Password

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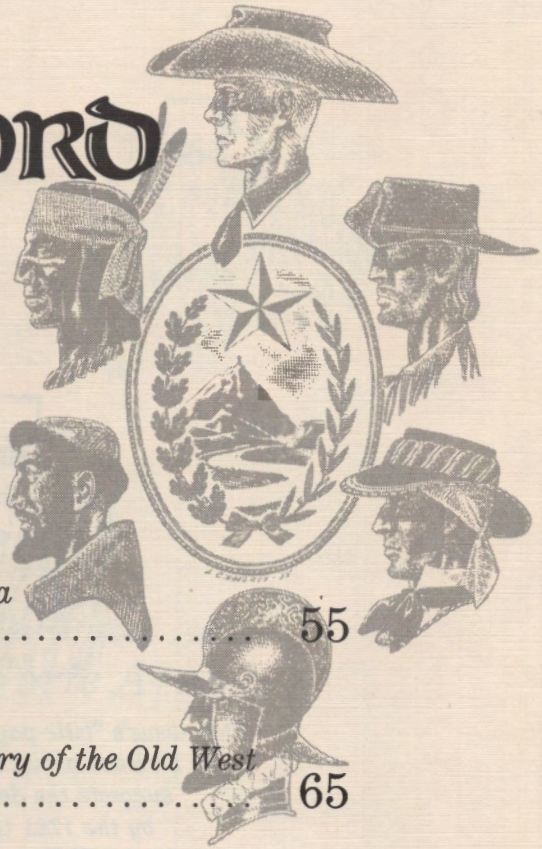

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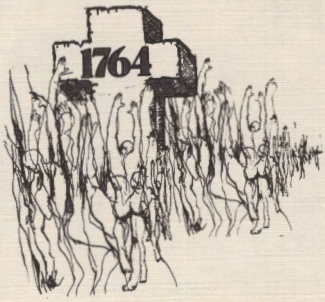

This issue's "title-page insignia," a drawing by El Paso artist David Nakabayashi, suggests the devastation caused by the 1764 typhus epidemic in the El Paso del Norte region.

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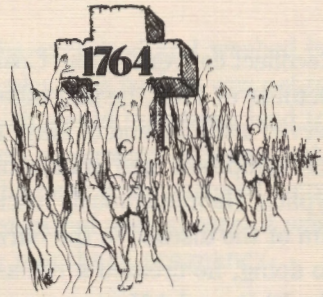


Tabardillo

The 1764 Typhus Epidemic in the El Paso del Norte Area

by Rick Hendricks

In September, 1761, typhus claimed the first victim in Mexico City of what was to be the last major outbreak in eighteenth-century New Spain of this dread disease. Through the remaining months of 1761 and 1762, typhus, which combined its lethal force with a concurrent smallpox epidemic, carried off between 14,600 and 25,000 people before subsiding in the viceregal capital. However, the typhus epidemic was not confined to the Valley of Mexico. By the summer of 1763, it was reported in several parishes in Puebla, and the spread of the disease to the far northern frontier was only a few months away. The cycle of epidemic typhus was probably introduced into a population that either was not immune or had suffered previous outbreaks and was only partially immune, with recovered patients acting as reservoirs of infection.[1]

Death stalked the El Paso del Norte area in the fall of 1763. On October 23, a man by the name of José Lucero died of typhus.[2] Before the epidemic ended more than a year hence, hundreds met the same fate. The unenviable task of burying all the dead fell to fray Diego Zapata. Father Zapata, a native of the largely Tarascan community of Zitácuaro in highland Michoacán, had professed at the Franciscan

Recollect convent of San Cosme in Mexico City on February 6, 1737. By October of 1752, he had taken up his assignment in El Paso, where he served until the end of May, 1768.[3] The Franciscan obviously knew well the symptoms and course of *tabardillo,* the usual Spanish name for typhus. He meticulously inscribed a capital **T** over the name of each victim of the disease in the burial book of the El Paso mission church. By so doing, he created a remarkably complete record of the epidemic in the El Paso del Norte area.

Typhus was known as a clearly recognizable and distinct disease in Europe by the late fifteenth century. At that time, men who had been soldiering in Cyprus brought it to Spain.[4] The onset of typhus usually occurs in the colder months of the year, in winter and spring. Classic symptomatology includes headache, loss of appetite, fever, and malaise. A rash of rose-red macules appears at four to six days. The rash begins on the lower chest or upper abdomen and spreads to the back, shoulder, upper arms, and thighs. In severe cases, the lower legs, palms of the hands, and soles of the feet are affected, though the face is seldom involved. Typhus is also marked by the onset of a high fever of 102° to 104°. Body temperature peaks at 104° to 105° at the end of the first week and remains high until the twelfth day; the temperature returns to normal between the fourteenth and sixteenth days among survivors, who have a long, slow convalescence lasting several months. Immunity usually lasts many years. In fatal episodes, the victim suffers prostration followed by delirium and finally coma. Death comes from cardiac arrest. Fatalities can range from 10 to 60 percent of those infected.[5]

In 1592, Fray Agustín Farfán, an Augustinian, dedicated a chapter of his *Tractado Breve de Medicina* to typhus, which he referred to as *tabardete.*[6] Father Farfán reckoned that corrupted blood and an admixture of choler (yellow bile) caused *tabardete.* He named the characteristic rash on the back and chest as the principal symptom, and he rightly observed that delirium was an indication of a serious episode. He blamed spicy local food and unripened fruit that in a hot climate led to corruption of the blood. After examining the patient and taking the pulse, the would-be curer of *tabardete* was advised to take six ounces of blood from a vein in the right arm and to prescribe a daily dose of a bittersweet drink, such as one consisting of two ounces of pomegranate and lemon juice and three ounces of chicory or borage water. Proper nutrition was to be encouraged, with chicken in lemon juice and lettuce on the menu, as was further bleeding according to the course of the illness. The victim was to be purged if there was no response to the treat-

ment after four days. The limbs were to be exercised and washed in water prepared with lettuce, onions, and apples. The patient was not to be allowed to fall into a deep slumber, which would inevitably lead to death, but the restorative effect of sleep was recognized as important. Washing the head with milk and rubbing the neck with warm oil were also considered helpful. Pregnant women required special care; it was safer to bleed and purge them in the early months of pregnancy.

While Father Zapata in the faraway frontier pueblo of El Paso del Norte would have been able to identify accurately the disease, which he called *tabardillo,* he undoubtedly knew nothing of either the real cause or the vector for its transmission. Typhus is caused by *Rickettsia prowazekii,* a microorganism living in the lining of the intestine of *Pediculus humanus,* the body louse. The louse survives infestation for twelve to eighteen days, then expels the microbe in the feces, where it can live for several days. Lice bite and defecate on human skin, which leads to irritation and causes the affected person to scratch. The microorganism enters the human being through cuts or abrasions and then has an incubation time of ten days to two weeks. In the febrile period of the disease, the microorganisms in the blood pass to other lice when they bite an infected person.[7]

In the mid-eighteenth century, the riverine communities extending from El Paso del Norte to the south were characterized by homes built in the middle of agricultural fields rather than abutting, as in the typical, urban-built environment.[8] This settlement pattern made the family unit particularly vulnerable to the 1764 typhus epidemic. Many families were decimated by the disease, some even annihilated. Other families, who lived at a distance, remained untouched. Infrequent bathing and changing of clothes and the acceptance of the body louse were part of everyday life at the time. Because the citizenry lacked complete knowledge of how to prevent the spread of the disease or failed to put it into practice, infected garments and bed clothing and inadequate sanitation created a perfect breeding ground for typhus. Once present in an extended household, typhus took many victims. Presumably, the residents of the El Paso del Norte area followed Father Farfán's prescribed treatment of administering juices, phlebotomy, and purges.

Although census data vary widely in the Spanish colonial period, they can be useful for understanding some aspects of demographic change. The 1760 census of the El Paso area, recorded by Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, bishop of Durango, provides a useful point of reference

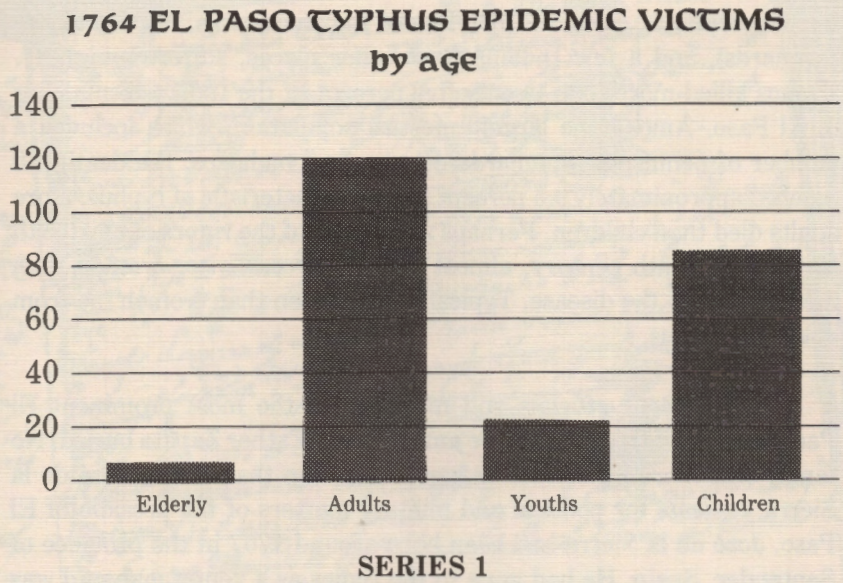
for studying the impact of the 1764 typhus epidemic. According to that census, there were 426 Spanish and Indian families in El Paso at the time of the bishop's visit. Together they contained 2,728 individuals. Five years later, the population had increased by only 137 to 2,865.[9]

From October, 1763, to February, 1765, 231 people died from typhus; and in 1764 alone, 26 pregnant women who were suffering from the disease miscarried. A recrudescence, lasting from March through August, 1767, killed another eleven persons. No group was spared. Presidial soldiers; an unlucky prisoner from upriver in New Mexico; and citizens from the downriver communities of the *real* of San Lorenzo, Senecú, and Socorro fell ill and died while in El Paso.[10]

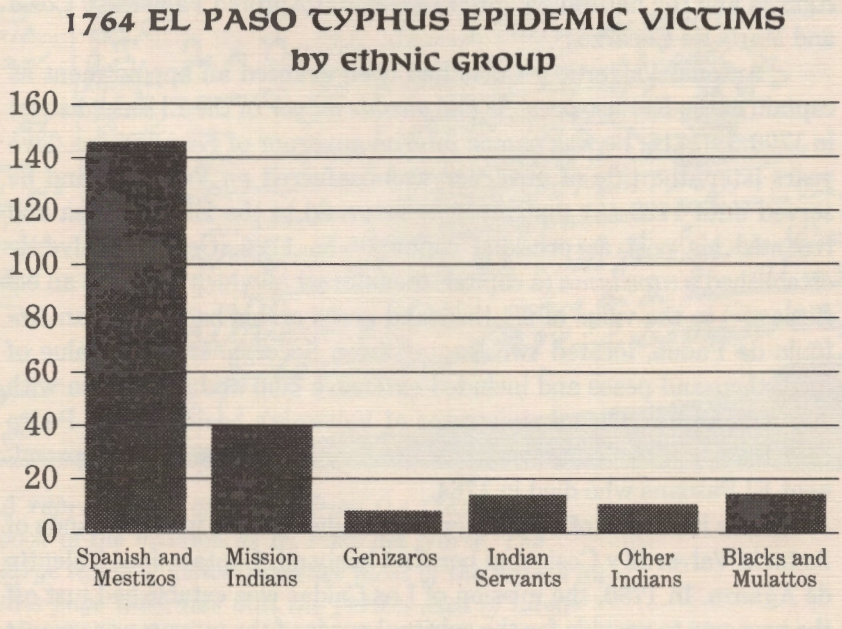
Even without epidemic disease, the year 1764 would have shown a heavy toll in El Paso del Norte, for several of the community's leading citizens died that year from other causes. In early February, Bernardino de Olivares, a widower, died at age fifty-nine. A native of Puebla, Olivares had served for many years as a notary in the El Paso area. He had also filled the important post of Protector of the Indians in the pueblo of Socorro in the 1750s.[11] By mid-March, Manuel Antonio San Juan de Santa Cruz Jáquez de Valverde, captain and *justicia mayor* of the presidio of El Paso, was entered on the death rolls as well. San Juan was a native of Veracruz, in New Spain, but was the son of an influential Basque from the Spanish province of Biscay, Francisco San Juan, who had served on the king's council. Don Manuel's two-year-old daughter, Francisca Borja Dionisia, followed her father to the grave that winter. Upon arriving in El Paso some years earlier, San Juan had chosen his bride well. She was Francisca García de Noriega, whose family formed an integral part of the small, close-knit local elite.[12] Also before that year ended, the El Paso area lost another prominent citizen: Pedro Díaz Beanes, *teniente de justicia* of Senecú, Ysleta, and Socorro.[13]

