



# THE CYCLONE



## Special Panels Highlight Midland Meeting

A full program of thirty papers on subjects including ranching, historic preservation, education and sports greeted members and guests at the seventh-seventh annual meeting of the West Texas Historical Association in Midland March 31- April 1, 2000. Special panels included a joint session with the East Texas Historical Association and a plenary session "West Texas History: Looking Back, Looking Forward." Banquet speaker was Dr. Robert Flynn of San Antonio with a humorous presentaion "Miracles in Chillicothe."

Awards presented at the meeting included the Outstanding Student Paper to Gary Lindsey for "Willard B. Robinson and the Ranching Heritage Center at Texas Tech University" and the Mrs. Percy Jones Award for Best Article in the *Year Book* to Sean J. Flynn for "Life-Blood of the Plains: John L. McCarty and the Panhandle Water Conservation Authority." The Rupert N. Richardson Award for Best Book on West Texas History was presented to Dr. Frederick Rathjen for a reprint of *The Texas Panhandle Frontier*. Abel Ramirez of the Southwest Collection received a special award for being always Ready, Willing and "Abel."

A new slate of officers for 2000 was also approved at the meeting. Congratulations to President Clint Chambers of Lubbock and Vice-President Gary Nall of Canyon. New board members include Cindy Martin of Lubbock, Hubert Strom of Fort Worth, Janet Neugebauer of Lubbock and Don Walker of Lubbock.



Plenary speakers Clayton, Martin, Bellinghausen, Rodenberger, and Aston

## Mushaway or Muchaque? A Hill by Any Other Name . . .

by David J. Murrah

Many years ago, while I was touring Israel, our guide mentioned that seeing the land was like having access to a fifth gospel, and he was right. I knew the story, but to be able to stand in the place where the story took place, to see the space, the dimensions, and the terrain, one cannot help but gain new insight into the old story.

I had a similar experience while standing on a remote West Texas peak. Several years ago, a small group of us took advantage of an offer by rancher Rich Anderson to take a first-hand look at one of the region's most venerable landmarks, Borden County's Muchaque Peak. To the casual passer-by the hill probably means little, but decades ago, its sighting meant the end of the trail to bands of weary Comanchero traders making their way across the Llano Estacado.

This little hill, located about five miles south of Gail, is known among the locals as Mushaway; as is so identified as such in the *Texas Almanac*. However, on USGS maps, it is called Muchakooago, on an 1875 Army map, it is Moocha Koway, and Mexican Comanchero traders called it Muchaque. According to Daniel Gelo, in his very good



article on Comanche place names in the January 2000 *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, the name is derived from the Comanche term *motso ku?e*, which means "beard summit." Apparently the term relates to a story from Comanche folklore.

By all pronunciations, it has been one of West Texas' most important landmarks for centuries. Why? The answer lies at the top of the peak.

Climbing Muchaque was relatively easy. It rises more than five hundred feet above the nearby creeks, but only three to four hundred feet above the surrounding plains. However, the last 15 feet presented a challenge, for one has to scale the Cap Rock itself to reach the top. Muchaque's thick cap accounts for its very existence. Once the peak was a part of

the level plains which now lay ten miles to the northwest. The surrounding Colorado headwater tributaries ate away the alluvial deposits, but Muchaque's Cap Rock kept the peak intact, forming a mountain island on the rolling plains.

The first of two surprises awaited me when I scaled the top. First I came face to face with two wild goats. Obviously, we startled each other, and the goats turned and nimbly scrambled down the craggy slope. Later, I found their home, a cozy den tucked in a shallow depression on the south side of the peak. Although they were wild domestic goats, they clearly were managing to survive by using the football-field sized mountain top as their home base.

The view which awaited me at the top revealed the other surprise, and that revelation requires some geographic and historical explanation. For the nomadic Comanches and Kiowas, Muchaque's surrounding terrain offered winter grass, mesquite wood, and a mild winter climate. It was Ranald Mackenzie's explorations in 1872 which first gave insight to the role that the Muchaque valley played as a winter resort and trading post. By that time, the Comanches relied less on finding buffalo along the Colorado; (Continued on page 2)

## From the Executive Director



Dear Fellow Members,

Recently we have been reading many of the past articles of the *Year Book*, and, as always, we have come away impressed at the scope and breadth of West Texas history. Our interest in history has compelled us to collectively document a wide variety of subjects that include water development, tent shows, architecture, comancheros, and ranching. In reading through the 75 years of *Year Book* articles we are reminded that some of the best history ever written can be found in there. As one long-time WTHA member had recounted, "The *Year Book* has been consistently one of the best sources of Texas history around." Guided by editors who knew their craft, the publication was the gemstone in the crown of Texas history and the single-most important publication that promoted the legacy and lore of West Texas. Today, the tradition continues and the upcoming volume is a testament to the spirit of Rupert Richardson, Ernest Wallace, Carl Coke Rister and William Curry Holden. If you have not done so, I encourage you to dust off those back issues and read them.

