom had hidden themselves across the road from Johnson's hiding place, saw him approaching, and when he was within twenty feet of the brick pile they saw Johnson rise up behind it and fire both barrels of his gun. But either because he was suffering from a severe attack of buck ague or stage fright, or because he was unsteady from too much whiskey, he missed. Then Stoudenmire, drawing his pistol, quickly filled the would-be assassin's body with bullets. The men...now opened fire on him, wounding him in the foot, but, drawing another gun, he charged them head on and quickly put them to flight.

From that day until he resigned from office Stoudenmire held imperial sway over El Paso. He kept order, sometimes by shooting his man, sometimes by merely bringing down his gun upon the offender's head. Unluckily...he had one great fault. He was a copious drinker and, although *he could carry an almost incredible cargo without loss of his faculties, there were times when it would get the better of him....* Finally, after a year of service during which he wrote his name, principally in blood, upon the imperishable records of El Paso, he was politely asked to resign.... Within a few months after his resignation Stoudenmire was killed in a gun fight with two of the Mannings, Jim Manning, as usual, being tried for the murder and acquitted on his regular plea of self-defense.

IV

In 1881, shortly before Stoudenmire resigned, the first railroad reached

town and immediately, over night almost, its entire aspect underwent a second change.... Brick buildings began to take the place of old adobe ones; ornate bar equipment and costly gambling tables replaced makeshift devices formerly in use; men who had never before tripped the light fantastic on anything but Mother Earth could now hear the tapping of their own boot heels, and a new element, a peroxided, hand-decorated female one, recruited in the East and Middle West and shipped in by the carload, came to supplant the brown-skinned...señoritas of the day before.... A wonderful prosperity was about to come to the Southwest, and Vice, knowing that the pickings were going to be easy, garbed itself becomingly for the harvest and assumed an air of affluence. The blonde women wore beautiful gowns—cut too high and too low, but beautiful none the less; the bartenders...began to wear white jackets and thousand-dollar diamonds; and the gambling fraternity blossomed out in all the glory of imported tailor-made garments and kept women.

Behind all this was the constant thought of money. Up to the time when the news that the railroads were on the way had changed a village that was actually admirable for the heroic quality of its badness into a border town whose population was made up largely of abject apostles of vice, nobody had cared very much for cash.... A man's social standing had then depended much more upon his capacity for handling his liquor and his ability to shoot straight than upon the number of fifty or hundred dollar bills that he could display to a sordid public....

In addition to unloading blondes, bar fixtures and building materials, the trains also began to deliver a class of men who came for the purpose of embarking in more or less legitimate business.... They set about making the town a good one for trade, as the sporting fraternity had already made it a good one—one of the best in the Southwest—for entertainment. Thus El Paso soon became the Mecca towards which every honest soul in the Southwest who had his pockets full turned at least once...a year. The diamond-studded bartenders, the beautifully tailored gamblers and the wonderfully painted ladies extended to the visitor, one and all, an invitation to enjoy themselves. They all came and they all had a good time. The resorts were open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week....

Men who had entered into legitimate business...began to grow rich. Corner lots which had been valueless a short time before made fortunes for old-timers who had held on to them, and showered down a golden harvest upon delegations of realtors from Missouri, and upon a trio from Tennessee who had come in early enough to grab some choice locations.... Everybody made money, and everybody was happy. El Paso grew; the

sporting element continued to prosper; the derby hat and the white collar became tolerated; marriage licenses began to be issued with some degree of regularity; ministers of the gospel made their appearance; church spires pierced the heavens. An then the war was on!

V

For the first few years there was only desultory skirmishing. But in 1894 there began a struggle which soon had most of El Paso's "better" element side-stepping with as much agility as a flea shows in hopping. By better element, of course, I mean that portion of the population which was not engaged directly in operating saloons, gambling houses, dance halls, variety theatres or stews. Naturally, this element was large, but if I were to say, in place of "directly operating," "interested in" or "profiting by," the number, I fear, would be somewhat reduced. In fact, everybody in El Paso, and even the city itself, was deeply involved with the sporting element. For years the revenues derived from licensing gambling houses, dance halls and bawdy houses ran the city, thus relieving the tax payers of a heavy burden and allowing the pious to contribute heavily to foreign missions and Bible societies.... In addition to helping the city fathers with their financial problem, El Paso's sports did the businessmen of the community a more direct service. They made the town highly attractive to all the citizens of the adjacent States, and brought in thousands to buy bolts of calico, picks, shovels and barrels of dill pickles who might have just as well placed their orders in Denver or Los Angeles. These customers came in person, transacted their business during the day, and then at night, as a matter of hospitality, they were shown the town, chaperoned, as a rule, by the merchant or banker or broker with whom they had had their dealings.

Thus, during the intensely busy years between 1881 and 1904, when the doors of the "public" gambling houses and dance halls were closed forever, many of the prominent citizens of the town acquired an indirect interest in the operation of the communal dens of iniquity, and were thus unable to lend their whole-hearted support to the closing movement. Their indignation had to be concealed. It was all well enough for a man to agree with his wife when she said to him at the breakfast table: "George, dear, this is a hell of a place to raise children," but it was an entirely different matter when George got down to his office and checked up his books. There he found that if the rent didn't come in from the saloon building that he owned on the corner, he wouldn't be able to come across with that thousand dollar subscription to the new Methodist Church; that if Madame X and her girls didn't pay for the gaudy gowns bought last month he

The VIEW from OVER YONDER

A Citizen of Juárez Comments on the Díaz-Taft Meeting

*introduced by Themis Molina Peinado
translated by Robert L. Tappan*

THE BEAUTIFUL AUTUMN DAY OF OCTOBER 16, 1909, was not an ordinary one. On that day President William Howard Taft met with President Porfirio Díaz of Mexico in El Paso. It was an occasion of much grandeur and festivity in which thousands of El Pasoans and Juarenses joyfully participated. My father, Dr. Rafael L. Molina of Juárez, was one such person who attended some of the activities connected with the historic meeting. Twelve days later, on October 28, 1909, he sent a letter to his cousin Miguel Molina y Molina, who was living in the Mexican town of Zacapoaxtla, Puebla. In the letter to his cousin (whom he addressed as "brother"), my father described his impressions of what he had observed on October 16.

Presented in the following pages is a copy of this letter, which I obtained from Ciro Molina, one of Miguel Molina's sons. The first and final paragraphs of the letter have been omitted as they pertained only to family matters. Appearing side by side with the copy of my father's letter is an English translation executed by Dr. Robert L. Tappan of El Paso.

Readers of *Password* may find this letter interesting in that it shows my father's complex attitude toward the United States, an attitude undoubtedly shared by many other Mexican nationals at that critical time in Mexico's history. It was an attitude which blended a profound admiration for American democracy with a deep distrust of "those ambitious Yankees" and an undisguised repugnance for what was perceived as their "arrogance and egoism."

Themis Molina Peinado, a native of Juárez, began her El Paso residence in 1913, when she immigrated with her parents to the United States. She attended the Effie Eddington School, at that time the girls' division of Lydia Patterson Institute. She is the widow of Arnulfo B. Peinado, a prominent El Paso real estate developer. Dr. Robert L. Tappan, a retired Associate Professor of Modern Languages at The University of Texas at El Paso, is a Special Consultant to Password.

couldn't settle for the simple little things that his own girls, undergoing a polishing treatment on the Hudson, said that they had to have; that if Old Man Taylor, the gambler, didn't kick in with the agreed price for four corner lots, the wife couldn't, during the coming social season, tilt her head at the right angle.

Altogether, it was a difficult situation for Christian man. It was met by turning it into a political issue. Vice entrenched itself for a seige; and the reformers, few at first but strong in spirit, formed for the assault. It was a long and beautiful battle and at the end of ten years the reformers got the decision. After that the blonde heads of the ladies from Utah Street were no longer seen in the dress circle at the old Myar Opera House, distracting the attention of the men from the play upon the stage; the whirl of the roulette wheel and the rattle of the poker chip no longer called busy merchants from the barroom to the upper floor of the Gem Saloon, and the banging of the piano no more invited the transient cowpuncher and the itinerant prospector into...Louis Vidal's dance hall. These things were gone....

VI

Between the years of 1904 and 1907 [El Paso] blossomed out into the small metropolis phase of its career and the citizens began, hastily, to change their habits. With as much earnestness as they had before displayed in enjoying themselves in a free and unrestrained manner, they set about learning how to live according to the rules which their wives, who were now taking annual trips back East, brought home and inserted into the family curriculum. Early in the game the leading businessmen took a great fall upward. Regular fellows, men who had been cowpunchers, had pounded drills, had weighed out *chile* and *frijoles* by the pound to nickel customers...suddenly found that the possession of virtue made it incumbent upon them to conduct their business from within the confines of private offices. This advance into obscurity made another step imperative.... That was their drinking. Public conviviality had become unseemly and so these men who had for long, long years been in the habit of calling bartenders by their first names and doing most of their business with one foot on the rail got themselves together and began organizing clubs. For the first time the community made acquaintance with the post-prandial orator and with those highly decorative municipal improvements, the club president, the club director and the club committeeman. Men who, a short fifteen years before, had been content to sit on their heels and roll their own while they conversed freely and openly with the world, now found

...continued on page 72

October 28, 1909
Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

Señor Miguel Molina y Molina
Zacapoaxtla

My dear brother:

The Presidents' visit to our city was a most significant event in the history of our nation. Time, which reveals all truths, will unveil to us the presently unknown things which took place at this meeting. God grant that it may all turn out to be for the good of our country! But I doubt it, because the Yankees are forever on the alert to seize every opportunity to their advantage, while we are timid and complacent and give them whatever they demand. What I can indeed affirm is that for all practical purposes we are politically under the thumb of those ambitious Yankees, who are the real bosses and only use us as their cat's paw.

From the point of view of our national pride, the festivities which accompanied the Díaz-Taft meetings were splendid and impressed most favorably even the Americans, who did not expect such formal European protocol.

Don Porfirio was dressed in the uniform of a Division General, wearing the most striking of his many impressive medals and surrounded by his presidential guards, likewise lavishly attired in their most colorful uniforms, a combination of Japanese and German mili-

28 de Octubre de 1909
Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua

Señor Miguel Molina y Molina
Zacapoaxtla

Muy querido hermano:

La visita presidencial fue en esta Ciudad un suceso de gran interes para la historia de nuestra Nacion. El tiempo que descubre las verdades nos dira los misterios que en esta entrevista hubo! Dios quiera que todo haya sido para bien de la Patria! Pero lo dudo porque los yankees no se duermen nunca y de todo sacan provecho en su favor, y nosotros somos muy timidos y complacientes y les damos todo cuanto piden. De lo que si puedo asegurar es que practicamente estamos bajo la ferula politica de estos embiciosos y que ellos son los que realmente gobiernan sacando la carne con la mano del gato.

Bajo el punto de vista de nuestro orgullo nacional las fiestas realizadas con motivo de la entrevista Diaz-Taft fueron esplendidas y dejaron una impresion agradable aun a los americanos que no se esperaban este lujo de etiqueta a la europea.

Don Porfirio se presento vestido de Gral. de Division con todas las mas ricas medallas de su ya inmenso repertorio, rodeado de sus guardias presidenciales vestidas de todo lujo con indumentaria vistosissima como es una mezcla de los vestuarios militares japones y ale-



Dr. Rafael L. Molina as he appeared c. 1910 in his attire as a thirty-third-degree Mason. (Photo courtesy Themis Molina Peinado)

tary garb, replete with rich galloons and fine embroidery. And since they are all fine looking, handsome young men, mounted on the most beautiful pure-bred horses decked out in the richest of trappings, the whole effect was a dazzling one which contrasted notably with the poorly uniformed American cavalry, who proved to be unskilled horsemen riding poorly trained mounts, saddled so loosely that more than four of them slid off their horses, landing on the ground along with kepis and saddle blankets.

