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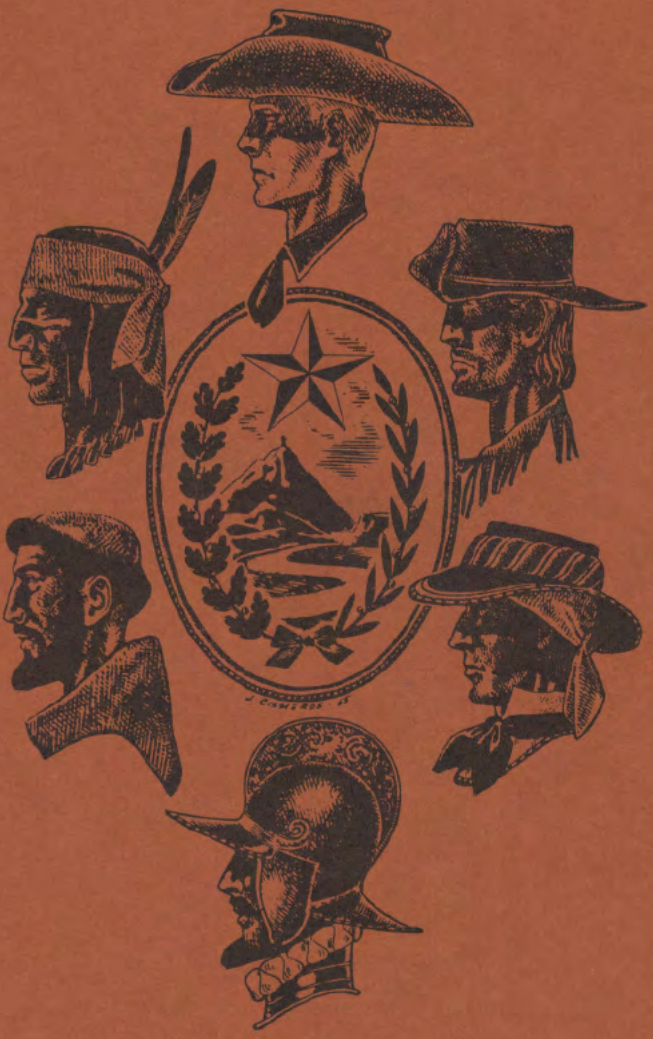

THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Volume 50, No. 1 · El Paso, Texas · Spring, 2005

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VOLUME 50, NO. 1
SPRING, 2005
EL PASO, TEXAS

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Entered as periodical mail at El Paso, Texas

José Felix Trespalacios:

Frontier Insurgent, Constitutionalist, and First Mexican Governor of Texas

By Richard Baquera

As the work day ended early in November, 1814, for the seven thousand residents of the village of Chihuahua, everything seemed to indicate it would be another quiet, cool, late-fall evening. Initial surveillance and tension raised by the Hidalgo revolt which had led to the creation of a committee of vigilance, the *Junta de Seguridad*, and a local watchguard militia, had by now become routine. Reports of *insurrecto* activity did filter in from *tierra adentro*, but few people feared any flare-up of rebel action in the north.

A few informed *chihuahuenses* knew that the situation in Chihuahua on that particular evening was far from quiet and peaceful. For several weeks, a group of disgruntled citizens had been organizing a plot to overthrow the local authorities. A leader in this cabal was a young creole named José Felix Trespalacios. Texans might remember him as the first Mexican governor of Texas. Fewer still may know of his involvement in the James Long filibustering expedition of 1820-21. Yet upon closer inspection, in Trespalacios one finds a fascinating life and career that transcends mere local history.

Born in 1781, his father a Spaniard, Trespalacios lived the life of a creole on the far northern frontier of New Spain. His *patria chica,* the village of Chihuahua, founded in 1709, was isolated from the major areas of population by many leagues of desolate, fairly empty land. Beset by chronic economic woes and the seemingly endless Indian menace, *chihuahuenses* relied on themselves to take whatever actions were necessary to alleviate their way of life. One of their only visible links with Spain was in

the person of the commandant general of the Interior Provinces, who, headquartered in Chihuahua, presided over the vast northern areas since 1792. Because his father was a royal postal official, José Felix likely enjoyed a few privileges, such as a basic education, which others in the *villa* did not enjoy. His early life was likely a thorough preparation for entering royal service—either in the military or, like his father, in the bureaucracy.

In November, 1809, several months before the beginning of the Mexican Independence movement, don José was asked to attend a special meeting called by the commandant general, Nemesio Salcedo y Salcedo, to raise money for the company of "*fernandinos*" that was being organized. The Spanish crown having been usurped by a Frenchman, the crown expected French agents to come to New Spain to incite rebellion. The "*fernandinos*" would guard against such an occurrence. Each of the *vecinos* was to contribute a certain amount because Trespalacios was among those in attendance, it was an indication of his status and regard for civic responsibilities.

Almost a year later, when the *ayuntamiento* or city council organized a new militia to protect the *villa* from insurrectionary agents, José Felix, then twenty-eight years old, was among several men who offered to instruct others in the proper use of arms. These precautions were taken as a result of Miguel Hidalgo's call for liberty in Dolores, Guanajuato, on the morning of September 16, 1810. A cavalry detachment formed to complement the infantry unit of the wealthiest and more gentlemanly men of the village. It was led by Captain Savino de la Pedrueza; whose second lieutenant was Trespalacios. Within a year however, Hidalgo was captured on the frontier, his insurgency and army in retreat.

As the rebel had been captured in the territory of the commandant general, the trial and execution were held in Chihuahua. A member of the tribunal which heard the testimony was José Felix Trespalacios. Speculation regarding what possible effect serving in the group which dictated Hidalgo's execution may have had on the young creole would be conjectural. Nevertheless, it is too intriguing a possibility to ignore.

By 1812 Trespalacios entered city government as the municipal attorney, *sindico procurador,* he thus combined those duties with his activities in the cavalry company. Due to the ongoing insurrection, the royalist general Felix Maria Calleja published a rather thorough military plan which called on all towns and villages

to create their own defense measures. In March of the same year, Trespalacios, informed the city council in his official capacity as attorney that he did not think it convenient for the *cabildo* to impose new taxes in accordance with General Calleja's defense plan because revenues collected would be insufficient and would come in too slowly. Instead, he proposed that another *donativo voluntario* be collected from the military, clergy, and other officials. A three-man committee having been appointed to draw up a contribution list for this donation, Trespalacios' own share was to be two hundred pesos.

Following the reorganization of the villa's defenses according to Calleja's instructions, Trespalacios retained his rank in the cavalry. For several months, he was given a third chore—treasurer of a lottery which Calleja's plan had authorized as a municipal revenue-producing measure.

In November, Trespalacios joined with the rest of his fellow *chihuahuenses* in proclaiming allegiance to the liberal Spanish Constitution of 1812. It formally acknowledged the right of the very grateful for the timely aid of the two fellow *norteños*, for rebel forces had occupied virtually the entire city.

It is worth noting that Trespalacios traveled with a known troublemaker—Caballero. For, although Caballero was in the cavalry unit, he had offended the sensitive ears of local officials in April, 1811 by complaining publicly about his salary as a soldier.

It is worth noting that Trespalacios traveled with a known troublemaker—Caballero. For, although Caballero was in the cavalry unit, he had offended the sensitive ears of local officials in April, 1811 by complaining publicly about his salary as a soldier. For this and other disrespectful language, the *Junta de Seguridad* had ordered his incarceration and shackling for ten days. Either Caballero had amended his ways—or Trespalacios had begun to retreat from his staunch royalist beliefs.

This brief foray into active military life behind him, Trespalacios returned to Chihuahua and immediately became embroiled in its political life. It came about as a result of the new instructions pursuant to the Cadiz Constitution. In a meeting held late in 1813 to choose the city fathers for the coming year, Trespalacios figured in the results. According to article five of the new

charter, the process was to begin when citizens met and chose a number of electors based on population. On Sunday, December 5th, the citizens met and don José Felix Trespalacios received seventy-five votes; this made him the tenth of the seventeen allotted electors. As the 8th of December represents a major Catholic holiday, these seventeen parish electors met in mid-week and selected the *cabildo* officers for 1814. The new first alcalde was don Francisco José de Jauregui, soon to be the provincial deputy-elect to the Spanish Cortes; the fifth *regidor* (councillor or alderman) was Trespalacios.

Unfortunately, this city council would not be permitted to serve its full term in office. The Interim Intendant Governor, Bernardo Bonavía who annually validated the elections, refused to allow this council to serve. In an order dated January 4th, and received in Chihuahua six days later, the intendant ordered that new elections be held because the secretary of the December 5th meeting, José Maria Ponce de León, had not been elected, as provided by the constitution, but apparently only appointed. The intendant ordered that notice for a new meeting be posted and the entire process repeated—this time with a duly elected secretary.

As strict as the Spanish were about following rules and regulations, Bonavía's decision from Durango should have been no surprise to the *cabildo* in Chihuahua. Nevertheless, what likely did offend was the fact that the time-consuming process had to be repeated. Bonavía could have overlooked this slight breach of rules. It could just as easily reflected dislike for some of the men chosen. Nevertheless, less than a month after having assumed office, the *cabildo* was forced to resign and face new elections.

The first weekend after these instructions were received, a new meeting of electors convened and returned practically the same slate of officers to the *ayuntamiento*. Yet again the elections were invalidated by Durango. Early in March a third series of elections had to be conducted because a Salvador Porras had been allowed to participate and had even received a few votes in the process. The problem was that Porras had been deprived of his rights of citizenship, which involved his right to vote and participate in the *ayuntamiento*, because he and another priest, Mateo Sanchez Alvarez, had attempted to liberate Miguel Hidalgo before the rebel's execution in July 1811. Having voted for the third time for the *cabildo*, these frustrated *chihuahuenses* followed orders and re-elected almost the same group of men—the major exception

being that Pedro de Valois and not Jauregui was to be the new first *alcalde*. This was likely due to the fact that Jauregui had recently been elected to be the deputy to the Spanish Cortes from Nueva Vizcaya and New Mexico. It was not clear from the archival sources whether this *ayuntamiento* was finally allowed to serve its time or whether more time would pass before Chihuahua would know who its leaders for 1814 would be. At any rate, as far as Trespalacios was concerned, the damage had been done.

In a council meeting being held on April 30th to discuss the upcoming elections for 1815, a frustrated Trespalacios rose to propose what he believed was a new, more democratic method of choosing the city council. One can only conjecture what passion, anger, and courage he displayed when he took the floor to say that despite his nervousness, he felt compelled to speak. "Despite the fact that I am nervous speaking before this respectable meeting, since I am not accustomed to keeping silent when I feel strongly about something, I will speak. Our wise constitution has declared us all free and equal before the law," he said. But it was not bringing any substantive reform—the usual political power was in control. He did propose that city council elections be held by lottery—a process which would include all those qualified to perform the tasks required—but that was voted down as not conforming with constitutional provisions for conducting the elections.