But, the *Year Book* is only as sound as its membership and to keep it strong we urge you to think of new members that might enjoy our fellowship. New members will be the spark for ideas and stories that will carry the *Year Book* into the 21st Century. We are, if nothing else, a collegial group committed to good company, good history and fine bouts of visiting. But, we are reminded by WTHA president, Clint Chambers, that we must find a way to appeal to the young people--college and high school students--to become part of the WTHA. In the coming year we must reach out and get them excited about history.

The coming year holds many exciting opportunities for the organization. On September 28-30 the WTHA will have a session at the East Texas Historical

Association meeting in Nacogdoches. On Friday September 29 Tom Crum (Granbury), B. W. Aston (Abilene), Don Walker (Lubbock) will present papers on West Texas history. The two organizations have worked out a reciprocal arrangement where each holds a session at the annual meeting of the other. It is hoped that these two key regional historical associations might work more closely together on projects of common interest. Please take the opportunity to attend the East Texas meeting.

At the Midland annual meeting the association board selected meeting sites for 2001 and 2002. Next year's meeting will take place on March 30-31, 2001 in Wichita Falls, Texas. The board accepted an invitation from Michael Collins, Dean of the Liberal Arts College of Midwestern State University who invited us to Wichita Falls. Planning is already underway with local arrangements being handled by Harry Hewitt (Wichita Falls). Janet Neugebauer (Lubbock) will handle the duties of program chair and will be working closely with Kenneth Hendrickson (Wichita Falls).

The board also accepted an invitation from Preston Lewis (San Angelo) and Angelo State University to hold the 2002 meeting in San Angelo. We have not met in there for some time and it will be a pleasure to return.

The association sincerely thanks all of those sponsoring and sustaining members who have given their support to the organization. In addition, we extend our sincere appreciation to WTHA president Clint Chambers for his recent donation of 250 lapel pins. The pins exhibit the WTHA seal and he asked that the proceeds go to the association. If you would like to order one please call or write. The price is \$10. Also, the WTHA and the Wichita Falls Shriners are once again sharing the proceeds from video sales of the Annual Oil Bowl football and basketball games. Ty Cashion and his associate filmed the games June 22-24. The money will be used to fund a worthwhile project to be named later. Special thanks go to Ty for his generous time and effort.

As always, we hope that your summer is productive and that you save time for friends, family, and colleagues. And to paraphrase W. C. Holden we hope you will jump more rabbits than you'll ever have time to bag.

Most sincerely,

Tai Kreidler



## Muchaque

(Continued from page 1)

instead, they utilized the area as a trading post for cattle they stole from Texas ranches to the east and south. Comancheros—Mexican traders—came from the Pecos valley in New Mexico bringing "guns, ammunition, cloth, flour, bread, sugar, coffee, etc." to the Comanches in exchange for livestock. As Major John Hatch reported in March 1872, "two traders named Hughes and Church . . . furnish the goods and buy the cattle" from the Mexicans, once the cattle were delivered.

No one knows how many thousands of Texas cattle were run through these first livestock auctions on the plains, but such trade occurred for many years along the Canadian, at Quitaque, at Ransom Canyon near Lubbock, and at Muchaque. Once it was thought that these sites were Comanchero trading posts, designed to attract the Comanches. However, archaeologists tell us that the traders were simply going to where the Indians were.

My view from the top of Muchaque offered a surprising revelation and answer as to why the Indians were there, an answer hardly discernable from below. I contend that the Indians were always to be found there, especially in the winter, due to the lay of the land. From the top of the peak looking south, is the broad expanse of the Colorado River and its shallow valley which stretches east to west. To the north, is a funnel, a "Buffalo Gap," formed by the Llano Estacado escarpments to the northwest and the Fluvana Escarpment to the northeast. These form a valley which narrows to eight miles just to the north of Gail. This valley also serves also as a pass from the Brazos watershed to that of the Colorado.

In the late fall and winter, buffalo herds naturally drifted southward off the plains into the Brazos breaks. Perhaps they would linger along the Brazos until the next norther, and then they would be driven into the Muchaque funnel. Once they crossed the pass, they were slowed or hampered from further movement south by the Colorado River, which lies only eight miles south of Muchaque. The River effectively served as a drift fence for the migratory buffalo herds. Its tributaries formed sheltered breaks which surround the Peak on all sides which provided protection from sharp north winds for buffalo and Comanche alike and assured the wintering residents of a permanent food and water supply. Thus, the isolated Muchaque Valley, with its 500-foot mountain sentry post sitting squarely in the middle, provided a safe winter haven for generations of Comanches, and probably for their predecessors as well.

If you are interested in seeing the pass to Muchaque, drive from Post to Gail along Farm Road 669, and visualize, if you will, drifting herds of buffalo, trailed by Comanche caravans headed south for the winter. You won't regret the effort.

# The Land and the Life of the Great Plains

by Walter Prescott Webb

[Editor's note: The following is a condensed version of a much longer paper published in the 1928 Year Book. Webb, then a doctoral student at the University of Texas, presented and published this paper at the West Texas Historical Association—three years before his landmark book, *The Great Plains*, was published in 1931. Webb went on to become one of the foremost historians of the American West.]