Our army demonstrated a high degree of discipline in their sprucely tailored uniforms, in marked contrast with the careless

man llenos de galones y bordados de los mas finos y ricos y como los guardias son todos jovenes simpaticos y buenos mozos cabalgando en caballos todos de pura sangre y hermosos y ricamente enjaezados el cuadro era deslumbrador y contrastaba de modo notable con los soldados americanos mal vestidos, malos jinetes montados en caballos mal educados con sillas mal apretadas que dieron lugar a que mas de cuatro jinetes hubieran rodado por los suelos y que los kepis y los sudaderos hubieran regado el suelo.

Nuestro ejercito dio pruebas de estar a gran altura como disci-

attitude of the American soldiers. The latter, while they waited in formation in the neighbor city to receive our President, would break ranks and go into the taverns or lay their rifles on the ground while they sat on the sidewalks to scratch themselves.

In fact, to the Americans, who always expect to find feathers and a tail on a Mexican, the splendor and fine comportment that they observed in our soldiers have been a revelation. So much so that President Taft soon ordered all his own troops to retire to their quarters, saying that he did not require them to protect him, since he had been elected by the people and it was they who should guard him, and he added that Americans always thought that they had nothing to learn from others, which was a mistake, for they could always learn something even from the smallest countries, in all of which there were worthwhile things to learn.

From the democratic point of view, then, the Americans did get the best of us, considering that their President was like any ordinary citizen, not guarded by the military but by his people, who acclaimed him with sincere enthusiasm and empathy. There was no pretense in this, simply the unadulterated truth.

In El Paso there were no arches nor any other symbols of monarchy, only the simple decorations of a people celebrating the arrival of one

plinado, apuesto y bien uniformado, cosa que es difícil hallar en el americano donde el soldado es de contentillo pues cuando estaban en la ciudad vecina en formación para recibir a nuestro Presidente los soldados se separaban de las filas y se metían en las cantinas o se sentaban a rascarse las pantorrillas en las banquetas dejando el fusil en el suelo.

En fin para los americanos que siempre están creyendo hallar rabo y plumas en los mexicanos ha sido una revelación este lujo de nuestros soldados y su comportamiento y tan fue así que el Presidente Taft ordeno desde luego que se retiraran las tropas a sus cuarteles pues que él no necesitaba de los soldados para que lo cuidaran, que él había sido electo por el pueblo y este era el que debía cuidarle, y agregó que siempre los americanos creían que de nadie recibían lecciones y que esto era un error pues que hasta de los pueblos más pequeños podían recibirla porque en todos ellos había algo bueno que aprender.

Bajo el punto de vista democrático si que los americanos nos ganaron, visto pues que su Presidente se presentó como un particular cualquiera sin guardias de soldados pero sí del pueblo que le aclamaba con verdadero entusiasmo y simpatía; aquí no hubo fingimiento sino la verdad monda y lironda.

En El Paso no hubo arcos ni

of their best friends.

When will this happen in our own gilded country?

Without a doubt, as a democracy the United States is, after France, the nation most in accord with modern sociological teachings, and in this sense is immensely great and powerful, but from the point of view of unbridled ambition, of arrogance and egoism, it is the vilest, most wretched nation imaginable.

Anyway, this is all I can tell you regarding the Díaz-Taft meetings.

Your brother,

Dr. Rafael L. Molina

otros simbolos de un reinado sino el adorno sencillo de un pueblo que se pone de fiesta para recibir a uno de sus mejores amigos.

¿Cuando ocurrira lo mismo en nuestra dorada Patria?

El Pueblo americano como democrata es sin duda despues del pueblo frances el mas conforme con las enseñanzas modernas sociologicas y en este sentido es inmensamente grande y poderoso, pero bajo el punto de vista de su ambicion desmedida, de su orgullo y egoismo es el pueblo mas vil y miserable que pueda darse.

En fin ya te he dicho todo cuanto puedo decirte respecto de la visita Diaz-Taft.

Tu hermano,

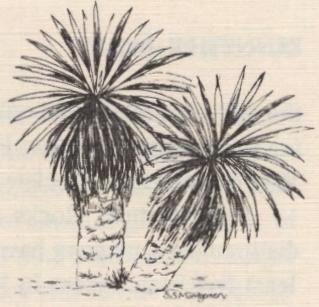
Dn Rafael L. Molina

EL PASO...continued from page 67

themselves confined in a close pasture where etiquette demanded that they smoke perfectos at four bits a throw and associate only with other unfortunates.... These poor men now shaved daily, boasted of the cold plunge every morning, changed their clothes by the clock, and began to play golf. This was the end.☆

NOTES

1. Marshall Hail, "TWC Mencken Letters Show Sage's Salt," *El Paso Herald-Post*, December 28, 1962.
2. *El Paso Herald-Post*, April 20, 1936. Letter to the editor by historian Cleofas Calleros.
3. John Gordon Knight, "Owen Payne White, El Paso's First Writer of Renown," *El Burro*, Texas Western College, March 1965, 11.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Owen P. White, *Autobiography of a Durable Sinner* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 172-173.
6. Carl Hertzog, "El Paso's Durable Sinner," *Password*, XXV, 2 (Summer, 1980), 69.



PIEDRAS

of FEDERAL AVENUE

A Treasure Trove of History

by Kenneth K. Bailey

FEDERAL AVENUE BETWEEN PIEDRAS AND LUNA Streets is a delight to any viewer who appreciates historic landmarks. For as many as sixteen homes fronting the thoroughfare in these three blocks were designed by two of El Paso's most talented architects ever, Otto H. Thorman and Mabel C. Welch, commencing in 1913 and continuing for twenty-five years. Thorman prepared plans for the houses with these avenue numbers: 2908 (for Albert J. Hunter), 2915 (for himself), 2919 (for William A. Johnston), 2920 (for John I. Peterson), 3024 (for J. Davis Mayfield), 3033 (for John T. Ederington), 3037 (for Charles H. Leavell), 3101 (for Alfred F. Kerr), 3121 (for William R. Ezell), and 3128 (for Will R. Shutes). Welch-designed buildings carry the avenue numbers 3021, 3038, 3100, 3110, 3127, and 3133, where original householders were W. Angie Smith, Jr., Louis Roy Hoard, James J. Gortman, David B. Vinson, Charles B. Woodul, and Clarence D. Johnson, respectively. Together, the places provide a treasure-trove exhibit of sophisticated, era-related architectural styling. The Thorman-designed house at 3033 Federal was among five El Paso residences featured in a November 1980 issue of *Texas Homes*, published in Dallas. Earlier, a photograph of the Welch edifice at 3038 Federal appeared with commentary in a na-

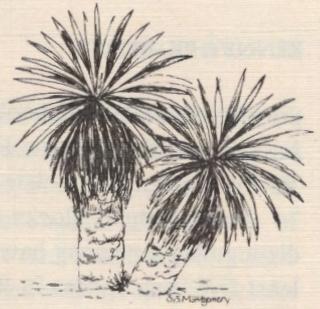
tionally-circulated textbook entitled *Planning Your Home For Better Living* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1945), authored by Milton D. Thalberg and Yale University Associate Professor Clarence W. Dunham.¹

But the three blocks attract historic interest too as a locale where distinguished persons have resided in remarkable numbers (including at least five biographees in *Who's Who in America*) and as a destination to which visiting celebrities have been drawn. Thorman himself, the householder at 2915 Federal from 1921 to 1927, easily qualifies as a resident of distinction, having been considerably lionized by a status-conscious, esthetically-sensitive clientele, both local and nonlocal, including headline makers such as United States Senator and Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall and Brigadier General Walter C. Short, who advanced to the rank of lieutenant general and—unfortunately for his reputation—commanded the American Army in Hawaii when the Japanese attacked in 1941.

Renown in a quite different category marked the career of an earlier householder just down the avenue, Scurry Latimer Terrell, who purchased the two-story brick house at 3020 Federal on May 17, 1917, and maintained residency there for a year. Before moving to El Paso from Dallas, Dr. Terrell already enjoyed national distinction as a medical-faculty professor and a practicing oculist and aurist. But his all-time great moments in history derived from personal and professional ties with Theodore Roosevelt. When a would-be assassin fired a bullet into Roosevelt's chest in Milwaukee during the Presidential campaign of 1912, Dr. Terrell attended the victim at the scene and afterward headed a four-person hospital team assigned to the case. For several anxious days, he and his pronouncements commanded suspenseful attention around the world.²

Of similarly brief duration was the residency of a notable-to-be across the avenue, at 3021 Federal. This property—including a garage-top study affording grandiose mountain views—was designed and developed by Mabel C. Welch, from whom the Reverend W. Angie Smith, Jr., acquired title on March 14, 1929, he being the senior pastor at El Paso's Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1930 he was transferred to the Shreveport First Methodist Church and subsequently to other pastorates before his installation in 1944 as a bishop in The Methodist Church,

Dr. Kenneth K. Bailey, a professor emeritus of history, retired last January after thirty-one years of faculty service at The University of Texas at El Paso and nine faculty years elsewhere. He received his Ph.D. and other degrees at Vanderbilt University and was a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow in 1966-67. *Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) is perhaps the best known of his publications, all in the sphere of U. S. southern history.



THREE BLOCKS of FEDERAL AVENUE

A Treasure Trove of History

by Kenneth K. Bailey

FEDERAL AVENUE BETWEEN PIEDRAS AND LUNA Streets is a delight to any viewer who appreciates historic landmarks. For as many as sixteen homes fronting the thoroughfare in these three blocks were designed by two of El Paso's most talented architects ever, Otto H. Thorman and Mabel C. Welch, commencing in 1913 and continuing for twenty-five years. Thorman prepared plans for the houses with these avenue numbers: 2908 (for Albert J. Hunter), 2915 (for himself), 2919 (for William A. Johnston), 2920 (for John I. Peterson), 3024 (for J. Davis Mayfield), 3033 (for John T. Ederington), 3037 (for Charles H. Leavell), 3101 (for Alfred F. Kerr), 3121 (for William R. Ezell), and 3128 (for Will R. Shutes). Welch-designed buildings carry the avenue numbers 3021, 3038, 3100, 3110, 3127, and 3133, where original householders were W. Angie Smith, Jr., Louis Roy Hoard, James J. Gortman, David B. Vinson, Charles B. Woodul, and Clarence D. Johnson, respectively. Together, the places provide a treasure-trove exhibit of sophisticated, era-related architectural styling. The Thorman-designed house at 3033 Federal was among five El Paso residences featured in a November 1980 issue of *Texas Homes*, published in Dallas. Earlier, a photograph of the Welch edifice at 3038 Federal appeared with commentary in a na-

forerunner of the United Methodist Church. That a second Smith concurrently held the same ecclesiastical rank in the same religious denomination would not have been long or widely remembered, even among Methodists, except that the second Smith also carried the unusual given name of "Angie." The name similarity of the two—Angie Frank Smith and W. Angie Smith, Jr.—advertised a blood relationship, for each was in fact a namesake of the same father.

