



La Vista de la Frontera

Newsletter of the Center for Big Bend Studies

Earl H. Elam, Editor

Sabrina Wares, Assistant Editor

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CENTER FOR BIG BEND STUDIES

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La Vista de la Frontera is the newsletter of the Center for Big Bend Studies. Its objective is to provide information to the public about the activities of the Center and cultural information which may be of interest to Big Bend enthusiasts.

Since the first issue was printed in 1988, *La Vista's* mailing list has expanded to approximately 3,000 entries scattered over most of the United States and several foreign countries. The following information is provided for persons who receive the newsletter and are not familiar with the purposes of the Center.

In 1987 the Center began formal operations as a program of Sul Ross State University with approval by the Board of Regents, Texas State University System. Its objectives, as stated in the Administrative Policy Manual of the University are "to support and promote programs and scholarly activities (including research, instruction, and publications) relating to the cultural and historical development of the Trans-Pecos, Big Bend region of Texas and Mexico. Emphasis will be given activities involving the arts and humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, education, economics, and business (including agricultural-business enterprises)."

No academic degree programs are offered through the Center, and no state appropriations are made to support its

operation. Projects of programming, research, and publication are funded by income from the Center's endowment, from joint projects with University departments and outside organizations, and from grants.

The Center is staffed by a part-time director who also is a professor in the University. Other faculty members, students, and persons outside the University community are involved in projects. An advisory council, appointed by the president of the University, assists the director in developing and maintaining purposes and goals consistent with those of the University and general policies relating to the objectives of the Center. The director reports to the president.

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1991-92 ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Including representatives from the University and the region, the current members are:

Abelardo Baeza, Professor of Literature and Languages,
Sul Ross State University

Jim Case, Associate Professor of Political Science and Chairman,
Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences,
Sul Ross State University

Frank W. Daugherty, Professor of Geology (ret.),
West Texas State University

Earl H. Elam, Professor of History and Director of the Center,
Sul Ross State University, Chairman

Monroe Elms, County Judge, Presidio County,
Marfa, Texas

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Fort Davis, Texas

J. Charles Kelley, Professor of Archeology (ret.),
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Robert Overfelt, Professor of History, Uvalde Center,
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Larry Sechrest, Assistant Professor of Business Administration,
Sul Ross State University

Albert B. Tucker, Associate Professor of Education,
Sul Ross State University

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Warnock
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William A. Webb, Deputy Commissioner, Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board (ret.),
Alpine, Texas

Paul Weyerts, Professor of Range Animal Science and Director
of the Turner RAS Center,
Sul Ross State University

Ex officio members are:
President Vic Morgan and Vice President David Cockrum,
Sul Ross State University

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JOURNAL OF BIG BEND STUDIES

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The Center publishes *The Journal of Big Bend Studies* annually. It is an interdisciplinary, nonrefereed journal with articles that relate to the history and culture of the southwestern United States, with emphasis on the Big Bend region of Texas. Scholarly in content, an effort is made to publish articles that will have broad appeal and normally will not include excessive academic disciplinary jargon. Annual subscriptions are \$10.00.

Publication began with Volume 1 in January 1989. Volume 4 is scheduled for publication in January 1992. Manuscripts for future editions are welcomed and will be given careful consideration by the editor and advisory board.

Address: Editor, *Journal of Big Bend Studies*, Box C-71 SRSU, Alpine, TX 79832.

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AVAILABLE JOURNALS

Vol. 1 (January 1989) (2 printings circulated) -- out of stock; no plans for a 3rd printing.

Vol. 2 (January 1990) -- 20 copies are on hand; no plans to reprint.

Vol. 3 (January 1991) -- large quantity available. (See order form on back page.)

Vol. 4 (January 1992) -- 650 copies will be printed. Orders may be placed now. (See form on back page.)