An effort to understand the historical influence of the Great Plains on American civilization would be futile without a clear comprehension of the physical forces that have worked and continue to work in that region. These forces, historically speaking, are constant and eternal. They make, therefore, a permanent factor in the interpretation of history. If the Great Plains forced man to make radical changes, sweeping innovations in his ways of living, the cause lies almost wholly in the physical aspects of the land. A study of these physical aspects, land formations, rainfall, vegetation, and animal life, not only illuminates the later historical development, but explains it in large measure. These aspects themselves when compared and contrasted with those of the humid area go far to prove the general thesis that conditions in the Great Plains were such that a civilization entering them from the humid east was compelled to modify its methods and means of utilization.

## 1. How the Great Plains Were Built

In the formation of the Great Plains is found the first contrast between the arid west and the humid east. In general the topography of the humid region is what it is by virtue of stream erosion and degradation, by virtue of a surplus of moisture; the topography of the Great Plains is what it is by virtue of a desert condition, of stream deposit or aggradation.

The upper soil of the Great Plains rests upon a "structural slope of marine-rock sheets uplifted with general uniform eastward inclination."

The surface of the Great Plains is mantled by a debris apron composed of the material brought by the "swinging rivers" down from the mountains. Or, to put it another way, the Great Plains were created by the wearing down of the mountains and the spreading down of the debris as a foot slope. Thus it appears that in the surface origin the Great Plains afford a striking contrast to the land forms of the humid east. There plains are formed only at the sea shore by delta formation, whereas in the arid country plains are formed where the streams issue from the mountains onto a more nearly level surface.

[Erosion has occurred on the eastern and western slopes of the Great Plains, leaving



Photograph courtesy of the *Handbook of Texas* fragments of the original debris apron in place, forming the High Plains.]

Underneath the surface, water is found in greater or less[er] quantities in the debris apron that mantles the marine rock foundation. This water is slowly making its way down the plane to the east. It travels best in the gravel beds left by the swinging rivers; it travels poorest in the clay. Well makers seek these gravel beds and shun the clay. And on the Plains civilization took hold and developed only where water existed or could be procured.

The account of the way the surface was built up by aggrading and diminishing rivers also explains the presence of lime and alkali in the soils west of the one hundredth meridian, mentioned so often by Plains explorers. Since the advancing waters were being constantly absorbed into the ground or evaporated, the river was constantly giving up its load and a large part of the minerals carried in solution. The process is not different to that which goes on in an enclosed or salt lake, except in degree.

From the above explanation, certain features of the Great Plains become intelligible:

1. The plains are barren of minerals—especially metals—because the surface is of fluvial origin.
2. The rivers are unsuited to navigation because they are aggrading and shallow. Therefore river boating played no part of the Plains.
3. The rivers were full of quicksand and dangerous to early travelers and cattle drivers, due solely to the fact that they were aggrading.
4. The water was impregnated with salts for reasons given.
5. The oil that has been found in such quantities, especially in Texas and Oklahoma, is found below the fluvial soil under the marine rock foundation.

## 2. The Climate of the Great Plains.

The distinguishing climatic characteristic of the Great Plains environment is a deficiency

[of] water. The Great Plains from the ninety-eighth meridian to the Pacific slope are sub-humid. Within the area there are humid spots, due to local elevation, but there is a deficiency in the average amount of rainfall for the entire region. It is this deficiency in moisture that accounts for the peculiar life and ways of life in the West. It conditions plant life, animal life, and human life and institutions. In this deficiency is found the key to what may be called the plains civilization. It is the feature that makes the whole aspect of life west of the ninety-eighth meridian such a contrast to life east of that line.

The line of twenty inches [of annual precipitation] follows approximately the hundredth meridian. Nowhere west of that line does the rainfall rise above twenty inches over any appreciable area short of the Pacific slope. It is generally agreed that wherever precipitation is less than twenty inches the climate is deficient. This means that the land cannot be utilized after the methods employed in the region where precipitation is more than twenty inches.<sup>2</sup>

Another climatic feature that has had important economic and historical consequences for the Great Plains environment is the wind. No where in the world has the wind done more effective work than in the Great Plains. The Great Plains, particularly the High Plains, is a region of high wind velocity, especially as compared with the humid east. The level surface and the absence of trees give the air currents free play. On the whole, the wind blows harder and more constantly on the Plains than in any other portion of the United States save on the sea shore.

The effect of the wind on the life in the Great Plains offers an alluring study for the student of social institutions and for the psychologist.

"Very striking," says Professor [Robert DeCourcy] Ward, "is the broad zone of the Great Plains, with wind velocities closely resembling those along the eastern seaboard and the Great Lakes.... No more striking illustration of the wind velocities on the Great Plains has even been given than Captain Lewis's description of the occasion, on the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, when one of his boats, which was being transported on wheels, was blown along by the wind, the boat's sails being set!.... Over this great treeless open country... blow winds of remarkable uniformity and of relatively high velocity, averaging ten to twelve miles per hour, and even reaching fourteen or fifteen miles in the region of the Texas Panhandle."<sup>3</sup> The abundance of wind has compensated in great measure for the scarcity of water in the

Great Plains country. In another paper on windmills this question of utilization of the wind will be treated at greater length.

Certain special weather features of the Great Plains are of sufficient importance to merit notice. These are in hot winds, the chinook, the northers, and the blizzard, named here in the order of descending temperature.

The hot winds blow in summer in the southern portion of the Great Plains.

"The chief characteristics of these winds are their intense heat and their extreme dryness. They come in narrow bands of excessively hot winds.... Their velocity varies from a gentle breeze to a gale."<sup>4</sup>

The economic disaster occasioned by these hot winds is terrible. Everything goes before the furnace blast. It has been reported that over 10,000,000 bushels of corn were destroyed in Kansas in one season. The hope of the farmer is to mature the corn before the hot winds begin to blow. Ward reports that a case, for which he makes no citation, is on record where traffic on the Southern Pacific Railroad in Texas was suspended for a time because the excessive heat expanded the rails until they were warped out of alignment.

The chinook wind occurs in the northern Great Plains along the eastern foot slope of the Rocky Mountains from Montana southward to Colorado. The chinook is a warm wind that blows from the mountain down into a colder region, mitigating greatly the severity of the cold, melting the snow, and in some cases evaporating it so rapidly as to leave the ground on which it lay perfectly dry.

The norther is the name given in Texas to a cold wind descending from the north over the Great Plains into a warm area. In this respect it is the reverse of the chinook. But unlike the chinook, a norther may be "wet" or "dry." It comes suddenly from the north or northwest, often accompanied by a solid sheet of black cloud, and clouds of sand, and causes the thermometer to drop with incredible speed from twenty-five to fifty degrees.

The blizzard is the grizzly of the Plains. The term seems to be a modification of the German word *blitzartig*, meaning "lightning-like" and appears to have come into use in America after 1860. The term is used loosely to apply to any severe cold accompanied by high wind and snow. Blizzards occur rarely in the east. Their home is the northern plains. A North Dakota blizzard of 1865 has been described thus:

"It was a mad, rushing combination of wind and snow which neither man nor beast could face. The snow found its way through every crack and crevice. Barns and stacks were literally covered by the drifting snow, and, when the storm was over, cattle fed from the tops of the stacks."<sup>5</sup>

Another weather feature on the Great Plains is hail, [which] is a curse to the country it visits. The map given by Ward shows that the

hail area lies almost wholly within the Great Plains.

The five weather phenomena are all localized in the Great Plains country. The hot winds, chinooks, northers, and blizzards are the most novel features of United States weather. The fact that all find their habitat in the Great Plains is worth noting because it reveals a part of the unusual conditions which civilization had to meet and overcome in that region.

### 3. The Vegetation of the Great Plains

Vegetation furnishes the most obvious aspect of the contrast between the eastern and western parts of the United States. It is, in turn, an index to climate, particularly to rainfall or precipitation.

The ninety-eighth meridian separates the vegetation of the East from that of the West. In its primeval state practically the entire region east of the line was heavily timbered, truly forest land. West of the line, excepting the northern Pacific slope, and the islands in the mountains, there is a scarcity or a complete absence of timber.

The non-forested area—the Great Plains environment—falls into three subdivisions, the tall grass or prairie, the short grass or plains, and the desert scrub. These areas lie in north-south belts from east to west in the order named. They correspond closely to the rainfall of the regions:

Tall grass	humid	Low plains and prairie
Short grass	sub-humid	High plains
Desert grass (mesquite)	semi-arid	Southern High Plains
Desert shrub	arid	Intermountain

In an historical study of the Great Plains, the reason for the existence of grasslands throws considerable light on the nature of the country as an abode for man. To put the matter briefly, grass prevails only where conditions are hard, unfavorable for more luxuriant forms of plant life. In terms of human experience, [this means] that grasslands offer many hardships to man. History seems to bear out the theory, for European civilization has developed in a forested region, never in a plains environment.



### 4. Animal Life on the Great Plains

In this study only those animals peculiar to the Plains will be given consideration. Historically the Plains animals are significant if they exhibit characteristics which suggest peculiar adoption to their environment. These characteristics may be offered as more or less tangible evidence of the contrast existing between the two regions that lie on either side of the ninety-eighth meridian.

The American antelope or pronghorn is the purest type of plains animal, and seems to have developed only in the Great Plains of North America. It is not a member of the antelope family of Europe or Asia. It seems to occupy an intermediate position between the goat and deer. Its horns are hollow like those of cattle or goats, yet it sheds them like the deer. It has the caution and timidity of the deer and the curiosity of the goat.<sup>6</sup>

It takes its abode solely in the plains country, and has a special antipathy for the woods and canons.

The antelope are peculiarly well fitted for their chosen environment. First, the sense of sight is such that they can detect danger at an immense distance. Second, they were the swiftest runners on the continent, and can be pulled down only by the greyhound. But with them curiosity and caution are strangely mingled. They want to observe any strange or unusual object, and this makes them a mark for hunters.