Smith's successor at 3021 Federal—Samuel J. Isaacks—had commenced his public career in 1903 as a Texas legislator from Bastrop County. Subsequently he served as mayor of Midland from 1906 to 1909, then as Judge of the Seventieth Judicial District before locating in El Paso in 1916. As a member of a Democratic Party slate, he was chosen in statewide polling to serve as a Presidential Elector in 1920, in which capacity he formally cast one of twenty electoral votes assigned to Texas that year in the Presidential selection process and one of an equal number assigned to the state in the Vice Presidential selection process. Elector Isaacks balloted for James M. Cox and Franklin D. Roosevelt, respectively, losers in a race won by Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge. After returning to the state legislature in 1939 as a representative from El Paso County, Isaacks became chairman of the powerful House Judiciary Committee. In 1954 he relinquished his seat to his daughter Maud Isaacks, who continued to live in the family home until the late 1960s.

Next door, at 3027 Federal, a bottom-story duplex apartment housed the first President of the Texas College of Mines (now The University of Texas at El Paso), from the time of John Gerald Barry's investiture in 1931 until his retirement from academic administration in 1935. Barry's wife, Alice, became a well-known personality in her own right as a pioneering weekdays newscaster and commentator at Radio Station KTSM and as secretary of the metropolitan Central Council of Social

Alice Barry, Federal Avenue resident in the 1930s, popular radio newscaster, and wife of John G. Barry, first president of Texas College of Mines (now The University of Texas at El Paso). (Photo courtesy Dr. Robert L. Tappan)



Agencies. Widely remembered were the delightful teas in the Barry apartment, where Town and Gown dignitaries met and mingled, cooled in hot weather by electric-fan breezes directed over tubs of ice. A later well-known resident of the apartment, from 1943 to 1976, was Mary Belle Keefer, charter member and President of the El Paso Audubon Society, co-editor of the first published checklist of birds in the El Paso area, consultant to authors of standard books on ornithology, and almost certainly the city's most informed nonprofessional ornithologist ever.

Notables resided in the upstairs apartment also from 1925 to 1939, when Alfonso M. Martinez, President of the Martinez Investment Company, lived there with his wife, Isabel, and their daughter, Rosita. Alfonso and then Isabel (following his death in 1934) managed the mammoth estate of his deceased father, Felix, which included several substantial downtown El Paso holdings as well as ranching and farming properties up and down the Rio Grande Valley. (In 1983, Felix Martinez was inducted posthumously into the El Paso County Historical Society Hall of Honor in recognition of his many contributions to El Paso and the region.)³

East of the duplex and adjacent to it, at 3033 Federal, a two-story, one-family dwelling became the hub of community pageantry in 1959 during the reign of Linda Hart (now Linda Hart Kemp) as the Sun Carnival Association's twenty-fourth annual Sun Queen. Though the queen's father, Maynard S. Hart, was a highly respected pathologist and sometime health-agency official at both state and local levels, he did not draw broad attention outside his specialty until dispatches from Austin announced in 1977 (after the family had located elsewhere in the city) that Governor Dolph Briscoe had appointed him to membership on the State Health Advisory Committee. Astonished nationwide reactions ensued when it became known that the designee had died almost two years earlier! In the 1960s and '70s, the householders who succeeded the Harts at the Federal Avenue address—Mary and Kenneth Bailey—hosted various home functions at which luminaries in the spheres of biographical and historical writing were feted, including two Pulitzer-Prize winners (Merle Curti and T. Harry Williams) and others whose preeminence was signified by presidential terms in national professional organizations.⁴

Next along the avenue, at 3037 Federal, stands a spacious, Thorman-designed house of Georgian Colonial style. It is the oldest building in the three-block stretch, having been completed in 1913 and first occupied the following January by the owner, Charles Holland Leavell, Sr., the prime subdivider and developer of the neighborhood, and his family. Leavell had been the operator of the Figure 2 Ranch, extending from Sierra Blanca to

the Rio Grande, and his El Paso business interests were primarily in large-scale insurance, real estate development, and construction contracting. Throughout a generation, the Leavell mansion was El Paso's prime site for high-style social events—excepting the half-dozen years or so when the McNarys lived in their Crescent Circle edifice. A ballroom covering the entire third floor was among only three or four such household accommodations in the city. Guests at Leavell-home events included celebrities like Albert B. Fall, James Graham McNary (El Paso's banking and timber magnate and President Harding's nominee for the Comptrollership of the Currency whom the Senate never confirmed), Scurry Latimer Terrell, Louis Roy Hoard, John C. Hayes, Alfred F. Kerr, Will T. Owen, John J. Pershing, Patrick J. Hurley, and the inimitable Luis Terrazas (political and economic titan in the State of Chihuahua, eight times governor and owner of approximately one-tenth of the land of that state, but an expatriate residing in El Paso from 1913 to 1919). Particularly treasured in the memories of the Leavell family was a succession of weddings solemnized in front of the living-room mantel and fireplace. Here, for example, on November 7, 1936, Josephine Leavell, daughter of Charles, Sr., exchanged vows with Lieutenant James Hilliard Polk, U.S.A., future Commanding General of the Fifth U.S. Army Corps (1964-66) and then Commanding General of the U.S. Army in Europe (1966-71).

Eastward across the San Marcial Street intersection, at 3101 Federal, another palatial Thorman-designed structure housed Alfred F. Kerr and his family from the time of its completion in 1915 until 1922.⁵ As a founder and core decision-maker of the El Paso Bank and Trust Company—in which he, his mother-in-law (Mrs. James Wright Gillespie), and her family held controlling stock—Kerr had few peers in local finance for a decade or so. He was additionally an executive and part owner of the Roberts-Kerr Cattle Company, whose assets in the El Paso vicinity included what was said to be the second largest herd of beef in the nation. Kerr's standing plunged abruptly in the early 1920s, however, when his distressed bank acceded to an absorption by a rival under terms adverse to him. Two decades later, in Tucson, he again attained great wealth, and he and his wife became major donors to the University of Arizona Medical School.

Back in El Paso, meanwhile, the former Kerr home on Federal was now occupied by Will T. Owen and his family. President of the El Paso Refining Company, of the Ivey-Dale Farms Company, and of the Owen-Dale-Ivey Company, and a controlling influence in other highly-capitalized corporate organizations, Owen is especially associated with the introduction of cotton growing into the El Paso valley. Although he suffered

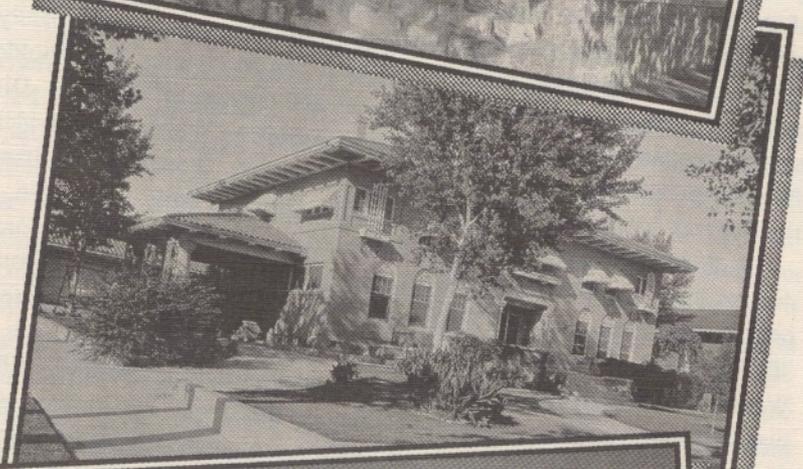
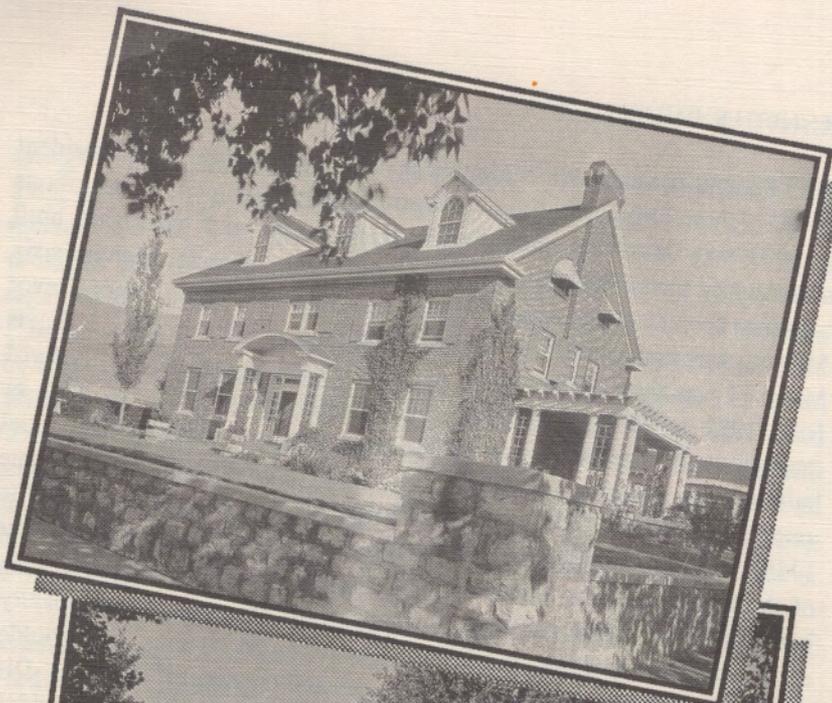
severe financial reverses in the early 1930s, he was able to retain ownership of his Federal Avenue home, which at his death in 1937 passed to his son, Jerome Dale Owen. In the 1940s, the house was converted into a duplex, then reconverted into a one-family dwelling in 1958 by new owners.

At 3038 Federal, facing the Leavell home across the avenue, stands a majestic Mabel Welch creation whose first and long-time owner (beginning in 1929) was Louis Roy Hoard. From 1918 to 1945, Hoard was President of the Canadian-chartered Nor-Oeste de Mexico Railroad—a five-hundred-mile line connecting Juarez and Chihuahua City by way of San Pedro, Casas Grandes, and Madero. A subsidiary company of which he was also president owned more than two and a half million acres of Mexican timberland. Hoard's involvements included face-to-face exchanges with Pancho Villa and President Adolfo de la Huerta; he similarly injected himself into American politics at the apex when he appeared before a United States Senate subcommittee in 1923 and offered testimony adverse to the confirmation of fellow El Pasoan James Graham McNary for the post of Comptroller of the Currency.⁶

Westerly within the same block, another resident, John C. Hayes, had shouldered somewhat equivalent managerial responsibilities in Mexico earlier. The revolution there had drawn him into high-risk affrays, during one of which he was grazed by a bullet fired by a Pancho Villa partisan. His relocation in El Paso followed not long afterward. Hayes had been superintendent of the million-acre Hearst ranch, Hacienda San Jose de Babicora, in western Chihuahua, for approximately fifteen years before settling at 3011 Federal in 1918. The founders of the El Paso National Bank seated him on their board of directors at the outset, in 1925, an affiliation that continued without interruption for thirty years.⁷ Relationships with figures like Porfirio Diaz, Luis Terrazas, John J. Pershing, and members of the Hearst family anteceded broader minglings between Hayes and the elite of both nations, with many of whom he developed trusting, convivial ties. On at least one occasion, actress Marion Davies accompanied William Randolph Hearst when he dined with the Hayeses in El Paso.

