Volume VI

As in 1992, only one issue of La Vista is being circulated this year. We plan to resume a biannual publication in 1994. The present circulation is about 3,200 throughout the United States. For the first time, Sul Ross State University has received its biennial appropriations from the state legislature limited funding to assist with the operations of the Center. Previously, no state appropriations have been earmarked for it. The funding this year and next will assist with the salary of the director and free some local funds previously used for that purpose for programming. Included will be efforts to improve communications about the Center and its activities: regular circulation of La Vista on a biannual basis, new brochures on the Center and The Journal of Big Bend Studies, and publicity about special projects.

Interest in the culture and history of the Big Bend-Rio Grande border region is booming. From the Pecos River to the Rio Grande and from the Guadalupe Mountains to the Big Bend National Park, communities and individuals are active in projects that are attracting tourists, drawing attention to SRSU as the cultural center of the area, and giving attention to research and publications on topics in many academic disciplines that have long been needed investigating.

Some of the interest may be attributed to the attention being given the U.S.-Mexico border in the debate over the North American Free Trade Act; some is because of the continuing fascination visitors have with the natural environment and climate; some is associated with increases in enrollment at SRSU (2,200 in the Fall Semester); and some is the plethora of topics that the region offers for scientific and humanistic studies.

The Center is currently pursuing projects and/or planning with the Big Bend Natural History Association, the Big Bend National Park, the Brewster County Historical Commission, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Texas Rural Communities, Inc. In addition, a number of Center Associates are involved in individual projects which appear in various ways on help provided by the office of the director. The office has increasingly served as a clearing house for directing the public, students, and scholars to research resources within the region. The entries in this newsletter reflect some of these.

The Journal of Big Bend Studies is a major project of the CBBS and one for which, gratefully, much praise has been received. Annual subscriptions since the first issue in 1989 have averaged around 550, and with very little publicity, most of which is through this newsletter. We hope that readers of La Vista who have been pleased with the journal will help spread the word about it.

The objectives of the journal are to provide in each issue an interesting collection of well written and well documented articles for the general public, as well as for scholars. The limitations of staffing and resources permit publication of only an annual publication at this time. A large number of articles are received for consideration. Only a few can be selected for each issue, but a backlog of qualitative articles is maintained. In time perhaps resources will permit the publication of biannual or quarterly issues. In the meantime, serious attention is given to all manuscripts that are submitted. Contributors are encouraged to check with the editor before submitting manuscripts. Write or call: Editor, Journal of Big Bend Studies, SRSU Box C-71, Alpine, TX 79832. 915-837-8179.

The Journal of Big Bend Studies
Volumes V (1993) and VI (1994)

Volume V was circulated to subscribers in the Spring. Copies are still available at $10.00 each. Please use the order form on the cover. Articles are:

"The Death of the Hero in Modern Drama of the American West," by Patricia Gordon

"J. C. Bird: A Big Bend Pioneer," by Tommy R. Woodward

"The Storyteller: An Interview with Big Bend Pioneer Hallie Crawford Stillwell," by Betty L. Dillard

"Jumanos and Tarahumaras: A Common Identity?" by Carolyn Ohl

The book is a miscellany of folklore (lost mines, buried treasure, ghosts, and the "Marfa Lights"), archeology (the "Midland Man"), paleontology (dinosaur tracks), spelunking, history (the camel experiment in West Texas), descriptions of the author's mountain climbing in the Big Bend and the Guadalupe Mountains, and interviews with interesting characters (cowboys, oil field workers, railroaders, hoboos, border patrolmen, and Mexican immigrants (legal and illegal). The title is somewhat misleading since it covers a broad area of West Texas extending from the Rio Grande in the Big Bend to San Angelo. It is well written and illustrated. The reader with broad interest, but little knowledge of the region, will find it entertaining.