Third, the antelope is equipped with a signal system that enables it to communicate danger at great distances. This is the white rump patch. The rump of the antelope is lighter in color than the body. When frightened or interested in anything unusual, the antelope contracts its muscles and the rump patch becomes a flare of white. Ernest Seton-Thompson records that these flashes can be seen further than can the animal itself, flashing in the sun "like a tin pan."<sup>7</sup>

Fourth, the antelope, like all plains animals, possesses great vitality. Dodge says that "the antelope will carry off more lead in proportion to their size than any other animal."<sup>8</sup>

The western portion of the United States or of North America seems to be the natural home of rabbits and hares. But in the jack rabbits are to be found the true Plains rabbit. They are restricted to the region west of the Mississippi River, and are ever to be found in the open country.

The jack rabbit has certain qualities that well fit him for Plains life. His long ears—which make him resemble the burro—gave him the name of jackass rabbit, later shortened to its present form. Since they live on the open plains, they rely for safety on a keen sense of hearing and on speed, "and all they ask of a coyote is a fair start and an open field."<sup>9</sup>

Because of his size, the individual jack rabbit does great damage to growing crops. It is a common saying in the West that a jack rabbit will eat as much as a horse, and the farmers have been at war with them since they crossed the ninety-eighth meridian. Bounties have been offered for them in practically all western states. It is estimated that crops in Tulare County, California were damaged one year to the amount of \$600,000 and that one county in Idaho paid in one year \$300,000 in bounties. As many as 20,000 jack rabbits are said to have been killed in one drive. In the ten year period, 1888-1897, a total of 494,634 jack

rabbits were killed in California alone as a result of drives.<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the jack rabbit is not a rabbit, but a true hare. Like the other Plains animals, the jack rabbit was misnamed.

The prairie dog, like most Plains animals, goes under an assumed name. He has "no more of the dog about him than an ordinary grey squirrel."<sup>11</sup> The prairie dogs inhabit the high, dry plains, and live in colonies. Their food is grass. Not only do they eat the blades, but they dig up the roots—destroying vegetation "root and branch." Vernon Bailey tells of a prairie dog town on the Texas plains between San Angelo and Clarendon that covered 25,000 square miles which was estimated to contain 400,000,000 prairie dogs. He estimates the number in Texas at that time (1901) at 8000,000,000 and that these would require as much grass as 3,125,000 cattle.<sup>12</sup>

The prairie dog is the squirrel of the Plains. While the eastern woodland squirrel seeks safety in hollow trees, the Plains squirrel seeks it in the ground. The plains squirrel alias prairie dog has constituted a serious economic problem in the West. He can be reached only by poison, and it is a matter of greatest difficulty to exterminate him in the region that attracts his fancy.<sup>13</sup>

These Plains animals exhibit certain characteristics which are worth noting.

1. All are grass eaters.
2. The antelope and jack rabbit are noted for their speed and both stick to the open country, depending solely on speed for safety.
3. All can get along with little or no actual water supply.
4. All these animals are extremely shy, and must be hunted with long range guns, a fact that had a marked influence on the development of weapons in the United States. In common with all Plains animals, Indians included, these above possess great vitality, the antelope most of all.

A further fact about the Plains animals is that most of those peculiar to the Plains have been

popularly misnamed. The buffalo is the bison, the prairie dog is a marmot, the jack rabbit is a true hare. This is suggestive of what happened when a people having their background in a humid, forested region came out on a new environment. The point is not important, but worth noting as a symptom of the eastern misunderstanding of the West.



The buffalo is or was the most important of the Plains animals, and has attracted more attention than any other animal indigenous to the United States. Originally the range of the buffalo was not confined to the Plains, but it was only in the Plains area that he grew in sufficient numbers to exert any appreciable effect on man. It is said the first buffalo seen by a white man was viewed by Cortez and his men at Anahuac where Montezuma maintained a menagerie. Hornaday says that the nearest place from which this animal could have come was the state of Coahuila, which is an extension of the Great Plains of the United States south of the Rio Grande. This was in 1521. The English settlers found buffalo as early as 1612, when Samuel Argoll records seeing the animal, probably near the head of the Potomac River.<sup>14</sup>

The true home of the buffalo, [however], was the Great Plains. Hornaday's map shows that they were practically exterminated east of the ninety-fifth meridian by 1850. West of this line they were still innumerable.

Dodge describes a herd which was estimated to cover fifty square miles, and containing in sight about 500,000. Hornaday estimates that herds might total 12,000,000 and that they would certainly reach 4,000,000 as a minimum estimate. The point is that here was, under the natural conditions on the Plains, an

inexhaustible beef supply, unrivaled by anything known to man.

Historically the buffalo had more influence on man than all other animals combined. He was the life, food, raiment, and shelter. The buffalo and Plains Indians lived together and together passed away. The year 1876 marks the end of both. Custer's defeat (it is miscalled a massacre) and the last big slaughter of buffalo came in that year, the doom of man and beast.

An understanding of the geography, topography, climate, the vegetation, and wild animal life throws a great deal of light on the history of the Great Plains. Other phases of Plains life will be developed in future studies.

