

PASSWORD



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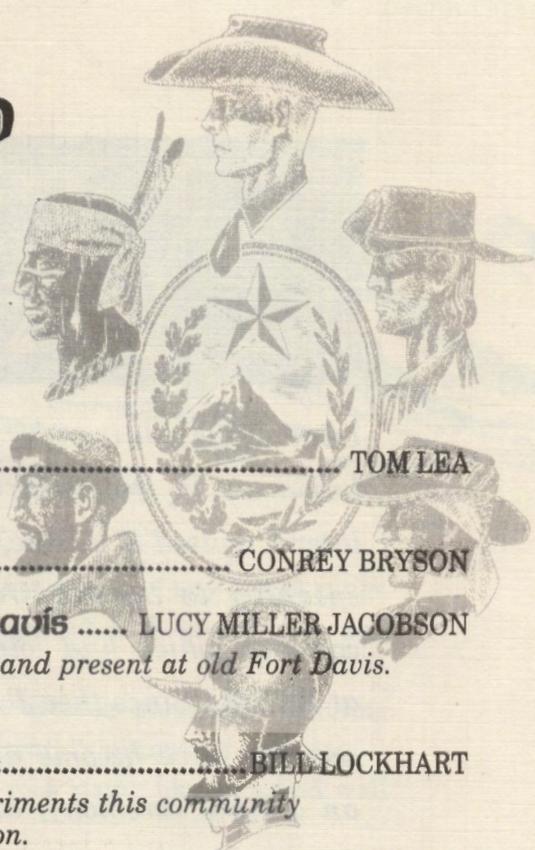
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I first wrote this in order to speak it on a radio broadcast in December of 1951. Two years later I revised it a little, to accommodate the speaking to the requirements of television cameras which had joined the microphones at KTSM. Since then the words here written seem to have become an invariable part of an annual ceremony, an affectionate salute repeated each year, spoken in a December dusk when a star is lighted on a mountainside and Christmastime comes again at the Pass of the North.

– TOM LEA

Today the star on Mount Franklin is lit nightly, but for many years it shone only during the winter holiday season. TOM LEA, the distinguished artist/author and the late CONREY BRYSON, noted radio/TV commentator, explain how the ceremony became part of modern technology. *Illustrations and text courtesy TOM LEA* [Ed]

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OLD MOUNT FRANKLIN is not a part of any fabled range of Delectable Mountains graced with green trees and softened by the fertile rain.

Mount Franklin is a gaunt hardrock mountain, standing against the sky like a piece of the world's uncovered carcass.

Mount Franklin is a ridge of rock rising like a ragged wall along the flank of a desert river.

The shape of Mount Franklin is a jumbled set of wedged pyramids, broken and interlocked, buttressed and bastioned together in a massive long line of heights and hogbacks.

• • •

The seasons touch at the mountain's rigid face. Spring winds make a brown ghost of Mount Franklin under the gritty amber of the sand-filled sky. Summer rain brings a burgeoning green velvet fuzz along the rounded tilt of the sun-worn slopes. Autumn haze shrouds Mount Franklin's feet and touches canyons with a blue and violet mystery. Winter snow traces with a delicate white the lift and turn of the ridges.

Above the Rio Grande's ribbon of green, forming one side of the portal of the Pass of the North, Mount Franklin is a presence and a personality. Standing above us, above the build of our town, Mount Franklin is the landmark and the trademark of where we live.

— TOM LEA



Tom Lea, An Artist in Any Medium

By Conrey Bryson

Password is pleased to reprint part of an essay by the late Conrey Bryson from the November-December 1992 issue of The Roundup (Vol. 5, No. 3 New Series) published by Western Writers of America, Inc. It appears here with the permission of the late author and the publisher. [Ed]

In 1951, as a writer and producer for radio station KTSM in El Paso, I was charged with the responsibility of producing a program to announce the lighting of a huge Christmas star on the face of Mount Franklin, which overlooks our city. The star and the program were to be annual presentations of the El Paso Electric Company. I had an inspiration. I went to Tom Lea: "Do you think you could put into words, for a radio broadcast, your artist's impression of Mount Franklin?" After a few minutes pondering, he gave an affirmative answer.

The result rang with the artist's knowledge of light, shadow, bulk and color, and with the writer's choice of words that forced the radio broadcaster's tonal inflections to make the picture complete. It began: "Old Mount Franklin is not part of any fabled range of Delectable Mountains, graced with green trees and softened by the fertile rains. Mount Franklin is a gaunt, hardrock mountain, standing against the sky like a piece of the world's uncovered carcass."

In some six hundred beautifully chosen words, the broadcast progressed to an inspiring climax: "Above the Rio Grande's ribbon of green, forming one side of the portal of the Pass of the North, Mount Franklin is a presence and a personality. Standing above us, above the build of our town, Mount Franklin is the landmark and the trademark of where we live."

In my mind, no tonal variations by a skilled radio announcer could have been as great as Tom's blending of light and color with words and their sounds. By Christmas, 1952, television had come to El Paso. Camera portrayal of the face of Mount Franklin could be keyed to Tom's words, and the artist was ready with changes and additions to take advantage of one more medium.

Fifteen years later, in 1968, the annual broadcast was continuing, an eagerly awaited part of El Paso's Christmas tradition. By that time I had become assistant to our Congressman in Washington, D. C. At Christmas time, I received a package, the most precious book I own: one of a limited edition of 300 copies of **Old Mount Franklin** by Tom Lea. It combined words of the annual Christmas broadcast with Tom's priceless drawings of a mountain and a star. The inscription, in Tom's unmistakable hand, reads: "To Pat and Conrey Bryson, a warm Christmas greeting, an affectionate salute and a happy memento from the Pass of he North and your friends there."





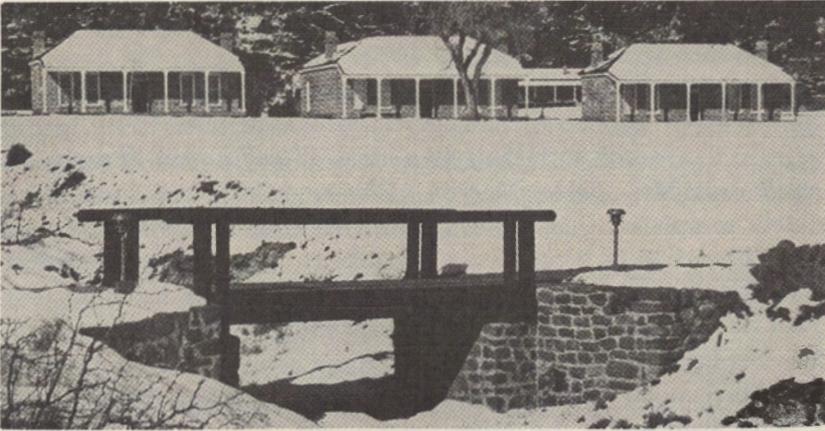
Christmas at Fort Davis

By Lucy M. Jacobson

Fort Davis was established October 23, 1854 to guard the San Antonio-El Paso Road, both for the mail/stage line and for the numerous emigrants headed for California. Garrisoned by the 8th U.S. Infantry, it was the first settlement between Ft. Clark (Bracketville) and San Elizario in the El Paso Valley.¹

Lt. Col. George Washington Seawell, Commander of the 8th, did not like the site chosen by the head of the Department of Texas for the post and would not authorize any permanent buildings. The only substantial structures were six limestone barracks erected during his absence. Most housing consisted of green pine slabs driven vertically into the ground for walls, with dirt floors and thatch or canvas roofs. Much of the command was housed in tents for the entire six years of the post's existence. All supplies had to be hauled 490 miles from San Antonio. Conditions were exceedingly primitive – although on a par with most frontier posts of that period. Two or three officers' wives joined their husbands at the post for brief periods and there was the usual consignment of laundresses. Social life was limited by the harsh frontier conditions and was predominately male-orientated. Although there are a number of diaries, letters and accounts of life (for officers) stationed at pre-Civil War Fort Davis, there are only a few references to Christmas. Of course many of the Victorian traditions which we follow today did not gain wide acceptance in the United States until the late 1870s.

Lt. Edward Hartz in a letter to his family back East described his arrival at the post on Christmas Eve 1856. He was housed in a tent and his Christmas dinner the next day consisted of three slices of fat bacon with rind, a plate of water crackers, and a tin cup of commissary water and whiskey.



Present-day Fort Davis showing Officers' Row and Post Hospital. Snow blankets the ground and buildings. Photo courtesy Ft. Davis National Historic Site

Christmas 1857 brought a bitter norther and heavy snow. Indians, probably taking advantage of the bad weather, ran off all of the stage line's livestock at Fort Lancaster to the east, thereby stranding three coaches of passengers and mail. Apaches stole all of the livestock at La Limpia, as the little settlement which grew up around Fort Davis was then called, and attacked the station at El Muerto, twenty-five miles to the west, burning two coaches and forcing abandonment of the station. Troops from Fort Davis gave chase, unsuccessfully, in both of the latter incidences.

When Texas voted to secede from the Union in February, 1861, U.S. troops surrendered Fort Davis to a small detachment of George W. Baylor's rebels. Confederate occupation of the post, never exceeding thirty or forty men, continued until August of 1862. As the last remnants of Sibley's ill-fated New Mexico campaign staggered back to San Antonio, Indians sacked and burned the post. The site was abandoned for the next five years.

In May 1867, Lt. Col and Bvt. Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt with four companies of the 9th U.S. Cavalry reoccupied Fort Davis and began building a permanent installation. The 9th was one of the regiments ordered established after the Civil War with black troops and white officers, the *buffalo soldiers*, a term first applied to the 10th Cavalry by the Cheyenne because the soldiers' kinky hair reminded the Indians of buffalo. Later, *buffalo soldier* became a term of respect and is now used for all four of the black units – the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry. Until 1885 Fort Davis would be garrisoned primarily by *buffalo soldiers*.

There are few personal remembrances of life at Fort Davis for the late 1860s through the 1870s. Building on the new fort progressed and living conditions were somewhat better than at the pre-Civil War post. Some historians have tried to fill in the gaps in the record with their own ideas. The frequently repeated story about Mrs. Wesley Merritt celebrating Christmas 1867 in the newly completed Commanding Officer's Quarters with the first Christmas tree in West Texas, is a fabrication. Although Merritt was later married twice, he was a bachelor during his tenure at Fort Davis. Nor were Christmas trees widely used at that period. Private Christmas trees did not become common in the town of Fort Davis until the mid 1930s. One large tree at the Presbyterian Church sufficed for the entire community.

On Christmas Day, 1875, any celebration in the little village was disrupted when William Leaton shot and killed John Burges in front of W. Keeseey's General Merchandise Store in the center of town. Leaton and Burges both lived in the Presidio del Norte area and theirs was a feud of long standing. Burges had killed Leaton's step-father a few years previously. As Presidio County, with Fort Davis as the county seat, was officially organized only a few months before, the military more than likely had to step in to aid the civil authorities. Leaton was detained in the post guard-house as the new county had no courthouse, jail, or other building substantial enough for prisoners.

