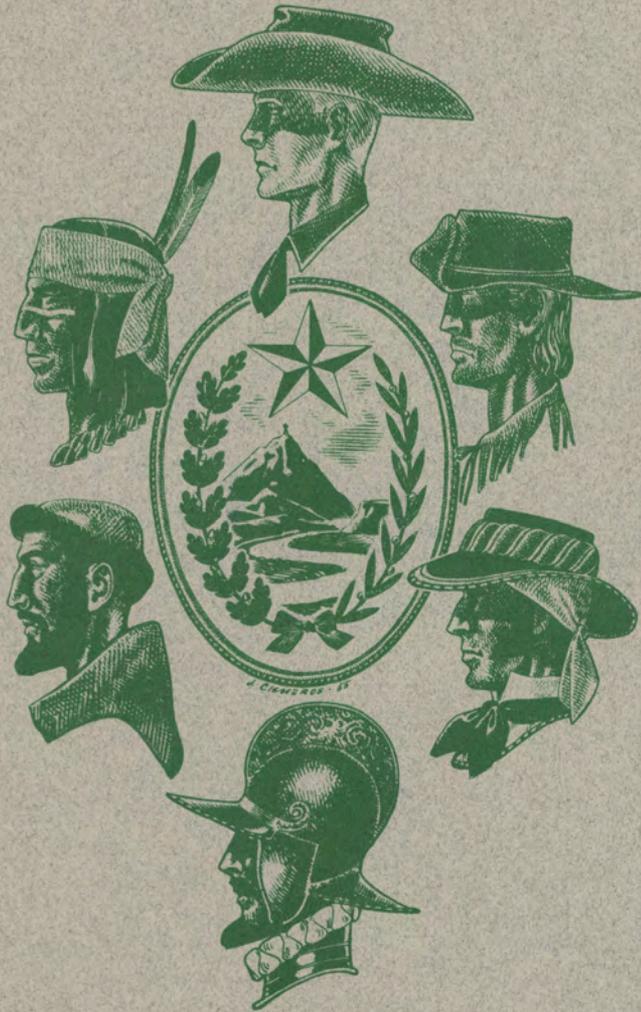


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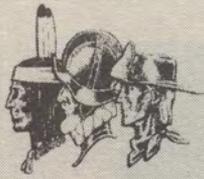
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*Alexandre Daguerre and his wife, Refugio Samaniego, probably a wedding photograph from 1849.*

*All photos with the Daguerre article are courtesy Raymond Daguerre.*

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# Alexandre Daguerre, Pioneer Trader at the Pass of the North

By Nancy Hamilton



ringing with him the good looks with which he was blessed, the young Guillaume Alexandre Daguerre arrived in Mexico at the age of eighteen in 1831. He had left France as a political refugee. His brother, Paul Michel, two years older, had accompanied him to the

Americas but settled in Argentina.<sup>1</sup>

His arrival in northern Mexico was opportune. During the period when trade routes were being developed and the owners of wagon trains were amassing fortunes, he was able to join their ranks, operating mainly from Chihuahua City and Paso del Norte, which became Ciudad Juárez in 1888. Although he was young, Alexandre had a head for business that would enable him to become one of the most important traders in the area.<sup>2</sup>

Mexico had become independent from Spain in 1821, leading American traders to pursue routes to markets in Mexican territory from Santa Fe southward. In 1827 the 800-mile Santa Fe Trail was developed with a departure point at Independence, Missouri which was later moved to the site of the present Kansas City in the 1840s. Mexican officials in Santa Fe charged tariffs and were not above accepting bribes as well. Between 1822 and 1843, Americans paid an average of \$50,000 to \$80,000 in duties and bribes there.<sup>3</sup>

Once the Santa Fe Trail was open, American traders sought even more opportunity by continuing south to Chihuahua City. Josiah Gregg said that during the 1832-1842 decade, half the American traders followed the part of the Camino Real known as the Chihuahua Trail, traveling the additional 600 miles in order to sell their goods there. Under the Treaty of Velasco in 1836, the area north of the Rio Grande had been ceded to the Republic of

Texas, and Texas joined the Union in 1845. Then came the war with Mexico, after which the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established the international boundary at the Rio Grande.<sup>4</sup>

Daguerre arrived on the trading scene when the north-south trade from Santa Fe into Mexico was already well established. As the postwar boundary between the United States and Mexico was being defined, new roads were developed by the military to link El Paso with San Antonio to the east and Fort Yuma to the west. Although few reports of his activities have survived, they indicate that he traveled all these routes as the owner of a thriving freighting business.

His good looks earned him the nickname "guapo francés"—the handsome Frenchman. A strong outdoorsman, he attracted crowds of young women when he brought his wagons into Chihuahua City. He chose as his first wife a Chihuahua girl, Carmen Guerra, who bore their son Alejandro Librado in 1848. Shortly thereafter, Carmen died. The young boy, who had blond hair, resembled his father and was known for his good disposition.

*Several other wagon types came into common use on the trails. The "road wagon," in early use on the Santa Fe Trail, had a bed twelve feet long and three and a half feet wide, two and a half feet deep, and carried 1,000 pounds of cargo.*

The first kind of wagon Daguerre used for transporting goods up the Chihuahua Trail probably was the *carreta*, a slow, ox-drawn vehicle, with a load capacity of 2,000 pounds, which moved on wooden wheels that screeched on wooden axles. It took six months to travel from central Mexico to Santa Fe using *carretas*, which operated not only in Mexico, but could be found along the Santa Fe Trail as far as Kansas City.

Several other wagon types came into common use on the trails. The "road wagon," in early use on the Santa Fe Trail, had a bed twelve feet long and three and a half feet wide, two and a half feet deep, and carried 1,000 pounds of cargo. The Dearborn wagon, drawn by two or four mules, had a front seat for the driver and carried passengers as well as a payload of

five hundred pounds. Joseph Murphy of St. Louis developed the wagon that bore his name, measuring sixteen feet long and six feet high, with rear wheels seven feet in diameter. Later iron tires became available to extend the life of the wheels. The Murphy

could carry five thousand pounds and was drawn by ten or twelve mules or three, four, or six yoke of oxen. The most picturesque transportation was the Conestoga, an adaptation of a German version, with the floor higher in front and back than in the center and sloping outward at the top to prevent shifting of freight on inclines. The body was nearly four feet wide, twelve feet long at the bottom, and sixteen feet long at the top. The wheels stood five feet four inches high. The boat-like outline of the hood covering the vehicle earned for it the soubriquet "Prairie Schooner."<sup>5</sup>

While operating a fleet of freight wagons might bring the owner considerable income, the investment was nearly as impressive. A Murphy-built wagon cost an average of \$130.25 during the years 1840 to 1850. By 1860, a large wagon was priced at \$800 to \$1,500. Mules, which were Daguerre's choice, were adapted to heavy work and could find their own forage along the way. In 1832, a mule cost \$19 in Mexico; by 1841, the rate in Missouri was \$200 to \$400 per animal. Mules had a complex harness that was also expensive, about \$100 per wagon in 1850. In the first month of operation, it took \$29,000 to set out as a trader on the Chihuahua Trail.<sup>6</sup>

Being the owner of the wagon train, Daguerre probably rode his favorite mule much of the time. The mule driver, or muleskinner, walked on the left side of the animals. Caravans of prairie schooners coming through El Paso were drawn by fourteen to eighteen mules, four abreast. Freight charges were twelve and a half to fifteen cents per pound. As many as forty men, including the drivers, well armed against Indian attacks would be part of the company. Prices of goods, once they reached El Paso, reflected the shipping charges: a kitchen stove in the early 1860s cost \$125; coffee, 75¢ per pound; sugar, 60¢ per pound; lard, 40¢ per pound; nails, 50¢ per pound; tobacco, \$2 per pound; and alcohol, \$8 per gallon.<sup>7</sup>

The day's travel started as teams were hitched to wagons. The wagon master, who earned up to \$100 a month and found, would signal the start as whips cracked and the animals were nudged forward. Individual muleskinners drew \$25 to \$30 a month plus meals. The train would make about two miles at daylight, then stop briefly, go another seven to ten miles, and stop for breakfast. After another ten miles or so, they would pause for the next meal, then driving would continue until dark. Wagons would be placed

in a circle with the animals inside, protecting them from stampede and also sheltering the men in case of an Indian attack.

His business meant long absences from home for Alexandre Daguerre. The 1,500-mile trip from Mexico City to Santa Fe could take six to eighteen months. Nevertheless, he wanted to maintain a home life and care for his small son. On November 15, 1849, he married Refugio Samaniego, member of a prominent Paso del Norte family. Her brother was Dr. Mariano Samaniego. Their parents were Don Florentino Samaniego and María Josefa Jesús del Pilar Delgado, niece of the Rev. Ramón Ortiz, celebrated, long-time *curé* of Paso del Norte. Refugio and Mariano, their mother, and three siblings lived with Padre Ortiz after their father was killed in an Apache raid. A sister, Concepción, married another important trader, Ynocente Ochoa.<sup>8</sup>

Rex Strickland characterized the Daguerre family as being in a highly select group in 1854:

El Paso del Norte, two centuries old, had a graduated society. At the top was a coterie of well-to-do and capable men: Inocente Ochoa, Sebastian Bermudes, Juan Luján, Alejandro Daguerre, Ramón Ortiz, and Dr. Mariano Samaniego. Samaniego, graduated in medicine from the University of Paris where he once had Louis Pasteur as his teacher of chemistry, was a healer to the two El Pasos during a half century of dedicated service.<sup>9</sup>

Daguerre and his second wife had seven children: Hortencia, María, Josefina, Alejandro Nicolás, Refugio, Eugenia, and Ana.

Once the roads from San Antonio through El Paso to Arizona had been established in the early 1850s, Alexandre Daguerre became one of the earliest of the freighters to use them. He operated regularly between San Antonio and the Arizona towns of Tucson and Prescott. Few historic accounts that mention him survive, but a significant account is that of John Russell Bartlett who had been sent by the Boundary Commission to trace the new international line. In November 1850, at a point approximately 108 miles east of the Rio Grande, Bartlett's party passed a stranded train of sixty wagons belonging to Franklin Coons which was taking supplies to the military post at Coons' Rancho, now downtown El Paso. The party had left Indianola in April and reached Crow Spring on September 16th. Having suffered the loss of many wagons and animals, they had been stranded for fifty-six days, unable to proceed because of the lack of water on the trail



*Refugio Samaniego vda de Daguerre and her seven children posed for this photo probably sometime after the 1885 death of Alexandre. Seated, from left, are Hortencia, Alejandro N., Ana, and Mrs. Daguerre; standing, María, Josefina, Refugio, and Eugenia.*



*Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre, ca. 1890.*



*Delfina Ochoa de Daguerre, first wife of Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre, ca. 1880—the daughter of Ynocente Ochoa and Francisca Ronquillo.*

ahead. Next Bartlett encountered Alexandre Daguerre, who had wagons on the way with water for Coons' train, and who had also had deposited barrels of water at locations along the road. Bartlett was granted permission to use some of that water if need be. A few hours later, Bartlett's party came across Daguerre's ten large wagons pulled by ten mules each, bringing water for the Coons' wagon train.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, some 120 years after Alexandre had befriended the earliest boundary commissioner, his great-grandson, Raymond Daguerre, was serving with the same International Boundary Commission as administrative assistant to the eleventh United States Commissioner, Joseph F. Friedkin.

