

PASSWORD



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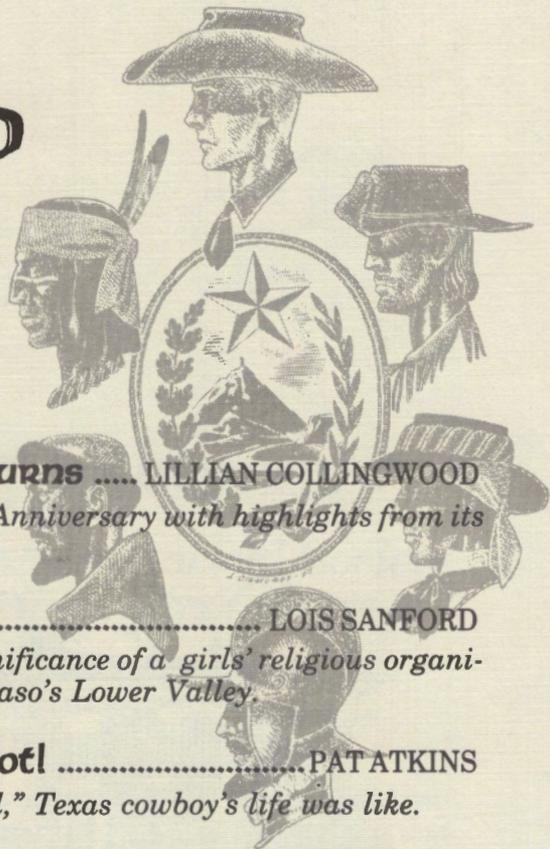
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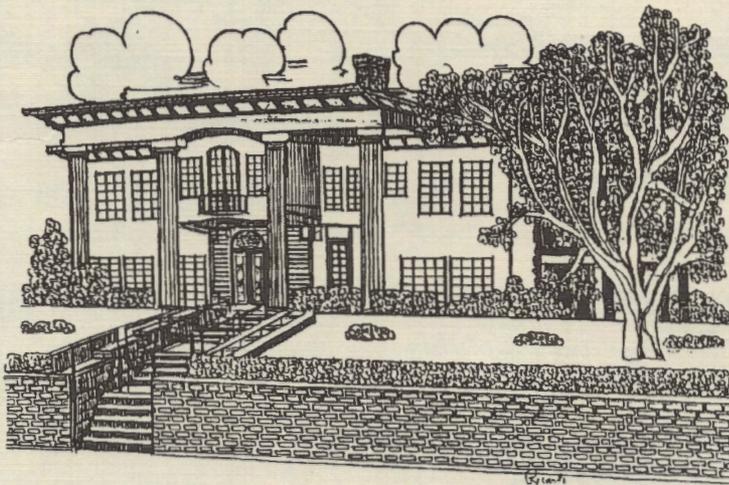
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Burges House, home and headquarters of The El Paso County Historical Society, as sketched by El Paso artist Ricardo in 1989.

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... Many Happy Returns

The El Paso County Historical Society Celebrates its Fortieth Birthday

by Lillian Collingwood

In 1953, El Paso was eighty years old as an incorporated community and could also boast a pre-incorporated history that reached back some considerable length of time. The founders of what would become the City of El Paso had all passed away, and entire sections of the original village had vanished in the great tidal wave of Progress brought by the arrival of the railroads in 1881. Understandably, in the 1940s and '50s some El Pasoans were becoming alarmed that the city's history was getting lost in the rush of post-World War II expansion. In October of 1946, for example, a newspaper columnist lamented the passing of W. W. Bridgers, who as a boy had arrived in El Paso in 1881, had subsequently served the community in many public offices (including several terms as a State Legislator), and had been an authentic voice of the "old days." "What in the world are we going to do from now on," asked the columnist, "when we want some first-hand information about early El Paso?"

Another such concerned citizen was Cleofas Calleros, a local historian and author. Early in the 1950s, according to Paul A. Heisig, Jr., writing in the inaugural issue of *Pass-Word* (the spelling so rendered in that issue dated February, 1956) Calleros had given a "stirring talk" to the members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing the need "to . . . preserve our heritage by protecting and memorializing our present historical landmarks

in a brochure and later in the Spring 1966 *Password*) and the election of officers. Mrs. Schuessler declined the presidency, and the membership elected Paul A. Heisig, Jr. as its first president. He would hold the office until December 31, 1956. Earlier, dues had been set at three dollars a person and five dollars a family per year. Leon Metz tells us (in a 1971 *Password* article) that by August of 1954 the membership had soared to nearly 600 and to almost 700 by the following February. "The idea of a historical society touched the imaginations of El Pasoans," Metz goes on to say.



Mrs. Louise Schuessler
(Photo courtesy El Paso County
Historical Society)

Metz also tells us that it was that same mover and shaker, Louise Schuessler, who drafted the Society's Purpose, a Purpose which remains unchanged today: "To promote and engage in research into the History, Archaeology, and Natural History of West Texas, Southern New Mexico, Eastern Arizona, and Northern Mexico; to publish the important findings; and to preserve the valuable relics and monuments."

In no time at all, the Society began to implement its Purpose. Its initial project was the restoration of the first mule-driven streetcar that had plied between El Paso and El Paso del Norte (soon to be renamed Juárez) as early as 1882. In colorful dedication ceremonies held on September 15, 1955, the Society presented to the City of El Paso its oldest streetcar (complete with "Mandy," a 2100-pound castiron "mule" – the gift of El Paso Oddfellows Lodge No. 284) and placed it in Pioneer Plaza. According to Society president Heisig, this was "just the beginning of a big program to preserve El Paso's historical relics."

And he was right. Before that year was out, the vigorous new Society had prepared bronze plaques to be placed in the valley missions ("missions that predate the much-publicized California missions by more than a hundred years," said Heisig), and by

January, 1956, it had initiated a project of installing several metal signs at Hueco Tanks explaining the pictographs made on the rocks by long-ago area Indians.

Meanwhile, the Society was not neglecting its pledge "to promote and engage in research" and "to publish the important findings." It conceived the idea of publishing a quarterly journal devoted to the region's history – an extremely ambitious project for the young and impecunious organization. But determination and courage won the day. The Society was able to secure the editorial services of Dr. Eugene O. Porter, a professor of history at Texas Western College, who in turn recruited the book-design expertise of the distinguished printer Carl Hertzog and the artistic talents of José Cisneros. Together, these men (with the assistance of a competent editorial staff – Frank Feuille III, Dr. Joseph Leach, Phyllis Mainz, and Addie Jo Sharp) produced the initial issue of *PASS-WORD*, an attractive thirty-two page publication featuring an article on the 1877 San Elizario Salt War, a group of letters written from Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914, a reproduction of an early Texas map accompanied by a brief explanation of its "provenance," and several book reviews – the cover of the issue adorned with the Society logo, designed and graciously contributed by José Cisneros.

Password is now in its thirty-ninth year of uninterrupted publication, its issues all together exhibiting a regional history rich in diversity and extensive in time. To make the material easily accessible to students, researchers, history buffs, and scholars, three Cumulative Indexes (1956-1970, 1971-1980, 1981-1993) have been published and are available at most of the local libraries as well as at the Society Headquarters. The circulation of the journal is nationwide and includes many prestigious universities, libraries, and other research centers. It is no exaggeration to say that the *WORD* of the *PASS* is "broadcast" throughout the land.

Continuing its dedication to its Purpose, the Society launched yet another project in 1961 – its Hall of Honor. Inspired by Richard C. White, an El Paso attorney and soon-to-be his district's United States Congressman for a period of eighteen years (1965-1983), the Hall of Honor would function as an expression of gratitude to those El Pasoans (past and present) who "have made El Paso County better for having lived in it." The Hall of Honor would also bring to public attention a sometimes-forgotten truth – clearly expressed by Richard White in the Spring 1963 *Password*: "History

does not happen. It is made, partly by the collective action of many, but greatly by the direction of some few strong personalities." To date, seventy men and women who "have influenced over a period of years the course of history in El Paso County, or . . . have brought honor and recognition to the El Paso community" have been inducted into the Hall of Honor, two or three each year, in impressive ceremony at the annual Hall of Honor Banquet. The list includes the names of public servants, artists, businessmen, librarians, doctors, civic leaders, homemakers, lawyers, clergymen, engineers, writers, teachers, et al, et al.

As the years rolled on, the Society opened up additional avenues of historical source material. One of these is the Tour of Historical Homes. Begun in 1977 and held annually in October, these Tours afford El Pasoans the chance to visit some of the area's vintage residences and to "experience" the architectural features and the attendant lifestyles of former times.* Another is the Historical Memories Essay Contest, which annually invites the "over-55 crowd" to write down and submit their "remembrance of things past." This Contest has generated a large number of essays which attest to the historical value of memoir and recollected experience. Some of the essays have appeared in *Password*, and many of them are on file in the Society archives for the use of researchers.

In the mid-1980s a challenging new opportunity was presented to the Historical Society in the form of a gift by Jane Burges Perrenot - namely, her home, built in 1912 by her father, Richard F. Burges. The gift was accompanied by a sum of money invested in local stocks and designated to be used for the upkeep of the property. The ownership of Burges House passed to the Society upon the death of Mrs. Perrenot in June, 1986, and acceptance of the gift was approved at the Society's Quarterly Meeting on October 19, 1986. The House then became the Society Headquarters.

The Society immediately recognized the enormous responsibilities it had assumed in accepting ownership of the large, seventy-four-year-old house. After long and careful deliberation and consultation with its attorneys, the Board of Directors constituted the Burges House Commission, authorized to act for the Society in all

* Author's note: A short history of the Tour of Homes may be found in "Historic Tours - Along the Sunlit Trail" by Emily and William Burgett (*Password*, Fall, 1985, 115).

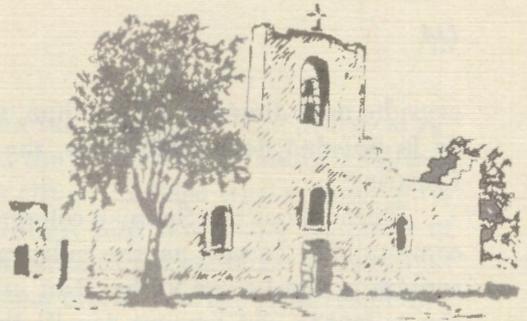
matters connected with the operation of the House – maintaining the property, setting priorities for improvements as funds permit, managing the Perrenot fund, meeting all legal requirements, and responding promptly to emergencies. The Commission is composed of seven members and their respective committees, the seven members serving three-year overlapping terms. Annually the Commission members elect one of their number as chair and also elect members to fill vacated seats, the slate subject to approval by the Society President and Board. This Commission has been extraordinarily faithful to the charge laid upon it. To supplement the interest from the Perrenot fund, which it reinvested in government securities, it handles two rentals on the property, holds fundraising projects, and gratefully accepts donations. It has also found the time to apply for and obtain for the House a Texas Historic Landmark designation, one of the very few such designations in El Paso.

At present, the Commission welcomes the Society's Burges House Restoration Fund Drive, intended to raise sufficient funds to restore the House to its 1912 elegance, an enormously costly project far beyond the means of the Commission's assets. Meanwhile, the Commission continues its vigilant care and beautification of this Texas Historic Landmark so as to make it available to other organizations for meetings, conferences, and special events – and thus to enrich the entire El Paso community.

Part of this goal has already been achieved. In January, 1994, the Society opened to the public the Jane Burges Perrenot Research Center, located in the former library of Burges House and now the repository of the Society archives, a very large and ever-growing collection of historical documents, maps, and photographs garnered through forty years of active search and dedicated labor.

All these impressive achievements (in addition to many others not mentioned here) are, in the words of the Society's first president, "just the beginning" of a vigorously ongoing program that researches, publicizes, and preserves the history of the El Paso Southwest. Without doubt, there will be MANY HAPPY RETURNS of birthday greetings to the El Paso County Historical Society.

LILLIAN COLLINGWOOD needs no introduction to *Password* readers. Longtime editor and contributor, she now serves as Associate Editor and Book Review Editor. In recognition of her distinguished career in the English Department at The University of Texas at El Paso, she received the title Professor Emerita of English.



The Hijas de María

by Lois Stanford

The community of Socorro in El Paso's Lower Valley has had a long and rich cultural history. From the late seventeenth century until well into the twentieth, its community life revolved around Catholic rituals and religious brotherhoods, known as *cofradías*. One of these important religious organizations was the Hijas de María, or Marian Daughters. Historically, most *cofradías* in the New World were formed exclusively of men of Hispanic descent and of the Catholic faith. Therefore, the Hijas de María, comprised of young girls devoted to the worship of Mary, deserves special consideration. Its purpose, as one Socorro resident and parishioner expressed it, "was... to foster devotion to the Virgin." The same resident explained that the girls "dedicated themselves to live a Catholic Christian life" and added that "Naturally, the Hijas de María greatly influenced the young girls to behave themselves and, at the same time, to be proud of themselves...."¹

The communities of Socorro and Ysleta are unique to the Lower Valley because of their continuous existence since they were settled by the Spanish colonists and Native Americans in the early 1680s. Ysleta was established in 1682 as a Franciscan mission to the Tigua Indians (now recognized as a Native American tribe) and Socorro in 1684 as a mission to the Piro and Manso Indians and some Spaniards. The Socorro mission was dedicated to La Purísima, the Immaculate Conception, and was originally known as Nuestra Señora de La Limpia Concepción de los Piro de Socorro del Sur. In 1789, the Spanish government relocated a

presidio near Jiménez, Chihuahua, to the rancho Nuestra Señora de la Soledad de los Tiburcios, the location of present-day San Elizario.²

Throughout the Spanish colonial and Mexican periods, these communities served as the cultural, political, and commercial centers of the Lower Valley. Not until 1881, with the coming of the railroads, did present-day El Paso become an urban center. Catholic residents of American El Paso did not even have their own church, but had to cross the Rio Grande to El Paso del Norte (later Ciudad Juárez) to worship or go to the mission churches in the Lower Valley.³ Even into the mid-twentieth century, Socorro's cultural basis consisted of the original Spanish families who had been among its first settlers; the Catholic church provided the foundation for social organization which revolved around religious celebrations and processions, marking the cycle of the church calendar.

Cofradías originated in Spain in the late twelfth century and flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were brought to the New World by the Catholic clergy to help convert the indigenous population; however, here they assumed new forms, reflecting differences in the populations, the historical period, and the support from the regular and secular clergy. For example, the Mayans integrated pre-Hispanic beliefs and practices into the veneration of the Catholic saints.⁴ And in northern New Mexico, the Penitente brotherhood, devoted to public manifestations of the penitential spirit, flourished until its activities were denounced by Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy.⁵

In El Paso's Lower Valley, the Church supported *cofradías* until the early twentieth century. The associations assisted members in times of financial and emotional crises, and also provided opportunities to establish bonds of social contact and friendship that extended beyond the family. Through their participation, members actively contributed to the preservation of the church and of traditional community values. Although there are few published records of these *cofradías*, interviews with former members demonstrate their role in community integration, as well as in preserving the history of these Lower Valley communities.

The decline of the *cofradías* in the 1950s coincided with the arrival of new immigrants – urban-based Mexicans who brought with them different Catholic beliefs and religious practices. By

the 1960s, great changes began taking place – the liturgical reforms of Vatican II eliminated the celebration of many traditional feast days and rituals; the city of El Paso was expanding its borders toward the Lower Valley; and increasing numbers of Mexican immigrants began to settle in the colonias. These rapid changes came within the lifetime of many of the local residents.

Devotion to Mary in the Catholic church began as early as the fourth century, and since the twelfth century, Marian feasts have venerated Mary's attributions or miracles. These feasts fall into three categories: (1) Feast of the Mother of God, commemorating Mary's maternal qualities, (2) Feast of Our Lady, honoring Mary as protectress of mankind, and (3) Feast of the Blessed Virgin, venerating Mary's personal holiness.⁶ A society would select one of these feasts to correspond to its religious focus. For example, the Day of the Immaculate Conception (December 8) became a feast day for the Catholic Church of England in the twelfth century.⁷ This celebration corresponds to rituals venerating Mary's purity and sanctity, typified by societies such as the Hijos de María, which was organized in the nineteenth century in the Lower Valley.

On November 5, 1881, Father Andres Echallier, a French Jesuit, assumed the responsibility for the parishes of San Elizario and Socorro. He had brought with him a new statue of Mary from France, and, as an amateur cabinetmaker, constructed three new altars for the church at Socorro. He decided to found a congregation of young, unmarried girls, devoted to the worship of Mary in order to "mold mothers and Christian families who were well instructed in religion and piety." As a French Jesuit, Father Echallier possibly drew inspiration from similar congregations that the Paulist Fathers had organized in France.⁸ On January 21, 1885, the first congregation of Hijos de María was formed in Socorro. The patron saints were Mary, the Immaculate Conception, and the virgin saints, Saint Rose of Lima and Saint Inez. When the first members, numbering over twenty, were presented to the church in Socorro, they were dressed in white, the attire of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Father Echallier had the support of many local residents, in particular, the Armendariz and Apodaca families. Ponciana Armendariz and Romualda Apodaca⁹ were very active in the founding of the Hijos de María. Of Romualda, Gerarde DeCorme in his *Epoca Moderna*, wrote:

*"Although afflicted with partial paralysis of the face, she was possessed of a clear intelligence; of special ability in housework, sewing and embroidery (then all done at home); of a compassionate and caring heart; and of an overall piety and zeal for all tasks. Beyond the work she gave to the Congregation, she cared for a long time for her paralyzed mother, raised an orphan, visited the sick, and wiped the tears of all those afflicted."*¹⁰

Others in the Apodaca family also became members, including the daughters of Zacarias Apodaca, cousins of Romualda. Later, five of the women became nuns, three with the Sisters of Charity and two entered the Congregation of the Incarnate Word. A sixth, Delfina Apodaca, never married and remained an active leader in the Hijas de María in Socorro for her entire life.

On January 21, 1910, on the Day of Saint Inez, the congregation celebrated its silver anniversary. Both Ponciana Armendariz and Romualda Apodaca were present, serving as secretary and president, respectively. A mass was held at 9:30 in the morning and a benediction at 6:00 in the evening.

Meanwhile, other congregations had been established in the neighboring communities; for instance, one at San Elizario in 1886. The one at Socorro became the oldest and largest in Texas.¹¹ When Delfina Chavez of Socorro was asked in 1991 how many girls from the valley communities were members of the Hijas de María, she replied: "Well, there were many.... We were all very close. I do not know, but we all cared for each other very much. The girls with me, and I with them. My comadre Isabel still lives.... And, Aurora, still lives...too."¹²

A girl usually joined the Hijas de María at about seven or eight years of age, after having received the first communion. At that time, she became a *postulanta*, and was identified by a green ribbon worn around her neck. About a year later, she was formally initiated into the society, receiving her blue ribbon and sash as an indication of membership.

Juan Fresquez remembers that "the rule was that all the girls should become Hijas de María.... They had to learn the catechism and everything necessary for the first communion. Once they had their first communion, then they could begin to be *postulantas*. Then, after completing one year as a *postulanta*, they could enter the Hijas de María with the congregations of



These photos were taken in the grotto behind Socorro Mission. The top photo (1920s) shows the newly-constructed shrine to Mary. The banner to the left is that of the Hijas de María. The girls are dressed in the attire of the Hijas. The photo below (1930s) includes girls and boys who have just received their first communion. Father DuPont is standing near the statue of Mary. (Photos courtesy Juan and Manuela Fresquez, Socorro, Texas)



girls of Mary. From that time on, they continued as Hijas de María until they married or went to a convent or did not want to continue."¹³

In Socorro, children usually received their first communion en masse, either on May 8, the second feast day of St. Michael (the unofficial patron saint of Socorro), or December 8, the Day of the Immaculate Conception. Traditionally, the priest gathered the girls and boys together for a photograph in the grotto behind the mission.

Members of the *cofradía* not only received instruction in religion and morality, but also in domestic chores. When asked what the girls learned, Simona Sanchez recalled that "Each month, a group was responsible for cleaning the altar because you can see that it is very large. They met, a group of eight or ten, to go to clean the altar and everything." They also learned "to confess and to take communion. There was the meeting and dues. I think that it was 25 cents a month. One paid dues in order to buy flowers for the altar."¹⁴

On the first Sunday of each month, the girls would dress as members of the Hijas de María to attend mass. They arrived at the church as a group to take communion, wearing their white dresses and medallions of the Virgin. In addition to the monthly rituals, there were special feast days. One was the Day of the Immaculate Conception when, according to Simona Sanchez, the girls "cleaned the church. The candelabras were bronze, and [the girls] filled them with wax. The altar was decorated with new flowers. I remember that the first time there was no light. They put flashlights beside the Virgin. We put in electricity... around 1928."¹⁵

Many of the girls also sang in the choir. For the celebrations of the Immaculate Conception, vespers were traditionally sung the night before the feast day. Since the girls all spoke Spanish as their first language, they learned the Latin words for the songs from the priest. Some members even remember the songs to this day. Delfina Chavez reminisced: "At night, there were vespers, [which] we sang. We had prepared them in Latin. I still remember many of them...but we sang them to the Virgin. The priest gave the benediction, and then we went outside because they set off fireworks and fired shots."¹⁶

The next morning there was a mass in honor of the Virgin.

After the mass, the congregation formed a procession around the cemetery outside the church, "where," explained Delfina Chavez very thoughtfully, "you see that there are portals [sometimes called *descansos*]. One of these was for Mary.... There was the one for the Hijas de María. The first [one] was for San José. We all dressed as Hijas de María. We all went in the procession - very pretty."¹⁷

The second most important religious celebration was held during the month of May, when the girls came to recite the rosary at church every day. The girls always came regularly because their mothers brought them. They brought fresh flowers, decorating the altar, maintaining it for the entire month. On the last day of May, the girls put on their white dresses and veils and wore their medallions. After mass, they formed a procession outside, and carried the statue of Mary around the Church and then returned it to the altar.

The third important feast day was Corpus Christi, which usually occurred in July or August. This holiday reinforced the solidarity of the lay organizations, honored the Holy Eucharist, and historically, was associated with Holy Thursday of Holy Week. Now, it falls on the Thursday following Holy Trinity, the first Sunday after Pentecost. During the Middle Ages, the celebration was associated with the mystery and passion of the Eucharist. A special mass was held to consecrate the Host to be used in the procession that followed. By the fifteenth century, most churches had specific vessels designed for Corpus Christi processions.¹⁸ In the New World, especially during the colonial period, Corpus Christi was a time for the church to parade its riches; in this way, priests hoped to inspire awe among the congregations, particularly in Native American communities.

In Socorro, Corpus Christi helped reinforce the solidarity of *cofradía*. As mentioned before, in the cemetery adjacent to the mission, there are four portals, or *descansos* [resting places], one situated at each corner. Each was decorated by one of the *cofradías*; represented were the Sagrado Corazón (Sacred Heart), San José (St. Joseph), and the Hijas de María. The fourth one was assigned to various *cofradías*. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, it was assigned to the Unión de San Luis, but by the early twentieth century, it was reserved for the *mayordomos*, male parishioners who organized and collected funds for celebrating the two feast days for St. Michael.¹⁹

After a special mass, the priest led a procession around the

cemetery. One group of parishioners carried the monstrance, the vessel which contained the Host consecrated for this day. The *cofradías* followed, each bearing its identifying banner. During the early twentieth century, there were five: (1) one for San Miguel, (2) one for the Apostolate of the Oration, (3) one for San José, (4) one for the Hijas de María, and (5) one for the *mayordomos*.

The priest brought the procession to each portal which had been decorated by the members of the *cofradía* it represented. A shrine to receive the Host had also been installed. Describing the portal, Juan Fresquez elaborated: "They decorated it so that it was beautiful, as one would decorate a house...; first of all, they put a "sky," a white cloth, in order to make the sky.... From there, on the sides, there were curtains of different styles.... It was the custom to put a saint or two on the wall. Finally, in the corner, there was an altar...; they put the monstrance there. Then they sang... the 'Salutaris' and other short prayers.... He [the priest] went to another portal; it was the same thing."²⁰

Slowly, the procession moved to the four corners of the cemetery, and then returned to the church where the monstrance was replaced on the altar. While making the rounds of the portals, parishioners viewed the decorations, noting which ones were the most carefully and beautifully adorned. In some ways it was like a competition. The people liked these celebrations "since there were few diversionary activities." It gave them a sense of pride "to be out there, decorating, participating."²¹

Girls continued as members of the Hijas de María until they were to be married. At that time, they could no longer remain in the congregation. A special ceremony was held in the grotto behind the church where the brides gave up their medallion as a symbol of leaving the society. It followed the wedding, and the bride would "deliver the medallion to the Virgin."

"We do not know why they held that ceremony," Juan Fresquez recounted. "Possibly to serve as an example to the girl. She had just married and was saying to the church and the Virgin, 'Well, I have served you all this time in this manner. Now, I am going to serve you in another manner.'"²²

Afterwards, the now-married woman went back to the grotto on her own, and collected the medallion from its place at Mary's feet. She would save the medallion, ribbon, and sash as a remembrance of her participation in the society. Perhaps she gave

it to her mother to keep, for as Manuela Fresquez confided, "I have, I believe, three or four, because all my daughters were Hijas de María."²³

Even after leaving the Hijas de María, a woman's devotion to Mary continued. In Socorro, some women would carry their new babies to the grotto, reciting prayers and presenting the infant to the Virgin Mary for her blessing. According to Juan Fresquez, it was perhaps "to maintain the Jewish custom...to take children to the temple. This, I believe, is where the custom of doing this came from. Now it is not done."²⁴

Upon leaving the congregation of the Hijas de María, most women joined other devotional associations, including the congregations of Sagrado Corazón, Carmelitas or Guadalupanas, among others. Some of these were only for women; others, such as the Sagrado Corazón, included men and women. Thus, throughout their lives, women actively participated in devotional associations organized around the veneration of a particular saint. As former members of the Hijas de María, they retained the right to be buried with the medallion which signified their devotion to the Virgin Mary. Some members never married, including Ponciana Armendariz and Romualda Apodaca, but continued to lead the congregation into the twentieth century. Delfina Apodaca, Romualda's niece, also never married, but remained active after the death of her aunt. Delfina's nephew, Ignacio Apodaca, recalled that at his aunt's death she was "dressed... as an Hija de María with a white shawl and white dress, and the...ribbon, and the blue sash, too. That's the way she wanted to be at the wake...at her house."²⁵

In 1936, the golden anniversary of the founding of the Hijas de María was celebrated with the assistance of Bishop Anthony J. Schuler, Father Juan Cordova, Father Leon DuPont, and relatives of the founders. Two of the original members, Doña Desideria Holguin de Apodaca and Doña Librada Cadena de Apodaca attended. It was estimated that there were at least 152 former members living, and of these, 125 were present. The group also included twelve nuns. The sons of former members "formed a long procession that stretched around three sides of the cemetery, the churches of San Elizario and Ysleta and four churches in El Paso having been invited to the celebration."²⁶ On January 21, 1960, the congregation commemorated its diamond jubilee;

Bishop Sidney M. Metzger celebrated a mass that evening. Father Gerarde DeCorme was recognized as the guest of honor. By the late 1970s the congregation had ceased to exist.

Over time, the Catholic Church came to de-emphasize many of the traditional feast days, and *cofradías* ceased to play their customary role within the valley communities. The combined impact of Church reforms and the influx of Mexican immigrants changed the nature of Socorro's church life. For example, services are no longer held in Latin, but in Spanish or English. In addition, choirs are less important, and much of the music is played on guitars, rather than on organs. The intent of the reforms was to encourage greater congregational participation and to make the services more meaningful to the parishioners. Ironically, for many of the descendents of the early settlers, these reforms meant that they were no longer able to carry out the traditions that had expressed their spiritual and community solidarity. For these families, La Purísima, as the Socorro church is known, represented the soul of the community.

Today, Socorro is one of the fastest growing parishes along the border. Recent arrivals have brought new practices, reflecting the traditions and beliefs of their own folk Catholicism. Changes in religious activities mirror a social and economic transformation of El Paso's Lower Valley. Many descendents of the original settlers associate the loss of their traditional celebrations with the Vatican II reforms and social changes. These traditions, the folk Catholicism of Socorro, including the *cofradías*, not only expressed religious beliefs, but were also an important mechanism for integrating and forging unity within the community. The *cofradías* did much to shape and structure the culture, preserving customs, reinforcing spiritual faith, and providing a strong sense of community assistance and sharing. This "community," as experienced by these people, endures only in the memories of the dwindling number of pioneer families. By electronically recording their memories, these "oral histories" help preserve the community as the people remember it, giving their culture, in some small measure, a permanence it never had before.

Looking into the future, one of the residents, Juan Fresquez, sadly commented: "The days of the original people are numbered... our children live in other places.... When we pass away, there is not going to be any other alternative but to sell [the land]. Only God knows what will happen then."

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2. Rick Hendricks, "Colonial History of Socorro and San Elizario," J. A. Peterson and D. O. Brown, eds., *El Valle Bajo: The Culture History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of El Paso* (El Paso: Archaeological Research, Inc., 1992) II, 2-44.
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8. Gerarde De Corne, "Epoca Moderna, 1821-1950," *Las Misiones del Valle del Paso, 1559-1960* (Unpublished document, n.d.) II, 3.
9. Ponciana Armendariz, daughter of Juan Armendariz (a merchant from Chihuahua) and Andrea Padilla (of Socorro) was born on December 29, 1862, and attended the Sisters of Loretto in Las Cruces. Never married, she died on May 4, 1914. Romualda Apodaca was born on April 7, 1847 and died on November 20, 1911, and left her property to the church in Socorro.
10. De Corne, 48.
11. Cleofas Calleros, *San Elizario Presidio-Mission*. (Unpublished document, n.d.)
12. Interview with Delfina Chavez, Socorro, Texas, November 2, 1991.
13. Interview with Juan Fresquez.
14. Interview with Simona Sanchez, Socorro, Texas, January 26, 1992.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Interview with Delfina Chavez.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, IX, 346-347.
19. Interview with Simona Sanchez.
20. Interview with Juan Fresquez.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Juan Fresquez.
23. Interview with Manuela Fresquez, October 19, 1991, Socorro, Tx.
24. Juan Fresquez.
25. Interviews with Ignacio Apodaca, Socorro, Tx, September 29, 1991, October 26, 1991, and September 18, 1993.
26. Juan Fresquez.

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A Movie Cowboy... Not!

by Patricia Atkins

The following essay won first place in the 1993 Historical Memories Contest sponsored annually by the El Paso County Historical Society. Open to seniors fifty-five years of age and up, it offers two cash prizes: \$200 for first place and \$100 for second place. Kathleen Gilliland, director of the 1994 Contest, has set December 16, 1994, as the deadline for submission of manuscripts, to be addressed to her at 7735 Rosedale, El Paso, Texas 79935. The essays may be handwritten or typewritten (double-spaced), not exceeding 1500 words. [Ed.]

I would spend twenty-five cents on Saturdays back in the '40s to see a double-feature Western, a cartoon, and the newsreel. The management gave me a candy bar to boot! My heroes were Roy Rogers, Tom Mix, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, and Gene Autry. Their sidekicks, Andy DeVine, Slim Pickens, and Gabby Hayes, were funny, and all the horses were smart. Later, in my teens, John Wayne became my cowboy idol. These movie stars were what I thought of as being real cowboys – until I met my late father-in-law. He had been a real working cowboy.

William "Bill" Vance Atkins was born on April 22, 1902, in Moody, Texas, near Waco. His parents and maternal grandparents had come from Georgia. They later settled southwest of Miles, a small community near San Angelo. Much of the land was being farmed, but there were still pastures which Bill roamed. He would often go with his dad to livestock sales in San Angelo. They would tie several mules to the wagon and head for Johnson's wagon yard on the corner of Chadbourne and Concho where his dad purchased mainly calves, and sometimes horses, mules, and hogs, if he thought he could make a dollar on them. But he never

bought sheep. These sales, called First Mondays, were the type where you traded inside a lot. It was not an auction. If you saw a fellow with a horse that suited you, you traded right there. The same with calves.

Bill's dad helped build a schoolhouse for the local children, and Bill went there for seven years; then for two years he rode horseback to school in Miles. Considering himself "schooled" and grown-up, and because his dad got sick, he went to work to help out. He was fifteen. He found a job on a ranch in Coke County working as a "chore boy." His chores included getting the horses up to the lot to be fed and watered, feeding the chickens, feeding and watering the hogs, and doing anything else the seven or eight cowboys on the ranch thought beneath them. They worked with the cattle, riding their horses over numbers of sections of land - a lot of territory. That summer was a wet one, and it brought on an outbreak of screw-worm. The cowboys had to find the cattle and doctor them right where they were; it was too far to take them back to the house. One cowboy would rope the hind legs, one the head, and the horses would hold the ropes tight while the medicine was being administered.

All the hands stayed in the bunkhouse and did their own cooking, and Bill became a very good cook. Being around the cowboys and watching them at work, Bill decided he wanted to be a cowboy. About this time, the United States entered World War I, and the army had need of a large cavalry. Bill went to work for a rancher who bought wild horses and assigned Bill and four other cowboys to "knock the edge" off of them so "soldier boys," as Bill called them, could ride the horses. Breaking horses became his full-time job, and he liked the work because he liked horses. He often said, "If you don't, the horse knows it. I got along with them, but I got busted once in a while." To break the really "ornery" horses, the cowboys tied them to a log for a few weeks and let them drag it around until they settled down.

When Bill was in his early twenties, most of the cattle being raised were Long Durhams, referring to the length of their horns, and some white-faced Herefords; there were no black Angus. The range cattle were longer-legged than today's cattle, and Bill recalled how he had to ride like everything in order to catch one of them. And, if there was brush, it really became a job to find them. They would actually hide from the cowboys!

Bill related a story of getting fired over this very fact. It was

on Red Creek – he had let a cow get away from him and she hid. He looked everywhere and finally had to admit to the foreman that he had lost her. The man fired him and told him to go into town and pick up his wages. When the owner asked him why he had been fired, Bill shamefacedly answered, "I let a cow get away from me." The owner burst out laughing and told him, "You go back and ask that foreman if he never let one get away, and see what he says. You're not fired!"

After World War I, the military had little use for horses, the rancher had no more work, and Bill had to go looking for a job. Not finding one, he and a friend took their horses and two pack mules, and went on a month's vacation, touring

Texas on horseback. They rode west from San Angelo all the way to El Paso, killing game for food and sleeping under the stars. When they reached the Rio Grande, they followed it to the Gulf of Mexico. By the time they got back home, they were out "no cash money" and had had a fine trip. The following year, Bill and another friend took off an entire year and rode horseback through the Texas Panhandle, New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Arkansas before returning to San Angelo. Being single, Bill could do this with no qualms. He said it was a good way to pass the time when jobs were scarce. During those years, he learned that cowboys lead a lonesome life, being away from home for a year or so. He said he didn't have time to get married and there were no



*Bill Atkins, at age 21, standing on Mt. Margaret, Northeast of San Angelo.
(Photo courtesy Pat Atkins)*

girls on the ranches. He recalled that "you never saw a girl unless you came to town, and even then you had to be early because women didn't go on the streets after five o'clock." He was thirty-five years old before he got married, and was forty when he became a father.

When the stock market crashed, many well-to-do ranchers went broke. Mortgages were called in and the seemingly wealthy people lost cars, land, and cattle. One banker told Bill that the bank would gladly GIVE him cattle if he had a place to run them, but Bill had no money either to buy or lease any land.

In the 1930's when President Roosevelt's New Deal came to the Southwest, hogs and cattle were destroyed and millions of acres of cotton were plowed under. The idea was to cut over-production and raise prices. Bill remembered that the rancher he worked for would dig big trenches, drive the cattle into them, and then shoot them. Bill was horrified by this practice and refused to have any part of it. Bill was the type who didn't even believe in killing a spider.

There being no feed (during the 1930s there was a terrible drought), the rancher could only survive by leasing some of his land to tenant farmers who would raise oats and maize and pay their rent in feed. In this way, the rancher filled his barn, fed his bull calves, and sent them to market. He would shoot the heifers. The ranchers who did not have farming operations along with the cattle ran out of feed.

After World War II, Bill took his wife and son and moved to Christoval, south of San Angelo. He found work on a place near the South Concho River, where they lived for two or three years. Bill's job was to irrigate the crops. He was allowed to raise and sell some watermelons and beans for his own use. He and his wife also raised chickens and planted a garden. Irrigating was hard work because the pump had to be kept running all the time. His wife and three-year old son would set up camp (a cot, food, and utensils) at the pump so that she could grease the belt to keep the pump going. Meanwhile, Bill would be out in the fields moving the irrigation pipes from row to row. Sometimes he was up until one or two o'clock in the morning.

During this time he also traded livestock. Sale days then were on Wednesdays and Fridays in San Angelo. Bill remembered that he could make some money buying hogs, cattle, and sheep "out of the ring." This meant that he would stop in the park-

ing lot of the sale barn. If there was a rancher who was in a hurry and didn't want to stick around all day, Bill would offer to buy his livestock. That way the rancher could head on back home, and then Bill would go inside, run the stock through the sale ring and make two or three dollars above what he'd paid. This practice of buying and selling is not allowed anymore. Bill also remembered that he once bought a dog in this way. A man was walking the dog outside and asked Bill if he would be interested in buying it. Bill told him he didn't know what he would do with a dog. But the man persisted, pointing out that the dog was as good a coon dog as he'd ever find. And, furthermore, he'd only take \$5.00 for it. Bill gave in and bought the dog. After lunch his boss asked him where he got the dog. Bill told him that it was half his. The boss said he didn't know what they'd do with it. So, Bill had a dog on his hands nobody wanted. A few hours later, an "ole boy" came along and asked what he wanted for the dog. Bill replied, "Ten dollars." "I'll take it," said the man. Bill told his boss how he had turned a 100% profit. Bill chuckled, "Those were the sale days."

Bill's last job on a ranch was at Millersview, and the rancher was running all Black Angus – quite a change from the earlier Durham and Hereford days. Bill's job was to feed the cattle during the winter. He had only one helper and there were almost four hundred head of cattle. After leaving this job, Bill farmed on shares and worked buying and selling eggs and chickens. That's when he became ill and had to quit work. After spending twenty-eight years as a cowboy, he never worked on a ranch again, but he vowed never to live inside any city limits, and he never had to.

My idea of the "rootin-tootin" cowboy featured in the "shoot-'em up" movies of the 1940s was a gunslingin', hard-ridin', and singin' man. He always fought the bad guys, got the girl, and rode happily off into the sunset. Movie cowboys, the "reel" cowboys, never seemed to have a regular job, a steady income, a house, or a family. You never thought about whether they had a family, or even parents. The movies were made to be romantic, and led me to want to grow up to be a cowgirl or a rich rancher's daughter. But best of all, the rich rancher's wife.

From Bill I learned that a real cowboy's life was lonely. Rarely, as in the movies, did Bill enjoy the companionship of other cowboys. Usually he was alone, out riding the fence look-

ing for breaks or hunting strays. Sure there were some Saturdays when he might go to the bunkhouse and maybe to town. But the “nice” girls were all at home with their families. I also learned from Bill that the real cowboy didn’t carry a six-shooter, but a rifle on his saddle to shoot snakes or cougars. He wore chaps to protect his legs from the thorns of the prickly pear, and wore high-top boots with high heels – the high tops for protection against the rattlers and the high heels to fit better into the stirrups. And he usually was NOT the rich rancher. Like J. Frank Dobie said: “I never recollect the ranch as being what is called romantic.”

Bill’s memories have made our lives richer. We will pass them on to his great-grandchildren and hopefully enrich their lives as well. Bill was a part of the westward movement at the turn of the century, and a vital part of a lifestyle that is slowly disappearing. He may not have been a “reel” cowboy, but he certainly was a “real” one.

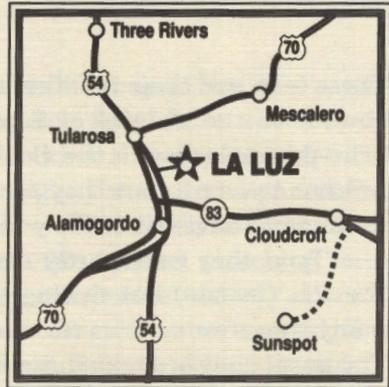
PATRICIA ATKINS resides in Christoval, Texas, south of San Angelo. She has written for *REMINISCE* magazine and for the *TOENAIL TRIBUNE*, Christoval’s local newspaper.

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LA LUZ, once known as the “Adobe Village,” was the site of a thriving pottery industry from 1930-1950. Begun by Roland Hazard of Providence, Rhode Island, the La Luz Clay Products Company used clays from nearby La Luz Canyon to produce over 100 varieties of decorative clay objects such as six-foot strawberry jars, ollas, bean pots, bird baths, and roof and floor tiles. It was said that some of the clays surpassed the terra cotta clays of southern Europe, displaying “soft peachy-reds and tans.” Although the operation was abandoned in the 1950s, collectors of clay pieces still value them highly. The sample of pottery shown at left was taken from an undated brochure distributed by the company.



The Spirit of La Luz

New Mexico's City of Light

by David Townsend

The following article is reprinted from You Take the Sundials and Give Me the Sun, a collection of essays by David Townsend dealing with the history of the Alamogordo, New Mexico, area and published by the Alamogordo Daily News in 1984. The article appears here with the permission of the publisher and the author. [Ed.]

Early in any history of the Tularosa Basin, a word needs to be said about spirit. The people who came to this harsh and demanding land – and who stayed – had a quality, a courage, a persistence that transcended the ordinary. For want of a better word, I call that quality “spirit.” A look at La Luz might illustrate the point.

No one knows beyond doubt when La Luz was founded. There may have been temporary settlements throughout the Basin, some as early as the 1700s. For all practical purposes, however, the permanent settlement dates from around 1860, roughly the same period as the founding of Tularosa. It is logical to assume that the first settlers of the two villages came from the same areas for generally the same reasons. Juan J. Gutierrez, in his *The La Luz I Remember*, lists the original settlers as his grandfather, José Manuel Gutierrez, who was the leader, accompanied by the Gallegos brothers Seferino, Luciano, and Felipe; Lorenzo Ulivarri; José Moya; Bentura Jiron; Bartolome Pino; the Baca brothers, Francisco, Antonio and Martin; and Felix Trujillo.

These men and their families were from small villages on the Rio Grande in the vicinity of Socorro. Mr. Gutierrez says of them: "The descendants of...the Conquistadors were not seeking magnificent treasure, but they carried with them the same spirit of daring and adventure. They longed for a new and better life."

