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A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF  
THE EL PASO AREA

THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE SPANISH AND INDIAN PERIOD

Some knowledge of the geography and topography of the El Paso area is essential to an understanding of its social and economic development. The Mexican Highland is a vast region embracing the Big Bend Country and the western half of Trans-Pecos Texas north of the thirty-first parallel, central and southwestern New Mexico, the southeastern part of Arizona and a belt stretching northwest to include the southern tip of Nevada. The El Paso district occupies the east central portion of this Mexican Highland. This definition includes more of Texas than the present county of El Paso and less than the first county created in the Trans-Pecos region.

The most prominent topographical features of the El Paso district are the trends of the Organ and Franklin Mountains and the Valley of the Rio Grande. These mountains are a part of the Oscura trend which stretches from about thirty-four degrees north latitude south to the Mexican border beyond which it is extended in the mountains known and spoken of locally as the Mexico or "Juarez" Mountains. The southern three-quarters of the Organ

Mountains and the northern foothills of the Franklin Mountains are in the El Paso area. The trend of the ranges is almost due north and south. Both chains are long and narrow. The Organ Mountain reaches a height of eight thousand feet, which is the highest elevation in the area, while the Franklin Mountain is over seven thousand feet above sea level.<sup>1</sup>

For several miles above El Paso the Rio Grande flows through a narrow gorge between the Franklin Mountains and the extension of the range in Mexico. This gorge is the famous "Pass of the North" from which the present city and county received their names. Below El Paso the valley grows wider; its average width is five or six miles. The river meanders in a general southeastern direction across the El Paso Valley to the Quitman Mountains where it passes out of the El Paso district.<sup>2</sup>

Desert conditions prevail over the greater part of the El Paso area; except for the river valley and certain mountain areas. The vegetation, including scattered shrubs, grasses, greasewood and creosote bush, is the sort that is usually associated with semi-arid regions.

The winters are mild; only occasionally does the thermometer fall to zero or below. The lack of humidity

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<sup>1</sup>Grace Long, "The Anglo-American Occupation of the El Paso District" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas, 1931), pp. 4-8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

and the thirty-five hundred foot altitude make the extremes of heat and cold more endurable than in districts of greater humidity. The growing season lasts from 120 to 220 days. The sun shines about eighty per cent of the time.<sup>3</sup>

The motives that prompted the early Indians to settle in any one locality are a matter of speculation. Therefore, it would be difficult to state the exact reasons for their settling in the El Paso area. However, it seems very likely that the early Spanish inhabitants came to this region because it was on the road between the existing settlements in Old and New Mexico. It is a known fact that the earliest Anglo-American occupants were following the ancient highway from Santa Fe to Chihuahua. Later the California gold rush led a number of people through the Pass of the North. Trade has probably been the most important factor in the growth of population, although it is certain that a healthful climate, fertility of soil, and nearby facilities for mining and grazing have played definite roles.<sup>4</sup>

The wagon road between Chihuahua and Santa Fe has been well traveled since the sixteenth century, proving that a flourishing trade must have passed through El Paso between these two points.<sup>5</sup> It is impossible to determine all the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Catherine Burnside O'Malley, "A History of El Paso Since 1860" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1939), p. 36.

individual motives that prompted people to settle in this vast area that occupies the east central portion of the Mexican Highland, but certainly the general motivating force must have been the strategic geographical location.<sup>6</sup>

There is evidence of human habitation of the El Paso area thousands of years before the coming of the red or white men. Ruins and relics of the district indicate that there were first nomadic occupants, later hunting and food-gathering people, then semi-agricultural and agricultural people. Who they were, whence they came, and where they went, archeologists have not been able to determine. To the northeast of El Paso, extending into both New Mexico and Mexico, are remains of prehistoric houses. There are long rows of rectilinear rooms. Near these ruins have been found stone artifacts and pottery indicative of agriculture.<sup>7</sup>

Not a great deal is known about the Indians who lived in the El Paso vicinity before the coming of the Spanish. They lived in frail houses and appear to have been very hostile to any invaders. Their dress was scant and their weapons were the customary ones of all Southwestern aborigines.

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<sup>6</sup>Long, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup>Anne E. Hughes, The Beginnings of Spanish Settlement in the El Paso District, pp. 303-304.

The Mansos were the best known Indian tribe of the district, living some fifty-five miles above El Paso on the Rio Grande in New Mexico. Their dwellings were made of branches and boughs, and they carried on a limited amount of agriculture. They dressed much like the Apaches and the Indians of the Plains.<sup>8</sup>

Their conversion was delayed until the middle of the seventeenth century, but missionary work among this group of Indians had probably been in progress since the first group of religious leaders entered New Mexico. According to Benavides, the Mansos first displayed interest in resident missionaries the last time he passed their rancheria, about 1630, at which time he preached to them and placed a cross in their midst.<sup>9</sup>

Another fierce tribe that was well known to the Spanish and later to the Anglo-Americans was the Apaches. This tribe was first mentioned in 1694 by Father Kino as a nation of robbers. They disliked every other tribe and were equally disliked in return. Every account portrays them as a treacherous, blood-thirsty people living by plunder alone.<sup>10</sup> As late as 1879, the great Apache chief, Victorio, escaped from the reservation and depredated through western

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<sup>8</sup>Malley, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>9</sup>Hughes, op. cit., pp. 303-304.

<sup>10</sup>John Russell Bartlett, Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua, II, 387.



Texas and southern New Mexico for more than a year before he was killed.

Because of an Indian uprising in the year of 1684 by the Mansos, Janos, Julimes, Apaches and other less well-known tribes, a Spanish leader by the name of Lopez, petitioned to abandon El Paso, located on the present site of Juarez. However, the religious leaders opposed this move and in 1685 the petition was rejected.<sup>11</sup>

It was the Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico in 1680 that brought the Tigua Indians to El Paso. The Ysleta mission was primarily for this group, and the descendants of this tribe live in the vicinity of Ysleta at the present time. They were very friendly and often acted as guides for the Spanish.<sup>12</sup>

The modern student of the Spanish expeditions can get access to three types of historical records in connection with the early settlements of the El Paso section. Marcos de Niza described the terraced houses and the customs of the aboriginal tribes he found in the Pueblo country. Coronado's records show his wild imagination and romantic ideas about the great northern country. Four decades later in 1582, Espejo described the home life of the people of

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<sup>11</sup>Hughes, op. cit., p. 303.

<sup>12</sup>J. I. Driscoll, "The Tiguas," Diocese of El Paso, p. 28.

this section.<sup>13</sup>

Cabeza de Vaca is credited with being the first white man to see the El Paso region in 1536. The records do not state definitely the course he pursued, but the general topography of the land he described fits the El Paso land.<sup>14</sup>

It is believed that several expeditions traveled through or near the El Paso vicinity from 1543 to 1700. In 1581, Fray Augustin Rodriguez obtained permission to make an expedition into what is now the frontier of New Mexico. His party of about twenty-eight persons went up the Rio Grande River for about twenty days. They first passed through a settled country and then through a desert country coming very near the site of the present city of El Paso.<sup>15</sup>

Some members of this expedition were lost and in 1582 the Espejo group went out to rescue them. Among the soldiers was one Miguel Sanchez Valenciano who brought his wife and three sons with him. According to all available records, this group was the first white family in the El Paso vicinity.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Harriette Quisenberry, "El Paso, the Hub of Texas Industry," Voice of the Mexican Border, p. 144.

<sup>14</sup>Owen P. White, Out of the Desert, the Historical Romance of El Paso, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup>W. A. Stephenson, "Spanish Explorations and Settlement of West Texas Before the 18th Century," West Texas Historical Association Yearbook, June, 1926, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup>J. I. Driscoll, "El Paso, the Land of Romance, on Its 400th Birthday," Diocese of El Paso, p. 3.

The most important expedition to this region was led by Juan de Onate in 1598. He was accompanied by four hundred men, 130 of whom took their families with them. Onate and his men encountered incredible difficulties and underwent extreme suffering in order to avoid going through the country of the Julimes who were on the warpath at the time.<sup>17</sup>

Villagra, a member of the Onate party, describes the sufferings of the expedition in the following words:

We advanced and for fifty days we marched enduring hardships, patiently, trusting in God to bring us with safety to the river's shore. . . . We journeyed on until it seemed that we would never find our way out of these unpeopled regions, traveling vast and solitary plains where the feet of Christians had never trod before. Our provisions gave out and we were obliged to subsist on such edible weeds and roots as we found. But as we went forward, sometimes through dense thickets which tore our clothes and left us ragged; at other times over rough stoney passes where it was almost necessary to drag our tired mounts. Our shoes were worn out, and we suffered terribly from the burning sands. . . . The horses suffered most. . . . They were almost frantic with thirst, and their eyes nearly bulged from their sockets. After four days of travel without water they were well nigh blind, and could scarcely see where they were going; stumbling against the rocks and trees along the path. . . . After journeying, as stated, four days without water . . . we joyfully viewed in the distance the long sought waters of the Rio del Norte.<sup>18</sup>

On April 30th, 1598, the doughty leader, Juan de Onate,

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<sup>17</sup>Hughes, op. cit., pp. 297-298.

<sup>18</sup>Carlos E. Castaneda, Our Catholic Heritage, I, 244.

with pomp and ceremony took formal possession of these lands in the name of His Catholic Majesty, Philip II, calling them the Kingdom of New Mexico. This formal act occurred somewhere near the present site of Socorro, Texas. Due to the changing course of the river it may have occurred on the present site of the river.<sup>19</sup>

The governor ordered a chapel built under a grove of shady trees, and the soldiers were instructed to dress in their finest clothes. After the missionaries had marched into possession of this chapel, the official ceremony was over and the entire army began celebrating. To complete the day the first drama to be presented on the Rio Grande, perhaps in the United States, was played by a group of soldiers. This dramatic composition was written by Captain Farfan and attempted to depict the advent of the friars to New Mexico. He foretold the early triumphs of the sons of Saint Francis in New Mexico. His allegorical composition was first presented on the threshold of modern El Paso, less than fifteen miles south of the present city.<sup>20</sup>

Onate continued up the river and on May 4, 1598, reached the Pass of the Rio del Norte, the site of the present cities of El Paso and Juarez. He gave this passage the name of Paso del Norte, the formal christening of El

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<sup>19</sup>Driscoll, "El Paso, the Land of Romance, on Its 400th Birthday," Diocese of El Paso, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Castaneda, op. cit., p. 244.

Paso and the first time it was called by that name.<sup>21</sup>

These exploring parties opened the way for missionary work among the Indians of this vicinity. The records on the earliest missionary work of the Spanish among the Indians of the El Paso region are rather sketchy in places. However, all the writers on this subject agree on certain fundamental facts. When Father Estevan Peron was appointed custodian of New Mexico in 1628, he took Fray Antonio de Artaga as one of the thirty missionaries who accompanied him. This interested religious leader founded the mission of Senecu and later tried to convert the barbarous Mansos. However, it seems that this zealous friar was obliged to abandon his work in the El Paso region shortly after his arrival in 1630.<sup>22</sup>

During the administration of Governor Bernardo Lopez de Mandizabal, who held office in New Mexico not earlier than 1655 nor later than 1661, another effort was made to Christianize the Mansos. The natives were not interested in religion and they set upon the priests and tried to kill them. Governor Mandizabal sent out a rescue party and again the Indians were abandoned.<sup>23</sup>

In 1659 Father Garcia de San Francisco secured the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 247-248.

<sup>23</sup>Hughes, op. cit., pp. 304-305.

necessary authorization to do missionary work among the Indians of the El Paso region. He set out in November with ten families of Christian Indians to help him congregate the natives of his prospective mission. He selected a site on the south side of the river where, with the aid of natives, he built a church of branches and mud and a monastery thatched with straw. This mission came into being on December 8, 1659, and stood on the present site of the city of Juarez. The temporary structures were soon replaced by more permanent buildings. On April 2, 1662, Father Garcia recorded that he had blessed the cornerstone of the foundation of a new church on that day. Six years later, on January 15, 1668, the church was completed, and at its dedication one hundred natives were baptized and married. According to the description of the ceremonies, the men were baptized at one door and the women at another. After receiving the sacraments they were married in the middle of the church.<sup>24</sup> This account is to be found in the administration books of the mission. The original entry was made by Father Garcia's own hand, a certified copy of which, made in 1663, is in the archives of the church.<sup>25</sup>

Before 1680, another mission was founded some twelve leagues down the river. In 1680, El Paso received a large

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<sup>24</sup>Castaneda, op. cit., pp. 248-249.

<sup>25</sup>Nancy Lee Hammons, "A History of El Paso County, Texas, to 1900" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, College of Mines, El Paso, 1942), p. 24.

addition through the revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. In 1683 and 1684 missionary work was temporarily extended to La Junta among the Julimes Indians. Before the end of 1684 seven churches had been built for nine tribes of Indians living on both sides of the Rio Grande. These were abandoned within a short time on account of uprisings.<sup>26</sup>

The refugees from New Mexico in 1680 claimed that the Spaniards had settled at El Paso in the Mission Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe from the time of mission establishment. Actually, it cannot be determined how early this Spanish settlement took place, but there is no doubt that the Spaniards were living at Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe de El Paso, as is shown by marriage, baptismal, and burial records.<sup>27</sup>

When Governor Otermin retreated before Pope and his rebellious Indians from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Guadalupe Mission at Paso del Norte in the year 1680, he brought with him many Christian Indians, mostly Tiguas, Sinecus and Piros. After remaining at the Guadalupe Mission for awhile, they established a settlement on the Rio Grande about twelve miles east, naming the mission Ysleta del Sur.<sup>28</sup> The Indian name of the village is Chiauripia

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<sup>26</sup>Herbert E. Bolton, "The Spanish Occupation of Texas, 1519-1690," Texas State Historical Association, July, 1912, pp. 19-20.

<sup>27</sup>Castaneda, op. cit., pp. 250-251.

<sup>28</sup>Clifford R. Morrill, "Know El Paso and Vicinity" (Unpublished booklet), pp. 5-6.

or Chipiya. The name Ysleta would indicate that the mission was located on an island. At one time Ysleta was on the south bank of the Rio Grande, but because the river changed its course the mission is now on the north side.<sup>29</sup>

An old issue of the Encyclopaedia Britannica states that a mission was built by Coronado on the present site of Ysleta in the year 1540.<sup>30</sup> Actually, there seems to be little, if any, historical data to back up this statement, which is still claimed to be true by some loyal El Pasoans. If this statement could be proved, Ysleta would have just claim to being older than Juarez, Santa Fe, or San Augustine, Florida.

The present mission of Nuestra Senora del Socorro was likewise established as a result of the uprising of Pope and his Pueblo Indians in 1680. The original site of Socorro was about where Fabens stands at the present time. Due to an uprising among the Indians in 1683, the mission was moved much nearer La Isleta. The mission was destroyed by floods in the year 1829. Upon rebuilding, the location was removed to the present site in Socorro, Texas. Some of the old vigas were salvaged by the builders from the ruins of the old church, and are now serving their original purpose

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<sup>29</sup>J. Walter Fewkes, "The Pueblo Settlement Near El Paso, Texas," American Anthropologist (1902), pp. 59-61.

<sup>30</sup>Elizabeth Wooten Cline, "Seeing El Paso and the Valley" (Unpublished booklet), pp. 17-18.



of supporting the roof of the present church.<sup>31</sup>

San Elizario was one of the best known forts of the early Spanish colonization period, commonly called the "Old Town." Originally there was a small chapel built at San Elizario for the convenience and accommodation of the officers and their families. The first convent in the western section was founded at San Elizario. It was long occupied by the Sisters of Loretto Academy.<sup>32</sup>

From a muster roll of citizens in and about El Paso made by order of the governor on November 11, 1684, the number of settlers is learned to have been 109 families totaling 1,030 persons.<sup>33</sup>

The years of activity by the Spanish in the El Paso district attest to the indefatigable energy of the Spanish priests. An area of more than 350 miles in breadth, extending from the Janason in the West to La Junta in the East, had been partly settled and Christianized. The priests had partially Christianized portions of six or more native tribes, the Mansos, Sumas, Janos, Julimes, Piros, and Tiguas. Fourteen Indian pueblos had been settled within this district.<sup>34</sup> Considering the obstacles and hardships that had to be overcome, the missionaries' accomplishments

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<sup>31</sup>Driscoll, "El Paso, Land of Romance, on Its 400th Birthday," Diocese of El Paso, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup>Cline, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>33</sup>Hughes, op. cit., pp. 368-369.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 389-390.

speak for themselves.

