

PASSWORD

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THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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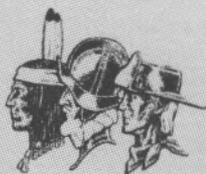
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AND INDEXED IN
HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS
and
AMERICA: HISTORY
AND LIFE



*McNeely Bookplate
Hall of Honor, John Hamilton McNeely,
Courtesy of the McNeely family.
See page 162*

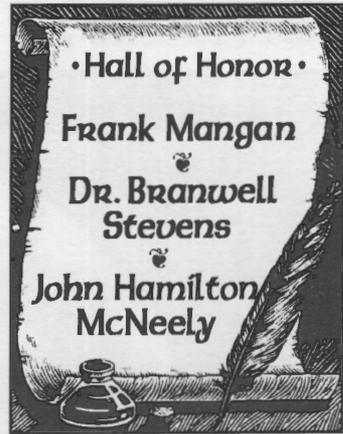
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• Hall of Honor •
2007



The El Paso County's Historical Society each year honors two and sometimes three El Pasoans who deserve the honor of being named to the Society's Hall of Honor. This year, the Society has chosen to honor Frank Mangan, writer and publisher; Branwell Fanning Stevens, doctor; and John Hamilton McNeely, professor. Their biographies appear here through the courtesy of many people—the person or persons who nominated them, the members of the selection committee, various friends, and members of the El Paso County Historical Society.

Those chosen must be outstanding men and women of character, vision, courage, and creative spirit who have been residents of El Paso County. They are El Pasoans who have consistently achieved those things which make them truly outstanding—who have created that which deserves to be read, heard, or seen, and who have made El Paso better because they were here. Also treasured are El Pasoans who have influenced the course of history of El Paso County and have brought honor and recognition to El Paso.

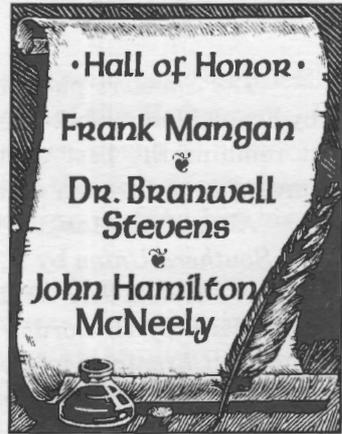
The Society publishes a complete list of those honored by being named to the Hall of Honor. This list can be found in the Directory of the Society.



*Frank Mangan,
2007 Hall of Honor Recipient*

• Hall of Honor •
2007

Frank Mangan



Frank Mangan is a native El Pasoan born on October 11, 1921 to Grace Kathren Little and Frank John Mangan. He has two sisters, Mary Lou Mangan Faller of San Ramon, California and Ronnie Mounce of El Paso. His half brother, William Roche, passed away some years ago.

He is a graduate of Austin High School and attended Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy, later Texas Western College, and now the University of Texas at El Paso. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and upon discharge from the service, he earned a bachelor of journalism degree from the University of Missouri. He was the student president of the School of Journalism and was awarded a scholarship from Erwin-Wasey Advertising in New York City.

In the late forties, Frank began his career in advertising at the White House Department Store and White & Shuford agency. He married Judith Peterson, a native El Pasoan and 6th generation Texan who was writing radio commercials for the Popular Dry Goods Company. In 1951 Frank joined the El Paso Natural Gas Company where he spent twenty-eight years. After spending 20 months in Houston as assistant director of public relations, he took early retirement in 1979.

Frank began his second career in 1979 when he and Judy formed Mangan Books. Their goal was to design, edit, and publish local and regional historical titles. Meanwhile, Frank had already written and designed *Bordertown*, published by Carl Hertzog in 1964. He followed that with *El Paso in Pictures* in 1971, *Bordertown Revisited* in 1973, *Ruidoso Country* in 1994, and *Mangan's War: A Personal View of World War II* in 2003.

The Shooters published in 1976 with typography and design by Frank Mangan became the first of eight titles by Leon Metz, and it remains the best selling of the Mangan Books publications, having gone through eleven printings.

Altogether Mangan Books has published forty titles, including *Southern Union* by N. P. Chesnutt; *Railroads and Revolutions* by J. F. Hulse; *The Gentlemen's Club: The Story of Prostitution in El Paso* by H. Gordon Frost; *The Bear Facts* by Ray Sanchez; *El Paso Chronicles* by Leon Metz; and *Sun Country Banker: The Life and Bank of Samuel Doak Young* by Joseph Leach. Texas Christian University press has reprinted five Mangan book titles. The first was *El Paso in Pictures*. The Mangans have donated signed, first edition copies, of each of their forty published books to the El Paso County Historical Society and to the library of the University of Texas at El Paso.

In terms of honorary accomplishments, Frank Mangan has earned recognition as:

1. El Paso Advertising Federation's Man of the Year in 1959.
2. The recipient of the coveted "Authors at the Pass" award from the El Paso Writers Hall of Fame in 1977.
3. The recipient in 1981 of the Border Regional Library Association's award for writing and publishing *El Paso in Pictures* in 1972, and *Ruidoso Country* in 1995.
4. The recipient in 1981 of the "Southwestern Library Association Award of Excellence" for publishing *Fort Bliss, an Illustrated History* by Leon Metz and Millard McKinney.
5. Also in 1981, he received from the Texas Institute of Letters—the award for the best book design in the state of Texas.

Frank Mangan is a charter member of the El Paso County Historical Society and was a member of the El Paso County Historical Commission. He was one of the founders for KCOS, El Paso's public television station and has served on committees for the YMCA and the Girl Scouts. He made numerous civic contributions while working for and eventually retiring as public relations director for the El Paso Natural Gas Company.

In 2003, Frank designed and published *Mangan's War: A Personal View of World War II*. From the letters his mother had lovingly saved, he recreated his involvement in some of the big

adventures of the European theater of operations, specifically the landing at Normandy and the Battle of the Hedgerows. In one of the more humorous incidents—which wasn't so humorous at the time—Frank described friendly fire that came very close to his foxhole, an event that left him wearing nothing but his GI [government issue] shorts.

And finally, in terms of the war, Frank Mangan was involved in the aid and release of the prisoners of war from the famous and infamous Dachau Concentration Camp outside Munich, Germany.

Leon Metz said of Frank and Judy:

I have known Frank and his lovely wife Judy for many years. I have never had more treasured friends, and El Paso has never had more accomplished and more treasured residents. In my mind, Frank Mangan represents all that is good, and fine, and honorable, and loving about El Paso. He has done it all, and he has been supported every step of the way by his gracious and beautiful wife, Judy.

Frank Mangan epitomizes what this community is, what this community was, and what this community can be.

It is unfortunate that we cannot clone Frank Mangan, because future generations may not realize how fortunate we have been, and what they are going to miss.

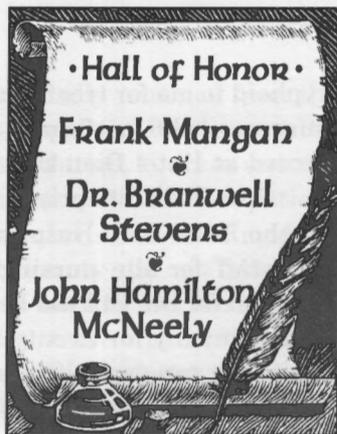




*Dr. Branwell Fanning Stevens,
2007 Hall of Honor Recipient*

• Hall of Honor •
2007

Dr. Branwell Fanning Stevens



It is often individual acts of courage and generosity in the face of adversity that inform a community, define what it holds sacred, and shape future generations. Such is the legacy of Dr. Branwell Fanning Stevens. Born on May 1, 1874 in Chicago Illinois to John B.

Stevens and Sarah Fanning, Dr. Stevens graduated in 1899 from Rush Medical College in Chicago and worked in a sanitarium in Palmyra, Wisconsin for two years after graduation. He developed a mild nephritis and, believing that a dry, warmer climate might help his health, he followed a colleague from medical school to El Paso, Texas.