Daguerre was among the early traders who served military installations in the Southwest. Fort Webster, established in 1851 near the Santa Rita copper mine, was supplied from Fort Fillmore above El Paso near the Rio Grande. Lacking transportation facilities, both posts relied on privately owned wagon trains to bring commissary and quartermaster stocks. Lt. Col. Dixon S. Miles, Third Infantry, mentioned in correspondence from Fort Fillmore the need to hire "Mr. DeGuerre [sic] or Magoffin's trains to cross at El Paso and ascend the Rio Grande to Mesilla," where he could purchase supplies. He also needed transportation for two hundred *fanegas* of corn to Fort Webster. At the time he wrote, the Rio Grande was rising and in danger of flooding.<sup>11</sup>

Later in 1852, a report was made from Fort Webster regarding the theft of Daguerre's livestock by Apaches on September 27th in Doña Ana County. The report, signed by Christoval Shes, relied on the testimony of three men to E. H. Wingfield, Indian agent for the Apache Nation, given December 16, 1852. The theft was impressive: 132 head of cattle valued at \$25 per head and four horses valued at \$50 each, for a total of \$3,500. The witnesses had counted forty-five men in the party of Indians headed by a chief named Delgadito. Daguerre, they said, had received no compensation for his loss. Since he preferred mules as draft animals and the losses are mainly cattle rather than oxen, this report may indicate that Daguerre was ranching in southern New Mexico at the time, unless he was taking the herd to another site.<sup>12</sup>

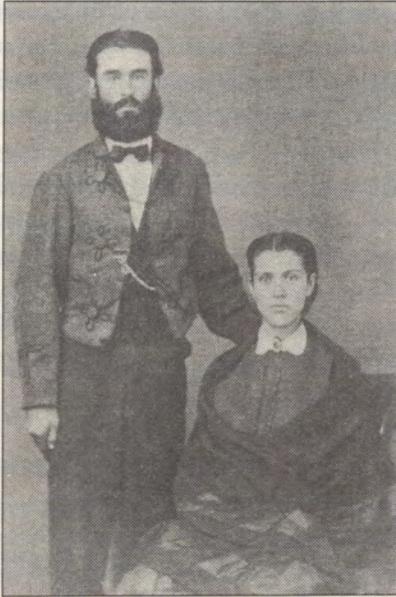
Families did not travel alone, preferring to join wagon trains for protection and fellowship. In 1860 Ben Dowell, who would become El Paso's first mayor thirteen years later, took his wife Juana and five-year-old daughter Mary to Kentucky to meet his

family. They had a large ambulance, a closed vehicle in which they could sleep, driven by a man called Quine or Queen, plus a supply wagon complete with food and a French cook. They joined the train of Daguerre, who was taking twelve-year-old Alejandro Librado to San Antonio to go to school.<sup>13</sup>

During the Civil War years, Daguerre idealistically espoused the cause of the South and made the services of his wagon trains available to the Confederate army for its operations in Texas. Like many residents at the Pass of the North, he chose San Antonio, Texas, as a haven for his family, under the care of Fernando Samaniego. After some time, Samaniego took them back to Paso del Norte, their trip being completed without incident. Shortly afterward, Alexandre returned from one of his trips. As he approached the town, he mounted one of his favorite mules to lead the convoy and was surprised to see his daughters lined up to greet him at the outskirts. His reaction was mixed; he appreciated the welcome, but feared for the safety of the girls in leaving their home.

One of his best-remembered adventures was indirectly related to the onset of the war. In the summer of 1861, seven Union sympathizers, employees of George H. Giddings's San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, feared the approaching takeover of Confederate forces. The vanguard of Lt. Col. John R. Baylor's Second Regiment, Texas Mounted Rifles, had reached Franklin (El Paso) in the first week of July. Using a celerity wagon belonging to the mail line, the seven left Mesilla on July 20, bound for Los Angeles and the protection of Federal troops. They knew they risked great danger on the road west because of a series of recent incidents. The discovery of gold in southwestern New Mexico in May of 1860 had drawn hundreds of prospectors to the region. In December, miners had attacked an Apache settlement on the Mimbres River, with several Indians killed and women and children taken captive.

*The discovery of gold in southwestern New Mexico in May of 1860 had drawn hundreds of prospectors to the region. In December, miners had attacked an Apache settlement on the Mimbres River, with several Indians killed and women and children taken captive.*



*Alejandro Librado Daguerre and Josefita Montoya de Daguerre, ca. 1875, possibly a wedding photo.*



*Josefa Montoya de Daguerre and son Antonio (1870-1889)*



*At the 1909 meeting of Presidents Porfirio Díaz of Mexico and William Howard Taft of the United States, Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre led the Díaz cortege into El Paso, attired in full hussar's uniform and plumed hat.*

years. Along the road taken by the seven men, several parties of civilians had been killed in April by a Chokonen war party led by Cochise near Stein's Peak. The slaying of travelers on that route continued as Federal troops withdrew from the area. Settlers, lacking protection, began moving away.

The seven men stopped at Cooke's Spring station for water, about sixty miles west of Mesilla, which like other mail stations along that route had been abandoned two months earlier. When they resumed their trip the morning of July 21, they were ambushed about a mile beyond the spring at the entrance to Cooke's Canyon. The men, though well armed, were no match for the band of Apaches led by Cochise and Mangas Coloradas. The men scrambled to a peak about a half mile from the trail, where they built a makeshift defense of rocks about two feet high. Lacking food and water, they fought desperately for three days, but all were killed.

Contemporary newspaper accounts indicated that the Americans' bodies were hastily buried by employees of Alexandre Daguerre as he brought a caravan eastward through the desert from the Hanover copper mines to Mesilla, en route to San Antonio, Texas. About two weeks later, fifteen men of the Confederate Arizona Rangers, commanded by Capt. George M. Frazier, went to inspect the battle site. They gave the men a more proper burial and found the coach, riddled with bullets and arrows.<sup>14</sup>

The victims are remembered on a monument on the Missouri Avenue side of the El Paso Public Library, erected in 1920 by the Mills family. They are identified as Emmett Mills, aged 19, who was the brother of W. W. and Anson Mills; Freeman Thomas, M. Champion, Bob Avlin, Joe Poacher, John Pontel, and John Wilson. The plaque mentions "a note under a stone stating that on July 23rd all had been killed, save two, who planned their escape that night. Later they too had fallen with their comrades." Strickland further identified the men: "the conductor, Freeman Thomas, a native of Ohio, age 29, listed in the *El Paso Census of 1860* as a grocer; Joseph Roescher, age 26, stage driver, and a native of Holstein, Germany; Emmett Mills, age 19, stage company clerk at Tres Hermanos station; John Wilson, a sportsman who had killed Cochise's Mexican slave and interpreter, José, at Apache Pass a year before; John Portell who had shot, not fatally, Virgil Mastin, a secessionist at Mesilla, May 17; Robert Aveline and M.

Champion of whom we know nothing except the manner of their death." Berndt Kühn gives Champion's first name as Matthew and another as Robert S. Avaline (instead of Avlin or Aveline).<sup>15</sup>

When Benito Juárez took refuge from French invaders in Paso del Norte in 1865-1866, he often spent his evenings playing cards in the Daguerre home. A photo in W. W. Mills' book, also found in C. L. Sonnichsen's *Pass of the North*, volume 1, shows the Mexican leader seated at a table with four other men. Only two

*One of the cabinet members became enamored of the oldest Daguerre daughter, Hortensia. He gave her a "gallo" on her birthday and composed a waltz in her honor, titled Estrella del Norte, Star of the North. Alexandre disapproved of the match and would not consent to a marriage.*

are identified, Henry J. Cuniffe and Mills, but Daguerre is seated to Juárez's immediate left. The social season during that time revolved around the presence of this important man and his cabinet on the border. Refugio Daguerre, Alexandre's fourth daughter, was asked by Benito Juárez to be his dancing companion in the formal balls of that season. Her father did not really like to have his daughters attend dances. They were known as "*las munequitas francesas*," little French dolls. Not wanting the girls to be accused of unpatriotic feelings for failure to attend, he relaxed his restrictions, however, for the balls centered on Cinco de Mayo.

One of the cabinet members became enamored of the oldest Daguerre daughter, Hortensia. He gave her a "gallo" on her birthday and composed a waltz in her honor, titled *Estrella del Norte, Star of the North*. Alexandre disapproved of the match and would not consent to a marriage.

A proud Frenchman all his life, he kept a bust of Napoleon on his mantelpiece. He conceded to his children the option of Mexican citizenship, as though they had the option of being French citizens. All but Anita, the youngest, were born in Juárez; she was nicknamed "*la gringa*" because San Antonio was her birthplace during their wartime refuge there.

At the close of the Civil War, having sided with the South, Daguerre counted his holdings—\$90,000 in worthless Confederate money. This was a turning point in his fortunes, for he never was able to regain the wealth he had once known. Some of his wagon

trains were lost to Indian raids, and what money he was able to save was placed in a United States bank that failed. By the time of his death, he lacked resources of his own and was being cared for by his relatives. He died of dysentery at the age of seventy-two on May 18, 1885, in the home of Father Ramón Ortiz, the uncle of the second Mrs. Daguerre. He was buried first in a *huerta* of Ynocente Ochoa in a private cemetery. After his widow's death fifteen years later, the family had him reburied beside her in San José Cemetery. Their youngest daughter, Anita Daguerre de Ogarrío, later had an imposing tombstone placed there.

One of the trader's sons, Alejandro Nicolás, related many of his adventures on the trail to his relatives. One "adventure" occurred when he and his mother were traveling in a carriage from Tucson to Paso del Norte, accompanied by a young student who was on his first trip. Indian attacks were rumored in the area. At sundown they saw the outlines of three Indians silhouetted on a hill not far away. Their hearts sank. Alejandro Nicolás went for the rifles, and handed one to the student, who was so frightened at the thought of firing it, he dropped it. The mother, Refugio, was praying as her son held the reins in one hand and a rifle in the other. As they approached the hill, the Indians came toward them. Alejandro Nicolás stopped the wagon and got the rifle ready. As the Indians drew closer, the frightened travelers were able to see they wore identification on bands lettered: "Government Scout." Breathing a sigh of relief, Alejandro Nicolás lowered his rifle and greetings were exchanged.

Several of the Daguerre descendants achieved important roles in regional or national political and business circles.

Alejandro Librado (1848-1892) was the only child by Daguerre's first wife, Carmen Guerra. He married Josefita Montoya (1856-1888) in Paso del Norte. She was the daughter of Antonio Montoya and Juana Madrid and was a relative of Don Zenon Montoya who built one of the first flour mills in Paso del Norte. The couple had three children: Antonio (1879-1889); Raymundo Manuel (1883-1918), who married Maximiana Valenzuela (d. 1919); and Guadalupe Andrea (b. 1886). Alejandro's wife died when their children were small, and Raymundo and Lupe were cared for in the home of their uncle, Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre. Their father's death came only four years after their mother's. Raymundo's four children all married and had children of their own, with Raymond Peter

Daguerre (b. 1912) of El Paso passing on the family surname to his three sons.

Alexandre Daguerre and his second wife, Refugio Samaniego (1823-1900), had one son and six daughters.

