WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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THE CYCLONE

WTHA Announces Officers and Awards for 2001

WTHA Presidents Clint Chambers and Garry Nall at the 2001 meeting

Midwestern State University hosted the seventy-eighth annual meeting of the West Texas Historical Association in Wichita Falls on March 30-31. Highlights included a joint session with the East Texas Historical Association, a session on "Texas Oil: Past, Present and Future," and a tribute to Lawrence Clayton. Banquet speaker was Dr. Kenneth Davis with "Local Lore and History: What the Tale Tells Us."

Awards included Best Student Essay to M. Scott Sosebee for "Henry C. 'Hank' Smith: A Study of a South Plains Capitalist, 1900-1912" and the Mrs. Percy Jones Award for the Best Article in the *Year Book* to Lawrence Clayton for "Some Personal Comments on Literature and West Texas." The Rupert N. Richardson Award for the best book on West Texas history was presented to Paul Carlson for *The Cowboy Way*, while the R.C. Crane Award for best creative work on West Texas went to Walt McDonald and Janet Neugebauer for *Whatever the Wind Delivers*.

WTHA thanks outgoing president Clint Chambers and congratulates our president for 2001, Garry Nall of Canyon, and vice-president, Tom Crum of Granbury. New board members include Ty Cashion of Huntsville, Michael Collins of Wichita Falls, Cheryl Lewis of Hamlin and Donathan Taylor of Abilene. New Book Review editor is J'Nell Pate of Azle.

Casas Amarillas

by Paul Carlson

Casas Amarillas (the Yellow Houses) are located in northern Hockley County, a short distance south of Littlefield. The once brown, yellowish bluffs, are located on the west side (facing east) of a wide, eight-mile long, north-south oriented basin in the generally level Llano Estacado landscape. A century or more ago, when seen at a distance from the east and especially if a mirage was present, they looked like a series of houses - thus the name. The bluffs were pitted with caves, and a spring at the base of the bluffs provided water. Yellow Lake and other water sources, including playas, could also be found in the basin.

The combination of the lakes, fresh water springs, and the bluffs with their caves attracted early visitors to Casas Amarillas. Wildlife, especially bison, pronghorns, wolves, coyotes, stopped at the waterholes. Indian people used the area for hunting and camping. Comancheros used the basin to trade with various tribal groups, such as Comanches, Kiowas, Lipans, Mescalaros, and others, who frequented the popular landmark. U.S. soldiers, including the black Tenth Cavalry (the Buffalo Soldiers), and bison hunters made use of the site. Such ranches as the XIT, George W. Littlefield's LFD, and the Yellow House used the site for their headquarters.

Casas Amarillas was described by several of its early visitors. A Tenth Cavalry officer, Theodore Baldwin, said that "the appearance of the rocks [are] of a yellow color." Bison hunter turned author, John Cook, remembered the place as a "bold rugged bluff with a natural and excavated cave dug" at the base and on top off the bluff, above the Caprock, was "a stone half-circle breastwork;" he thought Indians and Comancheros had constructed the little fort. Englishman, turned bison hunter, Frank Collinson, wrote that "Yellow House proper was a large, yellow sandstone cave under the [Caprock], opening to the east, with sufficient room for twenty or more people to camp at a time."

Colonel William R. Shafter in 1875 noted that "a large alkali and salt lake, of from one-half to three-quarters of a mile in width and about three in length . . . [drained] the country for several miles in all directions." He reported that "there are two dug springs at the base of the bluff on the southern side, and about a half mile further south, at the head of the ravine, a large tank of fresh water" was present. He believed that the springs, later called - appropriately enough - "Yellow House Springs", fed the lake. After camping at the site for a couple of days and using the springs for both horses and men, Shafter still found plenty of water available.

Today Casas Amarillas is on private property, land belonging to The Yellow House Ranch. Although the primary site is not available to the public, the southern edge of the basin, its east-facing bluffs green with grass and weeds but still dramatic, can be seen from the country road that passes by the ranch entrance.

From the Executive Director

Dear Fellow association members:

Sitting in the WTHA office last week I realized that the summer was "almost over" and that we were well on the way toward the beginning of another great year. An email from Preston Lewis of San Angelo reminded me that we need to set our hats for San Angelo and the 2002 meeting. He reported that hotel arrangements have been made and the meeting rooms have been reserved. He and the local arrangements folk have been taking a look at a number of interesting tours either preceding or following the meeting. Meanwhile, Arnoldo De Leon of Angelo State University and the program committee have been busy and have issued a call for papers. Be sure and submit your proposals early as the deadline has been moved up to November 1.