Four additional captains of large-scale enterprises—all Federal Avenue residents—deserve mention. Claude M. McNutt (whose household was at

On opposite page, three Federal Avenue houses: top, the Thorman-designed home built for the Charles H. Leavell family in 1913 (courtesy University of Texas at El Paso Library Special Collections); center, the Thorman-designed house built for the Alfred F. Kerr family in 1915 (courtesy University of Texas at El Paso Library Special Collections); bottom, the Welch-designed home built for the Louis Roy Hoard family in 1929 (courtesy Dr. Kenneth K. Bailey)



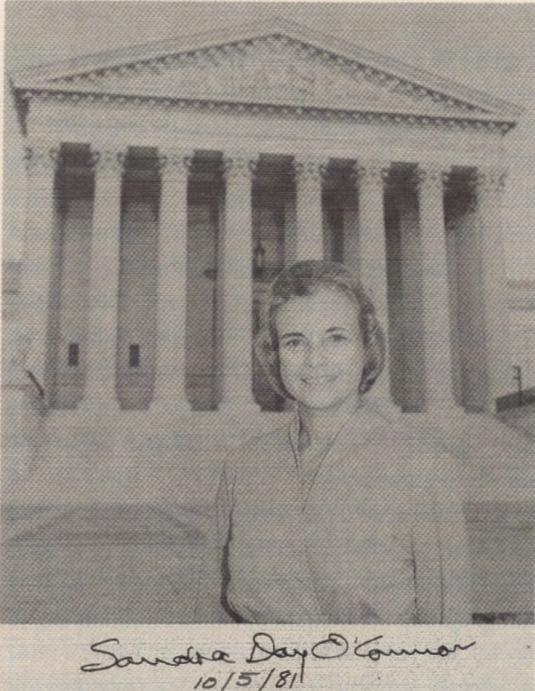
3115 Federal for a decade beginning in 1929) was founder and President of the McNutt Oil and Refinery Company, which commenced operations in 1933 and flourished under family management and ownership until absorbed by the El Paso Natural Gas Company in 1956; the founder's six sons also became associated with the business, one of whom—James Trevor McNutt—was householder at 3112 Federal from 1940 to 1957. J. Davis Mayfield was the original owner at 3024, where he and his family lived from 1922 to 1925. Mayfield led a family group that, by 1950 or thereabouts, had probably become the foremost constructors of residential buildings in the city, operating both as individuals and in corporate association. Joseph C. Peyton, householder at 2919 Federal from 1927 to 1955, was President, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and guiding force of the Peyton Packing Company, a mammoth meat processing and marketing operation that employed hundreds and far outdistanced locally-owned competing firms. And there was Julian M. Gomez, householder at 2901 Federal, beginning in 1943, owner and operator of the D. M. Distillery Company in Juarez, whose Straight American Whiskey was widely familiar on both sides of the international boundary. Though little utilized, the Federal Avenue estate remained in the Gomez family until 1976.

It should be noted too that, aside from Drs. Terrell and Hart, medical doctors have headed households along the three-block stretch in beyond-ordinary numbers. Samuel W. Swope, the original owner of the house at 3027 Federal, is memorable as the city's first psychiatrist. Leigh E. Wilcox, who resided at 3133 Federal from 1946 until his death in 1987, was a general surgeon of great reputation; and James J. Gorman, who resided at 3100 Federal from 1930 to 1965, commanded similar respect as a gastroenterologist. Diego A. Aranda and Patricia H. Alcala, the current householders at 3101 and 3038, respectively, are highly regarded, he as a specialist in plastic and reconstructive surgery, she as an obstetrician and gynecologist. Eric W. Hirsch, a current householder at 3027 Federal and a major in the Army Medical Corps, is a fourth-year resident in orthopaedic surgery at William Beaumont Army Medical Center. Two mainstay general practitioners of an earlier generation had particular commitments to tuberculars, each being a medical director and co-owner of a local sanitarium—James W. Laws, who resided at 3009 Federal from 1919 to 1925, and Orville E. Egbert, who resided from 1927 until 1960 first at 3017 Federal and then at 3000 Federal. By election of their peers, Drs. Hart, Wilcox, Gorman, Laws, and Orville Egbert each served a term as President of the El Paso County Medical Society. For a time in the 1950s, Orville Egbert's son, Edward, a specialist in the treatment of

allergies, was a householder at 3119 Federal. Two other physicians with long, productive careers were Charles P. Brown, a general practitioner who resided at 2900 Federal from 1917 to 1948, and Kevin D. Lynch, a urologist who resided at 2915 Federal from 1927 to 1937. Other well-regarded physicians who have resided along the stretch include Nicholas J. Battafarano, Kathryn Bullen, Maureen D. Clark, Timothy K. Faul, Mark L. Francis, C. Norman Giere, Michael R. Hermans, Thomas Lee Irvin, William E. Johnson, Steven A. Kulik, Jerome D. Love, Kevin M. O'Connor, R. Keith Solano, and John R. Wallace.⁸ Dentists who have resided with their families along the stretch include J. Benjamin Caldwell (at 3027), Wallace H. Black (at 3101), Donald L. Niewald (at 3001), William J. Reynolds (at 3038), and O. J. Shaffer (at 3128 and earlier at two locations westerly along the avenue).

And there remain a final five who rose to distinction by diverse paths, generally unlike those paths already noted. Samuel W. Fant, Jr., who lived with his parents at 2901 Federal from 1917 to 1925, built a superb reputation as a portrait photographer, for which he was feted during a "Sam Fant Day" proclaimed by Mayor Jonathan Rogers in May, 1984. Sam's brother, Jack N. Fant, served in public elective office for approximately twenty years beginning in 1955, first as County Attorney and then as Judge of the Sixty-Fifth District Court. At 2916 Federal there lived a lady who as a sixteen-year-old had performed an assignment of historic significance. She was Madeline Mills Gehring, wife of Herbert W. Gehring and daughter of William J. Mills, last territorial governor of New Mexico. In 1912, following the granting of statehood to New Mexico and Arizona, she was chosen to hoist the first of the forty-eight-star flags that henceforth flew over the statehouse in Santa Fe until a fifty-star design was prescribed in 1959.⁹ Just east of the former Gehring residence, at 3000 Federal, is the house where Frank G. McKnight lived in his early childhood, his father being the original owner and householder from 1919 to 1925; Frank McKnight became known nationally and internationally during the Nixon and Ford Presidential terms, first as Associate Administrator of the Department of Agriculture's Export Marketing Service, then as Secretary of the Commodity Credit Corporation.

The fifth of the final five resided at 3113 Federal in a home purchased by her grandmother, Mamie S. Wilkey, on June 13, 1943; four months later, the title was transferred to Mrs. Wilkey's daughter Ada Mae Day, whose husband (Harry A. Day) was proprietor and operator of the Lazy B Ranch in southeastern Arizona. There being no suitable schools near the ranch, the Days arranged for their three children, including Sandra



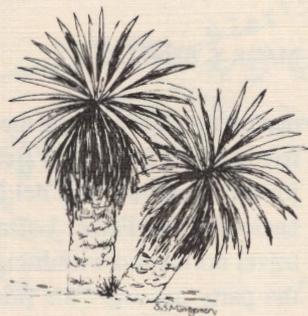
United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who as a high school girl lived at 3113 Federal Avenue during academic terms. (Photo courtesy Radford School)

(later Sandra Day O'Connor), to reside with Mrs. Day's parents during academic sessions and to attend El Paso schools, beginning in 1935. (The father and grandfather, Willis Wilson Wilkey, a cattle broker, died in 1938.) From age thirteen to age sixteen, during three academic years, the future United States Su-

preme Court Justice resided on Federal Avenue with Mrs. Wilkey while attending Stephen F. Austin High School, from which she graduated. The subsequent conferral of her B.A. degree by Stanford University, *magna cum laude*, was followed by a stellar law-school performance at the same institution and an appointment to serve on the editorial board of the *Stanford Law Review*. Later, she became a member of the Arizona Senate, wherein she was elected majority party leader (a first in the nation for a female legislator). From 1979 to 1981, she served on the Arizona State Court of Appeals, after which her service on the nation's highest judicial body commenced.¹⁰

Sandra Day O'Connor thus became another notable personage with ties to Federal Avenue, by no means minimal in her case nor easily forgotten. "When I was there recently for a day," she wrote in 1987, "I drove past the house I lived in on Federal and it brought back a flood of memories." The memories of others are similarly stirred when they revisit the houses and surroundings to which their earlier lives were moored. When articulated and sensitively related to events, sites, and personalities, these recollections richly inform us about an era and a legacy. They teach lessons about life and aspiration; they animate the inanimate, enliven faded impressions, and make the faraway seem near. They also engender

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The PADRE SILVER MINE

by Mark T. Bentley

FASCINATING STORIES OF LOST GOLD MINES and hidden treasure are told all over the world. In the El Paso Southwest, many of these tales are associated with the mountains of the region. The Franklin Mountains, for example, are reported to hold the riches of "The Lost Treasure" from the Church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Juárez. The Organ Mountains are said to possess a golden treasure at the "Lost Padre Mine," and the San Augustine Mountains are rumored to contain a wealth of gold at Victorio Peak. Such legends as these probably have a basic truth behind them, a truth that becomes distorted and colored with the passage of time.

The tale of the Lost Padre Mine in the Organ Mountains may have its roots in the exploratory mining activity conducted by the Spaniards at a different location entirely—namely, at the south end of the Hueco Mountains. No evidence of a settlement or of Spanish ore-processing has ever been found to substantiate the legend of a lost Spanish mine in the Organ Mountains. The earliest documentation of any mining in the Organs is 1849. And by then the Spaniards were long gone.

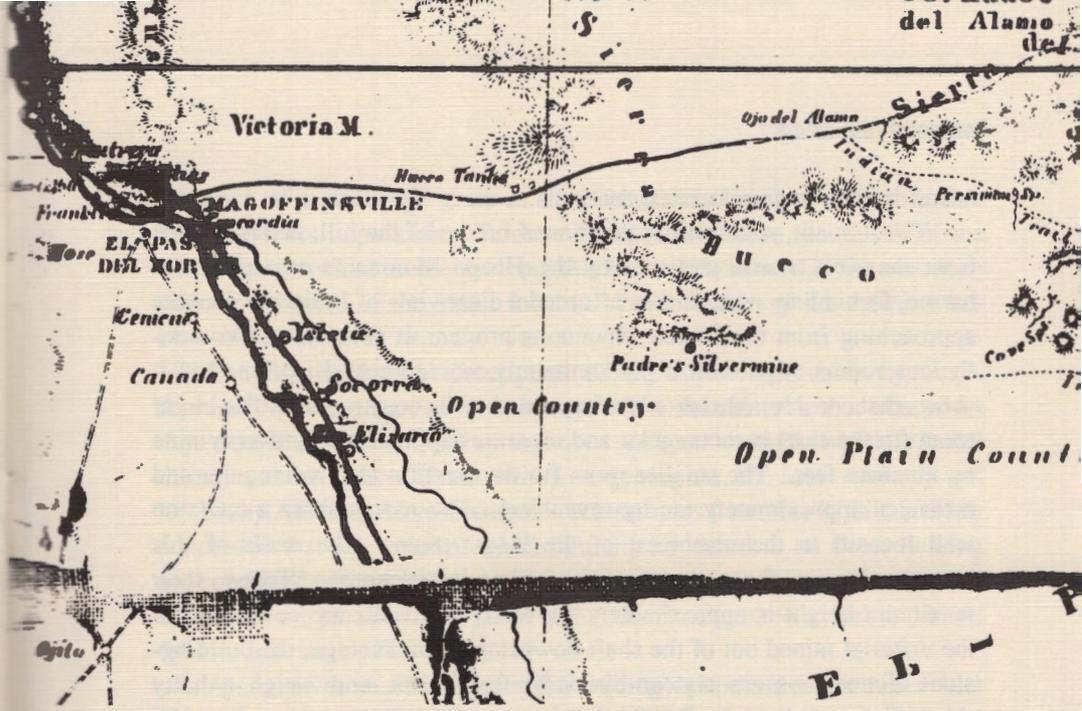
Nevertheless, the legend persists, and it is a tale full of wonder and tragedy. In 1935, geologist Kingsley Charles Dunham recorded the story as he heard it while working in the Organ Mountains. It seems that a priest named LaRue, who was stationed at a hacienda near Chihuahua sometime