Little heed was given to the passage of time by the people of these isolated villages. After the Guadalupe mission building -- half church and half fort -- was completed, the padres taught the Indians many useful things, among which was the cultivation of grapes. Generations were born, lived, and in time died, to be succeeded by other generations. The only event that ever broke the monotony of their existence was a raid by the fierce Apaches or the arrival of a pack train.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after the foundation of the Guadalupe mission Father Posados declared that he gave material help to the struggling settlement. He said the Indians knew nothing of civilization and had neither houses nor huts. It was at this time that he was supposed to have furnished the mission, providing ploughs, laborers, carpenters and implements of various kinds. He claimed to have given the mission three thousand beeves, four thousand head of sheep, and many goats. These animals increased greatly over the years, thus keeping the mission well supplied.

The next account that is recorded of this region is the report by Brigadier-General Don Pedro de Rivera, who inspected the presidios along the northern frontier of New Spain in the years 1725-1727. He reported that next to the

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<sup>35</sup>I. J. Bush, Gringo Doctor, pp. 79-81.

mission on the south bank of the river was a moderate town of Spanish, Mestizos, and Mulattoes, with two pueblos inhabited by the Mansos and Piro Indians. He also made note of towns on the north bank of the river located about four leagues down the river called El Socorro, La Isleta, Senecu, and San Lorenzo. These settlements were very similar to the one at Paso del Norte. Rivera also mentioned the fertile, spacious, irrigated valley which grew wheat, corn, beans, and luxurious vineyards.

In 1766 the Marquis de Rubi arrived in the El Paso vicinity and he gave much the same reports as had Rivera forty years earlier. He noted that the land was very well cultivated and that the people were particularly interested in producing grapes.<sup>36</sup>

The Indians and the Spanish lived commingled. Some of the Indians purchased their land and some received it as gifts from their chiefs. The Spanish had the main irrigation ditch and the Indians had the branch ditches. The upkeep of the dam was obligatory upon all. Frequent cleanings and sometimes complete destruction of the ditches were necessary to prevent the destruction of the village.<sup>37</sup>

As early as 1684 Spanish settlers were living in Ysleta. It is very probable that both the Spanish and

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<sup>36</sup>Castaneda, op. cit., pp. 276-277.

<sup>37</sup>A. F. A. Bandelier and Fanny Bandelier, Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico and Approaches Thereto to 1773, p. 509.

Indian settlers lived together in the same pueblo. All suffered in the first years. Food was so scarce that resort was made to wild herbs and roots, while lack of clothing prevented attendance at Mass.<sup>38</sup>

Until the year 1827 there was no human activity on the site of the present city of El Paso. The entire settlement was established and maintained on the south side of the river in the present city of Juarez. In the above mentioned, the first occupation on the north side took place by Don Juan Maria Ponce de Leon. He was an inhabitant of Paso del Norte and made application to his government for a grant of land. Ponce de Leon was one of the wealthiest, most enterprising gentlemen of this section during his lifetime. He raised large fields of corn and wheat on the site of the present city and cultivated an extensive vineyard where El Paso's courthouse and city hall now stand.<sup>39</sup>

Ponce de Leon died July 1, 1852. The old adobe ranch house which he built served as the Central Hotel until it caught fire and burned. The present Mills building is located on this site. The original plot of land granted to de Leon was sold in 1854 for \$10,000, thus passing out of his family.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Driscoll, "El Paso, the Land of Romance, on Its 400th Birthday," Diocese of El Paso, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Frank W. Johnson, A History of Texas and Texans, p. 1051.

<sup>40</sup>"Downtown E. P. Site Bought for \$10,000," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

The Spanish and Indians had almost complete control of the development of this region until 1850. Descendents of both races still make up more than half the population. The Catholic religion, place names, Spanish language, architecture, holidays and traditions are definite contributions of the Spanish. A study of the accomplishments of the Spanish over a three-hundred-year period as compared to the accomplishments of the Anglo-Americans over a period of less than one hundred years helps to reveal the conflicting characteristics of the two races.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

It has often been said that El Paso is one of the oldest and youngest cities in the United States. The early settlement of the Spanish in the general vicinity might support the first claim and the late arrival of the Anglo-Americans the second. It was as late as 1850 before a small number of Anglo-Americans began to arrive, and their settlement remained very minor until the advent of the railroads in the 1880's. Some claim that L'Archeveque, a Frenchman and a member of the La Salle expedition, was the first white man other than the Spanish to see this area. He is supposed to have come about 1692 with the expedition of Diego de Vargas and fought in the subjugation of the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

Between 1810 and 1824 a number of Americans passed through the El Paso district, and according to records it was the beaver hunters who first remained in this section.<sup>2</sup>

In 1807, Zebulon M. Pike had been taken prisoner by the Spaniards and for three days he had played cards with

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<sup>1</sup>White, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 28.

the wife and sister of the commander of the Spanish garrison at San Elizario. He is given credit for being the first Anglo-American to reach the El Paso area.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of geography in connection with trade has already been mentioned. Certainly James Magoffin would have testified that trade and location were encouraging motives for settling at Paso del Norte. He had been in Mexico and established a high standing with the better class of Mexicans long before the outbreak of the Mexican War. He had been politely, but firmly imprisoned in Chihuahua until after Doniphan's expedition. As soon as the Mexican War had been won, he settled at the present site of El Paso and had erected extensive buildings and corrals. A settlement grew up here that was known as Magoffinsville and might actually be called the first name of El Paso. Apache Indians frequently raided the corrals for horses.<sup>4</sup>

Franklin Coontz bought the De Leon ranch in 1850, but failing to make a success out of it, sold it to W. T. Smith in 1857.

In May, 1852, J. F. Crosby arrived in El Paso. His son is supposed to be the first Anglo-American child born

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<sup>3</sup> Marshal Hail, "Capital of Million Dollar Empire Rises from Desert Within Century," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>4</sup> Bartlett, op. cit., pp. 383-384; T. C. Richardson, "El Paso, Gateway to Cibola," Holland's Magazine, May, 1934, p. 14.

in this area. In 1857 Crosby was appointed Judge of all territory west of the Pecos. He remembers that it took him and his seventeen-year-old bride sixty-five days to cross the territory from Austin to El Paso. He also recalls that the border outlaws were numerous and vicious. However, these outlaws did not steal and were deferential to women and lenient with family men.

Shootings and killing affrays were daily occurrences. Murderers were almost never convicted; it was an understood principle that each man knew what was likely to occur and went prepared. The area was lawless, but there was not a safe in the country and mortgages were unknown.<sup>5</sup>

When Bartlett's surveying party arrived in this area in 1852, they found the town of Paso del Norte to be on the Mexican side. On the American side there were three settlements consisting of Franklin Coontz's ranch with its adjoining buildings, Stevenson's ranch, and the already mentioned Magoffinsville. The last was the principal settlement and it contained six or eight large stores and warehouses well filled with merchandise. Bartlett describes the houses in 1852 as being one-story adobe made from mud bricks baked in the sun. The walls were two to three feet in thickness with few openings. At this time such a thing

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<sup>5</sup>H. S. Kneeder, Through Storyland to Sunset, What Four People Saw on a Journey Through the Southwest to the Pacific Coast, pp. 101-102.



as a wooden floor was completely unknown.<sup>6</sup>

In 1858 the Southern Overland Mail came through El Paso. In September, Butterfield entered into contract with the United States Government to carry mail to Saint Louis and San Francisco, picking up the San Antonio mail at El Paso.<sup>7</sup>

It was also in 1858 that Anson Mills arrived in El Paso. Mills had been dismissed from West Point because of a failure in mathematics, but this failure certainly did not keep him from rising to prominence in El Paso's history. When Mills first came to El Paso he lived in a tent and later in an adobe house which he made for himself. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Mills, being a Northern sympathizer, joined the Union Army. He did not return to El Paso for twenty years, but in 1912 he built the present Mills building which was the first building of monolithic cement without steel or wooden beams to be built in Texas. Mills left some vivid descriptions of early El Paso in his writings, and he never failed to be interested in the city. He was very pleased when he was notified that the name of St. Louis Street had been changed to Mills Street in his honor.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Bartlett, op. cit., pp. 383-384.

<sup>7</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>8</sup>Elaine Lewis Morrell, "The Rise and Growth of Public Education in El Paso, Texas" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas), pp. 21-22.

W. W. Mills, a brother of Anson Mills, can also be classified among the early arrivals. He notes that there were no banks, drafts, or checks, and that everybody loaned money when he had it. Also it was no unusual occurrence for merchants to loan large quantities of their goods, bolts of print goods, muslin and sacks of sugar or coffee to their neighbor merchants. Carriages and buggies were almost considered as community property.<sup>9</sup>

Finally the Federal Government decided to recognize the existence of a settlement in this area by establishing a post office in 1852. Franklin Coontz was appointed postmaster and on being told to give the place a name, immediately christened it Franklin after himself.<sup>10</sup> In 1859, as the town's first surveyor, Anson Mills alleged that Franklin Coontz was not a fit person to have a promising city named for and that the name should be changed to El Paso or "The Pass." From that day forward the town has been known as El Paso.<sup>11</sup>

Any history of El Paso would be incomplete unless some mention was made of Benjamin S. Dowell, better known as Uncle Ben Dowell. He came from Kentucky to settle in El Paso in 1850; and he is supposed to have been "broke" and

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<sup>9</sup>W. W. Mills, Forty Years at El Paso, 1858-1898, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>White, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>11</sup>Hail, op. cit., p. 10.

without any education when he arrived, but nevertheless, his handicaps did not prove very limiting to his success. Besides being the first mayor and the first saloon owner in El Paso, Dowell was a soldier in two wars, postmaster, landowner, horseman, sportsman, stock farmer, groceryman, meat market owner, carpenter, wagon maker, wheelwright, surveyor, gold seeker, justice of the peace, alderman, acequia commissioner, county commissioner, county assessor, peace maker, father confessor, and in general a leading citizen.<sup>12</sup>

In 1878 there were but twenty-three Americans in what is now the city of El Paso, and about one hundred and fifty Mexicans. A small garrison of soldiers was quartered in the town. The metropolis of the county was at Ysleta, thirteen miles below El Paso, where District Court was held and county business was transacted. There was a Mexican population of about two thousand in Ysleta.<sup>13</sup>

Until the end of 1881, El Paso was as typically Mexican in appearance as if it had been built five hundred miles south of the Rio Grande. There were a few glass windows in the houses, and when these were not shot out, they were pointed out with pride by the entire community.<sup>14</sup>

It is easy to talk about the Anglo-American period of

<sup>12</sup>"Ben Dowell's Bar Just a Sideline," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>13</sup>Bureau of Information, The City and County of El Paso, Texas, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup>White, op. cit., pp. 157-158.

El Paso history, but it is entirely impossible to separate that period from the Mexican influence. El Paso grew very slowly and for a long time was regarded as a suburb of Paso del Norte (Juarez) which had a population of ten thousand. There was little or no race prejudice. Most of the American men had Mexican wives or mistresses.<sup>15</sup>

Common trials and dangers united the two races and the fact that one man was a Mexican and another an American was seldom mentioned. Each man was esteemed at his real worth. Spanish was the language of the country, but many of the Mexicans spoke English quite well.<sup>16</sup>

Ernest Kohlberg, a youth from Germany, reveals in his letters back to his family in Germany several interesting facts about life on the border in the 1870's. He described the Mexican people on the American side of the Rio Grande as being ugly and ragged, while those on the Mexican side were of a better class. It was an accepted fact that the inhabitants of Juarez and El Paso attended each other's parties and balls. Herr Kohlberg described one of these affairs that took place February 26, 1876, in the following words:

I attended a nice Mexican ball in Paso del Norte last week. . . . The Mexican men with their politeness and the ladies with their grace are really in their element at a function of this kind. Dances of this kind never take place in

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<sup>15</sup>Hail, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>16</sup>W. W. Mills, op. cit., p. 27.

the tavern, but always in the private home. . . . We partook of a fine supper at 2 o'clock and most of the food had chile for seasoning. It is customary for the gentlemen to take a lady to supper, not to eat with her, but to wait on her. He sees that she gets something of everything that is served, cuts her meat, changes her plate, and gives her some of the different wines that are served. While the lady is enjoying her supper the gentleman attends her by standing behind her chair. . . . After the ladies were through the gentlemen partook of supper. Before the ball starts the young men sit at the entrance of the home and as the ladies arrive they offer them their arms and escort them to the room in which they assist them to lay aside their wraps and then take them to be seated in the ball room. The dance takes place in the patio which has been covered over which canvas has been spread. . . . We had breakfast before the ball was over and everyone went home after an enjoyable time.<sup>17</sup>

Such social events as the one described above helped to maintain good relations between the settlers on the north and south sides of the Rio Grande.

Practically all citizens were connected with transportation in one way or another. In 1858, the San Antonio and San Diego Mail line secured from W. T. Smith an acre of the De Leon tract for use of the company. On this space was maintained a large general store in addition to its transportation business.<sup>18</sup> The Southern Overland Mail or the Butterfield Mail came into El Paso for the first time on September 30, 1858. El Paso was a division point upon the route and a big mail station was built on the

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<sup>17</sup>Ernest Kohlberg, "Translation of Letters, 1875-1876-1877" (unpublished MS.), pp. 2-3.

<sup>18</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 76.

corner of Overland and El Paso Streets. It was the company's largest station with the exception of the one at Los Angeles.<sup>19</sup>

Besides the people occupied in the trade and transportation business, some were occupied in surveying the area. Bartlett and his group spent some time in this section. Anson Mills was employed to lay out a town on the present site of El Paso. The houses had been built at random and the streets were neither parallel nor at right angles.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most interesting stories in connection with El Paso's history is the one about "the tree" that became famous locally. This tree stood on the north bank of the Acequia, right at the door of what is now the Blumenthal Building. No citizen of Franklin ever passed "the tree" without stopping to take a look. Some individuals would look at this tree and pass casually and calmly on their ways; others would look and hasten home to buckle on an extra six-shooter; while yet others would look and then rush to the livery stable, saddle a horse, and beat it for parts unknown. The secret of the tree was that it contained a signboard upon which men would post notices, telling the world just how little regard they had for each

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<sup>19</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

<sup>20</sup>Anson Mills, My Story, p. 51.

other's truth and veracity. In the early days the tree had been the bearer of many challenges and was the direct cause of many killings. The most frequent user, however, was Mrs. Gillock, who was proprietor of the Gillock House which stood about where the White House now stands. This building was the only American hotel within a radius of seven hundred miles and any customer who tried to leave or stay without paying his bill was sure to have his name posted on the tree.<sup>21</sup>

Newspaper people also led exciting lives, according to Frank Wells Brown, pioneer publisher of the El Paso Herald Post. Not only did many El Pasoans dislike his politics which were Republican, and reformist, but they also disliked some of the stories that were printed in his paper. Somebody was always threatening to throw the Herald Post into the street or the river. Once, the gamblers drove up in a body to attack the plant, but were unsuccessful in getting through the bales of cotton the force had used for a barricade. One editor was forced to leave town because he had written a witty account of a shooting scrape between two night club queens, Madam Alice Abbot and Madam Etta Clark. Madam Etta, feeling insulted by the article, took a six shooter, a lady friend and a bull whip and

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<sup>21</sup>White, op. cit., p. 48.

stormed into the newspaper office. Fortunately the editor was out, but publisher Brown almost believed the women were going to use the whip on him. Brady, the offending editor, deciding he did not want the disgrace of killing a prostitute and certainly being possessed of no intentions of being killed by one himself, left for Albuquerque and was never seen in El Paso again.<sup>22</sup>

El Paso had been known as a wide-open town both during and before the days of the Civil War. The saloons, dance halls, and gambling halls never closed. The gamblers boasted that they ran the politics of the town and always proposed to do so.<sup>23</sup>

There were some individuals in El Paso who had come neither for trade nor pleasure. These people came because of the beneficial climate for respiratory diseases. To this day there is a saying in El Paso, "Everybody came here for his health or for the health of some member of his family." The "One Lunger Club" was a very lively and progressive pioneer organization.<sup>24</sup>

Although it was claimed as a part of Texas, the territory to the north and for many miles to the east of El Paso during the entire period of Texas independence was without

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<sup>22</sup>"Paper Faces Armed Raids," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>23</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>24</sup>"Invalids Help Build El Paso," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.



any government whatever except such as Mexico continued to exercise.<sup>25</sup>

When the Civil War broke out, with its shattering influence on the Union, there was probably as little cause for interest in it by the people of that region as in any other section of the United States. The section was sparsely settled, the majority of the people being Mexican in origin. There were a few body slaves among the military officials, but the ranches which comprised the El Paso area were cultivated by Mexican labor. However, it was not long until the Anglo-American settlers had everybody interested in the Civil War.<sup>26</sup> On the question of secession, of the nine hundred votes cast in El Paso (1861), those of Anson Mills and W. W. Mills were the only two cast in opposition to the move. According to Mills, many of these votes were cast by Mexican citizens from across the river, brought over especially for the occasion.<sup>27</sup>

During the Civil War, El Paso was held alternately by large commands of the Confederates against New Mexico and Arizona, while again it was held by the Federals as a key to the control of these territories.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>White, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>26</sup>Rosalie Ivey, "A History of Fort Bliss" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas), p. 26.