Dr. Stevens arrived in El Paso on Christmas Day in 1901. He stayed at the Veager Hotel on the corner of Overland and Utah Streets. The first year he was here he did not make enough money from his new practice working alone, so he joined the office of Dr. E. J. Mellish, a surgeon he had known in Chicago, where his share of the office rent was \$15 a month. He managed to make a bare living by administering anaesthetics for several surgeons. He was the first doctor in the area to use ether practicing the "drop" method developed by Dr. L. H. Prince at the Augustana Hospital in Chicago.

Because his surgery took place at Hotel Dieu Hospital, he became acquainted with the Sisters of Charity who referred patients to him. When there was an overflow of patients needing a doctor, the Sisters often called on the new doctor in town, B. F. Stevens, thus allowing him to establish a medical practice that would span some fifty-six years. He often said "During my first summer in El Paso, I would have been hard put to exist if the good Sisters of Charity had not referred ten or twelve cases of

typhoid to me for treatment." By 1904 Dr. Stevens was one of five surgeons who performed over one hundred fifty operations on record at Hotel Dieu that year.

In addition to private practice, Dr. Stevens sat as an advisor on the Hotel Dieu Hospital board, he was a member of the teaching staff for the nursing school, and served as physician and surgeon for the El Paso Electric Company, Wells Fargo, and Swift and Company for twenty-five years. He served without compensation for ten years on staff at El Paso City County Hospital. In 1918 Dr. Stevens enlisted as a captain in the United States Army Medical Corps serving at Camp Travis, Texas and Fort Devens, Massachusetts before he was chosen for a research study to develop new methods of wound care at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. Dr. Stevens was elected president of the El Paso Medical Auxiliary in 1935 and was appointed chief of staff of Hotel Dieu Hospital in 1940. He was also on staff at the early Providence Hospital and volunteered his time and resources in the 1940's to examine draftees for World War II military service.

In addition to his exceptional professional achievements, Dr. Stevens was a devoted family man who in 1923 married Elise Walters at the First Presbyterian Church in El Paso. They had two daughters, Sara Stevens McKnight, born in 1925 and Ruth Stevens Herlin, born in 1927.

Among Dr. Stevens's many contributions to the community was his relationship with El Paso's only black physician, Lawrence Aaron Nixon, that most influenced the course of El Paso's history. After the rampant lynching of Blacks in East Texas in the early 1900s, Dr. Nixon relocated his family and moved to El Paso in 1909 to practice medicine. As a resident of El Paso, Dr. Nixon helped organize a Methodist congregation, voted in the Democratic primary and general elections, and in 1910 helped to organize the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1923 the Texas legislature passed a law which prohibited Blacks from voting in Democratic primaries. This prompted Dr. Nixon to begin a twenty-year battle to reclaim his rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.

These were turbulent times for our country and it is no secret that racism was rampant throughout the South. El Paso, however, was the exception, in part because its population was primarily

Hispanic and the city itself was geographically removed from the emotion and passion attached to the struggle of Blacks and the turmoil surrounding it. But even in its isolation, El Paso was not immune from external influence, and in order to admit a patient to a hospital, a physician had to be a member of the local medical society. In Texas, the State Medical Society did not allow its chapters to accept Black members, thus barring Dr. Nixon from admitting patients into El Paso hospitals. Once a patient was admitted, however, it was permissible for a Black doctor to attend. Steadfast in his opposition to this rule, Dr. Stevens nominated Dr. Nixon for membership in the El Paso Medical Society several times, but to no avail. Dr. Stevens, however, was not a man easily discouraged. Independent in thought and deed, Dr. Stevens had little use for class distinction and, creatively circumventing what he considered an antiquated policy, he admitted Dr. Nixon's patients to the local hospitals, after which Dr. Nixon resumed their care.

Dr. Stevens did not plan to become a civil rights activist, but he was a man of character with selfless determination and a pioneering spirit that recognized a need to accommodate cultural pluralism. His decision to admit Dr. Nixon's patients stemmed from a belief that injustice in health is the most inhumane of all forms of inequality, a conviction rooted in the knowledge that a healthy community equally among all people is a victory and benefit for society at large.

Tolerance does not arise from an historical vacuum, and by refusing to perpetuate the learned phenomena of prejudice and racism, Dr. Stevens set the standard for a community from which to grow. Dr. Stevens was a man concerned with the greater good who lived by example to change the face of our humanity and shape a generation to come. A tradition of compassion and fairness began—one that would lead to many milestones including that El Paso would become home to the first college in the State of Texas—indeed in the entire old Confederacy—to admit Black students.

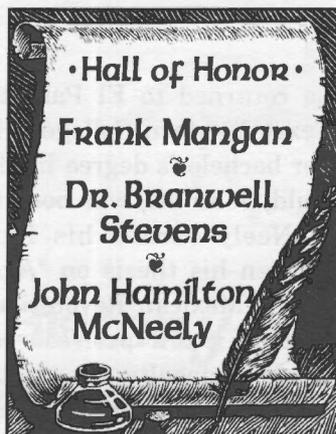
A visionary and pioneer, Dr. Stevens died on February 13, 1971 having transformed and enhanced the lives of many and leaving El Paso a better place for the seventy years he was here. His was a very firm voice, and a very eloquent voice and one that deserves to be remembered by all El Pasoans as an exemplary guide to our future.



*John Hamilton McNeely,
March 2, 1917–February 12, 2003
2007 Hall of Honor Recipient*

• Hall of Honor •
2007

John Hamilton McNeely



John Hamilton McNeely was born on March 2, 1917 in Evansville, Indiana to John H. and Alma Wood McNeely who were owners of a newspaper, the *Evansville Journal*. His father, who had served as a captain during World War I, was a researcher in higher education for the United States Department of the Interior.

John grew up in Washington, D.C. where he attended Central High School and went on to earn a bachelor's degree from Washington University and his master's degree at American University, both in Washington, D.C. He taught in a private school in the Washington area for ten years. In 1940, when Dr. McNeely was in his thirty-third year, his father died, whereupon he and his mother moved to Houston where her family resided.

Completing his teacher certification at Rice University in Houston, Dr. McNeely taught briefly in the Houston schools before accepting a position at McAllen High School where he met his future wife, Dora Lopez. Teaching jobs took him to Laredo and then on to El Paso in 1945 to the faculty of El Paso High School. He had considered a position at Fort Stockton but chose El Paso, although both cities were nearly the same size at that time. When it was noticed by members of the history faculty at the College of Mines that his vita contained the notation that he had contributed articles to the Texas Handbook, an authoritative history of Texas, he was offered and he accepted a position as an instructor at College of Mines in 1946. In 1947 he married his former student, Dora Lopez, and brought her to El Paso where their first child, Alma Alicia, was born two years later.

Dr. McNeely took a sabbatical and went to Austin to study for his doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1951

he returned to El Paso to what had become Texas Western College. His wife Dora earned her bachelor's degree in 1952 and their second child, John Jr., was born in May of 1956. Dr. McNeely earned his PhD in 1958, having written his thesis on "Agrarian Land Reform in the Mexican Revolution." He moved up to become a full professor and member of the graduate faculty.

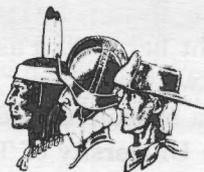


Dr. McNeely

He was founder of the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso for which were interviewed important El Paso artists among others. He also contributed articles to *Password*. During his career at the University of Texas at El Paso he donated approximately 8000 historical volumes to the University library to be part of what became the John H. McNeely Collection. The Collection was previously housed separately but is now interspersed throughout the holdings. Today scholars doing research use many of the rare volumes. The executive conference room at the University library was named in honor of Dr. McNeely.

His interests and contributions to the university lay also in many other areas. He donated grandfather clocks, furnishings, and sculptures to the library and to the president's residence. Early in his career he enjoyed periods of strong interest in tropical fish and exotic birds and later in life cultivated many varieties of fig trees. Upon retirement in 1984 he was honored as professor emeritus. Dr. McNeely was a lifelong art collector and in retirement he focused on building a remarkable collection of religious art in the rectory and in the sanctuary of Guardian Angel Parish.

He enjoyed a retirement of nearly twenty years and was in good health until he was struck down by a brief final illness. He passed away at the age of eighty-four on February 12, 2003 on the birthday of his youngest grandson, Stephen. His wife of fifty-five years survived him by only three and a half years. They lie in rest together at Valley Memorial Gardens near McAllen, Texas.





Oñate and our Un-Appreciated History of the Southwest

By Jack W. Niland



Close to the year 1500, two cultures collided in the desert Southwest and forever changed the history of the people who inhabited these lands. Nomadic Apache migrated south on foot from the Athabascan-speaking tribes of Alaska. Immediately their need for food and shelter forced them to begin raiding the settled Puebloan people for their sustenance. This lifestyle was nothing new to the Pueblo culture of that era, who frequently raided one another as a matter of their political culture and survival. The desert Southwest was a tough place to call home 500 years ago, and was made even tougher when the new group of warring Apache entered the scene to strain further the resources available to them all.

In 1598, two cultures collided once again, and made more changes to the history of those people who then inhabited these lands. Twenty-two years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Oñate, at his own expense, led his 500 colonizers who endured an unbelievably perilous journey toward the hope of a new beginning. The sight of Don Juan de Oñate and his cohort of 500 was an impressive sight, especially because this time the strangers appeared riding on horses, an animal of wondrous awe that the current inhabitants had never before seen. Don Juan de Oñate and his original 500 had come to settle this region as pressure from the French in east Texas began to threaten the Spanish claims that had been held by the crown for over seventy years. The introduction of the horse to the Southwest by the Oñate colonizers had a direct result on the formation of what would evolve to become the Plains Indian cultures, yet very few people outside the desert

Southwest know that this is a direct result of Oñate and his 500 colonizers. The introduction of the horse to the Southwest by Oñate and his followers later had a direct result on the success of the early colonies with the formation of east and west trade routes.

After all of this, and the unique culture that is evident today in the Southwest, why has this history been neglected? WHY has this history of our Southwest NEVER BEEN TAUGHT TO US?

Morison and Commager, who were recognized and reputable historians of the mid-twentieth century, devoted only ONE sentence to Oñate in their TWO VOLUME *Growth of the American Republic*, a text used on many college campuses in those years. Unfortunately, many of the writers of the time were easterners who apparently barely acknowledged anything west of the Mississippi.

Did you know who Oñate was before John Houser's sculpture came to our attention? Collegiate level American history classes across the nation do not approach the topic. Hence, my reference to our UN-APPRECIATED Southwestern history. These early Oñate colonizers have been overshadowed by the Pilgrims and by east coast tradition for over 400 years. The histories that have been written in the Southwest since the early 1900's have never been fully integrated into the theses of mainstream northeastern American historians.

In 1881, Katherine J. White was traveling on the Santa Fe Trail by stage coach bound for El Paso, where her husband, Alward, was a customs broker stationed here on the border. With her was her young son, Owen P. White, whose name was to become an important part of our heritage. Their anxiety to arrive at their destination was growing by the mile. Unfortunately they met possible calamity when they were only ninety miles from their destination—they were suddenly overtaken by Apache Indians. In a desperate dash for safety their stagecoach made a run for it.

Common practice of the day was for women to wear a locket carrying pills of strychnine. Imagine if you will, traveling with your family and having to contemplate administering a lethal dose of strychnine to your young son and then yourself, rather than endure the torture of being "taken alive." Fortunately, this fate did not befall Mrs. White, for Texas Rangers were coming up the trail looking for the late-arriving stage coach, and they turned the Apaches back.

Young Owen White, who grew up in this rowdy borderland of El Paso, became fluent in Spanish, and had a knack for writing. In 1923 Owen dug into the old Spanish archives of Paso Del Norte, and discovered in their written records the unbelievably rich history of the first inhabitants of this region. The result was the first historical account ever written about our area entitled *Out of the Desert: The Historical Romance of El Paso, Texas*. Owen White began his book with the native inhabitants of the territory and continued with tales of those early Spanish colonizers including Don Juan De Oñate.

In that same year of 1923, the publisher of White's book, William S. McMath, hired a talented young typesetter from the East by the name of Carl Hertzog. The literary history of El Paso, Texas would come to be firmly established by this legendary "Printer at the Pass."

Carl Hertzog spent the rest of his life finding and encouraging regional authors to dig deeper into our early south-western history. Hertzog painstakingly designed and hand-set the type of most of the collected historical works of our region extant at that time. It became his life's mission to publish the history of our area, which had been undiscovered, un-interpreted, and untold.

In 1939, Carl Hertzog and the young artist, Tom Lea collaborated on a publication of restaurant menus for the Paso del Norte Hotel. These menus consisted of drawings of twelve historical figures which forever impacted the history of this region. This body of work would come to be published by Hertzog in 1946 as the "Calendar of the Twelve Travelers Through the Pass of the North." Don Juan De Oñate was one of those figures.

Tom Lea later introduced another young artist, José Cisneros, to Carl Hertzog. In 1952, Carl Hertzog and José Cisneros together produced the first book published by the Texas Western Press, *The Spanish Heritage of the Southwest*. Don Juan De Oñate was featured prominently throughout this great work. José Cisneros

In that same year of 1923, the publisher of White's book, William S. McMath, hired a talented young typesetter from the East by the name of Carl Hertzog. The literary history of El Paso, Texas would come to be firmly established by this legendary "Printer at the Pass."

continues to capture, through his art, a time and a people who are now long gone.

The list of legendary El Paso historians goes on: W. W. Mills, Anson Mills, Cleofas Calleros, C. L. "Doc" Sonnichsen, Paul Horgan, W. H. Timmons, S. D. Myers, Leon Metz, Fred Morales, Frank Mangan, Katherine White, Rebecca Craver, Cleve Hallenbeck, Mark Simmons, John Kessel, and the list continues to grow. It would be nearly impossible to list all of them but my point here is simple—these historians had the courage to research, to "dig-in," and to write about our unappreciated history of the Southwest, a

history that has been overshadowed by the traditional history of the Northeast for far too long now.

The inspiration to write on these issues today comes from the spirit of the great pioneers of El Paso's past, some of whom are no longer here to speak for themselves. My inspiration comes from my heroes—Owen White, Carl Hertzog, and Tom Lea, and José Cisneros, and Ethan and John Houser who pioneered the idea of reclaiming our unappreciated southwestern history.

Our position on Oñate should come from these great historians who came "out of the desert" and on whose shoulders we proudly stand today. We should not have to debate about why we think the image of Oñate should or should not bear his own name—these local historians have already done the work for us.

Having been involved with the Oñate project for over ten years, I have

often thought that a powerful way in which the city could benefit from this monument, and capitalize on regional, cultural, and civic pride, would be to commemorate the first wave of Hispanic migration into the territory that would become the United States.

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These 500 Hispanic colonists arrived in the desert Southwest twenty-two years before the members of Plimoth Colony first set foot on our “stern and rock-bound coast,” yet we hear nothing about them. Is it because our El Paso history is not considered American History? Is it because these early colonizers spoke only Spanish that their tales have never been told?

We in El Paso have an opportunity to challenge the history that we have all learned by adding a new chapter to that history of the formation of this nation, if we can discover how to come together and tell our collective stories truthfully. None of us in the present generation has anything to hide, be it foot choppings or head scalplings. This is HISTORY and it is INTERESTING. So let us come together and learn from it—without “political correctness” and without the double-standard arguments about incidents that took place at a time that was sixteen generations prior to our own.

My hope is that El Paso can turn THE WORLD'S LARGEST EQUESTRIAN BRONZE SCULPTURE of Don Juan De Oñate and the remaining “12 Travelers” into a tool that sparks an interest in our past and that becomes a source of pride for the citizens of the Southwest—the ancestors on whose shoulders we stand.

JACK W. NILAND is a fourth generation El Pasoan. He graduated from Coronado High School in 1990 and from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994 and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Cultural Anthropology from the Institute of Latin American Studies Department. He holds the position of vice-president of the Niland Company in El Paso. Jack has served on the board of the 12 Travelers Memorial of the Southwest as vice-president and has served on the board of the El Paso County Historical Society for the past ten years, currently serving the organization as its president.



Farewell to the Editor

Since 1956 the El Paso County Historical Society has faithfully delivered to our members one issue per quarter of our journal, *Password*. Interesting articles are submitted to us from throughout the entire region. These articles have opened our readers eyes to histories that would have otherwise gone untold. We consider *Password* to be the crown jewel of our organization

Marilyn Gross has, during the last ten years, served as editor-in-chief of *Password*. Her attention to detail has been second to none. Each and every article submitted to her has been thoroughly scrutinized with blood, sweat, and tears. Articles are read, proofed, reread, edited, and then read again by Marilyn, her "readers," and associate editors—and then reread again. Her skill as editor has required that she make subtle changes in every piece she has elected to publish. Often the authors themselves thank her for her "fine tuning." It is a difficult and time consuming task which Marilyn has done as a labor of love. Her attention to detail has been evident in each and every issue. The citizens of the Southwest, historians, and future historians will be forever indebted to Marilyn Gross for her contribution to preserving the history of the Southwest.

Sadly, this issue of *Password* will be Marilyn's last as editor. The Board of the El Paso County Historical Society and its members wish to congratulate Marilyn Gross for her ten years of service as editor of *Password*.

With our congratulations goes a sincere Thank You.

We are truly grateful for your past service and can only hope to follow your example for the future of *Password*. We thank you, Marilyn, for your tireless effort in ensuring that our historical journal has remained at the forefront of the history of our region.

Jack W. Niland
President, El Paso County Historical Society



Pedro González Remembers the Revolution

(Note: The extract that follows is from an oral history interview conducted in El Paso in 1976 by Dr. Oscar J. Martinez, Director of the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. Martinez is presently Professor of History at the University of Arizona.)

Born in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1899 Mr. González was orphaned at a young age and was "adopted" by Francisco "Pancho" Villa. His capture by opposing forces, close brush with a firing squad, and escape from his captors vividly illustrate the trials and tribulations of a soldier attempting to return to a normal life.)

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In 1913, when I was 14 years old, I joined some federal troops that were going from Guadalajara to Torreón with the intention of conquering Villa. Since I was an orphan, I wandered around with them, just to see what was going on. I gave the officers [shoe] shines and ran errands for them whenever they needed something, and they would give me a quarter, a dime, twenty cents. Then some other people gave me food to eat, and that's how I earned my living. I had a good friendship with those people and they treated me very well. From Torreón we went to Durango, and from there we conducted a search, looking for Madero's followers in towns like Pedriceña, Cruces, Nazas, and Mapimi. The federalists were in control of all those places.

It turned out that the *maderistas* attacked Pedriceña, where I happened to be at that time. Then I went with the revolutionaries because there was more food and excitement with them. A man gave me a short 30-30 rifle and that's how I became a revolutionary against the federal government. I joined General Calixto Contreras' troops, and they must have liked me because they treated me very well. I went along with the colonel who took me under his wing.

One day there was a meeting of generals and colonels, and Villa was one of them. When they finished talking about the attacks that they were going to carry out, Villa said to me, "Listen, boy, will you come with me?" I told him that *I* couldn't say—that he would have to talk to the colonel that I was assigned to, and if

I enjoyed being where there was fighting going on, probably for the simple reason of just being young. Most of the generals appreciated me a lot and they all wanted me to go with them. But since I was working for Villa, I couldn't. If the general gave me permission to go to another brigade with another general I went; if not, I didn't go.

he allowed me to, then I would. I was afraid of Villa since he was *the* head of the Revolution. Then he left me entrusted to the colonel and to General Contreras. He told them, "OK, I leave you in charge of this boy; take good care of him." They said, "We will." A little later Contreras and Villa got together again and that's when I became a part of the *División del Norte* (Villa's troops). At that time Villa only had about 200 or 300 men. He picked me up and I went with him.

I enjoyed being where there was fighting going on, probably for the simple reason of just being young. Most of the generals appreciated me a lot and they all wanted me to go with them. But since I was working for Villa, I couldn't. If the general gave me permission to go to another brigade with another general I went; if not, I didn't go. The general saw how clever I was

in doing jobs which were a little difficult. He sent me to certain cities that he was going to attack so that I could find out how many troops there were and which positions were strong. For a week I would go all through town and the outskirts where the federal troops were, selling cigarettes, candy and other things, so that I wouldn't be suspicious looking.

In November of 1913 we captured Ciudad Juárez, and we were there until the federal troops started to come to attack us from Chihuahua. When we were in Juárez, the mayor of El Paso and a general from Fort Bliss came over to talk with the general. They asked him to please not fight in Juárez because the bullets could go over to the American side and there could be accidents

involving civilian families. Villa told them that they didn't have to worry—that he didn't like to fight among the houses, that he always liked to fight on the open plains.

We left Juárez and went about 10 kilometers towards the south to Tierra Blanca. The federal troops started to come in trains, but they couldn't get to Juárez because we were already waiting for them. We were there several days, and they distributed to us that sausage that the American government gave out at Fort Bliss—a *big* piece—and a square piece of bread which was also American. At that time the American government helped Villa a lot. Finally, one daybreak, Villa gave the order to attack and the battle began. There was a lot of shooting and I had to retreat to a little hill where our infantry was continuing to fire. While I was trying to rapidly get into a hole with a fellow soldier, they wounded me and I lost my horse. The federal troops kept advancing, and there I was, hurt. I climbed down the hill to a little stream, hoping that if the federalists came they would pass me by and not kill me. Then I heard a horse coming and saw that it was one of my comrades. I told him, "Comrade, pick me up, get me out of here." He returned, put me on the horse and we left. My condition was really quite bad with a wound in the shoulder and the back right next to the spinal column. The shower of bullets whizzed by us on one side and the other, and we were the last ones to get out of there. I told my comrade, "Make this horse go faster because they're going to kill us both right here." Well, he hit the horse a little more but I began aching badly and I told him, "Friend, don't hit him any more," and he stopped the horse for a while.

Finally we were out of danger and then we found the general. Villa recognized me and said, "My goodness, boy, is it you?" I answered, "Yes sir." He ordered the first lieutenant who had gotten me out of the battle: "Take this boy to the train for me and assign soldiers to take care of him until they get to Juárez, so that he can be cured in the hospital." Well, the officer took me to a train where there were a lot of wounded people and we left.

When I got to Juárez I found lodging in a hotel where there were many people recuperating. There were two other people with me in my room and a nurse from El Paso came and took care of us.

Some days later a train was leaving Juárez with some of Villa's soldiers, and since I liked to hang around the station, I climbed up on the top of the train with the soldiers. But Villa noticed that I was up there and he told me to get down. I got down and

then he gave some money to one of the brothers of Luz Corral de Villa (the general's wife who was sick in El Paso at the time) and said, "Take this; take the boy to El Paso and take him to the movies." Well, we went to El Paso, but since Luz's brother had a girlfriend, he left me at the theater and he left with her. I frequently went to see Luz because I was always going back and forth from the hospital in Juárez to El Paso.

Time passed, I got well, and we left Juárez to fight in various places: Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Torreón, San Pedro de las Colonias, Saltillo, Monterrey, and Zacatecas. The battle at Zacatecas was rough because the whole federal army reassembled there. I happened to be at the battle on the side of the *Ceno del Coronel*. We attacked one afternoon, but they forced us back to the bottom of the hill. When it was darker we attacked again and this time we managed to make it to the top, forcing the enemy back into Zacatecas. We were fighting that whole night and all of the next day when the order came from Villa for us to enter the city. Our group had to enter by way of the station where the enemy had a cannon and two machine guns. We were lucky enough to overcome them, and that allowed us to go *into* the station where we found other revolutionaries who had entered from the other side. We joined together and we all went into the town, except that you couldn't walk very well because there were so many corpses. On the corners there were entrenchments of soldiers, and in the streets there were dead men and horses. Some of the federalist prisoners made ditches in which to bury the dead. They filled mule-drawn carts with cadavers and dumped them in the hole, until they cleaned up the city and everything was all right. We were there about two months.