during the late years of the Spanish Colonial Period, "was told by a dying friend of...a fabulously rich gold-bearing lode in the mountains two days' journey north of Paso del Norte." Later, a drought brought famine to the hacienda, and Father LaRue persuaded the farm workers in his charge to travel northward with him, "the Organ Mountains being his goal." When the party arrived, "the priest recognized landmarks which had been described to him, and, sending his men out to search, succeeded in finding the rich deposits." Father LaRue settled his people at a place called Spirit Springs (now Cox Ranch), where "the gold was concentrated in *arrastres*" and where "some of the ore was smelted in 'vassos' (adobe furnaces)." The mine itself "was supposed to have been located in a deep canyon west or southwest of Spirit Springs." Meanwhile, the Church authorities in Mexico City became concerned about Father LaRue, having received no word from him in a long time. They sent an expedition in search of him, finally tracing him to the Organ Mountains. When the padre learned from his guards that an expedition was approaching, he "gave orders that the mine was to be covered up and the gold hidden." The members of the expedition tried various means of persuasion, but the priest "refused to divulge the secret of the whereabouts of the mine and gold, asserting that they belonged to his people and not to the Church." Then one night "he was murdered by a soldier attached to the expedition, and afterwards some of the colonists were tortured, but the secret was never told."¹

How this story originated will probably never be known. What is known, though, is that both civilian and United States Topographical Engineers' maps of the mid-nineteenth-century El Paso region show a "Padre's Silver Mine" (sometimes rendered "Padre's Silvermine") located at the south end of the Hueco Mountains.² And there is also plenty of physical evidence to support the testimony of the maps.

A very majestic red conical natural sculpture rests at the foot of the Hueco Mountains proper. Perched atop its crest is the ruin of a small stone fort. Forty-nine feet downslope and due southeast of the fort are traces of historical mining. A mineshaft exists that is reminiscent of the typical early Spanish mines. It has been reported, though not conclusively documented, that Spanish-style tools (including a notched-tree ladder) were removed from the mineshaft at the turn of the century.³ The few

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This map, referred to as "Pressler's 1858 Map of Texas," identifies the "Padre's Silvermine" as well as towns, wagon routes, and Indian trails. (Courtesy Mark T. Bentley)

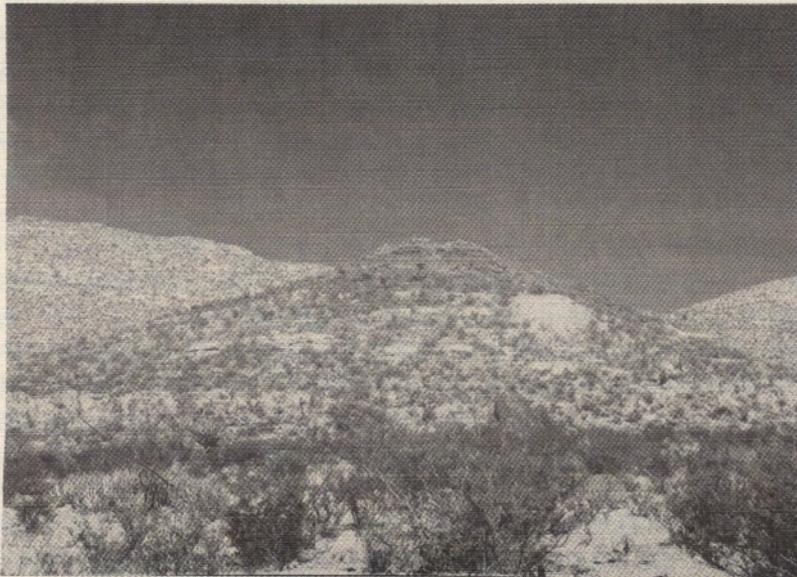
diagnostic artifacts that have been observed at this site include fragments of two Guanajuato Green Glaze⁴ cups with handles, interior- and exterior-polished brownware ceramics with a polished red pigment on the exterior, and an interior- and exterior-polished brownware sherd bowl form with a concave base. The brownwares were originally either small *ollas* or bowls. Fragments of lead foil are also said to have been found at the site. These may be remnants of official seals or of containers holding liquids. Lead was also used in a refining process called lead fusion and cupellation. At present, however, these postulations are inconclusive.

The small fort at the Padre Mine location was undoubtedly built for the purpose of defending against Indian attack while exploratory mining activity was being conducted. The Apache are reported to have consistently attacked settlers and explorers in this area of the Tularosa Basin/Hueco Bolson. In one case, a hacienda called Tiburcios de Ortega, which had been established between the 1680s and 1690s near present-day San Elizario, was abandoned because of Apache attack.⁵ This hacienda was located at the "Lower Ford" of the river. Later, in 1789, a presidio was built at San Elizario to protect the Spanish and Mexican people living at the villages of San Lorenzo, Senecu, Socorro, and Ysleta from marauding Indian raiding.⁶ It is therefore not unlikely that the Spanish mining explorations at the southern end of the Hueco Mountains, roughly fifteen

miles distant, required armed sentinels.

The redoubt, strategically positioned on top of the hill, is overlooked from the west, north, and east by the Hueco Mountains escarpment, a barren, forbidding area. It thus afforded a clear view of Indian onslaughts approaching from the Hueco Mountains proper. It consists of two contiguous rooms aligned in a predominantly west-to-east direction, and it shows that considerable labor was expended on its construction. The larger room (to the east) is rectangular and measures approximately twenty-nine by nineteen feet. The smaller room (to the west) is also rectangular and measures approximately ten-by-seven feet. The rooms share a common wall located to the northwest of the larger room. The walls of this breastworks are about twenty-eight inches in thickness. Today, their maximum height is approximately six feet. The walls are comprised of the material mined out of the shaft downslope. On average, the building-stone dimensions are sixteen-by-ten-by-ten inches, and weigh a hefty thirty-five pounds each. Recent digging by relic collectors is apparent by the disturbance of the dirt floors of this structure.

As for whatever mining activity took place, the evidence suggests that the operation was a prospect rather than a true mine. The shaft is about six feet in diameter, and its vertical depth is approximately thirty-six feet. At its maximum depth, the base of the shaft takes a turn to the north. The



View of the Padre Mine and Redoubt, facing north with the Hueco Mountain escarpment in the background. The small fort is located on top of the hill. (Photo courtesy Mark T. Bentley)

presence of a drill-pipe grate at the surface of this shaft makes further measurements impossible. Talus material is present at the mouth of the workings as well as on the upslope; this material was used in the construction of the walls of the small fortress. No evidence of ore refining has been observed at or near the site.

The first geological description of this locale was made by G. B. Richardson at the turn of the century.⁷ The matrix rock that comprises the Padre Mine is skarn, metamorphosed sedimentary rock, which is found throughout the Hueco Mountains. Two geologists, Dr. John Anthony and Dr. Libby Anthony, have examined rock samples from this location. They concluded that the material which initially appeared to be silver-bearing ore contained other metals than silver. Their review indicates that no silver or sulfides are present in the samples, but that "manganese oxides and some epidote are visible."⁸

A conservative estimate for the mining operation at the Old Padre Silver Mine places its inception after 1789 and sometime before the departure of the Spaniards from the area in 1821. This estimate is based on the establishment of the new presidio at nearby San Elizario and the time-range of manufacture of the diagnostic ceramics documented at the site. The very earliest date that ceramics were present in this region is March 8, 1691,⁹ when Spaniards from the Parral Mining District first entered the East Tularosa Basin for its salt resources and established the second of two intermontane shipping lanes in the territory. Further, the mine had to be a clearly identifiable emplacement well before 1849, since its name appears on historical maps dating from that year.

The significance of the Padre Silver Mine lies in the fact that it reflects an initial stage of Spanish mining strategy in the New World.¹⁰ The labor-intensive efforts that it reveals indicate high expectations, which in the long run did not materialize. It is a poignant reminder of the Spanish presence in the Paso del Norte region, specifically as regards the Spaniards' energetic search for mineral wealth in the area.

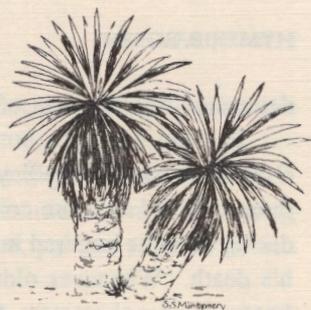
Today, the Padre Silver Mine is poised peacefully atop the picturesque red knoll at the southern end of the Hueco Mountains, its setting very dramatic against the drab gray stone backdrop of the mountains themselves. And it offers the interesting speculation that somehow, as the stories of its prospects and its disappointments trickled down through the generations, the facts suffered radical changes: its "Padre" came to be identified as a Chihuahuan priest named LaRue; its "Silver" was transmuted into gold; and its location was moved from a hilltop at the base of the Huecos to a "deep canyon" in the Organ Mountains. ☆

NOTES

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3. Thomas C. O'Laughlin, personal communication..., December 19, 1990.
4. Charles C. Di Peso, *Casas Grandes: A Fallen Trading Center of the Gran Chichimeca*, Vol. 8, the Amerind Foundation, Dragoon, Arizona (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1974), 186-189.
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6. Paige W. Christiansen, "Hugo O'Conor: Spanish-Apache Relations on the Frontiers of New Spain, 1771-1776," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1960; Mary Moore and Delmar L. Beene, "The Interior Provinces of New Spain—the Report of Hugo O'Conor (January 30, 1776)," *Arizona and the West*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1971), 165-182; Hugo O'Conor, "Hugo O'Conor to Viceroy Antonio Maria Bucarell y Ursua," January 30, 1776, Carrizal Document 540; Vol. 88, Provincias Internas, Archivo General y Publico de la Nacion, Mexico, D. F., Diario No. 3 Seguido desde 21 de Noviembre del ano de 1774 hasta el dia 7 de Enero 1775 (original copy is in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley); Edward Morris Opler and Catherine H. Opler, "Mescalero Apache History in the Southwest," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XXV (1950), 1-36; W. H. Timmons, personal communication, January 4, 1991, related to the occupation of the haciendas and presidios.
7. G. B. Richardson, *Geologic Atlas of the United States - El Paso Folio*, Geologic Folio No. 166 (Washington, D. C.: The Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, 1909); E. H. Sellards, "Stratigraphy," *The Geology of Texas*, Vol. I (Austin: University of Texas Bulletin 3232, Bureau of Economic Geology, 1932).
8. John Anthony and Libby Anthony, personal communication, December 16, 1990.
9. Letter of Diego de Vargas, April 7, 1692, Guadalajara Archives No. 139, Archival General de Indias, Seville, Spain.
10. Carlos Prieto, *Mining in the New World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973).