A narrative of developments during the past century affecting the natural environment of the region. Deals with stability and change in the Borderlands. Covers climate, landforms, plants, and vertebrates. New preface updates developments in the region since its original publication.


Volume XIV of the publisher’s Spain in the West Series. It is an account of Spanish entry into northern Sonora in late 1600s, founding of Fronteras, forty miles south of Douglas, Arizona, in 1701 as a military post to protect settlers and missions from Apaches, and life at the presidio. Covers conflicts between the military and Jesuits, abuse of Indians in mines, and religious instruction in the mission.

An examination of eighteen Mexican settlements along the 2,000 mile international border, from Matamoros to Tijuana. Chronicles their growth, compares their urban structures, and analyzes them as tourist, commercial, residential, industrial, and transportation centers. Contends that while near the U. S., they are fundamentally Mexican in their culture and organization.


The authors present a survey of the history of contemporary Mexico, covering the Mexican Revolution, the gradual consolidation of institutions, the Cardenas regime, the "Mexican economic miracle" and its subsequent collapse, and the recent transition toward a new historical period.


This is a complete Dutch oven cooking guide. It includes recipes for cooking outdoors, using charcoal briquets, or indoors, utilizing conventional stove top burners and oven. For use anywhere, Dutch oven cooking has been used on ranches and in the Southwest since the earliest times of settlement. For information on how to obtain copies may be obtained from them: write 6521 Southwind, El Paso, TX 79912, or call 915-833-6196.

RESEARCH

The following projects are sponsored in whole or in part by the CBBS:

The Sanderson Flood of 1965.

Research on the project, which was concerned with the disaster of June 11, 1965, in which 24 persons lost their lives and many others were hurt or made homeless, was conducted by Russell Scogin, a graduate student in history at SRSU from mid-1992 to the spring of 1993. The research included an oral history project, funded by Texas Rural Communities, Inc., in which approximately 100 people were interviewed and taped recordings were made. Persons interviewed either experienced the flood or were involved in the cleanup. Scogin's master's thesis on the subject was completed in May. Assisted by funding from Texas Rural Communities and individuals, the CBBS expects to publish a revised version of the thesis in 1994. More information will be provided in the next issue of La Vista.

Johnson's Ranch and Trading Post

Research on this historical site in the Big Bend National Park was undertaken in the fall of 1992 by Glenn Willford, a graduate student in history at SRSU, with assistance from a grant by the Big Bend National History Association. All basic research has been completed and Willford's master's thesis on the subject is expected to be completed during the fall. Copies will be placed in the Archives of the Big Bend and the Bryan Wildenthal Library, and the BBNA and the Big Bend National Park will be provided copies for their use.

Ghost Schools of Brewster County

Professor Albert Tucker of the Department of Education at SRSU has completed a manuscript on this subject which is being readied for publication. Concentration is on schools that once existed in the lower part of Brewster county. He is also researching schools that once existed, but no longer do, in Presidio County. Persons with information may contact him at SRSU, phone 915-837-8173.

U. S. Soldiers and Texas Rangers in the Big Bend

Research on this topic by the CBBS director has included work in collections in the National Archives, the Texas State Archives, the Archives of the Big Bend, and other depositories. One goal of the project is to identify and write about locations throughout the Big Bend where soldiers and rangers camped. Concentration during the next year will be on sites within the Big Bend National Park.

In addition, Wright plans eventually to enter census data for the counties for 1870, 1880, 1910, and 1920 in spreadsheet format in the CBBS computer for use on other projects as the need occurs. There are no records for 1890, those having been destroyed by fire in Washington, D. C.

Chico Cano, Bandit, Revolutionist, or Robin Hood?