<sup>27</sup>W. W. Mills, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>28</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 1054.

The Civil War and the period following interrupted the progress of El Paso. In the decade following the war the prospects of the village were indeed small. Many of the substantial citizens had been Confederate sympathizers and had fled farther south or into Mexico when the Union Army recaptured El Paso and its vicinity. The number of Anglo-Americans had decreased. There was no law or order, but that commanded by the busy Indian-fighting United States Army.<sup>29</sup>

After the Civil War, El Paso County was in the unique position of being Republican long after the Democrats had regained control of the remainder of the state. This fact seems to have been largely due to the work of W. W. Mills, son-in-law of A. J. Hamilton, who organized the Republican Party in the country around El Paso and was its leader for a decade. In 1869 a split occurred in the party and the anti-Mills faction threw in with the Democrats. With only 122 registered voters in the county, 273 votes were cast in the election. The election, lasting four days, was held at San Elizario. Mills claimed to have won by ninety-five votes, but the returns showed that he had lost by 139 votes. Thus the actual power of the Republican Party came to an end in El Paso County.<sup>30</sup>

In 1877 the population of El Paso County consisted of

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<sup>29</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>30</sup>Hammons, op. cit., p. 104.

little more than five thousand inhabitants. In the entire country there were only eighty Americans, and of these eighty not more than twenty or twenty-five were of what we would call a desirable type.<sup>31</sup> However, this small group had enough problems to give a much larger population much trouble.

The problem of the permanent county seat was one that caused much unpleasant feeling among the inhabitants of the area. In 1850 the original county of El Paso had extended east as far as the Pecos River, and the first county seat was San Elizario, which had about 1,500 inhabitants. Then in 1874 the county seat was changed from San Elizario to Ysleta. In 1883 the county seat was transferred from Ysleta to El Paso.<sup>32</sup> Old timers in Ysleta at the present time point out the Ysleta Grammar School, which is built on the foundation of the old court house, and recall how the town was cheated out of the county seat. On election day, when the decision was made to move the county seat from Ysleta to El Paso, the election officials from Ysleta were either given too many drinks by the opposition, kidnapped, or forcibly prevented from keeping any written records on the proceedings. The total registered voting strength of El Paso was known to be about three hundred, but two

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<sup>31</sup>White, op. cit., p. 97.

<sup>32</sup>Ruth Harris, Geography of El Paso County, p. 27.

thousand votes were cast before two o'clock in the afternoon. It is recorded that one man actually voted twelve times during the day. He had lived out in the hills as a prospector, unshaven and unshorn for many weeks. He first voted at each of the three precincts just as he appeared from the hills. Next he had his whiskers trimmed and made the rounds again without being challenged. The third time he shaved his whiskers and appeared with a mustache, and the fourth time he appeared clean shaven in a new suit that had been given him for his services. Naturally the results of the election were challenged, but as the Austin officials felt friendly toward El Paso at this time, nothing could be done. Too, this election occurred in 1883 when the railroads were causing a drastic change in the size of El Paso.<sup>33</sup>

On June 18, 1873, El Paso was incorporated into a city. Benjamin S. Dowell was elected the first mayor. The first law passed in El Paso prohibited further bathing in the city's irrigation ditch. It became a "high crime and misdemeanor for any person, male or female, brown or white, married or single, or any derivation thereof to wade, paddle, swim, dive, or duck in the waters of any irrigation ditch within the corporate limits of the city."<sup>34</sup>

Probably one of the most serious incidents in the El

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<sup>33</sup>White, op. cit., pp. 182-185.

<sup>34</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

Paso area was the Salt War which took place in 1877. The Salt Flats are located about ninety miles from San Elizario and had always been regarded by all the people as community property. One Charles H. Howard took possession of these flats and caused even more bitter feeling by killing Louis Cardis, who had been a friend and representative of the Mexican people.<sup>35</sup> Howard asked for the protection of the Texas Rangers in San Elizario, but they were unable to prevent the Mexicans from taking him and his two companions and putting them to death.<sup>36</sup> Although most reviewers of the Salt War agree that Howard probably deserved his fate, the serious problem came in the form of raiding and mischief afterward. With perfect organization and little discipline, friends and sympathizers from the Mexican side of the river joined their friends and relatives on this side to create quite a formidable army. The whole situation began to look as if it might develop into a serious problem with international complications. The extent of property stolen and destroyed and the number of lives lost were never known.<sup>37</sup>

Conditions had come to such a serious state in El Paso County that Lieutenant Baylor was ordered there to take command of the Ranger company. Baylor was warned by

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<sup>35</sup>Executive Document No. 93, El Paso Troubles in Texas, pp. 3-4.

<sup>36</sup>James B. Gillett, The Texas Rangers, p. 127.

<sup>37</sup>Ex. Doc. No. 93, op. cit., p. 4.

the Governor against letting a race war start on the border. It was Baylor's job to restore peace and order by using disciplinary measures and diplomacy whenever possible.<sup>38</sup>

It was impossible to avoid the occurrence of serious problems in this lawless area, but in one way or another these problems were usually disposed of to the mutual satisfaction of the local inhabitants.

It would be impossible to do justice to the story of El Paso without considering the influence of the military establishments on its development. In December of 1846, during the Mexican War, Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan won the battle of Brazito and took possession of the El Paso area. His occupation might be said to be the beginning of the American city on the present site of El Paso.<sup>39</sup>

It was on February 11, 1848, that a detachment known as the First Dragoons under Major Beall established itself in adobe huts on the ranch of Franklin Coontz for a few months. Major Jefferson Van Horn is given credit for actually establishing the first permanent military post in El Paso on September 14, 1849. Many famous generals have been stationed at Fort Bliss and the local people have taken great pride in having these persons as a part of El

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<sup>38</sup> Gillett, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> Johnson, op. cit., p. 1052.

Paso.<sup>40</sup>

In 1858 Fort Bliss was garrisoned by regular United States troops situated at the place now called East El Paso. It was considered by Army officers and their wives to be one of the most desirable posts in the whole country.<sup>41</sup>

The post fitted well into the social life of El Paso. The officers of the post held open house to whatever intellectual and refining influences the border had to offer. From its establishment to the present time many an El Paso girl has married one of its army officers. For this reason, El Paso is sometimes referred to as the mother-in-law of the army.<sup>42</sup>

However, the military establishments at Fort Bliss were not the only ones that affected the El Paso area. At various times the Texas Rangers were stationed at Ysleta, San Elizario, and El Paso. They were sent where the need was greatest, whether it might be raiding Indians, unruly border disputes, or cattle rustlers. The early settlers in this vicinity had great respect for the Rangers and their ability. The Rangers contributed vitally to the law enforcement of the country. Probably one of the best remembered and highly respected Ranger commanders was Captain

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<sup>40</sup>"Old Fort Bliss Noted School for Generals," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>41</sup>W. W. Mills, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>42</sup>Ivey, op. cit., pp. 119-123.

Jack R. Hughes. He was especially careful in his selection of men, which probably contributed to his success in handling difficult border situations.<sup>43</sup>

The importance of the coming of the railroads to El Paso can hardly be overestimated. El Paso, as has already been pointed out, was simply a small, wild, border town until 1880. On May 26, 1881, the first railroad train to reach the city of El Paso came in over the Southern Pacific Railroad from the Pacific Coast. Sixteen days later the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe sent in its first train from the north. After the Texas and Pacific Railroad had been joined with the Southern Pacific at Sierra Blanca, the first train from the east arrived in El Paso over that line in January, 1882. Final construction was made between San Antonio and El Paso and thus to the west coast in 1883. By 1884 the Mexican Central Railroad Company had completed a railway from Mexico City to El Paso.<sup>44</sup> W. W. Bridgers, who is the present State Representative of the El Paso District, was water boy on the Texas and Pacific line when the spike was driven down joining this railroad with the Southern Pacific at Sierra Blanca. He says there was little, if any, excitement on the actual meeting spot of these two great railroads, but that there was plenty of activity of

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<sup>43</sup> Jack Martin, Border Boss, Captain Jack R. Hughes, pp. 156-157.

<sup>44</sup> Johnson, op. cit., p. 1056.



every kind in town. There had arrived ahead of the railroads a rough-and-tumble class who were certainly unlike their predecessors in honor and fair play.<sup>45</sup> By the middle of the 1880's people were arriving at the rate of a hundred or more each day. They came in ambulances, buggies, wagons, on horseback, and on foot. They ate what they could get, sleeping any- and everywhere. They erected adobe houses during the day and caroused through most of the night. But aside from unloading blondes, bar fixtures, and building materials, the trains also began to unload men who, with the purpose of establishing legitimate business, became honored and respected citizens of the growing community. Corner lots which had been useless made fortunes for old-timers who had retained possession of them.<sup>46</sup>

El Paso's strategic position as an important gateway to the United States was assured by the completion of these railroads. From the time of the early Spanish explorers, the Pass had played its part in attracting settlers and transportation; its importance was now to increase enormously.

Among other important questions which began to concern the population was the one of education. Before 1883 there had been no organized public school system in El Paso. The

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<sup>45</sup>W. W. Bridgers, personal interview.

<sup>46</sup>White, "The Right Thing on the Border," The Taming of the Frontier, pp. 17-18.

Mexicans probably had their children educated through the Catholic Church, if at all. One lawyer, M. A. Jones, as early as 1867, was holding school in his law office when practice was slow. Annabelle Reed stopped over on her way to California in 1868 and conducted a school. In 1870 Williams Tays, an Episcopalian minister, opened a mission school for ten American boys and girls and a small number of Mexican children. When the compulsory school law of 1881 was passed, Tays hired Mary Dowell to assist him and continued educating the youth of El Paso.<sup>47</sup>

The first El Paso County public school was established three miles out of Ysleta in September of 1871. The compulsory school attendance law passed by the Texas Legislature was received with coolness by the large Mexican population of the valley. The Mexicans boycotted the schools and refused to send their children to class, although subject to fines. They contended that the public schools were against Christian doctrine, that the teachers were heretics, that the school would rob parents of necessary child labor on farms and ranches, and that education would undermine the purity of their daughters by enabling them to read love letters. However, through the work of two gallant teachers, E. N. Ronquillo and Mary Dowell Phillips, the valley Mexicans learned to appreciate the value of free public

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<sup>47</sup> Morrell, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

education.<sup>48</sup>

In 1882 El Paso had a street railway, banks, four well-organized churches, an established city government and the largest hotel in the state, but no public school building in the city.<sup>49</sup>

However, the live-minded citizens began to awaken to their need and the public schools of the area began to develop rapidly. Since that time education has almost kept pace with the development of the city and the valley.

In 1894 Judge Hunter, an ex-officio county superintendent of public instruction, reported twelve schools in El Paso County, with an enrollment of 501 students. This report did not include Ysleta and El Paso, because they were independent districts.<sup>50</sup>

Until 1881, El Paso was without a church building of any kind. Even the Catholic congregation which had been established for centuries, worshiped in Paso del Norte or at one of the missions down the river. However, in 1882 a chapel was completed on North Organ Street.

The first official Protestant services in El Paso were held in February of 1882 in the new church of the Episcopalians. The bell which called the congregation together

<sup>48</sup>"First Teachers Fought Old Prejudices," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>49</sup>White, Out of the Desert, p. 166.

<sup>50</sup>Minnie D. Blackman, "A Historical Study of Education as a Potent Factor in the Development of El Paso County" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Texas Technological College), p. 23.

is said to have been the first one ever to ring out for Protestant worship anywhere along the Rio Grande from Santa Fe to Brownsville. As the Methodists had begun building in 1881, they were ready to commence services shortly after the Episcopalians. In April of 1882, the Presbyterians accepted the hospitality of the Methodists and used their building in which to organize a Presbyterian congregation. At first the Baptists worshiped with the Methodists, but before the end of the year 1882 they had organized their own group in a new handsome brick church building.<sup>51</sup>

Along with education and religion, reform came to El Paso. Whether, as Owen P. White, who lived in El Paso from boyhood, believed, that reform grew more from the desire of parents to protect their children from harsh influences than from the influence of education and the churches, it is difficult to say.<sup>52</sup>

By 1900 the El Paso Herald Post, the churches, and many private individuals insisted that the saloons and gambling houses should be prohibited. Finally these demands met with success and laws were passed with these prohibitions.<sup>53</sup>

Now that El Paso had railroads, a swelling population,

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<sup>51</sup>White, op. cit., pp. 162-164.

<sup>52</sup>Owen P. White, personal interview.

<sup>53</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 145.

some signs of reform, and the prospect of developing into a city, she decided to make laws for her civic improvement as well as her moral upbuilding. One of these laws states:

It shall be unlawful for any person or persons to erect or cause to be erected, on or along any alley or public thoroughfare within the corporate city limits of the city of El Paso any fences or fence of what is known as barbed wire.<sup>54</sup>

It is not difficult to see that the small Anglo-American population had succeeded in a period of less than fifty years in making this area truly their own. Their accomplishments are further evidenced in the records of the early and later development of ranching, agriculture, and industry.

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<sup>54</sup>Ordinances and Charter of the City of El Paso, 1903,  
p. 91.

## CHAPTER III

### AGRICULTURE AND RANCHING IN THE EL PASO AREA

The history of agriculture in the El Paso area dates back to the oldest continuously operated farm in the United States. Four acres of the seven-acre plot of land owned and farmed by the Roman Catholic Church of Ysleta have been in cultivation since 1681. There has been no challenge to the claim that this farm is the oldest continuously cultivated one in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Marquis de Ruhi, whose reports on the El Paso area have already been mentioned, noticed that the land in the vicinity of El Paso was well cultivated and very productive in 1766. The chief products seem to have been grapes and other fruits.<sup>2</sup> In 1850 the Secretary of War reported that the peaches, pears, and apricots were very good. With the exception of activities on the island, he found most of the agricultural pursuits being carried on by the Mexican population on the south side of the river.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>L. A. Wilke, "Modern El Paso," Diocese of El Paso, p. 10; Hammons, op. cit., p. 26; Bartlett, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>2</sup>Castaneda, op. cit., p. 277.