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. TIMMONS

Password is pleased to announce that El Paso author-historian W. H. Timmons has received a prestigious award for his book *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (Texas Western Press). Dr. Timmons' book is one of three winners of the 1990 T. R. Fehrenbach Award presented by the Texas Historical Commission for outstanding contribution to Texas history. This award program is named in honor of internationally recognized historian T. R. Fehrenbach of San Antonio. Each of the three Awards carries a cash prize of \$1,000.



SAM DREBEN

Warrior, Patriot, Hero

by Hymer E. Rosen

S

AM DREBEN CAME TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1898, a penniless little immigrant from Russia. Who would have thought that twenty-three years later, on Armistice Day in 1921, he would be serving in the honor guard at the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Seventy years later, Dreben remains almost as unknown as the soldier he helped to inter in Arlington National Cemetery. Yet this adopted El Pasoan was a much-decorated American soldier who also participated in some of the most swashbuckling adventures of the early 1900s.

The day after his death in Los Angeles on March 15, 1925, newspapers all over the country carried front-page articles that paid tribute to him. *The El Paso Times* was no exception and, indeed, devoted the better part of an additional page to the subject of Sam Dreben's life and military career, including a two-column eulogy written by his good friend Damon Runyon. In the eulogy, Runyon described Sam as "a short, dark, chunky man, of self-effacing manner"—popularly known as "the fighting Jew"—who was "the bravest, the gentlest, the courtliest man I ever knew." "He struck you as anything but a fighter," continued Runyon. "He was almost painfully polite, always apparently greatly abashed.... But beneath the velvet of his

demeanor was the iron of a warrior soul."

El Paso has been home to several warriors more famous than Sam Dreben-Pershing, Bradley, Patton, Terry Allen—but none of these were more colorful or more courageous than he was. And the memory of his daring exploits lingered in the El Paso Southwest for several decades after his death. Whenever oldtimers used to get together to talk about well-known border characters, someone was sure to mention Sam Dreben. And then the stories about him would begin to flow—wonderful stories that took you all over the world with Sam "the fighting Jew": to the Philippines, China, Central America, Mexico, France.*

Sam's story actually began in Poltava, Russia, where he was born on June 1, 1878, to deeply religious Jewish parents. While he was still an infant, his family moved to Odessa on the Black Sea. Mrs. Dreben wanted her Sammy to become a rabbi, but the idea did not appeal to the youngster, who dreamed of being a soldier and wearing a uniform with shiny buttons. When informed that a Jew could not serve as an officer in the Czar's army, Sam was disappointed but not disheartened.

Twice he ran away from home, once going as far as Germany, only to find that there were no jobs for Jewish boys in that country. He returned home for a time and labored in the fields, listening to the stories of America, the refuge of the oppressed. At eighteen he left home for good, stowing away on a ship bound for England. In London, Dreben earned a precarious living carrying vegetables to market, but was soon fired for eating some of the produce. Obviously England was not the land of opportunity that he was seeking. But getting to America was not going to be easy. He managed to make his way to Liverpool, where he worked for a time as a dock laborer and as a tailor's assistant in a sweatshop, for one pence a day.

After saving enough money for the price of steerage passage to the United States, he arrived in New York City in January, 1899, and went to Philadelphia, where relatives had preceded him. He soon realized that the United States was not the star-spangled heaven he had imagined it would be. A person had to work to eat, and Sammy was unable to find

**Editor's note:* One of the many interesting Dreben stories appears in Art Leibson's "The Kidnapping of Little Phil," *Password*, XX, 3 (Fall, 1973), 99-110.

Hymer Ellas Rosen has been active in the El Paso scene for over fifty years, with a diversified background in the entertainment field and research in the area of Jewish pioneers in the Southwest. He is past president of the Joe H. Goodman Zionist District, life trustee of Congregation B'nai Zion, member of Masonic Lodge 130, Scottish Rite Bodies, among other organizations.

a job. For a few weeks he attended night school, struggling to learn the English language.

In 1899 the war in the Philippine Islands was going on, and Dreben heard stories of the fighting. Moreover, he learned from a recruiting sergeant that the regular army, to his amazement, paid its soldiers fifteen dollars a month and three meals a day.

"Do they give the uniform too?" he asked.

"Sure, you get all your clothes," the sergeant told him, "and also medical attention. Why, if you get killed they don't even charge a cent to bury you."

Within an hour little Sammy held up his hand and swore to protect the United States against all enemies, received his first meal, and was issued an ill-fitting uniform with real brass buttons. When he returned to the home of his relatives, his aunt exclaimed, "Sammy, you're crazy! Don't you know soldiers get killed?"

"Maybe, but they don't charge you anything to eat," Sammy assured her.

Dreben was assigned to Company G, Fourteenth United States Infantry, then stationed at Bacoar, in the Philippines, and was given a ticket and expense money to San Francisco. With other recruits and a few old-time regulars, he boarded a train for San Francisco. The Army had a time-honored custom in those days called "chiseling the rookies." On the first day Sam was initiated into the game of stud poker. On the second day he was broke and went hungry for the rest of the trip, except for handouts from his companions.

At San Francisco the squad of recruits was marched aboard a transport. In a short time, Sam learned that extra coal passers were needed in the stokehole. Every soldier who volunteered for a four-hour shift would receive the princely sum of one dollar. It seemed like found money, and for four hours Sam sweated in the terrific heat below deck. At the end of the shift he came on deck weary and weak, but he had a silver dollar in his pocket. On the mess deck a bunch of soldiers were ganged up in a corner shooting craps. Sam had learned all about the game on the train from Philadelphia. At least he thought he had. He took the dice, dropped his dollar on the deck, and said, "Shoot de works." One roll of the dice and Sam heard the verdict: "Snake eyes." And he saw his silver dollar disappear.

In the Philippines, on his very first day under fire, Sam characteristically "shot de works," but this time—as indeed throughout his military career—he did not come up "snake eyes." The incident was later described

by one of his fellow soldiers, Tex O'Reilly. Sam's outfit, ordered to put down the rebellion for independence led by Emilio Aguinaldo, was marching toward a stone bridge, where—unknown to the American soldiers—the rebels had placed “an ominous looking cannon loaded with black powder, nails, rivets and scrap iron, good for a single blast.” Suddenly it “blasted away,” and the men lucky enough to escape being hit scrambled for cover. “All but one man. A lone soldier emerged from the smoke, moving at a half-trot onto and across the bridge, disappearing as he leaped into the enemy trenches.” It turned out that Sam survived unscratched, and when his fellow soldiers later demanded an explanation of his “damfool conduct,” he responded “in his guttural English”: “Vell, I heard the captain say ‘Forwards!’ and I don’t hear nobody say ‘Stop.’”

Dreben next saw action in China, where the Fourteenth Infantry was deployed to rescue the besieged legations of the United States and other western nations in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. After the Rebellion was crushed, Sam, his Army hitch over, returned to the United States and got a job as a municipal rat catcher in San Francisco. Finding that type of employment disillusioning for a fighting man, he reenlisted in the Army. At the end of his hitch, he found himself in the Panama Canal Zone. The next day he joined a force of adventurers, led by General Lee Christmas, fighting in the Guatemalan revolution. There he met Tracy Richardson, a machine-gunner-for-hire and a soldier-adventurer who was to become Sam's close friend and comrade-in-arms. Before the fighting was over, Sam was made a “coronel.” The two soldiers of fortune followed wars wherever they found them.

According to one account, Dreben became involved in a Central American revolution which seemed to be going nowhere, both sides fighting aimlessly and listlessly. Sam picked the likeliest-looking side and got a job organizing its army. He drilled, cussed, fed, and paid his troops, but got no appreciable results. They still lacked spirit. Thinking it over, he hit upon a brilliant scheme. Appealing to their love of glory and finery, he promoted every man in the army. The lieutenants became captains, the captains became colonels, the colonels became generals, the generals became field marshals, and the buck privates became second lieutenants. There were no enlisted men. He then outfitted them all in splendid uniforms trimmed with gold braid, the whole army looking like the male chorus of the Strauss operetta *The Student Prince*. Now the bedizened officers fought like devils.

Sometime during the Mexican Revolution, Sam established his residence in El Paso—at 2416 Montana Avenue. But he was often away from

home-fighting in the Revolution. At the outset he fought in Madero's revolt against Porfirio Díaz. Later he was in many revolutionary battles in Chihuahua, fighting with Generals José Ines Salazar, Emilio P. Campa, and Pascual Orozco. He also fought with Pancho Villa, serving as Villa's purchasing agent for a time. But when Villa and Venustiano Carranza broke their alliance, Dreben remained loyal to Carranza.

One revolutionary battle stands out from the others. It took place near Parral, in southern Chihuahua. Even with Dreben and Richardson on his side, General "Cheche" Campos' federal army was fighting a disorganized war. Suddenly, General Pancho Villa and his army appeared on their flank, struck a blow, and faded away into the desert. Soon they returned and captured Parral, causing most of Dreben's men to flee the city. Sam, with only a small gun squad left to help out, grabbed a machine gun and began to fire upon the Villistas, stopping their charge. Then he began working around the flanks of the area on foot with fewer than a dozen Mexican troops. With his hands on the trigger of his machine gun, he and his men retreated several hundred yards. When the enemy again advanced, he opened up and drove them to cover. He continued these tactics for more than two hours until darkness gave him and his men a chance to rejoin the retreating federal army. It has been described as the greatest solo battle of the Revolution.

Another exploit, recalled later by some of Sam's El Paso friends, took place near Jiménez, where the *Federales* were concentrated. Dreben and Richardson, now fighting against the government forces, were entrusted with the job of forming the rebel line of defense. From the hills they watched the advance of the army below. Homer Scott, a young photographer who had been following the numerous battles in Mexico, armed only with a camera, was nearby. Viewing the scene near Jiménez, Scott called to the two warriors and asked, "Why don't you load one of the switch engines of the train with dynamite and bump them in the nose?"

It was a grand idea. They brought one of the old engines to the top of the hill, hastily packed it with 800 pounds of dynamite, and scattered percussion caps over the boxes. When the enemy trains were almost within rifle range, Sam opened the throttle, tied down the whistle, and jumped from the cab! Like a monster out of a nightmare, that roaring death machine rushed down the slope, striking the leading government train head on. There was a terrific explosion, and wreckage was strewn for a hundred yards across the track.

Twice during the Revolution, Sam came to the rescue of his friend General J. J. Méndez, military commander of Cd. Juárez. The first rescue

came in response to a revolt against General Méndez by one of his young captains, Jesus Valverde, who was angry because he had been severely disciplined by the General for insubordination. Routed in the middle of the night from his bed in Juárez, Mendez crossed to El Paso. He immediately applied to Chihuahua City and Mexico City for reinforcements and returned to Juárez accompanied by Dreben, who was to instruct the troops in the use of the new equipment. Soon, however, Sam was placed in command of the defense of the Customs House. He and Mendez then led a charge against the rebels and expelled them. Dreben received the thanks of the Mexican government for his work in quelling this revolt.

Then, with hardly a respite, along came a second rebellion, full of hot action but lasting only a few hours. Another ambitious young captain named Castro, with visions of being a second Pancho Villa, had decided it was a good time to stage a revolt and had gathered a small army on the outskirts of Juárez. General Méndez could scarcely muster a score of loyal soldiers and a few guns. Instinctively he raced once more across the river to El Paso and consulted his old friend Sam Dreben. By the time he and Dreben could return to Juárez, firing had already started and the Customs House was being attacked. But once again the loyalists prevailed.