My last expedition with the *villistas* was in 1915-1916 in Sonora. We were going to go towards Hermosillo but it wasn't possible because the *carrancistas* had joined together with the Mexican troops which had gone over to the American side. Because of that, Villa couldn't seize the border. We fought for a while in Agua Prieta and from there we went to Guaymas to take over the port, but we couldn't because it was already full of *carrancistas*. Little by little we retreated until we reunited with the people who had stayed at the foot of the Cañon del Pulpito near Colonia Dublán, Chihuahua.

We were there only for two days because there wasn't anything to eat. I got a hold of a can of salmon and a little bit of wheat that had been left at the edge of a mill, and that's what I ate. We decided to climb the Sierra del Púlpito and go down to Old Casas Grandes. It was winter at the time and there was a lot of snow in the mountains. I was on foot because they had killed my horse. There wasn't a road, and the snow came up past my knees. We fell in holes and everything. Finally we got out of the plain and we arrived in Old Casas Grandes where General José Rodríguez was with a few people who had arrived a little earlier. There wasn't anything to eat there either.

The next day General Rodríguez told me, "Listen, boy, do you want to join General Villa quicker?" Well, I told him that I did, although I was sorry later. He said, "I'm going to send a group of five men towards Chihuahua City to find him so that he knows that here in Casas Grandes the people who left for Sonora are reuniting." They gave me a horse and saddle, and it seemed like an easy job to me. Six of us left under the command of a lieutenant colonel—five who were commissioned, and I only went with them in order to join the general.

After several days, we stopped and the colonel said, "Boys, wait here two or three hours while I go to Villa Ahumada to arrange an armistice for us." We were without food or anything. In a little while one of the men said, "We've been waiting a long time. Let's go see what happened to the colonel." Well, there we went and we arrived in Carrizal (15 kilometers from Villa Ahumada). The two drunks went into a large corral and the rest of us went to get something to eat. I went to a home and asked a lady for some food; she gave me some and I paid her. On my way back to rejoin the others I saw a cloud of dust and I thought that the *carrancistas* were coming. I got to my comrades and told them, "You know what? Here

It turned out that the captured my companions and a little later the carrancistas came to where I was. They noticed the Texan hat that I was wearing and one of the officers asked me if I were a revolutionary. Right away I thought that I said that I wasn't, someone might tell on me and then they would treat me even worse. I told him that I was and they took me to where they were keeping the others.

come the *carrancistas*!" But they said, "Ah, those aren't *carrancistas*." Well, I left them and went to blend in with the townspeople. I had already changed clothes; I looked like a civilian. It turned out that they captured my companions and a little later the *carrancistas* came to where I was. They noticed the Texan hat that I was wearing and one of the officers asked me if I were

The carrancistas searched us and took everything that we had. I had one of those cartridge pouches that the American Army uses around my waist, and I had hidden around 250 pesos in silver inside. Well, everything was lost there—money, blankets, clothes. Then they tied the five of us together in a row and made us march in front of the horses until we reached Villa Ahumada, where they put us on a railroad car.

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A little bit later we got out of the car and joined the rest, and a sergeant told me, "Listen, friend, put yourself in God's hands because the train is going to take you now."* I answered him, "One day it's going to take you, too." Well, he hit me with the rifle and he made us walk to an old shed where we saw our companion who had been taken out earlier, thrown on the floor. I thought that maybe they had killed him and I looked at him to see if he were breathing. One of the *carrancistas* told me, "The same thing is going to happen to you." Then they tied our hands and feet behind us and put a rope around our necks. Four or five men pulled it

* [A POPULAR EXPRESSION MEANING "You are really going to get it," i.e. punishment is forthcoming, with an implied possibility of death.]

upwards and upon feeling that they were strangling me I said to the captain, "Why are you punishing us this way if we're not murderers, bandits or criminals? That's why you have rifles—to shoot us."

They let the rope loosen a little and they began to ask us questions about how many *villistas* there were and how many were on their way to that place. We answered that we weren't the leaders and that we didn't know. Then they kicked the man who was on the floor and he turned over. He hadn't been strangled; he was just pretending because they had told him that if he breathed or moved, they would kill him. He got up right away. Then they took us to the railroad car again.

We were there two days without food—just watching the soldiers eat! I felt the little pocket in my pants to see if there happened to be some coins left there, and it turned out that I found a fifty-cent piece. For two days I hadn't thought to look in that little place, and then I said "Thank God." Right away I asked a *carrancista* to do me the favor of buying me some bread with those few cents, and he said that he would. Each piece of bread was worth five cents, so I expected ten pieces. But the soldier returned with only five. Well, I shared them with everyone else and we ate them with water and had a half-way decent lunch.

That afternoon they took us to where the head of the garrison was and he told us, "Well, boys, here is some paper so that you can write letters to your families if you want, because tomorrow you're going to be shot by the firing squad." I thought, "Well, who should I write to?"

The next morning around eight o'clock I saw that there were already people there watching and that the soldiers were beginning to put on their cartridge belts and get their rifles, and I said, "Who knows what's waiting for us now?" The soldiers got in formation and they took the three of us out. Then they brought the other two who had been locked up in the basement and they reunited the five of us. Then they decided that they would carry out the execution behind the church, and they took us over there. The townspeople were already there and the soldiers got into firing formation. Then the captain read us the verdict (according to them), and asked, "All right, men, do you want to be blindfolded?" One in the group said "No, sir, none of us want to be blindfolded." They were going to shoot us when one of our comrades said, "By any chance do you have some cigarettes that

you'll give us?" The captain came back, gave each one a cigarette and lit it, and then we smoked them.

The captain returned to the line of soldiers and gave the order, "Load!" I thought, "Hey, stop!" I was dying there and just then a train passed full of *villistas* who had just been discharged, and upon seeing them I thought, "If only God had allowed me to go on that train to my home, to see who I could find in my family." And then from the other side: "Load! Aim! Fire!" They fired, and so I wouldn't see, I turned to the side. What a surprise to see that everyone else had fallen except me! The comrade who had been next to me fell beside my feet, and I turned to look at him. He was hurt and tried to get up, but the captain came and pow!—he shot

In the barracks the first lieutenant realized that I had been a captain in Villa's army and one of Villa's adopted sons, and he was always on my back. He didn't like me; that man didn't trust me very much. Either he or one of the others was always guarding me and I couldn't do anything, just stay there being punished.

him in the head and killed him. The captain was next to me with his pistol in his hand and I thought, "Well, since he shot that poor guy in the head, he's going to shoot me, too!" I looked to see if the captain was raising his pistol. There was a very calm silence as if there were no people there; not even the dogs were barking. Some time passed, and I thought that according to the rules of execution, if an accident happens and the one who's being executed doesn't get shot, well then, he's saved. But I said, "What are these people going to know about that?" Everything was very serious for about ten minutes, but then the people started to move and the atmosphere changed. The soldiers got in marching formation and the people began to go to their houses. They took me back to the barracks again. It must have been that they decided not to kill me because I was a boy or that it just wasn't my time to go yet. Only God

saved me from death; I've always considered it a big favor that they did me.

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ing me and I couldn't do anything, just stay there being punished. I was there like that for two or three days; there wasn't a chance to do anything. Then I went to see the head of the barracks and I told him that now that they had done me the favor of not killing me, I wanted them to do me a last favor and let me go. I told him I didn't want any more fights, that I wanted to try to find my family. He said to me, "OK, boy, if you want to go, leave." But I didn't believe what he had told me, so I went to talk to a first lieutenant that I trusted because he had also been a *villista* at one time. He advised me not to go. He told me that I should wait until they moved me from that place on the train within three days, and that I should escape on the way.

We traveled from Villa Ahumada towards Chihuahua City and I couldn't get off the train because they were always guarding me. In Chihuahua City I got off at the station but there wasn't any chance of hiding myself. We got on the train again, and there we went. I was near the back of the train with a soldier who started to talk with me, and I couldn't get him to go to sleep. Finally he fell asleep and started to snore. In the darkness of the night I got close to the ladder on the car and let myself fall. I didn't get hurt, got up, brushed myself off, and began to walk. But like a fool I walked towards the south instead of going towards the border. I could hear wolves and coyotes howling and I threw stones towards where it seemed the closest animals were. At daybreak I sat down to rest, when I saw a train going towards the south. I managed to get on it at a railroad siding.

I think that the guard saw me climb aboard, because he came to where I was hanging on and told me that I would have to pay two and a half pesos. I told him that I didn't have any money and asked him to allow me to stay aboard anyway, but he got very mean and hit me on the head. I had to get off, and there I went again. I walked and walked and walked and in the afternoon I saw another train that was also heading south. I climbed in a freight car and got as far as Gómez Palacios, where I had a good opportunity because I knew some people there. I went to the home of a family I knew, very hungry. It was dark already and when they saw that I was all filthy and my clothes were all torn, they didn't want to open the door. Since they didn't recognize me, I began to explain to them who I was and they opened the door a little bit. Through the opening I could see that they were eating.

When they opened the door wider they recognized me and pulled me inside, locking the door behind me.

We chatted for a while, but I could hardly talk since I was so hungry and kept staring at that food. One of the girls asked me if I had already had dinner and I was going to tell her that I hadn't eaten for two or three days, but I just told her that I hadn't had dinner yet. Then she told the maid to serve me, and she brought me beans, tortillas and milk.

Some time passed and I was still there with that family. One day one of the girls sent me to the market on an errand, and I ran into one of the soldiers who had captured me in Carrizal. He was dressed as a civilian. We greeted each other and he said that he had left the army, but when I left I had a heavy feeling that they would be looking for me. The next time that I was asked to go to the market, I told them about my fear of being captured and they didn't send me anymore.

After being with that family two months, I went to stay with a man who had a ranch near Gómez Palacio. I knew him because of his sons, who had been with our troops in Sonora when we were defeated. I asked the man to lend me some money because I was thinking about starting a business, but he told me that the only money that he had right then was in 100 peso bills and that Carranza had suspended the use of that kind of bill because they were going to be replaced with new bills. But he told me not to worry; he said that within two weeks he would have fruit in his orchard and I could pick whatever I wanted and sell it. He also gave instructions to his maid to give me something to eat whenever I was there. Therefore, if I couldn't eat in one place, I ate in another, and now I had the possibility of doing some business.

A little later I had the bad luck of being captured again. I was at the fifth of May celebration in Torreón and someone recognized me and I was arrested by an officer and a soldier. They took me to the barracks and that night they harassed me, but finally they left me in peace. The next morning they undressed me and gave me some cut-off undershorts and also a cut-off undershirt. Then they took me to a big corral and beat me with a steel sword. It hurt a lot because I was almost naked. Then I remembered that it isn't hard to break a sword; if one puts his elbows back, they hit in the hollow place between the elbows and the sword breaks. That's what I did and "pop," the sword broke in two. I said, "Let's see

you beat me now." Well, it was worse, because then they brought another sword and they hit me twice as much. They laid open my whole back, rear end, and arms. I couldn't bend over or even lie down. I had to stand up almost all the time for eight days. At night when my legs were aching, I got as comfortable as I could and little by little I reclined.

Finally I got better and they made me learn how to play the bugle because they needed a bugler. I didn't want to make the effort and one of the officers hit me in such a way that my mouth swelled. Then I told the captain that I couldn't play with a swollen mouth and he gave orders to the one who had hit me to leave me alone. When I got better, I could play the instrument.

One day I ran into an acquaintance who told me that the *villistas* were going to attack Torreón, and if they caught me with the *carrancistas* they would kill me. He advised me to leave Torreón, but it was impossible. When the attack began I was sleeping. An officer who didn't like me gave me a kick which hurt a lot: "Come on! Go get a rifle and ammunition so you can fight." Well, I didn't want to fight be-

cause I knew that if the *villistas* caught me they would kill me, but I went to get a Mauser rifle and I loaded it. I spent the night in a big horse corral, and since it was dark no one noticed if I had gone to fight or not. I prayed to God that that officer wouldn't return because then he would have realized that I hadn't fought and he would be a worse enemy and cause me *more* difficulties. The next afternoon the ones who had gone to fight came back and I realized that the officer was among those who had been killed.

I decided that I had to escape by jumping over a tall wall that faced the street. I hurt one of my feet a little, but I was able to walk all that night until I reached Gómez Palacio where I had

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a friend who had told me that if I escaped, I could stay with his family.

A little later a man selling firewood came to the house and the next day I went with him as helper to his little ranch. We arrived at night and I was extremely hungry, but his family was very poor. In the morning his wife ground a little bit of corn and made three tortillas, of which she gave me one. I ate it with a few beans, and that was all. There wasn't any coffee, or cinnamon, or anything. Then we went outside and the man told me to bring water that he needed to make some adobe bricks because he wanted to build another small room. Well, there I was—drawing water from the well, transporting it, stirring the mixture for the bricks, and he was just sitting there! My back was still hurting, but I didn't say anything. After two days I told the man that I was leaving and he gave me two pesos.

I entered Gómez Palacio with caution and began to sell fruit. I sold grapes to the people who were getting off the streetcar at a peso per kilo to the average person and a little less to the poorer people. After two days I had gotten together a little money and I bought half a dozen glasses so that I could sell fruit drinks. In the mornings I sold fruit, at noon I sold fruit drinks and ice cream, and in the evening I sold sweet bread which I bought in a bakery. Then a fellow from Durango set up a place to sell cigarettes, sodas, candy, and things like that, and he invited me to be his partner. He sold at the stand and I sold on the streets.

On the first of January, 1917, I went out to see the military parade in downtown El Paso. I ran into a boy more or less my age and since it was cold, he invited me to watch the parade from the window in the building where he worked. Since that place was the YWCA, there were beds where the ladies rested, and the boy told me that I could spend the night there. In the morning we got up, ate, and I helped him clean up. I became a friend of the director of the place and I was able to live and work there until April, earning five dollars per week.



Farewell from the Editor

With this issue I close my "career" as editor of *Password*. It has been a learning-filled and most enjoyable experience. My knowledge of the Southwest, its people, and its history has been greatly enhanced.

Before I arrived here, El Paso suffered in my mind from an image of wooden store-fronts and board sidewalks—the result of having seen too many Westerns. Many of you have heard me say that fifty years ago I thought "civilization" stopped at the Hudson River! How wrong I was! My thoughts have changed completely.

I love the Southwest—this is my home—and I will be a Southwesterner forever.

There are so many people to thank—the writers who submitted their manuscripts; Denise Mankin, who patiently trained me in the proper form for submitting work to her; the staff at PDX printing who took my work when I presented it; to my readers and associate editors Leigh Aldaco and Richard Field who found the hidden errors; and the myriad others who gave their help, support, and plaudits.

Thank you, *Password* and thank you El Paso, for all you have done for me.

Marilyn Gross





The Foster Women

By Dee Birch Cameron



Few El Pasoans remember the red-haired Foster women, but in the decades between 1918 and 1989 their work touched many lives. Fanny Massey Foster taught English at El Paso High School from the opening of the Trost building until her retirement in 1954. Her niece,

Susan Elizabeth Foster Goodman, became a medical assistant before that term was coined. She was so well-known that mail addressed only "Liz, Stanton Medical Building, El Paso" reached her. Mention either of these women to anyone who is old enough to remember, and you will see smiles and hear stories.

Evidence of Fanny Foster's dedication to the English language comes from Jean Miculka, former speech teacher at the University of Texas at El Paso. The voices of women were rarely heard on radio in 1943—until the men went off to war—then the listeners often criticized the women replacements. One day Fanny Foster poked her head into the studio control room where a nervous female announcer was running the station. "Are you Jean?" the lady asked. "Then my dear, you must pronounce the word 'accessory' correctly. When there is a double 'c,' the first 'c' has a 'k' sound; the second 'c' has the sound of 's.' Do be correct and don't forget." Jean's comment was, "I remembered that lesson for sixty-two years."

Dr. Laurence Nickey credits her with inspiring his life-long interest in reading literature. *A Tale of Two Cities*, a favorite he has revisited often, was introduced in her class. It was there, too, that Dr. Nickey dodged a flying eraser meant for a boy who was chatting with a friend. It struck the miscreant sharply on the shoulder. "I need your attention," Miss Foster reminded him in a level tone.

Ruth Braun describes Fanny Foster as sharp-tongued, witty, and fair. If you did the work, you made the grade. When she

taught Shakespeare, you understood Shakespeare. Many of those who taught at El Paso High in those days would have measured up to today's college professors.

Former students remember Miss Foster as elderly, walking with a cane, and resting her leg on a box under her desk. Yearbooks often listed her among the teachers not photographed, but the 1922 annual shows a full-page portrait of a pretty, young woman and a warm and lavish dedication from students thanking her for her friendship and help.

The original American Foster was William, an English cabinet-maker who appeared first in the 1850 census for Grant County, Wisconsin as a new husband. His wife Amy, four years his senior, came from Connecticut. By 1860, the couple had four children, and the whole family was living in the Lancaster, Wisconsin jail. William had taken on first the constable's job and later he became the sheriff,

setting a precedent for public service that would be a theme throughout his family's story. Later Joseph would become a carpenter, while Amy, Ada, and the eldest, George, would become teachers. George Thomas Foster rose to school principal first in Lisbon, Wisconsin and then, in 1881, in Cherokee, Iowa. He married Elizabeth G. Ennor, a descendant of Cornish immigrants.

When mineral resources ran out in Cornwall, experienced laborers scattered to mining centers worldwide, including the iron mines of Wisconsin. Elizabeth's maternal grandfather, Thomas Blight Uren, was a mining agent. Her father, William Trehane Ennor, kept a hotel. William died when his six children were young, and his widow married Henry Lycurgus Massey, a prosperous merchant.

Before retiring from education in 1889, George read law and passed the Iowa bar, but frail health cut short this second career. When he died in February 1895, schools and many businesses

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closed for the day, and his obituary notes that "several hundred people failed to get admittance to the church."

Determined they would be educated at their father's alma mater, Elizabeth Foster moved the children to Beloit, Wisconsin. Harold was twelve, Fanny ten, and George, Jr. was only six years old.

Fanny and her mother first appeared in El Paso about 1918, when El Paso High was newly built at its present location. George, Jr. soon joined them and married Inez Isaacks, a daughter of S. J. Isaacks. The young couple moved to Burbank, California, where George was a cashier in the Bank of Italy. After his early death, Inez Foster returned to El Paso and taught for many years at Coldwell School.

Inez Foster's nephew, Dick Isaacks, was one of Fanny's pupils, and he remembers her classroom vividly. Her great love was teaching Shakespeare, and she illustrated the scenes by setting up various sizes of spools of thread which represented the players on her desk—or sometimes on a large dictionary representing a stage. Many former students remember the black spool that was Hamlet.

On the first day of school her room was arranged like most other classrooms, with chairs in rows facing her desk. After she had taken roll she would ask the pupils to arrange their chairs in a semicircle and pull them up tightly to the front of her desk. Dick remembers being told forcefully on the first day to pick up his chair and bring it behind her desk and sit facing the rest of the class.

The reason soon became clear. From that position she was able to reach him with her cane or a ruler, and she brandished them with glee. Dick assumes that each of her classes contained a pupil placed in such a perilous position. How she chose those pupils he doesn't know. He was chosen because of the family connection, having known Fanny (just "Fanny," never "Miss Foster" except in class) since earliest memory. His aunt, Maude Isaacks, was head of the English Department and best of friends with Fanny and her mother. Fanny was a serious and devoted bridge player, and both of Dick's aunts were part of her many bridge groups.

Elder brother Harold and his family joined the El Paso Fosters at 4201 Hastings Street in 1932. Early illness had blighted Harold's career as it had that of his father and grandfather. After

graduating from Beloit in 1903, he had taught for two years in Cherokee, Iowa, and then set off for the Philippine Islands to teach for the Bureau of Education. Later he transferred to the Department of Internal Revenue. He was a sales manager for a tobacco import and export company in 1927 when ill health forced his return. In El Paso he taught contract bridge at home and at the Hilton Hotel, eventually moving back to Cherokee where he died. Harold's wife, Susan Washburn Steele, came from another family that stressed education and service. Ample resources supported these interests, since her father owned Steele's Bank in Cherokee.

Thomas Henry Steele hailed from Salem in Washington County, New York. He was named for a great-grandfather who came to Washington County with a cohort of church members from Colerain in Northern Ireland in time to fight in the Revolutionary War. In 1874 young Steele was drawn to the West and settled in Iowa, where he established a bank in partnership with his father and later his brothers. He married Eoline Washburn, another New York transplant. They raised a large family—seven girls were followed by two boys, and in time the children were sent off to college at Carlton, Lake Forest, Vassar, and Susan's alma mater, Mount Holyoke. Daughter Grace graduated from the Still School of Osteopathy in Arizona.

A local history calls Steele a "public-spirited man," active in his church, and as a member of the school board. When colleagues proved lukewarm to the suggestion that trees be planted in the school yards, he put them in himself.

The T. H. Steele Prairie State Park is named for him. He loved gardening and horticulture, but he knew when to leave things to nature. While many advocated dubious "improvements" to the mid-western soil, he allowed native plants to flourish and harvested "prairie hay." Steele outlived the Foster men by decades. He and his wife celebrated their golden anniversary in the house where their children had been born.

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By the time Susan and Hal Foster moved to El Paso, their oldest daughter Susan Elizabeth was ready to enter El Paso High. In her junior year, she was inducted into the National Honor Society and she joined the exclusive Kalavala Fraternity, an English honorary. She was one of five charter members of the Extemporaneous Speech Group, in which each student had to prepare material for speeches on forty topics. Going straight on to the College of Mines, she seemed headed into teaching, but the smiling girl in the sophomore section of the 1936 yearbook never reappears. Those were hard times in which many young people

Her bright mind seemed to thrive in her new surroundings. Today we would probably call her a medical assistant, though she was trained "on the job" in the days before rigorous standards for that role were established. In Liz's obituary, Patricia Thomas, wife of Dr. Andrew Thomas for whom she worked after Feener's death, said Liz "essentially practiced medicine."

had to revise their plans. When Liz first appears in the city directory as an employed person, she is a stenographer at the Lone Star Cotton Mills.

The 1940 city directory shows Liz as the wife of Philip I. Goodman. She and Goodman were the same age, and both came from families with British, New England, and mid-western roots. In the early 1940's they had two sons. The 1943 directory shows Liz Goodman as office manager at Dawson Poultry. That same year brought Dr. L. C. Feener to El Paso as an Army doctor, a coincidence that was to set Liz's professional life on a course for which she could not have planned.

Dr. Feener, an internist, finished his service and began private practice in the Banner Building in 1947. In 1948, Liz became his secretary, a job she held for thirty years and in which she made her mark. She drove him to his house calls and accompanied him on hospital rounds, an unusual duty for office staff at that time. Her bright mind seemed to thrive in her new surroundings. Today we would probably call her a medical assistant, though she was trained "on the job" in the days before rigorous standards for that role were established. In Liz's obituary, Patricia Thomas, wife of Dr. Andrew Thomas for whom she worked after Feener's

death, said Liz "essentially practiced medicine." Those who remember her kindness to patients and her keen intelligence say that in today's world she would have become a physician in her own right.

Theirs was a strong working relationship between people of similar temperament. Their fights were legendary. Susan Anchondo, a hospital nurse at the time, remembers them arguing even in front of patients. They seemed to have a great deal of fun, but when they disagreed, Dr. Rita Don says, you might see the telephone book fly.

Apparently Liz's experience as an extemporaneous speaker and niece of a teacher with a good arm for pitching erasers had equipped her for assisting a boss who was not only respected but colorfully eccentric. Dr. Don recalls being called out by Feener on an early morning house call for a seriously ill patient. Dr. Feener urged her to hurry and throw street clothes over nightclothes, as he had done. When the patient was out of danger and the sun was rising, Dr. Feener insisted they catch a bite of breakfast at the Hotel Cortez, pooh-poohing her hesitation to appear at the elegant eatery dressed as they were. She describes crossing San Jacinto Plaza in bedroom slippers with Feener jingling all the way, since his were Turkish-style, with bells on curly toes.

Only once did their tempers threaten the partnership, and then it was Liz who called it quits. She phoned her friend, Dr. Don, to say she was leaving for parts unknown and did not want to be found. "Where is she?" Dr. Feener demanded first thing the next morning. In despair, he called out the Texas and New Mexico police, who found her in Albuquerque and convinced her to return.

Without Liz, Dr. Feener "would have been lost," says Dr. Larry Gladstone. Whenever Dr. Gladstone covered for Dr. Feener while he was out of town, he had only to call Liz and tell her the patient's name, and she would recite the history in detail. "She was a walking medical records collection," he said.

Pharmacist Barry Coleman recounts a tale told by a drug company representative who entered Dr. Feener's office on a busy day and asked to show the doctor a new vitamin preparation. "Follow me," said Liz, coming out from behind the desk, picking up the sample case and leading, unexpectedly, to the hall. There she bowled the case down the corridor. "See that suitcase?" she

asked. "Well, you just follow it and don't come back." She knew the patients needed to see the doctor and that Dr. Feener needed no education about vitamins.

One El Pasoan who shared a weekly appointment time at a beauty shop on Oregon Street recalls feeling in awe of the competent red-head in the next chair. They never got to chat very much since Liz, even at the hairdresser, spent much of the time on the telephone with the doctor or a patient.

It is no wonder that when Dr. and Mrs. Thomas came to town, some time after Dr. Feener's death, they sought her out. "When we first came to town in 1975, we kept hearing tales about a medical assistant named Liz, but nobody knew her last name. She was just 'Liz.' But we wanted her."

S. Elizabeth F. Goodman died in 1989. Her aunt Fanny Foster predeceased her in 1967. The architectural landmarks of their lives have given way to progress. The freeway runs where 4201 Hastings Street once housed three generations of Fosters. On Oregon Street, where Liz's future husband and mother-in-law first rented a room when they came to El Paso, cement stairs lead to a vacant lot. The red brick house on the corner, where in retirement Fanny Foster could watch Mesita School children cross Stanton at Kern, was torn down last year to enlarge the school grounds. Their personal influence is more durable. When fewer middle class women worked outside the home, the Fosters made a living and much more. They carried a family tradition of service into the twentieth century and gave it a modern twist. Going to school or getting sick was enough for El Pasoans to profit from their work. Over time, thousands basked in their attention and were the better for it.

DEE CAMERON holds masters degrees in English from George Washington University and librarianship from the University of Pittsburgh. A native Pennsylvanian, she has lived in El Paso since 1966 and worked at UTEP and in El Paso Public Schools. She has two children and four grandchildren. She volunteers at the El Paso Museum of Art and acts in local theater. In 1989 she founded Kern Place Writers Bloc. Her work has appeared in library publications such as *American Libraries*, *School Library Journal*, and *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*; in the denominational magazines *Friends Journal*, *Quaker Life*, and *Presbyterians Today*; as well as literary magazines including *Antietam Review* and *Kansas Quarterly*. Retired, she now works part time in the Reference Department at the library of El Paso Community College, Valle Verde Campus.





*Aunty Elizabeth
and Aunt Selma*

The Aunts

By Judith Hevner



It was 1939 and my father had passed away. I was only five years old and had spent the first five years of my life in our home at 701 Upson Avenue. It's the little Queen Anne perched on the corner of Upson and Los Angeles.

After a brief stay with the nuns at St. Margaret's in the valley, my brother and sister and I were moved into town where the Southwestern Childrens' Home was to become our home. The Southwestern Childrens' Home, established in 1923, was located at 1019 North Ange Street where as many as 125 children were cared for at times. We all had parents—we were not orphans. These were the years of World War II and fathers were away defending our country. Most of our mothers were working for the war effort and some were widowed. We were put into the capable and loving care of the staff. We were lovingly looked after by a staff of "aunts" and "uncles," all of whom must have loved children because I know we were a handful.

I have many wonderful memories of those years, some of them in remembering the companions of my childhood and the games we played in the play yard after school—mostly jacks, but some times marbles when the boys let a "girl" play! We spun tops and swung so high as to cause the swing chain to pop and jerk!

In a child's life there is always one adult who stays in the memory and in your heart stronger than some. That one was Elizabeth Moore—Aunt Elizabeth or "Aunty" as she was later called.

As I was still of an age considered a baby, I was delegated into Aunt Elizabeth's "Baby Home." The "baby home" was one of a group of buildings which comprised "the Home," a small bungalow facing Arizona Street. "Aunty" was then to become a mother

to me. She was still a young woman at the time, with the patience of a saint, with sparkling, laughing blue eyes, and a kindness of face I've not known since. She wore cotton dresses with a long sleeved smock at all times and had keys jingling from somewhere in a pocket of her smock.

Spankings were delegated to her and I've since thanked her for not spanking too hard as I remember receiving three or four spankings while living there. Once while at our summer home in Ruidoso. I was trying hard to memorize a certain passage from the Bible in order to win the privilege of going skating. The rest of the group had already memorized their passage and had won that privilege. I tried so hard but each time I came to a certain line "He cast the chariot into the fire" I stopped—I couldn't get past that line no matter how I tried. After the third try Aunty could see how desperate I was. In that ever so kindly voice she said, "I can see you've worked hard—alright Judy—you can go this time." God bless her! I just had to go—my best friend Shirley Cloud was going.

This was only one of the many kindnesses she had shown me.

I recall that late one night after we were all snug in our little iron cots, I awoke with a very painful earache. I was whimpering, trying not to wake the other children, when in no time Aunty was at my bedside asking me what the matter was. I was given aspirin and a kind word and soon was sleeping peacefully. I never heard that lady raise her voice or say an unkind word.

I am sure that those who knew her will agree that my Aunty has many "stars in her crown in her Heavenly home."

How lucky I am to have had such an Aunty, and there was another memorable "aunt."

Aunt Selma was our "aunt" in charge of the "big girls" house. The big girls were those no longer considered babies. When I reached "that age" I moved from the "baby home" to the big girls house. I was now one of Aunt Selma's charges. Describing Aunt Selma is a simple task—tall, assertive, fun, and stunning—with that beautiful red hair, which always reminded me of Greer Garson. Her task on the other hand could never be described as simple. Not only was she responsible for our daily care, including making sure we were all up and ready for breakfast on time,

but her duties continued into after school and to bedtime. She had been a teacher somewhere before she came to care for us, and I suppose former teachers never stop teaching. We had many happy sing-a-longs, we learned poems and staged little plays under her direction. To this day I still hum and sing some of those songs—my favorite being “McNamara’s Band.”

Aunt Selma was our “Miss Manners” of her day. Always reminding us that young ladies walked and talked in such a manner as not to bring attention to themselves.

Of all my memories of Aunt Selma, the one which stands out most vividly in my mind would be the night of the fire. In those days we still washed our “dainties” by hand each night, they were draped over a metal rack the size of a quilt rack and then placed over the floor register which was gas heated.

Some time during the night I woke to the sight of Aunt Selma charging through the dormitory. Her night gown flying behind her, her arms out stretched before her while she shouted “Fire!” She reminded me of pictures from the Bible of Moses holding back the waters of the Red Sea. The look on her face was one of sheer terror.

Before anyone was fully awake or out of our beds, she had somehow managed to pull the drying rack away from the heater and put out the burning cotton undies, saving her girls from harm. Her bravery was not rewarded by medals or high praise from any quarter that I was aware of. In fact it was hardly even talked about that I can recall. Just another incident in the daily life of a caring “mother” figure.

I think of her often as I go about my daily life and see my three grandchildren “performing” while they sing “Doe-A-Deer” from *The Sound of Music*. I think of how Aunt Selma would have liked to see them perform. I’m sure she had a great influence on my love of the musicals from the 1940’s and the theater in general.

Although Aunt Selma is no longer with us she will be in our hearts and memories forever.



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