During the era of the Mexican Revolution, Chico Cano, of Pilares, Chihuahua, was a prominent figure in activities along the Rio Grande in the Big Bend country. His life is being researched by a grand nephew, Tony Cano, and Ann Sochat of El Paso. They are planning a novel centered on the life of Chico which they hope to complete in 1994. They are researching copies of materials from the Texas State Archives and the National Archives that are located in the CBBS and other materials in the Archives of

ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND

The Archives is located on the second floor of the Bryan Wildenthal Library, hours are 8-12 and 1-5, Monday-Friday. Archivist Melleta Bell reports the following activities and new acquisitions.

An "Annotated Bibliography of Hispanic-Related Materials, Archives of the Big Bend" (150 pp.), has been produced for the Archives by JoAnn Pospisil, candidate for a master's degree in Public History at the University of Houston. She worked as an intern in the Archives during the summer of 1993. The bibliography is available for use by researchers. Some of the holdings that are listed are being entered on the database of a project at the University of Houston titled, "Recovering the U. S. Hispanic Literary Heritage."

Recent acquisitions:
The Gene Hendryx Guadalupe National Park Papers, a collection of personal and official papers of a former Texas state legislator.
Papers of retired SRSU English Professor Ernest Speck, folklorist, former president of the Texas Folklore Society, and son-in-law of noted folklorist Mody C. Boatright.
A set of 32 color maps of the Rio Grande from Presidio, Texas to Seminole Canyon produced by the USGS in cooperation with the U. S. Customs Service, 1982-83.

New Exhibit:
"Things Come of Value After Hard Work" — focuses on the importance placed on education by area Hispanics; includes items relating to the formation of a school at Polvo (Redford), to activities of educator-librarian Lucia Red Madrid in Redford, to the Blackwell School in Marfa, and to desegregation of the Alpine Public Schools.

MISCELLANEOUS

A note received from Grace Rose of Uvalde invites readers to send articles, make inquiries, and/or subscribe to a quarterly published by the Southwest Texas Genealogical Society. Dues are $15. Write P. O. Box 295, Uvalde, TX 78802-0295.

The Brewster County Historical Commission, chaired by Franklin W. Daugherthy, is working with persons in Terlingua to arrange fencing for the cemetery at the old mining town. The landowner, Bill Ivey, is involved and has done much to restore facilities in the "ghost town."

A call for papers has been circulated for a national conference titled "The Mosaic of Texas Culture" to be held on the campus of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, March 10-12, 1994. The deadline for papers and abstracts is December 21, 1993. Contact Dr. Teresa Taylor, Box 667, HSU Station, Abilene, TX 79698.

The IV Congreso Internacional de Historia Regional Comparada will be held at the Universidad Autónoma de Cd. Juárez October 27-29, 1993. The sessions will include a wide range of topics: Historia económica, Economía y sociedad, Elites y grupos de poder, Rebelión y disidencia, Demografía histórica y poblamiento, Industrialización y urbanización, Iglesia y estado, Literatura e historia, y arte, pensamiento, costumbres. For more information contact the University. Address: Ave. López Mateos No. 20, C.P. 32300, Ciudad Juárez, Chih., or telephone (16) 11-11-46 or 11-57-22.

William J. Munter, a contributor to The Journal of Big Bend Studies, and conference co-chair informs us of The Third Annual Conference of the Society for Crypto Judaic Studies, to be in San Antonio, November 7-9, 1993, at the Holiday Inn, 318 W. Durango. The Society is dedicated to the study of the history of Shephardic Jews who fled the Inquisition in Spain in 1492 and came to the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Conference fee is $75. Send check to Gloria Trujillo, 2000 Brooklyn Ave., Monterey Park, CA 91754.

Mrs. Elvive Williams of Alpine recently contributed a complete set of the publications of the West Texas Historical and Scientific Society to the CBBS. The Society, no longer in existence, published twenty publications between 1926 and 1966 concentrating on Big Bend topics. Some of these rare issues are devoted entirely to specific subjects: archeology, history, folklore, science, the Big Bend National Park, Sul Ross State University. Other issues contain articles treating a variety of historical and scientific subjects. Mrs. Williams' gift will be permanently housed in the director's office and used by persons doing research sponsored by the Center.