After Villa carried out his infamous raid on the American garrison at Columbus, New Mexico, Sam's allegiance to his adopted country proved stronger than any of his allegiances in Mexico. When General John J. Pershing entered Mexico chasing after Villa, the little soldier promptly volunteered his services and served with distinction as a scout for Pershing in the Punitive Expedition. When Pershing withdrew to El Paso in 1917, Sam returned to civilian life.

Now a married man and almost forty years old, Sam thought his soldiering days were over. However, two events changed his expectations: the death of his infant daughter (which plunged him into deep sorrow) and the entry of the United States into the World War. When a special company was recruited in El Paso, Sam enlisted as a private but was soon promoted to first sergeant in Captain Richard F. Burges' Company A of the 141st Infantry.

After training at Camp Bowie, the regiment was ordered to France, where it participated in several of the hardest campaigns of the war—among them, the Meuse-Argonne drive and the allied Champagne offensive. On one occasion, as reported (much later) in *The El Paso Times* of March 16, 1925, Dreben saved Major Burges' life: "...when their regiment was under heavy fire, the Americans had taken some ditches. Major Burges had found a dugout and was in it when Dreben came by and insisted that he get out

of that one and spend the night in another. He had gotten out on time before his dugout was bombed. 'Yes, he saved my life, by this thoughtfulness,' Burges said."

It was not merely "this thoughtfulness" that inspired in Major Burges his profound respect and deep affection for Sam Dreben. According to Burges, Sam was always the first man to reach the objective during attacks, his initiative and courage serving consistently as an inspiration to his men. And, indeed, the records of Sam's deeds in World War I bear out these words. At St. Etienne, for instance, Dreben captured a machine-gun nest, killing fourteen Germans single-handedly. For this heroism, he was decorated with the highest French honor given an enlisted man—the *Medaille Militaire*—and a second medal, the *Croix de Guerre* with palms. He also received the Italian War Cross and the United States Distinguished Service Cross.

First Sergeant Dreben and Major Burges returned from France together, and were met by cheering crowds in their hometown of El Paso. Once again a civilian, Dreben became a prominent figure in real estate and insurance circles.

The esteem in which Dreben was held by the ranking military officials of the United States and France is illustrated by the following incident. Sam, wearing all his decorations, attended a convention of the American Legion in Kansas City, Missouri. While walking through the lobby of the hotel, he met General Pershing and Marshal Foch on their way to a banquet being given for the military notables present. Pershing immediately stopped and, turning to Foch, said, "This is one of my bravest soldiers." Foch, seeing the French decorations pinned on Dreben's chest, embraced him in the French style. Pershing then invited Sam to the banquet. Needless to say, Sam accepted with pleasure.

Rabbi Martin Zielonka, rabbi of Temple Mount Sinai in El Paso from 1900 to 1938, knew Dreben for many years and bore testimony to Sam's pride of Jewish descent. The rabbi was in fact a close student of Dreben's life and published his findings in a long article entitled "The Fighting Jew," which appeared in Volume 31 of the *American Jewish Historical Society* (1928). Norman Walker, a newspaperman who also knew Dreben well, said, "Sam's two most cherished possessions were his Jewish ancestry and his American citizenship."

Although Sam Dreben's career as an active soldier ended with the signing of the Armistice in 1918, his "warrior soul" remained strong and vigorous. Sometime in the early '20s he made a significant contribution to American Legion policy in El Paso by fighting for what he knew to be

right. When a known Ku Klux Klan member sought to join the organization, Sam introduced a resolution prohibiting any Klansman from membership in the Legion: "These men, oath-bound to secrecy, hide behind their masks and say that because I am a foreign-born Jew I am not good enough to be an American. Every time America has called for volunteers, I have put on the uniform. They did not ask me at the recruiting office if I was a Jew, and they did not ask me on the battlefield what my race or religion was.... The soldiers didn't wear masks in France, other than gas masks, and they don't need them now." A stormy debate followed, the chair ruling that Dreben's resolution was out of order. But Sam appealed to the post for a ruling, and his resolution carried without a dissenting voice.

In 1921 Dreben received an invitation from Washington, D.C. The Unknown Soldier was to be buried with honors in Arlington National Cemetery on November 11, and General Pershing had picked the guard of honor from among the men who had shown the greatest bravery in the war. Among those chosen—and the list included such luminaries as Sergeant Alvin York—was El Paso's Sam Dreben.

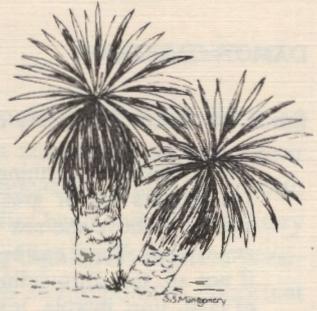
On March 16, 1925, the day after Sam's death, the Texas Legislature adjourned for a day in his honor, and the flag was flown at half staff at the state capitol. General Pershing sent this telegram to Sam's widow: DEEPEST SYMPATHY IN GREAT LOSS YOU HAVE SUFFERED IN THE DEATH OF YOUR HUSBAND. HE WAS MY DEAR FRIEND. And in his nationally syndicated newspaper column, Damon Runyon wrote: "If I were asked to write his epitaph I would put it in a few words. I would simply engrave in the granite shaft: SAM DREBEN, ALL MAN. ☆

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses his gratitude to the staff of the Southwest Collection Department of the El Paso Public Library for helping him to locate materials on Sam Dreben.

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The NEWS at the PASS— ONE CENTURY AGO (April–June, 1891)

by Damon Garbern

THE SPRING OF 1891 WAS FOR THE MOST PART a relatively slow news season in El Paso. The dominant newspaper story in early April related that the United States War Department had been looking for a new firing range and had found exactly what it wanted in El Paso. “On the new post site the department has a range two miles long and a mountain 1500 feet to fire into.” The newspapers also reported that the local Democrats were trying to organize and were attempting to persuade “Independents” to make a commitment to one or the other of the two major parties. Local Democrat Leigh Clark was quoted as saying that his party would have to “put up a democratic ticket even though we know defeat stares us in the face.”

During this dry news season, *Times* Editor Hart continued his efforts to rally El Pasoans to take their true place in the sun. Citing El Paso’s failure to send a delegation to a commercial congress in Kansas City, he declared: “El Paso is entirely too indifferent to her own importance and the many opportunities offered to increase that importance.” He quoted extensive passages from the *Colorado Exchange Journal*, a publication of

the E. N. Baker Company of Denver that had glowingly praised El Paso:

The climate is everything that could be desired, mild, equable, healthy. The grasses are of great variety and peculiar excellence due to the elevation above the sea which gives life, vitality, and coolness to the atmosphere. There can be no question that there is great wealth in nearly, if not all, the surrounding mountains.... Several promising discoveries of coal, iron, marble, lead, silver ore and gold have been made within a few miles of the city.... All of this applies with equal force to that vast and inexhaustibly rich portion of northern Mexico, southern New Mexico and Arizona, and western Texas of which El Paso is already and must remain the business, mining, and political center.

In spite of such hyperbole, life remained sleepy and calm in El Paso, and newspaper readers had to content themselves with accounts of mundane happenings—such as the report that “County Surveyor Parker is preparing a handsome plat of the county poor farm which will adorn the walls of the Commissioners Court Room” and the revelation that health officer Yandell had asked for funds to calsomine the pest house in preparation for a visit from the state inspector. Also, readers could peruse the details issued by the tax assessor, who informed them that the City had collected for 1890 a total of \$40,000 in property taxes; and if time still hung heavy on their hands, they could examine the listings of the County tax assessments, wherein they would learn, for example, that Jesus Archulata’s taxes for one lot in Socorro came to \$2.80 and that Julian Yrigollen’s were \$13.61 for his sixty-seven acres in Ysleta.

However, the news drought suddenly broke. The newspapers announced that El Paso was to be visited by the President of the United States, Benjamin Harrison, who was making a cross-country tour from the east coast to California with many stopovers along the way. El Paso city fathers immediately began making elaborate plans for a great “international” reception with the idea of having President Harrison meet President Diaz of Mexico in the center of one of the international bridges. The *Times* declared that “The international nature of the reception to be tendered President Harrison on his arrival here brings El Paso to the front as the most important point to be visited by the presidential party on this entire journey.”

As it turned out, President Diaz was unable to accept El Paso’s invitation, but a large delegation from Mexico was expected. The Mexican War Department was to be represented by Sr. General Jose Maria Ranjel [sic] and his aides—one colonel of infantry, two first captains of cavalry,

Damon Garbern, the author of this regular Password feature, holds a supervisory position with the El Paso Public Schools and is a PRO-MUSICA performer.

two second captains of cavalry, plus artillerymen with four cannons and a 45-piece band. The Mexican officers, it was announced, would appear in full dress uniforms including swords and sidearms. On hand also to meet the presidential train would be the Fort Bliss band and other military units. Together with carriages for the visiting dignitaries and the presidential party, the fire department, and assorted self-appointed important citizens, quite a parade was promised for the trip from the depot to the Court House, where the official reception was to take place.

El Paso's newspaper readers were informed that the presidential train would leave Sanderson, Texas, at 10:50 p.m. on April 19 and would proceed at a leisurely pace (Marfa, 2:40 a.m.; Sierra Blanca, 3:45 a.m.; San Elizario, 9:15 a.m.; Ysleta, 9:35 a.m.) to El Paso, arriving at 10:00 a.m. on April 20. The El Paso delegation headed by Mayor Caples had planned to take a special train to Ysleta and meet the presidential train there, but were told that it "would not be convenient." This disappointment did not dim the brilliance of the festivities (held on the evening of April 19) that featured an address by General Crillo, Governor of Chihuahua, and a fulsome response by Mr. Bronson of the El Paso committee. The latter gentlemen proclaimed that "Both republics have but one watchword and that is progress—and I hope that...they shall always march onward joined by the ties of the most frank and cordial friendship...."

On the day following the President's visit, the *Times* devoted practically the entire issue to details of the event, the lead story headed "WELCOME! FAREWELL!" and the opening lines reading thus:

El Paso gave both salutations yesterday and right proudly did she carry herself in the ceremony, so proudly indeed that she captured the hearts and admiration of the presidential party.... The day dawned clear and beautiful and at an early hour the finishing touches were given the handsome decorations in which the entire city was clothed.

The issue included transcriptions of the several speeches delivered at the Court House reception. Another article described the school children, dressed in white, who lined the President's path at the court House and who looked "as fresh and pretty as young rosebuds in May." And yet another commented on the President's voice: "clear and robust and his enunciation so perfect as to make his remarks heard by all."