Early in March a third series of elections had to be conducted because a Salvador Porras had been allowed to participate and had even received a few votes in the process. The problem was that Porras had been deprived of his rights of citizenship, which involved his right to vote and participate in the ayuntamiento, *because he and another priest, Mateo Sanchez Alvarez, had attempted to liberate Miguel Hidalgo before the rebel's execution in July 1811.*

Immediately Francisco José de Jaurequi protested saying Trespalacios' proposal was in direct conflict with Article 314 of the constitution, but the young creole had vented his feelings and his heart. Years of working closely with the Spanish administrative system had left their mark. He had hoped that the constitution would accomplish some good, but it did not seem to be fulfilling his

aspirations. Ideally, the document seemed to guarantee free elections without family or political influence, but the same people remained dominant in the affairs of the *cabildo;* little was being done to let other voices be heard. The culmination was the election held in December of the previous year in which the electoral process had to be repeated several times because on technicalities, the intendant governor refused to validate the results.

Consequently, Trespalacios concluded that a better method of selection should be proposed. A more democratic system would be to pool the names of all the qualified candidates and select the city leaders by chance—thus hopefully ensuring that, in Trespalacios' words, "having closed the doors of tyranny, the interests of the people will not be put behind those of a privileged family." However, this was too liberal a view for the influential few gathered at the meeting; Trespalacios was thwarted in his first public plea for change. From Durango, Nueva Vizcaya's highest ranking officials, the commandant general and the intendant governor, commended the *ayuntamiento* for its handling of the Trespalacios proposal. More importantly, the two, Bonavía and Garcia Conde, asked the council to warn Trespalacios that he should be more careful in his future speeches and comments about the political situation in his native Chihuahua.

Those sentiments notwithstanding, Commandant General Bonavía himself was privately communicating much the same ideas to his superior in Spain. Specifically, he said:

> Those who have been and are the most privileged, independent and *preponderantes* [influential] have a better chance of being electors and being elected than the other citizens and none of those coming under Article 97 have as much influence as those who make up the ecclesiastical state. It is *notorio* [well-known] that they have managed and directed everything in the elections held here: they have *llevado la voz* [dominated] and the elections have been more ecclesiastical than popular.

Nevertheless, the final chain of events that led to an attempted *coup* in Chihuahua began only ten weeks later, on July 11th, when the *ayuntamiento* received a note from Durango. That note informed all *chihuahuenses* of the return from exile in France of their beloved Ferdinand VII on March 24th. Festivities in the village included a much-discussed bullfight. The singular events

of that summer culminated in mid-September when word was received that Ferdinand had revoked the constitution and reimposed autocratic rule. Consequently, all vestiges of the 1814 charter were to be removed; things were to return to pre-constitution days.

To an apparent liberal constitutionalist like Trespalacios, it must have seemed to signal the end of whatever hopes he had for better government in Chihuahua. Others in the area shared his sentiments; he began to seek them out secretly to discuss plans for forcibly restoring their only hopes for better government. One of these men was José Maria Arrieta, who had ridden with Hidalgo but saved his life by turning against the movement. These two leaders were joined by Juan Pablo Caballero, also a constitutionalist who had fought in Monterrey with Trespalacios.

On a designated evening, these three conspirators with the aid of their accomplices, a squad of soldiers, several men liberated from the *obraje,* (workhouse), and the jail, hoped to overpower the military garrison of the village. If successful, they not only planned to arrest the members of the city council, but such was the fervor that motivated these men, that Trespalacios and Arrieta had even discussed setting fire to the entire *villa* as punishment for the execution of Hidalgo and his generals. To crown their efforts, the Trespalacios-led group hoped to link up with the main insurgent leader, José Maria Morelos, who at the time was having trouble keeping the insurrectionist cause operating in the South.

Believing they had adequately prepared and planned, Trespalacios, Caballero, and the others met secretly on November 4, 1814, armed themselves, and prepared to instigate their plot. At that moment, however, they were surprised and overwhelmed by a force led by Diego de Aguirre, the royal treasurer; Antonio de Tejada, the *Ayudante Inspector*; and about a score of other Spaniards and creoles. The despair and disappointment of the plotters no doubt turned to anger, resentment, and bitterness when they learned the reason for the surprising turn of events—José Maria Arrieta.

Once again this man showed his duplicity by treacherously informing Aguirre, and thus, all local Spanish officials, of the Trespalacios arrangements. As early as August—after the return of Ferdinand but before the revocation of the constitution—Arrieta had communicated to Aguirre of movement by the Trespalacios

group. Aguirre called out his forces and the attempted *coup* was squelched as it began. One has to wonder how all the officials in Chihuahua and Durango were able to keep their secret for several weeks so that the members of the conspiracy did not know they had been discovered—actually double-crossed. It demonstrates either the amateurish nature of Trespalacios and his men or highlights their political naiveté.

Under the climate of political tension, fear, and apprehension then existent in New Spain, it was remarkable that the entire group was not summarily tried and executed for treason. Indeed, although Trespalacios and Caballero were to be executed, Bonavía decided they were not guilty of severe treasonable offenses but merely *sediciosos*, that is seditious or insubordinate, and commuted their sentence to ten years imprisonment at Ceuta, on the African coast near Spain. This was to be followed by perpetual exile from the Interior Provinces.

From their investigations of the affair, officials concluded that Arrieta had originated the idea of a revolt while Trespalacios and Caballero had joined the cabal only after the abolition of the Constitution of 1812. Consequently, despite the fact that his information had led to the squelching of the affair, Arrieta was to be banished from the Interior Provinces as well. Late in 1815, Trespalacios and Caballero were solemnly escorted out of Chihuahua en route to begin their sentences.

Rather than signaling the end of Trespalacios' career and his place in Chihuahua history, this was the beginning of an adventure that would see Trespalacios re-emerge as a hero of the independence movement. Instead of traveling south to Mexico City, the escort group was diverted to Durango, the temporary capital of the western Interior Provinces. As the *chihuahuenses* liked to think of it, their village was the official capital. The escort group remained some time before moving on to San Luis Potosí. While at San Luis, a royal proclamation granting pardons for certain criminals was published. Royalty often used occasions of special celebration to grant such favors. But when Trespalacios attempted to use the pardon to bring about his release, orders were given that he be sent to Spain as planned. There his case would receive special consideration—either his majesty would grant his pardon or his prison term would begin.

Having exhausted all available means of avoiding his assessed punishment, Trespalacios' only recourse was escape. In this he was successful for his subsequent activities were under the insurgent forces led by Colonel Sebastian Gonzalez in the San Luis Potosí-Queretaro area. His services to the insurgent cause lasted a short while for his ill-fortunes continued and he was recaptured and imprisoned at the San Juan de Ulua fortress at Vera Cruz.

The consequence of his activities in Chihuahua had been a commuted death sentence. This time, Trespalacios faced two death sentences for his insurgent activities following his escape. Previously, a sympathetic Spanish official had changed the decision of the court to imprisonment and exile. Once again Trespalacios' sentences were commuted—but this time, it was through the heroic efforts of his wife, Ana Maria Garcia, who, as one admiring author wrote: "traveled 160 leagues to where her husband had been taken by royal forces and at great pains and embarrassments was able to evade two death sentences and save his life. . . ." Desperate may have been a more appropriate word for her activities, however, for no doubt royal officials wished to insure that Trespalacios would not be given another opportunity to incite rebellion and flaunt the sympathies of the crown.

Being struck by this disease would not normally be considered a stroke of good luck, but it was in this instance because the convicted rebel was left in a Havana hospital to convalesce. From Cuba, Trespalacios was able to effect a new escape; early 1820 found him in another hot-bed of intrigue and lawlessness—the United States port of New Orleans.

In any case, the itinerant would-be liberal still faced a prison term across the Atlantic at Ceuta. His fate continued along a trail with bad fortune mixed with good: in Havana, Trespalacios fell ill with the dreaded *vomito negro* or yellow fever. Being struck by this disease would not normally be considered a stroke of good luck, but it was in this instance because the convicted rebel was left in a Havana hospital to convalesce. From Cuba, Trespalacios was able to effect a new escape; early 1820 found him in another hot-bed of intrigue and lawlessness—the United States port of New Orleans.

For several years, the Spanish-American frontier, that is, the lower Mississippi valley from Natchez to New Orleans, had been a focal gathering point for adventurers and soldiers of fortune as well as common thieves and swindlers. Spurred by nationalistic fervor of the post-War of 1812 era, many Americans were looking to extend their influence over the remainder of Spanish Florida and Texas. Whether motivated by greed, nationalism, or a desire to escape retribution by the law, the experiences of these men in the 1810s and 1820s are known as the "filibustering expeditions."

Although many conspired, bragged, schemed, and plotted—only a few were able actually to execute their plans. One of the earliest was the José Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara–Augustus Magee escapade of 1812-13. The former, a liberal, planned his expedition on the heels of the Hidalgo revolt of September, 1810. Having subsequently failed, the remnants of this adventurous group of men fled across the border to the Louisiana territory.

After 1819, when the agreement with Spain was announced, those Americans interested in Texas believed that the United States and John Quincy Adams had unjustly renounced American's claim to that coveted area. Men such as General E.W. Ripley, John Sibley, John G. Burnett, and others, were convinced that their Secretary of State could not possibly be as aware as they were of the importance of Texas to the future of the United States. Consequently, they promoted an expedition to free Texas from Spanish rule and facilitate American annexation and colonization. Land hunger was the motivation; the liberation of Texas was but a step in that direction.

Dr. James Long, a native of Virginia, was prevailed upon in 1819 to lead a filibustering expedition of about seventy-five men to Nacogdoches, to free the province of Texas from Spanish control, and to permit American influence to grow and prosper. Although initially successful, Long's men also subsequently had to flee across the Sabine to American Louisiana to recover and to plan further strategy.

José Felix Trespalacios, although from a different frontier experience, nevertheless found a common bond with these men—they also professed to believe in New Spain's independence. Long, Ripley, and their admirers, came to the conclusion that by recruiting more Mexicans they could link themselves to New Spain's insurgent movement. If successful, this would not only add manpower and capital to their cause, but above all it would add legiti-

macy to their venture. Consequently, Trespalacios' arrival in New Orleans must have seemed providential to Ripley. The two reached an agreement whereby Trespalacios would be given command of General Long's expedition in return for the Mexican's obtaining official recognition from the Southern insurgent leaders in New Spain. Having easily fulfilled his part of the arrangement in New Orleans, Trespalacios prepared to leave that city for Point Bolivar, off the Texas coast, where Long had stationed the remnants of his army.

Having arrived to take command of his troops, the new commander made several immediate decisions. He appointed Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara to their Supreme Council; issued treasury notes to pay the officers and troops; and, most distressing to the men, set them to work—instead of preparing to fight. The men's grumblings soon became louder and mutinous when the notes Trespalacios used to pay them were not accepted in New Orleans.

Trespalacios' reception at Long's camp was described in this manner by an eyewitness:

> He was received with a warm and generous welcome; heightened, no doubt, by the timely supply of provisions and clothing which he brought with him. His presence had a tranquilizing effect. He was a tall, sedate, and dignified man, gentlemanly in his deportment, kind in his expressions and liberal in his dealings. He assumed command without giving offense to any, and entered upon the discharge of his duties, with a promptness, zeal, and sound discretion which inspired general confidence, and gave new life and animation to the garrison. All seemed to be, once more, contented and happy.