## NOTES

1. Willard D. Johnson, "The High Plains and their Utilization," Twenty-first Annual Report of the U.S. Geological Survey, Vol. IV (1900), p 627.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture Yearbook, 1921, p 413.
3. Robert De Courey Ward, *The Climates of the United States*, p.156f.
4. *Ibid.*, 405.
5. *Ibid.*, 880-881.
6. Witmer Stone and Wm. E. Cram, *American Animals*, (1913), p.54
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57
8. Dodge, *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, p.301.
9. Vernon Bailey, "Biological Survey of Texas," U.S. Biological Survey, North American Fauna, No. 25 (1905), p.155.
10. T.S. Palmer, "The Jack Rabbits of the United States," U.S. Biological Survey, Bulletin 8 (1897), pg 58.
11. Dodge, *Hunting Ground of the Great West*, p. 211.
12. Bailey, "U.S. Biological Survey of Texas," p. 90; C.V. Piper et al., "Our Forage Resources," Yearbook, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1923, p.400.
13. C. Hunt Merriman, "The Prairie Dog of the Great Plains," Yearbook, U.S. Dept of Agri. (1901) pp.257-270.
14. W.T. Hornsby, *The Extermination of the American Bison*, Annual Report of the U.S. National Museum (Smithsonian Institution), 1887, Part II, 373ff.



## Did You Know? West Texas Facts and Trivia

COMPILED BY VICKY JONES, SOUTHWEST COLLECTION, TEXAS TECH

The World's Largest Rattlesnake Roundup is held each March in Sweetwater, Texas (Nolan County).

Ben Ficklin, Texas, then the county seat of Tom Green County, was destroyed by the flooding of the Concho River on August 23-24, 1882. Sixty-five people died in the flood. The post office and county offices were moved to San Angelo, which soon became the new county seat.

The first Thanksgiving in the United States may have been celebrated in West Texas. A group of Spaniards led by Juan de Onate, a Spanish explorer, arrived at the Rio Grande River near El Paso on April 28, 1598. They celebrated the completion of their 350-mile journey across the Chihuahuan Desert with a feast.

Roy Orbison, well-known singer of songs such as "Pretty Woman" and "Crying," grew up in Wink, Texas. Wink's Roy Orbison Museum (open by appointment only) houses a large collection of Orbison memorabilia, and sponsors a Roy Orbison Festival each second weekend in June.

Flomot, Texas (Motley County) was originally located on the line between Floyd and Motley Counties. The town's name comes from the first three letters in each county's name.

Crosby County, organized in 1886, was named for Texas Land Commissioner Stephen Crosby.

## NEWS FROM AROUND WEST TEXAS

Dr. David J. Murrah has been promoted to the position of Vice President at Southwest Museum Services. He moved from Lubbock to Houston in the fall of 1998 to become project manager for the firm. Dr. Murrah is the past director of the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University.

Dr. Don Taylor has become head of the Department of History at Hardin-Simmons University, effective June 1. Dr. Greg Cantrell left HSU and is now at the University of North Texas.

Noel Parsons has accepted the position of Director of the Texas Tech University Press, effective September 15. Parsons, currently Editor-in-Chief at Texas A & M University Press, has more than 25 years experience in book publishing. He grew up in Pampa and, thus, is returning "home."

Lou Rodenberger was recently elected to the Foundation Board at Texas Woman's University, a three-year term.

Janet Neugebauer and Walt McDonald received the Western Heritage Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame on April 1, 2000 for their book, *Whatever the Wind Delivers: Celebrating West Texas and the Near Southwest* (Texas Tech University Press). The book, dedicated to the region's pioneers, pairs poems by McDonald and historic photographs chosen by Neugebauer.

Richard Francaviglia's recently published book *The Cast Iron Forest: A Natural and Cultural History of the North American Cross Timbers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000) received an award from the Crosstimbers Heritage Association of Keller, Texas, on June 25th, 2000.

Steve Bogener of Texas Tech's Southwest Collection received a grant from the Helen Jones Foundation for \$10,000 for a symposium to be sponsored jointly by the SWC/SCL and the School of Art in fall, 2001. They will feature speakers, exhibits of both student and professional photographers. The focus of the symposium will be Defining and Re-defining Place Through Photography and the interpretation of same through photographic images as documents.

Steve Bogener is also working on an *aviation exhibit* in cooperation with Lubbock International Airport. The exhibit will go up in August or September and will feature early aviators on the High Plains including pioneer Clent Breedlove, South Plains Army Air Field (the glider training program at LIA in the 40s located where LIA is today), and Lubbock Army Air Field, which became Reese AFB west of town. A second exhibit is in cooperation with Meredith McClain of the Foreign Language department and will focus on *German-Texans*.

The West Texas Collection at Angelo State University in San Angelo, TX is closed in order to prepare for a move into new and enlarged facilities. They will be located on the 2nd floor of the University Center and hope to reopen to the public about 1 Oct 2000. They will have twice as much space. The new facility will include a display room, microform room, the Elmer Kelton Reading Room, a workroom, archive storage, the Eva Canunez Tucker Center for the Study of Southwestern History and Culture, reception room, gallery, seminar room and resident scholar's office.

There is an HO-scale model of the Clairemont, Texas, jail. It is manufactured by Guts, Gravel & Glory Scenic Railroad Supplies and can be ordered at railroad hobby shops through the Walthers catalog.