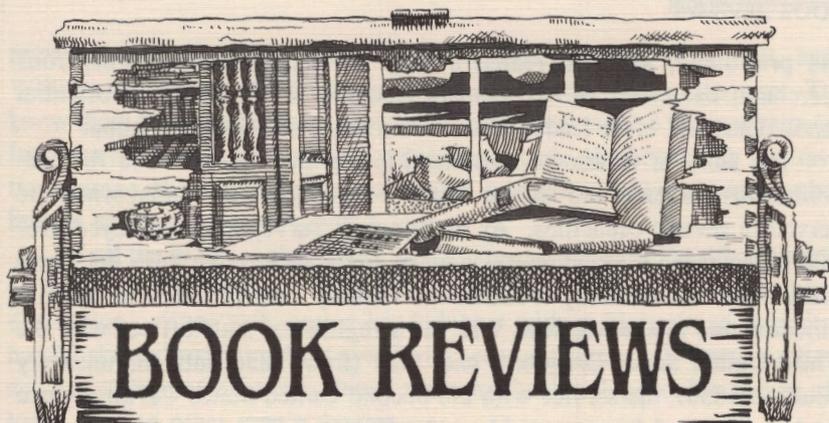
The visit by the President ended with another parade back to the depot, and the train pulled out of El Paso at 1:10 p.m. El Paso had had its three hours in the sun, and it was back to reading that "Justice Lessor fined Pancho Bela and Frank Amstad each fifty cents and costs for disturbing the peace." ☆

FEDERAL AVENUE...from page 82

contemplations about nurture. One former resident spoke for many when he characterized this locale of his youth and childhood as "a marvelous neighborhood in which to grow up."¹¹☆

NOTES

1. In preparing this article, the author relied heavily on interviews with residents and former residents, on written statements by a few such informants, on official real estate records in the County Court House, on *El Paso City Directories*, on published biographies and general works of history, and on newspaper files. An additional valuable source was the information assembled in the late 1970s by neighborhood volunteers under the leadership of Una B. Hill, when Manhattan Heights was being proposed for enrollment on the National Register of Historic Places. The O. H. Thorman Records in the Special Collections Department of The University of Texas at El Paso Library were also valuable. Within the three blocks under consideration, many structures not designed by Thorman or Welch have interesting architectural features, though the architect in most such cases is unknown. Foremost in this category is the elegant house on the northeast corner of the Federal Avenue-Piedras Street intersection, numbered 2901 Federal. It is known that the designer and contractor were Houstonians and that financing was provided by a wealthy Houstonian, Laura Koppe, in whose honor Laura Koppe Road in Houston is named. The house was a gift from Koppe to her daughter and son-in-law, the Samuel W. Fants, who were the original occupants, from 1917 to 1925. It is interesting to note that two of the houses located in these blocks are adobe, at 2916 and 3128.
2. See the *New York Times*, October 15, 1912, and issues for the several following days; see also *The Tyrell-Terrell Family of Virginia* (El Paso: Carl Hertzog, 1959).
3. For an excellent coverage of the life and career of Felix Martinez, see Deane Miller, "Tribute to Felix Martinez," *Password*, XXIX, 1 (Spring, 1984), 5-8.
4. Curti served terms as President of the American Historical Association and President of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association; Williams served terms as President of the Organization of American Historians and President of the Southern Historical Association. Other honorees and the organizations in which they were elected president are as follows: Kenneth M. Stampp, Organization of American Historians; William T. Hagan, Western History Association; Walter Rundell, Western History Association.
5. Henry C. Trost and the Trost and Trost firm have been generally identified as the designer or designers of the house at 3101 Federal. Yet the O. H. Thorman Records leave no doubt that Thorman was the designer. See the photograph in Box 9 with typed inscription "Residence Alfred Kerr, Federal Street, Manh. Hts. El Paso, Tex. O. H. Thorman, Architect." In the same collection, in the file of Thorman drawings, Folder "K," see seven large sheets of drawings for the Kerr house, dated March 21, 1914, identified as "Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Kerr. O. H. Thorman, Architect."
6. For a treatment of Hoard's career, see J. F. Hulse, *Railroads and Revolutions: The Story of Roy Hoard* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1986).
7. Recent commentaries about Hayes' role in the El Paso National Bank appear in Joseph Leach's authoritative *Sun Country Banker: The Life and the Bank of Samuel Doak Young* (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1989).
8. Robin B. Weinman, Executive Director, El Paso County Medical Society, provided useful information about the medical doctors.
9. For a commentary on Mrs. Gehring, see Alice Gehring Miskimins, "The Las Vegas Connection: Wilson Waddingham and the Mills Family of New Mexico," *Password*, XXXII, 2 (Summer, 1987), 77-86, especially 84-85.
10. Judith Bentley's *Justice Sandra Day O'Connor* (New York: Julian Messner, 1983), a useful account, was loaned to the author by Radford School.
11. Sandra Day O'Connor to Kenneth K. Bailey, June 3, 1987; Edward Egbert to Kenneth K. Bailey, November 28, 1990.



POLES IN THE 19th CENTURY SOUTHWEST by Francis Casimir Kajencki. El Paso: Southwest Polonia Press, 1990, \$25.00

Five Polish emigrés who made contributions to the development of the Southwest emerge from obscurity—and spring to life—through the meticulous research and writing skill of Francis C. Kajencki, El Paso author-historian, graduate of West Point, retired colonel, and a man who is himself of Polish descent.

The author captures our attention first with the story of Louis William Geck, who came to the United States as a stowaway, enlisted in the Army in 1841, and served ten years with the First United States Dragoons. In 1851 he settled in Doña Ana, near present-day Las Cruces, and entered a long career in merchandising, eventually operating stores in Doña Ana, Mesilla, and Las Cruces.

Next comes Martin Koslowski, who is immortalized in the annals of the New Mexico campaign of the Civil War because of his association with the Battle of Glorieta Pass in 1862. Koslowski had served with the First United States Dragoons in New Mexico and Arizona in the 1850s. Upon his discharge, he bought some acreage at Glorieta Pass, where he established a small ranch and a home which also served as an inn and tavern for stagecoach travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. When the forces of Confederate General Sibley clashed with the Union forces under Major Chivington in Apache Pass, it was Koslowski's ranch that served as headquarters for the Union forces, and afterwards as a hospital for the Union wounded.

The third emigré is Alexander Grzelachowski, who was educated as a Catholic priest, probably in France, and recruited by the Church to serve as a missionary in Ohio with Father Jean Lamy (later, the famed Archbishop of Santa Fe). He accompanied Lamy to New Mexico and served as a parish priest affectionately known as Padre Polaco. He eventually left

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the priesthood, married, reared a large family, became a prosperous merchant, cattleman and sheepman, freighter to the Army, substantial landholder, and civic leader in the community of Puerto de Luna.

The story of Charles Radziminski merits two essays. The first describes his career in the United States Boundary Commission, which he served in several capacities. As its Principal Surveyor, he surveyed over 600 miles of the international boundary, much of it in the Paso del Norte area. The second essay recounts his military career, which included a "modest role in the Mexican War" as a regimental staff officer with the Third United States Dragoons, and, later (from 1856 until his untimely death in 1858), his service with the Second United States Cavalry, when he had the good fortune to ride under Robert E. Lee.

The final essay tells the story of Napoleon Koscialowski, a Polish aristocrat exiled to the United States in 1834 for political reasons. As a citizen of St. Louis in 1847, he answered a call for volunteers to protect the wagon trains along the Santa Fe Trail, serving briefly as "a captain in the indomitable Santa Fe Trace Battalion," which "contributed a proud page to American history."

Author Kajencki is to be congratulated for his handsome, beautifully illustrated book containing the very readable and well-documented narratives of five men who helped weave the colorful tapestry of today's Southwestern culture.

CLINTON P. HARTMANN
Principal, Lydia Patterson Institute, El Paso



SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO EMPIRE: THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF DONA ANA COUNTY by Leon C. Metz. El Paso: Mangan Books, 1991, \$21.00

In writing *Southern New Mexico Empire*, El Paso's popular and prolific historian Leon C. Metz states early on that his work would have been much easier if a history of Doña Ana County had already been written. Sorry about that, Mr. Metz, but the fact is that in producing your fine treatment of a prominent Las Cruces bank you have, incidentally, given your readers a good brief history of Doña Ana county.

The book begins in 1598 with the arrival of Don Juan De Oñate and his Spanish colonists heading north to establish settlements. From there on, Metz focuses ever more sharply upon the energies involved in colonizing southern New Mexico and eventually in establishing on May 3, 1905, the First National Bank of Las Cruces.

Once underway, Metz's narrative chronicles the lives of the bank's

presidents—among them, Nicholas Galles, Oscar Snow, H.B. Holt, and William Sutherland—its directors, and its most prominent customers. To know them from the beginning is to see clearly how much a bank, whatever its place on a map, epitomizes the practical needs, the hopes, the visions, the courage, the budding financial means, and the events that become the human story of its community.

Of all the energies that figure in these pages, those of President Frank O. Papen rank uppermost. Here, Metz's skill as a biographer finds its best expression. The "tall, cotton-headed boy with a big grin, a friendly handshake and sparkling blue eyes" who became a financially keen, public-spirited citizen of his town, Papen made his bank a dependable source of loans to fund other men's dreams.

The fact that the First National Bank commissioned Metz to produce this book is a major reason to give it high marks. In publishing its own story, the Bank has helped its community appreciate the pioneer money men who broke the trail, financially speaking, for thousands of others who now enjoy the good life in Las Cruces and southern New Mexico.

JOSEPH LEACH

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



WESTWARD THE TEXANS: THE CIVIL WAR JOURNAL OF PRIVATE WILLIAM RANDOLPH HOWELL edited by Jerry D. Thompson. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1990, \$20.

The plan was to transform the Confederacy into a trans-continental nation, stretching from Charleston to San Francisco. Confederate Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley convinced Jefferson Davis that he could recruit a brigade of Texans and equip them from Federal arsenals in Texas. Simeon Hart of Franklin (now El Paso) would provide foodstuffs to sustain the campaign.

At Fort Bliss, General Sibley told the natives he had come to free them from the Federal "yoke of military despotism." He invited those who had been recruited into the Union army to throw down their arms and join the Confederate cause. The campaign went well for Sibley's brigade until Federal forces burned the Confederate supply train in Apache Canyon east of Santa Fe. Fatigued, low on ammunition, and out of food, the Confederate troops retreated down the Rio Grande to the Mesilla Valley, through El Paso, and back to San Antonio.

Private William Randolph Howell, a twenty-year-old enlistee for what he called a "glorious struggle," chronicled the campaign. As the grand adventure turned sour, Howell's journal reflected the fatigue, hunger, pain,

BOOK REVIEWS

and despair of these frustrated participants in the Confederate cause.

Editor Jerry D. Thompson augments the firsthand observations in Howell's diary with a forty-page critical analysis of all existing historical records of the "War in the West." Sections on letters, diaries, memoirs, newspapers, and official dispatches provide information on sources of particular value in illuminating this obscure but significant theater of the Civil War. Excellent annotation and a comprehensive bibliography earn this volume a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in the Southwest or the Civil War.

FRANCIS L. FUGATE

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



COWBOY FOLK HUMOR by John O. West. Little Rock: August House, 1990, \$8.95

In early Texas history, Dr. West reminds us, "cow-boy" was often "a term of contempt, reserved for hell-raisers who raided Mexican ranches across the Rio Grande, plundered out-of-the-way settlements, and caused problems." He also points out that "Cowboys are crazy. They have more fun than anybody, in part because their job is hard, wearing on both body and spirit, and often quite lonely. They have to have a sense of humor to survive."

Capturing and collecting that humor has long been an avocation of this longtime member of the English Department at The University of Texas at El Paso. He has never missed a rodeo in El Paso, always listening to the stories the hard-bitten riders have to tell, stories that are often wild and outrageous as "each cowpoke tries to out-lie the rest."

Discerning exaggeration from fact, the author shows that life for the old-time cowboys must have been the most lonesome occupation of all, for they often were alone on the range for weeks at a time with no other company but the unresponsive animals. They had ample leisure to think up the practical jokes they pulled off whenever they were having human companionship.

Dr. West long ago discovered that the unique culture of the cowboy had a folklore of its own, and he has pursued that culture in his writings. His strong interest in the customs and legends of ranch life led him to discover many of the stories he relates in this present book. At the same time, he gives us a straight look at the real life of the working cowboy, as differentiated from the reel life.

ART LEIBSON

El Paso

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