In the previous decade, Franciscan ministers serving in El Paso had recorded slightly more than fifty burials a year. The figure was almost four and a half times higher during the principal epidemic year of 1764, jumping to 218. The following year the number fell to 52, not counting the deaths from typhus. In the five years after 1764, an average of seventy-five burials took place annually.[14]

The effects of the disease were not evenly distributed throughout the population of El Paso. Typhus victimized more than forty percent of the households in the area, but in twenty-six of them multiple deaths occurred. Parents, children, and servants shared a common fate in a number of homes. The dwindling Indian population, including mission



Juarez Cathedral Archives, roll 4



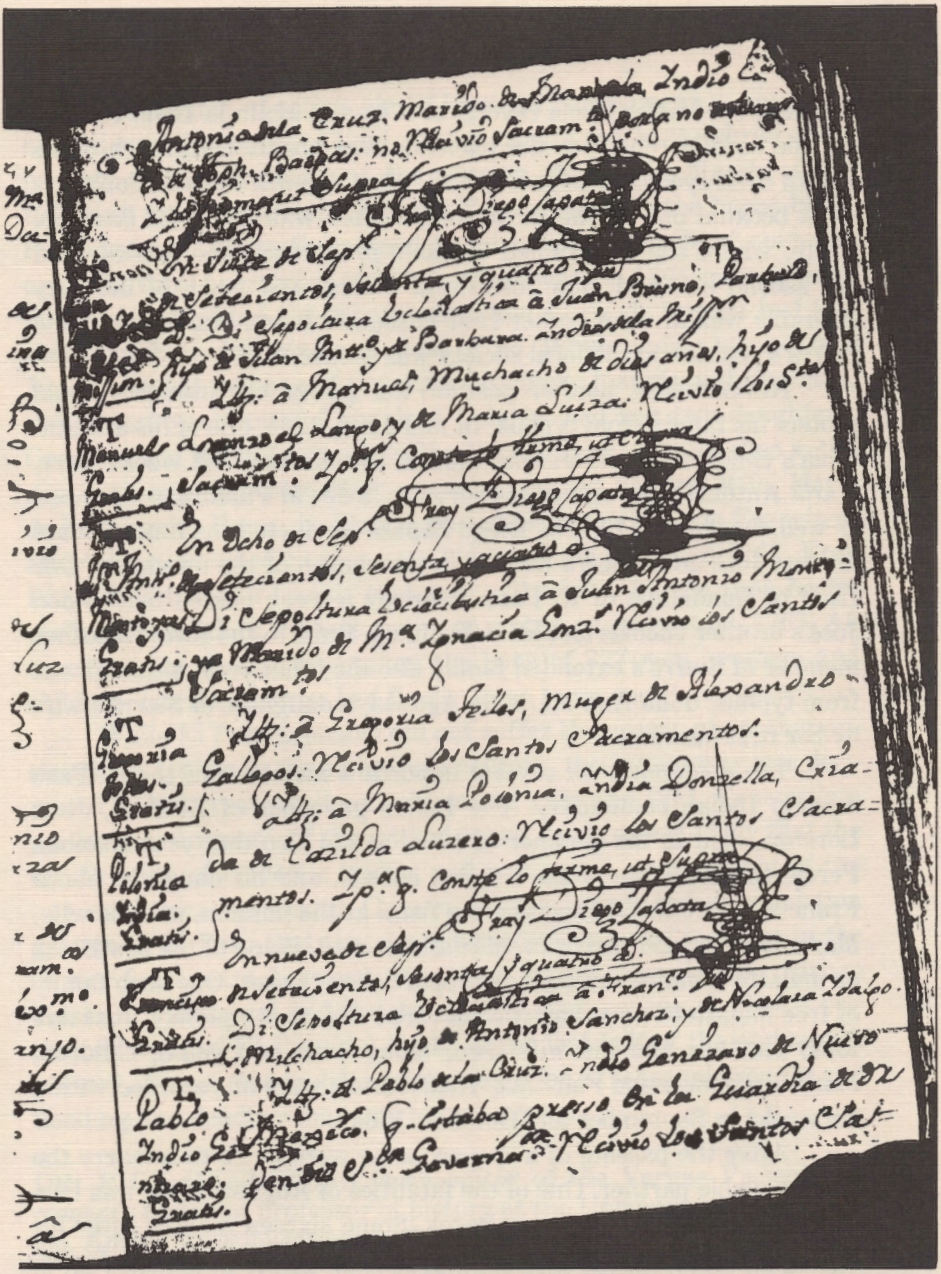
Juarez Cathedral Archives, roll 4

Indians, servants, *genízaros* (non-Pueblo Indian captives, rescued by the Spaniards), and a few Indians from other places, suffered mightily. Typhus killed more than twenty-five percent of the Indians remaining in El Paso. Among the largely mestizo population, which included a number of peninsular Spaniards, Blacks, and mulattos, the death toll reached approximately 9.5 percent. As is characteristic of typhus, more adults died than children. Perhaps as a result of the rigors of childbirth in the eighteenth century, almost fifteen percent more women than men died from the disease. Typically, more men than women die from epidemic typhus.

Government officials and members of the most prominent El Paso families of the period were among those Father Zapata buried. No family was more influential or harder hit than that of don José de la Sierra, *teniente* for political and military matters of the presidio of El Paso. José de la Sierra had been born around 1707 in the province of Santander, Spain. He had gone to the Indies as a young man and was followed by his younger brother, Nicolás, who joined him in El Paso. In January, 1737, José made a splendid marriage, taking the hand of doña Antonia de Valverde y Cosio, the widow of Captain José Valentín de Aganza and the natural daughter of General Antonio Valverde y Cosio and María de Esparza.[15]

Antonio Valverde y Cosio had been granted an appointment as captain of the El Paso presidio and *alcalde mayor* of the El Paso district in 1700. In 1716, he was named interim governor of New Mexico. Two years later, the title of governor was conferred on Valverde, and he served until 1722. At that time, he returned to the El Paso area and resumed his post as presidial captain.[16] In 1726, General Valverde established a *capellania* (a capital, the interest of which supports an ecclesiastic) in the value of six thousand pesos on his hacienda, San Antonio de Padua, located two leagues from Socorro. It had a value of forty thousand pesos and included extensive land and an acequia with adequate water. The administrator of Valverde's hacienda was Pedro Diaz Beanes,[17] the same who would be numbered among those prominent El Pasoans who died in 1764.

The Hacienda of San Antonio de Padua passed into the hands of Antonia Valverde y Cosio and her first husband, Captain José Valentín de Aganza. In 1730, the mission of Las Caldas was established just off the property to provide for the spiritual needs of the numerous servants on the hacienda and the Sumas in the nearby hills. The ill-starred mission



A reproduction of a page from the 1764 burial book of the mission at El Paso del Norte. The large letter **T** *which precedes most of the names on this page indicates that the person died of* tabardillo *(typhus). Note also fray Diego's elaborate insignia signature. (Courtesy Dr. Rick Hendricks)*

was destroyed after Suma revolts in 1745 and again in 1749. Following the second rebellion, the hacienda was abandoned, much of its wealth destroyed or dissipated. Still, after Aganza's death, doña Antonia became one of the most sought-after widows in El Paso del Norte, where she maintained valuable properties. She predeceased her second husband, don José de la Sierra, and much of her considerable wealth went to her first husband's heirs, but by that time Sierra's position in the local society was secure.[18]

Nevertheless, neither position nor power nor influence could protect his family from typhus. In mid-June, 1764, one of his and Antonia's children, María Josefa, died of the disease. Six weeks later, María Antonia, the wife of his servant Javier el Panana, succumbed as well. On August 13, fray Diego Zapata conducted the funeral mass for don José de la Sierra himself in the church of the mission of Our Lady of Guadalupe of El Paso. Scarcely a week passed before don José's brother Nicolás lost his wife, Juana Ruiz, to the fever. Another member of Sierra's extended family also died that year, although not from typhus: doña Ana María de Aganza, a daughter of Sierra's wife by her first husband.[19]

The epidemic took several important members of the El Paso mission Indian community. The Indian governor of El Paso, Juan Lorenzo, died in the summer of 1764, as did also that year Esteban Perea, the sacristan of the mission church, and his daughter María Francisca. Further, Francisco, the fiscal at the mission, saw his wife, María Regina, and their son, Mariano, buried. Some of the few Black or mulatto families suffered disproportionate losses. One such family of free mulattoes must have disappeared almost completely. José Antonio Jiménez and his wife died, along with two young children, María Prudencia and Faustina. Their burials were all recorded within six weeks in September and October, 1764.

After the passing of a spouse, some were quick to remarry the first available partner. One of the fatalities of August, 1764, was Pascuala Perea, wife of Antonio Pasos. Some sixteen months after his wife's death, Antonio petitioned for permission to wed Micaela Perea, a second cousin of his deceased wife. The impediment to the marriage created by this relationship notwithstanding, Antonio's request was granted, although it may have been unseemly by the standards of the time. Despite their personal tragedies, the citizens of El Paso demonstrated the resiliency necessary for their harsh existence on the far northern frontier of New Spain and began to rebuild their lives.[20]

The rhythm of activity in El Paso del Norte began to return to normal over the course of 1766. Father Zapata saw to the burial of only forty-eight individuals at the mission church. In March of the following year, however, the dread **T** reappeared in the burial book. Recrudescent typhus threatened to introduce the cycle of epidemic again. Several households struck by the disease in 1764 gave up additional victims. Juan Cristóbal Sedillo and Lucía de Ortega had lost their daughter, Bartola, in August, 1764. When typhus reappeared, Juan Cristóbal was one of the early fatalities. Juanillo and Pascuala, the genízaro servants of one José Colarte, had lost two daughters, Gregoria and María Luciana, during the epidemic. Juanillo died in the new outbreak. Santiago Montoya, who had lost his first wife, María de los Angeles Perea, to typhus, buried his second, María Francisca, after she succumbed to the same illness in the spring of 1767. Fray Diego listed eleven burials that year, all adults, by the time he recorded the death of the last victim of typhus on August 30, 1767. All together, the disease had taken the lives of 327 men, women, and children, but the scourge had finally come to an end.[21]

While El Paso probably did not suffer the misery of another onslaught of typhus in the eighteenth century, the community was decimated by the great smallpox epidemic of 1780 and 1781. Census data are lacking for many of the critical years, but it seems likely that the combination of epidemic typhus and smallpox – reminiscent of the two epidemics in Mexico City in 1761 – so retarded population growth in El Paso that there was practically no real increase in the twenty-four years between the 1760 census recorded by Bishop Tamarón y Romeral and the detailed El Paso census of 1784.[22] For the residents of El Paso del Norte in the last half of the eighteenth century, disease was truly as implacable a foe as seasonal drought and flooding and deadlier than any human enemy.

DR. RICK HENDRICKS is an editor of the Vargas Project and research assistant professor of history at the University of New Mexico. Among his publications is *Two Hearts, One Soul: Correspondence of the Condesa de Galve, 1688-96,* edited with Dr. Meredith D. Dodge, which is forthcoming from the University of New Mexico Press. Dr. Hendricks recently completed an extensive survey of archives with holdings bearing on the El Paso area in the Spanish colonial era, a work supported in part by the El Paso Lower Valley Water District Authority and the Center for Anthropological Research at New Mexico University.