Summer is the time for traveling and we had a number of visitors at the association office on the Texas Tech campus. Your president, Garry Nall of Canyon, Texas, visited us in early in June. He checked on committee appointments, financial matters, and membership. While here, his wife Annette signed on to become our most recent Life Member. We also hosted a brief visit in July from last year's president Clint Chambers of Lubbock. He was grinning from ear to ear from a research jaunt to Oklahoma and Kansas. Needless to say he had "bagged" additional information on Jack Stillwell. Bob Burton of Snyder stopped for a short visit also. He regaled us with tales of Julia Roberts and Hollywood-types who were in Snyder filming a movie. Apparently, the folks in Snyder got used to seeing a Rolls Royce or Mercedes parked at the "Sweet Shop" for a burger.

In 2003 we expect to return to Lubbock for our annual meeting, but no decision has been made as to where the association will meet in 2004. There is a suggestion that we return to Abilene, the birthplace of the association. However, the folks in the Trans Pecos region have expressed a tentative interest in having us meet in Alpine. Either place would be ideal. In the meantime, if there are any other suggestions, please pass those along to board members or to the association office.

Here is a reminder about the Fall East Texas Historical Association meeting September 27-29 in Nacogdoches. The WTHA will be conducting a session discussing "Elmer Kelton in Context." Jim and Becky Matthews and Lewis Toland will be presenting and Harwood Hinton will preside. For further information about the meeting you can call Dr. Archie McDonald at 936/468-2407, you can email him at AMcDonald@sfasu.edu, or you can consult the East Texas Web Page at--leonardo.sfasu.edu/etha/ETHA-Meetings.html.

We would like to acknowledge the kind and generous association members, Kenneth Davis and Alvin Davis, who have donated money in memory of Lawrence Clayton who passed away in December 2000.

We lost another friend, and colleague this spring. Seymour "Ike" Connor passed away in Lubbock. West Texans are still a bit lonesome in the heart and we will remain so for a while.

Have a great summer.

Tai Kreidler

In Memory . . .

Seymour Connor, the founding director of the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech, died in Lubbock on March 23, 2001. Connor was born in Paris, Texas, on March 4, 1923. He served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army during World War II, taking part in the Battle of the Bulge. He earned his BA, MA, and PhD all from the University of Texas. Afterwards, Connor worked as an archivist at West Texas State University and at the Texas State Archives. He came to Texas Tech University in 1955, where he taught history as well as serving as founding director of the Southwest Collection until his retirement in 1979. Connor edited *The Texas Treasury Papers* and several series of books. He wrote many articles and twelve books on Texas history. He was past president of the Texas State Historical Association, a fellow of the Huntington Library for two summers and recipient of the Wrangler Award from the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Working Cowboys at the Memorial Service

by Robert Fink, Hardin-Simmons University

"The monk told me that singing, story telling in song and dance were the highest forms of art." *-- Robert Laxalt*

We watch them walk down the aisle
of the college auditorium, leaning back
and shuffling their weight from one

bowed leg to another as if the horse
that throwed them once, that broke

their one good leg, still swayed
beneath them. No chaps or spurs,

this occasion formal as Saturday night
in Starched *Wranglers*, the crease
down the middle pronounced as their code

of *yep* and *nope*. Nothing exotic
about their boots except the polish.

But the shirts! The shirts—
their one extravagance in ochre

and sienna and turquoise and
the yellow-orange of sunset,
the deep purple of a star-filled

prairie night. And such geometry,
as if a tribe that rode at ease

across the land, seeing they might
be forgotten, took a sharpened bone

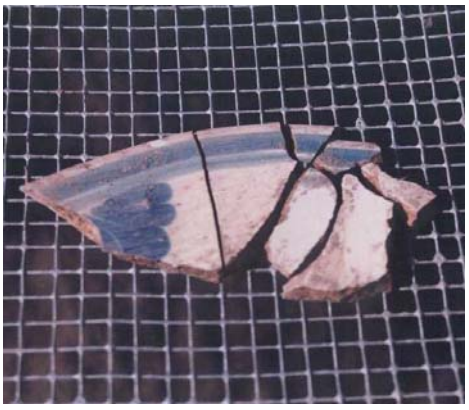
and dipped it in a bowl of what
they had no word for but *color
given of earth*, and wrote across

this fabric their song of deer and bison
and laughing coyote standing upright

on two feet, lifting one and then the other,
dancing for the moon the names of all

who rode beyond those who remain,
who settle around the fire, lift their hands
and begin to sing the story.

In memory of Lawrence Clayton



Shards from a plate found at the San Saba Presidio in Menard. The Texas Tech Archeological Field School began a dig at the presidio in June. They plan to return for further excavation over the next few summers.

Some Explanatory Origins in Comanche Folklore

by Ernest Wallace

[Editor's note: This is a condensed version of an article first published in the 1947 Year Book.]

In June, 1876, a starving band of Comanche Indians led by Quanah Parker surrendered to the United States military authorities at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and agreed to confine themselves within a reservation. This was the last defiant remnant of a once powerful tribe which for a century and a half had dominated the South Plains, a vast region extending southward from the Arkansas River to the Pecos and westward from about [the] ninety-eighth meridian to the eastern settlements of New Mexico. Shortly after 1700 the Comanches had migrated southward from the vicinity of the headwaters of the Platte and had made themselves "Lords of the South Plains." Having won the country, they held it successfully against Indians, French, Spanish, Mexicans, Texans, and Americans for more than a century. Not until the Industrial Revolution provided the Anglo-Americans with the iron horse that moved across the prairie with a speed and endurance too great for the Indian's pony to match and with rifles for the ruthless slaughter of the buffalo did the fearless Comanche admit defeat and submit to reservation.

This proud people left scant archaeological remains and no written literature. No trained anthropologist recorded their old way of life. Knowledge of their culture is confined largely to commentaries of a few white observers, to old customs that have survived on the reservation, and to a few but brief scientific studies. Among the unexplored sources for the study of Comanche history, religion, customs, and patterns of behavior is their folklore. Although only a relatively small number of tales have been collected, they reveal a wealth of information. Many stories concerning personal attributes of character, ideals to be followed, and weaknesses to be overcome suggest a moral or a pattern of behavior. Some explain the origin of whatever attracted interest; others reveal cultural, historical, and spiritual aspects of tribal life. Those narrating the exploits of the warpath or counting coup were the most popular. Some of the stories were short; others were long. Some were trivial, others were interesting and well worth hearing.

In the simple life of the Comanches, folk tales became both entertainment and education; story telling, an oral art and a literary achievement. When told at night to a

group of young and old sitting in the fading light of the campfire as it cast its long, ghostly shadows on the yellow, buffalo-skin tipis, the tales held the attention of all and stirred to the depth of the soul emotions of bravery and ambition, reverence and awe, or love and honor.

The frank, simple humanity of the tales adds much charm. The lack of synonyms and the general simplicity of the Comanche language led the storyteller to the use of elisions, figures of speech, mimicry, and an immense variety of facial expressions and gestures. When an audience became intensely interested, the story teller tended to embellish his story. The practice appears to the reader as useless repetition, but gave added suspense to the listener. There is something in the native version that more truly reflects the original natural atmosphere, the vigor, the figurative expressions, and the reality of the stories than is possible in the translated and written form.

Races from time immemorial have sought explanations for the unknown they see in nature and for that invisible power which controls the elements of nature and the destinies of man. The Comanche myth credits the Great Spirit with the miracle [of creation].

Creation of Man[1]

The Great Spirit gathered the dust from the four corners of the earth to make man, so that when man died the earth would not refuse him a burying place. When the Great Spirit created man, the earth shook and trembled—and asked the Great Spirit: "How can I feed the vast multitudes of men that will issue?"

The Great Spirit replied: "We will divide the maintenance of man. You will feed man during the daytime with all you produce, and when night comes I will send sleep upon him and he will awake refreshed in the morning."

The Great Spirit took eight parts to form man: the body from the earth, the bones from the stones, the blood from the dew, the eyes from the depth of the clear water, the beauty from his own image, the light of the eyes from the sun, the thoughts from the waterfalls, the breath from the wind, and the strength from the storm. The first man was of such gigantic size that his head reached the skies and his eyes looked from one end of the earth to the other. But menial labor and unwholesome food diminished his size and made him vulnerable. After the Great Spirit created man, he ordered all living things of earth to prostrate themselves before him. All obeyed except one, who as a result was cast out. The demon to seek revenge took refuge in the tooth of the serpent, the fang of the spider, the legs of the centipede, and in other poisonous animals, insects, reptiles, and plants to torment and harm man on earth at every opportunity.

The Great Spirit sent a secondary spirit to earth to teach man how to live. He taught the Comanches to make stone arrow points and knives of stone and bone. He instructed them how to put arrow points on shafts, and showed them how to make a bow. He told them that the buffalo, the deer, and other animals were on the earth for their benefit. He taught them to make fire by rubbing two sticks together or knocking together two stones.

One interesting characteristic portrayed in Indian tales is the vague, doubtful, and changing boundary line which separates man from his "little brothers" among the lower animals. The Indians consider the animals closely related to themselves and cannot conceive of man as set apart from the animals by an impassable barrier. They are endowed with the thoughts, actions, behavior, and responses typical of the norm patterns in Comanche society. Medicine or spiritual power might reveal itself through the intermediary of an animal or object. In such a case an animal or object possessed supernatural power. Under such circumstances the guiding spirit sometimes changed personality from animal to man or from man to animal. This conception of mutability is not particular to the Comanches. Coyote appears far more often than any other actor in the tales. He is symbolical of one of the more powerful secondary spirits. In some of the tales he is a wise mythical hero who called the tribal councils to decide questions of great import and offered words of wisdom; he had strong medicine for reading the future. In other tales he is a trickster, and as such may be symbolical of the Comanche people themselves. He appears as a mythical hero with medicine power in the pre-historic period and as a trickster in the historical. The stories leave the impression that the majority of the people could converse with Coyote in the pre-historic period, whereas in the historic period understanding of Coyote language seems to

have been limited to a few. An oral myth explains how the Comanches learned the coyote language.