Several months afterward, with supplies running low and no success to show for his efforts, Trespalacios returned to New Orleans hoping to receive monetary support from friends and supporters. He fully expected to have their donations waiting for him—but was very distressed to find no money. To make matters worse, those notes which his men had attempted to cash were now presented to him for his personal payment. The entire affair had degenerated into a hapless, ill-planned, and ill-financed filibustering expedition.

The crowning blow to Trespalacios' leadership efforts came in May, 1821, when the men under his command decided they had endured enough, formed a cabal, and attempted to force the

removal of Trespalacios as their leader. Distraught, bankrupt, and without an army, Trespalacios hid in a friend's residence while awaiting assistance from Long.

Shortly after his arrival, Long arranged for new support for the Trespalacios contingent and made it possible for the *chihuahuense* to disentangle himself from the economic, legal, and other problems that had beset his command. Having acquired new funds and supplies, Long, Trespalacios, and any men still wishing to embark on the adventure set out for Point Bolivar to resume their efforts to set Texas free.

Having acquired new funds and supplies, Long, Trespalacios, and any men still wishing to embark on the adventure set out for Point Bolivar to resume their efforts to set Texas free. Consequently, when a communication was received in August indicating that the insurgent cause was at last on the verge of victory, Trespalacios and Benjamin Milam were soon on a ship bound for Veracruz to investigate those reports.

Consequently, when a communication was received in August indicating that the insurgent cause was at last on the verge of victory, Trespalacios and Benjamin Milam were soon on a ship bound for Veracruz to investigate those reports. Since Veracruz was one of the few remaining royalist strongholds, and no doubt, because Trespalacios had barely survived the death sentences previously, he was imprisoned on his arrival there. But it was possible that on his way to Veracruz, Trespalacios attempted to add piracy to his list of accomplishments, was caught, and therefore imprisoned in Campeche. Whatever it was that led to Trespalacios' imprisonment, Milam was able to have him transferred from jail in Campeche to Tabasco and later freed altogether.

Yet the insurgent cause had indeed finally prevailed and both men had, at last, made their way to Mexico City by early 1822 where they were accorded a friendly reception. Several weeks later, General Long and some of his men arrived as well. After Trespalacios and Milam had left camp in August, Long attacked La Bahia but was captured and taken to Monterrey. From that northern city, this group was sent to the capital—arriving there to be cordially received by the new Iturbide government.

At this point, the objectives of the Long-Trespalacios cabal were at least fifty percent complete: Texas was free from Spanish rule; now colonization efforts could begin. Unfortunately, as often occurs, politics interfered with their plans. At the center of the problem stood Agustin de Iturbide. His obvious moves toward establishing a monarchy in the newly independent country alienated many who desired a republic—or at least a constitutional monarchy.

Iturbide's politics split the faction from Texas. Trespalacios supported Iturbide; Long and Milam did not. General Long refused all offers of friendship and military rank from Iturbide. Then, only ten days after arriving in Mexico City, Long was shot and killed by a sentry as he attempted to enter the quarters of General Riley. Milam and the other anti-*Iturbidistas* believed at the time that Long had been the victim of a paid assassin and asked the emperor to investigate the incident. They openly accused Trespalacios of having Long murdered in order to eliminate his competition for power in Texas. Eventually, though nothing was proven, when Trespalacios was appointed governor of Texas the Long faction was more than ever convinced that their views were correct.

Although Long's plans failed, at the same time there was another American with the same objective. Stephen F. Austin arrived in the latter part of April, 1822, and immediately initiated efforts to have a grant, previously conferred on his father by Spanish authorities, renewed by the Mexican government in his own name. Imperial officials seemed to be inclined to revalidate the grant; even Trespalacios was reported to favor the enterprise.

As Trespalacios, the new governor of Texas, prepared to leave for San Antonio in May, 1822, Long's friends refused to concede defeat. If they could not obtain revenge by legal means, then an assassination of their own was considered. As the party of Anglo-Americans joined Trespalacios' group headed for Texas, Milam and John Austin who later became leaders in the revolution in Texas, were resolved to avenge Long's death somewhere near Monterrey. However, the governor-designate's life was once again saved when two of the Americans warned Trespalacios of the murder plans. Milam and the other conspirators were arrested and jailed near Saltillo. Subsequently transferred to Mexico City,

they remained incarcerated until November, 1822, when, through the efforts of American minister, Joel R. Poinsett, they were liberated and returned to the United States.

Arriving safely in San Antonio, José Felix Trespalacios relieved Bernardo Martinez of his duties early in August, 1822. The major event of his short tenure was the granting of the Austin grant; but a "band of villains[,] Spaniards[,] and Americans" who were engaged in stealing mules and horses, raised another sort of problem for Trespalacios. Concerning the Austin grant, he wrote to Austin expressing confidence that the grant would be conferred and indicating a desire to help in any way possible. Since most Americans realized that Trespalacios now wielded a tremendous influence over their plans to settle in Texas, they resolved to do all in their power to befriend him and insure his continued good wishes.

An indication that Trespalacios did not feel responsible for General Long's death—as well as the fear on the governor's part of the possibility of some retribution from others of Long's friends —could be seen in a letter Trespalacios wrote to Jane Long, the general's widow. The governor encouraged Mrs. Long to come to San Antonio where the state would provide for all her needs. Coincidentally, Jane Long arrived with her family after a month-long journey from Point Bolivar in mid-October, 1822—the same day Ana Maria Garcia de Trespalacios joined her husband in San Antonio.

Shortly thereafter, Agustin I was forced out of his erstwhile throne—a victim of extravagance, a depleted treasury, and despotism. Scarcely had the Trespalacios' and Mrs. Long settled into their residences in San Antonio when news of the accession of a new government was received. Trespalacios abruptly resigned in April, 1823. The new government would appoint his successor; the Trespalacios clan prepared to move to Monterrey.

At this point, Trespalacios' life becomes even more obscure. Apparently Monterrey became the new home for the ex-governor and his family. However, he did visit his home in Chihuahua either late in 1823 or early 1824 to present a new flag of the Republic of Mexico to the Provincial Deputation there. Later he was deputy to the state legislature of Coahuila y Texas. Trespalacios also belonged to the Scottish Masonic Rite—the conservatives of contemporary Mexican politics—who wished to establish a centralist government. Alarmed by the growth in power of the liberal

yorkinos of the York rite, the *escoses*, the Scotch rite, late in December, 1827, proclaimed the Plan de Montaño. Calling for the abolition of secret societies, expulsion of the American minister Poinsett, and respect for law and the constitution, the Scottish Rite Mexicans nevertheless were not successful and many faced exile as a consequence of their activities. Trespalacios was one of the exiled *escoses*. The unstable political situation in Mexico brought the conservatives back to power in 1830 and Trespalacios and all other political exiles could return.

Having been officially repatriated, the ex-insurgent and ex-governor was reinstated into the army and chosen senator from the state of Chihuahua for the 1831-34 sessions. However, at the end of 1832, he left the capital and the senate to become the Military Commandant for Chihuahua and New Mexico. He held this position until the end of 1834 when, at the age of fifty four, a victim of failing health, he retired holding the rank of brigadier. Only seven months after his retirement, Trespalacios died in Allende, Chihuahua, near Parral, on August 4, 1835.

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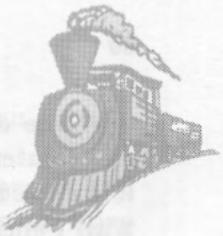


Historical Memories

There are many memories—people, places, and events—that appeared in print only as tiny squibs appended "in passing" to a story or article—if they were printed at all. The Historical Memories contest has produced many of these little gems that have lain hidden in the memories of our senior citizens. When many of these reminiscences are mentioned within a conversation which includes people younger than sixty years of age, they are met with a puzzled look and obvious disinterest—the occurrences of our childhood are met with the same interest as a discussion of the Pyramids at Gaza or the Acropolis at Athens! Forty years from now, today's young people, no longer "young," will recall faintly the stories they heard in their youth, but they will have forgotten the details. Unfortunately, the original teller of the tale will no longer be available.

There is a rich body of information out there just waiting to be tapped. Our historical memories vignettes are not documented nor are they guaranteed to be absolutely historically accurate. Rather they are the recollections that are imprinted on the memories of our grandparents and our older relatives and neighbors. We present a few of those memories here. Winter is a good time to jog memories. Others will be presented here from time to time. Enjoy.

Maurice Schwartz and Pancho Villa

as told by Albert Schwartz

My Dad, Maurice Schwartz, came to El Paso in 1898 as a sixteen-year-old Hungarian immigrant. He told me stories about his early life here—the dirt streets, the many bars, the multiple shootings, the beautifully dressed ladies of the night, and watching the Mexican Revolution from a hill behind the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Mathias on West Yandell Boulevard.

Maurice Schwartz

One of Dad's tales was especially interesting, particularly as it involved a relationship he had with Pancho Villa who was often in Juaréz to secure his role as northern Mexico's rebel chief. The rebels often had no uniforms save the crossed bands of bullets on their chests. After his first couple of visits with "don Mauricio," then the general manager of the Popular Dry Goods Company Department Store, Pancho Villa told his officers that he and Dad had worked out a plan for a "uniform allowance." From then on, most of the officers and non-commissioned officers happily spent their allowance on their wives and girlfriends. Dad said that "uniform allowance" sales consisted primarily of ladies garments, lingerie, shoes, cosmetics etc. As a matter of interest it should be known that, Dad; Ignatz Weiss, the general merchandise manager; and Uncle Adolph, the store president, did not sell guns or ammunition.

The Popular was favored by the officers of both armies, the rebels and the nationalists. One day two opposing generals and their aides were shopping in the store at the same time. Store employees kept the soldiers apart until a horse drawn ambulance from Hotel Dieu spirited the nationalists out of harms way.

Early one morning Villa's aide delivered a message to Dad. A train from the South with the payroll for Villa's troops had been delayed, and hundreds of Villa's soldiers would be without their promised pay —a situation that could only spell trouble! Villa asked the Popular to lend him $25,000! Because he thought Uncle Adolph would have denied the loan, Dad—without consulting anyone—said "yes" and made the loan. During several long days of waiting for the anticipated—and hoped for—repayment, Dad really "caught it" from Uncle Adolph who was sure that "Villa Pistola" would never repay the $25,000.

A few days later, again in the early morning, Villa's aide brought the general's greetings and thanks for the loan. Repayment was to be made immediately from a locked freight car just

north of the bridge. Dad was told there was more than enough, and for him to take whatever he wanted.

Dad quickly contacted Harold Potash, store attorney, and George Matkin, store banker. To the freight yard they went. They were surprised to find the freight car contained only bars of silver bullion! An assayist brought a special scale, and exactly $25,000 of the silver was weighed and removed from the freight car which was then resealed and monitored until it was on the Mexican side —in Villa's hands.

