



La Vista de la Frontera

Newsletter of the Center for Big Bend Studies

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* **Columbian Quincentenary** *
* **Celebration** *

CBBS planning for celebrating the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage to America, announced in the spring, is in progress. Publications of the Center, including La Vista de la Frontera and The Journal of Big Bend Studies are designated locally as commemorative projects. Each issue from now until 1993 will carry news and articles relating to the worldwide celebration of the event. Application has been made to the United States Christopher Columbus 500 Quincentenary Jubilee Commission (established by Congress in 1984) for official recognition of the CBBS activities.

Among the activities being planned are a series of public conferences focusing on acculturation processes in the Rio Grande borderlands of Texas and Mexico from the pre-Columbian era to the 20th century.

The first of the conferences, tentatively scheduled for

October 12 and 13, 1990 in Alpine on the campus of Sul Ross State University, will concentrate on the natural setting at the time of Columbus, the archeological background, the native peoples who were in the region, and the coming of the Spanish. Indian-Spanish relations will be reviewed from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Among the scholars scheduled to present lectures are Felix D. Almaraz, Jr.; Harry P. Hewitt; Elizabeth A. H. John; Oakah L. Jones, Jr.; J. Charles Kelley; Robert Mallouf; Joseph P. Sanchez; David Weber; Robert Weddle, and W. H. Timmons. Noted El Paso illustrator Jose Cisneros will exhibit his "Riders of the Borderlands." Details will be announced as soon as plans materialize and funding is secured.

"America was discovered accidentally by a great seaman who was looking for something else;
[and] named after a man who discovered no part of the New World."

-- Samuel Eliot Morison

 * La Vista de la Frontera *

With this issue, circulation has been increased to approximately 2,500 persons and institutions in the United States and several foreign countries. There is no subscription cost at present. The purpose is to provide information in a semi-annual newsletter about activities of the CBBS and other organizations dedicated to promoting understanding of the cultural and historical development of the Big Bend, borderlands region of Texas and Mexico. Readers are encouraged to send their comments and suggestions to the Editor, SRSU Box C-71, Alpine, Texas 79832.

 * NEW PUBLICATIONS *

"The Best Ballpark in Texas (or Anywhere Else)," by Nicholas Dawidoff, Sports Illustrated (July 31, 1989), relates the history of Kokernot Park in Alpine, Texas, and how rancher H. L. Kokernot, Jr. brought professional baseball to the remote Big Bend country.

The Indians of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico: Selected Writings of Thomas Nolan Campbell, by T. N. Campbell (Austin: Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, 1988), is a compilation of a distinguished archeologist's writings by friends and associates to honor him on his 80th birthday. Coahuiltecas, Cabras, Payayas, and "mission" Indians are emphasized.

Roundup of Memories, by Olan M. George (Seagraves, Texas: Pioneer Book Publishers, 1987), contains reminiscences of life in the Trans-Pecos country in West Texas in this century by a Fort Stockton, Texas resident who rode into that town in a covered wagon with his family in 1911.

"Pecos Bill": A Military Biography of William R. Shafter, by Paul H. Carlson (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), covers Shafter's forty-year military career, including service at Fort Davis in the 1870s and 1880s; the mining town of Shafter in the Big Bend country is named for him.

The Cattlemen, by W. R. McAfee (Alvin, Texas: Davis Mountain Press, 1989), is a portrait of two Davis Mountain brothers, Wade and Roy Reid, and their ranch, the Eleven Bar 11, in the Barrilla Mountains northeast of Fort Davis, which they established and operated from the turn of the 20th century until their deaths in the 1970s.

Watt Matthews of Lambshead: A Photographic Study of a Man and His Ranch, by Laura Wilson (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1989), covers the life of a ninety year old cattleman who has spent his entire life (except for four years at Princeton, University) at Lambshead, his ranch near Albany, Texas, and who reflects in his lifestyle and operations the Texas of a century ago.