A new quarterly publication which contains information about social, economic, and political issues relating to the U. S.-Mexico relations and developments along the border is Borderlines, published by the Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, Box 4506, Albuquerque, NM 87196. Annual subscriptions are $10. The Resource Center also has a Catalog listing various guides, fact books, directories, and other publications relating to Mexico and Central America.

Research, publications, and programming relating to acculturation processes along the United States and Mexico border continue to be an emphasis of the CBBS, which is expressed in articles in the JBBS, in professional papers, in Elder Hostel and Big Bend seminars, and in talks to area civic organizations. New courses for which approval is being sought by SRSU to add to its multicultural curriculum are "The Mexican Americans in United States History," and "Multicultural Psychology." Courses dealing with the culture of diverse ethnic groups in the United States currently in the curriculum include "American Indian History," "Minority Groups," "Chicano Literature," and "History of American Women."

At the December 1992 meeting of the Advisory Council of the CBBS, the recommendations of a resource development committee were presented. Among the proposals being implemented during this year are (1) the formal development of the Center.
Files of the CBBS: The Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts

The CBBS receives many inquiries about people, places, and historical developments in West Texas. During the past two years many of the questions have concerned Seminole-Negro Scouts who were authorized for use in Texas by the U. S. Army in 1870. They were first stationed at Fort Duncan in Eagle Pass, and the last of the scouts for which information is available in the CBBS were at Fort Clark in Bracketville in 1913.

Early in 1909 when the army was planning to close Fort Clark, the disposition of the scouts and their families, who were living at the fort, also required attention. Locally, Colonel Joseph H. Dorst, the commanding officer, was ordered to provide information about the post and its occupants to the Commanding General, Department of Texas, at San Antonio, who, in turn, provided information to the Department of War in Washington, D. C. Dorst’s letter of January 23, 1909 relating to the subject and notes of General John L. Bullis are printed below. The original documents are in the National Archives, Record Group 393, File No. 28985, “Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts”:

Fort Clark, Texas, January 23, 1909.

The Adjutant General,
Department of Texas,
San Antonio, Texas.

Sir:

Referring to your letter of the 20th instant informing me that the Department Commander desires certain information concerning the Detachment of Seminole Negro-Indian Scouts, I have the honor to recommend that Brigadier General J. L. Bullis, retired, be requested to furnish information concerning the early history of the detachment. Such early records are now on file here are not likely to contain much valuable information that is within the knowledge of General Bullis. On my reporting for duty here in 1873, General Bullis, then a lieutenant in the 24th Infantry, was in command of the detachment, and had been commanding it for some time. He continued in command until some time, I think, in the early 80’s, and was therefore its Commanding Officer during the most active and useful period of its existence. As I remember, the detachment consisted of all the able-bodied males of military age belonging to the band, their women and children having much the same relation to them as the wives and children of Indians enlisted for scouts.

I feel sure General Bullis can explain where these people came from, how it was they came to be located here and when, and also whether the Government is under any obligation, direct or implied, to furnish them homes or land. A statement from him would correct or throw light upon my report which will have to be based upon information that can be gathered here.

Very respectfully,
J. H. DORST,
Colonel 3d Cavalry,
Commanding
On January 30, 1909, Dorst was informed by Major William Lassiter, Adjutant General, Department of Texas, that General Bullis had already been interviewed. A copy of "Notes by Gen'l John L. Bullis . . ." was filed on February 8, 1909 in Lassiter's office in San Antonio. It is quoted here:

"Notes by Gen'l John L. Bullis, U. S. Army, retired
Commanded the scouts from 72 to 81, 9 yrs."