True, they were partly motivated by the sporadic flooding of the Rio Grande, but during the migration they faced dangers many times worse than flood: a hostile land and hostile Indians. The spirit that brought these first settlers I like to call the spirit of light. The most common explanation given for the naming of La Luz demonstrates this spirit. The settlers reached the vicinity of the Tularosa swamps after many days of travel, danger, and hardship. The place was not right for them. Should they go farther, get nearer to the mountains? The women and children, under protection of a few men, stayed in camp while the other men shoved on a bit farther. They found the place they had hoped for, and a large signal fire was built. When the women saw it, they said, "La Luz! Allá está La Luz! Está bien!" The spirit of the light

had led these brave people to the place.

They found the place...and a large signal fire was built. When the women saw it, they said, "La Luz! Allá está La Luz! Está bien!" The spirit of the light had led these brave people to the place.

What kept them at the place they had found? I call it the spirit of *La Muralla*. Shortly after establishing their central settlement, the families spread out through La Luz Canyon, Fresno Canyon, and Labrocita Canyon to build

homes and develop their assigned land for farming. But they remained in riding distance of *La Muralla*. The Apaches were ready to dispute ownership of the land involved. Perhaps that is not quite correct since, in the Indian view, no one can own the land. Paul Blazer, in an unpublished manuscript on the Mescaleros in the Blazer files of the Rio Grande Archives, says the settlers in early Tularosa and La Luz were considered by the Indians to be a boon – a new element in the economy – to be raided as one would raid a storehouse. Regardless of the niceties of language, the settlers at La Luz were in danger from Indian depredation.

The answer was *La Muralla* – the Rampart – a protected area in the heart of La Luz. It was literally a fort built of adobe. It was

a large area covering the square now occupied by *El Presidio Parque*. One side was bounded by the formidable adobe house built by José Manuel Gutierrez, the other three by an adobe wall eighteen inches thick and five feet high. The wall was punctuated by rifle ports located eighteen inches above the ground so that a person in prone position could pour fire into an attacking force. *La Muralla* was so effective that it was not attacked, although individual farmers and families were. Deaths were recorded, livestock stolen, danger was ever present. But the people stayed.

There is a message to be read in places like La Luz. The first dwellings may have been dug-outs, but they were soon replaced by structures of real solidity, structures that said, "We shall not be moved." These structures, as if to emphasize the point, were usually protected by a *La Muralla* – or, as in Lincoln, by a *Torreón* – where the point could be stated bluntly: "We will fight if you try to move us." This is the spirit of community. The spirit of cooperation in controlling water, in clearing the land – in staying in spite of the odds.

But does such spirit comport well with the modern world? The answer is, of course, yes and no. As law and order come, much is gained but something is lost. The tendency grows to let Government – or Society – do it. The spirit of community effort



The former home of Dave Sutherland, host to Judge Albert Fountain and son on the night before they rode off toward the White Sands never to be seen again. (Photo by Emily K. Lovell, courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Neg. No. 111709)

is often lost in the anonymity of bureaucracy. Not so in La Luz – as the spirit of *El Presidio Parque* attests, a spirit ignited by the individual initiative of civic leader Katie Garcia.

By the latter 1890s, La Luz had settled into its quiet quaintness. Its atmosphere might have been disturbed by a visit now and then from the likes of Billy the Kid, or Colonel Fountain on his last fateful journey, or a group of hard-nose Texicans on the prod, but generally things were quiet. By 1898 most of La Luz was owned by an enterprising Texan named Perry Kearney. In a plat of the town that he had filed with the Doña Ana County Clerk, the central part of the town – what had been the area enclosed by *La Muralla* – was designated as a “plaza.”

Through the years the plaza languished. It was cleaned up periodically but nothing significant changed its face until the early 1930s when Civilian Conservation Corps efforts turned the plaza into a rock garden. Unhappily, the rock garden/plaza went unmaintained, and three decades of weeds and snakes and kids thrived in it. In 1963, Katie Garcia and several others decided that the weeds and snakes had to go. They commenced an effort that would take ten years and would make a park worthy of the spirit of the original settlers of the village.

It was not easy. Since money was scarce or non-existent, Mrs. Garcia rallied the troops. Labor, much of it by children, was donated to clear the land. Money to pay for the accouterments of the park was raised by bake sales, by enchilada dinners, by donation. The perseverance of Katie Garcia and those who worked with her was rewarded when the park was crowned with a bandstand. The Otero County Commission gave five hundred dollars to help with the bandstand project, which was completed with volunteer labor. Where once *La Muralla* stood tribute to a determined people, now stands a handsome bandstand tribute to their equally determined descendants who in Juan José Gutierrez’s words (although written in a different context) – “helped to keep...undimmed ‘La Luz’ – the light.”

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A Muster of the Presidio of San Elizario in 1819

Presented and Introduced by Rick Hendricks

Spanish military authorities relocated the presidio of San Elizario in February, 1789, to Los Tiburcios on the site of the present town of San Elizario, Texas.¹ No muster of the original presidial company has yet surfaced. The earliest documents relating to the presidio refer only to the officers by name.² What is known of the first enlisted men to serve in San Elizario and their families is learned principally from other documentary sources, such as enlistment papers and service records, and from family histories. Complete presidial musters for some years in the nineteenth century, however, survive in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City and provide an interesting glimpse of an evolving frontier institution.

The document presented here is from the summer of 1819, thirty years after the founding of the presidio of San Elizario and a mere two years before Mexican independence. At that time, the full complement of the presidial company was ninety-two: one captain, one lieutenant, one first alferez, one second alferez (vacant), one chaplain, one armorer, three sergeants, one drummer (vacant), six corporals, six riflemen, and seventy soldiers.³ In addition, there were thirty disabled former soldiers attached to the presidio. Curiously, most of the able-bodied soldiers were away from the presidio when their commandant, Isidro Rey, prepared the muster roll. Juan de Olguín, the company alferez, was on campaign with thirteen other soldiers. The importance of horses to a

mounted company can be seen from the fact that a twenty-man detachment was guarding the herd. Finally, more than a third of the presidial troops were serving upriver in New Mexico.

In 1821, Mexico secured its independence from Spain. José Antonio de Arce was named captain of the presidio. With the backing of the government of nearby El Paso del Norte, Arce successfully argued for retaining the presidio as a bulwark against raiding Apaches.⁴ The presidial troops had loyally served the Spanish crown, but most of their families had been established on the frontier for generations.⁵ Presumably, they had little difficulty changing allegiances and continuing their military careers under the Mexican flag.

Many of the names on the muster from one hundred seventy-five years ago will be familiar to people today who consult the local telephone book, trace their roots to San Elizario, or contemplate its church's stained-glass windows. With the presidio came Escageda, Olgúin, Montes, Ronquillo, and Sambrano men. They and their wives, among others, formed the basis of modern San Elizario.

Presidio of San Elizario⁶

August 1, 1819

List of the individuals who passed muster passed before me, the captain of the presidial company of Principe, don Isidro Rey, current commandant of the presidio of San Elizario by order of the commandant general.

Cavalry

Lieutenant Colonel

Capt. don Pedro Ruiz de Larramendi, in Durango

Lieutenant

Don Alejo García Conde, in Durango

Alférez

Don Juan de Olgúin, on campaign

2nd Lieutenant

Vacant

Chaplain

Fray Tomás del Pino

Armorer

José Hernández, in Durango

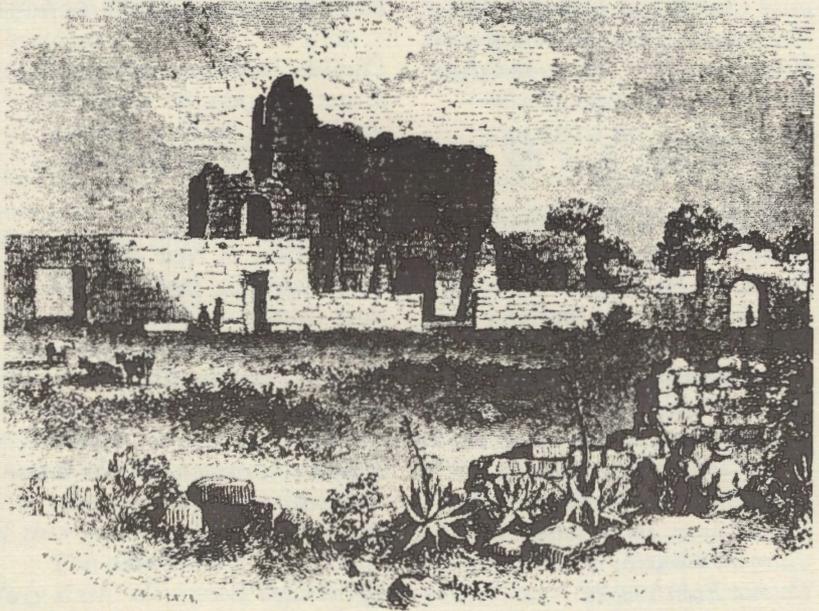
Sergeants

Albino Sambrano, in New Mexico

*José Gómez
Juan Padilla*

Drummer

Vacant



Presidio of San Elizario as sketched by John R. Bartlett in 1850.

Corporals

Juan Ortega, in Chihuahua
José Olivárez
Vicente Horcasitas, with the
horse herd
Juan Cásares, in New Mexico
José Valdez, with the horse herd
Pedro Albidrez, on assignment

Riflemen

José Escageda, on campaign
José Ronquillo, in New Mexico
Felipe Morales, on guard duty
Rafael González, in New Mexico
Mariano Ronquillo, with the
horse herd
Máximo López, with the horse
herd

Cadet

Don Ignacio Rodríguez y Ríos,
in Durango

Soldiers

Cleto Ronquillo, in New Mexico
Agatón Gutiérrez, with the horse
herd
Gregorio Padilla, in New Mexico
Francisco Hidalgo, in New Mexico
Francisco Ortiz, on guard duty
Mariano Cisneros, with the horse
herd
Francisco Cásares, on guard duty
Tiburcio Varela, in New Mexico
Mauricio Sambrano, ill in Chi-
huahua
Victoriano Hidalgo, on assign-
ment
Carlos Cásares, on campaign
Faustino López, with the horse
herd
Cesario Sánchez, with the horse
herd
José Montiel, with the horse herd
Joaquín Muñoz, in New Mexico
José Valencia, with the horse herd

José Chávez, on guard duty
Valentín Valencia, in New Mexico
Francisco Ortiz, on guard duty
José Berru, in New Mexico
Juan Ortega, on campaign
Pedro Medina, with the horse herd
José Gándara, on assignment
Canuto Albidrez, on assignment
Francisco Medina, on campaign
Ramón Luján, with the horse herd
José Apodaca
Juan Ortega, on campaign
Simón González, in New Mexico
José Olivárez, on campaign
José Soto, in New Mexico
José Rentería, in New Mexico
Félix López, imprisoned
Juan Provencio, on campaign
Cosme Ramírez, in New Mexico
Sabino Montes, in New Mexico
Miguel Durán, in New Mexico
Juan Apodaca, with the horse herd
Juan Leyba, on campaign
Francisco Vargas, in New Mexico
Guadalupe Albidrez, on campaign
Vicente Granillo, with the horse herd
Juan Tafoya, on campaign
Santos Anchondo, serving as mounted orderly
José Peña, with the horse herd
Abán Maese, with the horse herd
Toribio Lara, in New Mexico
Martín Sambrano, in New Mexico
José Alvarado, with the horse herd
Albino Sambrano, in New Mexico
Manuel Cisneros, in New Mexico
Juan Lucero, in New Mexico
José Tafoya, in New Mexico
José Olgutn, in New Mexico
José Ruiz, in New Mexico
José Albidrez, on campaign

Plácido Provencio, with the horse herd
Casildo Luján, on campaign
Marcila Luján, on campaign
José Luján, in New Mexico
José Mísquez, on assignment
Nicanor Rentería, in New Mexico
Juan Ruiz, in New Mexico
José Valencia, in New Mexico
José Gómez, in New Mexico
Juan Padilla, in New Mexico
Agatón Trujillo, ill
Leandro Maese, with the horse herd
José Sambrano, with the horse herd

Disabled

Sgt. Diego Ronquillo
Corp. Francisco Gándara
Corp. Damián Montes
Corp. Manuel Albidrez
Corp. José Muñoz
Corp. Vicente López
Corp. Mariano Gutiérrez
Corp. José Pérez
Corp. Bernardo Ruiz
Juan Bustillos
Juan Márquez, in Socorro
Joaquín Tafoya
Julián García, in El Paso
Antonio Pérez
Pedro Sambrano
Pedro Fuentes
Rafael Olgutn
Mariano Montiel
Javier Alvarado
Cosme Luján
Manuel Corona
José Benavídez
Silverio Sánchez, in El Paso
Agustín Rodríguez
Pedro Carpio
Ramón Montes
Félix Pasos, in Ysleta

Agustín Armendariz, in *El Paso* Ramón Vargas, in *El Paso*
 Cristóbal Pérez Francisco Ruiz, in *El Paso*
 Mariano Olgúin José Beltrán
 Vicente Ortiz

This agrees with the muster passed before me, the captain, of the officers, chaplain, sergeants, and troops contained in the foregoing document, to which I attest with the father chaplain because there are no officials present.

Isidro Rey [rubric] Fray Tomas del Pino [rubric]

José Beltrán was an active duty soldier until the last day of June and became disabled as of July first, attached to this company. He receives 90 reales each month by virtue of a cédula issued by the Most Excellent Lord Commandant General, Brig. don Alejo García Conde, dated May fifth of the present year, delivered by the interim Asst. Inspector Lt. colonel don Alberto Máynez on June first of this year. Beltrán is listed as disabled.

The drummer of this company, Victoriano Téllez, deserted on July sixth. He had filled the position until the fifth of that month.

Isidro Rey [rubric]

DR. RICK HENDRICKS is research assistant professor of history at the University of New Mexico and an editor of The Vargas Project. A native North Carolinian, he received his B. A. from that state's university at Chapel Hill, and his Ph. D. in 1985 from the University of New Mexico in Ibero-American Studies.

NOTES

1. Spelled San Elceario in Spanish, the anglicized version, San Elizario, is employed throughout this article. W.H. Timmons, "The Presidio of San Elizario, 1789-1851," *Password* 33:3 (Fall, 1988) 107.
2. Documents from the Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Spain, detail the initial years of the presidio of San Elizario at Los Tiburcios. For example see Antonio Cordero, *Extract of an inspection*, San Elizario, 13 May 1790, AGS, *Guerra Moderna* 7047:52. The author and Dr. W.H. Timmons are nearing completion a history of the presidio of San Elizario and the surrounding community from the Spanish through the Mexican periods.
3. There were seventy-three soldiers stationed at the original, downriver site of the presidio of San Elizario in 1783. Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1975) 92.
4. Timmons, "Presidio of San Elizario," 110.
5. Enlistment papers for the presidio of San Elizario demonstrate that most of the recruits were from communities in the modern Mexican state of Chihuahua. See for example AGS, *Guerra Moderna* 7047:168-74.
6. Isidro Rey, Muster of the presidio of San Elizario, Aug. 1, 1819, Cárceles y presidios.
7. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico.

PORTRAITS

by James J. Metcalfe

HISTORIAN

HE WRITES about the world at large . . . Some kingdom and its crown . . . A war that changed the map, or just . . . The story of his town . . . He gathers facts and rumors and . . . He sifts them one by one . . . And talks to people everywhere . . . To get his writing done . . . A document, a cornerstone . . . The marker on a grave . . . The Bible or some newsprint old . . . That someone thought to save . . . His words may not be perfect and . . . He may not want to swear . . . That it was just exactly as . . . He has recorded there . . . But he preserves the memories . . . Of years and years gone by . . . And as his pages take their place . . . The past will never die.

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Remembering My Dad

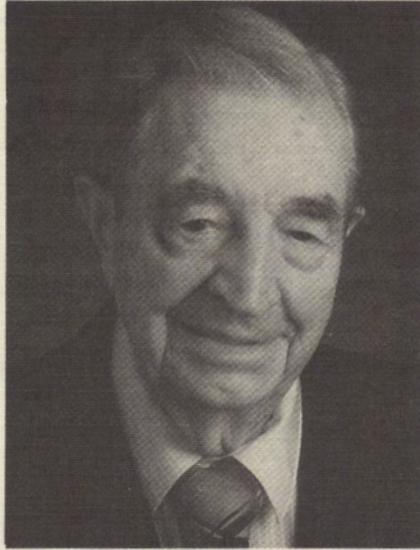
Conrey Bryson, 1905–1994

by Maurice C. Bryson

My father was so much a part of El Paso, and El Paso so much a part of him, that it seems he should always have been here. However, the facts are that Melvin Conrey Bryson was born in Cleveland, Utah, on October 13, 1905, to Samuel Conrey Bryson and Clara Elizabeth Davis Bryson and that he grew up in a third-generation Utah family, between the coal fields of eastern Utah and the cotton fields of “little Dixie” around St. George. As part of a brief career with an itinerant acting troupe, he came to El Paso in 1929. “I never intended to settle here,” he was to say later, “but that’s where the company ran out of money.” Quickly coming to love the area and the city, he was to spend the next sixty-five years writing and speaking of that love.

A job with Western Union made ends meet during the tough years of the early 1930s. In 1935, the same year he married Pearl Melvina Hale (Pat), an offer from KTSM owner Karl Wyler led to the 29-year radio and television career that made my dad an El Paso institution. Initially a copywriter, he became a newscaster during World War II when, slightly too old for military service, he found himself with one of the few male voices at the station – in those days, a prerequisite for newscasting. His nightly news was instantly popular, worldwide in coverage but always with a special focus on the El Paso Southwest. He never believed that he had a natural broadcaster’s voice, but it was a voice that inspired confidence and somehow conveyed the deep honesty that characterized the man. When television came to El Paso in 1950, Dad was a natural selection for KTSM-TV’s 10:00 news. Although

known to the city for fifteen years as a TV newscaster (the term "anchorman," which he disliked, came into vogue only later), he still enjoyed the radio medium. His favorite activity was his special-events work for KTSM radio, including two daily five-minute specials of his own creation: "A Word to the Wise," which showed his love of the English language through his interesting stories of the origins of some of its words; and "Emphasis El Paso," a series of vignettes about the history, geography, and people of the Southwest.



Conrey Bryson

(Photo courtesy Maurice Bryson)

Dad was an avid student of politics and a Democratic party activist. His liberal politics were more consistent with his conservative Mormon religion than some might imagine. Current political scholars are sometimes surprised to learn that Mormon Utah was once a Democratic stronghold, a legacy of Democratic tolerance for religious dissent in the late 1800s. Dad's own sense of religious, racial, and political justice was profound. On radio and television he was vocal – often unpopularity so – in opposing the anti-Communist excesses of the McCarthy era. His political avocation became a career following his 1964 support for the Congressional campaign of moderate Democrat Richard C. White. He was visibly thrilled after the election when Congressman-elect White asked him to go to Washington as a staff assistant and press secretary.

Despite a busy work schedule, as well as civic and church-related activities, Dad was never short of time for his family. I have warm and vivid memories of his reading to me in the evening, not just from children's books but from anything in the house that might pique a young boy's curiosity, and of his teaching me to spell by pecking out the letters on an ancient Underwood. Family trips to Carlsbad Caverns, afternoon hikes up Mount Franklin, and shopping trips to Juárez let him share with my mother, my sister, and me his fascination with the El Paso Southwest.

The seven-year stay in Washington, with no children left at home, allowed my parents to explore their own interests more thoroughly. Somehow during his radio-TV years, Dad had found time to earn B.A. and M.A. degrees in history at Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso), making life in Washington a special opportunity. He delighted in the discovery that so much of early American history was now within a day's drive. He and my mother tried to spend each major holiday at an appropriate historical site: Washington's Birthday at Mount Vernon or Washington's Birthplace; Independence Day at Monticello or Philadelphia's Independence Hall; Memorial Day at Gettysburg or another battlefield. His work, though, remained focused on his real home, El Paso. He was especially proud of his part in clarifying a long-standing time-zone dispute.* Although El Paso had always observed Mountain Time (and is, in fact, west of the nominal center of the Mountain zone), all of Texas was legally on Central time, and in 1968 the Department of Commerce was threatening to enforce the law. This would have sent El Paso children to school long before sunrise. Dad's research led to legislation sponsored by Congressman White to codify the historical practice.

Dad's return to El Paso in 1972 was saddened by my mother's death. Lonely but never bored, he began a twenty-year writing career with *The Land Where We Live*, a monograph for the "1973 Anniversario del Paso" celebration. Among his other publications are the scholarly *Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon and the White Primary*, a biography of the black El Paso physician whose 1924 and 1932 lawsuits ended racial discrimination in primary elections; the delightful *Down Went McGinty*, a history of El Paso in the 1890s that won the 1977 C. L. Sonnichsen Publications Award from Texas Western Press and the El Paso County Historical Society; the religious *Winter Quarters*, a history of the Nebraska community settled by the Mormon pioneers during their trek to

* For a comprehensive treatment of the legal and bureaucratic confusion regarding time zones that existed for many decades in the United States, and in particular in El Paso, the reader is referred to Conrey Bryson's "timely" article "What Time Is It in El Paso?" published in *Password*, XII, 2, (Summer, 1967). The article delineates the roles that the railroads, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the United States Congress, the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, and, most importantly, Congressman Richard C. White, played in establishing once and for all, Mountain Standard Time as the "official" time in El Paso. [Ed.]

Utah in 1846-48; and the touching *To Pat*, a privately published tribute to my mother. At his death, Dad was at work on a biography of Peter Kern, the eccentric jeweler and developer who founded Kern Place in El Paso. Dad's literary and artistic interests were reflected by lifelong friendships with his mentor and literary idol C. L. Sonnichsen, artists Tom Lea and José Cisneros, writer Francis Fugate, and publisher Carl Hertzog. In 1990, Dad was inducted into the *El Paso Herald-Post* Writers Hall of Fame, joining the company of many other distinguished "Authors of El Paso."

Dad remarried in 1974. With his new wife Fannie (Fay) Gardner Maxwell, he visited my sister Beth and her husband, Earl Hurst, while they lived in England and in Australia, and he marveled at how the boy who once rode across Utah in a covered wagon could now traverse the Pacific in a 747. Following Fay's death in 1992, he married Marzilla Anderson on June 11, 1993.

Dad expressed wonder at his long life, but never wearied of it. Several hospitalizations and minor strokes were followed by a massive stroke after an afternoon walk through Kern Place; he died that evening, May 25, 1994. His strong Mormon faith had well prepared him for death, as illustrated by a poem written ten years earlier for a church publication, and reprinted for his funeral program. It reads in part -

*Send a mourning dove to mourn for me,
And let all the people smile.
Let the mocking bird on the cypress tree
Keep singing all the while.*

*Let the rosy finch, from the chapel eaves,
Continue his merry tune
'Til the whip-poor-will from a desert shrub
Has welcomed the rising moon.*

*With these I have lived, and these I have loved
Through the long and happy years;
Now bid me farewell with a merry note
And a few soft, loving tears.*

MAURICE BRYSON, native El Pasoan, holds the B.A. from Harvard University and the M.S. and Ph.D. from Colorado State University where he taught statistics. He is presently employed by the Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico where he and his wife, Joan, reside.



Downtown El Paso

by Conrey Bryson

The author submitted the following essay to the Society's 1993 Historical Memories Contest in which it was awarded Second Place. [Ed.]

The wind was blowing full blast when I arrived in El Paso in March, 1929; I was told that only in March would I find such objectionable weather! It didn't matter much in my case – I wasn't planning on staying very long anyway. I had come to El Paso as a wandering actor, and it just happened to be the end of the line – the place where our troupe went broke and disbanded.

Aside from the wind, the BIG news was the Escobar Revolution across the border in Juárez, Mexico. Although it turned out to be short-lived, it lasted long enough to get me a job with Western Union. I had had five years experience with the company in Salt Lake City, and, realizing that a revolution along the border meant a lot of business, I walked into their offices located in the First National Bank Building on Oregon Street, explained my qualifications to O. W. Reagan, the delivery manager, and asked if they could use me. I never got a job so easily in my life. The following year I became a branch manager, and stayed with the company for seven years.

During this time I got the idea that El Paso was a "downtown" sort-of-place. Although Western Union had six branches scattered about town, the most distant one was only seventeen blocks east

on Texas Street. The main office downtown occupied three floors of the bank building. The operating department, filled with noisy teletype machines and a few Morse code operators, occupied the top floor. On the floor below were the bookkeeping department and other offices. The main floor contained the manager's offices and the busy delivery department from which countless young men and boys on bicycles, motorcycles, and on foot, carried messages to all parts of town.

One of my early residences was the YMCA, then located downtown at Oregon and Missouri Streets. Going from the "Y" to my work every day took me through the centerpiece of downtown El Paso - San Jacinto Plaza. I could not resist stopping for a while, leaning on the rail of the Alligator Pool to watch the residents "not move." The alligators had so thoroughly adapted to the city's leisurely way of life that their appearance belied their "vicious" reputation, except at feeding time.

People always wondered how the alligators got to the desert town of El Paso. According to one story, someone in Louisiana sent some baby alligators in a cigar box to J. Fisher Satterthwaite (a real estate developer who was given the responsibility to improve San Jacinto Plaza). For a time, they were nurtured in a barrel at the old Vault Saloon, but were finally deposited in the newly-built pool in the Plaza. Sometime later, Milton Warner, founder of a downtown drugstore by the same name, also mysteriously received a baby alligator which he promptly deposited in the pool one dark night.

Alligator stories abounded as the years passed, and the poor creatures were often abused by pranksters. Eventually, in one of its civic improvement projects, the city council eliminated the alligator pool. Somehow the decision seemed to be the turning point in El Paso's affection for downtown.

In 1929, El Paso's population was about 118,000 - still small enough that when people talked about the business district, they could only mean "downtown." Two large and competitive department stores were located there - the Popular Dry Goods Company at San Antonio and Mesa Streets and The White House, domiciled in a large, white building next to the Mills Building. For years, shoppers made special trips "downtown" just to compare the window displays of the two stores.

El Paso had a long-lasting love affair with the railroads. Eager to welcome them to the fledgling town in 1881, the citizens gave



Aerial view of downtown El Paso in the 1920s. (The photo above and the one on page 145 courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)

them a right-of-way bordering the northern village limits – and named it Main Street. As the town expanded, the street became the city’s “main” traffic problem! Trains blocked automobiles at the crossing for as long as thirty minutes at a time. In 1950, the tracks were moved a half-block north and depressed, ending years of traffic jams. No longer was “I was stopped by a train” a valid excuse for being late.

By 1935, several downtown service clubs and the Chamber of Commerce decided to put to practical use the Chamber’s celebrated motto, “El Paso – Where Sunshine Spends the Winter,” and organized the Southwestern Sun Carnival Association. It quickly grew into a great community celebration. There would be Sun Bowl football games, and in those pre-television days, no one worried about conflicts with the Rose Bowl or the Cotton Bowl. To reign over all the festivities, the Chamber selected a Sun Carnival Queen, following a complicated process to keep her name secret until Thanksgiving Day, when Sun Carnival activities more or

less began officially.

The highlight of this "winter carnival" was a parade on New Year's morning. It began downtown and wound its way north to Mesa and Montana Streets, where it turned east to end at Five Points at Piedras Street. I was in radio broadcasting by then and one of my jobs was to describe the parade from the second floor of Grant's Department Store, located at Texas and Mesa Streets. As an announcer, I was just as concerned as the Chamber of Commerce to promote El Paso sunshine; however, on one occasion the task became formidable. Snow had fallen intermittently all morning, but I was intent on glorifying a small patch of blue on the eastern horizon that seemed to be growing. In the midst of my oration about the forthcoming sunshine, the unmistakable voice of a small child could be heard saying, "Daddy, it's snowing again!"

Although my traveling troupe had long been disbanded, I had not entirely abandoned my career as an actor. The Little Theater movement was sweeping the country and there were several amateur groups active in town. It was in one of these that I first became acquainted with Karl Wyler. He was cast as the lead, a radio announcer, in a play called "Louder Please." At rehearsal one evening, I asked him if he could use another employee in his radio business at KTSM. He asked me if I could write. I told him of some minor articles I had published. "Can you write advertising copy? I responded that I was sure I could. The next morning I reported to work and began my twenty-nine year career in radio and television

My El Paso years, many of which centered around "downtown," have been both delightful and challenging, and it is a pleasure to share some of the memories.

CONREY BRYSON was active in the El Paso County Historical Society for over three decades, serving as its president three terms: 1964, 1965, and 1974. In addition to being editor of *Password* (1975-1979), he contributed dozens of articles and book reviews to the journal and delivered tributes to three inductees into the Society's Hall of Honor.

Editor's Notes

Password published THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF MAJOR EMIL WESCHE in the Spring 1994 issue, but failed to credit THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY of San Marino, California, for permission to re-print it. PETER J. BLODGETT, Curator of Western Historical Manuscripts, graciously accepted my apologies and wrote that "the proposed correction in the Editor's Notes of a future issue [is] quite acceptable."

A further note concerning Major Wesche. In his Introduction to the diary, JERRY THOMPSON concluded that the "whereabouts [of Wesche] after 1881 cannot be determined with certainty." Quite by accident, while researching another subject, I came across Wesche's name in the State Department's Register, circa 1895. Wesche had come to El Paso sometime after 1884 when he resigned from the Masonic Chapman Lodge #2 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and joined Lodge #130 in El Paso on June 15, 1887 giving his occupation as clerk. By 1894, he had become U.S. Vice-Consul in Juárez, and remained in that post for at least twelve years. He died on November 10, 1906 in his home at 1205 San Antonio Street and was buried in the Masonic Cemetery at Concordia the following day.

Two colorful and striking murals entitled respectively "The History of El Paso 1680-1918," and "The History of El Paso 1918-1970" are located at Jaxon's Restaurant at 1135 Airway. Commissioned by JACK MAXON and executed by BASSEL WOLFE who has taught drawing in San Francisco, design at The University of Texas at El Paso, and conducted workshops in figure-drawing, the murals depict over fifty individuals and historic places, including Jane Burges Perrenot and Burges House.

GONZALO G. LAFARELLE, a new member of the Editorial Board, is a former Associate Superintendent of the El Paso Public Schools and currently Director of Student Teaching at The University of Texas at El Paso. A native of Alpine, Texas, and member of a pioneer family there, he was the first Hispanic principal in that city's public schools.

Password is exploring the possibility of publishing a series of biographical sketches of former El Paso mayors whose biographies have not appeared in previous issues. Guidelines regarding the length, format, and style of such articles may be obtained from the editor.



DANGEROUS PASSAGE: *The Santa Fe Trail and the Mexican War* by William Y. Chalfant. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994, \$29.95

The Santa Fe Trail during the years 1846 to 1848 was indeed a dangerous passage. If the dull-eyed oxen and the unpredictable mules which pulled your wagons didn't succumb to the freezing sleet-driven winter winds or flop from exhaustion during the fiery heat of the Plains summer, leaving you stranded in the middle of nowhere, why then an obliging Comanche, Apache, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Pawnee, or Cheyenne Dog Soldier was likely to lift your scalp.

The way West over the trail that stretched from Independence, Missouri, to the New Mexico capital was not a route for the fainthearted. Author Chalfant takes you on that difficult journey in an extremely well-researched book that fairly recounts both the hardships of the Americans and the heartbreaks of the doomed Plains Indians.

As a result of the Mexican War, traffic along the Santa Fe Trail increased. Trade followed the flag – first by wagon trains supplying the volunteer American soldiers heading for Mexican California and then by the increased commerce of bold merchants trading from Independence to Santa Fe.

The Trail was “a world devoid of trees” with “grasses that often reached as high as the shoulders of horses.” And “when the ever-present south winds swept across the hills, the grass bent and swayed, creating swells that seemed to roll from one horizon to the next.” As the Americans crossed this wilderness, they burned the few trees along stream beds for firewood, depleted the grasslands by grazing their draft animals, and shot

the buffalo for food and for fun. In desperation the Plains Indians repeatedly, if futilely, attacked the intruders, trying to turn back the drive toward "manifest destiny" that was to destroy their cherished way of life.

Chalfant recounts the stories of men like the scout "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick, the Comanche chief Red Sleeves, and the luckless Lieutenant John Love as they contested the middle continent against both the elements and each other.

Profusely illustrated with line drawings, maps, and photographs, *Dangerous Passage* will prove a rewarding read for those interested in the saga of the American westward drive along the Santa Fe Trail during the years of the War with Mexico.

DOUGLAS V. MEED
Editor, *El Conquistador*

HISTORIC RANCHES OF TEXAS. Text by Lawrence Clayton; paintings by J. U. Salvant. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993, \$24.95

This attractive volume breathes life into the vast Texas spaces occupied by ranches. It is particularly a must for the traveler who drives an often-drearisome distance over Interstate 20 in Texas, totally unaware of the extraordinary fabric of life that has stretched for some 150 years over a large area to the north of what is now I-20. In this historic area are eight of the twelve great ranches described by Hardin-Simmons English professor Clayton and illustrated by Austin artist Salvant. The other four are located respectively in the Big Bend, the Hill Country, and South Texas.

Each of the ranches has endured over a long period of time through productive management practices, family solidarity often playing a major role. Ingenuity, foresight, vision – especially in the crossbreeding of cattle and in the bloodlines of horses as related to the demands of ranch terrain – have figured in a struggle against great odds. One ranch began with a thirty-million-dollar investment from Scotland; another with the determination and talent of a lone cowboy.

The book appropriately begins with the Four Sixes Ranch (6666), which has its headquarters northwest of Guthrie. The ranch lies roughly at the center of a huge cluster of historic ranches extending over hundreds of miles. The Four Sixes had its early roots in cowboy life and at one time included nearly half a million acres. Now owned by a fourth generation of the found-

ing Burnett family, the ranch also has a 108,000-acre division in the Panhandle.

Other chapters describe the Matador Ranch, northwest of Guthrie, and its division in the Panhandle; the Pitchfork Ranch at the Forks near Guthrie; the Swenson Ranches with headquarters in Stamford; the Wagonner Ranch with headquarters near Vernon; the Green Ranches to the north of Guthrie and near Albany (also with a division in the Panhandle); and the Lambshead Ranch (J. A. Matthews) north of Albany. Another ranch in the Panhandle is the now-defunct XIT, once with over three million acres spread over a 200-mile stretch.

Treatments of four other ranches to the south and east in Texas complete the book – a fascinating history of the King Ranch; a discussion of the Iron Mountain Ranch in the Big Bend Country; a review of the Y. O. Ranch in the Hill Country near Mountain Home and Kerrville, with its diversity and reputation for exotic game; and a presentation of the Yturria Ranch, northeast of Brownsville, with its Spanish heritage, “to which all of Texas ranching owes its roots.”

Complementing the verbal descriptions of these ranches and their histories are Salvant's lovely watercolors, which help to convey a sense of place. Her paintings show both the humble beginnings and the great houses that wealth built, as well as scenes of ranch life – roundup and branding time, supper around the chuckwagon, and quiet chores outside the bunkhouse.

Historic Ranches of Texas is a strikingly effective product of two talents – accomplished writing and gifted painting. Together, the words and the images permit the reader to enter the world of Texas ranching – a world that all aficionados of the West will treasure for years to come.

BOB REID
El Paso

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE ALAMO by Crystal Sasse Ragsdale. Austin: State House Press, 1994, \$21.95/\$14.95

Women cooking over tiny fires; children playing in the dusty rooms of the church! How did they come to be there? And how did they fare? Crystal Sasse Ragsdale searched for the answers to these questions, and her findings provide us with a new and unexpected side to life in the Alamo during the siege of 1836.

According to the author, there were at least a dozen women

and children, as well as several black men and women, who sought sanctuary in the Alamo when Santa Anna's troops poured into San Antonio de Béxar on February 23, 1836. All of that group lived to tell their tales, save one black woman who was reported to have been caught in cross-fire as she attempted to cross the compound. Juana Navarro Pérez Alsbury was the only literate person among them, so their stories were not written but were told to journalists and others, with the chance of errors in translation, interpretation, or personal bias. However, as Ragsdale points out, the important thing is that the survivors provided history with "narratives of what life was like inside the Alamo during the last fatal day of March 6, 1836."

Recollections of six of the survivors are included here, the author devoting a chapter to each one. Represented are Juana Navarro Pérez Alsbury, sister-in-law of Jim Bowie, who stayed in the officers' quarters with her year-old son, Alejo, and her younger sister Gertrudis; often-quoted Susanna Dickinson, who was delegated by Santa Anna to carry the news of the fall of the Alamo to Gonzalez, and her baby daughter, Angelina; Concepción Charli Gortari Losoya, whose son Toribio fell defending the Alamo; vibrant Madame Candelaria, who witnessed Crockett's heroic death and said of the Alamo simply, "I was there five days and one night!" Also present were Ana Salazar de Esparza, her daughter Maria, and two small sons. One of these sons, Enrique Esparza, was eight years old at the time and waited almost seventy years before speaking freely of his experiences.

All manner of maps and photographs are strategically placed within the text. Deserving of special mention is an 1849 daguerreotype, the earliest datable photograph taken in Texas and the only existing one showing the Alamo with its original flat-topped facade. The cover of the book is adorned with a glossy color print of the Alamo taken from a 1901 painting by artist Verner Moore White. Best of all, there is a clarity and verve to the writer's style which makes her work a pleasure to read.

WINIFRED McVEY MIDDAGH
El Paso

WHITE SANDS: A National Monument's History by Dietmar Schneider-Hector. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993, \$17.50

Touted as "the first book on White Sands written for a lay audience" and as "a comprehensive study of the geology, fauna

and flora, cultural, and institutional history of the White Sands, New Mexico area," this book doesn't measure up to the hype.

If you want to learn about gypsum sand dunes, how they move or why they only reach a certain height, you'll have to go somewhere else. If you want more than a laundry list of common plant and animal species, you'll also have to look elsewhere.

The book's strong point is its history of efforts to establish a national park and then a national monument in southern New Mexico. In particular, Schneider-Hector provides great detail about the efforts of A. B. Fall and Tom Charles to set aside the dunes. He also provides insight into the different attitudes concerning the dunes. For instance, the National Park Service is concerned with preserving and interpreting a natural resource, while the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce often wishes to promote the monument as a recreation area.

Underlying the entire book is an obvious and bothersome prejudice against the military and White Sands Missile Range. At one point the author refers to Department of Interior cooperation with the Department of Defense as an "unholy alliance." Then he says military activities at the missile range have "undermined the National Park Service's mandate for preserving the dune field and its flora and fauna."

Having worked at the missile range for sixteen years, I know the military activities may be a nuisance for the monument because of frequent evacuations and noisy overflights. However, it would be a stretch of anyone's imagination to label these activities a threat to the dunes or the plants and animals.

Schneider-Hector even goes so far as to criticize the missile range for activities which never took place - as, for example, his accusing the range of setting M-44 cyanide coyote killers on the west boundary of the monument. Unfortunately for Schneider-Hector's credibility, this activity never took place. In 1984 there was talk and some preliminary coordination about trying this measure in order to protect the endangered desert bighorn sheep population in the San Andres Mountains, but the idea was quickly scrapped. In fact, missile range records show there has never been any predator control within miles of the monument border.

Other obvious errors include references to the lion study being done on White Sands by the "University of New Mexico's" Wildlife Research Institute. Actually, the study is being done by the Wildlife Research Institute in Moscow, Idaho, which is directed by Maurice Hornocker, the "dean" of big cat researchers.

The bottom line is that this is not a "comprehensive" look at White Sands. Readers may want to wait for two publications which the national monument will soon have on book shelves: the

park guide, which provides a good look at the monument's geology and other natural attributes, and an administrative history which will tell the operational story of White Sands National Monument from its inception to its current situation.

JIM ECKLES

Public Affairs Officer,
White Sands Missile Range

LAS CRUCES: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY by Linda G. Harris. Las Cruces: Arroyo Press, 1994, \$29.95

Strange as it may seem, El Paso has numerous city histories. Las Cruces, and to a large extent Mesilla, have had none. Until now.

Linda Harris, currently president of the Doña Ana County Historical Society, has written a first-rate account. The narrative moves the city from its raw Spanish and frontier beginnings to the present time.

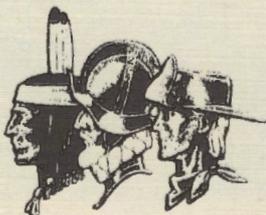
The river isn't neglected. Neither are the farms, the mines and the military. All of these threads, and more, create the fabric known as Las Cruces. We see it, we feel it, we understand it, we know a little more about our neighbor just forty miles up the river. And in knowing and appreciating more about Las Cruces, we just naturally learn and appreciate more about ourselves. The two histories are linked.

Carefully interspersed throughout the narrative are black and white photographs and illustrations, most of them never before seen. In fact, the entire book, slightly oversize, is a visual delight. Not only is it exceptionally well written, but when people speak of beautiful books, this one should just naturally come to mind.

Anyone who reads and loves history needs *Las Cruces*. It is a perfect gift not only for others, but for yourself.

LEON C. METZ

El Paso



Booknotes

...from around the neighborhood

A recent issue of the *Las Cruces Bulletin* announced a University of Utah publication edited by Donald A. Barclay, librarian at New Mexico State University, and literature professors James H. Maguire of Boise State University and Peter Wild of the University of Arizona. Titled *Into the Wilderness Dream: Exploration Narratives of the American West, 1500-1805*, the book is described as an examination of thirty explorers' written accounts of their respective forays into what is now the western United States. Barclay is quoted as saying that "these records have been thoroughly examined through the years by historians, but only recently...as literature." He calls the accounts "good reads" and no more fictional "than the average corporate report of today," explaining that "these explorers were writing in order to justify what they were doing," often forcing "reality to fit their dream." The book is priced at \$17.50 and may be obtained at area bookstores.

The Lincoln County Historical Society, in association with the Lincoln County Heritage Trust, has published the second in a scheduled "series of studies concerning the history of Lincoln County, New Mexico, and its environs." Titled *Fort Stanton, New Mexico: The Military Years, 1855-1896*, the study was authored in 1988 by Lee Myers, a man now ninety-one years old, who, states Robert M. Utley in the Introduction, "carries in his mind, and in his extensive research files, as much knowledge about southwestern army posts as exists anywhere." The 52-page study, amply documented and handsomely illustrated with photographs and a historical map of the area, may be obtained from Lincoln County Historical Society, P.O. Box 91, Lincoln, New Mexico, at the list price of \$4.50 (plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling).

The 34th Annual Conference of the WESTERN HISTORY ASSOCIATION meets October 20-23, 1994, in Albuquerque, New Mexico and offers an array of program sessions covering a wide range of topics, numerous side trips, and other events. Its current president is Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., well-known writer of Western History. Further information may be obtained from the Western History Association, University of New Mexico, 1080 Mesa Vista Hall, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1181. Telephone 505-277-5234 or fax 505-277-6023.

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