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JBBS ARTICLES

Volume 3 (January 1991):

"Las Vegas de los Ladrones and the Flynt Gang," by Franklin W. Daugherty;

"The San Vicente Rain Dance," by Elton Miles;

"Settlements and Settlers at La Junta de los Rios," by Oakah L. Jones;

"Terlingua Abaja," by Albert B. Tucker;

"I Will Love You in Atlantic City," by Beverly Six Case;

"An Interview with Eve Ball," by Lawrence Clayton;

"Rickenbacker and Halliburton: Evincing the 'Texas Spirit'," by David R. Halliburton;

"Praxedis Mata Torres: The First Mexican-American Teacher in the Public Schools in Uvalde County, Texas," by Anita Torres Smith.

Volume 4 (January 1992):

"The Beginning of the End: Eschatological Notions in the Discovery of the New World," by Melinda Lang Hilsenbeck;

"Various Aspects of the Rock Art of South Brewster County, Texas," by Carolyn Ohl;

"Victor J. Smith, Pioneer Archeologist," by Curtis Tunnell;

"The Demography of La Junta de los Rios del Norte y Conchos," by Howard Applegate;

"Dear Kit": A Fort Davis Army Surgeon's Letter to Kit Carson in 1860," by Earl H. Elam.

"W. D. Smithers: Big Bend Photographer," by Barney Nelson;

"The Glen Springs-Boquillas Raid Reconsidered: Diplomatic Intrigue on the Rio Grande," by Arthur Gomez;

"History of the Jews of Texas' Middle Corridor," by William J. Munter;

"La Escuela Del Barrio: A History of Alpine's Centennial School, 1936-1969," by Abelardo Baeza

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NEW BOOKS

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The Colonel's Lady on the Western Frontier: The Correspondence of Alice Kirk Grierson, ed. Shirley A. Leckie (University of Nebraska Press, 1989). This is a volume of letters, with annotations, written over a long lifetime by the wife of Benjamin Grierson, onetime commander of troops at Fort Davis.

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I'll Gather My Geese by Hallie Crawford Stillwell (Texas A&M Press, 1991). This is the life story of one of the best known personalities in West Texas. Teacher, rancher, writer, housewife, Justice of the Peace, and other roles have characterized the life of this Texas Hall of Fame lady whose experiences in the Big Bend began in 1916 when she left home in Waco and went to Presidio to teach school. She married a Marathon rancher and never left the area.

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Interim in the Desert by Roland Sodowsky (Texas Christian University Press, 1990) is a novella of short stories depicting the pathos of human situations in southwestern community settings by a former professor of English at Sul Ross.

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North to Superior and other poems by Peter Hoheisel (privately printed, Sul Ross State University, Box C-21, Alpine, TX 79832). This is a book of poems commemorating the experiences of a Sul Ross literature lecturer who spent 15 years on the shores of Lake Superior and are described as painting "a vibrant, if chilly, portrait of events and characters driving life in the north."

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El Paso: A Borderlands History, by W. H. Timmons (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1990). El Paso area history for 400 years, beginning with the first Spanish expedition from the south in 1581, is traced in this comprehensive synthesis. It is organized into parts dealing with the legacies of the Spanish-Mexican North, the American Southwest, and the international bicultural community of El Paso and Juárez.

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Memoirs of a Rolling Stone, 1875-1905, by Andrew Jarvis Giraud (ed. Andrew Jarvis Giraud, Jr. and Edward Hake Phillips; ; privately printed, Pottsboro, TX, 1990). Giraud (1875-1966) crowded into his long life adventures throughout the American West, Mexico, and Guatemala. Gold prospector, barnstorming baseball player, hobo, orchid hunter, cowboy, and "jack-of-all-trades," he spent much time in the Big Bend country, including work on the Hart ranches in the Comstock-Del Rio area.

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Roy Bean: Law West of the Pecos, by C. L. Sonnichsen (reprint; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991). This is a reprint of a 1944 study of one of the most colorful and mythical characters of the Trans-Pecos told by the dean of southwestern writers whose recent death at age of 89 culminated a long career of teaching and writing.