Alejandro Nicolás (1855-1929) was first married to Delfina Ochoa, daughter of another important trader at the Pass, Ynocente Ochoa. Her mother was his first wife, Francisca Ronquillo. Ochoa's second wife, Concepción Samaniego, was a sister of Alexandre Daguerre's second wife, Refugio. The home of Alejandro Nicolás and Delfina was on Calle Comercio, now Calle Dieciséis de Septiembre, in Juárez. The rooms were beautifully carpeted. At the rear was a corral for horses, cows, and poultry. When Delfina became ill with cancer, her husband arranged for her to go by train to Mexico City for treatment by a specialist. She was accompanied by his mother, Refugio; his niece and nephew, Lupe and Raymundo; and a niece of Delfina's, María Ochoa. They spent about six months in Mexico City, but a cure was not possible. After their return home, Delfina died November 22, 1897. Alejandro's mother moved in with the family to care for Lupe and Raymundo plus a cousin, Charles Edgerton, whose father had died. A strict disciplinarian and a devout Catholic, she led the family in the rosary every evening. The household continued in this manner until Alejandro Nicolás remarried. His new wife was María Amador (1874-1936) of Las Cruces. Their wedding day, January 11, 1899, by coincidence was the same day as the final stroke suffered by his mother, who subsequently died on November 21, 1900. She was buried in the San José cemetery in Juárez beside her husband whom she had outlived by fifteen years.

The children for whom Alejandro Nicolás had been caring moved to the home of their aunt, Eugenia, and her husband, Lic. J. O. Nájera, when their uncle remarried.

Alejandro Nicolás had diverse business interests. He was at one time in partnership with an El Pasoan named Ellis in a Juárez newspaper called *El Centinela*. Earlier he had been partner in a flour mill operation with Silvano Montemayor and at one time was impresario of the Juárez bullring. Like others in the family who became interested in public service, he was an alderman and *secretario del alcalde* in various Juárez municipal administrations from 1905 to 1911. When Presidents William Howard Taft and Porfirio Díaz met at the border in 1909, he led the Díaz presiden-



*Raimundo Manuel Daguerre*  
(1883-1918)



*Guadalupe Andrea Daguerre*  
(1886-1977)



*Jesús Agustín Nájera Daguerre,*  
ca. 1915



*Rodolfo Ogarrío Daguerre,*  
ca. 1928

tial cortege across the bridge into El Paso, attired in full hussar's uniform and plumed hat, and riding a charger.

Like many other prominent families, the Daguerres took refuge in El Paso from the Mexican Revolution in 1911. Alejandro Nicolás and his wife were joined by the Jesús O. Nájera family and their niece, Lupe. They were considered "porfiristas," political exiles like their predecessor, Alexandre, who had left France for political reasons.

Nájera, who was married to the second youngest daughter of Alexandre, had once been *jefe político* in Juárez. In that capacity, he had made the presentation of the Pedro García claim to the Chamizal before the International Boundary Commission in 1894. At the beginning of the revolution, he was warned to flee, and the family left their home at 117 Lerdo as it was, taking with them only what they could carry in their hands. As a well-known

*The influx of families resulted in overcrowding of church facilities and the Rev. Carlos M. Pinto, S.J., who had been involved in the development of numerous new churches in El Paso and Juárez, bought a site on West Missouri in Sunset Heights. With the help of the refugees, the new Holy Family Church was erected.*

international lawyer, Nájera was able to purchase a home in El Paso at 711 Upson in Sunset Heights. Most of the well-to-do families who came from Juárez settled in that area, which has a street bearing the name of Porfirio Díaz.

The influx of families resulted in overcrowding of church facilities and the Rev. Carlos M. Pinto, S.J., who had been involved in the development of numerous new churches in El Paso and Juárez, bought a site on West Missouri in Sunset Heights. With the help of the refugees, the new Holy Family Church was erected. Described as "pillars of the church" were the Nájeras, the Daguerres, Mr. and Mrs. Manuel N. Velarde, and Mr. and Mrs. José Tavisón. Mrs. Daguerre also was on the executive board for the Guadalupano Day Nursery, established by Bishop A. J. Schuler to help poor Mexican children. It was staffed by refugee Mexican Sisters.<sup>16</sup>

Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre resided at 216 Los Angeles, where at age seventy-four he died in 1929. His widow continued to live in Sunset Heights; her home was at 808 Mundy at the time of her

death at sixty-two in 1936. Both were buried in Evergreen Cemetery in El Paso.

Alexandre's youngest daughter, Anita, married Rodolfo Ogarrio, the customs collector in Juárez and later in Piedras Negras. He later became *director general del timbre*, collector of internal revenue, in the administration of President Porfirio Díaz. Their three sons had prominent careers in Mexico. One of them, Rodolfo Ogarrio Daguerre (1889-1957), became a vice president of the Texas Company at the age of 39 and was responsible for developing the Tampico oil field. Born in Juárez, he attended St. Louis College in San Antonio and studied civil engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was graduated from Sheffield Scientific School at Yale University in 1909. He served with the Texas Company in various capacities in Mexico, Venezuela, and Panama. In 1925 he became assistant to the vice president of production in New York, and in 1928 was named vice president; he was made a director in 1931. After thirty-four years with Texaco, he retired in 1950, having chaired an executive committee considering crude oil production policy on a worldwide basis. Rodolfo's brother Julio became a prominent banker in Mexico City and another brother, Manuel, was a prominent attorney there.<sup>17</sup>

The third daughter of Alexandre, Josefina, who died in 1949, had married Nicolás Flores and become the mother of two mayors of Juárez. Arturo N. Flores Daguerre held aldermanic positions beginning in 1920 and served as mayor in 1929 and 1931. Gustavo Flores Daguerre was acting mayor in 1927 and became mayor in 1930. Arturo's daughter, Hortencia, became the wife of yet another mayor of Juárez, Teófilo Borunda, who later was governor of Chihuahua, federal senator, and president of the Mexican Senate.

Hortencia, the oldest daughter, born in 1850, married Rafael Barrios, customs collector in Juárez and later Mexican consul in Philadelphia. One of their daughters, Refugio Barrios, married Lic. Carlos Muñoz, who became president of the Tribunal of Justice in Mexico City. That couple's son, Felipe Muñoz, became one of Mexico's most popular novelists.

The second daughter of Alexandre and Refugio was María, who married the American consul in Juárez, George Edgerton, died in 1925. Their son was Charlie, who was at one time part of the household of Alejandro Nicolás Daguerre.<sup>18</sup>

Another daughter, Refugio, was married to Ramón Samaniego and had numerous children.

Wagon trains that brought trade goods to the Southwest long ago were replaced by trains, planes, and highways dotted with huge trucks. The dedication of pioneers such as Alexandre Daguerre lives on in the heritage of his descendants in government and business in Mexico and the United States.

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#### NOTES

1. A birth certificate from the Archives communales de Bayonne, France, shows Guillaume-Alexandre's birth date as January 14, 1813, and his brother's as June 29, 1810. They also had two sisters: Marie, born in 1814, who died as an infant, and a second Marie, born May 1, 1816. Their parents were Jeanne Duyau (b. March 11, 1788 in Bayonne) and Michel Daguerre (b. November 3, 1776 in Hasparren), whose profession was given as shoemaker. They were married October 13, 1809 in Bayonne. Her parents were Marie Mendiboure and Philippe Duyau; his were Catherine Lahirigoyen and Salvat Daguerre. The family was from the Basque province of Labourd. A small community in the region, Castel Daguerre, still bears the family name. In Paris a hotel and a street are named after the most famous Daguerre, Louis Jacques Mandé (1789-1851), who pioneered the photographic technique known as the daguerreotype. According to family tradition, Alexandre and Michel came to the New World to avoid French military conscription being imposed on young men in the Basque provinces. They dropped the use of their first names as a means of disguising their identities from French secret service agents who were combing Mexico and other countries for draft evaders.
2. More than thirty years ago, Raymond Daguerre of El Paso, a great-grandson, compiled material about the descendants of Alexandre Daguerre, with the help of other relatives. Personal recollections about the family came from a daughter, Josefina Daguerre vda. de Flores; two grandchildren, Jesus A. "Chito" Nájera and Guadalupe A. Daguerre of El Paso; and great-grandchildren, Delfina Armendáriz nee Daguerre of El Paso, Salvador Treviño, S.J., then of Rio Hondo, Mexico, and Raymond Daguerre. For this article, references to family members that are not annotated are from the

- above sources. The family recalled that Daguerre reached Mexico at the age of 18, which would set the year as 1831. Church records for his second marriage in 1849, however, indicate he had resided in Mexico for only fourteen years, which would make the year 1835. Raymond Daguerre provided his research materials to Nancy Hamilton, then a reporter for the *El Paso Herald-Post*, who developed them into three articles published January 9, 10, and 11, 1974. Mexican marriage records give Alexandre's name as Alejandro Guillermo Daguerre and his parents' names as Juan Daguerre and Juana Duyo. Rick Hendricks, ed., *New Mexico Prenuptial Investigations from the Archivos Históricas del Arzobispado de Durango, 1800-1893* (Las Cruces: New Mexico State Library Rio Grande Historical Collection, 2000), 211. Death records researched by Raymond Daguerre in the Juárez Registro Civil in the Municipal Palace, however, show the father's name as Miguel (Michel in French) and the mother as María Juana (Marie Jeanne in French).
3. Valerie Sherer Mathes, "The Santa Fe Trail," in *Pioneer Trails West*, ed. Don Worcester (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1985), 111.
  4. Leon C. Metz, "The King's Highway: El Camino Real," in *Pioneer Trails West*, ed. Don Worcester (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1985), 124.
  5. Henry Pickering Walker, *The Wagonmasters* (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 95, 96, Mathes, 111.
  6. Walker, 99, 102, 103.
  7. W. W. Mills, *Forty Years at El Paso, 1858-1898*, ed. Rex W. Strickland (El Paso: Carl Hertzog, 1962), 26-27.
  8. W. W. Mills, 188.
  9. Rex W. Strickland, *El Sabio Sembrador: El Paso in 1854* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1969), 41.
  10. John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua, Connected with the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission during the Years 1850-1853* (New York: D. Appleton Co., 1854), 1: 127; Roscoe P. Conkling and Margaret B. Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Trail 1857-1859* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1947), 397.
  11. D. S. Miles to J. C. McFerran, May 19, 1852, Record Group 393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, Department of New Mexico, Letters Received. Robert W. Frazer, *Forts and Supplies: The Role of the Army in the Economy of the Southwest, 1846-1861* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 76.
  12. St Fe OK Papers, Box I, Folder I, Zimmerman Letters, University of New Mexico Archives, Albuquerque.
  13. Nancy Hamilton, *Ben Dowell, El Paso's First Mayor* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1976), 27.
  14. W. W. Mills, 195-967 Conkling & Conkling, 115-18; George Wythe Baylor, *Into the Far, Wild Country: True Tales of the Old Southwest*, ed. Jerry D. Thompson (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1996), 255 n.3. The Conklings speculated that the men took refuge in a ruined house in the mail station

- corral, where several hundred empty cartridge shells were later found beneath the sand-covered floor. They also reported that personal effects of the slain men were "exhibited by drunken Indians about the saloons of the Mexican town of Paso del Norte" and that the seven were "victims of a political conspiracy and betrayed into the hands of the notorious blood-thirsty savage, Mangas Coloradas." The incident was described in the *Mesilla Times* of July 27 and August 3, 1861. James H. Tevis told of burying the bodies in *Arizona in the '50s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), 229-30. He and Charles Brown, who also participated, were probably in Daguerre's outfit. An extensive account of the event is given by Berndt Kühn, a Swedish historian of the American Southwest, in "Siege in Cooke's Canyon: The Freeman Thomas Fight of 1861." *Arizona History*, 38:2 (Summer 1997): 155-75. Two novels inspired by the incident are Will Henry's *The Seven Men at Mimbres Springs* (New York: Random House, 1958) and Brian Garfield's *Seven Brave Men* (New York: Magnum Books, 1962).
15. W. W. Mills, 195-96, Anson Mills, *My Story* (Washington: Byron S. Adams, 1921), 74-75.
  16. Sister M. Lilliana Owens, S.L., *Most Reverend Anthony J. Schuler, S.J., D.D., First Bishop of El Paso, 1915-1942* (El Paso: Revista Católica Press, 1953), 313.
  17. An Internet site shows Ogarrío Daguerre, S.C., as a patent attorney firm in Mexico City.
  18. An Internet site headed "Joleen Edgerton Ancestors Page" shows Maria Da Guerre and George Edgerton as the parents of Charles Able Edgerton, Eduardo Alexandro Edgerton, and Concepcion Edgerton.