NOTES

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3. Francisco Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa, Prontuario general y especifico y colectivo de nomenclaturas de todos los religiosos que ha habido en esta Santa Provincia del Santo Evangelio desde su fundación hasta el presente año de 1764, University of Texas Library, Austin, Latin American Manuscripts.
4. William H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (New York: Doubleday, 1976):194-95.
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11. Luis Gómez and Juana Fresqui, Diligencia Matrimonial (DM), El Paso, 20 Aug. 1730, Catholic Archives of Texas, Austin (CAT), r. 2, 7 f, microfilm from CAR. Juan Antonio Pérez Velarde and María Jacinta Valencia, DM, El Paso, 29 Dec. 1736, CAT, r. 2, 4 f. Manuel Antonio San Juan, Summons and proceedings, Socorro, 25 Aprl. 1755, Juárez Municipal Archives (JA), 1750, v. 1, r. 40, f. 288-91.
12. Juan Antonio San Juan, Will, El Paso, 16 Mar., 1764, Juárez Municipal Archive [new filming] (JAN) r. 8, bk. 1, 1764, f. 366-407. Baptisms, El Paso, 13 June 1760, 15 Oct. 1761, and 12 Oct. 1762, JCA, r. 5.
13. Baptism, El Paso, 14 Aug. 1755, JCA, r. 4. Account book for the Hacienda of San Antonio, 10 Mar. 1750, El Paso, JAN, r. 3, bk. 1, 1757, f. 1-r. 4, bk. 2, 1757, f. 66.
14. Burials, El Paso, 1753-70, JCA, r. 4.
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16. John L. Kessell, Rick Hendricks, Meredith D. Dodge, Larry D. Miller, and Eleanor B. Adams, eds., *Remote Beyond Compare: Letters from don Diego de Vargas to His Family from New Spain and New Mexico, 1676-1706* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1989):190-91.
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19. Don Nicolás and doña Juana had lost a child, Nicolás Antonio, who died soon after birth on 16 January 1764. Baptisms, El Paso, 16 Jan. 1764, JCA, r. 5. Nicolás de la Sierra, Petition on behalf of the heirs José Valentin de Aganza, El Paso, 17 June 1754, JAN, r. 2, bk. 2, 1750, f. 246-468. Burials, El Paso, 1763, (JCA), r. 4.
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21. Burials, El Paso, 1766, JCA, r. 4.
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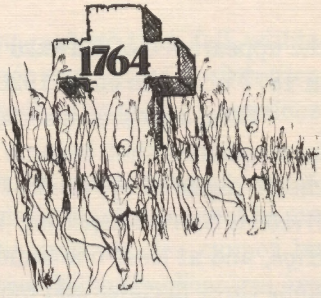


Western Magazines

A Rich Resource on the History of the Old West

by Larry J. Walker

The Old American West, an era long since past, lives on in the minds and hearts of western-history enthusiasts, not only in the United States, but around the world. For over one hundred years, its mighty challenges and dramatic confrontations have been nurtured by a steady stream of fiction – novels, short stories, plays – and, in more recent times, by movies and television dramas.

Even before the era ended, works labeled "The Dime Novel Western" began to pour forth in response to the general public's thirst for vicarious experience of life in the Wild West. E. Z. C. Judson, better known by his pseudonym Ned Buntline, earned the title of "King of the Dime Novels"; and long after his career had ended, he was recognized by J. Frank Dobie, the renowned folklorist and historian, as "perhaps the most prolific of all Wild West fictionists." His novels about Buffalo Bill (as well as many on the same subject by Prentiss Ingraham), Beadle's Dime Novels, Zane Grey's mass productions, and a host of other creations "represented," according to Dobie, "a fictional output truly stupendous in quantity." These highly romanticized renditions of life in the West flourished for more than four decades, from

the appearance of Edward L. Wheeler's first "Deadwood Dick" novel in 1877 until the early 1920s, when their appeal began to fade.

Soon appeared a somewhat upgraded version of Western fiction in magazines that became known as the "pulps" – named for the cheap paper they used. Publications such as Street and Smith's *Western Story Magazine, Wild West Weekly, Ranch Romances, Ace High,* and at least one hundred others crowded the news stands. For some three decades and more, magazines of this nature served the interest of readers who wanted to be entertained by fanciful images of life in the Old West. Most of them, according to J. Frank Dobie in his *Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1943) "betrayed rather than revealed life, though not with the contemptible contempt for both audience and subject that characterized most of Hollywood's pictures on the same time, men and places."

After World War II, yet another genre of Western Magazine made an appearance. It was prompted by a growing awareness on the part of magazine publishers that the post-war years had spawned a large reading audience interested in factual, rather than fictional, accounts of the Old West. This audience was composed of general readers – Old West buffs, you might say – who wanted to learn some historical facts through their pastime reading. To reach this audience, the publishers realized that the non-fictional material should be presented in an entertaining manner – written in a lively, informal style and sprinkled with illustrations and photographs. They also understood the appeal of an attractive magazine cover depicting colorful action.

Several years ago, I became interested in this new type of Western Magazine and began a concerted effort to collect back issues (a difficult task, as it has turned out, for they are not available in bookstores, but only from individuals searching their attics and storerooms in response to my advertisements in various publications). To guide my venture, I established a set of guidelines which govern the limits and scope of the collection: the magazine must have commenced publication after 1950; its content must deal with the United States West and must be non-fiction written in an entertaining, popular style; it must be national in circulation and its subject matter not limited to a particular state or a specialized topic; and, finally, its format cannot be that of a tabloid or newspaper.

I have identified thirty different magazines that fall within these parameters, only three of which remain currently in print. (See the chart appended to this article.) Admittedly, the thirty magazines vary in quality due to editorial policies.

The requirement that the writing style be entertaining and popular does not imply that articles found in scholarly journals cannot be entertaining. Nor does it imply that popular-style articles cannot be scholarly. Indeed, most of the essays in these thirty publications are based on extensive research. Many historians have contributed to these magazines, including J. Frank Dobie, Glenn Shirley, and El Paso's Leon Metz. Walter Prescott Webb once served as "historian" for one of these publications. Even so, the informal presentation of the material and the fact that it is intended for general readers rather than scholars give rise to the misconception that these magazines are merely another form of "horse opera" and therefore unreliable. The truth is, however, that a well-researched article written in an informal style can be just as informative and valuable as a documented work in a scholarly journal.

An example comes to mind, one which *Password* readers may recall. Titled "Cavalryman vs. Cowboy" and co-authored by Thelma Cox Knoles and Jessie Peterson (both late of El Paso), the article appeared originally in the September-October 1965 issue of *True West* and was reprinted in the Winter 1990 *Password.* It is a lively account of a riding contest held on January 13-17, 1922, "which was to prove once and for all whether the Cavalryman or the Cowboy was the bet-

Typical covers from three "modern" Western Magazines, their original bold colors rendered here in black-and-white. (Courtesy Larry J. Walker)

ter horseman." The essay tells the readers that the Cowboy's banner was carried by Key Dunne, a famous rodeo rider from Sierra Blanca, Texas, and that the Cavalry was represented by a young army officer stationed at San Antonio, Texas – Terry Allen. The race covered a distance of three hundred miles and was run over two routes, each route taking its rider to the finish line in San Antonio.

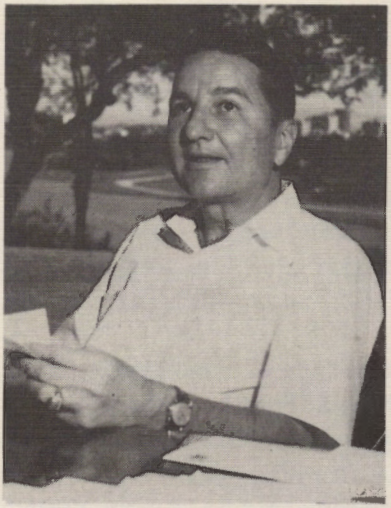
The authors drew their information from an interview with General (Ret.) Terry Allen, who happened to be living in El Paso, and from newspaper reports on the race. Then, combining their writing skills with their research, they produced a vivid account of the race and its preparations – right down to the clothes each rider wore, the details of the weather ("cloudy and drizzly"), the hazards along the way, and the "Texas-size yells" that greeted the winner in San Antonio. The article is fun to read, full of excitement and suspense; and it is also a thoroughly reliable account of an actual event.

Just recently, John Joerschke, Editor of *True West* and *Old West,* made clear his unwavering commitment to reliable content. Addressing the members of Western Writers of America, Inc., in their November-December 1992 newsletter, *The Round Up,* he said: Our readers . . . are knowledgeable about Western history . . . and want articles to be informative and entertaining. . . . Historical accuracy and strict adherence to the facts are essential. We much prefer material based on primary sources (archives, court records, diaries, journals, and contemporary newspapers) to articles that rely on secondary sources (published books, magazines, and academic journals). . . . We do not want dialogue unless it can be documented, and we do not use fictionalized treatments of historical subjects."

The "modern" Western Magazine had its beginnings when Joe Small, the publisher of a magazine called *Southwestern Sportsman,* made a discovery. His magazine carried a regular column of assorted facts about the Old West. To his surprise, most of the mail he received from the readers was in response to that column. As a result, Small decided to launch "something new in western magazines," and in 1953 he published the first issue of *True West* on good-quality paper and with cover illustrations by Joe Grandee. The content was non-fiction, written to appeal to a wide readership, and illustrated with photographs. The cover proclaimed "all stories TRUE!" and the editorials were signed "Hosstail," a play on Small's middle name, Austell. Small gradually developed a close personal bond with his readers and

without question became the pioneer of a new genre of the Western Magazine. He set the pace that many others have attempted to follow.

In 1957 Small expanded his operation by purchasing the long-established *Frontier Times,* founded in 1923 by J. Marvin Hunter and published in Bandera, Texas. It had been an extremely popular non-fiction magazine that dealt mainly with Texas history covering Indian depredations and massacres, county histories, and pioneer personalities. It was printed on pulp and was rather plain looking. Small continued the numbering sequence of the volumes and issues, but he drastically changed the appearance of the magazine and virtually made it a "twin-sister" of *True West.* The two magazines were published on alternate months until 1981, when *Frontier Times* was discontinued. It was resurrected briefly in 1984, but in 1985 it was finally laid to rest. *True West* then became a monthly magazine.



JOE SMALL
(Photo courtesy Western Publications)

Small's third venture took form as a quarterly called *Old West.* Begun in 1964, its purpose was to reprint articles from early issues of *True West,* but once that reprinting project was completed, it continued publication with new articles. It also featured a "book bonus" – a reprint of a rare and out-of-print books in each issue. And Small didn't stop with a mere three ventures in magazine publishing. Ever the innovator, he tried others, too – with varying degrees of success. Testing the market for specialized periodicals, he launched *Gold, Horse Tails,* and *Badman,* which confined their content respectively to the subject indicated in the title of the magazine.

Joe Small retired in 1984. The new owners, Western Publications, located in Stillwater, Oklahoma, continue to publish *True West, Old West,* and reprints of some early issues of Hunter's old *Frontier Times. True West* has established a record for longevity in this new field, having produced 298 issues since its inception in 1953. Considering that only three of the thirty magazines of its type have survived, it is a remarkable achievement. Western Publications also publishes a

limited number of non-fiction books on the West. A recent book, *The Western Readers' Guide* by James Browning is a most helpful publication for research in Western Magazines devoted to non-fiction presentations of the Old West.

In 1957 Charlton Publications of Derby, Connecticut, launched the magazine *Real West,* which began as a quarterly, progressed to a bi-monthly, and then occasionally to a monthly. Before suspending operation in 1988, it had produced 221 regular issues and 45 specials – annuals and yearbooks devoted to specific topics such as Indians, outlaws, and lawmen. By some, *Real West* is considered one of the best Western Magazines in terms of historical validity, for its articles include bibliographies and lists of related source material. Unfortunately, when the magazine ceased publication, all of its existing back issues were destroyed.

A few other magazines in the category deserve mention, if for no other reason than that they survived for at least ten years. *Pioneer West* was able to produce 57 issues before its demise. *The West* completed a total of 135 issues during its ten-year lifespan, and *Golden West* completed 76. *True Frontier* was able to come up with 76 issues during its eleven years of publication, and *Western Frontier* managed 73.

As can be seen from the chart on the opposite page, most of the Western Magazines devoted to presenting authentic accounts of life in the Old West enjoyed only brief existence. Twelve of them produced fewer than five issues before biting the dust; only three exceeded one hundred; and two reached well over two hundred.