Christmas Eve 1877 brought a much happier occurrence to the isolated post. The telegraph line to the east was completed and was operational most of the time thereafter.

By the 1880s, life at Fort Davis became very pleasant. Indian problems ceased with the Victorio Campaign in the summer of 1880, and the completion of the railroads not only made travel and the acquisition of necessities much easier, but also afforded luxuries such as fresh oysters packed in ice and shipped on one of the three or four daily trains. Quarters at Fort Davis were considered superior to most frontier posts, the climate was pleasant and the scenery beautiful. With the transfer of headquarters of the 10th Cavalry from Fort Concho to Fort Davis in the summer of 1882, living conditions became very crowded but the social life of the post became almost hectic. Lt. Millard Fillmore Eagleston of the 10th began publishing a small newspaper, *The Apache Rocket*. There are no known copies in existence; however, the *Army and Navy Journal* picked up and reprinted many items from *The Apache Rocket* - especially the social events. The glowing journal-

ism popular at that time is as interesting historically as the events described. Christmas 1883 at Fort Davis was a festive time and received considerable coverage. On Christmas Eve the children of the post were entertained in the library with a dance. This would have been the officers' children, of course. The library was housed in the Post Chapel which also served as a theater and dance hall. Quoting from the *Army and Navy Journal*:

Christmas Day was beautiful and bright. Vast fires were burning in the Troop ranges and odors of cooking game, turkeys, chickens, pigs, cakes, pies, puddings, sauces and all else known to be good to sustain the weary frame of the soldier added a particularly pleasant variety to the atmosphere.

At noon an assembly of the officers and ladies at the Commanding Officer's Quarters took place and thence proceeded to inspect the Christmas dinners, which had been especially arranged by the different troops.

The first visit was made to Capt. Keys, Troop D, 10th Cavalry and the display of table ware, the arrangement of the dining and the side tables were beautiful. While the dinner was superb, there was nothing left to want, the quantity was profuse and the meats were so temptingly browned that they were delightful to behold.

Altogether it was an elegant display and a good dinner, as we passed out a man projected a cigar box at us; we smoke, and so took a cigar; as we got toward the door another man projected a goblet of egg-nog at us; we drink, that is to say, sometimes when we are attacked in this way and so we took that, and then we meandered toward Capt. Morrison's Troop A, 10th Cavalry, where we found a collection of pigs, fowls, pies, cakes, etc. etc. sufficient to atone for a long past. It was a capital dinner.²

After visiting Troops D, A, and B, the party proceeded on to Capt. Lebo's Troop K, 10th, where the silverware was engraved with the letter, regiment and troop designation above crossed sabers. Here the entourage witnessed another Christmas feast.

After inspecting the Christmas dinners of the troops, several officers gave dinners at their individual quarters. The evening brought a dinner and ball to inaugurate the newly completed barracks of Troop B, Tenth Cavalry, Capt. Smithers commanding. The glowing journalism fashionable at that period reported: "The dining room was beautifully decorated for the occasion. The tables, five in number were covered by exquisite red and white

cloths. Two beautiful Christmas trees laden with every variety of fruit, etc. add materially to the decorations of the room."³

All of the officers of the garrison and their wives with their guests and friends were in attendance at Troop B's ball. The musicians occupied an elevated platform at one end with the caller on another near the center of the room. Dancing commenced at 9 o'clock. The first march, waltz and quadrille were performed by the officers and their wives, after which, the enlisted men were given possession of the dance floor. Supper was served at midnight. After supper dancing was resumed until 2:30 a.m. when the band played "Home Sweet Home," and the guests departed. One of the novel features of the evening was a waltz competition, open to all; the award was a large chocolate cake with the letters B-10th Cavalry in icing on its top.

Dancing was the most popular recreation on the frontier, military or civilian and during the next week there was another "informal hop" hosted by the officers of the garrison. On New Year's day, Mrs. B. H. Grierson, the Commanding Officer's wife, with her cousin and companion, Sadie Morley, held open house where a profuse lunch and champagne were served. Formal calls, complete with calling cards, up and down officers row, were exchanged. The *Journal* also noted, "Mrs. John Davis, the wife of the Post Trader, and the Misses Murphy, with their friend and guest, Miss Terbell, of New York, received their many friends among the officers at their respective houses, most delightfully."⁴

The "Misses Murphy" were the daughters of Daniel Murphy whose store, saloon, and large house were south of the post. He had four daughters and four step-daughters of marriageable age at that time. Needless to say, the Murphy residence, which also possessed a piano, was a center of social life. Six of the girls married army officers while two married the post traders.

The festivities were not over yet. The *Journal* continued:

The non-commissioned officers of the staff and band of the Tenth Cavalry gave a ball New Year's Night which was opened by the officers and ladies of the post. The supper on this occasion was very tastefully got up and was composed of everything which could tempt the most delicate, and to which ample justice was paid by the NCOs and their friends.⁵

Mrs. Anson Mills and Mrs. W.H. Gardner (the wives of the Major of the 10th Cavalry and Post Surgeon respectively) chose January 4th for their "German." The *Journal* elaborated: "The

library room had been carefully prepared for the dancers; the ceiling of flags, the lace curtains to the windows, the many additional lamps and the favor table made a transformation in its appearance.⁶ Handmade favors consisted of smoking caps, banners, tambourines, and tobacco pouches. Supper was served at 12 o'clock after which dancing continued until 3 a.m."

Lt. John Bigelow Jr., 10th Cavalry, described his and his bride's first Christmas day at Fort Davis in 1884 as much quieter, consisting of a horseback ride in the morning followed by dinner at a fellow officer's home. The menu included raw oysters, soup, turkey, vegetables, plum pudding, cold *blancmange*, fruits and nuts topped off with Cook's Imperial Champagne. Bigelow was disgusted that a fellow officer and invited guest failed to appear at the feast "Consequent upon too much punch drinking in the course of the forenoon."

During the holidays there was a mock hunt instigated by the avid sportsmen. A bear skin was dragged around the area to mark a trail, then the hounds were turned loose with the mounted officers in pursuit. Lt. Bigelow commented that some of the officers became as excited as if it were a genuine bear hunt. Bigelow didn't think much of the sport.

He also described an evening visit to a local Mexican home to witness a play called *los pastores*. The home was that of former *buffalo soldier*, Archie Smith, and his common-law Hispanic wife, who was exceedingly religious and had added a private devotional area to their house. He described it as "about as large as the chapel we go to on Sunday. There was no design about it further than symmetry and order. The principal features were candlesticks, looking glasses and artificial flowers. These were supplemented with images, statuary, pictures, gimcracks and gewgaws of various sorts."⁷ The two and a half-hour play was performed by children and concerned the shepherds and the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem. Variations of the Biblical account included a struggle between the devil and an archangel, and culminated in both participants and spectators kneeling to kiss a little image of the Baby Jesus.

Presumably there were also a number of hops, or Germans, during the holiday season. Lt. Bigelow noted that the ladies were generally arrayed in quite fashionable styles. The younger ones in bright colors, but many of the matrons in black – as Victorian custom required a full year of mourning for any family member who had died, and death was frequent. Bigelow, fresh from the

East, also commented on the roughness of the ladies' hands in the dry West Texas climate.

Harvey Forsyth, the son of Commissary Sgt. Thomas Forsyth stationed at Fort Davis from 1885 to 1890, many years later recalled that during that period – when Fort Davis was primarily garrisoned by the 3rd Infantry – enlisted men would go to each house on the post (both officers' and enlisted men's) in a wagon to pass out small presents, usually fruit or candy to the children.

Fort Davis passed its heyday with the transfer of the 10th Cavalry to Arizona in the summer of 1885. Although the post remained active for another six years, it had literally outlived its usefulness. The number of troops diminished rapidly until the final departure in the summer of 1891.

The land and building returned to a private owner. Until the mid-1930s, the buildings at the post were prime rental property for the community, but gradually they fell into disrepair and finally into ruin. In 1961, after many years of effort on the part of area citizens, legislators, and many others, Fort Davis again came under the jurisdiction of federal government, this time as a National Historic Site under the National Park Service. Christmas is once more celebrated at the post. The restored officer's quarters and barracks are festooned with evergreens, red bows and candles. A freshly cut native piñon is installed in No. 2, the restored Captain's Quarters, and trimmed with Victorian decorations, mostly handmade. Just before the neighboring elementary school lets out for the Christmas holidays, Santa, in an army ambulance pulled by mules with an escort of reenactment soldiers, visits the children to distribute candy and fruit following the post custom of a hundred years ago.

NOTES

1. Jacobson, Lucy Miller, & Mildred B. Nored, *Jeff Davis County, Texas*. Fort Davis, Tx: Fort Davis Historical Society, 1994.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. McChristian, Douglas C. (ed), *Garrison Tangles in the Friendless Tenth, The Journal of Lt. John Bigelow, Jr., Fort Davis, Tx*. J.M. Carroll and Co., Bryan and Mattituck, 1985.

LUCY M. JACOBSON is a fourth generation native of Fort Davis and continues her life-long interest in the area's history. She is the co-author of *Jeff Davis County, Texas*, reviewed in the BOOK REVIEW section of this issue.



The Incorporations of San Elizario, Texas

By Bill Lockhart

Although San Elizario is best known as the site of the Spanish presidio erected there in 1789, it also became the county seat of El Paso County, and the scene of the Salt War. Although virtually unnoticed among historians, San Elizario first became an incorporated town under the auspices of the Texas State Legislature in 1875 and later even maintained the status of "city." During a forty-year span, the town was incorporated no fewer than six times, each lasting an average of about three years.