# Trials, Transformations, and Takeovers: Tracking Seventy Years of El Paso Bottling History through Nehi, Seven-Up, and Canada Dry PART II

By Bill Lockhart



## Seven-Up Royal Crown Bottling Company—1969-1986

Al Randle, Jr. had a dream that he wanted to expand the company. At the age of thirty-two, he was more and more involved with the business and he began to look with interest on Royal Crown Cola. Royal Crown offered two major opportunities: 1) a cola drink to compete with Coke and Pepsi; and 2) Diet Rite Cola, the fastest-selling diet soft drink on the market. Although the Nehi-Royal Crown parent company had been willing to run the El Paso operation for the previous four years in order to “keep the territory from drying up,” competition from Coke and Pepsi kept sales volume low. To Randle, however, Royal Crown sales added to Seven-Up sales equaled a vastly improved business, so he negotiated with the Royal Crown representative. They reached a price that was acceptable to both parties and the Seven-Up Royal Crown Bottling Company was born. As part of the agreement, the Randles took over trucks, building lease, franchise, and bottles—everything. The company moved into its new, more spacious location at 7328 Boeing Drive.<sup>26</sup>

Within ten days after the Randles bought the Royal Crown franchise, disaster struck. The Food and Drug Administration banned cyclamates, the basis of Diet Rite Cola,<sup>27</sup> and the premier

diet-soda in America was withdrawn from the market. The new franchise owners were not even allowed to sell off existing stock; they had to retrieve it from the customers' shelves. Al Randle, Jr. remembered that they "poured out gallons of it." The smell of cyclamates permeated the plant for weeks. The timing had been really bad as obtaining Diet Rite Cola had been one of the major assets that led to the buying of the franchise. Eventually, however, new sweeteners were found, Diet Rite returned to the market, and the Seven-Up Royal Crown Bottling Company prospered.<sup>28</sup>

About that time, Randle hired Charlie Sterns as a full-time mechanic to keep his trucks in top operating condition. Prior to that time, the trucks had been sent to the service station where Sterns was the mechanic, but the closing of that station left Sterns jobless and Seven-Up without a mechanic. The solution suited both parties perfectly. The addition of Sterns made the vehicular section of the operation practically self-sufficient.<sup>29</sup> Raul Echaniz, an employee since 1948 and brother of the plant manager, had

*Even better, Canada Dry allowed Randle to take over the existing franchise; in effect, he got the franchise free. It was a rapid-fire changeover.*

*Randle moved almost everything to the Boeing Drive plant on Wednesday, had a sales meeting on Friday, and started production on Monday.*

demonstrated a talent for sign painting and had produced perfect, hand-painted company logos for the trucks.

The younger Randle next heard that John D. Scott was becoming discouraged with Canada Dry and was ready to give up his franchise. Randle approached Scott who said that he was, indeed, tired of the product. It sold well only during Christmas, and business had never notably improved during the time he had owned the franchise. To Randle, however, it could be profitable in conjunction with other sales; Royal Crown-Seven-Up salesmen were already making the stops, so it would be well worth their while to take in extra cases. Randle told Scott, "I'd like to get it." A Canada Dry representative flew to El Paso and met Randle for lunch. Randle recalled, "We hit it off great."

Canada Dry needed a franchise operator; Randle wanted the extra business. The plant obtained from Royal Crown four years earlier had sufficient space, and there was no conflict of interest between Canada Dry mixers and the company's regular soft drinks.

Even better, Canada Dry allowed Randle to take over the existing franchise; in effect, he got the franchise free. It was a rapid-fire changeover. Randle moved almost everything to the Boeing Drive plant on Wednesday, had a sales meeting on Friday, and started production on Monday.<sup>30</sup>

Quart bottles had recently become increasingly popular. Randle asked the Canada Dry representative for a hundred racks to display quarts of product. The following week, Canada Dry delivered the rows of beautiful racks with imitation wooden shelves. The company began installing the shelves in El Paso supermarkets almost immediately, and sales soared. Randle's salesmen were stocking quarts of Royal Crown and Seven-Up beside the Canada Dry mixers.<sup>31</sup>

Then the dream began to dissolve. Allie Randle died in 1976 at the age of seventy-four after a series of strokes that lasted five years and left him badly deteriorated. The senior Randle left a bitter disappointment for his son. A few years before his death, he had ordered his company lawyer to write a codicil to his will. Over the last four years of his life, Randle repeatedly refused to accept the lawyer's revisions, but finally he signed. Upon Randle's death, the will was found to be virtually undecipherable. Two lawyers examined the will and presented the younger Randle with their experienced opinions—the son had been disinherited. Although the younger Randle already owned twenty-two and a half shares of stock in the corporation, Sarah Randle inherited the other sixty-five and a half shares of Randle's estate and the position as president of the company. Echaniz, also a two percent shareholder, remained as general manager, and Al L. Randle, Jr. became vice president. The younger Randle contested the will, claiming that his father had always intended that the business should go to him. Because no one was willing to testify in his behalf, he was defeated.<sup>32</sup>

The younger Randle was about to receive another shock. His mother, Sarah, had been told, possibly by the company accountant, that another Great Depression was due to occur in the near future. Like many people who survived the Depression of 1929, Sarah retained strong memories and deep emotional scars from the ordeal. Fearing that the business would become worthless, she decided to sell, encouraged by her lawyer and accountant. Although Randle argued with his mother, she was determined to follow through on the sale. Seeing that she could not be dissuaded, Randle petition-

*Randle was told, unofficially, that he was competing with politically and financially powerful individuals, and, if he refused to sell his stock, he would be left with nothing. The warning was prophetic.*

ed to buy the corporation himself. Randle said later that he was told he could expect no special favors and would have to "bid like everybody else." The requirements for the bids were ten percent down payment with the balance payable over a ten-year period at ten percent interest. Randle placed a bid for his mother's sixty-

seven and a half percent and waited. On the acceptance date, Sarah Randle announced that she, with her lawyer and accountant, had accepted the bid of Donald W. Anderson and William Kastrin.<sup>33</sup>

Upon hearing the amount of the winning bid, Randle complained that his bid for his mother's stock was actually higher than Anderson's offer. In response, he was told that his mother, along with her advisors, had decided that his offer must be in cash. Although Randle continued to complain, it was to no avail. The company lawyer made Randle an offer for his minority stock from Anderson's backers. When Randle asked the identity of the backers, the lawyer told him that Anderson was backed by a corporation, but the stockholders were unknown. Randle flatly refused.

Although Randle received anonymous threats and warnings, he sued his mother in her own interest and as executrix of the estate of his father, Allie Lee Randle. A hearing was set for January 30, 1978, with Al Randle, Jr., citing the Securities Act of 1933 and the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. In response, he was fired on December 17, 1977, just before Christmas. Randle was told, unofficially, that he was competing with politically and financially powerful individuals, and, if he refused to sell his stock, he would be left with nothing. The warning was prophetic. Randle's first lawyer was inept; his second one only a slight improvement.<sup>34</sup>

The long, drawn-out court battle lasted almost three years and culminated in a judgement against Randle. His minority stock in Seven-Up Royal Crown, sequestered for collateral to ensure the payment of legal fees, was now placed for sale. Only one entity was interested in minority stock in the disputed company, so Randle's worst enemy was rewarded with a double-triumph. As an added insult, Randle discovered that *all* assets of the company were sold,

including \$100,000 in the bank. That meant that the purchasing company was able to make the down payment with money from the company it had bought.<sup>35</sup>

In 1982, the battle ended. Sarah Randle sold the company to Donald W. Anderson and retired from business life. Pete A. Echaniz was retained until the court battle ended and the sale was finalized, then was forced to retire after forty years of bottling Seven-Up. Echaniz received neither pension nor retirement benefits.<sup>36</sup> Sarah, born in 1909, died in 1985, leaving one final tragedy for Al Randle, Jr. In a sad *deja vu*, Randle was again "disinherited"—he was virtually written out of his mother's will. His share of her estate was limited only to a bedroom suite.<sup>37</sup> The public never became aware of Randle's personal tragedy. Advertisements continued, and the workings of the plant went on almost unabated. Deborah C. Kastrin replaced Anderson as president of the corporation in 1986 and was at the helm when the company was sold to Kalil Bottling Company the following year.<sup>38</sup>

### Canada Dry Bottling Company—1948-1974

Although the distributor is unknown, Canada Dry products were sold in El Paso at least as early as 1931 when Canada Dry Ginger Ale was advertised in the *El Paso Times*. The ad, placed by the parent company, suggests that the products may have been offered previously in El Paso because it touts a reduction in recommended price from 25¢ to 19¢ per bottle. It is possible that William Hull who listed himself as "Wholesale distributor of Beer, Ginger Ale, and Cigars" distributed Canada Dry as early as 1917.<sup>39</sup> During 1946 and 1947, Hurd & Butler Sales Company, an El Paso beer distributor, advertised Canada Dry products. Two years later, in 1948, the Canada Dry Bottling Company opened its doors at 2031 East Yandell Boulevard under the leadership of Eugene J. Liggett, president of the corporation. John D. Camp replaced Liggett the following year but was himself replaced by William D. Mayfield in 1952. Mayfield retained the presidency through the 1950s when the newspapers reported the industry boom.<sup>40</sup>

By 1953, the company employed twelve people and served the New Mexico communities of Las Cruces and Alamogordo, as well as El Paso County, Texas. Canada Dry offered twenty-three different beverages and, the following year, became the first El Paso bottler to palletize, or move large numbers of cases on pallets, in

1954. The company also expanded its territory to include Silver City and Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Robert J. Galentin and John D. Scott bought the company from Mayfield in 1958.<sup>41</sup>

Scott had arrived in El Paso in 1954 as an associate of Aetna Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut. Two years later, he became a salesman for Hicks-Hayward and retained that position during his first years with Canada Dry. Galentin, a long-time resident of El Paso, had begun his working life as an usher at the Plaza Theater in 1933. His began his career with Standard Oil Company began in 1937 as a messenger before working his way up the occupational ladder in the accounting department and finally becoming a division head of the Standard Oil Pipeline. After his retirement from Standard Oil, Galentin decided to try his hand at bottling with Scott.<sup>42</sup>

*The new corporation bottled products for other dealers who wanted to retail soft drinks in El Paso without the headaches involved in packaging. Retail outlets, such as Safeway, were joining in the competition against the established bottlers but had neither the desire nor the facilities to produce the company product.*

Although neither of the new owners had any previous bottling experience, they felt that the future of Canada Dry looked promising in El Paso. The two entrepreneurs incorporated with Galentin as president and Scott as vice president in 1958. The building on Yandell Boulevard had never been adequate for the volume of drinks produced by Galentin and Scott, but they remained in the crowded plant for eighteen years, finally relocating to larger quarters at 4751 Durazno Avenue in 1972. In 1974, Galentin sold his interest to Scott and retired. Scott, too, was becoming discouraged with Canada Dry and let his franchise lapse in favor of the Randles.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Wes-Tex Custom Bottlers, Inc.—1974-1978**

Although discouraged with Canada Dry, Scott was not disheartened with bottling. To remain in the industry, he formed Wes-Tex Custom Bottlers, Inc., a bottler without a brand. The company remained at 4751 Durazno Avenue with Scott as president. The new corporation bottled products for other dealers who wanted to retail soft drinks in El Paso without the headaches involved in packaging.

Retail outlets, such as Safeway, were joining in the competition against the established bottlers but had neither the desire nor the facilities to produce the company product. Wes-Tex provided the means. Scott took on Carmen Paz as a new associate in 1975, and the firm continued as a custom bottler until 1978 when it finally disbanded.<sup>44</sup>

### **Kalil Bottling Company—1984-present**

El Paso's newest soft drink manufacturer is the Kalil Bottling Company, a subsidiary of the Kalil Bottling Company of Tucson, Arizona. The El Paso branch opened in 1984 at 900 Kastrin Street with Robert Rosasco as the local sales manager. Kalil began its tenure in El Paso by purchasing the Nehi-Royal Crown franchise from the Seven-Up Royal Crown Bottling Company and added to its diversity by obtaining Dad's Root Beer and Big Red from the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Company in 1985, along with franchises for Gatorade, Delaware Punch, Vernors, Texas Light, Bubble Up, and Yoo Hoo Chocolate. Two years later, Kalil bought out the rest of the Seven-Up franchise, moving into the old Seven-Up Royal Crown plant at 7328 Boeing Drive. With the sale of Seven-Up, only three bottlers—Kalil, Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Company, and Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company—remained in El Paso. Eduardo "Eddie" Gonzalez replaced Rosasco in 1993 and remains the branch manager in 2003. Kalil imports its soft drinks from the parent company in Tucson, rather than bottling in El Paso.<sup>45</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

26. EPCD 1970; Randle interview.
27. Glenn Vaughn, "The Fizz and Fizzle of Royal Crown, Georgia's Other Cola." *Georgia Trend* 1995, 10 (10):28-36. Cyclamates, approved by the FDA in 1949, were officially banned on Saturday, October 18, 1969.
28. Randle interview.
29. Randle interview.
30. Randle interview.
31. Randle interview.
32. EPCD 1976-1981; Randle interview; Social Security Death Index.
33. Randle interview.
34. Randle interview; EPHP 12/21/1977.
35. Randle interview.
36. EPCD 1982-1985; Echaniz interview.
37. Randle interview; Social Security Death Index.
38. EPCD 1986-1987.
39. EPT 4/2/1931 2:3; EPCD 1917.
40. EPCD 1942-1952.
41. EPCD 1953-1958; EPT 4/5/1953 B13:4; 4/25/1954 E11:2; EPHP 4/24/1954 39:1.
42. EPCD 1933-1958.
43. Interview with R.J. Galentin, February 28, 1996.
44. EPCD 1973-1978; Galentin interview.
45. EPCD 1984-1996; EPTD, 1984-85-1987-88.



Ed. Note: *One of the contributors to "The Brides of Burges House," having developed a taste for research, continued her search of "family archives." She discovered that indeed the list that was attributed to Jane Rust Burges was really not written by her, but was rather dictated by her to another member of the family. The physical act of writing was done by the person to whom it was dictated.*



# A Man for All Seasons

By Sharon C. Cowell



*Robert "Bobby"  
Emmet McNellis  
1941-2003*



It's been seven months since the severe pain began, four months since the heartbreaking diagnosis, and two months since he succumbed to the cancer that robbed this world of a remarkable story-teller, historian, researcher, comedian, father, grandfather, brother, son, friend, and companion. There are those among us who came to know Robert Emmet McNellis only late in his life but among those are a few whose lives are forever changed.

Robert Emmet McNellis, known to all as Bobby, was an El Pasoan to the core. Born at Hotel Dieu Hospital on November 11, 1941, he was the first of ten children born to Mary Byers McNellis and Bob McNellis. During his early childhood, his maternal grandmother, Annie Brady Byers, lived with the McNellis family on West Missouri Street. She was to be an important influence on this inquisitive, mischievous child. She was a religious woman and, later in her life, lived close to St. Patrick's Cathedral where she attended Mass daily. Bobby's maternal grandfather, Dr. Ballard Byers, was a doctor who teamed with his brother, Dr. Earl Pious Byers, to provide local dentistry to the citizens of early El Paso. "Dr. Ballard" performed the hands-on work with the patients while "Dr. Earl" made the teeth for these stoic customers. The Doctors Byers did not believe in novocaine, Bobby explained, as he recalled his childhood dread of going to the dentist. Their professional business was located in a second floor office of the building which housed Union Fashion, but the "real action" took place in the room behind the office—at night and into the wee morning hours. Bobby's grandfather loved to play cards and was

as well known for these late night card games as he was for his dentistry.

Bobby's mother, Mary Elizabeth Byers, was the only girl and the youngest of three children. She attended Loretto Academy and played basketball in the El Paso Women's Basketball League. When she was seventeen she was "recruited" for the All American Red Heads, a women's professional basketball team of the late 1930s. Mary's parents were horrified, however, to imagine that their daughter would dye her hair red and travel around the country with such "worldly women." Instead, they did agree that she could take short trips throughout Mexico with a local women's basketball team. It is through this association with basketball that she met Bob McNellis who worked with Otis Aultman, the well-known El Paso photographer of the early 1900s. While Mary was still in high school, Bob McNellis came to take pictures of the basketball team. He brought the proofs to a basketball game, ended up asking Mary for a date, and the stage was set.

Bobby's father, Robert Emmet "Bob" McNellis, had roots that could be traced back to Nashville, Tennessee, and to Andrew Jackson, seventh president of the United States. Robert and his only sibling, Virginia, remained in Nashville in the care of two unmarried aunts after their mother, Eleanor Gerhardy McNellis died and their father, Robert Emmet McNellis, remarried and moved to Washington D.C. Family members recall Bob telling stories about playing at The Hermitage, the Jackson family home, where he played with the sword that was presented to Andrew Jackson by the city of New Orleans after the famous Battle of New Orleans. When sister Virginia was in her teens great-grandmother Gerhardy moved to Juárez because she felt it would be less expensive to live in Mexico. In Juárez the blonde-haired, blue-eyed Virginia met and married Luis Trillo, the owner of two prominent newspapers, *El Fronterizo* and *El Continental*. Bob, concerned about his sister's well being, journeyed to Juarez in 1938 to see for himself how she was faring. He was pleasantly surprised to learn that she was very happy and living comfortably with her new family. Bob decided to stay in El Paso. He eventually met and married Mary Byers and together they owned and operated McNellis Cameraland, first located on Montana Street, then relocated to Mills Street across from the Plaza. Born into such an adventurous and enterprising family, it is no wonder that Bobby became the colorful—and oft times—off-color person his friends enjoyed and loved.

His early years were spent with his parents, his brothers, and sisters on Missouri Street in El Paso's historic Sunset Heights area. Spanish and English were both "first languages" for Bobby. He learned Spanish from the family's maids. He attended St. Mary's School, and Cathedral High School from which he elected to "drop out" because he early disputed the segregation he found there—to Bobby, an "all-boys school" was a "segregated school." He graduated from Austin High School in the early 1960s.

Almost from the beginning, Bobby's life intertwined with history and "history-making events."



*Bobby McNellis, Age 17.  
Photo courtesy of author.*

At a very early age he became quite a rock-thrower, and at this time, Bobby Fuller, singer and songwriter of the Bobby Fuller Four, was a neighbor of the McNellis clan. The mischievous side of Bobby McNellis never tired of taking credit for Bobby Fuller's success. Bobby McNellis had honed his rock-throwing skills to something of an "art" when he aimed a rock into the vicinity of Bobby Fuller's head. His aim was good—he hit Fuller on the head during this neighborhood caper. He claimed that this jolt ignited the musical talent and creativity in Fuller's brain that enabled him to write songs such as "*I Fought the Law*." Other rock throwing incidents occurred. One of these he would not discuss because it would solve the mystery of the slightly different shade of blue stained glass in a windowpane of his parish church. Surely with a little more practice, a career in baseball could have been his for the taking.

Encounters with "history" followed Bobby throughout his high school years. While attending Cathedral, he and several classmates were asked to help clean out the basement of the Albert B. Fall home on Arizona Street. Fall, Secretary of the Interior under President Harding, was convicted of bribery in the Teapot Dome scandal and spent time in prison. Bobby and his friends hauled old ledgers, books, and papers from the basement of Fall's home

to the city dump. Bobby always regretted that he had not recognized the importance of the information they were destroying.

While attending Austin High School, Bobby worked on the school newspaper as a reporter and photographer. He interviewed people such as Elvis Presley and other entertainers who came to perform in El Paso. This youthful newspaper experience would prove invaluable to him later in life when he interviewed people for historical research purposes. This was also the beginning of a writing career that was crowned by the articles that Bobby wrote for gun magazines in the 1980s.

After high school Bobby enrolled at Texas Western College. While there he took all the history and Spanish courses that were offered; however, he was not as enthusiastic about the other courses he needed to graduate. To relieve this drudgery he developed quite an active social life. One of his most important activities was his membership in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity where, for a term, he served as president. He did receive his college degree but took several "sabbaticals" during those years. He spent a year studying in Mexico and a summer in Littleton, Colorado working in the silver mines. While in Mexico he made friends with one of the guards—what a surprise!—at the Chapultepec Castle. He used his silver-tongued Spanish to talk this "new best friend" into allowing him to inspect articles not yet on display—these included the controversial De La Pena Papers and the flag that flew at the

Alamo. Also it was at this time that he opened his own gun shop in a part of his parents' camera store. Because of his interest in guns and the love of history, he became an expert gun appraiser and collector. The gun shop remained open until the late 1960s.



*Bobby in his gun shop.*

In the mid-sixties, after Bobby graduated from college, he worked for Hunt Wesson Foods. Northern New Mexico was part of his territory and he spent time traveling through the "historical meccas" of Albuquerque and Santa Fe and their environs. It was during one of these trips that he met Jarvis Garrett, the youngest son of Pat Garrett. Only through Bobby's dogged determination and fluent Spanish was he able to initiate a long-lasting relationship. After seeing the Garrett name in the local phone book, he called the Garrett residence. Jarvis was resistant to any type of contact because of his previous experiences with persons attempting to capitalize on his family connections. After several failed attempts to interview Jarvis, Bobby was able to use his charm and fluent Spanish to convince Jarvis' Colombian wife that he was sincere in his interest in the Garrett family history. Only then did she convince her husband that he should talk to Bobby. From that time on, Bobby and Jarvis remained close friends until Jarvis' death in 1991.

In the seventies, Bobby retired from Hunt Wesson and bought El Paso Saddlery. As a child he loved to play "Cowboys and Indians," and, among his memories, was a shopping trip to "downtown" El Paso with his grandmother. He saw a Hop-A-Long Cassidy gun and holster set in the window of a variety store. With great anticipation, he saved his money for this prize possession only to have the gun belt tear in half after one hour of play. He was angry and disappointed, and from that day on he vowed that if he ever made gun belts, they would not fall apart. Bobby always remembered this promise to himself and anything that carried the stamp of the El Paso Saddlery was of the highest quality.

The Saddlery provided the perfect opportunities for Bobby to meet all manner of famous people, not only "stars," but noted Western authors, gun collectors, and historians. All who shared his love of these things was welcome. Once again his research and interview skills played an important role in shaping what were to be his contributions to the preservation of western history. He did a great deal of the research for Gordon Frost's book *The Gentlemen's Club*, and throughout the years, he provided to other noted authors and historians such as Leon Metz and Dr. Richard C. Marohn with factual historical information useful in their writing.

The Saddlery was not only a place of business. It also served as a gathering place for old friends, new friends, and even visitors off the street. For many years Friday lunches and Saturday break-

fasts were important weekly activities. Saturday breakfasts took place at different restaurants close by. Before beginning his weekend work schedule, Bobby and several of his friends would meet for breakfast. This was time for the men to "get together" and it continues even to this day. If you wanted to know what was happening in El Paso at any given time, the Saddlery was the place to go—politics, business, law enforcement, crime, historical events, guns, cars, airplanes, clandestine activities, books, war stories—all things which constitute the pulse of El Paso or the world were subject to discussion at these gatherings.

The Friday lunches began before the Saddlery moved to its present location. There was a man who lived in a railroad caboose across the street from the business. He invited Bobby and two of his friends, Leo Gooch and Sam Blackham, to eat lunch each Friday. Eventually, other friends came and they invited their friends. As the crowd grew, this became too expensive for just one person to underwrite, so Bobby began to provide the food to be prepared. When the shop moved to its present location, the "Friday Crowd" came along and the meals were served at the Saddlery.

Clearly, Bobby was a "people person." His goodness and kindness was extended to all in need. Many people were helped along their road in life by his hospitality, knowledge, understanding, and willingness to listen. He gave many a young man the opportunity to "get his life together." He let them live at the shop, provided temporary employment, and, most importantly, encouraged them to recognize their untapped talent. With this humanitarian spirit Bobby's friends would jokingly suggest that he put up a sign reading "Broken wings mended here."

Bobby McNellis was also a man of many accomplishments. He served as a member and officer of many historical organizations, among them The El Paso Pioneers Association, The El Paso Corral of the Westerners, and the El Paso County Historical Society. During his involvement in these organizations Bobby met and henceforth counted among his friends many people of historical import, among them Joe Hardin Clements, a relative of John Wesley Hardin. When Clements died, Bobby received the Hardin Collec-

*Plaque located  
at the Hubbard  
Museum of the  
American West.*

This exhibit is respectfully dedicated to the memory of

**Bobby McNellis**

for his enormous contribution to the  
field of western history.

tion. He sold most of this collection but retained a gun and holster that had belonged to Hardin and several other pieces that remain in the McNellis family. Some of these items are on display at the Hubbard Museum of the American West in Ruidoso, New Mexico. The "Gunfighter" exhibit in that museum is dedicated to Bobby's memory for his contributions to western history. Bobby also acted as an agent for much of the Pat Garrett memorabilia. This collection included warrants, letters, Pat Garrett's desk and chair, and guns the most famous of which was the gun that killed Billy the Kid.

Bobby exhibited at many gun shows throughout the Southwest. Through the many contacts he made on these trips and the exposure of his high quality leather goods, he was asked to make leather props for many western films and made-for-television movies. His work is seen in "Tombstone," "Rough Riders," "The Shootist," "Streets of Laredo," and others. This led to personal requests for leather goods from the stars who had been cast in these productions. Bobby filled requests from such people as the Carradine brothers, Robert, Keith, and David; James Garner; Bruce Boxlightner; Garth Brooks; Johnny Cash; Willie Nelson; G. Gordon Liddy; Karem Abduhl Jabar; Clint Eastwood; John Wayne; and many others. Bobby's brother John recalls the story of how the holster that Bobby made for John Wayne many years ago was returned to him. Even though Wayne was diagnosed with cancer and had lost a great deal of weight, he was still filming his last movie "The Shootist." The holster that Bobby had made for him many years before no longer fit his emaciated frame. He sent the holster back requesting that Bobby make another just like it. When Bobby attempted to return both holsters, Wayne told Bobby to keep the original and followed this gift with a letter of authenticity. This holster is still owned by a member of the family.

In 1998 the Texas Historical Foundation awarded the John Ben Shepperd Jr. Craftsmanship Award to the Saddlery. This was the first time this honor was given for leather goods.

Someone once said that there were not enough adjectives to describe Bobby McNellis. He was a complex man with many interests. In addition to his life-long involvement with guns, leather work, and history, he loved music, especially Irish music and cowboy songs of the West. Among his favorite Irish songs was "The Black Velvet Band," and he was particularly fond of Andy Wilkinson's songs about Charles Goodnight. Another of his hobbies was restoring and tinkering with hot rod cars. When he became ill he

was in the process of renovating a 1947 Ford Coupe. Bobby was also fascinated with airplanes and at one time owned a "Piper Pacer Tail-Dragger" whose flight log indicated it had been flown by Charles Lindbergh. Bobby also was an avid reader and a lover of books who owned many first editions and inscribed books.

Herein you have been given only a taste of the man who was Bobby McNellis, because, unless you knew him, it is difficult—if not impossible—to appreciate fully what a truly unique individual he was. He never met a stranger nor ever felt that he was better than or above anyone. He was always willing to help and he trusted others to a fault. People usually responded positively to him because he put them at ease with his winning smile, his risqué humor, his ability to converse in Spanish, and an innate acceptance of them as human beings with their own story. Bobby could talk his way out of anything, and was often called on to do so.

It was hard to decide what could—or should—have been included here. His many good friends were anxious and willing to share their experiences, and provided stories too numerous to be included—and some that should not—and were not—included. When Bobby passed away on May 11, 2003, he left behind his son Ryan McNellis, Erin and Joe Conner, his daughter and son-in-law, his grandson Travis, his mother, and nine siblings.

Those of us who knew Bobby best will remember his humor, generosity, kindness, and his interest in people from all walks of life. We'll miss Bobby—our lives have been enriched by having known him. Wherever he might be, we know he is in charge of wonderful stories and good deeds—truly a man for all seasons!

*Special thanks must be expressed to the following people who helped provide material and photos for this article:*  
*John McNellis, Mary McNellis, Ryan McNellis, Dr. James M. Day, Dr. Myles Miller, Dr. John Moyer, and Patricia M. Brooks.*

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**SHARON C. COWELL** spent her early years in the Texas Panhandle and graduated from West Texas State University with a degree in English and history. She is a member of Delta Zeta Sorority who came to El Paso in 1969 and earned a master's degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. She is currently a secondary school counselor working with at-risk students. She was honored by being twice named Teacher of the Year. Sharon serves as "deputy sheriff" for the Corral of the Westerners, is a member of the Casa Magoffin Compañeros, and serves as a docent at the Magoffin Home.

**Second Place Award  
in the Frank W. Gorman  
Memorial Essay Contest**



# Lions and Tigers and ... Alligators? Oh my!

By Alejandra Barrio,  
Seventh Grade, St. Patrick's School



***Wild alligators are on the loose in downtown El Paso!***

Can this be true? Believe it or not, it once was! From 1883 to 1972, people would come from all over the city of El Paso, TX, to the Plaza of San Jacinto and marvel at the beautiful charcoal-colored creatures.

You may wonder how I know about these magnificent creatures. When I was younger, I would go visit my mom at work. Sometimes when we would walk around San Jacinto Plaza she would look toward a fountain in the middle and she would seem to wander into another time as she would tell me how she remembered the real alligators when she was my age.

It originally began long ago, in January of 1883. The Plaza of San Jacinto was a lively place a source of entertainment, a center for public transportation and a place to rest from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Before that though, the plaza was a small park. That all changed on January 1st of 1883, when many trees were planted and three alligators were inserted in the small pond in the center of the plaza. Soon the plaza was referred to as the Plaza De Los Lagartos, or the plaza of lizards.

Why were they put in the plaza? Many people have asked that simple question. Rumor has it the alligators were sent to a local miner from a friend in Louisiana as a joke. The miner then presented the alligators to Mayor C. R. Morehead, who had them placed in the park pond. Another story claims that J. Fisher Satterwaite (El Paso Parks and Streets Commissioner) brought the reptiles to El Paso in a box and kept them in a barrel of water

*The article, like the article printed in Volume 2, has not been edited by the staff of Password. It is printed here just as it was submitted.*

at a local saloon until a pond could be built around the fountain in the Plaza.

Regardless of how they came to live in San Jacinto Plaza, the alligators were the center of attraction. Everybody loved the alligators. They were sluggish fellows who mostly lounged around in the sun. At one time the pond contained as many as seven of the reptiles!

Most visitors just rested on the wall surrounding the pond and watched the alligators. Others actually had firsthand encounters with the reptiles. In 1952, an alligator named Oscar was hauled to Texas Western College and, as a prank, placed inside a professor's office. Another time an alligator was found in the swimming pool at the college right before an intramural swim meet. Sally, one of the first alligators placed in the pond, was the object of a weight-guessing contest. The lucky person won \$100 and a trip to Mexico. In 1952, Minnie, a 54-year old female alligator, laid an egg in the pond and spectators were delighted when they were able to see protective Minnie spring to life and rush towards her egg when park employees cleaned the pond.

Not all stories about the alligators are funny. Many of the reptiles face threats from vandals. In March 1953, Oscar was found dead at the bottom of the pond. He had received internal injuries after vandals removed him and threw him back in when police arrived. Seven months later, El Pasoan Myrtle Price donated two alligators named Jack and Jill to the Plaza to replace Oscar.

Sadly, the alligators were removed and sent to the El Paso Zoo in 1965 after two were stoned to death and another had a spike driven through its left eye. The alligators were returned to the plaza in 1972 for two years only to be removed once more because of vandals.

Not long ago, Luis Jimenez completed a sculpture of the popular reptiles and now they boldly stand overlooking the plaza. Though there are no more live alligators living in the Plaza of San Jacinto, their memory lives on through the beautiful sculpture and through people who faintly remember admiring the alligators when they were young, passing their stories along to their children just like my mom did to me. I only wish that I would have been able to experience them personally.

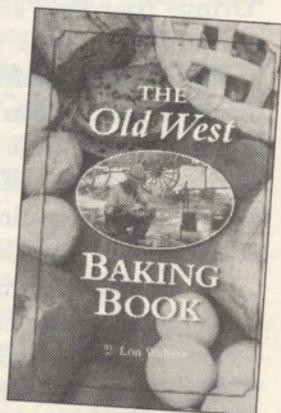


## Book Reviews

### Recipes for the Southwest

**THE OLD WEST BAKING BOOK.** Lon Walters. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Books, 1996. \$16.25.

This little volume has some wonderful bits of trivia about old West edibles as well as quaint recipes for Watermelon Cake, Railroad Cake, Indian Flat Bread, Fried Corn Bread, Old Range Biscuits, and three kinds of "starters;" basic, potato, and honey. There is also a recipe for Frybread which I saw being made in Mescalero, New Mexico. I was riveted to the process because the lady making it bore an amazing resemblance to my Portuguese grandmother—cotton house dress, grey hair drawn back, old worn shoes, and the dough in a blue-enameled basin. The only difference was that this lady threw her balls of dough into a pot of hot grease that was on a bonfire—my grandmother had her pot of hot grease on a wood-burning stove. My grandmother was not related to the Mescaleros—she was a-never-really-Americanized lady from the Azores. I was fascinated that these two women who were born and lived their lives half a world apart were mirror images of each other in at least a small part of the food department.



In this book you will also find directions for making Corn Beer, Cactus Treats, Southwest Shoofly Pie, Green Tomato Pie, and Mock Apple Pie. You will also find an interesting short description of such items as early stoves, "prairie fuel," Dutch Ovens, and a wonderful dictionary of Old West cooking terms.

Even if you never "make" one of these recipes, this book is a great read.