<sup>3</sup>Executive Department, Number 564, "Reports from the Secretary of War" (1850), p. 49.

Ben Dowell, the first saloon keeper and the first mayor of El Paso, was also the first scientific farmer in the district. He was the first to obtain and file all bulletins published by the Department of Agriculture. By 1870, he had introduced tobacco, sweet potatoes, and alfalfa as a storage crop to the valley. He was the first in the valley to fatten hogs and cattle to ship to outside markets. He taught the Juarez Mexicans how to make peach brandy. Because of his interest in horse racing, he was especially interested in the owning and breeding of good horses.<sup>4</sup>

American settlers did not concern themselves very much in the acquisition and settlement of land until after the railroads came in. Further agricultural growth and prosperity which would normally have been expected to follow the construction of the railroad was offset by a combination of several adverse conditions which resulted in a temporary decrease rather than an increase in the cultivated area. One of these conditions was the adjustment in the economic situation made necessary by the sudden development of overland transportation and a reduction in military force, both of which had created a market for local agricultural produce. The most serious consequence came from a series of years of drouth during the period

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<sup>4</sup>"Ben Dowell's Bar Just a Sideline," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

1870 to 1890, which consumed all the summer flow of the Rio Grande originating in the state.<sup>5</sup>

The importance of irrigation to agriculture in the El Paso valley cannot be stressed too much. With the scant rainfall in the area it would be impossible to carry on any successful farming without irrigation. Besides claiming the oldest farm in the United States, the El Paso region also claims the oldest irrigation dam. When the first Spaniards came through the "Pass of the North," they noted the formation of the river and found the Indians had built a dam to divert the water to their crops. The dam was built of stones and rushes; evidences of the old dam are still to be seen near the present site of Harts' Mill, El Paso.<sup>6</sup>

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, settlers of Ysleta were responsible for an important part of the development of the "community acequia" or irrigation ditches in the section. The Pueblos built and managed their irrigation system as community affairs. Taking care of the ditches became one of the chief tasks of the community. The foundation of the present irrigation system which surrounds the town was thus begun. The earliest community ditches in Texas were built around Ysleta. These

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<sup>5</sup>L. R. Flack, "Telling How Irrigation Came to Make the Valley a Paradise for Humanity," Rio Grande Review, November 30, 1933, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Quisenberry, op. cit., p. 144.



ditches were taken over by the Federal Government as agricultural projects; at the present time some are in daily use.<sup>7</sup>

Various suggestions had been made for a better system of irrigation for the El Paso lands, but none of these had been put into successful operation until the Rio Grande project was completed in 1916. This project was one of the first dams constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation created by Congress in 1902. The ratification of a treaty with Mexico for the distribution of the Rio Grande waters in 1906 and the signing of contracts with associations of water users had to be accomplished before the actual construction of the dam could get under way. The project is located in south central New Mexico and extreme West Texas. It extends for two hundred miles along the Rio Grande from the Elephant Butte Reservoirs in Socorro County, through Sierra and Dona Ana Counties, New Mexico, and El Paso County, Texas. It has a maximum width of six miles. Project lands extend from one hundred miles northwest to forty miles southeast of the city of El Paso, with a net irrigable area of 155,000 acres, of which 88,000 acres are in New Mexico and 67,000 are in Texas.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>A. T. Jackson, "Oldest Among Texas Towns," Texas Monthly, October, 1920, p. 564.

<sup>8</sup>United States Department of the Interior, General Descriptive Statement -- the Rio Grande Project, p. 1.

The Elephant Butte Dam is 306 feet high with crest roadway two hundred feet above the river bed, and an overall length of 1,674 feet, including the spillway. Caballo Dam, located twenty-two miles downstream, was completed in 1938. In addition to the storage reservoirs, the project's irrigation and drainage system consists of five diversion dams, 610 miles of diversion and distribution canals and laterals, 502 miles of land drains and waste ditches, six canals and drain structures across the river, and thousands of miscellaneous structures. There were 6,097 farms and suburban homes in the project area in 1944, with a population of 27,481. A total of 153,815 acres were irrigated in 1944. Crop values in 1943 amounted to \$23,357,400.<sup>9</sup>

Because the Rio Grande Project is founded upon a background of Spanish and Indian community ditches, the project has an international aspect as well as being an international development. The existence of the early irrigation works, the agricultural customs, and the methods of land development have certainly had their influence on the present system.<sup>10</sup>

The expression of "snatching farms from the desert" is literally true in the El Paso valley. In the days before the irrigation project was set up, most of the land

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Flack, op. cit., p. 1.

would have been condemned as utterly useless. It was covered by an impossible-looking growth of desert vegetation which the farmer had to remove. The next step was the two-year process of removing the alkali from the soil. Finally after planting alfalfa for two more years, the farmer could plant his newly claimed farm in cotton. There is a great amount of labor and patience involved in this work. For several years this unclaimed land could be bought very cheaply, but at the present time it is almost impossible to buy a farm at any price.<sup>11</sup>

After the farmer succeeded in taking his farm from the desert, he had to be willing to devote almost constant attention to it afterwards. The land is probably the most fertile in Texas, because the soil is composed of silt deposited through the ages by the overflow of the river. By reason of the mingling of the silt with the erosion from the hills, a great variety of soil is produced. It is necessary for the farmer to attend to his farm from the very early spring to the late winter. Every operation has to be timed to fit in with the irrigation periods. The occasional untimely rains or a hail storm can do almost untold damage to the farmers of the valley.<sup>12</sup>

Insect pests have been greatly eliminated through

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<sup>11</sup>T. R. Chesser, farmer and former director of farm loans in the El Paso Federal Land Bank, in personal interview and demonstration.

<sup>12</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 16.

various control measures including the use of dusting by airplanes.<sup>13</sup>

Labor for the farms of the El Paso valley consists almost entirely of Mexican Americans. These laborers are very satisfactory to the farmers of the region. The usual plan on the larger farms is for several Mexican families to live on the premises. During cotton-chopping and picking seasons the entire families are used in the fields. During the recent war, the demand for these laborers was much greater than the supply. However, arrangements were made with the Mexican government for the use of Mexican citizens as farm laborers during the busy seasons. Many of these laborers did not bother to make legal arrangements to enter the country. They simply crossed the river and started work.<sup>14</sup>

After the farmer of the El Paso area has succeeded in conquering his problems, he is usually well paid for his efforts. The casual tourist passing through El Paso sees miles and miles of rugged broken country on one side and miles and miles of sandy desert on the other. The more observing tourists notice the cotton fields, alfalfa fields, fruit orchards, and truck farms with small dairy and poultry farms scattered in between. If the observer

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<sup>13</sup>Chesser, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.; Harris, op. cit., p. 17.

makes any investigation, he finds that the yields from these different types of farms are all out of proportion under efficient management to yields for similar crops in other sections of the country.<sup>15</sup>

Long-staple cotton, the major product of the El Paso valley, was introduced into the valley in 1914 by Charles Davis. At first the cotton was so much of a novelty that tourists carried it off as souvenirs. Gradually in 1916 and 1917, other farmers were induced to plant this crop, until in 1918, it grew popular enough to justify the building of a gin.<sup>16</sup> Since 1918, cotton has been very important to the valley. The average yield is about one bale per acre. Good land produces one and one-half to two bales per acre and three bales per acre yields are not uncommon on highly productive land. Ninety per cent of the cotton grown is of the Acala variety because of its early maturity and length and quality of staple. The absence of rain makes the cotton produced unusually clean and beautifully white.<sup>17</sup>

The second crop in importance is the "pea green" alfalfa for which El Paso is famous. This crop was introduced by the already mentioned first scientific farmer,

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<sup>15</sup>J. I. McGregor, "El Paso -- a New Garden of Eden," Southern Pacific Farm News, November 15, 1924, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup>Morrell, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>17</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 16.

Ben Dowell, in 1870. This product has always commanded premium prices in the Western markets, due to high percentage of protein and fat. Most valley farmers use the rotation plan very successfully in planting alfalfa and cotton. Alfalfa makes five to six cuttings each year. This crop will continue to produce for about five years without being replanted.<sup>18</sup>

The climate and altitude of the El Paso area are particularly favorable to truck farming. As early as 1851 onions and pumpkins were common crops. In the days of the Spaniards, these crops were raised for local consumption. In recent years other crops making promising production in car-lot quantities are cantaloupes, spinach, tomatoes, and lettuce. Most of these truck farms range in size from two to seven acres. They are especially popular in the more thickly settled part of the valley.<sup>19</sup>

Another very important industry in this section is that of fruit raising. Due to the efficient work carried on by cooperative organizations, careful attention is given to tree and vine selection, methods of planting, cultivating and spraying. Unusual care is exercised in grading and packing fruits for shipment to outside markets. As a result, fruits bearing the labels of local associations are

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<sup>18</sup>Border Commercial Club of Hudspeth and El Paso Counties, "Truly an Oasis for Farmers," Rio Grande Review, November, 1933, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 17; Bartlett, op. cit., p. 185.

in great demand and command good prices when offered for sale. El Paso County leads all other Texas counties in the production of pears. The fact that seedling pear trees were hardy and bearing some two hundred years ago in this valley was a promise of successful pear growing to a few determined pioneers who began planting orchards. When a permanent supply of water was assured by the construction of the Elephant Butte Dam, more plantings were made with the result that pear growing is now on a sound commercial basis. Apples, peaches, plums, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, and pecans all occupy prominent places in the valley production.<sup>20</sup>

Possibly one of the most beautiful and interesting farms in this region is the ten-year-old chrysanthemum farm owned and operated by Francis Warnock of Ysleta. He markets some of the surplus supply locally, but most of the flowers are shipped to other places. During the autumn when the "mums" are ready to be gathered, his farm is truly the show-place of the vicinity.

Another type of farming that has assumed a place of importance is that of livestock farming. Dairying is the chief livestock industry in the El Paso section. The dairy development began about 1920 as the land became important for farming purposes. The gradual movement of the dairy

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<sup>20</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 18.

cattle to the farms where the feed was grown and the elimination of numerous small dairies caused the industry to assume large-scale production. Most individuals felt that this consolidation was a definite advantage to the consumer, producer, and distributor. The distributor profited because his delivery and overhead expenses were reduced by reducing the number of deliverymen. With the old method as many as forty milk deliverymen would pass a house each day; with the present system only three or four pass it. There is practically no pasture available in the valley, and as a rule all stock is kept in lots throughout the year. The Price, Hawkins, Millican, Stedham, and Borden dairies are among the most important in the valley.<sup>21</sup> The milk supply in El Paso almost reached the critical stage during World War II and the period following. The local dairies, unable to meet the needs because of reduced herds, lack of labor, and feed shortages, were forced to use recombined milk imported from other sections.

Climatic conditions are ideal for the production of poultry; because of the mild winters and the absence of wet weather, expensive housing is unnecessary. Green feed is always available. The fact that poultry of all kinds can range out of doors the year 'round means better fowls at

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 19.



lower cost. Most poultry producers have found a very profitable occupation because the demand always exceeds the supply, thus assuring premium prices.

Until recently hogs had been produced only on a very small scale, but at the present time many farmers have begun to produce very profitably on a large scale. Another meat-producing product is the rabbit. Some individuals raise these rabbits to sell commercially, while others merely raise enough to supply their own demands.

The most successful farmers in the valley do not practice the policy of producing any one product or animal to the exclusion of all others.

Practically all of the products and animals will be found on the larger farms. Therefore an off-year on price, crop yield, or quality of any one or two items still leaves a profitable income.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps agriculture and ranching should not be considered under the same head because the two are not very closely associated in the El Paso area. The farms of the valley are too highly productive to allow space for pasture and grazing. As a result the ranches of the area are found in the mountains and in the desert. Most ranch owners bring their cattle into special feeding lots when they are ready to be prepared for market.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>23</sup>Chesser, op. cit.

There have been herds of cattle in this area since the time of the early Spanish explorers. In about 1850, the cattle drive to California through El Paso was begun. When the first herds passed through the "Pass of the North" cannot be said with any degree of certainty. A large train of cattle, horses, and mules is said to have passed Fort Fillmore June 7, 1850. A fortnight later another group passed, consisting of a poverty-stricken caravan which was making its cattle do double duty, eight cows being yoked like oxen to the wagons. By 1854 the cattle drive had grown to considerable proportions through this West Texas region. There were several trails through the El Paso district. One from the Pecos River ascended Delaware Creek near the Texas-New Mexico boundary, and went westward to El Paso. Another left the Pecos River farther north, went up Penasco Creek, thence across the divide near Tularosa, and southwest to Augustine Pass above Las Cruces, or went through the gap between the Organ and Franklin Mountains farther south. The third route passed through Limpia Canyon to Eagle Springs and southward to the Rio Grande which was contacted about eighty miles below El Paso. From El Paso, the Rio Grande was followed for almost one hundred miles to Fort Thorne above the San Diego crossing, then westward through Florida Pass to Arizona and California. The second route was the most constantly used of the three.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Long, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

Outside the great alluvial and agricultural valley of the Rio Grande, the country for hundreds of miles in every direction consists of plains, uplands, and mountains. The altitude of 3,500 to 7,000 feet is admirably suited to stock raising. The loss from climatic conditions is practically nothing. The facilities for marketing stock, procuring supplies and labor are excellent.<sup>25</sup>

Thousands of cattle pass through El Paso annually for marketing purposes. Most of the ranches in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas and New Mexico either sell their cattle in El Paso or ship them from El Paso to other points. Besides the Texas and New Mexico cattle handled in El Paso, many herds are brought in annually from Old Mexico. It is no uncommon sight to see these herds being driven across the international bridge from Juarez to El Paso. Some of these cattle have been bought from Mexican citizens, but most of them are being sent in from Mexican ranches owned by people from the United States.<sup>26</sup>

It is evident that El Paso must depend on the agriculture and ranching of the area for much of its wealth and prosperity.

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<sup>25</sup>Bureau of Information, The City and County of El Paso, Texas, pp. 30-31.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY IN THE EL PASO AREA

A person predicting the industrial future of El Paso in 1850 would have needed a vivid imagination. It is doubtful if the term "industry" could truthfully have been applied to any activity in the town. A few years later, 1858, Simon Hart had set up a flour mill a mile above the village. He ground the entire wheat crop from both sides of the river and supplied flour to all the people and the military posts.<sup>1</sup> If it had not been for Hart's efforts in supplying flour during the Civil War, the people would often have been forced to do without bread.<sup>2</sup> The Old Mill is still one of the historical land-marks about El Paso.

Some individuals spent their time looking for minerals in the hills or working in the crude mines that were being operated. These mineral products were brought to El Paso and exchanged for merchandise or money. The currency consisted of the Mexican silver dollar, then at par, and the Mexican ounce, a gold coin worth sixteen dollars. It has already been pointed out that a number of El Paso's

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<sup>1</sup>W. W. Mills, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Ivey, op. cit., pp. 26-27.

early settlers occupied themselves in work made necessary by the early stage lines.<sup>3</sup>

In 1878 the stage and mail lines were supplemented by a more rapid means of communication, the United States Military Telegraph Line, which was completed from Albuquerque through Las Cruces and Mesilla and thence to Silver City, Tucson, and San Diego. When a number of citizens petitioned for the extension of the line to El Paso, it was agreed to on condition that \$700 be contributed. The money was raised by popular subscription in El Paso and Paso del Norte. The line was built to El Paso before the end of 1878. C. H. Hackett, the first operator, and the messenger boy represented the entire operating force until 1884.<sup>4</sup>

A group that might fall in this embryonic period of industry was the Chinese colony. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company had imported hundreds of coolies for its construction gangs. At the end of the construction period, many of these people settled in El Paso. They did the town's laundry, raised vegetables, operated restaurants, worked as servants and as cooks. In spite of being the best gamblers in town, they were highly respected for their honesty. In the early eighties, the postmaster distributed the Chinese mail by dumping it all in one box. There was

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<sup>3</sup>W. W. Mills, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>4</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 147.

never a case of one Chinese disturbing the mail of another. Gradually they began to leave, because steam laundries were introduced and gambling was outlawed. Many of them returned to California, but the few who remained have, for the most part, become prominent citizens.<sup>5</sup>

After the trial and error methods of the beginning stages of industry were passed in El Paso, certain live-minded citizens became aware of the industrial advantages of the area. Possibly one of the greatest advantages is that of the wide trade territory. The El Paso market possesses the unique distinction of extending not only for a retail trading radius of 250 miles into Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, but also far down into the interior of Old Mexico as well. In point of area, it is probably the largest market in the United States.<sup>6</sup> El Paso is the largest and most important city on the Mexican border for a stretch of two thousand miles. It has consistently maintained its position as the social, educational, religious, industrial, financial, and commercial metropolis of an area as large as the whole of the United States east of the Mississippi River. People in the Southwest often travel three hundred miles to do their personal shopping. Trade

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<sup>5</sup>"Tong Leader Once Power," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup>L. M. Barton, A Study of 81 Principal American Markets, p. 94.