Although time has enshrouded the earliest council minutes of the Town of San Elizario, the Texas Legislature first incorporated the village under a special act in 1871, the same year Socorro received corporate status.¹ The new statute, entitled, "An Act to Incorporate the Town of San Elceario in El Paso County," stated that the town council would include a mayor and five aldermen who must be qualified voters of the State of Texas. The aldermen were to be elected, but the "justice of the peace of the precinct in which said town is situated shall be ex officio mayor of the town." Likewise, the precinct constable became constable of the town. The act authorized the town to tax its citizens and make ordinances, but, more importantly, "the town council shall have the power... to grant or sell portions of real estate, the property of said town of San Elceario." The statute removed the temptation for land speculation by restricting the grantees or buyers to "actual settlers on said lands, who are citizens of the town," businesses planning

to erect buildings (specifically including railroad depots), and people who intended to be citizens of the town "who shall become actual settlers on the lands sold or granted." In this time, before newspapers had arrived in the valley, individuals were required to post a duplicate of their petition requesting land "in a conspicuous place near the door of the town council hall." The Legislature passed the law on April 5, 1871.² No records of dissolution have been found, but the corporation was still in force in 1875 when Municipal Court records listed Don J. Mauro Lujan as the town's mayor.³

The 16th State Legislature in 1879 relieved itself of the burden of declaring incorporations, passing that responsibility on to the counties. Title XVII, Chapter 11, allowed a town or village to incorporate if it had a population of not less than 200, but not more than 1,000. The act required at least twenty qualified voters to file an application with the judge of the county court. The county judge then ordered an incorporation election, and declared the village (or town) incorporated if a majority so voted. The town then elected a mayor and five aldermen who held office for one year. The town council held annual elections on the first Tuesday of April. Although a separate mayor was elected under the new act, he held the same power, both civil and criminal, as the justice of the peace of the precinct. The town also elected a marshal who had the same power as the county constable and collected the same fees for arrests. Authority of the town was otherwise very much as it had been in 1871. To abolish a corporation, at least fifty voters had to petition the county judge for another election which, once again, required a majority to create a change. All corporation property then reverted to the county treasurer.⁴

In 1879, Gregorio García, 1st, along with other residents of the town, petitioned the Commissioners Court to incorporate San Elizario for the second time. The court declared that "the necessary legal steps would be taken."⁵ Tomás García presided over the election held at the house of John L. McCarty on November 4. The citizens voted to incorporate by a count of fifty-eight to two. Since incorporation required a majority, Judge José Maria Gonzales declared the town to be incorporated on February 9, 1880.⁶ The first mayor was G. N. García, 2d, whose father had led the petitioners. G. N. was already *Juez de Paz* (Justice of the Peace) for Precinct No. 4. He signed his name as "G. N. García 2D, J. de P., P. N° 4, y Mayor de la Corporación de la Villa."⁷

The town council attempted to make the idea of a permanent San Elizario depot enticing to the Texas Pacific Railway Company. The council recorded its offer, signed by Mayor G. N. García on January 22, 1881:

“in consideration of one dollar paid by the Texas Pacific Railway Company and the construction and maintenance of a permanent Railway Depot and station therein... convey to the said Texas and Pacific Railway Company a tract of land...extending through the community lands of said town fifty feet on each side of the center of said Company’s survey...and does also grant the said Company the right to conduct and operate the said road over and along any street, way, alley and square in the Corporate limits of said town.”⁸

The council repeated its offer of a right-of-way through the corporate boundaries to the Galveston, Harrisburg, & San Antonio Railway on August 16, 1882.⁹ The Texas and Pacific chose to bypass San Elizario in 1881, bringing prosperity to El Paso and obscurity to the previously well-known village. Even though the G.H. & S.A. now passed through its boundaries, the damage was done, and San Elizario never regained its former status.

Tomás García, Jr., became mayor in 1883, and was succeeded the following year by Telésforo Montes. In August, the council engaged Sister Margaret Mary of St. Joseph’s to teach San Elizario girls, renting the school space from the Sisters of Loretto. Ex-mayor García became teacher for the boys in December. Both educators received equal salaries of \$60.00 per month.¹⁰

Montes was re-elected mayor in 1885, just before the Commissioners Court ordered an election to decide on the revocation of the incorporation. With a vote of 128 to 20, the residents decided to return to the county government, and Judge J. A. Buckler signed the necessary papers on April 28. News of the decision must have reached the council during its session the following day. Montes had just rented an office for \$11.00 per month; the minutes end abruptly and continue on the back of the same page with the first meeting of the re-incorporation of 1889.¹¹

On November 29, 1887, voters turned out for an election to incorporate San Elizario for school purposes only with a unanimous vote of 72 to 0. In December, they voted 60 to 47 not to re-incorporate as a town, but elected José Salazar, Rafael Telles, William Hamilton, Gaspar Girón, and Máximo Aranda as school trustees.¹²

Judge W. M. Chandler ordered another election for incorporation on February 20, 1888 which failed. In December, the judge ordered a second election to be held at the house of Luis Madrid.¹³ The voters reversed their previous decision, and Judge J. E. Townsend declared the incorporation of the "Town of San Elizario" on December 4, 1888.¹⁴

This incorporation, like its predecessors, deeded land to various citizens for considerations received. A search of the Texas statutes revealed loopholes that could possibly have invalidated the titles delivered by the corporation. In January, 1889, Judge Townsend and District Clerk A. O. Larrazolo, drew up a bill for perfection of the titles and presented it to the Texas Legislature which passed a special act to validate the titles; land owners were able to breathe a little easier. In July, by a two-thirds victory, citizens of San Elizario voted to abolish the incorporation for school purposes.¹⁵

The town then appointed G. N. García as interim mayor, but the voters replaced him and elected R. J. Carr in April, 1889. Under Carr, the council inspected the jail and found it safe to use for the imprisonment of lawbreakers who could not pay their fines. Tomás García replaced Carr in 1890, to be succeeded by Mariano Escajeda in 1891.¹⁶

The aldermen devoted most of their meetings to discuss water and irrigation, but when they enacted a municipal tax ordinance on May 8, 1891, it proved to be too much for the townspeople. The fourteen-page ordinance included a forty-six item form to be filled out by any "person, firm, company (sic) or corporation within the corporate limits of San Elizario."¹⁷ The form was quite comprehensive and required the listing of items such as: the number of horses and mules and their value; the number of cattle; sewing and knitting machines; watches and clocks; the value of gold and silver plate; and even the number of steamboats, sailing vessels, wharf boats, barges, or other water crafts and their value. The ordinance compelled all railroads to list their personal and real property and the number of miles of roadbed within the corporate boundaries. Residents apparently felt that the council had overstepped its bounds and chose to terminate the corporation shortly after the enactment of the ordinance. It was not until December 1892, however, that the Commissioners Court ordered the sheriff to collect the corporate records for return to the county.¹⁸

By the following year, however, the people of San Elizario were ready for another try. They petitioned Judge F. E. Hunter to order an election on May 16, 1893, in which they returned a majority in favor of incorporation. By this time, the village had grown large enough to change status under Texas law. Once the town attained a population in excess of 1000, it would be incorporated as a city with enhanced powers. Among these were the right to determine the number of aldermen on the city council, establishing laws against the selling and dispensing of alcoholic beverages on Sunday, compelling convicts to labor on the streets or other city property, and increased powers of taxation. The statutes made it more difficult to abolish the corporation, requiring at least one hundred qualified voters to petition the county judge.¹⁹ In his pronouncement, Judge Hunter declared that "said incorporated town be known as the 'city of San Elizario.'" ²⁰ G. N. García once again may have been interim mayor, but Charles Heintz defeated him in the January 27, 1893 elections. It was not until July, however, that Commissioners Court released the corporate seal, books, and other property to the new town government. The corporation lasted until 1897.²¹

G. N. García initiated another petition for incorporation in 1906. This election, officiated by J. J. Pérez, was held at the office of the Justice of the Peace, with fifty citizens voting for incorporation and only three against. Judge Joseph A. Sweeney declared the incorporation of the approximately two square mile area whose boundaries reached one mile from the center of the plaza to the north and south; and one half mile to the east and west.²²

José J. Pérez presided as the first mayor for the initial council meeting on January 19, 1907.²³ Commissioners Court returned the corporate records in February and the council began passing regulations. The council required that saloons keep their doors shut so children would be unable to look inside and that all streets and alleys must be "clean and in good order." Ordinances kept intoxicated people off the streets, and ordered a \$20.00 fine for anyone flooding the streets through neglect of their ditches. They were even concerned with speeding, stating that, "any person running on horseback through the streets at a very high speed shall be held subject to a fine not less than \$1.00 nor more than \$20.00."²⁴

Because water was so important, an alcalde mayor enforced ordinances for cleaning, repairing, and protecting the dams,

ditches, and canals that kept the irrigation system functioning, collecting fines and confiscations from violators. The council established a public pound to incarcerate stray hogs, sheep, goats, horses, cattle, and mules that were caught damaging the irrigation system. Owners paid ten to fifteen cents per head for return of the animals. Marshal Luis Parra, Jr., was authorized to put violators who refused to pay the assessed fines to work on the public roads or other property belonging to the corporation. The council allowed such people a credit of seventy-five cents per day for their work.²⁵

Pérez was re-elected in 1907 and again in 1908 despite an election to abolish the corporation. The election, held in March 1908, returned only twenty-one votes to disincorporate against ninety-two to remain a town. The council enacted new ordinances requiring that animals were not allowed to drink from *acequias* and that animals would not be slaughtered within the town limits.²⁶

In February, 1909, a new ordinance required that all male citizens between twenty-one and forty-five work on streets two days each year from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. G. N. García became mayor in April, his first time in office during this incorporation.²⁷ The council became interested in vital statistics in 1910, requiring that "physicians, surgeons, or accouchers (midwives)," or parents in absence of attending professionals, report all births, informing the council within five days of the infant's name, sex, color, and "such other data relating thereto."²⁸ A similar ordinance covered death certificates and required permits for burials and the removal of bodies.²⁹

The townspeople reaffirmed García as mayor in 1910, but he lost to Lorenzo Madrid the following year. In June 1911, a telephone was installed in the mayor's office, but such ostentation was short-lived. The Commissioners Court ordered an election to abolish the corporation on November 7, 1911. With a vote of 53 to 38, Judge Albert S. Eyler declared that the town was again under control of the county government. The court ordered the town's copy of the Revised Statutes of the State of Texas to be delivered to Clint and instructed ex-Mayor Madrid to turn over all corporate documents to the Justice of the Peace.³⁰

For many years the people of San Elizario were apparently satisfied with county government. In 1915, the Texas Legislature

passed an act validating grants of land issued by Socorro, Ysleta, and San Elizario as corporations. Thereafter only bits of information can be found. Commissioners Court records for 1920 refer in passing to the corporation of San Elizario, but fail to make strong confirmation. White's thesis on Socorro alludes to a disincorporation in San Elizario in 1920, but fails to state a date.³¹ According to the *El Paso Times*:

In 1921, the Texas legislature established the cities of Socorro and San Elizario in the areas encompassed by the old Spanish grants. Neither community established an active city government, and over the years the incorporations were forgotten, but they did not die.³²

Research has not turned up any corroboration in the records of the Texas Legislature, but the possibility exists that San Elizario did re-incorporate again sometime around the 1920s.

The incorporation issue did not appear again until March 6, 1979 when Jack Wilbourn called a town meeting to discuss incorporating the four square miles of the developed part of town in order to qualify for federal funds for water and sewage improvements and to protect historic buildings. Opponents feared that incorporation would increase taxes and make San Elizario ineligible for part of the \$1.5 M housing grant that the county hoped to receive. Citizens presented a petition to County Judge Udell Moore who agreed to set an election date if the group could provide evidence of the required population of 2,000. Proponents took a census that postponed the election date, and provided the needed information.³³

The election was set for January 19, 1980. On the eve of the election, opponents of the proposition circulated anonymous leaflets warning of the "evils of incorporation." Although Jack Wilbourn said that the flyers were "nothing but a pack of lies," the damage was done and San Elizario remained unincorporated.³⁴

In 1983, Bill McCoy spearheaded a meeting at the Adobe Horseshoe Theater to discuss incorporation. Some residents were worried about farm land being subdivided and used as low-income housing. Already some were living in plywood huts with no lights, gas, or water, and the group feared that unregulated growth would strain the resources of the fire department and public schools. McCoy apparently could not find enough support to carry out the proposition.³⁵

The final bid for incorporation came in 1985. A group headed by Ann Enriquez requested incorporation to deal with similar problems to those mentioned above – “improved streets, lack of water and sewer services, growing crime, and juvenile delinquency.”³⁶ Opponents, as before, feared increased taxes. The group needed approval from the City of El Paso since San Elizario was located in the path of the city’s expansion. According to state law, the city had a right to annex the town and would, therefore, be required to relinquish that right to allow the election. The *El Paso Times* for August 11, 1986 reported that voters had once again chosen not to incorporate by a margin of 56%.

For the past 125 years San Elizarians have maintained a strong political dichotomy. Between 1871 and 1911, the town was incorporated and disincorporated at least six times. From December 1888 to July 1889, it was doubly incorporated, remaining incorporated for school purposes, while it again became a fully incorporated township. There were three elections that failed to incorporate, and at least one attempt that never reached a vote.

And the story is not yet over. A strong movement is afoot to incorporate again, but there is a coalition in opposition. One informant has suggested that the dichotomy goes back to the Salt War of 1877 when the town was divided into two factions. On one side was the so-called “mob” which fought for what it felt was its right to salt – a right being suppressed by the laws of the new rulers of a different culture. The “law-and-order” faction felt that it was patriotically upholding the established statutes. It is said that the people making up the factions in the present-day incorporation/anti-incorporation forces are the same ones that opposed each other in 1877. Each group believes that it had the best interests of the town in mind then, and is convinced that it does so today. Resolution is certainly nowhere in sight.

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NOTES

1. Katherine H. White, "The Pueblo de Socorro Grant," Master's Thesis, Texas Western College, 1961. UTEP Library, 118; El Paso County Commissioners Court Minutes, Book 6: 250; El Paso *Times*, 30 Jan 1889, 1; UTEP Library Special Collections hold most of the minutes of the San Elizario incorporations.
2. Microfilm: Session Laws of American States and Territories: Texas, 1846-1899, M4, 1450, Chapter XLII, 83-93. "Laws Passed by the First Legislature of the State of Texas."
3. Minutes of the Civil and Criminal Municipal Court of San Elizario, Estado de Texas, Condada del Paso, Book 3, 1864-1881, A1-13.
4. Revised Statutes of Texas; Adopted by the Regular Session of the 16th Legislature. 1879; Title XVII, Ch. 11, 87-90.
5. C.C., Book 1: 58.
6. *Ibid.*, 58, 64, 73, 77.
7. Minutes, Book 3: A1-35.
8. Deed Records of El Paso County, Book 1: 589-90
9. Minutes, Book 4: A2-65.
10. *Ibid.*, A2-78, 97-98, 101.
11. C. C., Book 2: 254-55; Minutes, Book 4: A2-108-109; EPT, 28 Apr 1885, 4; 29 Apr 1885, 1.
12. C. C., Book 2: 577, 589; EPT, 2 Dec 1887, 5.
13. C. C., Book 2: 589, 642.
14. *Ibid.*, 657.
15. White, "Socorro," 128-30; C. C., Book 2: 704; EPT, 30 Jan 1889, 1.
16. Minutes, Book 4: A2-109, 114, 117, 133, 137.
17. *Ibid.*, 299-300.
18. C. C., Book 3: 382; Minutes, Book 4: A2-139-146, 152.
19. *Ibid.*, 442; Revised Statutes, 87-90; El Paso *Evening Tribune*, 28 Apr 1892, 1.
20. C. C., Book 3: 442.
21. *Ibid.*, 460; El Paso *Evening Tribune*, 28 Jun 1893: 3. The Commissioners discovered in November that the county owed the corporation \$3.00. It was returned (Book 3: 500). UTEP Special Collections at one time held minutes for this incorporation; records were lost, but a listing suggests it existed from 1893-1897.
22. C. C., Book 6: 250, 272-73.
23. San Elizario Minutes for Town Council Meeting, Jan 19, 1907-Jun 6, 1908: 1.
24. *Ibid.*, 4.
25. *Ibid.*, 11-17, 26-27.
26. C. C., Book 6: 497, 499-500; Minutes, 1: 26-7, 89, 94-99.
27. Minutes, Book 2, Corporation of the Town of San Elizario, Jul 18, 1908-Nov 1, 1911: 27, 41.
28. *Ibid.*, 67-68.
29. *Ibid.*, 68-70.
30. C. C., Book 8: 181-82, 204, 209; Minutes, 2: 80, 101-02, 109.
31. White, "Socorro," 131; C. C., Book 11: 532.
32. EPT, 8 Jun 1886, B2.
33. *Ibid.*, 6 Mar 1879, B1; 18 May 1879, B3; 19 Jun 1879, B1; 30 Jun 1879, B1; 4 Jul 1879, B3.
34. EPT, 20 Jan 1880, B1.
35. El Paso *Herald-Post*, 23 Mar 1883, A1; EPT, B1.
36. EPT, B1.
37. EPT, 8 Jun 1886, B2; 9 Jul 1886, B1; 7 Aug 1886, B1; 11 Aug 1886, B1.



A Hero's Fleeting Moment in History

By Robert W. Sternaman

A simple military tombstone at Fort Bliss National Cemetery in El Paso bears the inscription:

*William J. Johnson
QM Sgt. Co H
49 Regt US VOL INF
November 23 1873
November 7 1956*

Johnson, an African-American born in Charles County, Maryland, was a long-time resident of El Paso and resided in this city at the time of his death. A fleeting reference to Johnson by his full name is found in **Black Jack: The Life & Times of John J. Pershing** by Frank E. Vandiver.¹ In this biography of the General, Vandiver identifies him as the "faithful William Johnson" who was involved in the rescue of the General's six-year-old son, Warren, from the fire which killed Pershing's wife and three daughters on August 27, 1915, at the Presidio, San Francisco. Warren was the sole survivor of the Pershing family. At the time of the fire, Gen. Pershing was assigned to Fort Bliss in command of the 8th Infantry Brigade. Adding to the tragedy was the fact that his family had been scheduled to depart the Presidio and join him at Fort Bliss only a few days subsequent to the fire. Johnson's own account of the fire stated that he and a fireman climbed a ladder to Warren's bedroom, where he rescued the youngster and carried him back down the ladder to safety. This was after the bodies of Mrs. Pershing and the three daughters had been removed.²

William Johnson emerged from this tragedy as something of a fleeting hero, and it appears that Pershing was eternally grateful to Johnson for saving his son's life inasmuch as part of

Johnson's future life seemed to be connected to the General's. An examination of Johnson's life as it can best be reconstructed will demonstrate that he is deserving of a much greater recognition than he has been afforded.

During the 1970s, Bob McNellis, an El Paso businessman, bought an army trunk bearing the name "John J. Pershing." Inside was a handful of personal papers belonging to William J. Johnson. The trunk itself generated a considerable amount of interest, and was soon sold to a collector of militaria who apparently had no interest in the contents.

The papers remained in McNellis' possession for about twenty years, until he graciously loaned them to this author. Of particular interest is the original document which appointed Johnson as a sergeant in Company H, 49th Regiment, Infantry, U.S. Volunteers, a "colored" regiment, on October 30, 1899 at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. It was executed by Colonel William H. Beck, the regimental commander. Mark Kolbaum of the Jefferson Barracks Historic Park, St. Louis, Missouri, disclosed that this regiment was mustered at Jefferson Barracks on September 22, 1899, with Lt. Col. Arthur C. Ducat in command. By the end of October 1899, all twelve companies totaling 1,431 personnel had been formed. On November 15, Companies A through H proceeded to the Presidio of San Francisco for training.³

Earlier that year, President McKinley had authorized the organization of twenty-four regiments of volunteer infantry and cavalry for service in the Philippine Insurrection. The 48th and 49th Regiments were, at the time, the most racially integrated regiments in the U.S. Army. Company officers were African-American, as were all enlisted men. The captains and lieutenants had been selected from among the noncommissioned officers of the Regular Army's African-American regiments and from among African-American volunteers who had served during the Spanish-American war. Field grade officers often had service in the Army's black units. For example, Colonel Beck had served with the famed *buffalo soldiers* of the 10th Cavalry, and Lt. Col. Ducat as a captain with the 24th Infantry – the "Last of the Black Regulars." Gen. Pershing also had served with the 10th Cavalry as a first lieutenant.

It is unknown why Johnson was made a sergeant. It might have been due to some special skills or prior army service. He was almost twenty-six years old at the time of his appointment, but nothing in the papers he left suggests earlier service.

The 49th Regiment arrived in Manila in January 1900, and was assigned to the Department of Northern Luzon. Johnson and his regiment proceeded to Aparri, located in the province of Cagayan. Johnson could have seen action here as War Department reports describe a number of engagements fought there; the most serious occurred in March, west of Aparri.

Johnson received his discharge from the 49th Infantry on May 23, 1901 at Aparri, and he remained in the Philippines as a civilian employee of the Quartermaster Department (later known as the Corps). He worked at Echague, Isabela, Luzon from May 24, 1901 until January 19, 1902. From here on, Johnson's papers are sparse as to his activities. During 1908, he was at Camp John Hay, Baquio, and at Fort William McKinley in Manila, still with the Quartermaster Department. By June 1913, he was working in Zamboanga on the southwestern coast of Mindanao. By then, Johnson basically had traveled and worked in the entire length of the Philippine Islands.

Johnson departed the Philippines on December 15, 1913, as a civilian employee on the U.S. Army transport *Sherman*.⁵ It is perhaps no coincidence that his departure coincided with that of Pershing and his family. The General had spent most of his Philippine service in Zamboanga and Johnson might have come to his attention there. In any event, the *Sherman* arrived in San Francisco on January 13, 1914. Johnson's immediate movements there are unknown, but by the time of the fire, he was employed by the Pershings. Among Johnson's papers is a letter postmarked Manila, P. I., January 14, 1915, and addressed to him at Fort D. A. Russell, and not San Francisco, which would suggest that he became known to Pershing while in Zamboanga. It is also possible that Mrs. Pershing might have had something to do with Johnson finding employment at Fort D. A. Russell (now Francis E. Warren Air Force Base) inasmuch as her father, for whom the base was named, was then a Senator from Wyoming. However, nothing is known of Johnson's activities there.

On March 9, 1916, Pancho Villa conducted the famous raid on Columbus, New Mexico and the United States responded within a few days by sending a punitive force under the command of General Pershing into Mexico to pursue Villa and break up his forces.

When Johnson was again employed by General Pershing is unknown; however, he was with him on the Punitive Expedition. Two of Johnson's papers of particular interest consist of a note dated June 19, 1916 at "Headquarters Exp" (Colonia Dublan,

Chihuahua) to the Camp Quartermaster signed by ADC (aide-de-camp) Lt. [illegible], which instructed the former to issue rations to Pershing's mess for twelve men for five days.⁶ The second is the dinner menu for the Division Mess for July 4, 1916; it is typewritten with handwritten notations, the latter possibly in the handwriting of Johnson.⁷ Nothing more can be learned from Johnson's papers about his activities during the Punitive Expedition, but it can be surmised he was near Pershing the entire time.

At the end of the expedition, Pershing went on to command the expeditionary forces in Europe during World War I, and at the time of his retirement in 1924, was Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. He never returned to the El Paso area. Johnson returned in early 1917 and began working at the El Paso Quartermaster Depot, and then at the Post Quartermaster at Fort Bliss. He retired on or about May 22, 1939.⁸

A letter addressed to Johnson at 3328 Oro St., in El Paso and dated August 15, 1947 is from Sam D. Young, then president of the El Paso National Bank. Young thanks him for his "very generous donation to the New Providence Memorial Hospital Building Fund."⁹

Though an ordinary man, William Johnson should be remembered as an American who served his country well, risked his life to save another, and supported his community. He deserves to be remembered by El Pasoans.

NOTES

1. Frank E. Vandiver, *BLACK JACK: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN J. PERSHING*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1971.
2. "Man Who Saved Pershing's Son Now Lives in Retirement Here," *El Paso Times*, July 27, 1947.
3. Interview, Mark Kolbaum, Jefferson Barracks Historic Park, St. Louis, Missouri, February 18, 1993.
4. Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1900. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900.
5. William J. Johnson letter in possession of author.
6. Note in possession of author.
7. Menu in possession of author.
8. William J. Johnson document in possession of author.
9. Letter to William J. Johnson from Sam D. Young dated August 15, 1947 in possession of author.

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With pine trees atop the awnings of The Popular Dry Goods Co., the photograph captures the Christmas rush on E. San Antonio St. circa late 1930s. Taken at the intersection of San Antonio & Stanton, the photo shows J. C. Penney Co.; adjacent are J.J. Newcomb's Shop, Given Bros Shoe Co., and Mode O'Day. Across the street are the Truett and The Popular. In the distance is the Hotel Paso Del Norte. The unique building on N. Mesa and E. San Antonio is the LITTLE CAPLES BUILDING, a Trosper structure, built in 1910, and demolished in 1941. Photo courtesy El Paso County Historical Society.

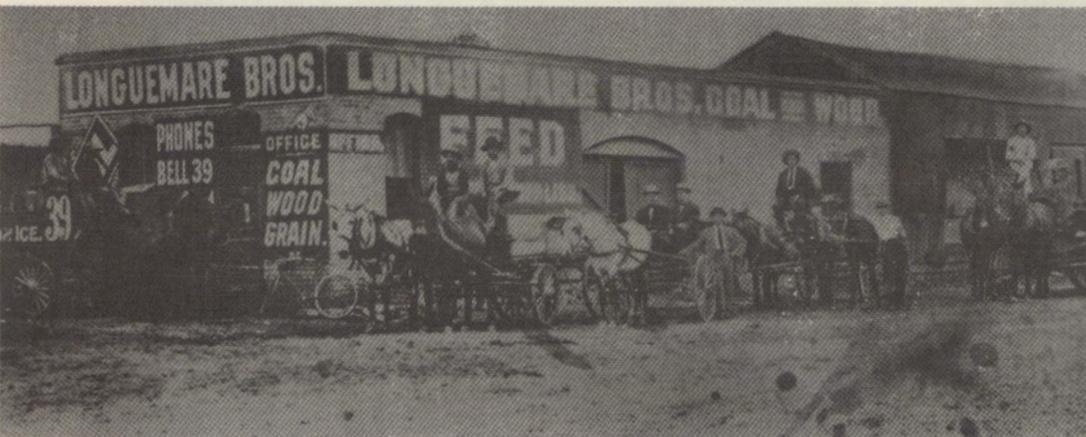


ographer catches the
section of E. San
berry, Mryon,
-Value Dress Shop
five-story building
ost & Trost struc-
y Historical Society.



ABOVE: "Papa left us many unusual legacies, including...the ability to survive on our own in the wilderness." Pictured L to R are Robert Neal, Charlie Hight, and R. Noel Longuemare, Sr., skillet in hand and coffee pot at his side. Photo courtesy Joanne D. Ivey

BELOW: "Carl and I opened up the fuel and feed store determined to undersell our veteran competitors." Photo courtesy Joanne D. Ivey





Fields of Endeavor

By R. Noel Longuemare, Sr.,
with Joanne D. Ivey

Introduction by Lillian Collingwood

Presented in the following pages is *Password's* third and final section of selected excerpts from the book-length, unpublished memoirs of El Pasoan R. Noel Longuemare, Sr. (1880-1972). Titled "Kernal's Boys: Recollections by the Rio Grande," the memoirs were composed with the assistance of Joanne D. Ivey in the mid-1960s, when Mr. Longuemare was in his eighties, and they record the author's remembrances of the first thirty years of his life: 1880-1910.

As the reader may recall, the first section of the memoirs appeared in the Summer 1992 *Password* under the title "A Boy's View of El Paso, 1888-1889." This section opens with the author's memories of his early childhood in Socorro, New Mexico, where his father, Confederate Colonel Charles Longuemare (affectionately known as "Kernal") was a mining engineer and the publisher of a mining journal, *The Bullion*. It goes on to tell of the Kernal's decision to move his journal and his family to the prospering town of El Paso in the summer of 1888. And promptly from this point, the reader is swept into an account of how unforgettable was that first year of El Paso residence for the Kernal's Boys: Noel, eight years old, and his brother Carl, who was nine.

It was a year so vividly recollected by octogenarian Noel Longuemare, Sr., that *Password* readers were able to enjoy and visualize young Noel's El Paso of that time: a booming railroad center "bounded by the muddy banks of the Rio Grande on south and west, by the rocky cliffs of the Franklin Mountains on the north, and on the east by brush-covered bosque." As remembered, it was a town vibrating with throngs of new arrivals and boasting such breathtaking features as the Grand Central Hotel ("a large white building with...plaster arches decorating the front"), a "Great big" City Hall, the "brand new" Sheldon Block ("a skyscraper four stories high" constructed of "bright red brick"), tree-lined San Antonio Avenue ("the nicest residential section") and in the center of everything "a large park" complete with "an exquisite emerald

carpet" and a "white bandstand." To the Kernal's Boys, the El Paso of 1888-1889 offered not only visual splendors but also opportunities for joyous excursions and high adventure: frolicking at Rand's Grove ("where the river formed a deeper-than-usual little bend"), finding a human skull one sunny afternoon "in the sand-hill at the end of Santa Fe Street," which – according to a new-found chum – "used to be some kind of old burial ground," catching pigeons under the cornice of the St. Charles Hotel and selling them to the Chinese restaurants. Even attending school in a make-shift, one-room building was a pleasant routine.

The second section of Mr. Longuemare's memoirs appeared in the Spring 1994 *Password* and was titled "Growing Up with El Paso in the Late 19th Century." This section – again, as the reader may recall – describes the most memorable events in the author's life during the decade 1890-1900. For ten-year-old Noel, the decade substantially began in September, 1890, when the Kernal suffered a serious injury which left him physically weakened and in constant pain. The section describes how the Kernal's Boys hastened to supplement their father's diminishing income, first by assisting in *The Bullion* office and then as delivery boys for the *El Paso Times*, and how their growth toward maturity accelerated when their father lost his "beloved *Bullion*" in late 1894. Soon afterwards, the Kernal's Boys left school to become the family's principal breadwinners – Carl taking up the trade of bookbinding and Noel finding employment at the El Paso Smelter (the name applied locally to the Consolidated Kansas City Smelting and Refining Company).

Although the family's adversities played a major role in Mr. Longuemare's life during the 1890s, he did not neglect to record the lighter, brighter side of his coming-of-age years. He and Carl were members of the Impromptu Club, "a group for teen-age boys" which gave parties and dances for the fashionable "younger set." He often escorted one or another of El Paso's pretty young ladies to these social functions and greatly enjoyed "whirling about to the music of Concha's Orchestra." Memorable too were the "musical entertainments" provided by the McGinty Club. And "there was always time for ice cream at Potter and White's Drugstore."

Running alongside the author's story of his passage to manhood is the story of El Paso's gradual transition from slapdash frontier townhood toward orderly, responsible cityhood. As remembered, this transition was neither steady nor easy, civic improvements rarely keeping pace with the rapid rate of population growth. Furthermore, the process of reform was sometimes compromised by "that other...[and] more publicized side of life on the Border": widespread open gambling, for instance, as well as the "flourishing business [of] prostitution" and six-shooters notoriously at the ready.

Now *Password* is pleased to publish Joanne D. Ivey's selected excerpts from the final chapters of "Recollections by the Rio Grande," recollections which focus on the young adulthood of the Longuemare brothers and their . . .

Fields of Endeavor

The early days of the new century gave no indication of the great changes that would occur in our lives before its first decade was over. For me, days at the smelter were running smoothly along, almost imperceptibly becoming weeks, months, years. Since becoming T. S. Austin's secretary, I had developed a great admiration for the business as well as the man. A lifelong career at the smelter was my dream, but not a secretarial one, of course. Already I was doing all of the metallurgical bookkeeping in the operating department, but my ambition didn't stop there. Gold and silver shipments were processed by the assayers, while lead and copper were handled by the chemists. A first-rate chemist! Smelter chemist might well seem an impossible goal for a boy who had never finished high school, but Carl and I were not lacking in educational opportunity. Even after we became full-time working men, my father and mother insisted that we continue our academic work at home. Every evening Papa would sit down to guide us through that world of knowledge so dear to him: mathematics, literature, grammar, both English and French, the basics of metallurgy and chemistry, even some history. Later on I became very interested in algebra and geometry and every day I would stop at the home of our old friends the O'Keefes, who lived in one of the big houses at the site of Old Fort Bliss. There Miss Margaret tutored me in those subjects; and I also learned some shorthand in the house where Juan Hart was born and reared.* So I felt quite certain that when the time came, I would be ready to train as smelter chemist.

Life was never dull at the smelter. Though the kind of work done there precluded any great refinement about the smelter itself with its dusty workrooms, great slag heaps, and tall smokestacks, the company strove nevertheless to provide some niceties for its workers. A little street, about a half-mile long, was laid out there, with some twenty houses for the officials standing neatly along it. At the very end was a beautiful frame house for the manager. For the workers, there were a reading room and music room close by, as well as a recreation hall for billiards and pool, and even a baseball diamond outside. And the smelter always had wonderful doctors for the employees. Dr. Schuster was of course one of El Paso's finest. And none better than Henry

* This building now houses the Hacienda Restaurant. [Ed]

Towne Safford could be found anywhere. The nephew of Robert S. Towne, Sr., smelter founder, he was still quite young when he came to the El Paso Smelter in the early 1900s.

The smelter was not the only growing industry in the city. There were all sorts of enterprises, big and small, vying for a foothold in the growing community. One of these was the tin mine, a very small prospect in the Franklin Mountains on the east near McKelligon Canyon, long abandoned. A group of young men, including Charlie Davis, the Mayor's son, Norvel Rand, George Bovee, and Fred Stevenson, went to Mr. Charles Morehead, president of the State National Bank, with a plan to work the old mine. Mr. Morehead organized a mining company, and the young men worked it for awhile – until they made a foolish mistake. According to George Bovee, they went on a big spree one night, drinking and driving about town in the little car the company had bought. For their grand finale, they drove the car up the steps of Allie St. Clair's fancy bawdy house, wrecking the car and their precarious future in El Paso's great tin mine.

A man named Shirley Brown started the El Paso Tannery around 1895, with the idea of curing hides with *Cana Aigre*, a tuber much like a yam with a high tannic acid content. Situated out in the bosque past Cotton Avenue, right next to Rand's Grove, the terribly smelly place produced a beautiful, light-colored leather. For some reason, the business folded up after a while. Another industry that flourished briefly was Abe Munsenberger's Soap Factory. There they turned the natural cleanser, *amole*, a product of the yucca plant, commonly called "soapweed," into an excellent soap.*

The tornillo wood enterprise was also of short duration. Two men, one named Robinson, later a Mayor of the city, and a Mr. Ross, bought up all the land around Tornillo, a small farm community about thirty miles east of El Paso. They cut most of the wood from the tough *tornillo* trees which flourished around there. The Chinese restaurants and the hotel kitchens paid twice as much as usual for the dense wood. At seven dollars a cord for four-foot pieces of two-to-three inches in diameter, it would get hotter and last longer than other varieties.

The harvesting of Prairie Grass Hay was a great enterprise for some time, as long as the grass lasted and as long as people

* According to Dr. Richard Worthington, Associate Professor of Biology at the University of Texas at El Paso, *amole* is technically the product of the desert plant, *agave lechuguilla*. [Ed]

kept horses. Anyone with a wagon and a little ambition could drive out a few miles northwest of new Fort Bliss and cut some of the long, wild prairie grass to sell as feed. But as the years went on, the grass was depleted and the supply moved farther and farther out from town. Then motorization spelled the end of that business too.

Water was an important concern to El Paso inhabitants from the earliest times. Though Sylvester Watts had established the water works and reservoir, that water was at times during the spring floods almost twenty-percent solids. It was muddy and moss-covered on the first level of the reservoir, not quite so bad on the next, and almost fit for domestic use on the last level. There was a mosquito problem, of course, and the moss was a menace. People who had money bought the crystal-clear water hauled in first from Samalayuca, Mexico, and later from Deming, New Mexico, in the early days. Then some private individuals drilled wells out near new Fort Bliss where the water was good. Horse-drawn water tanks became a familiar part of the El Paso scene, the drivers delivering pure water at five cents a bucket to regular customers.

There was the Gas Company, of course, as well as the Electric Company, and also the Foundry and all the myriad merchandising and service enterprises necessary for the maintenance of the expanding population.

Street peddlers were a common sight. I remember well Mr. LeRoche, the vegetable peddler. He had a small place up north near the New Mexico line and came to town with his produce every week or so. One of the most unusual wares was that of Joe Johannson, a rancher who lived for a while in the only house at Montoya, a few miles upriver from El Paso. He moved later to Cloudcroft, New Mexico, a favorite mountain retreat of El Pasoans even then. In the late fall and winter, Joe would drive down from Cloudcroft with a load of wild turkeys in his big double-bed wagon. To keep his kill fresh, he'd place some of the birds on a layer of snow, then on another layer of snow another layer of birds, and so on. The wild turkeys averaged ten to fifteen pounds each. Stationed at the southwest corner of El Paso and San Antonio Streets, Joe put up a crude sign: WILD TURKEYS, \$1.00 APIECE. He might have a hundred or more, but he'd sell every one in short order. El Paso was buying.

My father had his own little trade at home, for by now he had become completely house-bound. Right back to where he

had started so long ago in Tiptonville, Tennessee, he was once more a teacher. Among the pupils who came to our house were some old friends from Socorro who had also emigrated to El Paso. Paul Gallagher (later to become one of El Paso's finest doctors) and his sister Monica took piano lessons. Some of Judge F. B. Buchanan's children were piano pupils too, if I remember right. I wish I had a list of all the young people who learned French and music from my father. It would certainly form an interesting little Who's Who of early El Paso.

But Papa was growing weaker each day, and soon was unable to accept any pupils. Then, on October 16, 1904, our beloved Kernal passed away at the Hotel Dieu Hospital.

Soon after Papa's death, there were rumors at the smelter. A new regime was coming. Certain rules were being revised. They were going to fire everyone. All kinds of wild conjectures were being made, but I didn't pay too much attention. New regulations were indeed on their way, however, and when the moment of truth came, I took notice of just one. Henceforward, the position of smelter chemist would require a high school diploma and preferably evidence of even more advanced formal education. Just when the prize had been almost won, it was snatched forever from my reach.

My brother Carl understood my disappointment. He knew that for almost ten years I had worked steadily toward this one goal while he himself had moved restlessly from one position to another in an effort to advance in the world of business. Now he had a plan he felt would benefit us both. A great opportunity lay in the fuel and feed-supply business, he told me. As a team we couldn't help but succeed. With my acumen for figures and his penchant for drumming up business, we could surely give the already-existing feed and fuel houses a run for their money. Carl was very convincing. So with mixed feelings, I said good-bye to my associates at the smelter and became an independent businessman.

Owen White and Will Wise were doing a land-office business in wholesale hay, feed, and fuel. Free from serious competition, they easily bagged the biggest account in town, the Fort Bliss provisions, each year. In 1905 Carl and I opened Longuemare Brothers Feed and Fuel in a big warehouse just a few doors away from White and Wise. We posed the first threat to their comfortable position, and I don't think they appreciated us at all, but

we were young and ambitious. We made a bid for the Fort Bliss account the very first year. When we won, I don't know who was more surprised, we or our competitors. It was a good start. We bought another team of mules out at Fort Bliss and took our place among the thriving businesses of El Paso. We carried all kinds of accounts, from the tremendous Army contract to small orders for fuel for homes and offices.

One of our more famous customers was Mr. Pat Garrett. He handled the purchasing of fuel for the Customs Stations along the border at the time, for he was in charge of United States Customs in El Paso. His offices were in a big building across the street from the Sheldon Hotel. Courteous, polite, tall and straight as a poker, he was a real gentleman. It was hard to believe people glamorized him as the gunman who had killed the notorious New Mexico outlaw known as Billy the Kid.

A strange chain of events led to the end of our career as city businessmen. It all started, I guess, with the 1907 New Year's Fox Hunt and Grand Ball held at the Juárez ranch and home of German Consul Max Weber and his wife. Formerly the property of Dr. Alexander, an El Paso physician whose vineyards and winery had been located there, the lovely place had become a popular setting for the sparkling gatherings of social-minded El Pasoans. Through the El Paso Social Club, I was invited to attend this affair as the escort of Mrs. W. H. Tilton, a highly social creature whose husband didn't share her enthusiasm for large stylish parties. There I met her daughter's fiance, Kenneth D. Oliver, who had a ranch near Anthony, a little community spanning the Texas-New Mexico line just north of El Paso.

A few months later I became very grateful for this young man's acquaintance. While on a hunting trip near Chamberino, New Mexico, with two friends, we were unjustly arrested for shooting quail out of season. The judge in Chamberino slapped us with a fifty-dollar fine, an amount far exceeding our on-the-spot resources. We were trying to persuade him to let one of us go to El Paso for the money when who should ride up and bail us out but this same Kenneth Oliver. Word of our predicament had somehow reached him at his nearby ranch.

Oliver then invited us to his ranch, and we had a very pleasant visit there. I really liked the place. It had a nice house and good barn, plenty of trees and fertile fields. Oliver knew I was impressed. I guess that's why he came to Carl and me a

few weeks later when he himself was in financial difficulties. He rushed into our store and asked us whether we would consider leasing his ranch, explaining that his father had cut off his allowance and that he had no way of meeting his expenses.

The idea attracted us, so much so that within a day or two Carl went to the ranch and inspected it thoroughly. He was as impressed as I had been. Ever the opportunist, he saw Oliver's offer as an entrance to a new field of enterprise. With the way things were developing on the industrial front, we both realized the feed business wasn't going to last forever. Farming had never been done on a grand scale in this arid climate, but Papa had always believed in the future of agriculture as big business in the Southwest – from what we saw at Oliver's, we began to believe he may have been right.

We didn't hesitate for long. Taking everything into consideration, it seemed the thing to do. Neither Carl nor I were married. There was only Mama at home now. And she was all for it. From the moment we mentioned our plan, she began dreaming of a yard full of chickens and ducks, of the cozy farmhouse scenes that had brightened her own childhood. When we leased the place for three years, she was ready with a name for it. "We'll call our farm Meadowmere," she announced.

In short order we made our arrangements. Carl would remain in El Paso to manage the fuel and feed store until things were settled on the farm. To help me with the settling-in, we hired a man named Charlie Hight, a newcomer from Georgia whose great ambition, said he, was to be a "real westerner." Well, on the very day of the move to Meadowmere, Charlie got an initiation into the Real West – in grand style.

Kenneth Oliver accompanied Charlie and me to the ranch. When we arrived that afternoon, we were greeted by a crowd of eighteen or twenty workers on horseback waiting inside the locked gates for Oliver to bring a tardy payroll. Unlocking the gates, he stood in front of them and made a speech in fluent Spanish, explaining that he hadn't any money. He went on to say that he would give each of them a note for the amount due and pay them as soon as he could earn some cash. This offer didn't go down at all. The men immediately clamored for someone to fetch the sheriff to put a claim against the property – and to put Oliver in jail.

Oliver was becoming increasingly alarmed at this turn of events. He was getting married the next day to Mildred Tilton,

and we had arranged that I would drive him to Anthony after the brief visit to the ranch so that he could take the train back to El Paso. Something had to be done – and fast.

Charlie and I were the only ones with guns, so the two of us forced the workers outside the gates and closed them. A few minutes later, while the men were milling around awaiting the arrival of the sheriff, Charlie opened the gates and Oliver and I ran the team out as hard as we could. The workers chased us all the way to Anthony, where Oliver hopped over the border to Texas and soon caught the train. Miss Tilton would not be left waiting at the church after all.

Within a few weeks of this contretemps, Carl and I felt its repercussions. We found ourselves in dire need of workers. The natives refused to work for us. Meanwhile, Carl had found an old man called Pap Walker to serve as our foreman. He was a real character, somewhat famous throughout the United States as Walk-a-Bob-Bob. In his youth he had walked all over the country. Pap Walker had an idea on how to get a work crew for the farm.

“Why don’t I go down to the Palace Saloon in El Paso and look around a bit? I guarantee I’ll come back with six men to work this place,” he promised.

Sure enough, he returned with six of the toughest characters I’ve ever met. Every one of them had some kind of prison record but they were workers, all right. Without them – and a hired mechanical thresher – we could never have harvested the sixty acres of wheat that Oliver had planted.

We planted Mexican June corn and alfalfa as our main crops the next year. Both were very successful. The corn, in particular, was exceptional, though as novices Carl and I didn’t even realize it. One day as Carl was hauling a wagonload of it to Anthony, a couple of men stopped him to inquire about the crop. Carl gave them a few sample ears. Then they introduced themselves as faculty members of the agricultural college in New Mexico. They took our corn to their fair where it won first prize in its class. That certainly gave a boost to our agricultural ego!

Also, that first year we bought two horses and a double-disk plow. The horses had been sent from Missouri to Mexico for work on the railroad, but had been inspected and condemned for that kind of work. The contractor sold them to us for fifty dollars apiece, and they were two of the best horses in the world. We were doing pretty well as greenhorn farmers with our skeleton crew of condemned horses and wanted men.

Things were going too smoothly, of course. Something was bound to happen. It did. One day a letter arrived from my old Fox Hunt partner, Mrs. Tilton, telling us that Oliver and her little Mildred had returned to El Paso with the thought that it would be very nice to live on Oliver's ranch. Surely we would understand and give up the remainder of our lease so they could move in. As a matter of fact, we had the place in shape, we were beginning to succeed in this new work, we had gotten a good crop in the ground, and we were not in the mood to move. We answered with a polite but firm negative.

The next thing we learned was that Oliver was not in the mood to accept our refusal of his request. A letter from his lawyer informed us that he was suing us for possession on the grounds that we had not fulfilled all the terms of the contract. The charge was utterly frivolous, and when the suit came to court in the nearby community of La Union our attorney (Mr. Reber from the Las Cruces firm of Bonner, Young, and Reber) easily demonstrated that we had faithfully executed every one of our contractual obligations. Oliver lost the suit, and Meadowmere remained our home for two more years.

One other discordant note was struck while we were there, though not nearly as jarring or worrisome as Oliver's suit. Don José Enríques dominated all the land around La Union. In his role as an old-fashioned Spanish grandee, he felt he had a right to take privileges with the lands surrounding his own as well. He had several thousand head of goats, and for years he had run them directly across Oliver's fields. In spite of his friendship for us, he couldn't see any reason to change this arrangement. When we approached him on the subject, he was very friendly about the whole thing but he let us know he had no intention of altering his goatherders' route.

"I hate to have to say this," I told him, "but we're going to have to shoot any goats we find crossing through our crops."

The very next day, some of my men came across a bunch of goats in one of our fields. According to orders, they began to shoot. They killed seventeen of Don José's animals. For the next few weeks Carl and I waited tensely to see what Don José would do. He never retaliated in any way, however. In fact, he was as friendly as ever and never mentioned the incident. But he ran no more goats through Meadowmere.

As the time approached for us to leave the farm, Carl and I began to scout around for another place. We were gradually

liquidating the fuel business and had decided to devote full time to farming. We heard of a piece of land in the valley, about 172 acres, ten miles or so above El Paso. We approached Mr. Joshua Raynolds at the First National Bank, and he sent us to Mr. W. L. Tooley, who had been placed in charge of all the valley land transactions. Mr. Tooley listened attentively as we explained our plans for the property, and he came up with a suggestion that surprised and pleased us.

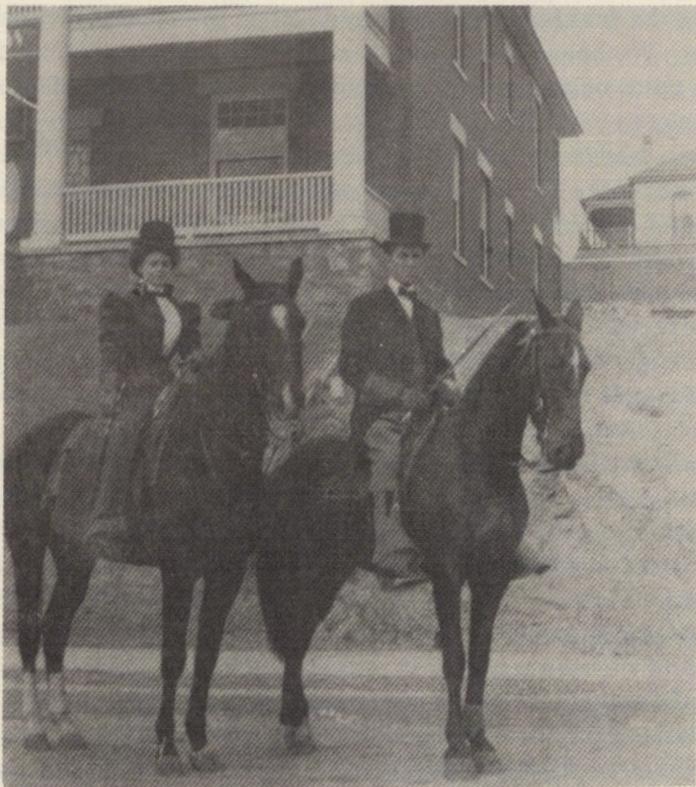
"You know, I've been wanting to get in on some of this valley farming myself," he said. "It's the coming thing. Take me in as a partner and we'll own the place fifty-fifty. I'll give you money for anything you want to do. We'll go first class all the way."

In the next few years we cleared some eight hundred acres located in the upper valley and bisected by the Rio Grande. We also wound up with a number of additional partners: Mr. Raynolds and his son Jack, as well as Edgar Kaiser and Walter Butler (two of Jack's friends). They gave us free rein as far as managing the extensive property. We had a fine team of workers, and we used a boat and cable to transport the men back and forth from one side of the river to the other.

When land promoters Mapel and Baum began developing tracts in the area with Adrian Poole as agent, Carl and I bought 160 acres next to W. H. Aldrich's place near La Union. Seventy-two acres of this land became our homestead on a dirt trail later known as the Borderland Road, for years the main link between El Paso and New Mexico. Here it was that we built Mama the ranch house of her dreams.

The ensuing years found my brother and me always engrossed in some venture or another, together or separately. Real estate and mining led me in one direction, and politics claimed much of Carl's attention. But somehow we always returned to the land. True to the predictions of a wise man known as Kernal, agriculture became one of the richest and most important fields of endeavor in the El Paso Southwest.

JOANNE DWYER IVEY is a general partner in the farming enterprises of James L. Ivey, Ltd. A "transplanted New Englander," she moved to El Paso in 1960 as a teacher for the Catholic Diocese. She resides in Clint, Texas, on a farm where she and her husband, James, have reared their seven children; and for many years she has been actively engaged in lower valley civic and cultural affairs.



ABOVE: "Guests wore riding habits, tight-fitting jackets of military red with black skirts and black derbies." Photo courtesy Mrs. Cornelia Owen whose parents, Dr. and Mrs. Jerome Love, are pictured here.

BELOW: Tallyho! The field awaiting the bugle call to announce the Master's command to begin the chase. Photo courtesy Mrs. Cornelia Owen



Happy New Year

A Grand Fox Hunt Entertains Border High Society



The German Vice-Consul at Juárez at the turn of the century was Mr. Max Weber, well-to-do businessman, who wielded great influence on the social and political life of Juárez and El Paso. Sometime before her death in 1972, Mrs. Hugh S. White wrote a letter to the El Paso *Herald-Post's* Society Editor, Ann Carroll, in which she described a mock fox hunt hosted by Weber and "his attractive, much younger wife." Mrs. White recalled, "In 1909, on New Year's day, the Webers gave a mock fox hunt in Juárez and the El Paso guests attended wearing riding habits, tight-fitting jackets of military red with black skirts and black derbies, riding their favorite mounts." The Webers provided horses for those who had no mounts. Quoting from the society editor's account, Mrs. White continued:

"The riders left the city at 1 p.m. so they could arrive at the Weber home, [one of the showplaces in Juárez, furnished with magnificent pieces, lovely tapestries, and rugs] at 2 p.m. On approaching the home, guests saw a beautiful arch which shone in the distance and above which stretched an immense piece of canvas banked with greens. Beneath was printed: HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"Riders awaited impatiently the bugle call for starting the hunt. One piece after another was played filling the riders with ambitious thoughts for the prize which was to be awarded. At last, the bugle resounded and off dashed the riders. The spectators anxiously awaited at the appointed spot for the return of the 'fox' who was Mr. Sig Schwabe. The riders kept track of the 'fox' trail via scattered bits of paper. After an hour and a half, he was spied and the race cross-country began. At last Dr. Hugh S. White was the winner of the fox tail as he was the first rider to take it from Mr. Schwabe's coat.

"Refreshments were served in the Weber home and punch was served all afternoon. Mrs. Weber awarded a [silver] loving cup to Dr. White."*

*Dr. Hugh S. White was inducted into the Society's Hall of Honor in 1971; a brief account of the hunt is found in the tribute. (*Password* Vol. 16, Winter, 1971) [Ed]

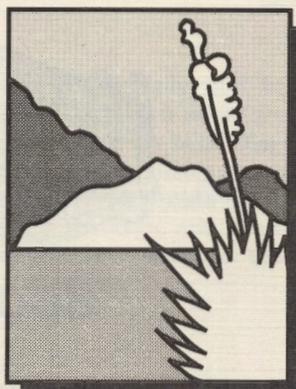
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Editor's Note

The past two years have slipped by and, like the old saying goes, I don't know where the time went. Editing your journal has been a challenge and a learning experience. I am indebted to the members of the EDITORIAL BOARD for their assistance in read-



ing and editing manuscripts, proof-reading, preparing the index, editing Spanish copy, and with all the tasks that go with book reviews. Special thanks go to DENISE MANKIN, who has patiently labored over the copy I took her, and with her magic computer wand and skill, transformed it into "a thing of beauty."

One of the most pleasant opportunities associated with being editor was getting to know the contributors – although making their acquaintance is mostly by letter or by telephone – it is, nevertheless, satisfying. Editing *Password* has also given me new insights into this region's history and taken me on journeys to ghost towns, mountain ranges, cemeteries, churches, and to nooks and crannies of the local libraries, whose staffs were always ready to assist me.

It is my pleasure to introduce you briefly to DR. JAMES M. DAY, *Password's* new editor. Dr. Day is well-known to the Society as a former president, 1982 and 1983. He has had a distinguished career as an academician, historian, archivist, museum director, and author. An editor, book reviewer, director of distinguished societies, he currently is a part-time Instructor of English at the El Paso Community College, and the administrator of the Mary L. Peyton Foundation.

As I write this, it is a beautiful crisp fall morning, reminding me of a poem Helen Hunt Jackson, a transplanted Southwesterner, wrote many years ago, the first line of which is "October's bright, blue sunny skies." They make one forget the dreadful hot days of summer, the dusty winds of spring, and the chilling blasts of winter. Days like this are a perfect setting for remembering, appreciating, and writing about "The Wonderful Country," as Tom Lea would name it. Here's to a great new year!

– CPH



Book Reviews

TOM LEA, AN ORAL HISTORY edited by Rebecca Craver and Adair Margo. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1995. \$50.00

It is nothing new to point to artist and writer Tom Lea as one of El Paso's great treasures. There have been earlier books by and about Lea, but none that strike the chord of honesty and sense of personality that is evident on every page of **TOM LEA: AN ORAL HISTORY**.

Rarely does an interviewer find a more interesting and articulate subject than Lea. Both as artist and writer Lea trained himself to observe, and his lucid memory recreates scene after scene from his life. The detail is amazing; sounds, smells, colors, all recounted with inimitable skill.

Adair Margo was the perfect interviewer, already familiar with the Lea family and herself well versed in the arts. One suspects she was able to draw out a more intimate account from Lea than would have been possible by other interviewers.

Born in 1907, Lea's life has spanned virtually the entire 20th century. His recollections of boyhood experiences in El Paso are tantalizingly vivid. He trained as a muralist in Chicago with John Norton, learning craftsmanship which enabled him to realize the images of great power which form the murals which launched his career in the 1930s.

World War II brought another leap forward in his career, as he was hired by *Life* magazine to record in ink and paint the personalities and experiences of that catastrophic time. After the war he turned to writing, producing books such as **The Wonderful Country** and **The King Ranch** which are and will remain classics of Southwestern literature.

He returned to painting, primarily paintings of this stark, elemental desert landscape in which we live. His works sold themselves, he says; friends and acquaintances would see them in progress in his studio, and buy them before they were even finished. He relates this with a mild sense of wonder that reveals much about Lea the man. The combination of stature as artist and writer, along with such unassuming modesty, is the very essence of this man.

People are obviously important to Lea, both his family and his many friends. He speaks of J. Frank Dobie, Carl Hertzog, Bob Kleberg, Charlie Leavell, and many, many others who obviously have been influential figures in his life.

There is a relationship between Lea's feel for people and his love of the Southwestern landscape. This is his home, in a sense few of us ever experience (it does not come automatically with being born here). Lea as a young man returned to El Paso, to his home, drawn by the sort of ties that should never be broken. How fortunate for us that he did, and how wonderful that Tom Lea, Adair Margo, and Becky Craver have given us this book as a permanent tribute to the man who has left his own visual record of this, his home and ours.

MARY A. SARBER
El Paso Public Library

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY TEXAS by Lucy Miller Jacobson and Mildred B. Nored. Fort Davis Historical Society, 1993. \$50.00

The authors of this hefty tome have produced a splendid county history from before recorded time to the present, including the families who have made Jeff Davis County their home from 1854 to 1954. Unlike most works of this type which line library genealogy department shelves, it is evident that this book has been carefully researched and is well-written. Complete with detailed bibliographies, it is an attractive volume that is a pleasure to read and can easily serve as a model for counties nationwide to follow. In addition to a clear, concise history of the region, it includes information about a wide range of early settlers – from Black cowboys, Mexican immigrants, and Jewish merchants to the families of wealthy bankers and ranchers. It is well worth the \$50 price (plus \$6 shipping) and can be obtained from L. M. Jacobson, P.O. Box 271, Fort Davis, TX 79734, with a check payable to the Fort Davis Historical Society.

MARY ANN PLAUT
Librarian, Lydia Patterson Institute

BOER SETTLERS IN THE SOUTHWEST by Brian M. du Toit. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1995. Southwestern Studies Series No. 101, paper, \$12.50

Just when we think that every racial and ethnic group that settled in the Southwest has been written about, here comes a monograph on yet another group. How many of us would have suspected that there were "Boers" among us, South Africans of Dutch or Huguenot descent? The dictionary tells us that Boer literally means farmers, and that is what the Boers who came to northern Mexico and the Southwest were – farmers, and good ones. Following the Anglo-Boer War which the Boers lost, many, for various reasons, left their homeland, and emigrated to Argentina, East Africa, and Mexico. The latter emigres first settled in Chihuahua, but eventually moved to the Rio Grande Valley, stretching from Las Cruces, New Mexico to Tornillo, Texas, where they established profitable farms, raising mainly grains and vegetables.

The author, raised in the Boer tradition in South Africa, concentrates on two local families who were especially important at the turn of the century. The patriarch of one of these families was General Ben Viljoen. He introduced new methods of farming and irrigation, was active in obtaining statehood for New Mexico, and became involved in the Mexican revolution.

Over time and continuing social contact with their neighbors, the closely-knit ties of the Boer families began to disintegrate and the Texas-New Mexico Boers began to disperse, becoming indistinguishable from their American neighbors. Brian du Toit has done South-western history a favor by preserving as much information about these industrious, solid citizens as he was able to unearth.

CLINTON P. HARTMANN
El Paso, Texas

BLOODY VALVERDE: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, by John Taylor. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. \$29.95

During the summer of 1861 while the early battles of the Civil War were raging in the East, Brig. Gen. Henry Hopkins Sibley, C.S.A., formerly a Brevet Major regular officer in the U.S. Army, caught the ear of President Jefferson Davis.

Sibley, known in the ante-bellum army as "the walking whiskey keg" was a drunk, a fool, and probably a coward, but a wonderful con artist. He convinced Davis that if he were given a command of Texas cavalry he would trek from San Antonio, Texas, west to New Mexico, capture Mesilla and Fort Fillmore, then march north along the Rio Grande and take Albuquerque and Santa Fe. From there he would capture Fort Union and seize the Colorado gold fields, and then head west to bring the Mormons of Utah and even California under the Confederate banner. It was a wonderful dream; however, it turned into a nightmare.

John Taylor, the author and a nuclear engineer at Sandia National Laboratories, tells the tale of this doomed expedition and the Pyrrhic victory at Valverde that drained the Rebel army of badly needed men and supplies.

In clear, straightforward prose, complemented by excellent line drawings, Taylor leads the reader through the moves and counter-moves of the clashing forces.

On February 17, 1862, the Confederate forces camped near Fort Craig, a few miles south of Valverde Ford on the upper Rio Grande, preparing to assault that Union supply depot. On the night of February 20, Captain Paddy Graydon, the most intrepid officer at the fort, had a great idea.

He got two aging mules, loaded artillery shells on their backs, lit fuses and with a whack, sent them trotting toward the river where the Rebel pack train animals were picketed. He thought, when the sacrificial mules blew up, so would the Rebel pack train. The mules

crossed a few yards, then abruptly turned and headed back to their Union masters. Graydon and his men fled in panic as the fuses burnt down and finally exploded. Frightened by the blast, the mules reared, broke their picket lines and ran off into the desert; a serious loss of transport for the Southerners.

The following day the Texans looped around the entrenched fort, took up positions to the north, cutting off Union communications and forcing the garrison to abandon the fort and come out and fight in the open. On February 21, the two little armies clashed in bloody combat. Before the fighting started, Sibley repaired to his tent claiming sickness. Others maintained he was drunk or frightened or both.

Command devolved on Colonel Tom Green, a highly competent commander. After fighting all afternoon the Federal force retreated back to Fort Craig leaving the field to the Texans. The victors had suffered losses of more than ten per cent of their men and 160 mules. After Fort Craig refused to surrender, the Rebels foolishly ignored them and continued to march north.

After taking Santa Fe they moved toward Fort Union, but ran into more Federal troops. They won a tactical victory at Glorieta, but their supply train was burned, leaving them short of food and ammunition, forcing them to retreat to Texas that soon became a rout of half-starved men and animals. Sibley was disgraced; his army decimated. The entire scheme was a fool's errand. It was the stuff of which foolish dreams are made.

DOUGLAS V. MEED
El Paso

INHERIT THE ALAMO: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine, by Holly Beachley Brear. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995. \$19.95.

For over two centuries the Alamo and its grounds have been the target of attacks by marauding Indians, Mexican soldiers, determined treasure hunters, angry Chicano protesters and revisionist historians. The latest assault on the Alamo's ancient walls, and the legends surrounding them, comes from an unlikely source – a professional anthropologist from George Mason University. Author Holly Beachley Brear, a native of San Antonio, is not concerned about determining what actually happened at this famous site in 1836. Instead, what interests her is the manner in which Texans have written about the Alamo in the past and how they construct and define its image today through rituals, ceremonies, parades, and film.

Brear carefully dissects the traditional accounts of the heroic sacrifices made by the Alamo's defenders in March, 1836, by explaining that these patriotic writings developed "a creation myth for Texas as well as the rest of the American Southwest." She then interprets in some detail the extensive religious and cultural symbolism used in such historical depictions. Then Brear moves on to the heart of her study: how modern Texans celebrate and commemorate the Alamo today and how

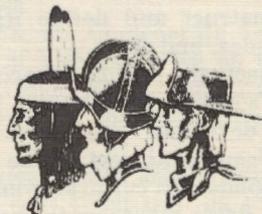
they attempt to advance their own definition of what the Alamo should represent.

The Alamo City's spring *Fiesta San Antonio*, serves as the backdrop for her discussion, since it brings together local groups with different historical and cultural agendas. The role played by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) in preserving the Alamo as a shrine and in controlling access to its "sacred ground" during festivities receives considerable attention. Brear also describes the interests and activities of several other groups, including the Texas Cavaliers, the Order of the Alamo, the Sons of the Republic of Texas, and the San Antonio Living Historians Association.

Many Mexican-Americans in San Antonio do not always feel comfortable with the cultural themes emphasized by such Anglo-dominated groups and sometimes find themselves to be "outsiders" at their own city's celebrations. Brear emphasizes the Alamo's mission heritage and Spanish origins - Hispanics place themselves and their spiritual ancestors in the cultural mainstream while diminishing the role of the DRT. She then describes controversies or incidents which reflect this Anglo-Hispanic struggle to shape local historical memory - whether Clara Driscoll or Adina De Zavala "saved" the Alamo from demolition, the creation of the position of El Rey Feo by LULAC, the movement to honor the memory of Mexican soldiers who also fell at the Alamo, and the controversy over the content of the 1988 IMAX film depicting the famous 1836 battle.

Brear accomplishes her goal of demonstrating that cultural perspectives through which Texans view the present heavily influence how they look at the past. The book reads fairly smoothly and contains relatively little anthropological jargon, although some readers will still find enough to irritate or confuse them. Finally, however, this study clearly demonstrates that the Alamo continues to fascinate Texans regardless of their social or ethnic background.

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