How Comanches Learned Coyote Language[2]

Once long ago, a Comanche father was always whipping his son and otherwise treating him very mean. One day the boy became tired of being mistreated and ran away, across the creek and into the mountains. He stayed a long time and almost starved. One day he came upon a litter of puppy coyotes. The boy and the coyotes played together and became friends. After a time the boy followed the little coyotes into their hole. The puppies licked the boy's tired aching feet and the boy fell asleep. When the mother coyote came home and saw the trespasser, she growled in anger; but the boy was too weak to run, and soon went back to sleep. The mother coyote, seeing that he had not hurt her babies and that they liked him, began to have sympathy with him.

"You love my children. Tomorrow I shall go hunt and bring you some meat."

Every day she brought food, and the boy remained and played with the coyote children. The boy ate raw meat, and as the days passed, he came to act and talk more and more like the coyotes.

One day some passing Kiowas saw the boy run into the hole. He would not come out when they called. The Kiowas told the Comanches what they had seen. When the boy's father heard, he guessed that it must be his son that the Kiowas had seen and sent to find him. Four times the father called the boy by name and asked if it were he. On the fourth call, the boy answered but said he did not wish to return home, for he was afraid. The father then built a fire to smoke the boy out of the hole. When the smoke became unbearable, the boy came out of the hole and returned to camp with his father. Ever afterwards he could understand the coyote language and could talk with the coyotes.

In one version of the origin of the days and seasons, the animals decided the question without the assistance of man. In [this] version the humming bird determines the seasons.

Origin of Days and Seasons[3]

When the world was still cold and in darkness, all the animals got together to consider ways of improving their lot. Some were dissatisfied with the darkness and wanted light. Others were dissatisfied with continuous cold. All the animals were represented—birds, bears, turtles, opossums, racoons, coyotes, and many others. After entering the tipi and seating themselves in a circle, they asked, "What shall we do? How shall we settle the question so that all will be satisfied?"

The coyote, who wanted darkness so that he could do his mischievous work, knew there would be several animals on his side. "Let's choose sides and have a hand game in the tipis," he suggested.

They started the game. The bear, turtle, and humming bird, among others, were on one side—the side that wanted light. They kept losing. Finally the bear went out of the tent to "make medicine," and when he returned, his side began winning. Then the bear arose with confidence, put his hand forward in an impressive gesture, and thrust it toward the door.

"It will soon be dawn," he told the other players. "We shall then have daylight. Watch my mouth and when you see there a yellow streak, it will be the sign of dawn."

The humming bird, pleased with the bear's speech, spoke up: "My friends, when daylight comes, look at my mouth. You will see six tongues that will indicate six months of warm weather and six months of cold weather."

When dawn came, the animals saw the yellow streak on the bear's mouth. The humming bird opened his mouth to shout, "Hurrah!" and the other animals saw that he really had six tongues. The humming bird flew happily out the door. The animals on the losing side ran away frightened.

That is how we happen to have day and night and winter and summer.

In a similar myth the Great Spirit asked Coyote to settle the mortality of man. After creation man had been permitted to return to earth after death. Just as in Blackfoot mythology, the mortality of man is determined by the sinking of a rock.

The Mortality of Man[4]

For a long time after the Great Spirit created man, the dead people were permitted to return to life after the lapse of four days. Finally, it was obvious that the earth would become crowded. The Great Spirit sent Coyote to teach the Comanches that the dead must not return to life on earth. Coyote called the council at the edge of a body of water. While discussing the question, Coyote picked up a rock and spoke: "Behold, our dead people shall do as this rock!"

Whereupon he cast the rock into the water. When the rock sank into the water and did not reappear, Coyote again spoke: "Similarly, our people will not return. This earth is very large, but if the dead were to come back, it would get crowded and there would not be enough food." The council agreed, and since then the dead have not returned to earth.

To all primitive men as well as songwriters and modern young lovers, the moon has been an interesting and puzzling phenomenon of nature. Many have speculated on the visible outline in the moon and see in it the form of man. But how did the man get in the moon? The Comanches had a mythical explanation.

How the Man Got in the Moon[5]

Once the children of two Comanche women strayed away from camp across the creek toward the mountains. A giant came along and saw the children. He put them in a huge buffalo skin bag which he carried and took them to his camp. He put them to bed and told them to go to sleep. After they were asleep, the giant intended to select one of them and eat him.