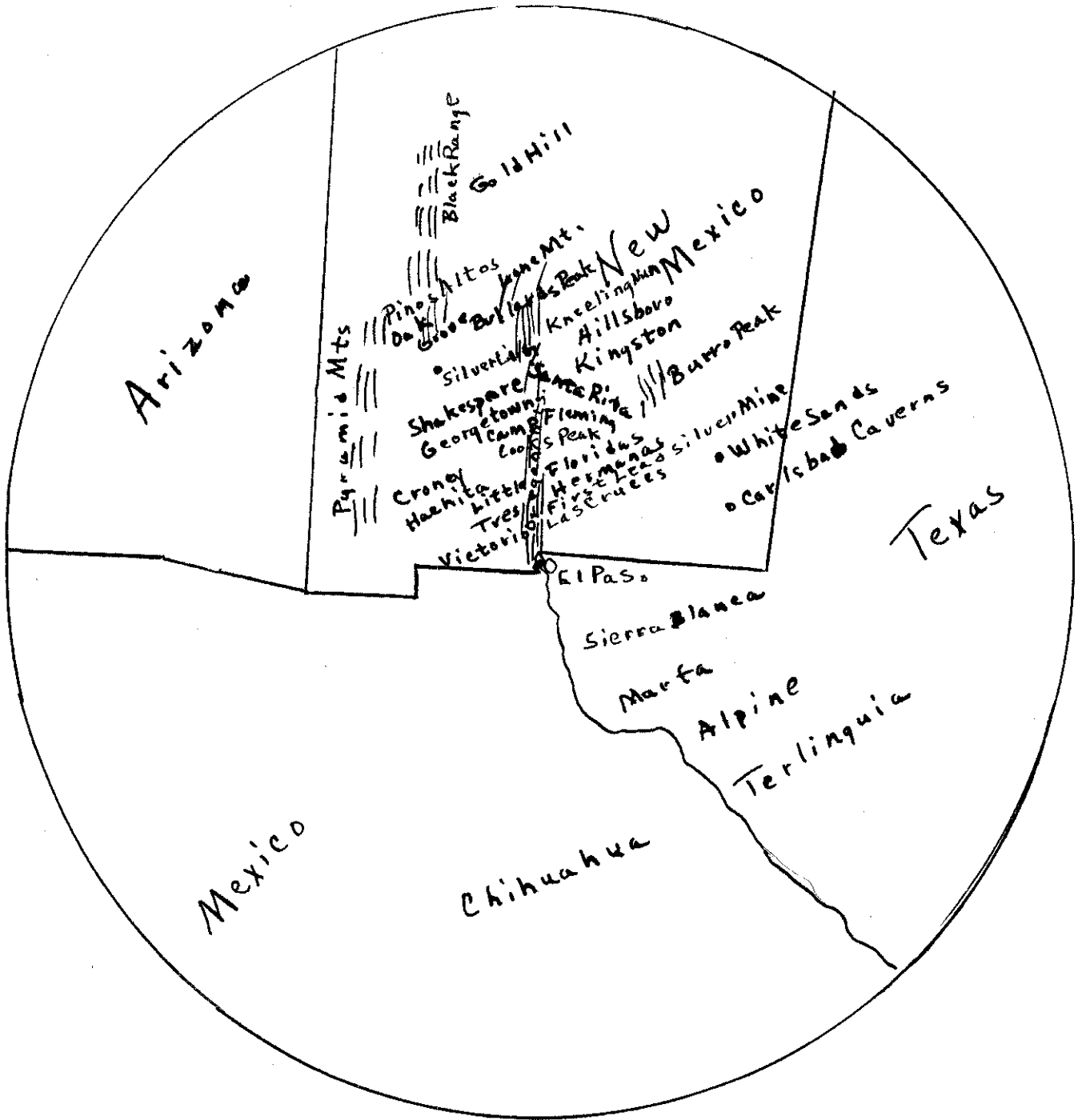
with Old Mexico is continually expanding, giving to El Paso a constantly growing international importance.<sup>7</sup>

The mineral wealth of Texas is said to be in its oil, gas, and sulphur. The El Paso area has virtually none of these. Yet if a person were to shut his eyes and stick a pin anywhere within a 250-mile radius of El Paso, the pin would not be far from a mine. These mineral products represent much wealth to the El Paso area.<sup>8</sup> The operation of mines in this district was in existence when the Spaniards arrived on the scene. Before Coronado's expedition in 1540, Indians were mining for turquoise in the Burro Mountains, fourteen miles southwest of Silver City. John Coleman, one of the first American miners in the district, located turquoise claims in 1870. One of the richest mining properties in the Southwest from the productive and historical viewpoint is that of the Santa Rita mines of the Chino Copper Company in Grant County, New Mexico. These mines were discovered by an Indian in the latter part of the eighteenth century. A little later, the Spaniards settled Santa Rita as a penal colony. A wealthy Chihuahua merchant bought the mines in 1804 and used convict labor to operate them. Crude pick and shovel methods were employed; ore was shipped by pack mules more than one thousand

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<sup>7</sup>"El Paso, Gateway to Mexico, Long in Big City Class," Christian Science Monitor, October 11, 1924, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



Mining of El Paso Area



miles to Mexico City. Each mule carried three hundred pounds of ore. Zebulon Pike reported in 1807 that the mines produced 20,000 mule loads annually. According to an old Spanish legend, a convent was established at Santa Rita and one of the nuns broke her vows and was turned to stone. To this day the stone column on the east rim of the basin surrounding the mining camp is called "the kneeling nun."<sup>9</sup>

Since 1873 the Santa Rita mines have been under American management. These mines, claiming to be the largest open-pit copper producers in the world, have produced enormous tonnage during the century and a half of their operation. A long succession of owners have controlled them, including the famous Hearst estate. Through the efforts of the late John M. Sully and various New York capitalists, the Chino Copper Company was formed by 1910 and the property was developed on a large scale. This high dividend-paying company is now owned by the Nevada Consolidated Copper Corporation.<sup>10</sup>

The mining interests represented by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation, the Calumet and Arizona Copper Company and the New Cornelia Copper Company have contracted with the Nichols Copper Company of El Paso to refine their entire

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<sup>9</sup>"Indians Operated S. W. Mines Before the Spaniards Came," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

output. El Paso is the logical center of the large copper industry of the Southwest. According to the 1926 Yearbook of the American Bureau of Metal Statistics, the total smelter output of copper in the United States in 1925 was 837,435 short tons, of which Arizona produced 361,325 tons and New Mexico 38,235 tons. In addition to this supply being refined in El Paso, Old Mexico also uses El Paso as an important market and supply source.<sup>11</sup>

The first important mine in the vicinity of El Paso was the silver-lead mine fifteen miles northeast of Las Cruces in the Organ Mountains. It was discovered in 1849 by a Mexican, who formed a partnership with Hugh Stephenson, a pioneer El Paso rancher. Stephenson built a fort on the location behind which the hardy miners alternately dug for ore and fought Indians. After several years of successful operation, Stephenson sold the mine to army officers at Fort Fillmore near Las Cruces for \$12,500.<sup>12</sup> In spite of the crude methods of mining and smelting, which left about half of the metal in the refuse, the mine was a profitable venture; it produced about eighteen dollars worth of bullion from three pounds of ore.<sup>13</sup>

The first important silver mining in the Silver City

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<sup>11</sup>Fred de Armond, "A Story of Copper," Texas Monthly, May, 1929, p. 635.

<sup>12</sup>"Indians Operated S. W. Mines Before Spaniards Came," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>13</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 83.

district began in 1871 when rich deposits were found at Chloride Flat. Within a few years Silver City became a roaring boom town. The next discovery of silver was seven miles northwest of Silver City and in the Bullard's Peak district, southwest of Silver City, where native silver running as high as 15,000 ounces to the ton yielded a production of more than \$600,000.<sup>14</sup> Much of the silver from the mines of New Mexico and Old Mexico is sent to El Paso. In 1926 it was estimated that twelve million dollars' worth of silver and one million dollars' worth of gold passed through El Paso annually.<sup>15</sup>

Among the first gold camps was the one at Pines Altos. Other gold and silver camps included the old workings at Pyramid, Shakespeare, Victorio, Cook's Peak, the Floridas, Tres Hermanos, Oak Grove, Georgetown, the Hachitas, Bullard's Peak, Gold Hill, the Burros, Camp Fleming, Chloride Flat, Lone Mountain, Black Range, Kingston, Lake Valley, Hillsboro, Croney, and others. Kingston was the center of an exceptionally rich silver deposit which produced individual fortunes amounting to \$6,000,000. Among the early prospectors in Kingston were Edward L. Doheny, oil magnate, and Albert B. Fall.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>"Indians Operated S. W. Mines Before Spaniards Came," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>15</sup>Curtis Vinson, "Farm Conquests in El Paso Area Is Agricultural Epic in History of the West," Dallas Morning News, May 16, 1926, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup>"Indians Operated S. W. Mines Before Spaniards Came," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

Mineral wealth of the El Paso area is not confined solely to the regions of Old and New Mexico. West of the Big Bend Park is the Terlingua quicksilver district. Forty miles south of Marfa is the famous Shafter silver mine which has been worked for some seventy-five years and has over sixty-five miles of underground workings. From Sierra Blanca to Alpine, there is a zone of intense mineralization dotted with small mines and prospects carrying silver, lead, and copper. The lead mines have been handicapped because they carry enough silver to win government disapproval, but the production of copper has been especially encouraged so as to cut down the current shortage. There is also in this district what appears to be a potentially large supply of fluorspar used in making hydrofluoric acid and as a flux in steel making.<sup>17</sup>

On the east side of Mount Franklin, not far from El Paso, is a famous old tin mine opened about 1860. Considering that not so much as a ton of tin has been produced in continental United States for a good many years, El Paso is proud of the fact that a smelter on this property actually produced metallic tin. This mine has not been in operation for more than thirty years. Manganese and tungsten both occur in this district and constant efforts are

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<sup>17</sup>Graham, op. cit., p. 10.

being made to develop sufficient reserves to warrant large-scale mining.<sup>18</sup>

The minerals most utilized in El Paso County are limestone and copper.

Since El Paso and the surrounding vicinity could not depend upon lumber for building materials, other means had to be devised. From the days of the earliest Spanish settlers, adobe has been used in the building of homes. Flood-plain clay occurs in several localities near El Paso. The beds range in thickness from a few inches to many feet, in character from rather pure clay to one containing large admixtures of sand. This clay is manufactured into common wire-cut bricks. The product is of fairly good grade; several million bricks come from this source yearly. Adobe bricks, made of sun-dried flood-plain clays, are manufactured extensively by the Mexican inhabitants of the valley to be used in the construction of buildings and homes.<sup>19</sup>

In the field of metal workings, El Paso has long been the leader in the great Western section. From El Paso many supplies are sent, including castings, mine cars, mining and smelting equipment, huge needles, valves for big power dams, hangars for aviation fields, steel towers and stacks,

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 23.

reinforcing steel, flumes, bridge steel and scores of other products of the foundry and fabricator. These supplies have been shipped to every section in the West and to foreign countries as far away as Australia. Representatives of the large mining manufacturers, mine headquarters, and twelve mining supply houses are located in El Paso.<sup>20</sup> It is obvious that the mineral wealth and the trade that result from the mines are important sources of revenue to this district.

El Paso has the largest custom smelter in the world. A custom smelter is one that receives ore from any miner or producer and extracts the useful minerals from it. The plant is operated by the American Smelting and Refining Company, operators of lead and copper smelters throughout the United States, Mexico, and South America.<sup>21</sup>

This smelter had its origin in 1885 when Robert S. Towne of Kansas City decided that El Paso's importance as a railroad center made it a logical choice for a smelter. Its most important business at that time was the treatment of lead ore coming from New Mexico and northern Mexico. In 1888 this smelter, owned by the El Paso Smelting Company, was acquired by the Consolidated Kansas City Smelt-

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<sup>20</sup>John F. Graham, "Mineral Wealth Is Basis of Prosperity in the El Paso Area," Texas Progress, September, 1943, pp. 10-28.

<sup>21</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 53.

ing Works. In 1901 the latter concern was taken over by the present owners, the American Smelting and Refining Company.

Before 1910 only lead ores were smelted, with the capacity of the smelter amounting to one thousand tons per day. However, in that year the capacity was increased to two thousand tons per day when copper smelting equipment was installed for the treatment of Chino concentrated ores from the famous Santa Rita mines. As the smelting of the lead ore had not been profitable, it was a life-saver to the smelter to receive the Santa Rita ore for smelting purposes. After World War I there was a slump in copper mining that caused the El Paso smelter serious financial trouble. It survived, however, in spite of difficulties; by 1929 it was the largest and practically the only custom smelter of its type in the world. Its capacity was twenty-five thousand tons a month for lead and forty to fifty thousand for copper. During the average year it received more than 310,000 tons of ore from 225 shippers in five states and Mexico.

Altogether at this period there were more than five hundred mines in the El Paso area producing principally copper, lead, gold, silver, and zinc. In 1930, \$3,500,000 per year represented the operating costs of the smelter; its annual payroll was more than one million dollars. The

smelter suffered greatly during the depression of the 1930's.<sup>22</sup> However, during recent years it has again assumed its place of importance.

When the smelter is in operation, the furnaces are never allowed to cool. Three shifts of men keep them charged every hour of the twenty-four and every day in the week. The smelting works are built on a hill above the Rio Grande; the slopes of the hill are used for dumps. Four great towers of masonry and concrete, one of them rising up to heights of four hundred feet, crown Smelter Hill.

A settlement known as Smelertown is located in the vicinity of the smelter. Because of the mixed types of population, close quarters, and generally unsatisfactory living conditions, Smelertown is often the scene of trouble. However, through the efforts of the school, church, and law-enforcing agencies, more peaceful conditions have begun to prevail.

The Nichols Copper Company and Metal Working Industry is located about four miles southeast of El Paso. Location and transportation facilities were the chief reasons for the beginning of this company in El Paso. All the copper that comes from Arizona and New Mexico mines must pass through El Paso on its way to the Atlantic seaboard. It was economically logical to make El Paso an assembling

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<sup>22</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 94-97.



point and ship only refined products rather than convey the raw products to the East. The company began operation January 28, 1930, with a working force averaging from two to three hundred men. This refinery, controlled by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation, is valued at \$4,000,000 and is one of the most modern in the world.<sup>23</sup> The Phelps-Dodge Corporation, the Calumet and Arizona Company, and the New Cornelia Copper Company have contracted with the Nichols Company to refine their entire output. The pit at Morenci, Arizona, which is able to produce forty thousand tons of copper ore a day, is owned by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation, and has its ore refined in El Paso by Nichols.<sup>24</sup> These companies, established in this region because of good transportation facilities and nearby mineral deposits, have brought much wealth into this area. Most of their labor supply is taken from the local population. Benefits are received from the taxes they pay and the money they spend for supplies.