I knew of Dad's interest in a silver mine in Parral. The mined ore was packed on burros, and the pack train headed for Parral. It seems every such train was robbed long before it was close to Parral! I understood why Dad had laughingly said "Pancho Villa's silver bullion was the only silver he had been able to bring from Mexico!"

The Battle of San Jacinto, Part II

by William Squires

They fell silently. Some were large and came down from great heights. Others were small, coming down from shorter distances. These were not bombs dropping from miles above the earth; they were tree limbs and branches falling on an unsuspecting public. There was something terribly wrong with the tall, grand, and elegant elm trees in San Jacinto Plaza. The very heart and soul of our city was coming apart!

No one that I recall was seriously injured, but the danger was there. Political repercussions were inevitable. If someone were badly hurt, would the city of El Paso be liable for their expenses and other costs? At first, it was not a critical situation, but it soon took center stage with the City, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Parks and Recreation Board.

The first signs of trouble occurred in early 1962. At that time city aldermen were elected and served based upon the departments they would supervise, such as the police and fire alderman, parks and recreation, etc. Bert Williams was the alderman for the Parks and Recreation Department, Dale Tate was in charge of the Parks Department, and I was chairman of the Parks and Recreation Board.

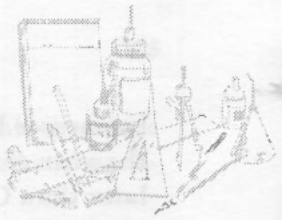
Many meetings were held to discuss what could and should be done about the trees. Could they be saved? Both staff members and independent experts examined the trees and all agreed that they were suffering from a fatal blight endemic to the elm tree. There was no way to save them. The prospect of denuding the area entirely for a long period of time was devastating, and it was depressing to watch the cranes and chainsaws destroy the plaza. The trees had been so beautiful and provided such wonderful shade to El Paso's citizens—including the alligators. But down they came!

The elms were fifty to sixty years old—at the end of their approximate life span. To replace them with trees even close to their size was not practical—or possible. The Parks Department and its in-house horticulturist, Ted Harris, spent most of 1962 preparing a design and plan for restoring the plaza.

Their most controversial suggestion was the replacement of the elms on the perimeter with live oak trees. Many people, and particularly the newspapers, criticized this part of the plan, saying the live oaks could not survive the cold weather of El Paso winters. Others, especially the Parks Department, believed they would do well. It was a close decision, but Alderman Williams agreed to include them in the new plan for the plaza.

A draft of the new plaza was approved by the Parks Board and the City late in 1962. Arbor Day in 1963 was to be the starting time for the restoration project. After the new trees were in, they were watched carefully for signs of weakness. Most of them survived in spite of the terrible pollution thrown at them daily by the local busses. Today, those trees along Mesa across from the Hotel Cortez are especially lovely.

The decisions were difficult and of great interest to all the people of El Paso, for this was the center of their city—but the choice was correct. The live oaks in San Jacinto Plaza have a life expectancy of 200 years. The battle was won!



Augustus Koch's "Birds-Eye View of El Paso" Map

Observations and Oddities

By Richard F. Bussell

An interesting map of El Paso produced by Augustus Koch hangs in many El Paso homes through the courtesy of the El Paso County Historical Society which many years ago reproduced the map to be sold. The map carries the notation:

> "The original Bird's eye view of El Paso" is thought to have been printed in 1884. This reproduction has been made possible through the grateful cooperation of the heirs of Otis C. Coles and Walter C. Kohlberg, Pioneer El Pasoans."

Over the years, a number of people have tried to determine a time period for the dating of Mr. Koch's map. This is a difficult task, and it is easy to see why. According to Millard G. McKinney in the spring 1983 issue of *Password:*

> . . . meticulous accuracy of artist Koch's layout of the El Paso of that time. Parks, hotels, churches, schools, international bridges, depots, and other public buildings are in their proper location. Judge Joseph Magoffin's extensive hacienda, with adjacent orchards, is well defined, and various recreation areas are shown. Said recreation areas include, for genteel fold, the "Mesa Gardens" in Sunset Heights and, for the more adventuresome residents, the "Red Light District" at Second and Utah (now South Mesa) Streets.

In trying to date Koch's map one finds that it is difficult to date the construction of the buildings and the businesses they house because there was a lack of advertising of the location of those

businesses by address. Several clues, however, seem to attribute the year of the construction of the map as 1886—no earlier nor later than October of that year.

It is probable that Koch visited El Paso sometime between the winter of 1885 and spring of 1886. That particular time period was chosen because in looking carefully at the "Birds-Eye View. . .", we see that the railroad depicted on the right side is the "El Paso, St. Louis & Chicago." It was created in 1885 by a group of local businessmen as the "White Oaks Railroad." They achieved the building of only ten miles of rail before running out of money. For the next three years, Henry Detwiler traveled to various financial centers seeking investors. Apparently, he was not too successful, for this railroad was not completed at that time.

What also dates the map no earlier than October of 1885 is the presentation of the Customs House at San Antonio and Utah Streets. Prior to October, Mr. S.C. Slade, the district clerk, had been living in and working from the old Central Hotel. In October he completed this building which was his residence, and began working from there according to the *El Paso Times* of October 30,1885.

Going to the far right side of the map, we note that the Texas and Pacific Railroad which had received approval for its building from the City Council in 1887 began laying rails on the east side of, and parallel to, Cotton Street. From there the rails turned west down First Street where they terminated at Kansas Street. Also, in 1887, the El Paso Ice and Refrigerator Company built a large plant at the corner of Virginia and St. Louis Streets. In February of 1887, the El Paso Street Railway connected the tracks at the intersection of San Antonio and El Paso Streets.

On December 15, 1886, the Street Railway company opened for service the line it had laid down Magoffin Avenue to Cotton Street according to the *El Paso Times.* None of the above items is located on the map, and it is not plausible to think that Mr. Koch would have omitted them had he been here at the time to see them.

Why then the choice of the spring of 1886? Koch produced over twenty maps of Texas cities and more than one hundred "bird's eye maps" of various cities in the United States. It is doubtful that Koch worked in the El Paso of 1885-1886 or any of the other cities to complete his work, rather, it is more probable that

he spent several months sketching, then packed up his drawings and returned to Chicago—presuming that he still lived and worked there, and produced the final map later.

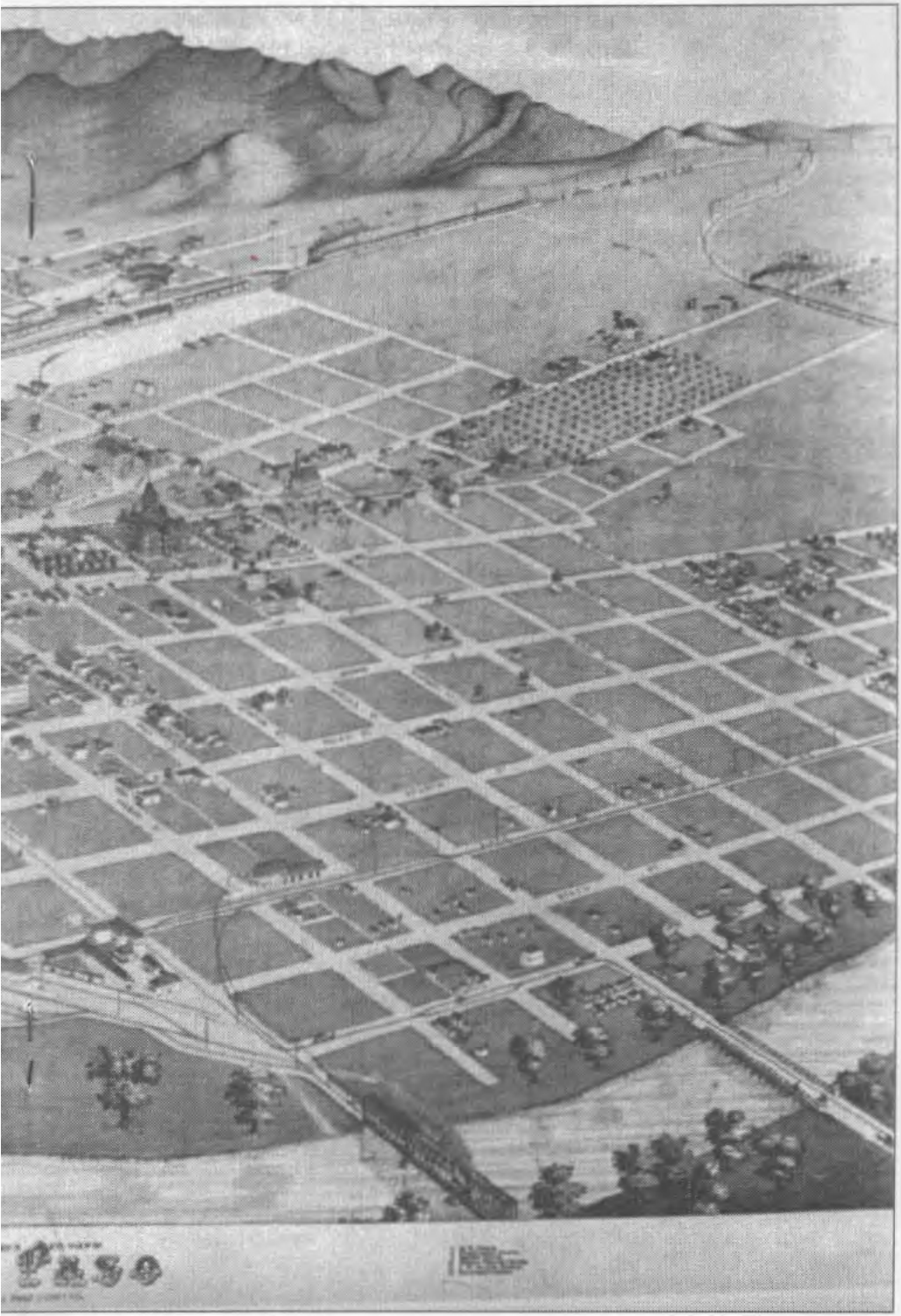
The first revealing clue is the Lesinsky building. Mr. Henry Lesinsky and his brother, who was also his partner, constructed a combination three-story and two-story building immediately next to and south of the First National Bank building. The new tenants were three of El Paso's best known businesses: Henry Beneke, J. Calisher, and Lightbody and James. According to the *El Paso Times* they began to move into their new quarters in May.

The second clue is the Bronson building. At the northwest corner of San Antonio and Oregon streets, there is a large two-story building for which excavation had begun on March 6th. Prior to the excavation work, this corner had been occupied by what the *El Paso Times* describes as "a row of shanties " and "Chinese washhouses."

On June 1st the *Times* reported that the foundation for this building had just been completed. Then in October, the *El Paso Times* reported that the walls were up and work would soon begin on the roof. This October "clue" is a peculiar one, for at the northeast corner of El Paso and Second Streets there appears to be a building and a half. The first building is complete with its roof. The building next to it, however, is not a completed building—it is just a front of a building in Koch's style, but it has no roof. On October 8, 1886 the *El Paso Times* carried the news that W. H. Carter is building a row of four one-story stores. One of his first tenants, signed before construction began, is one "B.F. Hosier, the Singer Sewing machine agent." Checking the City Directory for 1886-1887 there is listed one "Hosier, B.F., the Singer Sewing Machine agent." But was the northeast corner the correct location? The Sanborn map, which was an elaborate representation of the buildings in the city, produced for the insurance industry, showed that there is a space at that corner labeled "Sewing Mach." That address would have been 212 South El Paso Street.

Why the "building and a half?" My theory is that Augustus Koch spent most of 1886 sketching, then for some reason it was necessary for him stop at this point when he probably returned to Chicago to finish the work in his studio.

So, that's where I would date the map—the new County Courthouse has just been completed, at least thirty new homes


PASO

are under construction at any time according to the *El Paso Times*, and new commercial buildings are appearing throughout the town. El Paso is on the move and—spring is in the air.

Oddities and Observations

Over the course of many hours spent poring over maps, newspaper articles, and pictures, I began to notice a few strange items.

One "oddity" is First Street. In late 1885 and early 1886, First Street was one of several that had been promoted as needing to be "opened up"—in this case to Utah. Koch had drawn First all the way to Utah, but this never happened. To this day, First Street dead-ends at Stanton. Like the unfinished railroad, another project "sure to happen" that did not.

Another interesting "oddity" is that some buildings protruded into the street. This proved to be a problem and one in particular was at the intersection of Kansas and San Antonio Streets. In October of 1886, the owner, a Mrs. Pellan, began demolishing this adobe, just ahead of the marshal who had been ordered by the city council to demolish it.

Another "discovery" of my careful examination of this map is that it appears that a mistake was made—and corrected—at the north side of Kansas and Myrtle. A close inspection appears to show that there are two distinctive lines marking Kansas behind the house. Then it appears that the street was resurfaced by a material of slightly different texture and Mr. J. F. Crosby's home is drawn in its proper place.

One last aberration: at the south end of the Stanton Street bridge, on the Mexican side, there are two small buildings. One appears to be a box-like structure while the other seems to be in the shape of an octagon. In Frank Mangans' *El Paso In Pictures* there is a photo with a view looking north from the bridge. In that photo, the octagonal building is on the right, but in Kochs' map, also looking north, the octagonal building is on the left.

Ah, the Spring of '86—building, working, moving on.

El Paso, you'll get to be a city of 100,000 yet. And that "White Oaks Railroad" will get built.

Someday.

Tigua Indians and El Paso at the Texas State Centennial Exposition, Part II

By Nicholas P. Houser

Hueco Tanks Mountain Memorial

In far West Texas, the centennial spurred interest to establish county, state, and federal parks at Hueco Tanks, Fort Davis, the Chisos Mountains in the Big Bend country, and the Valley of the Pyramids near Fabens.[26] The El Paso City Council, the county commissioners, the local centennial committee, the Woman's Division of the Chamber of Commerce, and the media all supported the establishment of a park at Hueco Tanks, the colossal granite megaliths located thirty miles east of El Paso. The park plan was to preserve the historic site and make it accessible to the public.

In the early 1900s, many El Pasoans advocated protecting this historic site and its rock art by creating a park.[27] In 1909, a farsighted editorial entitled "Hueco Tanks for Public Park" called for the establishment of a county park to preserve its history.[28] Jeanie M. Frank, local historian, wrote several articles on "The Tanks" and other Texas centennial subjects.[29] She and other non-Indians were unaware that it was a sacred site of the Tigua Indians.

In 1934, the Chamber of Commerce and city leaders contacted sculptor Gutzon Borglum, the creator of Mount Rushmore, to create a large-scale mountain memorial in the region to commemorate the Texas Centennial. Borglum, who at the time was blasting the presidential heads on the granite face of Mount Rushmore,

Tigua Indian delegation gathers in Ysleta prior to departure to the Texas Centennial Exposition. Dallas. Copyright does not apply.

traveled to El Paso on several occasions to examine the feasibility of such a project. He made a site survey of the Franklin Mountains and Hueco Tanks and explored funding potentials.

Borglum realized that the hard Hueco Tanks rock formation was far superior to the loose stone of the Franklin Mountains. He visited Hueco Tanks and developed a concept sketch for the proposed memorial. The sculptor also submitted a second centennial proposal—the placement of carved stone panels commemorating the region's history on the International Bridge between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.[30]

The sculptor proposed to carve a giant relief of Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions "with Indians in the background" on the rocky cliffs of Hueco Tanks.[31] The project, known as "The Hueco Tanks Mountain Memorial," was not realized because county voters on August 24, 1935, rejected a three-cent tax levy that would have supported land acquisition and development for new parks. If the county had accepted the $42,000 offer of Mrs. Pilar Escontrias, owner of the Hueco Tanks Ranch, the new park would have comprised an enormous area—the area encompassing Hueco Tanks plus four sections of land.[33]

During the next year, Gutzon Borglum and his supporters continued without success to promote the Hueco Tanks Mountain Memorial. Hueco Tanks did not become a state park until 1965 when the county purchased it for $115,000, a price that was more than twice the original offer. The new park includes the immediate area of "The Tanks," but not the four sections of land previously offered by the owner.[35] Borglum's Hueco Tanks memorial, if realized, would have been a national tourist attraction, but it also would have been a desecration of a sacred Native American site and a geologic wonder.

Texas Centennial Sponsors the Arts

The centennial stimulated public arts and spawned paintings, murals, sculptures, and plays about El Paso's rich multicultural heritage. Private and public monies, especially depression work programs, supported artists and writers, some of whom would become nationally recognized such as Tom Lea. The art projects promoted the area's historical heritage and tourism.

The artists, whose works celebrated the centennial included Tom Lea and José Aceves, Carillo Gonzáles, and Keith Martin.[36] Their paintings and drawings, with those of Leola Freeman, were prominently exhibited at the Texas Centennial Exposition.[37] Lea's large mural depicting the Texas cattle culture graced the wall of the Hall of State building at the Dallas exposition. His illustrations of centennial themes were featured in the *El Paso Herald Post's* Texas Centennial Edition.[38] In October of 1936, the McKee Construction Company completed construction of the Centennial Museum at the College of Mines. Above the building's entrance, Tom Lea created a large sandstone lintel depicting Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions at the Pass of the North in 1537.[39]

Tigua Indian with the Tribal Drum at Hueco Tanks. Damacio Colmenero, tribal Cacique with Sebastián Durán (right, with drum) at Hueco Tanks, ca. 1932.

In August 1936, Damasio Colmenero, Tigua tribal cacique, posed for a large oil portrait by artist Keith Martin in the Paso del Norte Hotel. The portrait was publicized as a centennial activity.[40] The painting was temporarily exhibited in the Paso del Norte Hotel where the artist had his studio.[41]

Tigua History Celebrated

Newspaper writers who made the public aware of the Tigua legacy included Cleofas Calleros, Marshall Hail, Joseph Ignatius Driscoll, Jeanie M. Frank and Betty Luther. The El Paso Diocese published Driscoll's centennial booklet, "El Paso the Land of Romance" on its 400th birthday.[42] *The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement in the El Paso District* by Anne E. Hughes was reprinted by the El Paso Public School system in 1934 as a Texas Centennial activity. The historical treatise, written in 1914, focused on the early history of the settlement in the El Paso region. Subsequently, it has been annotated and re-published by Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.[43]

Several centennial articles concerned the Tigua Indians. On August 24, 1935, Marshall Hail wrote a newspaper article entitled "Change of Priest at Ysleta Stirred the Indians to Revolt." It concerned an event, which occurred in 1890 when Father M. Penella, S. J., assigned a secular curate to Ysleta Mission. Bishop Pierre Bourgade decided to remove the Jesuits from the El Paso area.[44] The replacement infuriated the Tigua Tribe because they had not been consulted. As a result of Indian opposition, Bishop Dunne was forced to reverse his decision.[45]

Tiguas march with the Tribal Drum at the Texas Centennial Exposition, Dallas.

J. N. Phillips wrote an article entitled "Early Day Ysleta Indian Band Save Spanish Deserters From Punishment."

It included an oral history tradition that he had recorded from Manuel Ortega. It helped make the public aware of the tribe's contributions to the development of the region.

Centennial Markers Recognize Tigua History

The placement of commemorative markers was a major activity of the Texas Centennial. The El Paso County Advisory Board of the Texas Centennial Commission produced stone and bronze plaques funded by the state for $200 each.[46] A few markers were privately financed by local civic organizations. During the centennial observance, at least twelve historical markers were installed within El Paso County.[47]

Four markers within the region recognized Tigua contributions, all of which have survived. The State of Texas erected two markers at the Ysleta Mission commemorating Tigua Indian history.[48] The Knights of Columbus donated a third marker at the mission. The fourth marker recognized the battle of Sierra Vieja near Valentine, Texas.

The Texas Centennial funded the marker at the Ysleta Mission which recognizes the founding of Ysleta Mission and the pueblo as a result of the 1680 Pueblo Indian Revolt in New Mexico. The State Historical Survey Commission, Texas Highway Department, Texas Society of Colonial Dames, and the Knights of Columbus authored the text. The plaque was unveiled in front of the Ysleta Mission on July 16th, the feast day of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, instead of on June 13th the feast day of San Antonio, the tribal patron saint. It was dedicated on this date because the tribal delegation and Cleofas Calleros were attending the Texas Centennial Exposition from June 11th through the 13th.

The Texas State Council of the Knights of Columbus erected the second Ysleta Mission marker. Outlined on the stone's vertical face is a design that features a patronizing image of a Tigua Indian kneeling before a Franciscan missionary. Above the image and text is a bas-relief of the mission landscape. The marker credited the Franciscans for founding the mission. The text honored the church for "civilizing and Christianizing" the Tigua. The plaque referred to Ysleta as the first Indian and Spanish settlement in Texas, when in fact it was specifically an Indian pueblo and not a Spanish settlement.

Texas Centennial Text Recognizing the Ysleta Mission

"Site of the first mission in Texas, Corpus Christi De La Ysleta Del Sur, founded in 1682 by Don Antonio de Otermín and Padre Fray Francisco Ayeta, O.F.M. for the civilizing and Christianizing of the Tigua Indians, Pueblo revolt refugees, formerly located at La Ysleta, New Mexico. Building damaged by floods of the Rio Grande and later by fire, but rebuilt on the exact site and in part on the walls of the original structure. Nearby was established the Pueblo of Ysleta, first Indian and Spanish settlement in Texas. Erected by the Texas State Council, Knights of Columbus in 1936."[49]

"Paso Viejo Battle Plaque"

The historical marker that recognized Tigua valor at the battle of Paso Viejo was installed at that location on the Espy Miller Ranch near Van Horn. Simón Olguin, Tigua pueblo scout, and six buffalo soldiers were killed on June 11, 1880, as result of an Apache ambush.[50] The text plaque reads as follows:

> In this Vicinity June 12, 1880, the Apaches made their last stand in Presidio County when four Pueblo Indian Scouts of General Benj. H. Grierson, U.S.A. fought and defeated 20 Apache Warriors. Erected by the state of Texas 1936.[51]

President Roosevelt's motorcade at the Cotton Bowl with Tigua Indians, Texas Centennial Exposition. Dallas.

The date on the plaque is incorrect—it should be June 11th. Jack Shipman, local historian wrote the marker's text with the support of the Marfa Chamber of Commerce and the State of Texas. It was unveiled with a dedicatory ceremony, without Tigua Indian participation, on March 6, 1938.[52]

Mr. Shipman, program coordinator, remarked at the dedication that the Tigua Indians deserved recognition by the state. He stated in a letter to a member of the centennial organization: "I am indeed happy [that] the State of Texas has honored these valiant men with a marker. Wonder if you can find out if there are any of these Pueblo scout's descendants living in Ysleta now?"[53]

Summary

The Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo participated in the state fairs of 1890, 1889 and 1936. The El Paso region was represented at these and other state fairs. Tribal involvement encouraged statewide recognition of their role in the historical development of the region and state.

The state fairs made Texas and the nation aware of the resources and economic potentials of El Paso and far west Texas. The centennial spawned many projects that would benefit education, the arts, and economic development. The 1936 Texas Centennial had a lasting positive impact on the El Paso region, which made people aware of a rich culturally diverse heritage.

All photos provided by the author.

NICHOLAS P. HOUSER has earned advanced degrees in anthropology, history, and public health. He is archivist and cultural anthropologist for Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. He creates exhibits for museums and cultural centers. He has published books and articles and has worked in documentary films. He has worked with Native American communities in the American Southwest and Latin America. He is project historian to the XII Travelers Memorial of the Southwest. Mr. Houser resides in El Paso with his wife Norma, and two children, María and Perry.

ENDNOTES
(continued)

26. *El Paso Times*, Feb. 9; Feb, 11, 1936; United States Library of Congress, The Gutzon Borglum Papers, McGee letter, Aug. 7, 1935.

27. *El Paso Herald*, July 10, 1929; Oct. 28, 1930.

28. *El Paso Herald*, July 19, 1909.

29. *El Paso Herald Post*, Jan. 24, 1935; Jan. 23, 1936.

30. US Library of Congress, Letter from G. Borglum to Rep. R. Ewing Thomason, May 8, 1935; Letter of May 6, 1935 to Mr. Arthur M. Huntington, Hispanic Society of America, from Earnest O. Bendix.

31. *El Paso Herald Post*, May 9, 1935; *El Paso Times*, Aug. 30, 1935.

32. *El Paso Times*, July 30, 1935; August 24, 1935.

33. *El Paso Herald Post*; July 22, July 24; July 30, 1935; *El Paso Times*, July 29, 1934 March 23, 1935; July 26, 1935.

34. El Paso Chamber of Commerce, Women's Division minutes, Feb. 1936, El Paso Public Library.

35. *El Paso Herald Post*, Sept. 12, 1965.

36. *El Paso Herald Post*, Jan. 27, 1936.

37. *El Paso Herald Post*, June 10, 1936.

38. *El Paso Herald Post*, May 3 0, 1936.

39. Metz, Leon C., *Robert E. McKee Master Builder*, edited by Nancy Hamilton (El Paso, Texas, Robert E. and Evelyn McKee Foundation, 1997).

40. *El Paso Herald Post*, Aug. 26, 1936.

41. A subsequent article about the portrait included a biography of the artist and identified the local patrons (El Paso *Times*, May 31, 1936). Keith Martin studied portraiture under Wayman Adams (1883-1959), a well-known painter from Indiana. Martin later became a well-known portrait painter. Swarthmore College owns several Keith Martin paintings but the status of the cacique's portrait is unknown. Communication to N.P. Houser from Dr. Constance Hungerford, Provost and Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History, Swarthmore College, Dec. 19, 2003.

42. Driscoll. Joseph I., *El Paso The Land of Romance on its 400th Birthday*, in Diocese of El Paso Centennial Celebrations booklet, edited by Cleofas Calleros, El Paso. (Cited: Calleros, 1951: footnote #8.)

43. Hughes, Anne E., "The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement in the El Paso District, Vol. 1, No. 3" (Berkeley, California: 1915), Reprinted by El Paso Public Schools, 1935.

44. Owens, Lilliana, *Carlos M. Pinto, S. J., Apostle of El Paso 1892-1919*, Jesuit Studies-Southwest, No. 2. (El Paso, TX: Revista Catolica Press, 1951) 47.

45. *El Paso Herald Post,* Aug. 24, Aug. 29, 1935.

46. *El Paso Herald Post,* March 21, 1936; El Paso *Times,* Nov. 5, 1935; Sept. 21, 1936; Sept, 22, 1936.

47. *El Paso Times,* "Six Markers are Received" (title). "Pass to the North Monument Will be Unveiled at 6 p.m. Today. (subtitle). "Six more markers for historical points in El Paso County have been received and will be unveiled soon. Mrs. E.F. Quisenberry, chairman of the El Paso County Advisory Board of the Texas Centennial Commission, said today. They are: San Elizario, Socorro, Ft. Bliss, El Camino Real, Butterfield Stage station, and the Pass to the North."—[Pass to the North Marker]. The marker bears the inscription: "On May 4, 1598, Don Juan de Oñate, adelantado and captain general, Governor of New Mexico, first named El Paso del Rio del Norte. Through this old pass, the lowest snow free feasible route from Atlantic to Pacific through the Rocky Mountains, extend today the great trunk lines of telegraph and railroad. The City of El Paso marks the place and perpetuates the name. Erected by the State of Texas, 1936." *El Paso Times,* Sept. 21, 1936: 7:6. (See Calleros, 1951, page 16 photo of marker which is ". . . located opposite Courchesne rock quarry on Highway 80A, upper valley." 1936).

    Timmons, W.H. Historic Markers, Memorials, Plaques In El Paso, unpublished descriptive inventory, El Paso Public Library, special collections. 1980.

48. *El Paso Times,* June 28, 1936.

49. Many Tigua Indians were forced to serve as burden bearers during the march from New Mexico to El Paso del Norte. The burdens included food and supplies for the Spanish refugees, which had been seized from Tigua Indians at Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico. (Houser, Nicholas P. "Tigua Pueblo." *Handbook of North American Indians,* Vol. 9, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 336-342.

50. U.S. National Archives, 1880, Record Group 94, Register of Enlistments; Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 137.

51. Houser, Nicholas P. 2003, "Tigua Indian Scouts in Defense of the Pass of the North—Three Centuries of Service" Vol 5. Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo Archives. (El Paso, 2003) 175-182. Three Tigua Indians held their ground to protect the body of their principal scout, while the soldiers retreated. The attacking Apaches withdrew from the battle.

52. Shipman Papers, 1938, El Paso Public Library,

53. Shipman Papers, Letter of Nov. 20, 1937, El Paso Public Library.

Charles Ellis 1877 Salt War Victim- An Untold Story

By Olga Trujillo Hernandez

Editor's note: This article cannot, as the author has said, be documented in the historical archives. It is part of a family "legend" which she is now sharing with us.

Many people have written about the Salt War; many have done extensive research in the newspapers of that era; others have researched the Congressional Records and many other resources. The Salt War was kindled by the refusal of the Anglo-Americans to honor an age-old custom. For many generations the Mexican population had taken salt from the salt flats east of San Elizario in an area that can still be observed along the highway to Carlsbad. Some of the new comers to El Paso and its environs had claimed title to the salt flats and refused to allow the old settled population to take the salt as had been their custom.

Not everyone in the towns of San Elizario, Socorro and Ysleta became involved in this uprising. Those who did were the ones who made their living from the salt, and those who sympathized with them. There were also those who resented the fact that men who did not even live in the towns would come, take control, and want to charge a fee for something that had been free for the taking for some many years.

This story is not about the war, or the reasons for the war. It is about one of the victims of this uprising, a man named Charles Ellis. You will not find my story about what happened to Charles Ellis in any newspaper, because it was kept a family secret.

Ellis was a New Englander who arrived in the southwest with the Union forces in 1862. He opened a store and mill at San

Elizario and settled down to become a respected resident of the community. Ellis knew the people and they knew him. He had learned enough Spanish to be able to communicate with the large majority who could not speak English. He soon became "Chale" to them and "Charley" to those who spoke English. He was successful in business and by 1870, he was considered the richest man in San Elizario.

On a December evening in 1877, Charley left his home for a stroll among the people who were also enjoying the evening air. Unfortunately, some among them knew that he and the much hated Charles Howard knew each other well, and they no longer trusted Charley. When Charley realized that his life was in danger, he ran from the crowd and hid in a wine cellar.

The next morning, a man named Cipriano Jesus Parra thought about taking Charley some food. Mr. Parra was married to Leonides Bustillos who was a niece of Teodora Alarcón, the wife of Charles Ellis. They often visited with the Ellis family, so Cipriano Jesus knew Charley well and guessed where Charley might be hiding. Since everyone in town knew that he was related by marriage to Charley, he did not dare take the food himself. If they saw him it would compromise Charley's hiding place, so he enlisted the help of a man whose feet were so badly deformed he could hardly walk, and who had limped around town for so many years that nobody paid any attention to him anymore. "El Rengo," the crippled, as he was called, agreed to take Charley his food. He did that, but then he decided to gain a little notoriety for himself. He went to those who were looking for Charley and revealed Charley's hiding place.

Charley was taken, tied to a horse's saddle, and dragged out of town—right on the road where the home of Cipriano Jesus and Leonides was located. Cipriano Jesus followed them at a distance, down the road that is now known as Rosa Street. He hid behind sand dunes and bushes and watched as they slit Charley's throat killing him. Cipriano Jesus went home, got a burlap sack, and went to get Charley's body. He kept the body in his carriage house and waited until night.

Going through the town in a wagon would have attracted more attention than Cipriano Jesus cared to attract, so he put Charley in a wheelbarrow and pushed him all the way to the Casa Ronquillo where Charley and his wife Teodora lived. Cipriano

Jesus proceeded to dig a grave in the Ellis orchard, and by daybreak, Charley was buried in an unmarked grave. Out of fear, they did not tell anyone. Only three people knew, Teodora, Cipriano Jesus, and Leonides. Those responsible had fled into Mexico taking the secret with them and because Ellis' body was never found, people thought he must have been thrown down a well as were others.

Cipriano Jesus proceeded to dig a grave in the Ellis orchard, and by daybreak, Charley was buried in an unmarked grave. Out of fear, they did not tell anyone.

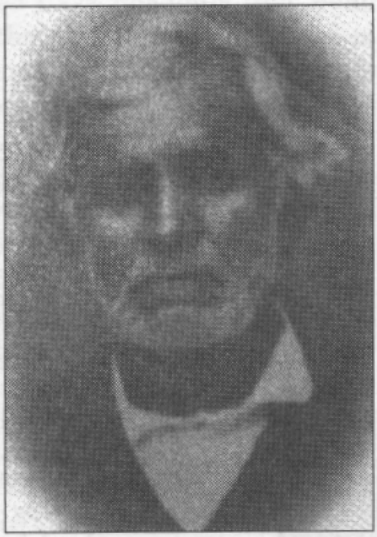
After all the hostilities had ended, a crowd descended on Teodora's house, stole all her furniture, took everything in her store and carriage house, and took wagonloads across the river. They did not take her jewelry because she had it well hidden, nor her clothes, and perhaps out of respect, or perhaps it was fear, they did not take her statue of the Virgin Mary. Not everything went across the river—one of her trusted servants was seen running through the bushes carrying several pieces of her silver candelabra.

By spring the town was quiet again and it was time to irrigate Teodora's orchard. Cipriano Jesus built a dirt barrier around the grave to keep the water out, and the fact that Charley was buried there remained a secret. Teodora lived in her home until her death in 1907. She lived on the money she made from selling her jewelry and from whatever crops she was able to raise on her land.

She became known as Tia Teodora whose final expenses were paid by her grand nephew Margarito Parra, son of Leonides and Cipriano Jesus. The statue of the Virgin Mary she gave to her favorite niece Leonides.

OLGA TRUILLO HERNANDEZ was born in San Elizario, Texas, to Pedro Truillo and Carolina Garcia. She attended schools in San Elizario, and graduated from Ysleta High School. Married to Felix Hernandez who was in the United States Air Force, they lived in Kansas, Arkansas, and New Mexico, and spent three years in Casablanca, Morocco and another three years on the island of Guam. They returned to El Paso in 1972 after retirement. Being a member of the San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society has been most rewarding as she traces her ancestry to the earliest Lower Valley settlers. She is very proud of the fact that the home of her great-great-grandfather, Gregorio Nacianceno Garcia, still stands, and is housed the San Elizario Museum.

The author adds:



Gregorio Nacianceno García

The information in this article came to me from my mother's sister, Angelina Garcia. The Garcia children; Angelina, Carolina, Concepcion, and Pedro, were born to Eduardo Garcia and Carolina Parra. Their mother died in 1907 at age thirty-one, and the children went to live with their grand-parents, Leonides Alarcon Bustillos and Cipriano Jesus Alderete Parra. All their children married and moved away from home, except Angelina. She lived with her grandparents until their deaths, Cipriano Jesus in 1923 and Leonides in 1939. She heard many stories from them and was willing to pass them on to her nieces—those who were willing to listen. I do not regret the time I spent listening to her stories. I used the name Cipriano Jesus Parra throughout my story because this was the name given him in baptism. However in the town he was known as Jesus, and in his old age as don Jesus.

Editor's Note, Correction: In *Password,* volume 49, No. 4, Winter 2004, page 179, there is an error in the footnote. In lines 11 and 12, the name of the county judge is incorrect. The correct name should have been Julius A. Buckler. The name of the square mentioned is also incorrect. It should be "Buckler Square." Thank you, Mary Ann Plaut for having found this error.

On page 162, Lisa Brown was identified as "Banquet co-chairman." Although Lisa performed many of the tasks of organization, the co-chairman was Rebecca (Becky) Craver. Thanks toLillian Crouch who brought this to my attention. All three of these ladies worked diligently to make the Hall of Honor Banquet the success that it was.

Casa Ronquillo

By Bill Lockhart

This article describes the home of the Ellis family. It was originally printed in Password *in 1996. It is worthy of reprinting here as an adjunct to the article by Olga T. Hernandez.*

C. L. Sonnichsen described Casa Ronquillo at the time it was occupied by Charles E. Ellis (1869-1877) as "a many-roomed adobe with two patios, a ballroom with painted walls and ceiling, and a little private chapel for the mistress." The house was described by the *Herald Post* in 1930 as a "massive 12-room adobe house built around a luxurious patio. Its walls are three feet in thickness." In 1944 the *Herald Post* noted that the "walls of the building are 30 inches thick and the ceilings are 15 feet high." Although the ceilings are lower today, the report may have been correct at that time. The cement floor was not then in place, and the area around the house may have been built up later as a means of flood control.

The big house was also noted for its beautiful murals. Although legend ascribed them to an older time, they were probably painted during the 1870's. One of the most popular murals, on the east wall of what Teodora Ellis had called her ballroom, depicted a single tree with spreading branches. Around 1917, J.A. Escajeda, born in San Elizario, instructed his children on the history of the murals:

> The tree was painted by a St. Louis artist Mr. Ellis brought out here to do the job. The artist also painted the mural around the wall in the same room, which is a rustic fence joined by logs, and murals of roses in some other rooms. He also painted the canvas ceiling. Two designs were conventional. The third was the 'Last Judgement,' showing the archangel and trumpet.

Charles E. Ellis had purchased Casa Ronquillo from Juan Armendariz on April 14, 1869. Although Ellis was murdered in 1877, the title remained in his name until the death of his wife Teodora in 1908. As the executor of her estate, Abraham Molina disposed of the property,

Ellis, a native of Maine, arrived in the area in 1862 with the Union forces. He soon opened a store and mill at the northern end of San Elizario near the present intersection of Church and Main streets and rapidly became a familiar resident of the village. Ellis was "a prosperous, affable little man with a brown mustache" who married a local Hispanic woman, Teodora Alarcón. Teodora "was not a pretty woman, but she was large and stately and gracious, like her house." Although Ellis was an educated man, his wife was illiterate, not even able to sign her own name. When selling land she signed with an "x" that required a witness to be legally binding. Ellis served as sheriff and tax collector for El Paso County from 1871 to 1873.

Ellis was quite wealthy in 1870. In the census, he listed himself as literate and noted his occupation as "G. Merchant." At the age of thirty-five, he owned $4,000 worth of real estate in the area and had personal property (including the store inventory) valued at $10,000. In 1870 he was easily the richest man in San Elizario. Teodora was seven years younger than her husband and owned a little property of her own valued at $50. Although she had been born in Texas, both her parents were from Mexico. The couple was living at Casa Ronquillo which they had purchased the year before. They shared their space with servants, Juan O. Estrada and Pablo Gándara, who was only nine years old, and five employees. Two of the employees, Kenny Fruys and Juan Alarcón, were clerks in the Ellis store, while the other three, Andres Sanchez, Dimicio Panfil, and José Ortez, worked as teamsters, hauling goods and materials to and from the store and mill.

Although the *Mesilla Valley Independent* had described Ellis as "a gentleman who was well-known on this frontier as an honorable and kind-hearted gentleman," he had fallen into disfavor with the Hispanic population, in part, for arresting Telésforo Montes, well-liked Indian fighter, because Montes would not make his sixteen-year-old daughter go to school. Ellis was therefore not in a good position in the predominantly Hispanic community on the eve of the inter-ethnic confrontation known at the time as the

San Elizario Riot and has been remembered historically as the El Paso Salt War.

The violence of 1877 was provoked by a conflict between the free and easy life style of the Anglo-American population and the more formal customs of the long-time occupants, the Hispanics. In the Anglo-American culture, statutory law was always binding, while Hispanics placed more credence in time-honored custom. The Hispanic population of the El Paso Valley and nearby northern Mexico had been hauling salt for unremembered generations from the salt flats that are located along U.S. highway 62-180, the road to Carlsbad, New Mexico, about ninety miles east of downtown El Paso. When Anglo-American opportunists claimed title to the flats, and refused access to the salt to the Hispanic population, tension increased. Violence arrived in the form of shoot-outs in Franklin (now El Paso), but, then, for a time, an uneasy peace settled over the valley.

The peace was broken on the night of December 12,1877, when Charles W. Howard, leader of the Salt Ring and the man most hated by the Hispanics, arrived in San Elizario with a company of hastily assembled, newly recruited Texas Rangers. Ellis, who had further weakened his ties with the village population by befriending Howard, invited him into Casa Ronquillo for the night. When Howard and Ellis heard sounds of a crowd forming in the village square, Ellis went to investigate. The crowd was so disturbed by the presence of Howard in town that soon their temper grew nasty. By the time Ellis realized the precariousness of his position, it was too late. An eyewitness described the action:

> Eutemio Chavez rode up on horseback and threw a lasso over Ellis and started on a run, dragging the unfortunate man; after he had dragged him some distance he then got down and cut his throat and the body was thrown to the coyotes.

The mob surrounded the Rangers and fighting continued for two days. Five or six of the mob and two Rangers were killed. Captain Garcia, a well-known local Indian-fighter who had sided with the Rangers, was wounded twice. The newspaper erroneously identified Miguel Garcia, one of the slain rangers, as Captain Garcia's son. Howard eventually surrendered to the mob which executed him along with John Atkinson, another Anglo-American merchant of the town. During the rioting, looters pillaged Ellis' home, store, and steam mill. The *Mesilla Valley Independent* reported that

Casa Ronquillo in 1996. Photo by M. Brian Gross, MiCasaTours.com, from Password vol. 41, no. 2, 1996.

"Doña Teodora, the widow of Ellis, was robbed of her jewelry, dresses, bed clothing, furniture everything; her house was stripped." C.L. Sonnichsen claims that when Teodora "asked the robbers to leave her something to eat, they laughed in her face."

Teodora continued living in Casa Ronquillo after Ellis' death and apparently continued to run the business her husband had established. She shared her home with some of her employees. George Kohlhaus and Jesús Juárez were both clerks, while Espiridion Chaves, Pablo Gándara, and Refugio Estrada listed their occupations as "laborer." The final two residents were very young. Both Tom Collins and Manuel Alvedres were only ten years old at the time of the 1880 census. Occupations are listed for the two boys, but, unfortunately, the are illegible. At some point, Teodora may have moved away from San Elizario for she is not listed in the 1900 census, the last census before her death in 1908.

WILLIAM "BILL" LOCKHART is an historical archeologist who lives in Alamogordo, New Mexico where he is on the faculty at New Mexico State University. He has published extensively in *PASSWORD* and in the *ARTIFACT*, publication of the El Paso Archeology Society. He has also been published on the Internet through the Townsend Library, New Mexico State University at Alamogordo.

From "Casa Ronquillo in San Elizario." William W. Lockhart in *Password* vol. 41 (Summer 1996): 71-87.

"Quickie Divorces"- Do you remember?

By Evan Haywood Antone, Ph.D.

"Divorce" has plagued families, governments, religions, and the entire world, for many, many years. The question came to the El Paso/Juárez border in a unique way during the twentieth century. It arose in 1933 in Mexico with the passage of a law permitting "quickie" divorces if states desired to offer them. The State of Chihuahua was one Mexican state to legalize divorces even though predominant Catholics had reservations.

Beginning in 1933 it was established on the El Paso/Juárez border so firmly that as many as 300 divorces were granted there each week. El Paso newspapers reported the names of the best known Americans who came, crossed the Rio Grande, obtained lawyers, and appeared before the First Civil Court.[1]

Investigators for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service tried to unravel the facts of Charlie Chaplin's Juárez divorce on October 10, 1942. The divorce was requested by Paulette Goddard who had acted in Chaplin's films and later married him. Chaplin was a British subject who became a storm center when the United States attorney general began an investigation before readmission to the United States. Chaplin said they were married in 1936 in Canton, China. The Juárez divorce was granted. Chaplin returned to the United States where he later married Oona O'Neill daughter of Eugene O'Neill, noted American playwright.[2]

On June 6, 1945 Merle Oberon arrived in El Paso from Hollywood accompanied by Lucien Ballard, a movie cameraman. The next day she was granted a divorce from Sir Alexander Korda, a British movie producer. Two days later, she was married by proxy to Lucien Ballard in Juárez. Their marriage lasted almost four

years. On February 11, 1949, Merle Oberon returned to Juárez, this time to divorce Ballard in one day. Asked if she intended to marry Count Giorgio Cini, wealthy Italian, she replied "I have no intentions to remarry." Seven months later on September 1, 1949 in Cannes, France, she watched the count plunge to his death in a flaming plane he was piloting.[3]

Another Hollywood star, Ingrid Bergman, filed suit on January 28, 1950 for divorce from Dr. Peter Lindstrom. In the Juárez First Civil Court, her two attorneys were William A. Cooke in El Paso and Arturo Gomez Trevino in Juárez. Both awaited action from Dr. Lindstrom, who had no attorney in either place. Judge Eugenio Calzada Flores granted her a decree on February 10th. Copies of divorce papers were flown by special plane to Dr. Lindstrom on February 11th. Earlier that month on February 3rd, Ingrid Bergman had given birth to a seven pound boy at Rome International Hospital. A year later, on June 18th she gave birth to twin daughters.

Both her attorneys recommended that a proxy marriage be performed in First Civil Court for Ingrid and Roberto. Since Ingrid was born in Sweden, a Swedish certificate of marriage was required and issued. Near end of the month, on May 25, 1950, Ingrid and Roberto were wed by proxy in Juárez. Judge Raul Orozco performed the proxy marriage. Marcelino Girbsi, a New York attorney, represented Roberto and William A. Cocke represented Ingrid. A copy of the marriage certificate was sent to Chihuahua City, then to the Italian Embassy in Mexico City, then on to Rome. Ingrid Bergman was quoted as saying, "If this is the only way our marriage can take place, then it is all right. I am glad it is finally over." Their marriage endured for seven years, but she then returned to Juárez on November 1957 when she again obtained a "quickie divorce" from Roberto.[4]

It was on July 4, 1950 that Bette Davis arrived in Juárez to receive her liberty from artist William Grant Sherry. Her divorce was granted that afternoon. Later that month, on July 28th, Miss Davis returned to Juárez with Gary Merrill. Again, in one day, his marital mixup was ironed out—Merrill was granted a divorce from Mrs. Barbara Leeds Merrill. The actor had already divorced his wife in the United States, but the second divorce was necessary because that decree would not become final for a year. Then, Gary and Bette were wed in the living room of Jose Amador y Trias, a

Mexican lawyer. Judge Raul Orozco of 1st Civil Registry performed their double ring ceremony.[5]

Shelly Winters and Vittorio Gassman, an Italian actor, arrived in Juárez on April 27, 1952. The next day, Gassman was granted a divorce from Eleonora Ricel Gassman by the First Civil Court at 11:45 a.m. Miss Winters and Gassman were then married at 1:00 p.m. the same afternoon. The speed of the Juárez procedure did not give the bride time to change into the wedding dress she had brought from Hollywood.[6]

Ethel Merman, starring on Broadway in "Call Me Madam," arrived in Juárez on June 9, 1952. She had been refused a "quickie" divorce in Cuernavaca, Mexico two days before, and Juárez was the only city in Mexico that would grant the speedy divorce that she desired. On the following day, June 10th, Miss Merman was granted a divorce from Robert D. Levitt, a New York newspaper executive. She returned to the Hilton Hotel in El Paso where she resided. Robert Six, president of Continental Airlines, was registered in the Hilton—ostensibly by coincidence. When asked about her reported romance with Six, Miss Merman replied, "He came to El Paso to see a bull fight in Juárez—not me!" On June 11, 1952, Miss Merman was scheduled to depart El Paso for New York City via American Airlines. Later reports were that she cancelled this flight and boarded another flight to Denver, Colorado where Robert Six resided.[7]

John Jacob Astor, a millionaire socialite, filed suit in Juárez First Civil Court on July 2, 1954. He sought a divorce decree on grounds of incompatibility from his second wife, the former Gertrude Gretsch, whom he had married on September 18, 1944 in New York City. They had been separated for four years and papers had been served on her. Astor, whose father had perished in 1912 in the sinking of the British liner Titanic, had an eighteen-year-old son by his former marriage to Ellen Tuck French. The decree was granted. He divulged no plans for future marriages.[8]

As late as 1968, when Mia Farrow divorced Frank Sinatra,[9] Juárez had profited mightily with its "quickie divorces" and El Paso profited to a small extent when the wealthy decided to stay—for whatever time—in El Paso hotels. Almost 45,000 divorces were granted in 1969; most were granted to New Yorkers. Through August 11, 1969 twenty-five million pesos, equivalent to two million dollars, had been turned over to the state treasurer in

divorce fees. The income for the year was projected to be forty-three million dollars.

A new law, introduced by Chihuahua Governor Oscar Flores was passed, and on November 11, 1970 new restrictions called for new laws governing divorces. Henceforth it would be necessary that the petitioner establish permanent residence for six months, that at least one of the parties involved appear before a judge, that official notification be given to the second party before a divorce became final, and that the opportunity to appeal be given to the person being sued. President Díaz of Mexico signed the new law because his personal conviction was that quickie divorces in Juárez were a discredit to Mexico abroad.[10]

Juárez and Mexico awakened to the fact that thirty-seven years of promiscuous behavior had to be terminated. The world-wide publicity of the seven examples cited certainly influenced the governor and president to take action to end "The Quickie Divorce" law of 1933.

Thus ended the "quickie divorce" in Juárez.

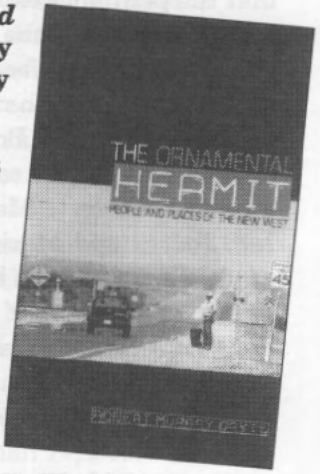
EVAN HAYWOOD ANTONE, a fourth generation Texan, was born in Clarksville, Texas where he began his career in journalism with the *Clarksville Times*. He joined the *El Paso Times* and *El Paso Herald-Post* and became retail advertising director for both. He was awarded B.A. and M.A. degrees from UTEP and the Ph.D. from UCLA. He was associate professor of English at the University of Texas at El Paso and he succeeded Carl Hertzog as director of Texas Western Press. During his newspaper years, he became interested in the Juárez "quickie" divorces and accumulated stories which are the sources for this article. He was President of the El Paso County Historical Society 1979 and 1980.

END NOTES

1. *El Paso Herald-Post,* August 3, 1965
2. *El Paso Times,* October 10, 1952.
3. *El Paso Times,* August 8, 1965.
4. *El Paso Herald-Post,* November 8, 1957.
5. *El Paso Herald-Post,* December 8, 1957.
6. *El Paso Herald-Post,* April 28, 1952.
7. *El Paso Times,* June 9, 1952.
8. *El Paso Herald-Post,* July 2, 1954.
9. *El Paso Times,* August 17, 1968.
10. *El Paso Times,* November 8, 1970.

Book Review

***The Ornamental Hermit: People and Places of the New West,* Robert Murray Davis. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004.**



Robert M. Davis is professor emeritus of English at the University of Oklahoma, where he taught from 1967 until 2000, with much time spent in Europe in the 80's. He was a Fulbright scholar and taught and lectured throughout Europe and in Canada in the 1980's. Davis has authored numerous books, including among them *Midland: A Family Album*, *Outside the Lines,* and *Playing Cowboys* and periodical articles such as "When was Postmodernism?" *World Literature Today* and "Everything Old/New is New/Old Again: The Fiction of Russell Smith" in *Essays on Canadian Writing.* His works also include poetry and social history. He has earned rave reviews of virtually all of his works.

His latest work, *The Ornamental Hermit,* purports to be a discussion of what traveling in the United States' West reveals about America, a social history of the American West in modern times and how the West differs from the East. The book is 197 pages in length and has no bibliography or documentation. It is divided into six sections, each section dealing with different aspects or impressions of Davis' travels. Each section encompasses between three and six chapters that are essays not necessarily related to the preceding or succeeding essays. Each of the chapters, or essays, deals with reminiscences of Davis' travels and does not involve any serious scholarly investigation. Mercifully, the chapters range in length from three to ten pages, giving the reader a plethora of good stopping places and making the book a relatively easy read.

The first five chapters discuss Davis' experiences as a Fulbright Scholar in Europe. They are liberally laced with braggadocio and bear little reference to the American West. He tries to relate the Danube, which is muddy, polluted, and not blue—no sur-

prise there—to the Missouri River of his youth. In the second section, Davis discusses the question of whether he considers himself an Oklahoman, and whether that moniker is demeaning or not. He can not seem to make up his mind as to whether he considers himself an Oklahoman or not. Maybe he is just a "sort of Oklahoman," but too intellectual to be a real Oklahoman, which, we all know, are dull-witted. John Steinbeck, of course, plays a major role in this section.

After the first seventy-two pages the essays begin to deal less with self and become more interesting. The chapter titled "Kicking 66" is where the book starts to hold the reader's attention and Davis does have some engaging remarks regarding Route 66 and the nostalgia surrounding that old highway today. Naturally, Davis also mentions the television series "Route 66," which contributed much to the nostalgia of today, in this essay. Here is where his lack of documentation is most lamentable because this reader at least, would like to have reliable facts regarding that historic highway. However, his observations should spur the serious reader to seek verification of his claims. In the remaining sections Davis still rambles from topic to topic, but his discussions of small-town America and the regeneration of towns that nearly became ghost towns might spur the reader to look into ways to regenerate his or her own community.

Davis' efforts are clearly aimed at the general audience and not specifically the historians among us. There is actually little of interest to an historian and what is there is not documented, forcing the reader to seek other sources. However, that might be of some value after all. In the last essay, Davis explains what an ornamental hermit is, but fails to relate the ornamental hermit to the contents of his book.

Davis' efforts to compare and contrast the American West with the more populous regions of the American east and northeast are only marginally successful. He does a better job of comparing the Danube with the Missouri, and more succinctly. In the first third to half of the book, Davis concentrates almost completely on his youth and European experiences. Indeed he does make a comparison, but he is so involved in other topics—like his travels, the days of his youth, and the Arizona Indian's attempts to improve tribal life—that by the time he gets to the point, one wonders if that is his point.

John P. Ryan

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The price of copies of PASSWORD from 1956 to 1979 is $10.00.
Cost of postage and handling is $2.00 for one issue, $1.00 for each additional issue.

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PASSWORD (ISSN 0031-2738) is published quarterly by
THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 603 W. Yandell, El Paso, Texas 79902

Periodicals Postage Paid at El Paso, Texas

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
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