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Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico, by Martín Salinas. This is a detailed study of historic Indian populations based on archeological findings and careful research of Spanish documents. At least 49 Indian groups are identified, few of whom were migrants into the region in the historical period.

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The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict, by Richard Griswold del Castillo (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990). The most recent of many works on the subject, it covers political and diplomatic developments in the United States and Mexico and the various interpretations made on both sides relating to the enforcement of this important treaty.

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The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement, by Rupert Norval Richardson. New ed. Ed. Kenneth R. Jacobs. (Abilene: Hardin-Simmons University, 1991). This is a handsomely bound limited edition of the original work, first published in 1933, and includes much material that was left out of the original in the editing process. An introduction by A. C. Greene of the University of North Texas perceptively states: "This is straightforward history, done well and done professionally by a writer I consider the equal to any historian the Southwest has produced."

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Revolution on the Rio Grande: Mexican Raids and Army Pursuits, 1916-1919, by Glenn Justice (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1991). A new volume in the Southwestern Studies series, this book covers the major raids made into the Big Bend country during the years covered.

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War Scare on the Rio Grande: Robert Runyon's Photographs of the Border Conflict, 1913-1916, by Frank N. Sampson and Paul J. Vanderwood (forthcoming; Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992.) With selections from 13,000 photos in the Barker Texas History Center at UT-Austin, emphasis is on the Lower Rio Grande region.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Leon Metz, Border: The U.S.-Mexico Line (El Paso: Mangan Books, 1989), by Albert B. Tucker, Sul Ross State University.

The U.S.-Mexico borderline, from the Gulf of Mexico in southern Texas and extending 1,951.36 miles to the Pacific Ocean in southern California, stretches across land whose history has significance beyond mere facts and figures.

In this winner of the Texas Historical Commission Fehrenbach Award, Leon Metz tells the stories behind the stories of the people who lived, died, fought, labored, connived, manipulated, used and resisted the establishment of the often contested, always changing, politically and emotionally sensitive

border between the United States and Mexico.

This drama of the border is told in a folksy narrative style, yet scholarly documented with primary sources, period photographs, and an extensive bibliography. Metz, whose previous works have largely been about New Mexicans and Texans, especially in and around El Paso, admirably expands his historical fields to include Arizona and California.

The student of southwestern history will appreciate the way Metz fills in the gaps of official records with the mortar of human interest, personalities, greed, and sacrifice. The more readers know about the history of the U.S.-Mexican border from 1848 onward, the more they will delight in the raw and gutsy conflicts, tragedies, and courageous efforts of the principal characters, such as General Winfield Scott, John Bartlett, Major William Emory, Confederate generals John Robert Baylor and Henry H. Sibley, and Texas Ranger Leander McNelly. Metz does not simply mention names. He incarnates them with graphic phrases, such as "the chuggy" General Hugh Scott and "the ineffective" New Mexico governor John C. Calhoun.

Metz skilfully lays the historical and human groundwork for events and dares to interpret them unpretentiously. For example, he describes the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as "an interesting case of sign now and worry later."

Readers may have feelings of guilt and might seek to read the book in private, sensing that they are peeking into someone's diary written for personal consumption only. The warts and the stars are equally exposed and equally appreciated for their historical significance and contributions.

Metz has lived in El Paso since 1952. He has worked in oil fields, law enforcement, museums, and public affairs. *Border* is a personal joy ride through territory and among people the author holds in high esteem. The proper sensitivity to border issues and respectful perceptive insights about the people on both sides of the border are never better promoted than in this enjoyable, scholarly, and well-written addition to the bibliography of the Southwest.

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ON THE HORIZON

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TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING, February 27-29, 1992. The annual meeting will be in Austin at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. A session on Friday afternoon titled "Acculturation Processes in the Rio Grande Borderlands" will feature papers by Earl Elam and Al Tucker of SRSU. Joe Graham, former SRSU instructor, now at Texas A&I University, will chair the session, and commentary will be by Glen Lich of the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

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TEXAS COWBOY POETRY GATHERING, MARCH 6-8, 1992. The 6th annual gathering will be held in Alpine and will feature individual topic sessions on Friday and Saturday, a chuck-wagon dinner and campfire on Friday and a Saturday night dance. For information call Nelson Sager at 915-837-8153 or J. J. Tucker at 915-837-8191.