**A GRINGO'S GUIDE TO AUTHENTIC MEXICAN COOKING.**  
**Mad Coyote Joe. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Books, 2001.**  
**\$18.25.**

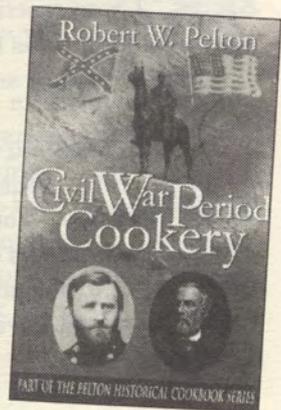
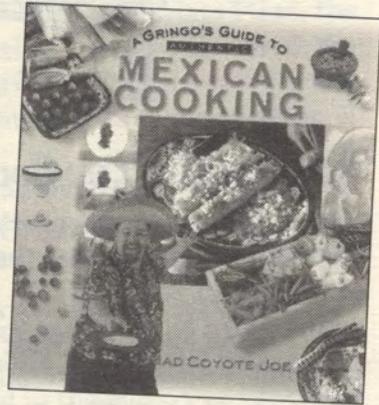
This "Gringo's Guide . . ." is exactly that—it makes Mexican cooking simple and even classifies the resulting dishes as "harmless," "moderate," "hot," and "danger," and, even better, they are also described as "Gringo friendly," and "Gringo approved." I wish I had read this book in 1958—before I daintily dipped a soup spoon into the bowl of green "soup" that was served to me. A large glass of water and 3 dinner rolls did not put

out the resulting fire which made my eyes water and my ears vibrate! This Bostonian **did** learn about salsa—the hard way!

I am pleased that I now know what I will get if I order anything *deshebrado*, or *chile verde*, or *machaca*, or *carnitas*, or *carne adobada*. At the front of this book you will find descriptions of the "Tools of the Mexican kitchen" and descriptions of the "Ingredients of the Mexican table" as well as descriptions and pictures of fresh and dried chiles which are helpfully rated from "Gringo Friendly" to "Gringo Killer."

**CIVIL WAR PERIOD COOKERY: A Unique Collection of Favorite Recipes from Notable People & Families Involved in the War Between the States.** Robert W. Pelton. Haverford, PA: Infinity Publishing, 2003. \$15.00

Did you ever wonder what they ate? What recipes did their wives use? Did you ever imagine that Jefferson Davis was partial to Baked Eggplant and that the Davis family had a favorite holiday fruit cake recipe? Or that Robert E. Lee liked Velvet Huckleberry Pancakes? Have you ever had "Killed Lettuce Salad?" That was a preferred recipe in the family of Major General Polk who fought at Shiloh, while the family of General Beauregard enjoyed their Buckwheat Griddle Cakes at breakfast. We find a trace of El Paso history here



for General Philip Kearney counted Navy Bean Casserole among his favorite dishes. Philip was the nephew of General Stephen Watts Kearney who led his troops in the conquest of New Mexico and who sent Doniphan through El Paso del Norte as part of the Mexican-American war. Another connection with local history is the recipe for Rice Waffles that were favored by General Philip Sheridan, one of whose descendants lives right here in El Paso.

Do you like Vinegar Pie? It was a favorite of the family of Lieutenant General James Longstreet. And Clara Barton, the Christian philanthropist who founded the American Red Cross included Mintade Syrup and Mint Lemonade among her favorites. Mrs. Jack Armstrong of New Salem who counted Abraham Lincoln among her friends, made Johnny Cake for the future president who was asked to "pass the blessing" before they ate a meal at her table, and John Wilkes Booth's mother made Spoon Batter Bread for her sons.

Stonewall Jackson's troops enjoyed a "bread" that I first saw at a gathering of Boy Scouts who made and ate a form of Battlefield Corkscrew Bread—dough wrapped around a branch and "baked" over the open fire. Since it was a "battlefield" concoction, I assume that the hands of the soldiers were no cleaner than the hands of those Boy Scouts. I have always wondered if those grubby fingermarks added to the delicious flavor!

The *piece de resistance* for me was the recipe to which I opened when I first picked up this book. There under my eyes was a recipe for the stuffing with which I have stuffed my Thanksgiving turkey for forty years—Sausage-Chestnut Stuffing. I didn't ever find this recipe in a book—it was my mother's stuffing, made by mother's method—"some of this, and a spoonful of that, and "as much as you think you need." As for eggs, cream, and wine it was "until it feels right." Over the years I had developed a recipe which is remarkably like "John Worden's Favorite Sausage-Chestnut Stuffing."

And if in your searching through great-grandmothers recipes you meet with a request for a "gill" of milk, or a "saltspoonful" of vanilla extract, or a "tumblerful" of water, or a "dash" of cinnamon, you will now know exactly how much to use, for in this book is a short list of the measurements from the "olden days" with their modern equivalent.

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*An interesting and colorful trio of paperback books for anyone interested in the methods, materials, and the foods of the land where we live. Separately or together they would make a most fascinating and engaging Christmas gift—all available at the Carriage House at the Magoffin Home.*

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**THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LAWMEN, OUTLAWS, AND GUN-FIGHTERS** by Leon Claire Metz. New York: Checkmark Books, 2003. 302 pp. ISBN 0-8160-4544-5 paperback \$19.95; ISBN 0-8160-4543-7, hardcover \$60.00.

Rattlesnake Dick, Three Fingered Jack, Apache Bill, Poker Alice, Black Face Charlie, Curly Bill, and Dutch Charley are only a few of the characters the reader meets in this book. It is fascinating reading.

Metz's introduction, "The Way of a Gunfighter," traces his interest in the topic by explaining the books he has written on the subjects which can be found in this book. He then explains the essence of "gunfighting" in that the best of the glorified top guns rarely "shot it out." He explains that this phenomenon came about because of a Springfield, Missouri shootout between Wild Bill Hickok and Dave Tutt on July 21, 1864. Hickok's lucky shot hit Tutt in the heart. Metz argues that "most gunfights were brawls that got out of hand."

Metz concludes that his encyclopedia aimed for completeness, but that it failed in achieving that goal—"There is no such thing" writes Metz,"and never will be any such thing as a 'complete' outlaw/lawman/gunfighter book." He arranges his subjects in alphabetical order, providing a biography for each one.

Many of the characters have El Paso or southern New Mexico connections. El Pasoans include George Wythe Baylor, Ira Aten, Bass Outlaw, John R. Hughes, Charles Fusselman, George Harold and Carl Kirchner. Lesser known El Pasoans are W. H. Garlick, Scott Russell, Alonzo Van Oden, William R. Raynor, Ernest St. Leon, David Tucker, and Milton Yarberry. New Mexico is represented by George Edgar Scarborough, Jr., Charley Lazure, Sandy King, Milton Good, and Joel A. Fowler.

The biography of Barney Riggs of Pecos, Texas and other places is excellent as is Metz's treatment of Lottie Deno of Deming

and Fort Griffin fame. Other women included Calamity Jane, Paula Angel, Celia Ann Blalock, and Helen Mrose.

By relating his publishing experience on the subject, Metz qualifies himself for the task he undertook. He writes smoothly, just as he speaks, and the reading is compelling. He gives no source for each item, but he does include an extensive bibliography. His pictures are graphic, especially the one depicting the hanging of "Killin' Jim" Miller.

Recommended!!!

JAMES M. DAY

Professor Emeritus of English  
University of Texas at El Paso



Ed. Note: *This would make an excellent Christmas gift for the ardent devotee of the history of the West in paperback for the student of history, and in hardback for the "collector."*



**EVERYDAY LIFE AND POLITICS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY MEXICO: MEN, WOMEN, AND WAR.** By Mark Wasserman. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000. 232 PP. + Selected Bibliography + Index. Cloth, \$39.95, Paper, \$19.95.

Anyone who has read about or attempted to study the history of nineteenth century Mexico knows what a daunting undertaking it is to unravel the many threads of what that new-born nation was like in the 1800s. When Mexico won its independence in 1821, its liberty seemed to be all she had accomplished. This new nation faced severe problems in almost every sector—not the least of which was the question of just what type of government would be established. For the remainder of the century politicians, the military, the clergy, social elites, regional *caudillos*, and others would all contend for the opportunity to dictate Mexico's development.

Rutgers University professor, Mark Wasserman, more known for his excellent studies of the Chihuahua elites at the end of the profirianto—for example, his 1984 work, *Capitalists, Caciques, and Revolution*—attempts here to write a work of synthesis, "an attempt to make sense of the century."<sup>(3)</sup> He believes that three watershed events— independence in 1821, the reform in 1855-60, and the Revolution of 1910 and three themes—the struggle of the common people to retain control over their everyday lives, external

wars, and the demographic and social aspects of war—dominate the Mexican nation of that era. External wars were such a constant in 19th century Mexico that the author asserts—not without some merit—that it may be the dominant factor in Mexican economic development and crucial to its politics. Following this basic format or organization, each section in the book revolves around the central figure of each era—Santa Anna, Juarez, and Diaz.

This is a well-written, engaging, and thought-provoking work of synthesis. Based on his own knowledge, Wasserman weaves significant recent research into his narrative which adds texture to the story. Not only are his depictions of the three major figures well-rounded, but the inclusion of the experiences of hacienda laborers, women's role in war, etc., makes it truly a work which deals with the struggles of the common people. Consequently, while the chapters which discuss the political maneuverings are important, I believe the three chapters which examine everyday life for each of the three periods are the heart of this book. It is here that one sees the impact that wars, partisan politics, regional antagonisms, clerical excesses, etc. have on the lives of the common people of Mexico.

As this work is meant as a text for students, it does not include extensive notes or an extensive bibliography. Instead, the various historians/researchers are mentioned within the text and the reader can find their works in the selected bibliography. So be aware of the fact that the bibliography is barely six pages long and I could see only one or two works in Spanish.

In sum this is a book whose value lies not in its detail—notes and bibliography—but in its ability to synthesize and encapsulate in an orderly and clear way what for many is a most difficult period of Mexican history. You might disagree with some of his conclusions or statements. You might think his conclusions too general. But think of it as a starting point from which you can dig deeper. I would recommend it to any one interested in Mexican history. It will pique your interest and you'll find yourself flipping back to the bibliography for those other works which will lead you to further reading and, hopefully, a better understanding of 19th century Mexico.

RICHARD BAQUERA,  
History, El Paso Community College

**TEXAS FLAGS.** By Robert Maberry, Jr. Foreword by Peter C. Marzio. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2001. In association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. 166 pp. + Notes, Bibliography, Index. \$50.00 Cloth. ISBN 158544-151-1.

Flags are one of the most recognizable icons of national—or regional—identity. The identity of Texas is so closely tied to its flag that it is also known as the “Lone Star” state. It is difficult not to recognize that flag and think of Texas. “Today, the Lone Star Flag is the physical embodiment of the myths of Texas,” the author writes. That particular flag, however, is only the most recognizable of several—or many, as the author’s research discovered—flags or banners that have been associated with the various nations, individuals, and associations in Texas history. Some are more well known than others but all have a place in the vexillological history of Texas

This study began as a catalog for an exhibit of several Texas flags at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston for which the author was guest curator. Research, however, led to a much broader, more, comprehensive treatment of the flags of Texas history, their symbols, and their relationship to the history of state. This book is the first attempt to do so since the 1936 Texas Centennial. “It is by no means meant as a complete guide to Texas flags,” cautions the author. The present study is limited to the formative years of Texas history what Maberry calls, the “heroic age.” It is the period, notes the author, “when designs were evolving and flags were not only symbols, as they are today, but served practical functions as well.” Consequently, flags carried by Texas military forces and by troops associated with the state predominate. The museum exhibit includes flags used in World War II but Maberry chose to end this study with the “passage of the 1933 law that reestablished the “Texian” flag as the state’s official flag. Practically all the flags discussed in the book are reproduced in color; many in their present state.