The heyday of the genre appears to have ended in the 1970s, and a revival does not seem to be on the horizon. The reasons for its decline in popularity have not been determined – and speculation as to the reasons lie outside the scope of this essay. What can be said with certainty, however, is that these magazines contain abundant ores ready and waiting to be tapped, mined, and used for the enrichment of knowledge about a very important segment of our nation's history.

LARRY J. WALKER, a resident of El Paso, is the owner and operator of MAGAZINE HOUSE, a mail-order outlet dealing exclusively in western and treasure magazines. His inventory is listed in his publication *Cowboys* (Catalogue Of Western Magazines Based On Years Since 1950), issued originally in 1990 and revised in 1992.

WESTERN MAGAZINES
1953 — 1993

TITLE	DATE OF PUBLICATION	LOCATION	NUMBER OF ISSUES
America's Frontier West	1967	Long Island, NY	1
Authentic West	1981	Fort Lee, NJ	3
Badman	1971-1972	Austin, TX	3
Big West	1967-1970	Van Nuys, CA	12
Frontier Times	1957-1985	Austin, TX and Stillwater, OK	138
Frontier West	1971-1976	New York, NY	28
Golden West	1964-1974	Freeport, NY and Rockville Centre, NY	76
Great West	1967-1974	New York, NY	36
Great West	1981	Fort Lee, NJ	3
Gunslingers of the West	1966	Stamford, CT	1
Man's Western	1959	New York, NY	1
Old Trails	1977-1978	Encino, CA	3
*Old West	1964-	Stillwater, OK	113
Oldtimers Wild West	1973-1980	Scottsdale, AZ	33
Pioneer West	1967-1980	Van Nuys, CA	57
Real Frontier	1970-1971	Sparta, IL	11
Real West	1957-1988	Derby, CT	266
The West	1964-1974	Freeport, NY	135
True Frontier	1967-1978	Sparta, IL	76
*True West	1953-	Stillwater, OK	298
True Western Adventures	1957-1961	Greenwich, CT	21
Western Action	1960	New York, NY	2
Western Digest	1969	Derby, CT	5
Western Frontier	1976-1986	Rockville Centre, NY	73
Western Roundup	1970	Sepulveda, CA	3
Western Tales	1960	New York, NY	2
Western True Story	1971	Scottsdale, AZ	1
Westerner	1969-1976	Encino, CA	45
Wild West	1969-1972	Sepulveda, CA and New York, NY	17
*Wild West	1988-	Leesburg, VA	28

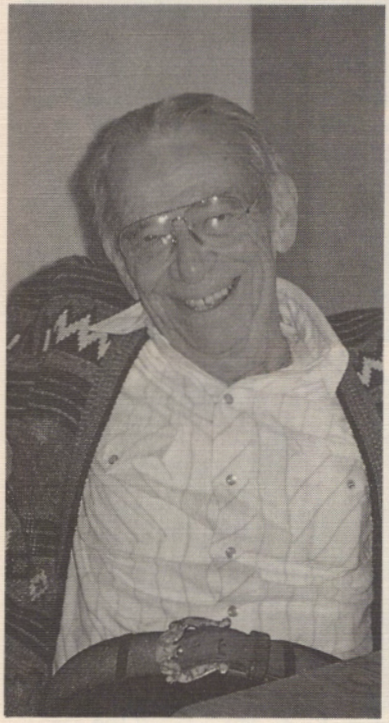
This chart prepared by **Clinton P. Hartmann,** *Associate Editor,* Password.

In Memoriam

Francis L. Fugate

by Dale L. Walker

Editor's note: An earlier version of the following essay appeared in the Western Writers of America, Inc., publication The Round Up *(January-February 1993).*



Francis L. Fugate

He wrote books on rocketry and upper atmospheric meteorology, on Erle Stanley Gardner, on the use of viewpoint in fiction. He wrote books on the Spanish heritage of the American Southwest and "roadside" histories of New Mexico and Oklahoma. He began writing professionally in 1935, published fiction and nonfiction in both the pulps and slick magazines, and contributed documented articles to such historical journals as *Password.* He was an authority on Ethiopia, barbed wire, coffee, the American West, and good writing. He was 77 years old and was serving as secretary-treasurer for Western Writers of America, Inc., and as a member of the *Password* editorial board. He was working at his word processor when he died, within an hour of the New Year on December 31, 1992.

Francis L. Fugate was born in Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1915, graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism, and worked as a newspaperman and magazine editor before entering the army in 1942. He joined the faculty of Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso) in 1949. He taught writing and served as technical writer and administrator of Schellenger Research Laboratories, whose work included conducting studies of the upper atmosphere. He retired from The University of Texas at El Paso in 1978 as emeritus professor of English.

Fugate's first book, *The Spanish Heritage of the Southwest,* was published in 1952. His other books, some in collaboration with his beloved wife, Roberta (who predeceased him on October 28, 1991), include *Viewpoint: Key to Fiction Writing; Secrets of the World's Best-Selling Writer: The Storytelling Techniques of Erle Stanley Gardner;* and *Roadside History of New Mexico,* followed by a similar book on Oklahoma.

His most recent *Password* articles include "An 1890 View of El Paso's Business Prospects" (Spring, 1992), in collaboration with Roberta Fugate, and "The Anatomy of a Historical Novelist" (Summer, 1992).

At the time of his death, he was putting the finishing touches on *Arbuckle's: The Coffee That Won the West,* which will be published by Texas Western Press. His article of the same title, published in *America West,* won the 1984 Spur Award from Western Writers of America for Best Nonfiction Short Subject.

A week after his death, an informal memorial gathering was held in The University of Texas at El Paso Library, where Fugate had spent countless hours in research. Among the friends speaking in tribute to him were Historical Society and Western Writers of America members Leon C. Metz, Nancy Hamilton, and Conrey Bryson and also several former colleagues at The University of Texas at El Paso: Dr. Joe Leach, Dr. John O. West, Dr. Ray Small, and Dr. Tom Barnes.

Francis L. Fugate is survived by a daughter, Roberta Fugate Treece, of Frederick, Maryland, and three grandsons.

DALE L. WALKER is acting Director of Texas Western Press and the current president of Western Writers of America, Inc.

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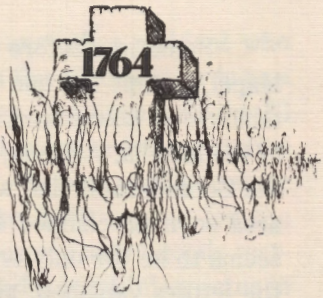


A Stranger in an Alien Land

The Letters of Henry L. Dexter, 1854-1869

by Art Leibson

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago Charles J. Mapel, a neighbor who knew me only as a byline newsman, invited me to his home to see something he thought I should be interested in. What he had was an eye-opener, a collection of some thirty letters, in their original envelopes, written by a collateral relative, Henry L. Dexter, who had reached the El Paso Valley in the mid-1800s and had settled in the area for a time. Addressed to a sister, Mary Dexter Roundy, living in Illinois, where Dexter had grown up, the letters began a few years after his arrival at the border, a stranger in an alien land.

Mapel, who had come to El Paso around 1910, tendered me the batch of letters, along with a daguerrotype enclosed with one of them, to do whatever I could in making them public and adding to accounts of El Paso's early history. I spent several weeks of my spare time copying them, often with the aid of a magnifying glass, adding nothing and marking deletions where it had been impossible to decipher the writing that had sometimes made waterlogged stage trips to the midwest. In time, I used the letters as the source material for a series of sixteen articles that ran in the *El Paso Times* in the 1950s.

Sometime before the series appeared, I returned the letters to Mapel, except for one prize, written on the back of a single-page, tabloid-size newspaper. It was a very rare copy of an "Extra" edition of the Mesilla, Arizona, *Times,* datelined July 29, 1861, the day after the Confederates had won their only real victory in New Mexico, an area soon proclaimed as part of an Arizona Territory. That letter seems to be the only original which still exists. After Mapel's death, the letters vanished, possibly thrown out by someone not realizing their value as articulate commentary on the El Paso border of the mid-nineteenth century. This two-part essay, therefore, is based on my copies of the letters lent to me by Charles J. Mapel.

PART I: *"This Heaven Forsaken Country"*

In 1849, Henry L. Dexter, a moody, misanthropic fugitive from society, was making his way west. Six years earlier he had been dismissed from West Point and was now probably joining the rush to the California gold fields. At Santa Fe, however, he turned south to follow the Rio Grande to the new border. Traveling alone, he passed through dangerous territory to a destination where he knew nothing of the language or customs of the people in the newly-acquired territory. Although the area was by this time part of the United States, Dexter felt as though he was "leaving the United States" as he began his journey downriver.

Little is known about Dexter's early life except what appears in West Point records and in passing remarks in his letters. He was born on September 2, 1823, and was admitted to the United States Military Academy on July 1, 1842. His home was in Vandalia, Illinois, the state's capitol from 1820 to 1829 and a farming community in the rolling prairie country east of St. Louis. His father was listed as residing in Harmony, Maine. Nothing is known about his mother. On January 20, 1843, just six months after entering West Point, he was dismissed, presumably because of poor grades. We cannot be sure what he did immediately after leaving the Academy, but from his letters we know that he left his trunk in Baltimore and perhaps sailed from there as a merchant seaman to ports around the world.

When he arrived at the El Paso border, Dexter stopped briefly at Frontera, a tiny settlement on the east bank of the Rio Grande just above the Mexican town of Paso del Norte. He then traveled down-

river and settled in Ysleta, where he found one other resident who spoke some English. By 1851 he was listed in the county records as a Tax Assessor and Collector. During his dozen or so years in the El Paso Valley he would fill many other local elective or appointive offices – postmaster, collector of customs, notary public, county judge, mayor of Ysleta, and director of the 1860 census for the sprawling West Texas area. He would also become a dry goods merchant, a grain speculator, a doctor of sorts, and a court interpreter in addition to his official duties.

In the first of his letters, dated Spetember 1, 1854, five years after his arrival in the border area, he told his sister that "nothing local would interest you unless it might be an Indian fight. The last we had came off on the 2nd of July. . . . Suffice it to say, I am not a professional Indian fighter but neither an amateur. I volunteered with a few Mexicans . . . and we were absent about twenty-four hours and brought in one scalp, lost one ditto; brought in one mule and two horses and lost three ditto. We also brought in six oxen, quite a prize to take from the rascally Apaches, or do you join your Yankee brethren in the song of 'Lo, the poor Indian'? False philanthropy, humbugging hypocrisy." (It will be noted that Dexter was never guilty of "humbugging hypocrisy." He pronounced his opinions and revealed his attitudes bluntly. In speaking of the people in the area, for example, he sometimes used pejoratives, but more often he used the labels of the time and place. On the El Paso border there were no Hispanics, Anglos, Blacks, or Native Americans. There were only Mexicans, whites, Negroes, and Indians – the latter giving considerable trouble with their thievery.)

By June 7, 1855, the date of his next letter, Dexter had bought a "rancho . . . which is called Frontera, some 8 miles above El Paso on the river . . . in an Indian country where everything, even pigs, is unsafe, unless guarded. What the Indians do not steal will hardly escape the Mexicans. Since my residence in this country I have lost 13 horses besides cows and oxen, only one of which I have recovered."* He also complained about the mail service: "In this outside barbarian region we have not daily mails as in your country." (Dexter seemed unable to

*Editor's note: In "The Frontera Settlement" (*Password,* XXX, 2, 55-61), Jeannie Marie Hamilton cites this passage as the source of her statement that Dexter bought this property from T. Frank White, who in the late 1840s had established a customs house and general store at this location. It was one of three places commonly used for crossing the Rio Grande in the El Paso del Norte vicinity. White's first structure washed away in a flood, but was rebuilt later.

bring himself to think of the El Paso region as part of the United States.) "Recollect we are somewhat remote from civilization, being more than 500 miles from San Antonio and more than 1000 from Independence, Missouri, leaving us completely isolated. Our mails are monthly from either place, but I prefer the Texan to the Missouri route, having lost a great deal of correspondence by the latter."

Continuing this letter, Dexter remarked that he "would like to visit some portions of the states but it appears that I am destined to spend my life here. It is proverbial that anyone who has lived a year or two in this country can never be contented in the states. . . . I sometimes feel as if I was unfit for civilized life."

A month later Dexter decided that existence in the hostile Frontera area was too much of a strain, and he returned to the lower El Paso Valley, where he penned his next letter, dated October 1, 1855: "I have enclosed some seed of the coffee of the country often used by the poorer classes. Its flavor is said to assimulate [sic] closely to ours. To me it bears a strong resemblance, while growing, to the ochra [sic] of our tables. I have also sent for your amusement some onion seed. . . . I suppose there is no country . . . where onions grow so large and are of so fine a flavor. I have one now which weighs 2 pounds 7½ ounces. It measures in circumference 18 and ¾ inches. . . ." He further remarked that he "came across a weed which here is very annoying to the husbandman but [which] is, I think, the original wild bean.**

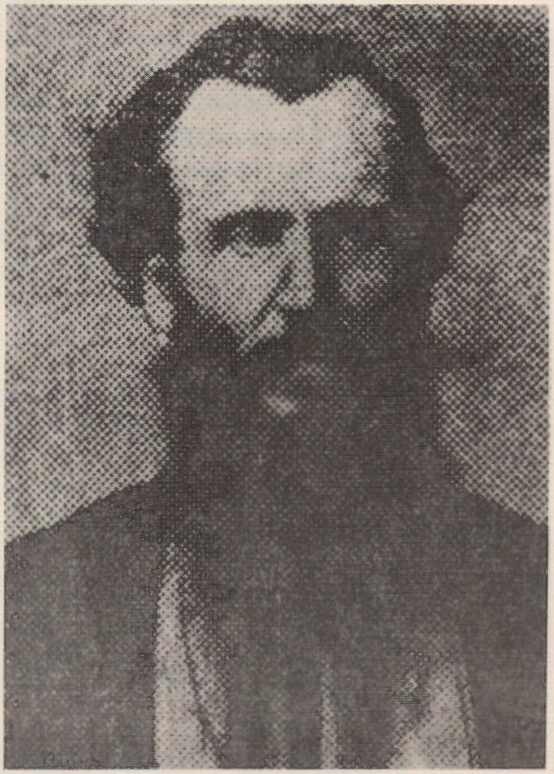
By this time Dexter seemed to be prospering in his adopted land and informed his sister that "I am at present occupying the position of Inspector of the Revenue [Deputy Collector of Customs] for this district, at a salary of $720 per annum, which is a matter of moonshine. I also have land that brings something, and a small produce business. . . . By buying corn and wheat during the summer and fall and holding on until spring and summer again, it affords a good profit."

Turning to another subject, apparently in response to a request his sister had made, Dexter wrote: "As for my miniature I have one, taken a year ago. Our artist is at present up the river. . . . He is expected before the mail leaves and if possible I will procure another and send both by mail." True to his word, Dexter later sent his sister a

**Editor's note: The proboscidia is a widespread plant in the Southwest known locally as the devil's claw or unicorn plant. Its fruit is similar in size and shape to okra. Dried, its seeds were used for coffee. Curved hooks on the end of the pod wreaked havoc with sheep, catching in their wool. The "wild bean" Dexter referred to is the desert tepary which grew profusely in the Southwest. Cultivated by the Indians and Mexicans, it was later domesticated and grown commercially.

daguerrotype of himself. A photographic copy of this daguerrotype, enlarged and framed, hangs now in the El Paso County Commissioners Court. Dexter became the second El Paso County Judge, holding that office during the 1856-1858 term.

At the time of his next letter, written almost four months later, on January 25, 1856, Dexter was still employed at the customs house, and his opening remarks show that he had become proficient enough in Spanish to serve as "interpreter and translator for the Mexican population." However, he was in a despondent mood and devoted a considerable portion of the letter to his poverty and loneliness: "Sad thought, and I fully realize its sadness, melancholic as I am while writing my own dirge this cold rainy night, with my two dogs quarreling with the wolves and disputing their entrance to the hen, turkey and duck house as well as guarding my horses and cows. While poor I am occupying my snug little room . . . upon the other side of a rousing fire of willow and corn cobs. For know ye that firewood – and we have but one grown here (i.e. cottonwood) – is a purchaseable commodity. I may some day give you a description of this heaven forsaken country we are doomed to waste our days in, that you may never have the curiosity to see it."



A photo of Henry L. Dexter, copied by James W. Ward from a photograph which hangs in the El Paso County Commissioners Court and which had earlier been reproduced from a daguerrotype.

Evidently responding to remarks about cholera in a letter from his sister, Dexter sympathized: "Cholera is . . . a terrible scourge. I had ocular proof of it before I left the 'states' . . . and buried a large number of friends and acquaintances during the latter part of my life

in Mobile where it raged furiously. I never had an attack until far out on the plains toward Santa Fe. . . ." The thought of Santa Fe seemed to evoke bitter memories of the "City of Holy Faith, which is certainly a misnomer, for since the day it received that name there has never been a city upon the face of the toadstool nearer resembling our idea of Sodom and Gomorrah."

Casting about for something more to write about his experience in "this heaven forsaken country," Dexter now regaled his sister with a description of his diet:

Although we have milk in abundance . . . few know how to make butter and what little we get is from the States and costs from 75¢ to $1 per pound. My daily food is somewhat as follows: When I rise . . . I take a cup of pure chocolate, such as none but Mexicans can make. . . . A large thimbleful is enough to satisfy anyone until 9 or 10 of the clock, when a good cup of coffee or milk with a grilled pigeon and a good dodger [bread] is taken. . . . At 3 or 4 p.m. a few beans cooked as Mexicans alone know how to cook, a little "chili colorado" with a good pork or beef steak smothered in onions, or sometimes a fat hen or duck or perhaps a stewed crane or goose, for of roasting or baking they [the servants] absolutely know nothing. Supper I never eat. Tea I never drink unless on extraordinary occasions. . . . The native wine of this country I am very fond of and drink a good deal of.

Henry Dexter's fortunes and his occupations changed rapidly as he became familiar with the language and customs and was exerting increasing influence over his Mexican associates. By the time of his next letter, dated May 11, 1856, he had resigned his position in the customs house and had opened a general store, this venture having brought some modifications in his lifestyle: "With the change of employment I have reduced my domestic arrangements and am now content with one servant to wait upon my 'merced.' Also reduced to one horse, one cow, etc., and an adopted son of some 9 yrs. to whom I am trying to teach English." In this same letter, however, he wrote of letting out a contract for a new house being built for him "in this village of 900 bodies [Ysleta]. The house I abandoned some months since was, I think, quite as large, spacious, comfortably commodious and new, not built by me. I did not like the location, distance some 25 miles from here and six miles from the nearest neighbor." Dexter was undoubtedly referring to his Frontera "rancho," the principal subject matter in his letter of June 7, 1855.

Continuing this letter, he wrote of the local produce: "My ideas have undergone a change in years past, and I now only think of the necessities of life. I have overcome the aversion I formerly entertained for green peas and we are now and have been for some time indulging extensively in them. Apricots are abundant and some other fruits, including early apples, with a prospect of an enormous harvest of fruit of all sorts excepting the grape which will be somewhat short from late frosts."

The next section of this May 11, 1856, letter makes reference to the very few Americans (i.e., "whites") living in Ysleta: ". . . when I came to this town there was a Dutchman residing here who spoke some English. He lives here yet. Now there are, besides myself, two white gentlemen whom I meet semi-occasionally, when we chat in the mother tongue. I have been for weeks and weeks without hearing a word of our native language. The country is sparsely settled by Amercans and will, I fear, be less before more so. The climate is fine; some of the land is good, but until Uncle Sam takes steps to protect the settler there will be little or nothing to induce American colonization. The Indian is now the proprietor of the soil and the fruits of the labor of the husbandman, and no one is safe from them, unless under lock and key or within the walls of a military garrison."

I may some day give you a description of this heaven forsaken country we are doomed to waste our days in. . . .

On the surface, this passage seems to indicate that Dexter didn't know about the military post located at Magoffinsville, a village some fifteen miles upriver from Ysleta. It was a well-established post which in May of 1854 had been named in honor of William Wallace Smith Bliss. The passage also suggests that Dexter was oblivious to the steady trickle of "Americans" who were beginning to settle near Magoffinsville and in its adjacent village sometimes called Franklin – both of these communities lying directly across the river from Paso del Norte, Mexico. Examined more closely, however, the passage serves to remind us that in the 1850s the settlements along the east

bank of the El Paso Valley were regarded as quite distant from one another – given the mode of travel at the time. Thus, from Dexter's viewpoint, Ysleta benefited not at all from the military protection enjoyed by the settlers at Magoffinsville and Franklin. Looked at this way, the passage might be said to express Dexter's disgust with Uncle Sam's failure to protect the immediate Ysleta area, perhaps because it was so "sparsely settled by ["white"] Americans."

About five months later, on October 1, 1856, Dexter told his sister that he had recently sustained several wounds in a gunfight which had resulted in the death of his opponent. "Do not be alarmed, sissy. I am as well as ever and have been unable to attend to my business only one or two days. I was a much better marksman and thus escaped." That was all he would say of the affair at this time. Mary must have evinced a persuasive curiosity as to the shooting business because Dexter gave a full account of it in his letter of January 20, 1857:

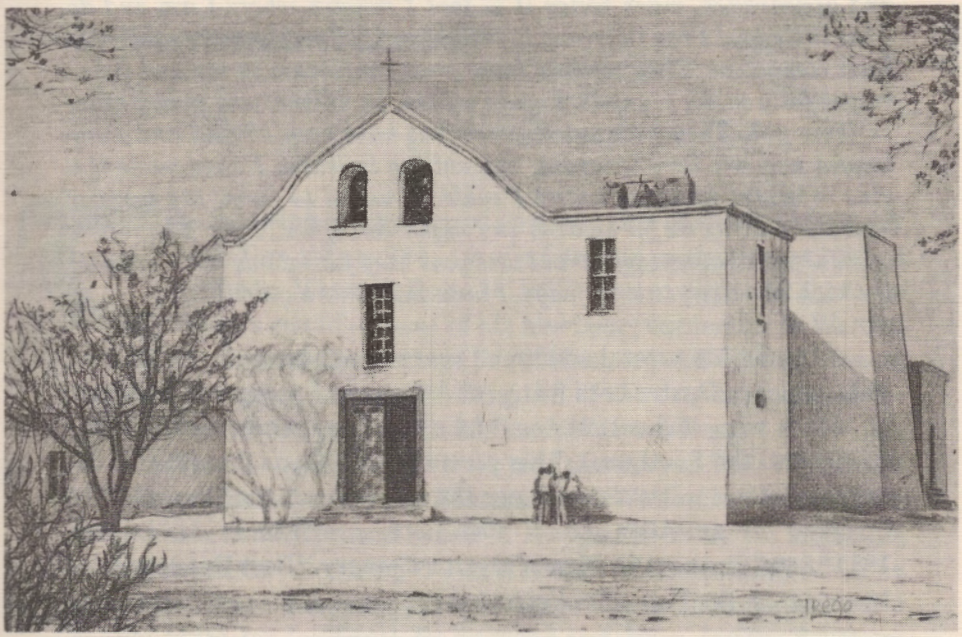
A German living in my town [possibly the same man referred to earlier as a "Dutchman"], considered me his rival in business and having been very successful in all his undertakings, undertook to bully me as he often had the Mexicans.

I bore with him a long time. He then by slander and other means attempted to injure my character, but finding I had more, many more friends than himself he changed his tactics and one day that my goats were coming home he shot at the herd and herder, seriously wounding two animals. It came to my knowledge next morning. I called upon him and coolly demanded payment for the damage done, and at the same time telling him that forbearance had ceased to be a virtue and for the next indignity I should publicly chastise him. Coward as he was, he promptly forked up the cash demanded and seeing me, as he thought, unarmed, became very insolent and after some words drew a revolver and pointed it at me. He was then inside his counter and myself outside. Knowing him to be a coward I thought I could disarm him and prevent his doing anything but bluster. Attempting to jump over the counter, he put the pistol to my face and fired, the ball passing through my cheek and the rim of my hat.

I then raised to my feet on the counter to grasp his arm when he prepared to fire again and immediately placed the pistol within 6 inches of my left breast, close to my heart. . . . Seeing he was determined to take my life, I saw no way but to defend it and that promptly. I then attempted to draw my own revolver, a frontiersman's constant compan-

ion, and raising my left arm to detain the scabbard, the ball from his passed harmlessly thro [sic] the lapel of my coat and under the arm. . . .

Finding I did not fall and seeing that I too was armed, he crawled under the counter for the purpose of hiding and saving a life which he had already forfeited by all laws, both human and divine. After crawling about two yards, and not succeeding in hiding his extensive trunk (standing over six feet and weighing about 200 pounds, while I am but 5 feet 5 or 7 inches and weigh scarce 150 lbs) either behind or between the two barrels standing against the counter, he arose again, aimed, and the muzzles of our pistols touching almost, he again fired, the ball passing through the left pocket of my pantaloons and skirt of my coat without even cutting my drawers. In the meantime my pistol hung fire and after many repeated attempts it discharged itself and gave him his quietus. He expired about 3 p.m. the same day, Sept. 22 last past [1856]. Sad event, but not sought by me, and much to be regretted. But my conscience is clear. I did not pass the bounds of duty to myself and society. I acted solely on the defensive. He would have it so and reaped his reward.



The mission at Ysleta, c. 1860, a landmark during Henry Dexter's residence in the village, 1849-1862. (Sketched from a photograph which appears in El Paso's Missions and Indians *by Cleofas Calleros)*

I immediately surrendered myself to a magistrate and gave five thousand dollars security to appear at the next term of our Circuit Court to respond if called upon. Next term should be April.

Dexter never named the victim, but Rex Strickland, in his appendix to W. W. Mills' *Forty Years at El Paso* (Carl Hertzog: 1962), identified the man as John Schiel.

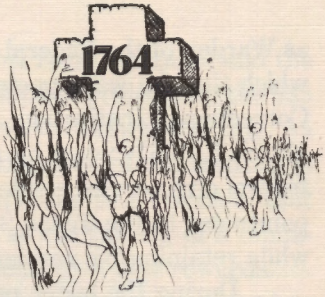
Evidently the case never went to court. But in the "court" of local public opinion, Dexter was exonerated – immediately. The El Paso County records show that Dexter became County Judge on October 4, 1856, not quite two weeks after the gunfight.

Just six days after writing the long letter describing the details of the shooting, Dexter wrote another, apparently in prompt response to his sister's urging that he return to Illinois. It is a short letter and reveals Dexter's patronizing attitude toward his fellow townspeople:

Unfitted for the society in which you move, by language, manners and appearance, much better it is that I remain where I am and do what little good I can in trying to enlighten these poor greasers so far as I am competent. They already have great confidence in me and listen respectfully to my counsels. I could obtain, by asking, any public office in their gift. They have intelligence, but have been abused and humbugged and are very ignorant, but willing to learn. I have made it a rule to accept no office unless I could be useful to them. My want of education unfits me for holding any important office. . . . I have been often urged to accept office and last year they forced one upon me with the high sounding title of judge. I bear my honors quietly. . . .

During his several additional years of residence in the El Paso Valley, Henry Dexter bore many other "honors," prospered financially, took a wife, and suffered painful disruptions when the Civil War spilled into the Southwest. This period of his life, as described in his ongoing letters to his sister, forms the subject matter of Part II of "A Stranger in an Alien Land: The Letters of Henry L. Dexter, 1854-1869." Entitled "A Man Without a Country," Part II is scheduled to appear in the Fall 1993 *Password.*

ART LEIBSON, an attorney-turned newspaperman, is a frequent contributor to *Password.* He was a longtime journalist for the *El Paso Times,* and for several years he served the *Time-Life* organization as its border correspondent.



Warden White Recalls the La Tuna Years

by Verdon R. Adams

The following essay is based on a selection of excerpts from my book *Tom White: The Life of a Lawman,* which was published by Texas Western Press in 1977. The excerpts all focus on White's reminiscences of his nineteen-year tenure as Warden at La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution, located in westernmost Texas, a few miles north of El Paso. All of the original material appears here with the permission of Texas Western Press.

As its title indicates, the book tells the story of Tom White's life and career. His full name was Thomas Bruce White. He was born on a Texas farm in 1881, and he died in El Paso in 1971. He began his distinguished career during the first decade of this century when he joined the Texas Rangers. After his marriage in 1909, he became a special agent for the Santa Fe Railroad and, later, for the Southern Pacific Railroad. This latter employment took him for the first time to El Paso. From 1917 to 1927, he was an investigator for the FBI; and then for most of the remainder of his working life he was employed by the Federal Penitentiary System in administrative positions. He served

as Warden of the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth until 1932, at which time he was appointed Warden of the newly-opened La Tuna Correctional Institution. He continued to hold this position until March 5, 1951, when he reached the mandatory retirement age for federal civil service employees. After that, he accepted a six-year appointment to the Texas State Board of Pardons and Paroles, meanwhile retaining his residence in El Paso.

During the latter part of Tom's life, I enjoyed many conversations with him, the subject inevitably drifting to his memories of his career as a lawman. He especially liked to talk about his La Tuna years. In fact, as he related the events of his long and unusually full and satisfying life, it became apparent that the nineteen years he had spent as Warden at this desert institution ranked among his most cherished experiences.

La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution opened on April 29, 1932, with the transfer from El Paso County jail of a group of prisoners being held on various federal charges. The Institution is well named, since *la tuna* (the Spanish name for the prickly pear cactus) is one of the desert plants which flourishes on this arid slope between the towering Franklin Mountains and the Rio Grande. The term "Correctional Institution" in place of the more commonplace "Prison" is also appropriate, for this institution represents one of the earliest meaningful efforts of Federal prison authorities to develop a penal system designed to emphasize the corrective feature of imprisonment, as opposed to the strictly punitive aspect.

When Tom White received his appointment as Warden of this new Correctional Institution, he and his wife were both delighted to be returning to their beloved Southwest. For years, Bessie White had said there was never any question, after Tom's initial assignment to El Paso by the Southern Pacific, about this city being their eventual retirement home. Additionally, the professional assignment had considerable appeal for Tom. He looked forward to working with a younger group of offenders where the prospects for rehabilitation were better than with older, confirmed criminals. Also, for a time at least, problems of overcrowding and general overtaxing of institutional facilities would be far less acute than at Leavenworth. Then

too, Tom had never forgotten or rejected his rural heritage, and the prospect of starting agricultural and horticultural projects on the 635 acres of land which comprise the Federal reservation was exciting. As one reads the official description of the development of this institution – the transformation from a patch of desert land to an oasis in that desert – the work can easily be visualized as the taming of a miniature frontier, with all of the difficulties, challenges, and rewards.

The large group of Mexican nationals committed to La Tuna has always included a sizable number of habitual "border jumpers." This high degree of recidivism is even more pronounced when one considers that the crime of illegal entry into the United States usually brings prosecution and imprisonment only after an individual has committed multiple such offenses or has combined them with another crime. To discourage reentry, attempts are made to transport the offenders to points near their homes. However, many tales are told of these offenders being transported to Chihuahua City, some 230 miles south of the border, for example, and being picked up again in El Paso before the deportation bus had made its return.

Tom recalled one man in particular who represented a classic example of such practice. This man proudly wore a very crude home-

La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution as it appeared when it opened on "a patch of desert land" in 1932. (Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)

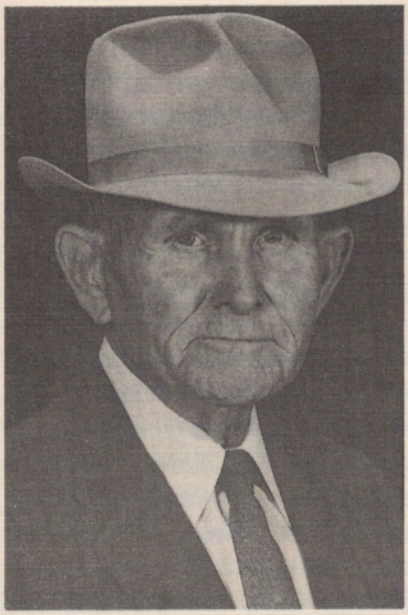
made peg leg. He asked no favors or special treatment because of his handicap, however, and gave as good an account as the next man when assigned to the fields. He was also an ideal prisoner in all other respects – cooperative, tractable, pleasant, and a respecter of authority. But he absolutely refused to stay south of the border. The lure of high wages and relatively easy living in Los Estados Unidos was just too much for him.

After he had been escorted back to Mexico several times by representatives of the Immigration Service under the "voluntary departure" procedure, with no apparent lessening of his determination to live in the United States, formal charges of illegal entry were placed against him. He was duly tried, convicted, and sentenced to serve a brief term in La Tuna Correctional Institution. When he completed his term, he was escorted to Mexico. He was soon back and the whole procedure was repeated. After the sixth or seventh such performance, with no variation except a gradual lengthening of sentences, Tom suggested that the final deportation action be emphasized by taking the alien to some point far south in Mexico, from which travel to the border would be very difficult. This was done, through special arrangements with the Mexican authorities, and he was finally released well over a thousand miles from the border. As Tom remembered the event, it took "old peg-leg" almost a month to bum his way back up to Juarez and get across the border, where his old friends in the United States Immigration Service once more took charge of the proceedings.

One of the nicer things which came Tom's way during his La Tuna years was a beautiful palomino horse, a gift from the commanding general at Fort Bliss, where all of the units were being motorized and horses were becoming obsolescent. No gift could have been more appreciated or more appropriate for this farmer's son who, for too many years, had been largely desk-bound. The fact that the palomino appeared to be slightly locoed did not lessen Tom's enjoyment of this beautiful animal. Even after being thrown several times, he refused to quit riding it. One of the inmates, who claimed to be an expert with horses, asked for permission to work with Pal. He was allowed to do so and the results were amazing. In a short time Tom was riding the palomino all over the reservation, looking after the various building and development projects underway.

Among these projects at that time was the construction of an earthen dam. This dam, when completed, was 750 feet long, 50 feet

high, and with a 50-foot-wide roadway. Not such an impressive engineering feat, one might say, until it is considered that it was built entirely by prisoners, under the direction of prison employees, with nothing but hand tools such as picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. The dam went up in terraces. One group of workers shoveled the dirt up as high as they could reasonably throw it. There, it was picked up by the shovels of a second group and tossed up to the next level – and so on, until the eventual height of 50 feet was reached. As Tom admitted, it was a slow process but it kept the men busy at work they could all do – and it was inexpensive.



TOM WHITE
(photo courtesy Verdon R. Adams)

One day at quitting time, the officers in charge of one group found themselves one man short when they checked out their work force as usual. A second count confirmed the presence of only ninty-nine prisoners instead of the hundred they had started with. An intensive search was immediately begun, and went on for some time. Finally, one of the officers in the search party discovered a straw protruding a couple of inches from the ground. It was in an area which had been filled with dirt to bring it up to the level of the surrounding terrain. He signaled to the others to approach quietly. When they had done so, he stepped over and pinched the straw between his thumb and forefinger. The result was as dramatic as he could have possibly hoped for. The ground literally exploded as the inmate, who was buried an inch or so beneath the surface, came kicking and clawing for air!

A prisoner well remembered by Tom was one of the relatively few men who have served life sentences at La Tuna. He was an Indian who had been convicted of murdering his wife in a rather spectacular way. It seems that he had bound her in a chair, saturated her clothing with kerosene, and set fire to her. For this crime, the court decreed that he must spend the rest of his own life in prison. From all accounts

this suited him quite well, and, in fact, he made a useful contribution to the La Tuna community. He was a skilled trapper, and the authorities capitalized on his skill. The prison's agricultural production was completely dependent on irrigation, provided by a system of ditches to distribute the water. Gophers were a constant threat to this system because of their extensive burrows which drained the water off into unwanted areas. For years, this Indian lifer conducted his one-man gopher-control program. One of Tom's successors was heard to remark that they would have to line their ditches with concrete and use siphon tubes when they lost their gopher trapper.