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WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 3-4. The 69th annual meeting of the association will be held on the campus of Sul Ross State University. Sessions with papers relating to West Texas will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Friday and continue through noon on Saturday. Ken Ragsdale, author of *Quicksilver: Terlingua and the Chisos Mining Company* (1976) and *Wings Over the Mexican Border* (1984) will be the featured speaker at the Friday evening banquet. For information contact Earl Elam at SRSU 915-837-8179 or B. W. Aston at Hardin-Simmons University 915-670-1239.

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DIAMOND JUBILEE OF SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY. Founded by act of the Texas Legislature in 1917, Sul Ross State Normal College opened its doors to students in 1920. A planning committee, chaired by Judith Parsons at SRSU, is working on a schedule of activities to commemorate these events. For information call Judith at 915-837-8148.

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COLUMBIAN QUINCENTENARY EVENTS. The Center for Big Bend Studies will continue to observe this

event in its projects during 1992, following up conferences on the subject in 1988 and 1990. Publications in 1992, including *The Journal of Big Bend Studies* and *La Vista de la Frontera* will commemorate the event as will other activities to be announced.

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NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS' MEMORIAL. Frank Daugherty, member of the CBBS Advisory Council and Chairman of the Brewster County Historical Commission, reports that this memorial in Washington, D.C. was dedicated on October 15, 1991 and is similar in design to the Vietnam Memorial. To date, 12,588 names have been placed on marble walls with space for 29,000. Among these is Felix Valenzuela, killed in line of duty in Terlingua in 1938. Frank is seeking other names of law enforcement officers who were killed in line of duty in the Big Bend area. Names, dates, and places can be sent to him at P. O. Box 329, Alpine, TX 79831 or call 915-837-2640.

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ARCHIVES OF THE BIG BEND

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Archivists Melleta Bell and Gaylan Corbin recently completed processing the Walter Fulcher Papers. Available for use are letters from the battlefield during World War II and the manuscript of Fulcher's book *The Way I Heard It* (1959), containing stories about the Big Bend.

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Also now available for use are positive prints of some 1,000 negatives in the Hunter Collection and a few from other collections. Included are photographs of Alpine and the Big Bend area during the 1950s and 1960s.

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Currently being processed is the Wedin Collection which contains materials associated with the production of AnneJo P. Wedin's book, *The Magnificent Marathon Basin*, Wedin family history, and other items relating to the history of Marathon and the surrounding area.

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A new acquisition is the Lovie and John R. Whitaker Papers. These include materials relating to Lovie's extensive bird and ant research and to her consumer protection activities in Alpine.

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In preparation for converting the cataloging in the archives to MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) format, Melleta Bell will be attending a workshop in December at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at UT-Austin.

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RESEARCH

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The Columbian Quincentenary, the free trade with Mexico dialogue, and other

developments, such as activities of the Alpine Chamber of Commerce's Economic Committee, have focused increased attention on the Rio Grande borderland region. More research and publications on all aspects of border life are vitally needed. The CBBS has long advocated more intense study of the culture of the region, including interdisciplinary approaches to understanding its past and present and potential for the future.

The Advisory Council in 1992 will be considering development projects aimed at providing help to interested scholars in their work. To do this endowment support must be secured. At present the endowment of the Center is approximately \$38,000 and does not bring in sufficient income to provide significant help.

More information will be circulated as plans are developed to address this vital need.

Individuals with ideas for projects and suggestions for funding the research or who desire to make contributions are encouraged to contact the director at 915-837-8179.

Contributions may be made to Sul Ross State University, noting the Center for Big Bend Studies Endowment, and sent to P. O. Box C-71 SRSU, Alpine, TX 79832. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

THE JOURNAL OF BIG BEND STUDIES

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