What the author has produced is much more than a recapitulation of the familiar “six flags” concept. He explains that even those familiar six flags aren’t always the historically correct flags actually used on the Spanish or Mexican frontier. Where possible, he has looked at original letterhead stationery or contemporary drawings that feature a flag in order to authenticate which specific flag was being used.

One of the more enduring stories about historic Texas flags is the one about which flag flew over the Alamo at the time of the attack by Santa Anna's army. Many histories and accounts assert that the defenders of the Alamo flew a Mexican flag with the date "1824" under the central "serpent and cactus" seal. This was to indicate that the Texans supported the 1824 federal Mexican constitution and opposed Santa Anna's new centralist regime. Maberry notes that recent writers have pointed out that it was "highly unlikely that the Alamo defenders would have fought and died under this flag." Speculation now is that either a tricolor flag representing the state of Coahuila y Tejas flew over the Alamo [because one contemporary sketch of the old mission depicts that flag] or that the true flag over the Alamo was the "design and colors of the American republic" because by that time the Texians had declared independence. His chapter on the development of a "Texas flag" also dispels some myths. He asserts that the accepted story of how the Lone Star Flag came to be is also not exactly true. There were any number of unusual designs and sizes for early Texas flags—many were simply variations on the United States stars and stripes. For the statehood era, there is a long discussion and depiction of the many flags used by Texas troops during the Civil War. One final chapter is devoted to a catalog of the flags in the museum exhibition. These are reproduced in their present condition—some in tatters and others in faded colors.

It occurs to me that this study represents the convergence of a museum wanting to exhibit these icons of Texas history meeting a historian with tremendous interest in and extensive knowledge of the topic. For us the pleasant result is this scholarly and informative study. Hopefully, it will lead to a renewed interest in saving these symbols before they disappear.

RICHARD BAQUERA

History, El Paso Community College

**TEXAS RIVERS.** By John Graves. Photographs by Wyman Meinzer. Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife Press, 2002. 144 pp. \$39.95

Those of us who live in Far West Texas and Southern New Mexico need only look at the border to be reminded of the impact a river can have. Often taken for granted—though I daresay not here where water can be at a premium—rivers, and lack of rivers, play significant, vital roles in any area's development. For centuries, the Rio Bravo del Norte was the highway for supply and trade

along the Camino Real above Paso del Norte. In Northeast Texas, the Red River was the site of early Anglo-American settlements—to name only two instances.

At first glance, it might appear that *Texas Rivers* would be a work that would complement *Texas Mountains* which appeared last year as well—but that is not exactly correct. *Texas Rivers*, distributed by the University of Texas Press for Texas Parks and Wildlife, is a compilation of a series of articles that originally appeared over a three-year period in Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine—though re-titled and revised for this volume. And, as the prefatory note explains, “This book is not a comprehensive or even a representative study of Texas Rivers.” (6).

These observations aside, this slim-looking, over-sized, 144-page book is worth a serious look. In six chapters, the authors offer observations on the history, exploration, and development of sections of six Texas rivers [the Canadian, Lower Neches, Pecos, Llano, Brazos Clear Fork, and Upper Sabinal.] Those familiar with John Graves [*Goodbye to A River*] are aware of his eloquent ability to transcend the visual and sensory and help readers get to know rivers as real places. Wyman Meinzees photography is an equally eloquent complement to Graves’s essays on each section of river.

Read the essays first, then browse through the photos. It’s clear that both authors—and publishers—have a deep respect and love for these rugged areas of Texas.

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## Book Notes



This is a continuation of *Book Notes* by Richard Baquera,  
Book Review Editor.

**RALPH W. YARBOROUGH: THE PEOPLE’S SENATOR.**  
By Patrick Cox. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.  
\$39.95 Cloth.

As one of the major Texas political figures of the post-World War II era to the 1960s, reading about Ralph W. Yarborough’s life and career is like re-living that turbulent era. Using Yarborough’s personal and professional papers, Patrick Cox offers the first in-

depth look at what began as a promising legal career [including a stint with the El Paso law firm of Turney, Burges, Culwell and Pollard] ended with Yarborough's 1957 to 1971 tenure in the United States Senate.

The "People's Senator" comes from what Cox argues is a life-long commitment that Yarborough exhibited for fighting for the "little people." It stems partly, concludes the author, from the time Yarborough spent in Europe in the early 1920s which "Undoubtedly brought home to him the widespread hardships and sufferings of the people. Texas had its own poverty, racism, and poor living conditions, but even these conditions sometimes paled in comparison to the problems Europeans faced in the aftermath of 'the war to end all wars.'" (Pg. 11) Cox chronicles Yarborough's accomplishments in "putting the jam on the lower shelf" as the politician himself described it. [This refers to a political speech in which Yarborough said, "Let's put the jam on the lower shelf so the little people can reach it."] In the end, Yarborough becomes the only United States Senator from a Confederate state to vote for every significant piece of modern civil rights legislation. But that was only one aspect of this man's accomplishments. He was active in the enactment of the Cold War "G. I. Bill"; creation of the Padre Island National Seashore, and the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

Still, it was probably his opposition to the war in Vietnam which cost him re-election to the Senate. He was defeated by Lloyd Bentsen, Jr. in the Democratic Party primary in 1970. It took three decades after the end of his career for this first political biography to be written. It looks as though the author has done a more than creditable job.

**CHICANO RENAISSANCE: CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL TRENDS.** Edited by David R. Maciel, Isidro D. Ortiz, and Maria Herrera-Sobek. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000. \$19.95, Paper.

This is a companion volume to a previous study that focused on social, economic, and political change. The volume under consideration here examines art and culture.

Nine essays in this volume cover various topics in Chicano life—everything from, *La onda tejana* and the Making of Selena, [thus the cover art of Selena], writings, cinema and television and art. The essays accomplish the purpose of recapping the present

state of Chicano culture in its varied forms. Indeed, they more than fulfill the stated thesis that, "contrary to the popular notion that Chicanos have succumbed to a victim mentality, they continue to actively struggle to shape the conditions of their lives and influence the direction of American society through their arts and social struggle." (Pg. xxxi)

For me, George Vargas's essay titled, "A Historical Overview/Update on the State of Chicano Art," was especially interesting as it includes a photo of the old silo which used to stand in a cotton field at the corner of Buford [now Horizon Blvd.] and North Loop. Today, there is a large shopping center at what has become a major Lower Valley intersection. When a new grocery store was built, the silo stayed in what is now a parking lot-but now it's painted with a mural titled *History of the Mission Valley* (Pg. 212-13). Now I know how, why it was saved and who is responsible for the mural.

There is much in this volume that Chicanos as well as anyone interested in the local culture will find interesting and enlightening.

**LONE STAR JUSTICE: THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE TEXAS RANGERS.** By Robert M. Utley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. \$30.00, Cloth.

Another book on the Texas Rangers might not receive much notice. However, this one is authored by well-known American West historian Robert M. Utley. Utley believes the Texas Ranger legend still persists. "The true Rangers of then and now come across as real people with their share of talents and shortcomings—people, furthermore, who sometimes lived up to the legend," (ix) writes the author. Consequently, "the strength and endurance of the legend mean people still care, perhaps enough to justify an effort to recapture the Texas Rangers as they were." (ix) Thus this latest Texas Rangers history.

This is the first volume of what is projected to be a two volume work. The author believes that Texas Ranger history can be divided conveniently at 1910. "Before 1910, the Rangers were volunteer fighting units contending with Indians and Mexicans who then turned themselves into lawmen of the Old West . . . . After 1910, their story features a new cast of characters, new themes, and new kinds of adventure." (x)

The title of this book comes from what Utley believed to be the character of the early Rangers—they were lawmen. But, "it was justice as understood by the Anglo Texans who dominated

the republic and then the state. Rooted in the white people's frontier ethos, it was unforgiving and lethal." (xi)

As for the contrasting views of the Texas Rangers—the Walter P. Webb idea that they were men of “sterling character and unswerving dedication to mission” as contrasted with the opposing view that they were “ruthless, brutal, and more lawless than the criminals they pursued,” (xii) the author concludes that both stereotypes contain elements of truth and falsity. In the style of the historian Utley continues to be, he uses all the available sources to depict the story and let the reader decide which is true.

Although he readily admits that certain episodes are missing from this Ranger history, he does have a chapter on the El Paso Salt War of 1877. Using the usual sources, the author relates the story of that episode. In the context of the Texas Rangers, he notes that the “salt war” does form one of their darkest chapters. “No Ranger unit had ever surrendered so completely or ever would again,” he concludes. He blames Ranger John B. Jones for misplaced friendship and trust [of Charles H. Howard]—Jones should have stayed to insure Howard would not return until his trial—though he notes the Texas Ranger had to leave on pressing business. “Had Howard carried out his promises to the San Elizario junta and his implicit commitment to Jones,” he states, “the insurgents would have had no immediate cause for violence.” (205)

The ultimate blame for the entire flare-up, however, Utley reserves for the federal government. There was no large federal troop presence at the time. “The army's generals persisted in regarding the affair as a purely local matter and convinced themselves,” asserts Utley, “despite reports from their own officers on the scene, that Mexican citizens were not involved.” (205) The crisis would have “blown over” had there been a larger federal troop presence.

Finally, he does allow that it's possible that the episode could be interpreted as a “people's movement” in which frustrated local Mexicans rose up to re-claim fights lost to the Anglo-Americans.

**STAGECOACH: WELLS FARGO AND THE AMERICAN WEST.** By Philip L. Fradkin. New York: Simon & Schuster Source, 2002. \$27.50, Cloth.

Among the several iconic symbols of the American West, the stagecoach ranks among the most recognizable. The author contends that a study of the growth and development of the Wells Fargo Company is the story of American Westward expansion—a combination of social, political, and business history.

Published in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of its origins, this book was a little disappointing—but maybe I expected more than I should have in this book. I was hoping to see a little wider focus that would have included stagecoach transportation in the Southwest, the Butterfield Overland, for example. But there are only a few paragraphs describing the overland mail. There is no bibliography but a list of sources by chapter. I was disappointed that Austerman's *Sharps Rifles and Spanish Mules* wasn't used or mentioned.

"The emphasis of this book is on the period from 1852 to 1918 when Wells Fargo was an express company," (xxi) notes the author. He also concludes that Wells Fargo made three contributions to the well-being of the West and to the nation as a whole: 1) it was the principal communications conduit between East and West; 2) it contributed to the Union victory in the Civil War; and 3) by shipping fresh vegetables and fruits via refrigerated express to the colder regions of the nation, it ensured better health. (xxi)

Fradkin was granted what seems to be free access to the Wells Fargo Company archives to write this book. While this is a plus for the book, I think the result is a book that focuses almost exclusively on Wells Fargo itself—an officially sanctioned history of the company. The author missed a good opportunity to write a more comprehensive history of the stagecoach as a form of transportation.

**LAND! IRISH PIONEERS IN MEXICAN AND REVOLUTIONARY TEXAS.** By Graham Davis. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002. Cloth, \$29.95.

Among the many cultural/ethnic groups which have contributed to the Texas experience, the Irish are among the earliest.

While several works detailing the Irish contribution to Texas exist, notes the author, they are either several decades old or written as local histories. "More importantly," Davis concludes, "they all presented the story of the Irish colonists in the romantic tradition of the struggle for national freedom, transplanted to Texas." (5)

This monograph represents Davis's attempt to write a history that is non-selective and "inclusive history, incorporating the lived experiences of men, women, and children, irrespective of race, color, or creed." (5) Ultimately, then, this is another history of colonization, empresarios, pioneer life and ranching in revolutionary Texas but with an emphasis on the Irish.



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