Another Indian inmate was somewhat reminiscent of "The Bird Man of Alcatraz." This man had been transfered from Leavenworth and was well known to Tom, who selected him to care for several thousand baby chicks which had just been puchased as a starter for the Institution's poultry industry. Even at this early date, Tom had visions of making the place largely self-sustaining. This particular inmate had the proper background for the work and soon showed great interest and ability in caring for his little charges. While inspecting the poultry house, though, Tom noticed that several of the chicks were sick. They just stood with their heads down, their eyes closed, and would not eat or drink. To prevent the disease from spreading, Tom instructed the convict poultry-keeper to kill the chicks and remove their bodies. On subsequent inspections it was apparent that the man was not following these instructions. When Tom pressed the matter, the man said he didn't think they were all that sick and maybe would get well. But they didn't. This dialogue was repeated several times, until the convict finally confessed that he just *couldn't* kill these sick little chickens, even if he was punished for not doing so. Tom did not insist, of course, but assigned him a part-time helper, whose principal duty was to kill the roupy chickens.

Not long afterward, the Indian poultry-keeper's sentence was completed and he was released. However, he was not destined to enjoy his new freedom very long. He was soon arrested by the Arizona authorities, tried, and convicted for the killing of his wife and young son. The man who could not be persuaded to kill a sick chicken had beaten these members of his family to death with a heavy hammer!

Tom's natural conservativeness and his ability to make do with whatever was at hand, coupled with a certain imaginativeness and ingenuity, undoubtedly contributed to his success in building La Tuna up to the self-sustaining position it now enjoys. Early on, for example,

he noticed that the inmates were very fond of the heavy, distinctly flavored syrup made from sorghum. He saw no reason why they shouldn't produce their own, and had some fields planted in sugar cane. While the cane was growing, a small single-horsepower mill and a huge cooking vat were constructed. In the meantime, a Louisiana molasses expert was located among the inmates.

At last the cane was harvested and crushed, and the juice cooked down under the careful supervision of the consultant from Louisiana. The product was tried out in the Officers' Mess and pronounced unacceptable. It was too bitter. Tom's expert explained that the juice of the sugar cane which is found between the joints is very sweet, while that in the nodes is bitter. The La Tuna cane, he pointed out, had relatively short joints, resulting in too high a proportion of the bitter juice. Various blends of the homemade and commercial varieties were then tried, and a mixture was discovered that was very palatable. This blend was then placed on the regular prison menu.

Another example of Tom's resourcefulness had to do with the blackbirds. They were everywhere – a constant nuisance and a continuing threat to the crops being cultivated by the inmates. When the blackbirds failed to get the seeds, they were right on hand for the young plants. And they were there by the thousands when harvest time arrived, always getting more than their fair share of the crop. All efforts to control their depredations seemed doomed to failure.

Then at dinner in the Officers' Mess, one of the men remarked that he had once eaten blackbirds on a bet and had found them very tasty. During the discussion, most of the men said they would have no objection to eating these pests. The prison doctor said there was no medical reason why they should not be eaten, so Tom gave his permission for enough of the birds to be shot for a tryout in the Officers' Mess. The ensuing meal was a big success. The officers agreed that they were as good as doves or better. An all-out blackbird hunt was then authorized, with the game to be placed on the prison menu. As Tom summarized the episode, the institution's crops were saved, the employees and the inmates were treated to an unusual and tasty meal, and the guards' marksmanship was improved.

And then there were the turkeys. Tom remembered from his early days of riding the Texas range that wild turkeys thrived on the seeds and berries of many desert plants. Well, they had many of those plants at La Tuna, so why not get some turkeys? Forthwith, he bought some turkey poults. Then he began looking for a turkey expert. He

was not long in finding a Mexican inmate who was wise in the ways of the big birds. This man seemed to think like a turkey and actually appeared to be able to converse with them. Tom remembered that the man placed a small red cloth on the end of a long fishing pole. With a flick here and a jiggle there, he could control his charges amazingly well. He would take them out of their pens in the morning and, with nothing but his red signal cloth, would herd them through the desert all day, seeing that they had the best foraging available, keeping the strays and laggards with the main flock, and returning them to the fold at night, with never a loss to the coyotes and other desert varmints. In time, the turkey flock provided excellent Christmas fare, not only for the inmates at La Tuna, but also for the soldiers at Fort Bliss and William Beaumont Hospital.

Tom continued to promote in other ways a high degree of cooperation between the Prison Service and the Army. Since La Tuna was primarily an agricultural community at that time, the work was of a seasonal nature, with intervals of comparative inactivity. During these periods, the Warden offered the services of his inmates to the commanding general at Fort Bliss for maintenance and general clean-up work. This offer was accepted with enthusiasm, and there were times when more than a hundred prisoners could be seen performing such work on the military reservation under the watchful eyes of military guards. However, with the gradual development of more diversified activities as the concept of prison industries emerged, it soon became possible to keep the prisoners occupied with meaningful tasks and training efforts on a continuing basis within the institution itself.*

Very few happenings at La Tuna escaped the notice of Warden White. But there was one incident that he missed, and when he heard about it – years later – he roared with laughter. It had to do with the never-ending battle of wits between the staff of the institution and the inmates regarding the pilfering of food.

Many of the inmates were real artists in causing food to disappear before it found its way to the table. One of the cooks was wise to all of the tricks of his helpers and was usually a step or two ahead of them. Thus, when his eggs began disappearing in large numbers, he

*Editor's note: An article headed "50 Years Behind Prison Walls" in the *El Paso Times* of October, 1984, reported that La Tuna's Federal Industries Corporation (UNICOR) generates about $5 million a year gross in annual sales to the government of the brushes and refinished furniture produced by the participating inmates. The article went on to state that UNICOR was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary that week. Thus, the Corporation was established in 1934, during Warden White's administration.

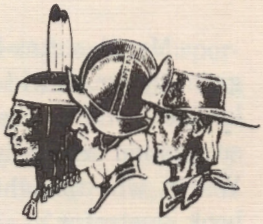
knew they were going to the laundry where they would be boiled in the hot water used for washing the clothes and then smuggled into the cells to provide a light snack when desired.

The cook had his own effective method of handling these particular thefts. He kept his eyes open for those telltale bulges in the side pockets of his inmate helpers. When he saw one, he would just walk past the offender and, without a word, give the bulge a sharp whack with the back of his hand. A broken egg in one's pocket usually tended to discourage the practice for a time, especially since the cook was careful to see that the culprit didn't have an immediate chance to clean out the gooey glob.

One morning he noticed the typical lump in the pocket of a young fellow he had caught once before. He waited until just the right moment, when he was sure several others would see the little byplay, drew his hand back, and delivered an unusually sharp blow. Instantly, the cook let out a groan of pain, while his "victim" and the other inmate-workers, who had all been waiting for this moment, went on about their business with perfectly straight faces. The "egg" was a door knob which the convict had put in his pocket for the very purpose it had just served. The cook wound up with a lump on the back of his hand almost as big as the door knob. And the worst of it was that he could say nothing about it. But every convict in the place knew all about the incident before noon. A few of the employees may have found out about it, too. However, in deference to the feelings of the hapless cook, nobody told Warden White.

VERDON R. ADAMS, who is retired from the Civil Service, is the author of two other books in addition to his biography of Tom White: *Peeks at the Past* (El Paso: 1982) and *Methodism Comes to the Pass* (El Paso: Trinity United Methodist Church, 1975).


J. CISNEROS -'91



My Life as an Illustrator in the Southwest

by José Cisneros

Editor's note: In September, 1992, the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University opened an exhibition of manuscripts, watercolors, and other materials from its Paul Horgan collection. One of the featured speakers at the opening ceremony was El Paso's José Cisneros, who had been invited to present an address reviewing his own distinguished career in regional art and literature.

Later, the DeGolyer Library published his address in a handsome booklet, designated as Keepsake Number Five and issued in a limited edition of 750 copies. The Keepsake also contains a Preface by David Farmer, Director of the DeGolyer Library, and an Introduction by David J. Weber, Dedman Professor of History at Southern Methodist University.

With the permission of Mr. Cisneros, Password *is pleased to offer below a reprint of the address and, on the page opposite, a reproduction of the drawing included in Keepsake Number Five.*

For the past several weeks I have been trying to formulate what I was going to say here. No academic background, no training as a speaker, and the difficulty of clearly expressing myself in English makes it presumptuous on my part to be addressing this assembly where so many high-caliber scholars are present.

My adventure began with an invitation to participate in this program by Dr. David Farmer, Head of the DeGolyer Library, whose kindness and deference I greatly appreciate. I understand that the suggestion originally came from my friend of many years, Dr. David Weber, who thought that I should tell my story of how I became a book illustrator.

To explain my presence here you have to endure and tolerate some boring details about my life, a life similar to that of many others who came to this country in search of better tomorrows.

Born and raised in Mexico during the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution, I was deprived of school in my childhood. With only three years of elementary education I came to the United States at age fifteen, and attended school for another three odd years. Forced by family problems and economic circumstances, I quit school and started to work doing janitorial work and delivering groceries.

Since my early years, I began to draw pictures. Without guidance or stimulation – my folks would say, *le gusta hacer monos,* he likes to doodle – I continued doing them.

I was attracted to pictures in books and newspapers and was fascinated with them more than with those hanging on walls. A desire to emulate those individuals who did them became an obsession with me. With that desire in mind, I began drawing with pen and ink for the sheer joy I experienced, for the creative satisfaction it afforded me, and because I felt that drawing was part of my impossible dream. This compulsive urge has never abandoned me.

Family responsibilities prevented me from devoting more time to my pen strokes and my reading. Nevertheless, I felt that with patience and perseverance I would one day attain my goal.

Back in the middle of the 1930s, while watching renowned Texas artist Tom Lea, to whom I am forever grateful, working on his monumental mural at the Federal Courthouse in El Paso, very nervous, with broken English, I took courage to show him my historical sketches. I was relieved when I saw an approving smile in his face and a bit of praise in his words. He introduced me to Carl Hertzog, who was on his way up as a fine book designer and printer. At that time he was beginning to publish and print books on his own; it was during the Depression, and people in those days were not very much interested in books.

Yet, for me, later on, the meeting with Carl turned out to be my golden opportunity, as it marked my initiation as a book illustrator.

While keeping my job as a spray painter for the local transportation company, I would do book illustrations for him at night. Our association lasted until his untimely death.

Through the influence and help of friends at the University of Texas system, Frank Wardlaw, Tuffly Ellis, Joe Frantz, I was granted a resident fellowship to work on a series of horsemen I intended to do from time back. We stayed six months at the very secluded and beautiful Frank Dobie's Paisano Ranch near Austin. For me it was a glorious experience, as never before had I the opportunity to be free to work on my pictures full time without worries or distractions. It also afforded me the good fortune of getting acquainted with lots of people involved in the business of books, writers, historians, artists, book dealers, teachers. Another fringe benefit was my bid for early retirement from my dull and uninspiring position with the transportation company.

From then on I began to take the matter of horses and horsemen very seriously, searching everywhere I could for information concerning equipment, accoutrements, costumes and garments of the riders, as well as written and graphic material about them.

This activity led me deeper into the field of Southwestern history.

Someone said that civilization came on horseback. This was certainly true of the culture and progress that originated in Europe and was brought to our continent with the arrival of the first equines in Veracruz in 1519. I made a commitment to follow their hoof prints along and across the land as my objective. To restore, visualize, and depict the physical appearance and countenance of their riders became my aim. Trying to reconstruct, to recreate, to retrieve from oblivion the forgotten or nearly lost characters that at one time or another roamed our land on horseback has been a difficult task but highly rewarding and attractive.

Since my beginnings as a book illustrator perhaps for ethnic or atavistic aberrations, I gave preference to subjects related to the region that Herbert Bolton considered the Spanish Borderlands. Of particular interest, as I mentioned before, was the subject of horses and their riders, their aesthetics, their impact and influence on our regional history and our environment. Dr. Haskell Monroe, past president of the University of Texas at El Paso, became aware of my preoccupation for the noble beasts and persistently insisted that we should have a book on them, an idea that I had nurtured for years.

With his help and assistance and the near-death advice of my good old pal, Carl Hertzog, I dared to write and illustrate what became an award-winning book, *Riders Across the Centuries: Horsemen of the Spanish Borderlands.*

Incidentally, the first book I illustrated was *Across Aboriginal America – The Journey of Three Englishmen Across Texas in 1568,* published by Mr. DeGolyer in 1947.

While dealing with history, our history, allow me to deviate a little and pay tribute to a group of individuals that appear very often in my work and who were responsible for most of the populated areas of the borderlands, the Franciscans.

The presence of Spain in the Southwest was enhanced by their strong support and assistance. They marked their paths with institutions, monuments, and customs that still prevail and have survived through the centuries. In their journeys they followed Estevanico, the Moor, and Francisco Vazquez de Coronado; they were with Antonio de Espejo and with the Adelantado Don Juan de Oñate; they traveled the land with the soldiers and without them. In their burning zeal to conquer souls their efforts sometimes culminated in martyrdom. No group of men had more influence in the founding of our pivotal cities of the borderlands than the members of the Order of Friars Minor. San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Guadalupe de Paso del Norte, La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de Nuestro Padre San Francisco – all attest and proclaim with their sonorous Spanish names the Franciscan heritage of their origin.

To conclude my peroration I will recall my first trip to Dallas almost half a century ago. Carl Hertzog was going to address the Associated Press Conference at Paris, Texas, in connection with the release of the book *The Red River Valley, Then and Now.* Because I had done the illustrations for it and they were going to be exhibited at the city's public library, he took me along.

Driving from El Paso we stopped in Dallas, where Carl had business connections and many friends, one of them, Bill Johnson, who invited us to his place in the woods. One of his guests was Elizabeth Ann McMurray, who owned a very prestigious bookstore downtown. I was a bit scared because of my rustic upbringing and because I had never been to social gatherings. I was amazed at their kindness and friendliness, and for the first time in my life I felt important when they introduced me to their friends as, "This is *Mister* Cisneros, a young, promising Mexican artist!"

WRITING WESTERN HISTORY: Essays on Major Western Historians edited by Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, $37.50/$17.50.

Viewing the history of the American West through the trained minds of ten different historians, together with the editor's commentary on these various accounts, makes for a quite exhilirating journey through space and time. Our travels take us through a careful selection of the writings of these leading Western historians who in different ways attempted to explain the impact of geography, culture, sociology, and politics on the people and the "peopling" of the West. To some of these scholars, the West included the entire area of central and western North America; to others, the West was more narrowly defined as a regional part of the Trans-Mississippi West.

The essays are grouped into three categories. The first section is composed of essays by precursors to Frederick Jackson Turner – namely Josiah Royce, who concentrated on early California history, and H. H. Bancroft, who, in his nearly eighty volumes of publications, left hardly a historical stone unturned from Mexico to Canada.

The second category of writers include Frederick Jackson Turner and "classic" western historians such as Frederic Logan Paxson, Walter Prescott Webb, Herbert Eugene Bolton, and James C. Malin. These scholars are evidently grouped with Turner because of their affinity to his frontier thesis, his 1892 interpretation of the social forces that shaped the American character: free land and the encounter with the American Indian.

In the final group, "Recent Western Historians," are found treatments of the West by Henry Nash Smith, Ray Allen Billington, and Earl Pomeroy.

Each essay is followed by comprehensive notes and a list of works pertaining to the subject of the essay. Brief biographical notes about the contributors and an index conclude the volume.

Writing Western History seems intended as a handy reference book for graduate students and other academics searching for contrasts/comparisons among the assorted renditions of this nation's western history. Nevertheless, the general reader will find the book extremely stimulating in its clear demonstration that time-past is forever the subject of ongoing interpretation, each interpretation the product of knowledge, vision, and judgment tempered by time-present, the time when the given scholar is Writing Western History.

CLINTON P. HARTMANN
Associate Editor, *Password*

FIGHTING WORDS: Independent Journalists in Texas by James McEnteer. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992, $21.95

Texas isn't the only state in the Union that lays claim to a fair share of straight-talking, independent-minded individuals. But to James McEnteer, an assistant professor of journalism at Connecticut's University of Hartford, the Texas of former times provides the setting for his study of independent journalism. He centers his study on five Texas newspapermen who forthrightly proclaimed their beliefs in the face of concerted opposition. Though they lived in different eras, they were similar in that they all dealt with explosive issues: racism, official corruption, religious freedom, political extremism of the left and the right, and the fear of change.

William Cowper Brann, the pioneer of these independent journalists, called his newspaper – very appropriately – *The Iconoclast.* He chose Waco as his base of operations and proceeded to assault the area's most cherished idols: the Southern Baptist Church, Baylor University, and the blatantly self-righteous. His attacks finally resulted in his assassination, but Brann got in the last word. Whirling and drawing his pistol, he shot and killed his assassin.

Independent number two is Don Biggers, a wandering journalist who served and edited so many papers in Texas that historians can't keep up with him. He went as far west as Midland, and even spilled over into New Mexico. A politician who served two terms in the Texas Legislature (each term from a different district), his favorite target was political corruption.

Next comes John Granberry. When he turned to journalism at the age of 53, he had already worked as a Methodist minister and as a college professor with a doctorate from the University of Chicago. He decided that as a journalist he could better attack civic wrongs and promote their rectification.

Then there was the amazing Archer Fullingim, who launched his many crusades from a weekly newspaper in the small East Texas town of Kuntze. His caustic editorials were quoted by the Dallas *News* and *The Texas Observer* and were even read in the White House.

Finally there was Stoney Burnes (Brent Stein), whose vigorous crusade for free speech employed such an abundance of four-letter words and scatological terms that he was declared repulsive and "A freak from the underground."

As presented by Professor McEnteer, the lives and works of these five independent journalists offer a unique perspective on Texas history and on the history of journalism. Molly Ivins, our state's currently best-known "iconoclast" and a syndicated columnist associated with the *Dallas Times Herald,* wholeheartedly agrees: "My only question is, why are so many . . . great journalists dead? Where is my generation, and the next? *Aux armes,* y'all. We have a magnificent tradition to maintain."

CONREY BRYSON
El Paso

MEMOIRS OF A COUNTRY DOCTOR by James W. Laws, M.D., ed. Ann Buffington. Lincoln, New Mexico: Lincoln County Historical Society, 1993, $4.50

The Lincoln County Historical Society, in conjunction with the Lincoln County Heritage Trust, initiates its proposed "Series of Studies Concerning the History of Lincoln County, New Mexico and its Environs" with selections from a physician's memoirs. The physician was James W. Laws, who served the Lincoln area during the first two decades of this century. His memoirs pertain to a much-neglected aspect of the area's development and therefore add considerable substance to the historical record.

The memoirs begin in Memphis, Tennessee, when young Dr. Laws discovered that he had fallen victim to tuberculosis. They then tell of his decision to seek a cure in the Southwest, where he was soon fortunate enough to obtain an appointment on the staff of Interns at Fort Stanton, recently converted from a frontier military post to a hospital for seamen suffering from the same dread disease. There, Dr. Laws found the cure he sought and subsequently married another health-seeker in the region, Grace Austin. From 1905 until 1918, he operated, together with his wife, a "ranch sanatorium" for "lungers" in the village of Lincoln, simultaneously conducting a busy private practice.

The memoirs chronicle the "pioneering adventure" of a Country Doctor coping with an "untreatable" disease, making distant house calls, performing "home-made surgery," and – in general – responding to enormous challenges. Very compelling reading. And all the more so under the expert editing of Ann Buffington. She guides us smoothly through two decades of the doctor's remembrances. And, even more strikingly, she places the memoirs in their proper historical context. Citing various source materials, she points out that Dr. Laws' migration to the Lincoln area was part of an "utterly ignored . . . important factor in population movements" at that time: "the relentless quest for health by hundreds of thousands of disease-ridden Americans." "New Mexicans," she states, "are keenly aware of the importance of the cattle and mining industries in the early history of their state," but they and other Americans "are, for the most part, completely unaware of 'the golden era of invalidism' and its influence upon the institutional and cultural history of the West."

This impressive contribution to the record of Southwest history may be obtained from the Lincoln County Historical Society, Box 91, Lincoln, New Mexico 88338 at the listed price plus $1.50 for shipping and handling.

J. HARRY MISKIMINS, M.D.
El Paso

APACHE MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS by Ruth McDonald Boyer and Narcissus Duffy Gayton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992, $24.95

Four generations of women from a single family of the Chiricahua Apaches (Tchihene, or "Red Paint People") are presented to demonstrate the massive changes in their culture brought by the settling of the western frontier.

Anthropologist Boyer and Apache leader Gayton begin their study with a description of the life of Dilth-cleyhen, Chief Victorio's daughter. Born in 1848, Dilth-cleyhen guarded her Apache traditions throughout warfare and confinement to reservations, but upon her death in 1930 she was buried in an Anglo cemetery, as required, rather than in a crevice of the mountains according to Apache customs.

The study next focuses on Dilth-cleyhen's daughter, Beshad-e, born in 1870, who – together with her mother – endured harsh reservation life imposed by the United States Army in Florida, Alabama, and Oklahoma from 1886 to 1913.

Beshad-e's daughter, Christine, bridged the gap between Apache traditions and Anglo-American emphasis on education. But Christine died when her daughter, Narcissus, was only seven. This meant that Narcissus would grow up under two strong influences: the cultural traditions practiced by her grandmother, Beshad-e, on the one hand, and, on the other, the formal schooling which gave her a determination to serve her people as a registered nurse and an advocate for health care. Still, Narcissus values the old traditions of the Chiricahua Apaches and strives to see that young Apaches keep the memories alive.

Apache Mothers and Daughters is written primarily for scholars of Native American history and anthropology. But general readers may also find the book interesting in the way it reveals the role of women in Chiricahua Apache culture and how these women adapt to change so as to make ongoing contributions to the vitality of their people. These readers will also enjoy the descriptions of such poignant and beautiful customs as Apache puberty rites and cradle-board construction, as well as the rich details of food preparation and preferences, attitudes toward death, ghost and doll sickness, dances, marriage, witchcraft, and religious cults.

BEA BRAGG
Freelance Writer, Albuquerque

WITH SANTA ANNA IN TEXAS: A Personal Narrative of the Revolution by José Enrique de la Peña. Trans. and ed. by Carmen Perry. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992, $12.95

The totally unexpected defeat of the Mexican forces led by General Santa Anna at San Jacinto in April, 1836, led to the publication of a series of explanations, justifications, and recriminations by several of the men and officials involved in the campaign. But it would be a mistake to put Lieutenant Colonel de la Peña's narrative into the same category, a narrative recently re-issued in paperback after being out of print for almost two decades.

For one thing, de la Peña does not confine his journal to matters military (though his description of the preparations to attack the Alamo and of the battle itself are graphic and riveting). Along the way, he also notices the great beauty and potential of Texas, as, for example, in this passage: "When Texas is populated and governed by good laws, it will become one of the most enviable places in the world, in which it doubtless will play a brilliant role."

Still, what makes this a unique account in a way (and caused the great controversy and uneasiness when this book was first published in English in 1975) is the fact that, as an eye-witness, de la Peña rather matter of factly notes that there were several Anglo-Texan survivors at the Alamo – Davy Crockett being one of these. Millions of Texans, of course, grew up with the Disney-Fess Parker-John Wayne image of the great Davy dying a hero's death swinging "Ol' Betsy," cracking the skulls of a few last Mexicans with him. Believers in Texas myths should not be distraught. In my opinion, de la Peña's account does not detract from the fact that Crockett, and all the others in the Alamo, were heroes when they decided to stay and fight. When and how they died is not important.

That point aside, though, this narrative is significant for its very outspoken criticism of almost all the men in the Mexican force – up to, and especially, including the Commanding General himself. De La Peña raises many questions about how the campaign was planned and executed. But he reserves his most biting remarks for General Ramírez y Sesma, Colonel de la Portilla, and Santa Anna – accusing them of incompetence/stupidity, theft, and murder (for the massacre at Goliad). He believes the war with Texas was inevitable, but he places almost all the blame on the central government – not only for making the war inevitable, but also for failing to prepare adequately for the war.

Of course, one must wonder about de la Peña's motives for writing his journal. Maybe he was pursuing his own political ends. Or maybe he was just so disappointed and frustrated by the tragic campaign that he needed to let others know. Wherever the truth lies, we are all the beneficiaries of another source, another perspective, from which to view the Texas Revolution for Independence.

RICHARD BAQUERA
Department of History
The University of Texas at El Paso

Congratulations . . . .

Pacific Historical Review has dedicated its recent anniversary issue to New Mexico State University history professors **Joan Jensen** and **Darlis Miller,** the dedication inspired by the two professors' 1980 essay on the role of women in the American West. That essay, states Susan Armitage in the *Review*, served as "a guidebook that helped many of us to find our way into the new territory of Western women's history."

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