Tai Kreidler and Ty Cashion met at Dr. Kenneth Neighbours's horse ranch on June 23 for "Cantonment II." They grilled steaks over an open fire, talked history, and slept under the stars. The Cantonment is their annual rite on the way to film the "Oil Bowl," the Texas-Oklahoma All-Star game. They sell copies of the game to the players and split the proceeds between WTHA and the Shriners. This year Texas won 11-9.

Lawrence and Sonja Clayton spoke at the Friends of the Cross Plains Library in July. In September, Dr. Clayton will also join Lou Rodenberger at the fall Storytelling Gathering at Haley Library in Midland.

The Terry County Historical Commission has asked Betty DuBose Hamilton to write/edit a new Terry County history

book. The Brownfield High School World Wide Web class is helping to publicize the venture by putting historical markers, history summaries, pictures, and the submission form on their web site. If you have a moment to browse (some of the photos take a little time to load), you might enjoy a visit to the site. The URL is <<http://home.att.net/~bhamilt/wsb.html>>.

Linda Jones reports that the Crosby County Pioneer Memorial Museum has just finished the second publication of the archaeology book, *The Bridwell Site*. The first publication was in 1982. It was not done with the help of computers or scanners. In the new edition, they scanned in color images of the artifacts.

*Water for a Dry and Thirsty Land*, a history of the Colorado River Municipal Water District will soon be off the press. The 100,000-plus word book, containing photos, maps, graphics and other data, was done to commemorate the district's 50th anniversary this fall. The work, by CRMWD retired secretary Joe Pickle of Austin in collaboration with Ross McSwain of San Angelo, is expected to be introduced at Big Spring in the fall.

Lawrence Clayton has a new book--*Tracks Along the Clear Fork: Stories From Shackelford and Throckmorton Counties*. It is co-edited by Joan Halford Farmer of Albany. Contents are by Rister, Richardson, J.R. Webb, Ben Grant, and others. Publisher is McWhinney Foundation Press

Bruce A. Glasrud, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Sul Ross State University, is pleased to report two publications this spring and summer. The first is *The African American West: A Century of Short Stories* (University Press of Colorado) and the second, *Exploring the Afro-Texas Experience: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources About Black Texans* written with and Laurie Champion (Center for Big Bend Studies).

Lou Rodenberger's article "Twentieth Century Women Writers and the Literary West," is scheduled to appear in the August issue of *Roundup*, publication of Western Writers of America. It is one of the series "Writers of the 20th Century" appearing in that journal this year.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*September 7-9, 2000.* The **National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration** at the Lubbock Civic Center. In addition to poets, musicians, story tellers, and exhibits of all sorts, there will be approximately two dozen papers dealing with many aspects of life in the American west. There will be plenty of chuckwagon cooking available for purchase. And there will be, of course, many working chuckwagon crews and their wagons.

*September 29-30, 2000.* **East Texas Historical Association** meeting in Nacogdoches at the Fredonia Hotel. This year's meeting includes a special panel of speakers from the West Texas Historical Association, who will read at 1:30 P.M.: Tai Kreidler, Texas Tech University, presiding; B.W. Aston, Hardin Simmons University, "The West Texas Historical Association: Seventy-Five Years of Collecting History"; Tom Crum, Granbury, "West Texas: What and Where?"; Donald Walker, Texas Tech University, "Years of Apprenticeship: Preston Smith Becomes A Politician." For hotel reservations, call 1-800-594-5323 by September 1. For more conference information log on at <http://144.96.211.125/ETHA.html>

*October 7, 2000.* The **Friends of Fort Davis NHS Annual Preservation Festival** at the fort. 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. Free. The day includes a variety of 19th century military and civilian activities. Featured this year are members of the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldier Association who will present mounted and dismounted cavalry demonstrations. Also, reenactors from Fort Stockton, Fort Concho and Fort Lancaster will conduct "Living History" demonstrations. Other featured activities include historic dancing, historic band concert, late 19th century craft demonstrations, an "1884" baseball game, firearms exhibit, auction, old-fashioned games, cavalry drills and small arms demonstrations, and a noon barbeque.

*October 20-21, 2000.* The **Center for Big Bend Studies** will hold its 7th Annual Conference, on the campus of Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas. Papers will be presented on the history, archeology, and culture of the Trans-Pecos region of Texas and northern Mexico. The featured speaker at the

Saturday luncheon will be Curtis Tunnell, former executive director of the Texas Historical Commission. If you are interested in submitting a paper, please send an abstract of 200 words or less to Kelly Garcia, SRSU Box C-71, Alpine, Tx 79832 or e-mail her at [kgarcia@sulross.edu](mailto:kgarcia@sulross.edu). For information call 915-837-8179 or fax 915-837-8381.

*October 21, 2000.* **Ranch Day** at the **Ranching Heritage Center** in Lubbock, Texas. Costumed Ranch Hosts and artisans demonstrate period crafts and skills. Other points of interest are a cavalry camp, chuck wagon cooking, farrier demonstration, carriage rides, Stick Horse Rodeo and traditional dances. Barbeque lunch sold. 10 AM – 4 PM, Proctor Park historical site. No charge.

*November 11, 2000.* A special evening entitled **From Retreat to Tattoo** will be held at **Fort Davis NHS**. The evening features special moonlight tours of the fort. Staff members and volunteers in living history attire will depict scenes from the 1880s at Fort Davis. The tours are free, but reservations are required because each tour is limited to 22 people. Tours start every 20 minutes, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Each tour takes 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.

*December 1-3, 2000.* **Christmas at Old Fort Concho**, San Angelo, Texas. Each day the grounds will be bustling with entertainment, living history, music, arts, and food. Enjoy the activities, holiday shopping, chapel services, and beautifully decorated buildings. With many children's activities planned, this year's event promises something for the whole family. Friday 3-9 PM. Saturday 10 AM-9 PM. Sunday 9 AM – 5 PM. For more information call 915-657-4441.

*December 8-9, 2000.* **Candelight at the Ranch**, **Ranching Heritage Center**, Lubbock, Texas. Luminarias light the paths throughout Proctor Park historic site, where costumed Ranch Hosts in the structures re-enact holiday activities of the late 1700s to early 1900s. In the DeVitt-Mallet Visitors Center, a cowboy Santa greets children. Hot cider is served in the 6666 Barn, where visitors can experience traditional ranch music and dances. 6-8 PM Friday and Saturday. No charge.

*March 1-3, 2001.* The **Texas State Historical Association Meeting** will be held in at the Renaissance Hotel in Houston. The event will feature more than 30 sessions on topics including the NASA Oral History Project, black Texas writers, historic cemeteries, and women on the New Spain frontier. In commemoration of Spindletop's 100th anniversary, several sessions will deal with the oil industry and the geyser that started it all. The meeting will also feature book exhibits and an auction of Texana. For more information, call the Association at 512/471-1525.

### From the Ranching Heritage Center:

*Pitchfork Country: The Photography of Bob Moorhouse.* Text by Jim Pfluger. Forward by Wyman Meinzer. \$30.00 soft cover; \$49.00 hard cover. Moorhouse's photos reflect traditional western subjects that create the illusion of scenes from a bygone era. As a working cowboy, Moorhouse has been able to create images that accurately portray ranch life. *Pitchfork Country* features over 200 full-color photos, background text and insightful comments by the photographer. Available by calling (806) 742-2498.

## The West Texas Historical Association Student Essay Award

The West Texas Historical Association announces an award of \$200.00 for the best article written by an undergraduate or graduate student on some aspect of the history of West Texas. The region is defined for purposes of this contest as that area west of Interstate 35.

The essay should range from 10 to 14 pages, be written by a student enrolled in a college or university and be sponsored by a faculty member of that institution. A cover letter from the sponsoring faculty member and a one-page abstract of the paper must accompany the manuscript.

The essay will be included on the program of the annual meeting and will be published in the *Year Book*. The winner will be awarded an additional \$50.00 grant to help defray expenses to attend the meeting.

**Deadline for submission:** January 10, 2001

Submissions should be sent to:  
Student Essay Award  
% Executive Director, WTHA  
Southwest Collection  
Box 41041, Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, TX 79409

## WTHA Membership Dues Increase

At the spring 2000 meeting, members voted to increase the WTHA dues by \$5 for most categories of membership. This decision was based on the fact that the association now loses about \$1.81 on each member, based on current expenses. The cost of printing the *Year Book* and two issues of *The Cyclone* in addition to the cost of several mailings to each member total \$16.81 per year. Current membership dues are \$15 for individuals.

Cynthia Savage reported on a comparison study she did of other similar organizations and pointed out the quality WTHA members are getting for their money. They receive a hard bound *Year Book* as opposed to a paperback journal. The newsletter, which comes out twice a year, is now eight pages long with articles and photographs. No other organization offers its members so much for so little.

New dues schedule:

Student	\$ 10
Regular	\$ 20
Institutional	\$ 20
Family	\$ 25
Sustaining	\$ 35
Life	\$300
Sponsoring	\$1000

### NEW ADDRESS?

Remember to send your change of address to the WTHA office: Southwest Collection, Box 41041, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-1041.

### THE CYCLONE

*A Newsletter for members of the West Texas Historical Association*  
Editors: Jim & Becky Matthews

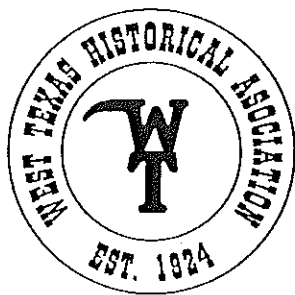
Published twice a year (February and August) by the West Texas Historical Association, Lubbock, Texas. Members also receive *The Year Book*, published each fall, containing articles, news notes, and book reviews about West Texas history. Annual membership fees are \$10 for students, \$20 regular, \$25 family, \$35 sustaining, \$20 institutional/library. All back issues of *The Year Book*, published since 1925, are available for \$15 each.

### WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University  
P.O. Box 41041  
Lubbock, TX 79409-1041

Phone: (806)742-9076  
Fax: (806)742-0496  
E-mail: wthayb@ttacs.ttu.edu

On line? Check out our Web Site at [www.lib.ttu.edu/swc/westtexas](http://www.lib.ttu.edu/swc/westtexas)



Non-Profit Orgn.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Lubbock, Texas  
Permit No. 719