Although the production of oil in the immediate vicinity of El Paso is practically non-existent, the area has profited from refineries that have been established there. The Pasotex refinery of the Standard Oil Company of Texas, the Texas Oil Refinery, and the McNut Oil Company Refinery,

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<sup>23</sup>Harris, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

<sup>24</sup>Graham, op. cit., p. 28.

an independent company located just over the line in New Mexico, are very important wealth producers in the El Paso area.<sup>25</sup> A two-hundred-mile long pipeline brings the crude oil to El Paso to be refined by the Standard and Texas Companies. These refineries are valued at over \$2,000,000. They pay good salaries and provide every convenience in very comfortable living quarters for their employees.<sup>26</sup>

Besides the leading industries already discussed, El Paso has more than two hundred manufacturing plants producing over 150 different products.

The first public utility provided for in El Paso was the water supply. In the earliest days, water was dipped from the river by those who lived close to it. The people who lived farther away had their water delivered to them in barrels. Later small surface wells were dug by individuals and operated by hand pumps. In 1881 a franchise for a water company was granted. In 1882 the franchise was transferred to Sylvester Watts, who built a water reservoir at the site of the old Sunset Pool and pumped water from the river into it. Pipes were laid from the reservoir to the city's main streets. So much mud and silt went through the pipes that the water was impossible to use. The system was changed when Watts dug a well in 1892, but

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<sup>25</sup>"Half Century Transforms Adobe Village into Industrial Center," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936.

<sup>26</sup>Harris, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

the consumers still complained of the water, particularly that it was too "hard." Several firms did a profitable business bringing water for domestic use from Deming, New Mexico. In 1902 the International Water Company obtained the franchise and in 1904 sank wells upon the mesa north of El Paso above the city. As the population increased, the company was unable to supply the demand, and the shortage was made up with water from the old Watts well. Apparently the water was still most unsatisfactory, because the customers complained so loudly that the city bought the entire plant in 1910. A survey made of the water system during World War I showed that the city had a huge lake underlying the cities of El Paso and Juarez with an inexhaustible supply of water available to them. The present city waterworks is a three-million-dollar plant publicly owned.<sup>27</sup>

The Portland Cement Company, established in El Paso in 1908, operates one of the most up-to-date plants to be found anywhere in the world. Its expenditures on freight, payroll, fuel, and miscellaneous purchases total more than \$2,000,000 annually.<sup>28</sup>

The \$600,000 plant of the El Paso Cotton Mills was organized in 1926. In 1932 it was leased to Hesslein and Company of New York who now operate it as the Lone Star

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<sup>27</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

Cotton Mills. Two large meat-packing plants, the John T. McElroy Packing Company and the Peyton Packing Company, along with two stockyards, handle many thousands of cattle each year. The Modera Box Company, when running at capacity, is one of the largest in the country. Another flourishing industry is the Harry Mitchell Brewing Company established in El Paso in 1935.<sup>29</sup>

Natural forests in New Mexico and Arizona cover more than 18,900,000 acres. Forest department supervisors insure to posterity a constant source of lumber supply, almost unlimited recreational facilities, moisture-holding watersheds to feed streams that make irrigation possible, and other benefits of a thoroughgoing conservation program. Three of the most extensive pine forests on the continent, located in Arizona, New Mexico, and Old Mexico, are within El Paso's trade territory.<sup>30</sup>

The concentration here of Federal Government agencies might also be classified as an industry. Fort Bliss, Biggs Field, William Beaumont Hospital, the Customs Service, Reclamation Service, Border Patrol, and other Federal activities account for an annual expenditure of more than \$9,000,000.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>"Half Century Transforms Adobe Village into Industrial Center," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>31</sup>"Half Century Transforms Adobe Village into Industrial Center," El Paso Herald Post, May 28, 1936, p. 7c.

According to surveys made of industrial El Paso in 1936, a great variety of articles are being produced. These include awnings, bags, barrels, beverages, bird baths, bridles, blueprints, boxes, bricks, brooms, building materials, cabinet work, candy, cement, chemicals, cigars, clothing, coffee, cotton compresses, concrete pipes, electrolytic copper, cotton cloth, cotton-seed products, cowboy supplies, culverts, dairy products, dental supplies, distilled iron products, furnaces, furniture, coffins, harness, hydrogen, maps, mattresses, meat products, medicine, Mexican foods, mill work, mirrors, monuments, novelties, work clothes, oxygen gas, sashes, serapes, smelter products, electric signs, stone products, tile, trunks, automobile accessories, yeast, and boats.<sup>32</sup>

When one considers the advance that El Paso industry has made in the short period of its development, it is evident that future possibilities are almost unlimited.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IMPORTANCE AND GROWTH OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE EL PASO AREA

Some idea of the importance of transportation to the El Paso area in the early period of the Anglo-American development was gained from the study of the occupations of this period. Practically all the occupations of these years were connected with the transportation of goods or with providing supplies for the transportation system, and practically all the industries in El Paso came because of the excellent transportation facilities.

The earliest official United States Mail line to traverse the El Paso district was established in 1854. On April 22 of that year David Wasson made a contract with the government to carry the mail in two-horse coaches between San Antonio and Santa Fe on a twenty-five day schedule. The contract was transferred on March 13, 1855, to George H. Giddings, who held it until it expired on June 30, 1858.<sup>1</sup>

The first transcontinental mail line through El Paso was established August 9, 1857, when the San Antonio and

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<sup>1</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 73.

San Diego Mail Line began operation. The original contract was between the United States Government and James E. Birch of Massachusetts.

When Birch lost his life a little later, George H. Giddings became the proprietor also of this line. The passengers were carried in square-bodied coaches drawn by five mules. The fare for each passenger was \$200, with the company taking care of all expenses including as good accommodations as possible. The average time required for the trip was twenty-three days; the mail left San Antonio on the 24th of each month; it must have reached El Paso near the end of the first and third weeks. The line was very successful until the spring of 1861, when the stations in western New Mexico and Arizona were destroyed during an Apache uprising. The route followed by the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line was the Lower Emigrant Road from San Antonio to El Paso, via Fort Davis, generally used by the government freighters, traders and stockmen.<sup>2</sup>

The Southern Overland Mail, better known as the Butterfield Mail, was perhaps the best known mail line through the district. There had been constant agitation over a long period for an improved method of communication between the east and west coasts. By 1855 five transcontinental routes had been explored, but the whole affair became

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

hopelessly involved in sectionalism and rivalry between cities. In 1856, because of popular demand, Congress made an appropriation of two hundred thousand dollars for a road from El Paso to Yuma.<sup>3</sup>

In the Post Office Appropriation Act for 1857, funds were provided for an overland route from St. Louis to San Francisco. The government advertised for bids to perform the services. John Butterfield, an old mail driver from Utica, New York, was the successful bidder. He proposed the southern route with St. Louis as the point for beginning operation. A six-year contract was entered into with Butterfield and his associates on September 16, 1857. Although the famous stage line retained the name Butterfield, the man John Butterfield was never farther west than Fort Smith, Arkansas.<sup>4</sup>

The first Southern Overland Mail from the East arrived in El Paso at five a. m., September 30, 1858. It arrived in San Francisco October 10, the traveling time being twenty-three days, twenty-three and a half hours. The first east-bound mail passed through El Paso September 29 with only one passenger aboard. The stage arrived in St. Louis October 9, making the trip in twenty-four days, eighteen hours and six minutes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 40-41.



It is thought that the route for a time at least coincided with the Upper Emigrant Road from the Pecos River to El Paso. West of El Paso the Butterfield road followed the Rio Grande to Fort Fillmore, thence westward by way of Cook's Springs to Tucson over the newly built government wagon road. Since this route was the one followed by the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line between El Paso and Yuma, the service on the Giddings line between the two points was discontinued in December, 1858. Congress, on March 2, 1861, authorized the transfer of the transcontinental mail from the southern to the central route through Atchison, Kansas, providing, however, for the continuation of local service through El Paso.<sup>6</sup>

It has been said of the Butterfield or Southern Overland Mail that from the first day of its operation it had the effect of advertising and greatly aiding in the settlement of the country through which it passed. This line of reasoning is especially applicable to the little town of Franklin, the forerunner of El Paso.<sup>7</sup>

Between El Paso and Yuma the mail suffered the greatest hardships because of the depredations of the savage Apache Indians. After the first few trips, mules were used instead of horses, since the Indians did not value mule-flesh as highly as they did horse-flesh. In a short

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<sup>6</sup>Long, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

time, the Butterfield Mail was making trips four times weekly from St. Louis to San Francisco through El Paso. The trip required twenty-five days and the fare was \$200, the passengers paying for their own meals and lodging. Since the Civil War made this southern service impossible, in the summer of 1861 it was discontinued.<sup>8</sup>

Six or eight guards were carried on each mail coach, the passengers were armed and were expected to assist the guards when necessary. In 1852 there was not a human habitation from Fort Clarke, 130 miles west of San Antonio, to El Paso. The Apaches, Comanches, and Mescalero Indians roamed the plains, constantly menacing the safety of the stage lines. Despite many difficulties, an immense traffic was developed and carried on during the stage-coach period. Long wagon trains came into El Paso, entering over a southern terminal of the Santa Fe route from Independence, Missouri. These trains were loaded with dry goods, groceries, and hardware to meet the equally extensive shipments of bullion and other products of Mexico. It was not unusual for a single store to sell \$100,000 worth of goods in a day. Money was more plentiful than any commodity demanded in daily living.<sup>9</sup>

The stage stations along the stage route were practically

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<sup>8</sup>Malley, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>9</sup>Kriedler, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

all on the same unchanging plan. They were made somewhat fort-like for the protection of men and animals. On each side of the entrance was a large room. The gateway opened into a passageway, which was roofed and extended from one room to the other. To the rear of the rooms was a corral with walls from six to eight feet high built of adobe or sun-dried bricks. One room served the double purpose of kitchen and dining room; the other was a combination sleeping quarters and storehouse. The stage company supplied the keeper with food, which he cooked for himself and the stage passengers.<sup>10</sup>

When the stage drawn by its wiry little Spanish mules arrived at the station, the keeper would throw open the gates to the speeding animals so that they could be replaced by another like team. These mules were wild as deer. They had been bought in groups of fifty to one hundred from the ranges of Old Mexico to be distributed along the stage route. They had to be tied down or tied up, as the case might be, to be hitched to the stage. When everything was ready, the gates were thrown open again to the running team. The intelligent little mules soon learned that all they had to do was to run between stations; when they were on their way they could not be stopped until they reached their destination.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Gillett, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

The drivers were a rough and ready group of fellows. They performed a fine and daring service for our country. Many of them lost their lives in this hazardous work. In 1880, during the last year that the stage line was in operation, several stage drivers were murdered between Fort Davis and El Paso.<sup>12</sup>

The next era of transportation development began with the building of the railroads. When four railroads began building toward the Pass, the town was thrown into wild excitement. From the west came the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe, from the east the Texas and Pacific, from the south the Mexican Central. It was a dramatic race providing a thrilling chapter to the already vivid history of the Pass city.<sup>13</sup> The Texas and Pacific Railroad was authorized by an act of Congress in 1871 to build from Marshall, Texas, to San Diego, California; at the same time it was given authority to connect with the Southern Pacific at the Colorado River. Construction reached Dallas in 1873 and was stopped for several years. By 1877 the Southern Pacific Railroad Company had reached Yuma and was continuing eastward. When the Colorado River was reached, Fort Worth was the western terminus of the Texas and Pacific. Huntington secured the right to continue building the Southern Pacific toward the east.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 136-137.

<sup>13</sup>Hail, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

In the meantime the Santa Fe Railroad was building southward through the valley of the Rio Grande and the Jornada de Muerto; at Rincon it branched, one line going to Deming, the other following the river to El Paso to make connection with the Southern Pacific.

On May 26, 1881, the first railroad train to reach the city of El Paso came in over the Southern Pacific lines from the Pacific Coast. Sixteen days later, June 11, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe sent in its first train from the North.<sup>14</sup>

In March, 1880, the Texas and Pacific again started building its line westward, hoping to check the advance of the Southern Pacific. As soon as the Southern Pacific reached El Paso, it continued construction to the eastward under the separate name of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway Company. Both companies were straining every point to reach Sierra Blanca so as to obtain right-of-way to the only logical route through the El Paso valley.<sup>15</sup> According to some reports, Collis P. Huntington, head of the Southern Pacific, was a much shrewder builder than his competitor, Jay Gould of the Texas and Pacific. Huntington stole a march on Jay Gould by contracting for all the rails that could be produced in the United States,

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<sup>14</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>15</sup>Long, op. cit., pp. 151-152.

forcing Gould to ship his rails from England. At any rate, it was Huntington's Southern Pacific line, under the name of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio, that reached the coveted spot first. The Southern Pacific arrived at Sierra Blanca November 25, 1881, while the Texas and Pacific did not arrive until December 16, 1881.<sup>16</sup>

The first train from the East arrived in El Paso in January, 1882. Huntington allowed Gould to have permanent right-of-way on the Southern Pacific tracks; so this train, as all other Texas and Pacific trains, traveled on the Southern Pacific tracks from Sierra Blanca to El Paso. Gould's original plan had been to extend the Texas and Pacific to the West Coast, but this plan was never carried out; El Paso remains the western terminus of the railway.<sup>17</sup>

After completing the Southern Pacific from California to El Paso, Collis P. Huntington continued work on the road to San Antonio in order to secure a transcontinental connection. The railway from San Antonio to El Paso was completed in 1883.<sup>18</sup>

The Mexican Central began construction in 1881 at Paso del Norte to make connection with the Mexican system of railways centering at Mexico City and opened service in

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<sup>16</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 46-47.

<sup>18</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 1055.

1882. Other railroads completed were the El Paso and Northwestern in 1898, and in 1903 the El Paso and Southern, which gives the city direct connection with the Santa Rita mines. These railroads have played a great part in improving terminal facilities.<sup>19</sup>

With the arrival and development of the railroads throughout the El Paso district, the city began to grow and to expand with great speed. Hundreds of persons arrived annually in El Paso to enter businesses of various types. The city is a division point of the Santa Fe Railroad. Large shops are maintained here in which approximately 280,000 men are employed; the payroll is about \$1,200,000 per year. El Paso is also a division point of the Southern Pacific lines which maintain even larger shops than the Santa Fe. About nineteen hundred men are employed by the Southern Pacific with the payroll amounting to about \$2,296,000 annually.<sup>20</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that the railroads built the city of El Paso. The population increase began almost overnight when construction of the railroads was begun toward El Paso. In one month of 1881, the number of persons increased from 761 to 1,500. This rapid increase has continued through the years.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 1056.

<sup>20</sup> O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 45-48.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

The arrival of the railroads stirred some of the town's progressive citizens into action about the condition of transportation within the city. Heretofore most of the traffic had been between Juarez and El Paso in small flat-bottomed boats which could be operated only when there was sufficient water in the river. In 1882 a group of men headed by Anson Mills obtained a charter for their El Paso Street Railway Company. This mule-drawn car system was operated between El Paso and Juarez over a wooden bridge constructed at Stanton Street. The system connected at this point with the Mexican chartered company serving Juarez.<sup>22</sup> The cars were imported and the mules were broken in to draw them. The second line constructed by the company ran out San Antonio Street to Judge Magoffin's home. The conductor on this line was known as Pedro. He was a hero to all the small children since, if the car was not crowded with pay passengers, he would allow them to ride free.

Soon the El Paso Street Railway Company met competition from Samuel Schultz, who secured a franchise from the United States Government to set up a rival line. This new line started from the "Little Plaza," about the center of town, ran down to San Francisco Street to the west, turned south on Santa Fe Street and continued to the river. The

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<sup>22</sup>From Mule Car to Motor Buses in El Paso, a booklet published by the El Paso Electric Company, p. 1.



Mexican authorities had constructed a line on the Mexican side to the river, but there was no Santa Fe bridge to join the two. This line existed vicariously until 1892 when Schultz sold his franchise to Z. T. White and J. J. Gordon on condition that they complete the line to Juarez.<sup>23</sup>

White was a very resourceful man. He immediately made arrangements with the mayor of Juarez to connect the Juarez line with his own over a bridge built across the river at the Santa Fe Street crossing. In 1895 the two mule car companies came under the same management for operating purposes. Under this new management the mule cars entered Juarez via the Stanton Street bridge and returned to El Paso via the Santa Fe bridge. After this step was taken there was little or no change in the city transportation system for the next twenty years.<sup>24</sup>

The mule cars ran on light, standard-gauge tracks, with a mule proceeding between the rails at a leisurely pace. The little wooden cars were without springs, had a single compartment, a seating capacity of ten persons, oil lamps, and wood-burning stoves for winter. Old-timers report that sand frequently covered the tracks; passengers would get out and help push the car over a bad spot.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Malley, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>"From Mule Cars to Motor Buses in El Paso," a booklet issued by the El Paso Electric Company, p. 2.

Owen P. White gives this vivid description of the mule car system of transportation in El Paso:

For twenty years, the mule cars operated without having an accident or paying a dividend. The old system was delightfully simple, convenient, accommodating and deliberate. When a passenger boarded a car, he immediately came in contact with all the officials of the company except the President and the board of directors. The cars, which were somewhat larger than a present-day wardrobe trunk, derived their motive power from a Mexican mule, while the mule in turn derived his from a man who occupied a composite position as motorman, conductor, stable-boy, car repairer, switch tender, superintendent of maintenance, power director, and day nurse. . . . The last mentioned service, that of day nurse, was one which was undertaken for the convenience of mothers along the line who could think of no better or safer way of getting rid of their children for a time than of parking them inside a street car, which in the course of a half day at least, would succeed in making a round trip.<sup>26</sup>

Floyd Payne, pioneer El Pasoan, recalls with praise the courtesy of the mule car driver, who would stop the car at any convenient location to accommodate the passenger who wanted to buy a loaf of bread, a spool of thread, to visit the butcher, or attend to other errands.<sup>27</sup>

Interest in the street railway transportation business was growing rapidly throughout this country. In 1901 the El Paso Electric Railway Company was formed to take over the mule car franchise and the two wooden bridges. This company, forerunner of the present company, began to

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<sup>26</sup>White, op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>27</sup>From Mule Car to Motor Bus in El Paso, a booklet published by the El Paso Electric Company, p. 3.

build an electric traction system immediately, but it did not go into the electric lighting business until four years later, when it bought out the power plant operated by the International Light and Power Company. After months of work, tracks, poles and trolleys for the electric system were in place. On January 11, 1902, the first electric street car departed on its maiden journey from downtown El Paso to Juarez. Old-timers agree that it was a great event. Appropriate ceremonies marked the occasion. Crowds gazed pridefully at the company's rolling stock, four electric street cars and three trailers, lined up for public inspection. The mayor made a dedicatory speech; the famous McGinty Club band played. After these preliminaries, the cars moved out under their own power through flag-bedecked streets, convincing some of the boastfully doubtful on-lookers of their power to run. One outstanding event in the celebration was the part played by the popular and well known mule, Mandy, which had for years pulled street cars through the town. This mule had been such a part of the town that it was felt that it would only be right to let her take part in the ceremonies. She was placed in one of the trailers to ride down the street in the first electric car on its maiden journey.<sup>28</sup>

By 1905 the trolley lines fully covered the downtown

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

business district, a substantial part of the residential district, extended to Old Fort Bliss, the smelter, and Juarez. The streets were unpaved and the street cars were the fastest, most comfortable means of transportation available. Street cars were almost always crowded; strap hanging was an institution. When Washington Park was a flourishing amusement center, it was frequently necessary to attach trailers to the street cars in order to provide transportation for the thousands who went to the park for recreation. One of the street cars, containing space for a coffin and seats for mourners, was known as the funeral car. Not until 1920 did the sale of electricity become more important than transportation.<sup>29</sup>

The installation of street cars was responsible for the spreading out of the city. New additions were opened and serviced by the new electric system. By 1922 the El Paso Electric Railway Company had become a seven-million-dollar enterprise and El Paso's largest taxpayer. Because many blocks of the company's routes have been abandoned, there is now only nineteen miles of street-car lines as compared to thirty-three miles of bus lines.<sup>30</sup>

The origin of El Paso's present highway system possibly dates back to "El Camino Real" or "The King's Highway"

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>30</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 76.

between Santa Fe and Chihuahua. The settlement at Paso del Norte was about halfway between these two cities. The hoofs of thousands of pack mules beat a trail down through the mountain pass between these two points.<sup>31</sup>

The roads from the Spanish period up to 1884 were little more than trails. In that year the Commissioners' Court had appointed a committee to lay off the first official county road. It was to be graded and was to extend from El Paso to the Presidio County line. The committee selected what is now called the "old valley road." This road was built from El Paso, through Ysleta, Socorro, San Elizario, Fabens, Fort Hancock, Fort Quitman, Sierra Blanca, and Van Horn to the Presidio County line. This remained the county road until 1907. The 1894 Commission located a county road also to the new Fort Bliss on the mesa to the northeast of El Paso.<sup>32</sup>

El Paso County has a well improved road system, with all the main highways radiating from El Paso. The roads leading out of El Paso are paved, while the county secondary roads are graveled and graded. Texas State Highway Number 1 enters the county at the extreme corner east of Tornillo and leaves at the extreme northwest corner of

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<sup>31</sup>Bush, op. cit., p. 79.

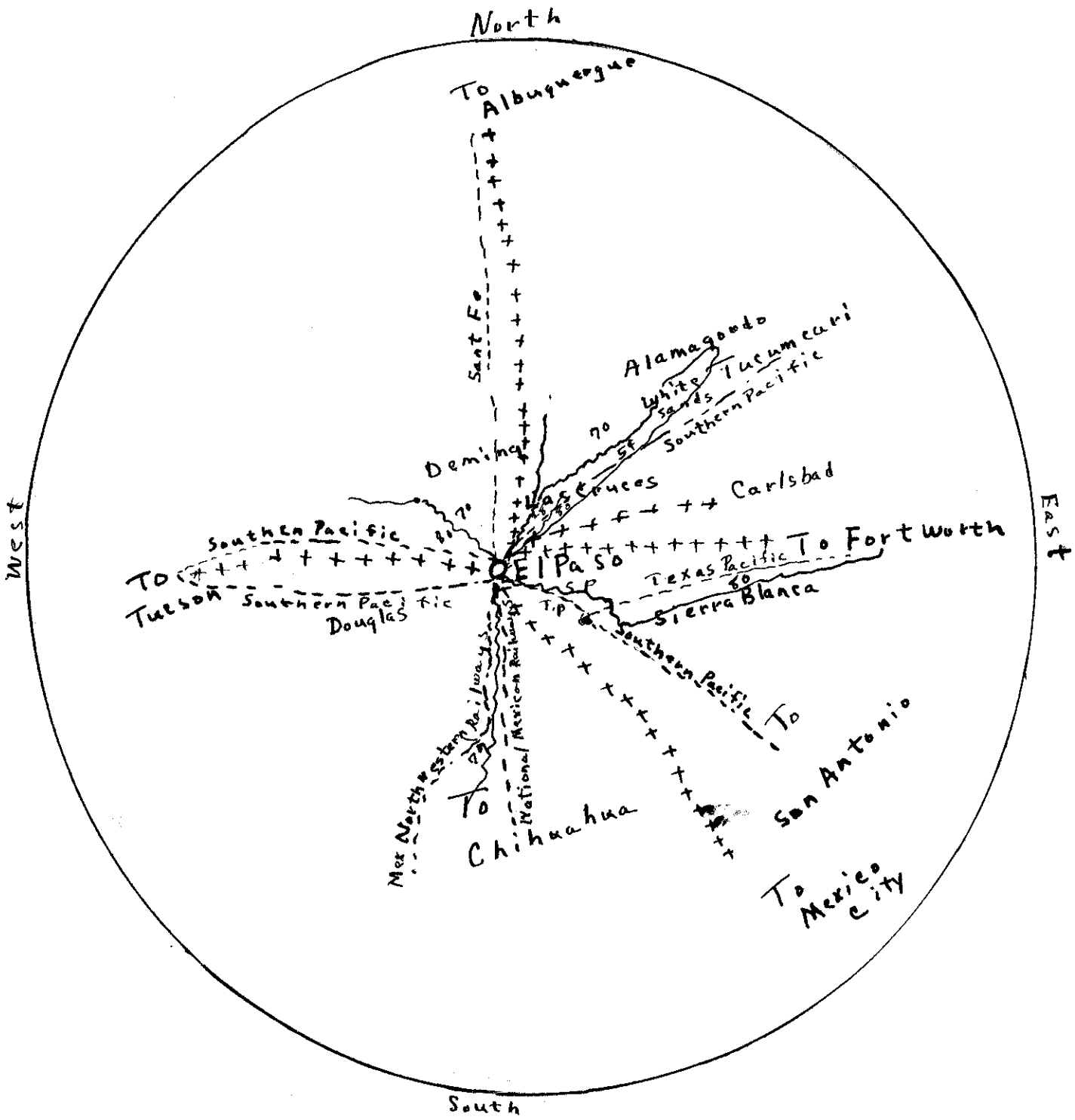
<sup>32</sup>Hammons, op. cit., p. 134.

Anthony, traversing the full length of the valley for a distance of sixty-one miles. Automobiles, bus and freight truck lines provide public carrier transportation over the highways between the local points. The Greyhound and All-American bus lines have stations in El Paso and make connections over the entire United States. In addition there are local buses, school buses, church and sight-seeing buses going to all parts of the valley. Milk routes and rural postal routes are also in operation over the network of roads in the upper and lower valleys.<sup>33</sup>

The most recent means of transportation to come to El Paso is that of the airplane. In 1927 Charles A. Lindbergh was touring the country in the interests of aviation. In September of that year, he arrived in El Paso to speak of the future possibilities of the airplane. He stressed the fact that this city is strategically located for air service. He reiterated what the early arrivals had observed a hundred years before, that the southern route through El Paso was the good-weather route because of the absence of snow and the lower altitude. With these words of encouragement to speed her on, El Paso soon became an air-minded city. On February 4, 1929, the first daily transcontinental air-train service was inaugurated through El Paso. It was very convenient to have El Paso serve as

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<sup>33</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 24.



+++ Airlines  
 --- Railroads  
 ~~~ Highways

Available Transportation Out  
of El Paso

a junction point. Passengers could easily be transferred from the Texas and Pacific Railroad to the Standard Air Lines east and west. In March, 1929, the Texas Air Transport began daily passenger service between Dallas and El Paso with six hours for flying time. A few months later, August 15, 1929, international connection was made between Mexico and the United States in El Paso. The Corporacion Aeronautica de Transportes began daily service between El Paso and Mexico City. This line made connection with the Mid-Continental Air Express which flew between El Paso and Denver, Colorado, a flying distance of four hours. The American Air Lines have taken over the Standard Air Lines on the east-west transcontinental routes.

The contrast between this mode of travel and the old Butterfield Overland Mail is very great. The flying time from St. Louis to San Francisco is twelve hours and thirty minutes as compared with twenty-five days for the same trip by the old stage-coach. The fare by air is \$105, while the Butterfield stage passengers paid \$200 in addition to meals and lodging.<sup>34</sup>

In a study of the development of transportation in the El Paso area, it is impossible to miss the importance, from the earliest days down to the present time, of the

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<sup>34</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., pp. 50-51; also, information obtained from the offices of the American Air Lines and Continental Air Lines in El Paso.



geographical location of the Pass to transportation. The present extensive systems of transportation by rail, bus, and airplane are just as dependent on this strategic placement of the Pass as were the drivers of the mule caravans that followed the "El Camino Real" through this Paso del Norte two hundred years ago.

## CHAPTER VI

### PRESENT-DAY EL PASO

This friendly, hospitable city of 124,000, built in a vast crescent around Mount Franklin, the southern tip of the Rockies in the United States, stands at the historic Paso del Norte. Here, at the lowest snow-free pass from north and east to the far west, highways, railroads, and air lines find the perfect year-around route. El Paso is certainly the product of its historical environment. Within the city and surrounding vicinity, living conditions range from the early primitive type Mexican adobes to the exclusive residential dwellings on El Paso's Rim Road.<sup>1</sup>

Elevation in the El Paso area ranges from 3,600 to 4,200 feet above sea level. The average winter temperatures vary from fourteen degrees minimum to seventy degrees maximum; the average summer temperatures from sixty-three degrees to 103 degrees. The average frost-free period of 203 days extends from April 9 to October 29. Winters are usually mild, while the summers have extremely warm days made bearable by cool nights. The medium altitude and dry atmosphere serve to moderate the southern

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<sup>1</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, Sunshine Playground of the Border, a bulletin, pp. 2-3.

climate. The average rainfall is 8.9 inches, more than half of which occurs in July, August, and September. About the only extreme weather conditions that cause any unpleasant feelings are the severe sandstorms in March of each year. Cyclones and thunder storms are practically non-existent.<sup>2</sup>

It has already been mentioned that El Paso has one of the largest trade territories in the United States. It is possible to walk down the street in El Paso and see individuals dressed in Indian costumes, cowboy outfits, Spanish sombreros, latest New York creations, ordinary clothes of the ordinary citizen, or whatever happens to be worn in any part of the vast trade territory. Each of these different individuals will be equally at home because the civilization from El Paso has contributions from each group.

The homes of El Paso demonstrate this mingling of cultures in their appearance. The later ones are mostly of Indian pueblo or Spanish type with creamy stucco walls. An architect with sophisticated ideas, or even a Spaniard, might question the authenticity of the words "Spanish type," but most individuals recognize the type immediately. Other types found here are the more pretentious Mediterranean type, the early New Mexican, the Mexican, American

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<sup>2</sup>Bureau of Reclamation, General Descriptive Statement, p. 4.

bungalow, and a few English mansions. Many features are peculiar to El Paso's climate; for example, the flat roof which can be used because of the fact that it does not have to carry the weight of loads of snow. Most El Paso homes are equipped with backyard fireplaces, open-air sleeping porches, patios, and outdoor living rooms.

Among the places bearing Spanish names in El Paso are Paso del Norte and Cortez Hotels; Del Camino Courts; Piedras, San Antonio, Luz, and Alameda Streets; San Jacinto Plaza Park. Early American names commemorated in place names include the Mills Building, Mills Street, Roberts-Banner Building, Bassett Tower, Mount Franklin, and Fort Bliss.<sup>3</sup>

It is estimated that the Latin-American population of El Paso makes up about forty-nine per cent of the total. There have been numerous examples of intermarriage between the Anglos and the Mexicans. This fact was particularly true in the days before the Anglo-American women came to El Paso. Descendents of some of these mixed marriages are very prominent and highly respected in El Paso circles today.<sup>4</sup>

Only sixty years ago, El Paso's students were educated in rented rooms; parents boycotted the schools, refusing to

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<sup>3</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Owen P. White, personal interview.

appropriate money that would educate their children along with those of the poorer families. With that thought in mind the growth of the public school system is a testimony to the civic organizations that have accomplished so much in so short a time. At the present time the pupils of the twenty-three public schools in El Paso have reached a total number of 24,718 with 765 teachers.<sup>5</sup> The El Paso schools have kept pace with the growth of the city.

Grade schools are located in all parts of town convenient to residential districts. In addition to the three regular high schools of the city, El Paso Technical Institute offers a thoroughly modern practical education to students not interested in attending college. Besides high school students attending this school, many adults avail themselves of the opportunity to receive further training in the special classes held at night. Many Catholic students of El Paso attend Cathedral High School for boys and Loretta Academy for girls. Girls desiring to attend private schools have an excellent opportunity to do so at Radford School for Girls. Many of the students at this school are from other towns and often from other states.

In the field of higher education there is the Texas College of Mines, a coeducational branch of the University

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<sup>5</sup>Welcome to El Paso, p. 12.

of Texas. The importance of mining in the Southwest with the easily accessible open pit copper mines at Santa Rita make El Paso a logical place for this college of mining and metallurgy. During its early years the curriculum consisted of subjects chiefly of interest to mining and engineering students. However, in addition to these highly specialized courses in the intricacies of mining, engineering, and allied subjects, increasing stress has been placed in academic fields of the curriculum. A large percentage of the student body lives in the city and the valley, thus traveling back and forth each day. The college offers both the bachelor's and master's degrees.<sup>6</sup>

At present there are about seventy individual churches in El Paso to cater to the spiritual needs of the people.<sup>7</sup> The Catholic religion probably has more followers than all the others combined. It dates back to the days of the early Spanish missionaries. A person desiring to attend Mass in El Paso may do so at one of the modern Catholic churches or at one of the old Spanish missions. The Catholic services at the Ysleta mission are still given in Spanish by a Spanish priest. The wedding ceremonies held at the little mission are very interesting and unusual

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<sup>6</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 8.

because of the Spanish customs included.<sup>8</sup>

During the week of October 9, 1945, the 75th anniversary of the Church of St. Clement was celebrated. This religious institution was founded under the leadership of the Reverend Joseph W. Tays on October 9, 1870. Attendance of nearby Episcopal clergy brought about the largest clerical participation in the ceremonial history of the church. An open invitation was extended to all non-Episcopalian friends and their attendance rivaled the days of Parson Tays, who enjoyed the friendship and good will of all religious denominations as well as the rough citizenry of the pioneer town of Franklin. One of the highlights of the celebration was the ceremonial placing of a wreath upon the grave of Parson Tays in Concordia Cemetery. Stress was placed upon the week's social program. A frontier fair depicted the Franklin social activities at the time of the founding of St. Clement. Melodrama, stage trips, dancing, food and games of the seventies entertained the crowd at the Parish House. A pioneer luncheon, a parish dinner, a tea and a reception served to bring the clergy, the people of St. Clement and their friends together in celebrating the achievements of a near century of progress which culminated in the breaking of the ground for the new

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<sup>8</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 22.

\$100,000 Williams Hall addition.<sup>9</sup>

Other churches in El Paso are the Methodists, Baptists, Church of Christ, First Christian, Presbyterians, Jewish, and practically every other found in existence.

Another institution that contributes to the education and knowledge of El Pasoans is the splendid public library. Its beginning may be traced to the organization of a reading club for boys in 1894, instituted by Mary I. Stanton. In 1897 L. M. Sheldon gave the little library a room, rent free, in which to function. That same year Mayor Magoffin offered the library space in the new city hall, thus enabling the Reading Club to continue to grow. In 1900 the first constitution was drawn up and the association was incorporated. The library soon became interested in the possibility of obtaining a gift from Andrew Carnegie, and plans were made accordingly. As a result, the sum of \$37,500 was received with the usual condition that the city furnish the site and agree to appropriate annually ten per cent of the amount given. The city granted five thousand dollars for a building site; on April 26, 1906, an imposing library was opened to the public.<sup>10</sup> The library has about 78,570 volumes at the present time. It is used by college students enrolled in the College of Mines,

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<sup>9</sup>"Church of St. Clement Begins Week-long Program to Celebrate 75th Anniversary," El Paso Times, October 10, 1945, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup>O'Malley, op. cit., p. 82.



public school pupils, local townspeople, and research students. The collection on the Southwest is especially good.<sup>11</sup>

From the time El Paso was a little adobe village to the present, its citizens have never failed to find plenty of recreation and entertainment. Customs brought from all over the United States are woven into the social fabric of El Paso. Customs of New England, the Deep South, the far North, Old Mexico, and the picturesque atmosphere of the cattle ranches add verve and color to the city's unusual social structure.<sup>12</sup> Entertainments include parties at the country club, Fort Bliss, the Upper and Lower Valleys, performances by the Little Theater group, meetings of the square-dance club, annual Junior League Follies, parties in private homes, and hotels.

Particularly fine entertainment is provided by the Community Concert Series and the splendid seventy-five piece symphony orchestra. Many famous guest artists have appeared under the auspices of these two organizations in recent years. Among the most outstanding were Jeanette MacDonald, Jose Iturbi, Helen Jepson, Gladys Swarthout, Yhudi Menuhin, Lauritz Melchior, Nathan Milstein, Jascha

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Ollie P. Lansden, "Pioneer El Pasoans Had Quick Welcome for Strangers," El Paso Times, November 6, 1938.

Heifitz, Mischa Elman, Ballet Russe, Ballet Theater, Rudolph Serkin, Mexico City Symphony, Don Cossacks Chorus, Argentinita, and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra.

Opera lovers have enjoyed the annual performances given by the San Carlo Opera Company.<sup>13</sup>

El Paso has thirty-two named parks of approximately 350 developed acres. The parks are scattered over the city within a radius of five miles, which gives each neighborhood the facilities of a small park. Washington Park is the largest and most popular recreational center, covering 120 acres along the Rio Grande. Memorial Park is one of the finest in the Southwest, a pleasing recreational ground for picnics and auto sightseers. The entire area of sloping hills is covered with pines, cypress, juniper, arbovitae, and many evergreen blooming shrubs. San Jacinto Plaza is a little garden situated in the heart of the business district, where people waiting to catch buses often amuse themselves by standing beside the pool watching the two gigantic alligators that were brought from Florida in a cigar box over fifty years ago.<sup>14</sup>

El Paso has two fine golf courses that can be used almost any day of the year. The College of Mines offers courses in riding to its students. Many prominent citizens

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<sup>13</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

of the city are members of the Riding and Driving Club. Horse shows at Cowboy Park attract many interested visitors. Many of the most substantial businessmen were practically born in the saddle, some having been cowpunchers in their early days. Most of these men own their own horses, and others may obtain them from nearby stables. Rodeos are held frequently with local horses and local talent making good appearance. The proximity of both the Army and Old Mexico tends to make this place an international polo center.<sup>15</sup>

The sportsmen who prefer hunting and fishing are not left out. There are deer, bear, mountain lion, rabbits, dove, duck, pheasant and quail in sections of the El Paso area. Fishing ranges from the kind that is done by small boys in the irrigation ditches to that done by their fathers in Elephant Butte Lake. Hunters and fishermen who tire of the domestic brands of wilds can always travel down into some of the unspoiled country of Old Mexico.

The accessibility of interesting mountain canyons and other favored spots makes picnicking a popular diversion. Many families spend frequent weekends exploring the ruins of old forts, looking for Indian arrowheads or examining queer rock formations. A fine natural park area is provided in McKelligan Canyon, just north of the city, which

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<sup>15</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 15.

is liberally equipped with outdoor fireplaces and picnic tables.

Spectator sports are very popular in El Paso. Among those included are professional baseball, college and high school football and basketball, boxing, wrestling and water sports on Ascarate Lake.<sup>16</sup> One of the greatest attractions of the year is the annual Sun Bowl football game. The champion team of the Border Conference is asked to play in the Sun Bowl in El Paso each New Year's Day with whatever team they choose to invite as their opponents. This game is sponsored by the Southwest Sun Carnival Association, which was begun in 1935 as a non-profit organization of the service clubs of the city. The ceremonies began, in the earliest games and down to the present, with a concert by the El Paso Symphony Orchestra three or four days before the climaxing event of the football game. The Southwestern Sun Carnival received national recognition in 1935. The beauty, color, and historical accuracy of the floats in the giant "Pageant of History" parade were described over radio station WFAA in Dallas and were filmed by newsreel cameramen for the theaters. The association in addition to promoting better football provides a medium for the people of West Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to become better acquainted.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>17</sup>L. A. Wilke, "The Sun Nearly Always Shines There," West Texas Today, November, 1936, p. 13.

The tourist trade in El Paso is quite prolific in normal times. El Paso's location makes it a desirable stop-over on the way to California or Old Mexico. Numerous sightseeing trips can be arranged for persons desiring to use El Paso as a headquarters. The attractions within thirty miles of El Paso include the city itself, viewed close at hand or from the vantage point of Scenic Drive five hundred feet up on the face of Mount Franklin; the valleys with their quaint settlements of adobe houses and famous old missions dating back to Pueblo Revolt days; Fort Bliss, formerly the country's largest cavalry post, now expanded into one of America's most important military posts; and the canyons of the local mountains.

Juarez, Old Mexico, is included also in the local attractions. A citizen of the United States needs no passport to visit this city of 61,256. Tourists are always attracted to the old mission, Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, which until recently was still used for church services. There are some very elaborate dwellings in sections of Juarez that appear to be quite old. The market and the shops are always interesting to the newcomer. Bull fights are held in Juarez each Sunday afternoon for individuals who are interested in this type of entertainment.<sup>18</sup>

For the person spending some time in El Paso, numerous attractions of one- to three-day trips can be easily

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<sup>18</sup>Cline, op. cit., p. 8; El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., p. 10.

arranged. Among the one-day trips are those to Carlsbad Caverns; to White Sands National Monument; to Elephant Butte Dam; to Cloudcroft and Ruidoso; to the Silver City area; to Dripping Springs and Soledad Canyon; to Hueco Tanks; and to Basket Makers' Caves. Three-day trips can be taken to the Big Bend section of Texas; up into various sections of New Mexico; and down to Chihuahua, Old Mexico. At the White Sands, the visitors see 266 square miles of dazzling white gypsum, fantastic dunes, and grotesque formations. The Elephant Butte Dam provides excellent facilities for fishing, swimming, boating and mineral baths. Cloudcroft and Ruidoso provide seasonal sports for those who desire to spend several days. Hueco Tanks was a watering place for the Indians of prehistoric times and historic times, as well as the stages of the Butterfield Trail. The Basket Makers' Caves nearby were excavated by the Smithsonian Institution some years ago; much material of archeological interest was uncovered. A series of caves around the walls of the canyon formed the homes of the primitive people who once lived here.

The trip to Chihuahua, Old Mexico, has become very popular with local residents and tourists. Chihuahua is a very clean, beautiful city of typical Mexican atmosphere, 234 miles from El Paso. The sightseeing trip includes the old jail, beautiful residential sections, elaborate cathedrals, Pancho Villa's house, the poverty-ridden sections,

the old irrigation system, and a trip to the mines. In addition to the pleasure-seeking tourists who come to El Paso, there are those who come for the sake of their health or to enjoy the mild pleasant winters.<sup>19</sup>

The El Paso Valley is one of the most interesting sections of Texas. After traveling several hundred miles in the desert, one feels refreshed and is pleased to come to this narrow green strip of fertile irrigated land. Several small towns are a part of this valley.

Ysleta is a small settlement of about 1,800 to 2,000 persons located ten miles from El Paso. For all practical purposes, this little town is almost like a suburb. Settlement is very dense on every road and street between the two towns. Most of the residents are employed in El Paso. Small farms are still cultivated, but there is a tendency to make these smaller and smaller as new residents move in and new residential areas are constantly being opened. Ysleta likes to boast that it is the oldest town in Texas. Customs, traditions, and festivities little known to the outside world abound here. On certain saints' days many guns are discharged to frighten away the devil and the evil spirits. Newcomers usually imagine an old family feud has come into existence when they hear this continuous shooting.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>El Paso Sunland Club, op. cit., pp. 3-4; Wilke, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>20</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 31.

The Tigua Indians are an interesting part of the Ysleta population. In 1936 there were about nineteen families living in this vicinity. A delegation of this group attended the Texas Centennial and received much attention in the ceremonies honoring President and Mrs. Roosevelt. Some of those attending were students of Ysleta High School. The day of all days for the tribe is St. Anthony's Day, June 13th. It is the day of their patron, and the date of the annual election of officers in the tribal organization. The main officer is the Cacique who is chosen for life and aided in the discharge of his duties by an assistant Cacique. Then comes in order the Gobernador, who has charge of the tom-tom, a Capiton-Mayor, and four capitones. On the eve of the feast, paper bags half filled with sand holding lighted candles are placed in the houses and the mission; dances are held at the Cacique's house until midnight. In the early morning the participants go to the mission in their ordinary clothes to attend mass. After breakfast at their homes, the tribal costumes are donned and a breakfast-dance is given at the mission for an hour and one-half. Then the Capiton-Mayor's house is visited where the retiring capitones give a dinner for their successors, the dancers, the pueblo and other invited guests. At four o'clock in the afternoon, when the feasting is done, all again go to the mission where, before



the altar of their beloved patron, St. Anthony, the traditional change of officers takes place. This transition of authority from one group to another is solemnly enacted as the new officers take up the burden of their respective offices. These Tigua Indians have become good citizens of this community. Some are employed on the farms of the community while others have preferred to take up industrial pursuits.<sup>21</sup> The head janitor at the Ysleta High School is one of the most prominent members of this group.

The Ysleta School District contains 177 square miles which includes the Standard and Texas Company oil refineries and the Nichols Copper Refinery. There are four grade schools and one high school. Students are transferred from the county grade schools of Socorro, San Elizario, Cooley, and Myra Winkler to the Ysleta High School. About 2,800 pupils attend the Ysleta schools under a teaching force of ninety-five to one hundred. When one considers that only ninety-five pupils attended high school in the new building in 1929 and that 676 attended during 1945-1946, some estimate of the development of the valley is determined. Latin-American students make up about fifty per cent of the grade-school attendance and thirty-five per cent of the high school enrollment. Mexican students from across the river occasionally pay tuition and commute back and forth

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<sup>21</sup> Driscoll, "The Tiguas," Diocese of El Paso, p. 25.

to school each day. The school is on a par with the El Paso schools in all competitive events.<sup>22</sup>

Clint is a thriving little town located about seven miles below Ysleta. The outstanding buildings in Clint are alfalfa mills and warehouses.<sup>23</sup>

The truck farms of Socorro are of special interest. Some of them are managed by Japanese, others by Americans. The principal products are sweet potatoes, chili, frijoles, corn, alfalfa, and cotton. The rude huts of the natives remind one of the dawn of civilization. They are in striking contrast to the modern homes. San Elizario is particularly interesting from a historical viewpoint. According to present records, the Missions Capilla de San Elizario were established in 1682. A visitor to the mission today may see priceless wood carvings and valuable paintings brought by the friars soon after the mission was founded.<sup>24</sup>

Fabens is the trading center for a district that extends fifty miles down the river. It is the cotton center of the lower El Paso valley. Thousands of bales of long-staple cotton from this district go to all parts of the world. To attract tourists, Fabens built a good hotel and a bungalow-style court containing thirty apartments. The Fabens airfield is very important to the lower valley as a

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<sup>22</sup>F. W. Cooper, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, personal interview.

<sup>23</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

base for the operation of the dusting planes which dust valley cotton.<sup>25</sup>

Tornillo is a small but prosperous town. It has a \$30,000 cotton mill oil company. The mill handles hundreds of tons of cotton seed annually, showing a fine profit on oil, cake, and hulls. The tomato packing plant sorts, packs, and ships the local tomatoes to distant markets.<sup>26</sup>

The future can usually be determined to some extent by events of the past. In this case the future of El Paso should be fast-moving and prosperous. In the past sixty-five years the sun-baked little town has developed into a modern city. The question now is whether El Paso has the potential wealth to meet the demands of the constantly increasing population. There is no vacant public land for settlement and no remaining raw land to develop. However, the application of more intensive diversified methods in settlement, development, and production can possibly offset this handicap.<sup>27</sup>

El Paso does not claim over a dozen millionaires, but many El Pasoans are in comfortable circumstances. During depression times, competition for good jobs is often very active. Natural advantages make El Paso an ideal location

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<sup>25</sup>Chesser, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>27</sup>Bureau of Reclamation, General Descriptive Statement, p. 4.

for more factories and greater industrialization. If this hope becomes a reality, the extra population can be assimilated and the way opened for the development of El Paso into one of the leading cities of the United States.

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