Texas Big Bend Country, by George Wuerthner (American Geographic Publishing Company, 1989), emphasizes natural history and is available through the Big Bend Natural History Association, P.O. Box 68, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834, for \$15.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. One chapter is reprinted in El Paisano (October-December 1989), bimonthly newspaper of the association.

* **CURRENT RESEARCH** *

Big Bend Military District

In June, with the assistance of an organized research grant from Sul Ross State University, the editor spent two weeks in the National Archives researching records of the "Big Bend Military District," a U.S. Army command extending from near present Sanderson, Texas to near present Sierra Blanca, Texas, between 1913 and 1920.

Copies of more than a thousand records from several collections in the National Archives were made. A paper will be presented on the subject at the annual meeting of the West Texas Historical Association in San Angelo, Texas, April 6-7, 1990.

Castolon on the Rio Grande

Work continues on farming communities which once existed along the Rio Grande between Castolon and Santa Elena Canyon in the present Big Bend

National Park. Investigations of ruins and interviews with people who lived there between the turn of the 20th century and the establishment of the park are proceeding.

Of great importance in understanding the society and culture of the small communities were the merchandising and agricultural enterprises of the La Harmonia Company, headquartered at Castolon from 1919 to 1961. Research in records of the company in the Archives of the Big Bend at SRSU is slow, but ongoing.

U. S. Army operations in the region, and the activities of various state and law enforcement agencies also will be researched.

Ghost Schools of the Big Bend

Numerous small schools once existed in the broad desert and mountain country of the Big Bend region. Most were one-room operations, and many were in homes of area residents.

Professor Al Tucker in the Department of Education at SRSU is compiling information on the schools. Currently, he is working on the Terlingua and Big Bend Park area. In that region, there were schools at Terlingua, in the Molinar community, at La Noria, at Castolon, at San Vicente, and perhaps at other sites. Persons with information relating to these schools are asked to contact him at SRSU, telephone 915-837-8181.

W. B. Mitchell and the
Highland Hereford Association

Professor Judith Parsons at SRSU has spent several years researching the W. B. Mitchell collection in the Archives of the Big Bend. Mitchell, a long-time Presidio County rancher was instrumental in organizing the Highland Hereford Association early in the 20th century and promoting it nationwide.

Professor Parsons presented a paper on the subject at the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association in 1989. Her article based on the paper will appear in Volume II of The Journal of Big Bend Studies. She also will read a paper on Mitchell at the annual meeting of the West Texas Historical Association next April.

Land Frauds in Brewster County

SRSU graduate student Rex Thee is researching for a master's thesis land frauds in Brewster County during the early 20th century, with emphasis on Progress City, a fraudulent development encompassing Santiago Peak, and Silver City, a scam in the Cathedral Peak area.

The Ydoiaga Expedition to
La Junta de los Rios in 1747

In 1747 the viceroy of New Spain sent Captain Jose de Ydoiaga to investigate the area where the Rio Conchos flows into the Rio Grande (modern

Ojinaga, Chihuahua, and Presidio, Texas) for the possible establishment of a presidio in the region.

Dr. Frank Daugherty, a retired Professor of Geology from West Texas State University and a resident of Alpine, is translating and annotating Ydoiaga's lengthy report. A typescript has been obtained from the Barker History Center at the University of Texas at Austin. In the process of translation, it will be compared with a microfilm copy of the original document which is being obtained from the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, Spain.

Professor Daugherty's work will be published in a future issue of The Journal of Big Bend Studies.

The Kingston Family

Sul Ross student Johnny Kingston has done extensive research on his family's ranching activities in the Trans-Pecos region and has written a short biography of his grandfather, W. L. Kingston. Also covering, in part, the Kingston operations, is Robert Weddle's article on Madera Canyon which will appear in Volume II of The Journal of Big Bend Studies. Johnny is continuing research which will result in a publishable article or monograph on the subject.

"What is Past is Prologue"

* **JOURNAL OF BIG BEND STUDIES** *

The Journal is dedicated to studies relating to the history and culture of the southwestern United States, with emphasis on the Big Bend region of Texas. It is intended for general and scholarly readers. Response to the initial issue, published in January 1989 was gratifying. A limited edition of 550 copies was printed. All copies have been circulated to subscribers.

Volume II will be published in January 1990. Approximately 650 copies will be published. The popularity of the first volume was such that **renewals and new subscriptions should be made now** to ensure a copy being available. It is anticipated that the content of Volume II will be of the same high quality and interest as that of Volume I. See the enclosed flyer for a list of writers and topics.

The cost for each subscription for the 1990 annual issue will remain \$10.00 for the United States; foreign subscriptions will be \$15.00; including postage and handling. **Send checks or money orders to:**

JOURNAL OF BIG BEND STUDIES
SRSU Box C-71
Alpine, Texas 79832

One subscriber's comment:

"I am delighted with my first issue, so much so that I am enclosing another check for Volume II The quality of printing and photography is excellent."

* **CBBS ADVISORY COUNCIL** *

The Fall 1989 meeting of the Council was held on Saturday, November 11 at Sul Ross State University. New members are:

Dr. Frank Daugherty,
Alpine
Mr. Monroe Elms,
Presidio County
Mr. Bill Leftwich,
Fort Davis
Mrs. Bettye Warnock,
Fort Stockton

Returning members are:

Dr. Abelardo Baeza, SRSU
Dr. Jimmy Case, SRSU
Dr. Earl Elam, CBBS, Chair
Colonel Russell Gardinier,
Fort Davis
Mr. Bob Hext, SRSU
Dr. J. Charles Kelley,
Fort Davis
Dr. Elton Miles,
Alpine
Dr. Robert Overfelt, Jr.
SRSU, Del Rio
Ms. Judith Parsons, SRSU
Mr. Kenneth Perry, SRSU
Mr. Robert Rothe,
Big Bend National Park
Dr. Al Tucker, SRSU

The president and the vice president for academic affairs of Sul Ross State University are ex-officio members.

The council assists the director in developing and maintaining a statement of purpose and goals for the Center; in formulating general policies to implement objectives; and in implementing and evaluating projects.

 * **RAMBLINGS** *

The staff and Friends of the Fort Davis National Historic Site were honored at "Take Pride in America" ceremonies in Washington, D.C. in July for their work in restoring an enlisted men's barracks.

The Big Bend Natural History Association has announced its 1990 Seminars on the Big Bend. Twenty-six seminars will be offered on twenty-nine dates, February to October. A list of topics and details can be obtained from: **Seminar Coordinator, Big Bend Natural History Association, Box 68, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834 or call 915-477-2236.**

The Alpine Chamber of Commerce will host its annual banquet on January 25, 1990. "Cow Pokes" Ace Reid will be the speaker.

Dr. Amy Freeman Lee of San Antonio will deliver the 1990 Mary Thomas Marshall Lecture at Sul Ross State University. The lecture is an annual event open to the public. The date and subject is to be announced.

Sul Ross ex-student Jimmy M. Skaggs, Professor of American Studies and Economics at Wichita State University and the author of several books on western history, has a new book about a little known island located in the Pacific southwest of Acapulco, Mexico. Clipperton: The History of the Island the World Forgot is published by Walker and Co., 720 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019 at \$19.95.

Professors Frank N. Samponaro of the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and Paul J. Vanderwood of San Diego State University on October 20 presented a slide lecture titled "La Tierra y Su Gente: The Rio Grande Photographs of Robert Runyon, 1910-1926," at the Barker Texas History Center. For more information contact the Center at UT-Austin, Austin, Texas 78713.

On February 21, 1990, Professor Earl Elam of SRSU will deliver one of seven lectures to be presented in the spring at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. Texas A&M University at Galveston is sponsoring the series as part of the "Texas in the Twenty-first Century" program of the Texas Committee for the Humanities. Elam's subject will be "The Karankawas: First Inhabitants of the Texas Coast."

 * **RECENT DONORS TO CBBS** *

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 Mr. Paul Kelch
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert McCullough
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 Commission
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