When the giant thought the children had gone to sleep, he slipped quietly into the bedroom to select the child for his meal. But the children had brought along a small dog, and every time the dog heard the giant coming it would scratch the bottom of the children's feet and awake them. When he saw they were awake, the giant would leave the room without disturbing the children.

Late the next afternoon the children got permission from the giant to go to the creek to take a bath. At the creek they met a frog. "Oh, frog, giant is going to kill us. Help us escape. We will run toward our village and when giant calls, you answer: 'Wait, we will be through shortly'."

Each time giant called, the frog answered as he had been told. The giant thought it was the children answering. After calling several times, the giant became angry and went after the children. When he reached the creek and saw the frog, he knew that he had been fooled. He tried to kill the frog, but the frog jumped into the creek.

The giant then started in pursuit of the children. When he was about to overtake them, the children saw a buffalo calf and ran to it pleading for help. The buffalo calf told the children to circle him four times and stop behind him.

When the giant came close, the buffalo calf lowered his head, pawed in the ground to make medicine, and charged the giant. He threw the giant high into the air, so high that he hit on the moon and could not come down. That is how the man happened to be in the moon.

The buffalo were indispensable to the Comanches. Hair, skin, flesh, blood, bone, entrails, horns, sinews, kidneys, liver, paunch, and the dried excrement were all utilized. The Comanches lived with the buffalo, and when the buffalo disappeared, Comanche power collapsed. The buffalo was life itself to the Comanche. It even possessed very great spiritual power. It usually used its power for

good, healing or befriending the Comanches. There are several versions of how the Comanches came to possess the buffalo, but the following tale appears to be the most popular. In some versions it appears that the Comanches obtained the buffalo from other people, but others leave the impression that they may have liberated the buffalo from some supernatural power that was holding them in closely guarded possession from all men.

How the Comanches Got the Buffalo[6]

Once long ago, an old woman and a young child who lived in the mountains in the far north kept all the buffalo in a pen. At that time the Comanches were a very poor people and often hungry. One day Coyote called a council of the Comanche chiefs and proposed a plan for getting the buffalo. The Comanches were to move in the vicinity of the enclosure and leave Coyote, who would change into a small dog, near the spring where the old woman and the child got their water. The Comanches agreed and did as Coyote said.

The next day when the child went for water he found the dog and carried it back to the house. The old woman was suspicious and did not want the child to keep the dog (Coyote), but the child plead so fervently that she finally consented. During the night when the old woman and the child were asleep, the dog (Coyote) slipped into the buffalo pen and began to howl. The buffalo were frightened. They stampeded, broke the gate down, and escaped. The noise awoke the old woman, but it was in vain that she attempted to hold the buffalo back. The Comanches were waiting a short distance away and herded the animals toward their plains homeland where the buffalo afterwards continued to range and multiply.

Although animals characters are principal actors in the preceding tales, the plot or central point of the story is not centered around them as such. The animal actor in each is a mythical tribal hero. However, purely animal stories are preponderant in Comanche folklore. Practically all may be classed as fables since a moral lesson is clearly stated or implied in each.

Living close to nature, Comanche children naturally had an immense interest in the animal life within their own environment. Such narratives help the child form the habit of putting himself in the place of others and adapting himself to the social norms of his group. [These] tales are stories that not only have a moral but explain origins. In satisfying an inquisitive child's desire to learn why the raccoon had rings on his tail, the story teller could at the same time impress upon the child an important lesson in social behavior.

Why Coons Have Rings On Their Tails[7]

Once while coming along the creek, Coon saw Coyote working an interesting trick. He was sticking his tail in the sand and pulling out Yampa (a potato) with his tail and eating the food. It was good food. Coon wanted to learn the trick so he could always have good food. He asked Coyote to teach him how to pull the roots out of the ground with his tail. Coyote agreed, but explained that it was difficult for the instructions had to be followed minutely else medicine would work for evil. Coyote showed him exactly how deep to push his tail into the earth. It must be no more or no less. The medicine would be lost if the instructions were even slightly changed.

Coon did exactly as he was told and was able to get the roots. He liked them. In the days that followed, Coon thought that he could notice that the better roots were deeper than he was pushing his tail. "Coyote just told me to stick my tail no deeper, as he wanted to keep all the good roots for himself." So he determined one day to try pushing his tail deeper. He stuck his tail deep into the ground and pulled and pulled, but he could not pull it out. He stayed there and starved. After that all the coons marked their tails with rings so they could tell exactly how deep to stick them into the ground without getting stuck.

Why the Crow Is Black[8]

Once, long ago, the Crow was white and had powerful medicine. He could fly over where the Comanches were slaughtering a buffalo and cause the meat to be bitter. The Comanches called upon Coyote to help them. Coyote called a council and made a suggestion. The Comanches were to set a trap on a butchered buffalo for the crow.

They set the trap and caught the crow. "Now," said Coyote, "tie him to the poles atop the council tipi and build a fire inside. The smoke will go through the opening on him."

They tied the crow to the top, built the fire, and soon the crow started 'cawing." Within a short time the crow was black. "That's all," said Coyote, "you can now turn him loose, for he will not harm you any more. When he 'cawed' and turned black, he lost his power." After that, freshly slaughtered buffalo meat was always good.

NOTES

[1] This version of creation as narrated by Herman Lehmann, was published in Jonathan H. Jones, *A History of the Apache and Comanche Indian Tribes*, 199-200. Lehman was captured by the Apaches and later adopted by the Comanches. He became a brave and respected Comanche warrior.

[2] Pakawa (Kills Something), Lawton, Oklahoma, June 25, 1945, to Ernest Wallace. As far as the writer has been able to ascertain this story has never before been committed to writing.

[3] By Rachel Mo-wat as she heard it Mow-wat, her father-in-law, in July 1940, and narrated by Herwanna Becker Barnard, *The Comanche and His Literature*, 79-80, a master of arts thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1941.

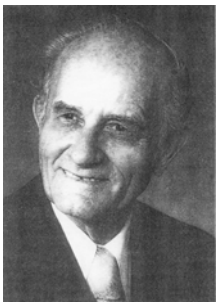
[4] H. H. St. Clair, collector, "Shoshone and Comanche Tales," in *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, July-September, 1909, No. 85, p.280.

[5] John Winnerchy (Comanche), Faxon, Oklahoma, to Ernest Wallace, June 28, 1945.

[6] Pakawa (Kills something), Lawton, Oklahoma, to Ernest Wallace, June 25, 1945. Slightly different versions may be found in St. Clair p.280-281, and in Barnard, p. 202-204.

[7] John Pahdopony (See How Deep Water Is), near Medicine Mound Park, Lawton, Oklahoma, to Ernest Wallace June 29, 1945. As far as can be ascertained, this is the first time the story has been written.

[8] Pahdopony to Wallace, June 29, 1945. Barnard, pp. 205-206 has a slightly different version.



Dr. Ernest Wallace (1906-1985) taught at Texas Tech for 40 years and is best known for his book *The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains* published in 1952.

Did You Know? West Texas Facts and Trivia

COMPILED BY VICKY JONES

-----Iraan, Texas (Pecos County) was founded in 1927 and named in a contest. The winners, Ira and Ann Yates, won a town lot as a prize.

-----Amarillo High School's mascot is the "Golden Sandie," named for a 1922 sandstorm.

-----Brewster County is the largest county in Texas. It has 6,169 square miles of land, less than 1% of it classified as farmland. Much of the county's terrain is mountainous, with elevations of 1,700 to 7,825 feet.

-----The Panhandle-South Plains Fair is held in late September-early October in Lubbock, Texas. The fair began in 1914 and was held in stores around Lubbock's City Square. Today's nine-day event, held at Fair Park in northeast Lubbock, includes agricultural and craft exhibits, commercial vendors, midway rides, concerts, and food.

-----The "Punkin Days" festival is held during the last weekend of October in Floydada. Some of the festival's events include pumpkin carving competitions, pie tastings, and pumpkin bowling. Approximately 800 acres of land around Floydada are planted in pumpkins, yielding 10-15 million pounds of pumpkins annually. It's no wonder that Floydada is known as the "Pumpkin Capital of the World."

NEWS FROM AROUND WEST TEXAS

WTHA president **Dr.Garry Nall** of Canyon has received the prestigious **Piper Professor Award** for teaching excellence, given each year by the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation to honor select faculty members from Texas colleges.

"Dr. Nall is one of those faculty members who reminds all of us at West Texas A & M University why we chose our professions: the love of learning, the joy of teaching and the exhilaration of association with students," Dr. Russell C. Long, WTAMU president said. "He is one of this University's finest, most effective teachers as well as being a distinguished scholar."

Nall, a 1954 graduate of Graham (Texas) High School, earned a bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Texas in 1958 and 1959, respectively. He joined the WTAMU faculty as an instructor in 1963 "with the intention of staying one year." That was 38 years ago. He received his doctorate from Oklahoma University in 1972 and has remained an integral and involved member of the WTAMU community throughout his tenure.

"Although I've received compliments on my lectures, some of my best teaching has probably occurred around a table, in a hallway or in my office," said Nall. His enthusiasm for teaching– in and out of the classroom—has not gone unnoticed. He received the University's Teaching Excellence Award in 1995, a President's Community Service Award in 1998, and the College of Education and Social Studies Outstanding History Professor Award in 1999. Nall will retire from WTAMU on August 31.

Lou Rodenberger missed the WTHA meeting last spring because she was being inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters. She has also recently been elected a Fellow in the Texas State Historical Association.

Fred W. Rathjen, professor emeritus at West Texas A & M University, Canyon, has been elected to the Executive Council of the Texas State Historical Association as an academic member.

Marleta Childs celebrated twenty-five years as a genealogical columnist on August 16, 2001. Her weekly column, "Kinsearching," appears in the Sunday edition of the *Amarillo Globe-News*.

Lewis Toland of New Mexico Military Institute will edit the Spring 2002 issue of *Southwestern American Literature*, which is devoted to **Elmer Kelton**.

Tales from Out Yonder, a new book by **Ross McSwain**, retired San Angelo journalist and past WTHA board member, is due for early August publication from Republic of Texas Press. The book is the third one to be developed from his long-running Out Yonder column that has been a weekly feature of *the San Angelo Standard-Times* for more than 20 years. McSwain also has several other books under his belt, including a history of the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association, and he collaborated with Joe Pickle of Austin on writing the history of the Colorado River Municipal Water District.

Streamed videos of **Austin Community College History Department**'s annual symposium for 2000 are now available for viewing at the department's web page. In the video lectures, Jim Steely deals with the creation of the state park system using the Civilian Conservation Corp in "Parks for Texas: Enduring New Deal Landscapes." Patrick Cox's presentation is "Legendary Liberal: Ralph Yarborough." Richard Flores examines the cultural and political use of the Alamo in the twentieth century, and Andres Tijerina comments of the Flores presentation. The exact url is http://www2.austin.cc.tx/history/boblain.html.

The **Vietnam Archive** at Texas Tech received a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a Virtual Vietnam Archive. The Virtual Archive is a multi-year project to digitize all of the non-copyright material in the Vietnam Archive, making them available in a searchable database on the Internet.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

The **West Texas Historical Association** Program Committee invites you to submit proposals for individual papers or panels on any aspect of West Texas history to be presented at the 2002 meeting. The conference will be hosted by Angelo State University, San Angelo, Texas, on April 5-6, 2002. Proposals should include the title of the paper, a brief abstract of the paper and the name, address and phone numbers of the participant. Presentations must be no longer than 20 minutes. *Deadline for submissions is November 1, 2001.* The **earlier deadline** will afford presenters with the opportunity to complete projects and to send out the programs earlier. Send proposals to: Arnoldo De Leon, Program Chair, Department of History, Box 10897, San Angelo, Texas 76909. Jorge Iber, Texas Tech History Department, and Don Taylor, Hardin-Simmons History Department are also on the program committee. Applicants will be notified on December 14.

The **Center for Big Bend Studies** will hold its 8th Annual Conference on November 9-10, 2001, on the Sul Ross Campus in Alpine, Texas. Presentations will focus on prehistoric, historic, and modern cultures of the borderlands region of the United States and Mexico. *Deadline for abstracts is August 31, 2001*, and may be sent to Kelly Garcia, SRSU Box C-71, Alpine, TX 79832 or emailed to kgarcia@sulross.edu. If you are interested in attending the conference, contact Becky Hart at 915-837-8179 or email rhart@sulross.edu.

Mosaic of Texas Culture Conference hosted by Hardin-Simmons University on February 15-16, 2002 seeks proposals for papers and panels. Several threads will run through the conference, including Texas folklore, history, music, art, geography, racial/ethnic concerns, women's issues, environmental issues, film makers, political issues, and archaeology. Proposals should include the presenter's name, title of the paper and a brief overview. Send proposals to: Dr. Donathan Taylor, Hardin-Simmons University, Box 16125, Abilene, TX 79698. e-mail <dtaylor@hsutx.edu>. 915-670-1294. *Deadline for proposals is November 1, 2001.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 7, 2001. The **Deaf Smith County Museum** in Hereford is planning a day of activities which will include individuals re-registering their livestock brands. People are encouraged to bring their actual branding irons and put their brands on a special board made for that purpose. Other festivities will include an exhibit by western artists and a barbecue. For more details call 806-364-4338.

September 28-29, 2001. **East Texas Historical Association Meeting** in Nacogdoches at the Fredonia Hotel. This year's meeting is the second to include a special panel of speakers from the West Texas Historical Association. The panel, titled "Tilling His Roots—Elmer Kelton in Context" is scheduled for 9 AM on Saturday September 29. The panel includes the following speakers: Harwood P. Hinton, Austin, Presiding; Jim Matthews, San Antonio, "Always Another Chance: Elmer Kelton's Development of Characters and Themes Through His Short Stories"; Becky Matthews, San Antonio College, "Gypwater and Lacy Mesquite: Gendered Views of West Texas in the Fiction of Elmer Kelton and Jane Rushing"; Lewis Toland, New Mexico Military Institute, "Rotten Hay from a Rotten Government." For hotel reservations call, 936-564-1234. For more information about the conference, contact the East Texas Historical Association, P.O. Box 6223, SFA Station, Nacogdoches, Texas 75962-6223. Telephone 936-468-2407.

October 6, 2001. **Friends of Fort Davis NHS Eighteenth Annual Preservation Festival** at the fort. 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free. Reenactors will present living history demonstrations. Featured activities include historic dancing and band concert, late 19th century craft demonstrations, an "1884" baseball game, firearms exhibit, auction, cavalry drills and a noon barbeque. For more information call 915-426-3224, ext. 20.

October 20, 2001. History will come alive at the 31st annual **Ranch Day Celebration** hosted by the **National Ranching Heritage Center** in Lubbock. The free event runs from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. More than 100 volunteers and artisans will portray ranch life of the 1780s to the early 1900s through living history presentations. Special attractions will include cavalry and buffalo hunter camps, Native American dances, horse gentling demonstrations, longhorn and other livestock exhibits, and chuck wagon samplings. Volunteers will demonstrate time-honored traditions of quilting, spinning, weaving, and tradition dancing with fiddle music provided by Lanny Fiel and the Ranch Dance Fiddle Band. Children's activities will include horse rides, crafts, and the yearly Stick Horse Rodeo. A barbecue lunch will be served between 11:30 a. m. and 1:30 p. m. for a small charge. For more information call Stephanie Gray at 806-742-0497, extension 228.

October 26-27, 2001. The **New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum** in Las Cruces has scheduled its third annual **Cowboy Days Celebration**. New to this year's event will be a chili cook-off contest. For more details e-mail Cameron Saffell at csaffell@frh.state.nm.us.

November 10, 2001. **From Retreat to Tattoo**, a special evening at **Fort Davis NHS**, features moonlight tours of the fort. Staff members and volunteers in living history attire will depict scenes from the 1880's at Fort Davis. The tours are free, but each one is limited to 22 people and reservations are required. Tours start every 20 minutes, beginning at 6:30 p.m. and last about one hour. Visitors should dress warmly and must be able to walk one mile unassisted. For reservations, please call Fort Davis NHS at 915-426-3224 ext.20.

First week of December. **Christmas Bazaar** at **Lake Meredith Aquatic & Wildlife Museum** in Fritch. Two shopping days are set aside for elementary school children. Two additional shopping days for Christmas gifts, crafts, and baked goods occur on Saturday and Sunday. For more information call Neva Burris at 806-857-2458 or fax 806-857-3229.

December 7-8, 2001. Free. **Candlelight at the Ranch** hosted by the National **Ranching Heritage Center** in Lubbock will take place from 6-8 p. m. both nights and from 5-6 p. m. on Saturday for visitors with special needs. Luminaries will light the path around 35 historic structures where Ranch Hosts volunteers re-enact holiday activities of the past two centuries. Illuminated by lanterns, firelight, and candles, the structures will be filled with the sights, sounds, and smells of holidays past. Visitors can warm up with a cup of hot cider and fresh popcorn while they enjoy the music of carolers, festive displays, and traditional music and dancing. Cowboy Santa and his Wranglers will be on hand to usher in the season.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

Ongoing through May, 2002. The **New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum** in Las Cruces is home to the interactive exhibit, *La Casa Colonial*, which includes a recreated 1815 Spanish home on the Santa Fe Plaza, complete with a courtyard and many hands-on materials. For more details e-mail Cameron Saffell csaffell@frh.state.nm.us.

January, 2002. **The New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum** in Las Cruces will open an exhibit on the use of *German and Italian prisoners of war in New Mexico* agriculture during World War II. Information on camps in El Paso County and Camp Hereford, Texas, are expected to be included in the display since those camps were the source for some POW laborers in southern and eastern New Mexico. For details e-mail Cameron Saffell csaffell@frh.state.nm.us.

[*A special thanks to Marleta Childs of the Southwest Collection for compiling much of the information in this column.*]

RANCHING HERITAGE CENTER CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY

A standing room only crowd celebrated the 25th anniversary of the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock on Friday, June 29. Highlights included three exhibits addressing the people, history and preservation missions of the NRHC, a keynote speech from Byron Price, director of the Buffalo Bill Cody Heritage Center in Cody, Wyoming, and entertainment by pianist Doug Smith playing the NRHC's 1876 Square Grand Piano, which was brought to Texas for renowned rancher Col. C.C. Slaughter 125 years ago. Emcee for the evening was Dr. Tai Kreidler, assistant dean of the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library.

The anniversary commemoration continued on Saturday with guided tours throughout the afternoon, historically-clothed docents providing the history of each of the NRHC's authentic buildings, and a concert and dance that evening headlined by western recording artist Red Steagall and his band.