After the Seminole War the Indians, under treaty, were moved to the Indian Territory and were allowed to take their slaves with them. They were settled near Fort Smith and after some years they became very much dissatisfied, from the fact their blacks were stolen from them and sold into slavery, and under a Chief named Wild Cat, several hundred of them with their slaves, left the Territory and marched through the northern part of Texas to the Rio Grande, where they remained in camp for a year or more at a point about ten miles above Eagle Pass. At this place the slave traders piddled their avocation, stole their women and children, and they then moved into Mexico and settled at the head of the Sabinas river, the Nacemiento [sic], where they remained for several years. At this place the small pox broke out amongst them and caused the death of most of the Indians, Wild Cat of the number.

At this place the Mexican Government induced them to move further into the interior, and they were settled at what they called the Laguna Paris, a very prosperous agricultural country, where they were employed for years as scouts in campaigns against the Apache Indians.

After the War of the Rebellion several of the head men of the Seminoles, the principal one being Juan Caballo, John Horse, a Seminole Negro came to this side of the Rio Grande and called on the Commanding Officer at Fort Duncan, at that time Major Zenas R. Bliss of the 25th Infantry, and requested that they be allowed to come to this side of the river, the War of the Rebellion being over and the slaves set free, and he, Major Bliss, laid the matter before the War Department, which resulted in authority for their enlistment as Seminole Negro Indian Scouts. They were first stationed at Fort Duncan and about 1873, were all ordered to Fort Clark, where they were continued in the service for many years, although the numbers were greatly reduced on the cessation [sic] of the Indian troubles on the frontier.

After the Government reduced the number of scouts, many of them returned to the head of the Sabinas river in Mexico, the Nacemiento [sic], and others went to the Indian Territory and settled with the Seminoles on their Reservation; but nearly all of the older ones are dead, both at the Nacemiento [sic], the Indian Territory and of the old scouts, but two are on the active list.

[End of notes of interview with John L. Bullis, Brig. Gen., U.S.A., retired, in National Archives, RG393, file 28985.]

The information accumulated by the Army resulted in a decision by the Secretary of War, in June 1909 to order that the scouts in active service be discharged on June 30, 1910, that the families be required to leave the reservation at Fort Clark, and that the fort be closed and placed in the hands of a caretaker on July 1, 1910. At the time, twenty scouts were still in service, and a total of 276 Seminole-Negro Indians (men, women, and children) were living at the post.

Leading men of the Seminole-Negro population appealed to the Secretary of War to reconsider his decision, resulting in the order being suspended on November 24, 1909. Thereafter, no new scouts were enlisted, the policy of the Army being to gradually reduce and eliminate the force through retirements and deaths.

The latest information on the subject in CBBS files, copied from the file in the National Archives, is a communication dated May 26, 1913 from Brigadier General Tasker H. Bliss, Commanding Officer, Department of Texas:
CENTER ASSOCIATES MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please enroll me as a Center Associate in the Center for Big Bend Studies for 1994. I understand that I will receive Volume 6 of The Journal of Big Bend Studies and other benefits of membership as described in this issue of La Vista de la Frontera. I have checked the blank below and enclosed my check or money order for $15.00. (Note: Membership is required in order to receive Volume 6 of the journal; library and other institutional memberships also are $15.00 if an earlier order has not previously been processed.)

MEMBERSHIP, CENTER ASSOCIATES, 1994 @ $15.00 (Includes JBBS, Vol. 6).

Back issues of the following volumes are available. For orders, please check the appropriate blanks below and enclose your check for the total.

Volume III (January 1991) @ $10.00 per copy.
Volume IV (January 1992) @ $10.00 per copy.
Volume V (January 1993) @ $10.00 per copy.

NAME ____________________________
ADDRESS ____________________________
CITY ____________________________
STATE ________ ZIP ________

THANK YOU! YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED

RETURN ORDER TO:
JOURNAL OF BIG BEND STUDIES
SRSU C-71
ALPINE, TX 79832

CENTER FOR BIG BEND STUDIES
SRSU Box C-71
Alpine, Texas 79832

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED