 Faces of the Community

Borderlands readers, this year we offer you longer articles than in previous issues. Some stories lent themselves to repeated interviews, as in the case of Korean War POW, Jerry Sperbeck, who offered EPCC materials from his service as well as recollections of a war whose veterans were not always treated well when they returned to their country amid a mad hunt for communists.

In the case of the article on Lee and Beulah Moor, it was impossible to do their story justice without trying to discover the motives behind their great desire to save children in poorly functioning homes. For 50 years the home they created has been helping children who bear the brunt of their parents’ difficulties. The Moors’ story is fascinating, optimistic, inspirational.

Growing up in New Mexico, I remembered that we sang the state song, “O Fair New Mexico,” by Elizabeth Garrett in elementary school. I had heard legends of the outlaw Billy the Kid (his mother is buried in Silver City) and Pat Garrett, the sheriff who killed him. But it was a long time before I realized that Elizabeth was the sheriff’s daughter. This research gave me a different perspective on him and his daughter, members of a family far ahead of their time.

I heard about Ingeborg Heuser, director of Ballet El Paso, when I first came here to teach at UTEP. After seeing my first Heuser “Nutcracker,” I attended as many as possible of her purely magical productions. I brought my mother all the way from Central, NM (a few miles from Silver City), one Christmas season to see her first “Nutcracker,” something she never forgot. It was snowing as we left Magoffin Auditorium after the ballet – how perfect was that? Thank you, Ms. Heuser, for that unforgettable Christmas memory!

Other stories just kept getting longer and even after repeated editings because there was so much to be said, exactly what happens in class sometimes when students want to tell me everything they discover. I love that enthusiasm in English 1302 classes where students learn to conduct research and write college level papers, the basis for these articles.

Students realize that research is an essential part of their education, regardless of the subject. And they learn that all their research cannot be conducted on the computer. They must get out of their comfort zone and discover their community. They must conduct field research, interview people. Students are always amazed that local authors, experts and celebrities are happy to talk to them. As their confidence rises, students might email or call the author of a book or article they are using, and then, they are on their way. Once they get excited about a subject, it becomes meaningful and active education takes place.

My students, editors Kim Wilson and Heather Coons and I hope you will enjoy these articles. Heather has been a joy to work with for three years – thank you, Heather! Kim, a North Carolina native, is learning about our Southwestern history and doing a great job researching it.

Thanks to Joe Old, our faculty editor from EPCC’s journalism and history disciplines, who edits each article just because he has a big heart and loves history and the written word. Thanks also to Monica Wong and her entire library staff, who work with my students and me to make this project a joy! Most of all, thanks to Richard Rhodes, outgoing president of EPCC, who has always supported Borderlands. We will miss you, Dr. Rhodes.

Ruth Vise, Faculty Advisor & Editor

From The Editors

History is where we have been. History helps explain how we got to where we are today. History helps to shape the future. Borderlands tries to preserve the stories that make up the history of our community. As a student in Ms. Vise’s 1302 English class, I came to realize that there is a lot more to history than what we read in textbooks. The everyday stories of our lives make up the fabric of who we are. Many of those new to the area have never heard the stories of the people who have shaped our community. We hope that even those native to the area will find something that they did not know in this issue.

Borderlands is truly a labor of love. It is a collaborative effort on the part of many supportive people. First, I thank Ms. Vise for her guidance and support. I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with this publication. Tremendous thanks go to the students for their hard work and effort on their research papers, as well as to the librarians who assisted them. We also appreciate the individuals and families who graciously shared their stories, time and resources.

I thank my family, Pat, Daniel and Katelyn, for their understanding and support which mean so much to me.

Special appreciation also goes to Laura Hollingsed at UTEP Special Collections for her tremendous assistance, along with Ruth Brown, Border Heritage Librarian at the El Paso Public Library, Pat Worthington at the El Paso County Historical Society and the librarians and staff at the Northwest Library.

We hope that you will enjoy the stories of those who have given so much to the community we call home. Enjoy!

Kim Wilson, Editor

It’s time for Borderlands again, and although my writing contributions for this issue are few, it has been a great joy and privilege to see our local history come to life in print.

As always, Borderlands would not be possible without the hard work and contributions of many. I would like to thank our featured trailblazers and their families for their contributions to history, as well as to the librarians who assisted with interviews and photographs.

I would also like to thank the students for their manuscripts, which are the basis of the articles herein. Kim Wilson should be praised for her wonderful work on this issue, as well as Ms. Vise, for her dedication to teaching students the joy of the written word and in seeing that Borderlands makes it into El Paso homes year after year.

I would personally like to thank Ms. Ingeborg Heuser for inviting me into her home and being so very gracious and kind, and Renee Tanner for taking the time from her busy day to talk with me and give me a tour of the Lee & Beulah Moor Children’s Home.

My biggest thanks goes to Mr. Jerry Sperbeck. Your experiences were humbling and your stories fascinating. Thank you so much for sharing them with me. It has been an absolute honor, Sir, to be the one to tell your story, and I sincerely hope that you like it.

This issue is bittersweet for me because it is the last time I will be contributing to Borderlands. Kim, I hope that you enjoy working on this project as much as I have; I look forward to seeing you in print next year. Ms. Vise, it has been an absolute pleasure. For the last time, El Paso, happy reading!

Heather Coons, Assistant Editor
Engineer and Editor Juan Hart Moved El Paso Forward

By Juana Black, Charles Gabriel and Kevin Guerrero

There are few individuals who have played a bigger role in the development of El Paso from a lawless, dusty town into a thriving metropolis than this native. Not only did he have a claim to many “firsts,” including being the first American born in El Paso, but he also helped to combat city corruption and even averted a war. Although he was a captain in the US Infantry, his accomplishments came not from military might, but from his education and the power of the spoken and written word. The name of El Paso’s pioneering editor and engineer? Juan Siqueiros Hart.

Hart, born July 24, 1856, was the oldest of seven children born to El Paso’s industrial pioneer and first newspaper publisher, Simeon Hart, and his wife, Jesusita Siqueiros (see Borderlands vol. 28). Although Juan Hart spent his early childhood at the Hart homestead (what is known to El Pasoans as the old Hacienda Café), he traveled with his family to San Antonio in 1862, where the Hart family remained during the Civil War.

According to Dorrance D. Roderick’s article in Password, journal of the El Paso County Historical Society, when Hart was 10, he traveled to New York to further his education. Two years later, Hart was sent to his father’s home state of Missouri, where he was enrolled at Christian Brothers College of St. Louis. In 1874, Hart graduated with degrees in civil and mining engineering, with honors.

That same year, Hart’s father died, and with his mother’s death just the year before, the young man found himself responsible for not only his younger siblings, but his father’s vast estate and business, Hart’s Mill. He was 18 years old.

Hart took on the responsibility of educating his younger sisters and enrolled them in one of the foremost girls’ schools in America, the Academy of the Sacred Heart, in St. Charles, MO, founded in 1818. To support his education, Hart took a position at his alma mater teaching mathematics and Greek, even writing several plays that were performed by the students, for which Hart acquired considerable acclaim.

At the height of the silver boom in 1878, Hart traveled to Leadville, CO, where he began his career in engineering with former schoolmate, J. C. Carrera. The death of one of his sisters brought Hart home. Because there were no railroads to El Paso yet, Hart purchased a horse and buggy in Leadville and set out alone, traveling over mountains and across deserts in Indian country. It took him 40 days to get home. Like his father, Hart held family functions in important social gatherings.

Hart’s next engineering ventures took place in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, where he surveyed several large haciendas, including the Corralitos property, one of the largest land holdings in the entire country. Once his surveying was complete, Hart took the position of manager for a large gold mining operation at Ocampo, Chihuahua, owned by his old friend, Sen. Horace Tabor of Colorado.

Throughout this time, Hart returned to El Paso often, and in the early 1880s, decided to stay to run his father’s estate. He continued his engineering career and was appointed city engineer, at which time he began drafting the first official map of El Paso. Known as “Hart’s Map,” it was officially adopted in 1881.

According to The Texas Handbook Online, it was also in 1881, after Joseph Magoffin was elected mayor, that Hart joined one of the city’s first two baseball teams, playing both first and second base. So named because of the color of their socks, belts, shirts and stripes on their caps, the El Paso Browns took the Southwest Championship in 1886, with Percy Williams on the pitcher’s mound and Hart on second base.

In 1881, three newspapers began publishing in the city—the El Paso Times, the El Paso Herald and the El Paso Independent. More by accident than by design, Hart found himself following in his father’s footsteps when he joined the newspaper business after coming to the assistance of Mrs. Horace W. Kelly, whose husband owned the Independent. On Jan. 2, 1882, the Kelly’s newspaper changed names to the El Paso Link, with Hart as editor.

Hart brought in substantial citizens as backers for the newly developed Link, and according to Roderick, Hart and his partner, H. D. Potter, a printer, made the Link a “leading force” in promoting law and order, responsible government and enterprises that would improve the city. Competition between the three local newspapers was fierce, and following the old adage, “If you can’t beat them, join them,” the weekly Times bought the Link from Hart to become the El Paso Daily Times.

In 1884, Hart found himself principal owner and editor of the Times when he and J. H. Bate purchased Sherman C. Slade’s shares of the company, with Hart doing most of the writing. With his extensive knowledge in engineering, Hart understood the absolute necessity of an irrigation system for the growth of El Paso, and right after joining the Times, he began editorializing for an irrigation system for the entire El Paso valley. After many years, his campaign eventually materialized as the Elephant Butte Dam, completed in 1916.

As the new owner and editor, Hart traveled to New York City to see M. E. Stone, general manager of the Associated Press, to try to negotiate bringing in an Associated Press wire to El Paso. Hart knew that if El Paso were to progress, it needed to be in contact with other cities throughout America and the world.

According to the Times article, “Captain Hart Brought First A.P. Wire News to People of El Paso,” Stone laughed at Hart’s idea of stringing the wire approximately 1,000 miles from Denver to El Paso. When finally convinced that Hart was not only serious but could pay the heavy leasing charges (since only the Times would be served by the wire), Stone reluctantly agreed to the massive undertaking, officially connecting El Paso with the news of the world.

Throughout his editorial career, Hart used the Times as a podium for progressive social change, as well as to fight against corruption. He led the campaign to move the county seat from Ysleta to El Paso. In 1884, he editorialized against con artists who swindled El Paso citizens with Mexican games of chance, “games which, while Mexican in origin, more likely were perpetrated by some derelict American sharper who found it easier to fleece his victims out of sight of the El Paso police,” according to John Middagh in Frontier Newspaper: The El Paso Times.

In 1885, Hart used his engineering knowledge to investigate the new courthouse being built. Hart and two other local newspapers used the Times to publish his findings, ultimately leading to a correction of all wrongdoings and restitution of misspent taxpayer money.

Not only did Hart promote reform and uncover corruption, but on more than one occasion, he used the Times to prevent social turbulence. In 1886, A. K. Curtiss, an American living across the border, was arrested then convicted of libel after his Paso del Norte (today’s Ciudad Juárez) newspaper accused Emigdio Medina, who had circulated a prospectus of a competing newspaper, of fraud and swindling. The American Consul, the State Department and the Mexican government were soon all involved.

Rather than print a retraction, Cutting sat in jail and “made the matter … between two nations,” as Middagh wrote. While the governments of the two countries examined the facts, the Times reported that townspeople had become inflamed over the idea that Mexico could hold the United States hostage. Armed forces on both sides were ready to fight, and although Cutting was eventually released from the Mexican jail, Hart was able to quiet the masses by suggesting ways to bring about peace, as well as advocating for more Fort Bliss troops to prevent border violence.

According to W. W. Bridgers’ article, “Bread and Bullets,” Hart again quieted local hotheads in 1894. A contingent of the first march to Washington, DC, of the unemployed and hungry during the country’s worst depression to that point in history, known as continued on page 11
Elizabeth Garrett: Songbird of the Southwest

By Daniela Ceron and Braydon Miller

When the name Garrett is mentioned, especially in the Southwest, most people automatically think of Pat Garrett who killed Billy the Kid, an alias of notorious outlaw William Bonney, another alias that Henry McCarty used. Sheriff Pat Garrett shot the Kid while attempting to recapture him after he broke out of jail. Even though Pat Garrett is better known throughout the country as a tough lawman, his daughter Elizabeth holds the place of honor in New Mexico. Elizabeth Garrett was a talented composer, singer and musician. Given her accomplishments during a time when women were not considered equal is remarkable, but that she was also blind and her entire life makes it truly amazing.

Elizabeth Garrett was the third of eight children born to Pat and Apolinaria Gutierrez Garrett. She was born on Oct. 12, 1885, at her father’s ranch in Eagle Creek, about four miles north of Ruidoso, NM. In his biography of Pat Garrett, Leon Metz wrote that there are several theories about how Elizabeth came to be blind. The two most plausible are that her blindness was due to an inappropriate medication being applied to her eyes to prevent infection as an infant or that she was simply born that way. Despite the fact that her daughter was different, the Garretts were determined to help Elizabeth become as independent as possible. She was raised to be self-sufficient and uninhibited like the other children in her family.

The Garrett family moved to a ranch in the Pecos Valley near Roswell, NM, when Elizabeth was very young. In a 1937 interview with Georgia Redfield for the federal Works Progress Administration program, Elizabeth said, “My childhood days on the ranch near Roswell were happy, neither constricted nor restricted.” Her mother insisted that his daughter have a normal childhood with few limitations. Elizabeth climbed trees, rode horseback and explored her environment freely.

Ruth Hall wrote in her biography of Elizabeth Garrett entitled A Place of Her Own that her father had originally decided to refrain from mentioning her disability at all. He taught Elizabeth how to use her hands and other senses to “see” what she could not with her eyes. The Garretts were very progressive in their attitude and care of Elizabeth. At this time in history, most people with disabilities generally were not taught to be self-sufficient and their parents appear to have been way before their time in their parenting. Elizabeth’s father explained to her that she was visually impaired, unlike her siblings, before she left for school. Hall wrote that she cried at first as her father tenderly made clear that she was not like others and would have to attend a school far away from home in order to become self-reliant. Although she had some difficulty comprehending how she was different, she quickly learned to deal with the news with an open mind. Pat Garrett accompanied his daughter on the long train ride to Austin where she was enrolled at the Texas School for the Blind at the age of six. This was the only school of its kind in the area that taught visually impaired individuals to become independent.

Elizabeth’s qualms at being far from home disappeared when she discovered she would learn to play the piano. According to Hall, Elizabeth learned how to read Braille and write letters using a special typewriter. Students at the school also learned math, science and history. Elizabeth did well in all her studies, but excelled in her music classes. She learned to play several instruments and even formed and directed an octet.

Without such a school like this, Elizabeth Garrett more than likely would have lived a more restrained, less fulfilled life because of the limited options a person with a disability would have had at the time. It is because of the quality of education that she received and the invaluable skills she learned, along with the help of her forward thinking parents and family, that Elizabeth was able to earn a living, to travel and to thrive as a career woman, a rarity in the early 1900s.

In James Shinkle’s Reminiscences of Roswell Pioneers, Elizabeth recalled, “My father shared with me all the wonders and beauties and secrets of nature. This intimacy brought to me the tender side of his nature as perhaps no one else ever knew it.” This bond influenced her as a composer, leading her to write numerous songs about nature. In the interview with Redfield, Elizabeth recalled that one of her earliest memories of composing was of a song about the fragrance of apple blossoms in the air and the bees that she could hear buzzing while she was swinging from an apple tree. Garrett often channeled the beauty and peace she encountered as a child into her songs.

Elizabeth Garrett composed the official state song of New Mexico and sang all over the country. (Photo courtesy of the University of Texas at El Paso Library, Special Collections Department)

After graduating with honors from the Texas School for the Blind, she returned to her family, then living in El Paso. Her father had been appointed El Paso Customs Collector in late 1901. Elizabeth sang and played the piano at popular events of the El Paso Woman’s Club and at teas and concerts for members of prominent families. She became the director of a church choir and opened a small studio where she continued teaching music with the piano that her father had lovingly purchased for her. After Pat Garrett’s appointment expired in 1905, the family returned to Las Cruces, but Elizabeth decided to stay in El Paso.

In 1908, Elizabeth moved back to New Mexico to be with her family after the murder of her father. Pat Garrett was shot twice from behind, a few miles from his ranch. Although Wayne Brazel, who had leased the Garrett ranch, confessed and was acquitted, some historians believe in a complicated conspiracy about the death of the man whom many believe brought law and order to New Mexico.

Soon after the death of her father, Elizabeth decided she would go to Chicago to study music. According to Hall, she had dreamed of studying under the famed Herbert Witherspoon, principal with the New York Metropolitan Opera and voice teacher who later went on to become the General Manager of the Met. With her family’s blessing, she made the long train ride to Chicago. The El Paso Woman’s Club helped her pay for the trip by arranging for her to give concerts on the way.

In Chicago, she took a job at the YWCA as entertainer and director of music to pay for her room and board. Among other jobs, she sang Spanish and Mexican songs in Spanish in select restaurants during dinner hours. Always proud of her Mexican heritage on her mother’s side, Elizabeth was bilingual, as were all the other Garrett children. After two years of study with Witherspoon, she returned home to Las Cruces.

Elizabeth was extremely proud when New Mexico officially became a state in 1912. Hall quoted Elizabeth as saying, “We’ve grown up together, my New Mexico and me.” Garrett wanted to make others aware of New Mexico’s beauty. Her love for the state was reflected in many of the songs she wrote and performed. People soon dubbed her the “Songbird of the Southwest.”

Garrett turned down an attractive marriage proposal in order to continue and grow in her musical career. In 1915, Elizabeth represented New Mexico at the world’s fair, the San Diego Exposition. Not only was she the official hostess of the state’s exhibition, but she also entertained visitors daily with her singing.

She composed “O, Fair New Mexico” in 1916 and the song was adopted as the official state song of New Mexico on March 14, 1917. The province of Ontario, Canada, asked permission to use the song, substituting the words, “O, Fair Ontario.” In 1937, New Mexico was the first state to pass legislation which expressed

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A Passionate Life: Josephine Clardy Fox

By Jennifer Martinez, Jeannett Fierro and Alexa Rae Rodarte

World traveler. Art collector. Socialite. Businesswoman. Benefactor. These titles describe Josephine Clardy Fox, a fixture in the social and financial world for decades in El Paso and the woman who made sure that the names “Clardy” and “Fox” would be familiar to El Pasoans for a long time. Today, not many people know much about the woman who grew up in the Southwest, but was well known in New York, San Francisco, London and other big cities, a woman who made a huge impact on the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) without ever attending it and on the community that was enhanced by her wealth and philanthropic contributions.

Josephine Clardy was born in Missouri on Aug. 13, 1881, to Allie Davis and Zeno B. Clardy. She was their only child. Her father was a prosecuting attorney for St. Francois County in Southeast Missouri. In 1882, Zeno Clardy moved his family to El Paso, for reasons that are not clear. According to Ruby Burns, author of a full-length biography on Josephine Clardy Fox, he may have been lured by the prospect of promising business opportunities arising from the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad and others in 1881 in El Paso. W. H. Timmons in El Paso: A Borderlands History wrote that the coming of the railroad caused the population to double in just one year from 800 in 1880 to 1,600 in 1881.

Burns related that Zeno Clardy’s brother-in-law, Firmin Desloge, was captivated by the stories of El Paso as a boom town. However, he had a large, highly successful lead-mining business and could not move, so he gave Clardy money to invest for him in real estate. Upon arriving in El Paso, Clardy joined a law practice with Allen Blacker, a prominent attorney. Clardy was known to accept parcels of land in exchange for his legal services and became a wealthy landowner from the continued practice of this bartering system.

Young Josephine Clardy attended a parochial school until 1891, when she entered the public school system, attending Mesa School for the fourth grade. She remained in the public schools until 1895. She then attended finishing school at Hosmer Hall in St. Louis, where she quickly developed a love of drama and music, interests which fueled her passion for the arts throughout her life. Josephine’s aunt and uncle, Lydia and Firmin Desloge, introduced and included her in many of the functions exclusive to their social circle while she was in St. Louis.

In the spring of 1901, Josephine returned to El Paso with her father. A few days later, Zeno Clardy died after suffering a heart attack at the age of 45. His wife and daughter were devastated by his death.

That fall, with the encouragement of her mother, Josephine went to Berkeley, CA, to study music. A year later, she traveled to New York to study with noted voice teacher, Emilio Agramonte, known for his work in opera and oratorio and director of the Gounod Society of New Haven, CT, dedicated to the performance of classical vocal music and named for the 19th century French composer Charles Gounod.

Burns said that Josephine returned to El Paso in 1902 and performed as a soloist in a musical called “Lullaby Concert.” Josephine traveled extensively in the United States and Europe, where she continued her study of music. She eventually gave up singing, however, perhaps because she suffered an eye injury that would plague her the rest of her life, according to Burns. Josephine Clardy was a tall, beautiful, vibrant, wealthy, and, by some accounts, a spoiled young woman. She was not ready to settle down into marriage as some of her friends had already done. She loved the attention of her suitors from several different countries and enjoyed being involved in social activities in El Paso when she was here. One of her more determined suitors was Eugene Emmett Fox, a hard working, handsome railroad executive, who took a room at the exclusive Toltec Club when he arrived in El Paso. He and Josephine maintained a close friendship for several years starting in 1904. According to Burns, it was understood that they would marry once Josephine consented. Clardy kept him dangling as she dallied with other men and enjoyed the single life with friends and as a traveling companion to her mother.

Fox took care of many of the business affairs of both Josephine and her mother, met Josephine in New York when he could and was infinitely patient. Finally, however, in summer 1915, Fox broke off the unofficial engagement and went on his way, wishing her much happiness. Josephine quickly contacted him and convinced him that she loved him.

The two married on Jan. 20, 1916, in New York when Clardy was 35. The couple settled in El Paso at a house located at 1119 Montana Ave. At this time, Josephine began a collection of elegant furniture and art for their home. In 1926, Fox’s work took him to San Francisco, and the couple spent three happy years there, according to Burns. Fox was next dispatched to Washington, DC, but Josephine did not move with him. She continued her own travels, with El Paso remaining her home. Their marriage was to be plagued by years of separation due to his work, her illnesses and their separate travels apart.

Eugene Fox supported Josephine and himself on his salary and his own money. Contrary to what some might have thought, Fox said, “What I have, I have acquired by my own hard work. … I have never spent one penny of my wife’s money.”

During the Depression, however, the couple suffered financial hardships caused by the weak economy. The First National Bank collapsed in 1931. Many businesses and tenants suffered because of the failure, which in turn affected Josephine’s income. She and her mother struggled to pay the taxes on their property. Eugene was living out of pocket trying to obtain surveys for Western Pacific Railroad but was not being paid for his time and effort.

Josephine suffered injuries in an automobile accident in 1933, the basis for her back pain in later years. Her husband, meanwhile, had taken a job for about one-third his previous salary and he rode night trains to avoid hotel bills and sent what he could to his wife. He rarely saw her at this point, and Christmas of 1933 would be their last day together. In March 1934, an unconscious Eugene Fox was taken off a train to a hospital after visiting his family in Kansas City. He died from a massive cerebral hemorrhage in Topeka, KA, on April 2, 1934.

Six years later, Josephine’s beloved mother died on March 23, 1940. Josephine Clardy Fox found herself alone, with no children and no immediate family in a huge house. Burns related that there were times when the ailing woman found herself bedridden and in pain, and although her house was full of fine art, it sometimes contained no food and she had no one to love her. In the 1940s a new man would come into her life whose financial expertise would greatly add to her wealth. That man was William J. Elliot. According to Burns, Elliot came to El Paso in 1939. He was in real estate and owned a corporation named El Paso Properties. He later orchestrated the sale of some of Josephine’s land for a shopping center, a post office and housing developments. The Clardy-Fox Additions were tracts of land that had been used to grow cotton in the Lower Valley. The land was sold to build homes during the boom after World War II. In 1955, Josephine sold 21 acres for more than $400,000 to be developed into the Fox Plaza Shopping Center. Ground was finally broken in 1958 and doors officially opened on July 1, 1959. Land on Paisano and Cortez Streets was sold to the government for $345,000, with groundbreaking for the new post office occurring continued on page 13
In 1945, World War II came to an end, and Western Europe started to rebuild. With Japan’s surrender, reconstruction began there. American soldiers returned home and the nation was “booming,” in economics as well as in babies. It was time to enjoy the good life.

Not so elsewhere. In Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, under Joseph Stalin’s command, began its domination of smaller adjacent states. China was in the hands of the communists. The Cold War had begun. Its first battleground: Korea.

At the end of World War II, Korea had been divided along the 38th Parallel, with the Soviets in control of the North and America in control of the South. Both the Soviets and Americans were supposed to play a temporary role in the development of the newly divided country, leaving the two states to form their own governments. In the South, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was born under pro-West leader Syngman Rhee. In the North, communism reigned under the leadership of Kim Il Sung.

On June 25, 1950, with aid from the Soviets, the North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) descended upon South Korea, intent on uniting the country by force. The nations of the world were outraged. President Harry S. Truman feared that if Korea were taken by the communists, much of Asia would soon fall. The UN Security Council unanimously passed resolutions calling for international assistance for South Korea.

The majority of the dispatched UN troops were American. More than half a world away, US soldiers battled not only the North Koreans, but extreme temperatures and impassable mountain ranges. Unexpectedly, 100,000 Chinese troops dug into those mountains and turned Korea from a policing action into a bloodbath as UN troops valiantly struggled to hold defense lines.

Heartbreak Ridge, Bloody Ridge, Porkchop Hill: those are just a few of the most horrific battles of the Korean War, but they weren’t the only battles for survival being waged. At the same time, in the mountains of North Korea, NKPA POWs endured a concentration-style camp. Their enemies were not only the communists, but starvation, dysentery, dehydration and torture.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Sperbeck stated during an April 2011 telephone interview with Borderlands student editor Heather Coons that POW Camp #1 almost broke him many times. “How did I survive? By the grace of God and the skin of my teeth,” he said.

Sperbeck was born Nov. 27, 1931, in Clark Mills, NY, and like that of many of his generation, his childhood was dominated by the Great Depression and then World War II. His family moved about once every year in order for his parents to find work to support nine boys and three girls, which made making friends quite difficult. Although he rather would have been playing soccer, Sperbeck would join his family working in the fields during summer breaks; then half-way through the seventh grade, he quit school and worked in a bowling alley picking up pins.

Finding himself unemployed, Sperbeck joined the Army and took his oath of enlistment on July 26, 1949. After 14 weeks of basic training at Fort Dix, NJ, he went to Fort Benning, GA, assigned to the Fire Department. In early 1951, Sperbeck reenlisted on a “short” (voluntary early reenlistment) and headed to his new assignment: Korea.

In February 1951, Sperbeck departed from Seattle, WA. More than 3,500 soldiers were aboard his troopship crossing the Pacific that winter. After two weeks of freezing cold temperatures, no duties and no entertainment (not even cards), Sperbeck arrived in Japan. Two days after that, he landed in Pusan, South Korea.

During the first week of March, then Pvt. Sperbeck took a train to Seoul, where he boarded a truck headed for the 35th Regiment located south of the Imjin River. As an ammo bearer for a 57mm recoilless rifle squad, Sperbeck joined the 25th Infantry Division, 2nd Battalion, F Company Weapons Platoon.

In his documented debriefing conducted by the US Army, Sperbeck went into detail about that battle and his ensuing capture. After being ordered to withdraw and rendezvous 15 miles to the south, Sperbeck and 15 others got lost behind enemy lines. Marching during the night, they avoided detection. When they spied US vehicles, they descended the mountains in the morning, only to come upon the Chinese. After being hit in the back by the force of a concussion grenade, Sperbeck was captured by communist forces.

In the debriefing document, Sperbeck described the march north. He stated that POWs were “humping and pushing it,” marching for 90 minutes at the Chinese pace (30 or 40 steps a minute faster than the American pace), followed by 15 minute breaks. Exhausted, POWs would collapse. Suffering from the cold and covered with frost when they got up, many of the POWs were without shoes, socks or winter uniforms, which were confiscated by the Chinese. By the time they were able to bathe at natural springs, men with boots who had not taken care of their feet easily succumbed to trench foot and gangrene, rotted toes coming off in their socks.

“You didn’t have any food. You didn’t have anything to drink. You didn’t have anything,” Sperbeck stated in his debriefing. “What happened if you were marching and fell out? ... They shot you.”

After more than three months of marching over mountains at night and hiding from American planes during the day, Sperbeck and the other POWs arrived at Camp #1 in Chongsong, North Korea.

While Sperbeck and the other POWs marched north, the tide had turned in America’s favor with the 1951 May Massacre, in which more than 65,000 Chinese troops were killed by American artillery.

At the beginning of the war, UN soldiers had attempted to advance towards Seoul from Osan only to be driven down to the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. Forming a defense line known as the Pusan Perimeter, Gen. Johnny Walker ordered troops to “stand or die” and began the largest military mobilization in history. UN troops landed at Inchon on Sept. 15, 1950, and began advancing into the mainland. On Sept. 16, soldiers began advancing out of Pusan, intent on uniting with the other UN troops to form a defense line in an effort to push the communist forces out of South Korea.

On Sept. 19, UN troops liberated Seoul and then pursued the NKPA north of the 38th Parallel. In early October, UN soldiers were once again pushed back into South Korea by unforeseen Chinese soldiers. By December 1950, UN troops were in a full retreat, and Seoul was once again occupied by the communists.

That same month, Walker was killed in an unfortunate jeep accident and replaced by Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway. Declaring that there would be no more retreats, Ridgeway began to restore soldiers’ confidence and brought in fresh troops and supplies. By March 1951, when Sperbeck arrived in Seoul, the city was once again under UN control.

UN casualties were becoming unacceptable, and military leaders were no longer allowed to launch an offensive with more than a platoon. The Chinese took advantage, sending large numbers of troops to one point along defense lines. The results were bloody hand-to-hand battles which continued until the end of the war while defense lines remained virtually unchanged.

Truce talks began on July 10, 1951, and, thanks to the communists’ stalling tactics, continued for two years. Knowing the United Nations’ distaste for casualties, the Chinese figured that allied troops would eventually pull out of Korea if the battles continued. The primary obstacle to the talks, however, was the concept of “voluntary repatriation.” Many of the Chinese and NKPA POWs had no desire to return to their communist homelands.

While truce talks stalled, the UN POWs held in the five camps in North Korea suffered. Upon arrival, POWs were interrogated on everything from military information to details about family and friends, where they lived and how much property they owned. They were threatened, beaten and tortured.

Many POWs died during their first few weeks of captivity. Those who lived faced a constant struggle for survival. Sperbeck shared a 10 feet by 14 feet room with nine other POWs. Food consisted of small portions of rice mixed with sorghum and cracked corn. There was no medical care.
Daily activities in POW camps included attendance at political indoctrination classes on the benefits of communism, about which the POWs had to write reports. They also had to haul firewood and water into the camp and clean latrines and food bowls, which doubled as wash basins. When they could, prisoners went swimming or played volley ball, cards or chess.

For the “reactor-ory,” or uncooperative POW, like Sperbeck, punishments included loss of privileges (like receiving letters from home), isolation and beatings. Captors also tried to turn fellow POWs against troublemakers by singling them out to appear as snitches. But according to Sperbeck’s debriefing document, the number one form of punishment was starvation. “When they got mad at you, … they played games with your food.” Many POWs suffered from dysentery, dehydration and blindness caused by malnutrition. Sperbeck, down to about 80 pounds, almost died several times.

In The Monitor, Sperbeck described the treatment he and 49 others received when put on sick leave. After being taken to a run-down Buddhist temple, a communist political commissar, whose duties were to ensure military loyalty and party principles, surgically inserted animal organs into the POWs’ bodies, a crude form of the “monkey gland operations” conducted by the Russian doctor Sergei Voronoff in France in the 1920s and 1930s. According to a 1954 Senate Report on Korean War Atrocities, the communists believed the operation could supposedly heal and rebuild a man. Left there to rot, the soldiers squeezed the putrid incision sites until all the animal tissue was removed. Some POWs cracked under communist pressure. In an effort to gain special privileges and better food rations, they turned on their fellow soldiers. In another Monitor article entitled “POW/MIA Honored,” Sperbeck told Michael Garrett that three instances were the exception, not the rule. “I have never heard any POW claim to be a hero, but when I was captured, I was surrounded by them. Many of them saved my life several times,” Sperbeck stated.

In the spring of 1953, several factors changed the course of the truce talks. Dwight D. Eisenhower, a five-star general and World War II hero, was the new president. America had developed the atomic bomb, and President Truman had given the green light to use it on Japan. The conflict had already lasted for three years. As Sperbeck said, “I was angry, just pissed at being there,” Sperbeck told Borderlands. “But you know who won that argument.”

Although Sperbeck had only completed elementary school, he earned his GED in 1954 and had two years of college completed by the end of his service in February 1970 when he retired as a Battalion Missile Maintenance Chief. Three days after his retirement, Sperbeck enrolled at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he earned two teaching degrees.

After retirement, Sperbeck joined the US Army Civilian Service in July 1971. He served as an instructor; Arts and Crafts Director; Morale Support Officer at William Beaumont Army Medical Center; Fort Bliss Youth Services Director; and Fort Bliss Marketing, Advertising and Sponsorship Director before recently retiring.

Sperbeck has also served his community as Fort Bliss Non-Appropriated Fund Sponsorship Director, and as Operation Santa Claus Marketing Director. He has served as the President of the Fort Bliss General of the Army (GOA) Omar Bradley Chapter, Vice-president of the Association of the US Army Corporate Membership, (civil service positions) and to this day is still an active spokesman for POWs and the military, as well as a grant writer for Creative Grants.

On Nov.10, 1997, during a Veteran’s Day celebration at Fort Bliss, Sperbeck was finally awarded the Purple Heart. After numerous attempts, Sperbeck’s inaccurate war records were officially amended in August 1998.

Regardless of all his struggles, when asked by The Monitor if he would go back and do it all again, Sperbeck replied in the affirmative, “because that’s what soldiers do.”

Although there are some very good books, like March to Calumny, by Albert Biderman, documentaries, like Freedom is not Free: The History of the Korean War, and material produced by the US military available on the Web, such as Graybeards, the official publication of the Korean War Veterans Association, according to Sperbeck, much of the information printed about Korea’s wartime history and its troops is slanted and inaccurate. Because of this, Korean veterans have termed themselves “forgotten.”

Although today soldiers are provided with help for post-traumatic stress disorder, Korean War POWs and veterans were not provided with any type of support. “We had to fight our own demons,” Sperbeck told The Monitor.

While Sperbeck attributes much of his emotional healing to the support of his wife, many POWs found their experiences too difficult to even speak about, especially to those who had no understanding of what they had been through. In response, POWs formed their own support groups. Locally, an informal POW support group meets the second Saturday of every month at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church at 7000 Edgemere in the Community Room. For more information on official groups, readers may contact Roy Aldridge, president of both the El Paso chapter and Texas Korean War Veterans Association at 915-494-0411. Sperbeck’s interview with David Flores is available online.

Department of Defense figures say that 33,742 Americans died in Korea; 92,134 were seriously wounded; 7,245 were taken as POWs; 2,847 died in camps and on marches; and 389 known POWs disappeared. Official reports estimated the Korean POWs’ death rate to be about 40 percent, comparable to other wars, but according to Carlson, military sources disagree. The total listed as missing in action and declared dead is 4,821, many of whom are believed to have perished in death marches and camps, placing the death rate closer to 67 percent.

While the fate of every MIA will probably never be known, according to Sperbeck and other survivors, many were buried on a hill in North Korea. In a poem, Sperbeck wrote, “Young and old, all wondering why the Korean War,” and material produced by the US military available on the Web, such as “Freedom is not Free: The History of the Korean War,” and material produced by the US military available on the Web, such as “Freedom is not Free: The History of the Korean War,” and material produced by the US military available on the Web, such as “Freedom is not Free: The History of the Korean War,” and material produced by the US military available on the Web, such as “Freedom is not Free: The History of the Korean War.”

POW/MIA Honored,” Sperbeck told The Monitor.

Sperbeck told The Monitor. “You didn’t want them [the military] to know you had trouble. You’d be out of a job.”


Six foot by two foot by one foot deep, in a Korean hill they sleep Young and old, all wondering why sixteen hundred had to die—

We go home to enjoy our fill they are still there on that lonely hill.
Leona Ford Washington Preserved Black History

By Marisha Hicks and Andreina Vega

Leona Ford Washington, an African American woman born and raised in El Paso, said she was taught to “make a contribution to the place where you live. If there is anything you can do better, you should.” Through her activism and civic involvement, Washington created a strong community for African Americans in El Paso.

Leona Ford was born in 1928. She had a twin sister named Leander and two older brothers, Eugene Jr. and Roland. She and her sister were the second set of black twins born in the city. The African American population in El Paso at the time of her birth was estimated to be only 1.5 percent of the population. Her parents both came from Mississippi. Her father, Eugene Ford, came to El Paso in 1915 and worked for the Southern Pacific as a blacksmith’s assistant. Her mother, Lollie Marie Wells, came to El Paso for her health with an Army family and married Ford in 1922. Their four children were delivered at home by Dr. L. A. Nixon, who himself worked for equality for blacks.

When Leona was four, the Fords moved to the Second Ward, better known as El Segundo Barrio, a well known Mexican American community today. The Washingtons were very close friends with their Mexican American neighbors. Washington said, “There were some whites in the neighborhood, but eventually they would move out when a lot of blacks moved in.”

At the time Washington was growing up, black El Pasoans were denied a political voice and were forced to suffer segregation. Charlotte Ivy, a contributor to Password, the journal of the El Paso County Historical Society, explained that Jim Crow laws created separate drinking fountains, restrooms and waiting areas in train stations for African Americans. Blacks were also forced to sit in separate train cars because of Jim Crow laws, a series of laws in the United States that made segregation legal between the 1870s and 1960s. Ivy said such laws “meant that black El Pasoans were not allowed to enter the socio-political-cultural mainstream of the city.”

El Paso became the literal station where things changed for blacks traveling on trains. Gerald Horne, Professor of History and African American studies at the University of Houston, wrote in his book Black and Brown: Africans Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920, “El Paso was the symbolic and actual dividing line on Jim Crow cars going west or north. Immediately after leaving this town and traveling toward New Mexico, for example, a Negro did not have to endure Jim Crow, while departing in other directions Jim Crow reigned — except, of course, going south to Mexico. Those who could go to escape this. Most would go other places that African Americans could go to escape this. Most would go just across the border to Juárez, Mexico, for entertainment where blacks were welcome, thus helping to enhance the economy there. In 1954, Texas Western College (now UTEP) became the first college in Texas to admit black students. In 1955, the El Paso Independent School District was the first major school district in Texas to desegregate. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) had established a local chapter in 1910. Leona Washington was a member and secretary of the NAACP at a pivotal time in El Paso history. In an interview with Ivy, Washington stated that many Mexican American and white Americans in El Paso were “sensitive” to and “supportive” of desegregation.

They passed one segregated school after another, dropping off playmates along the way. But after school they all met to share the fun and secrets of the neighborhood.” Maceo C. Dailey, Jr. and Kristine Navarro in their book African American women in El Paso reported that Douglass “provided a meeting place for community discussion, programming, and development in education and economics.”

After graduating from Douglass, Leona Washington was forced to leave El Paso to attend college because the Texas School of Mines and Metallurgy (now UTEP), did not admit African Americans. Instead, she received both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from what is now Prairie View A & M University near Houston, the only college for black students in Texas at the time. Transportation was made easier for young Leona than for other students since her father worked for the railroad and she had a pass to ride the train.

Because of her race, Washington was not allowed to begin her teaching career in El Paso except at the only black school in town, Douglass. It did not matter that she had not one but two college degrees at a time when most women, of any race, were lucky to graduate from high school. Because Douglass did not have a teaching position available in 1950, she accepted a job in Las Cruces, NM, some 40 miles west of El Paso, where schools were not segregated. Two years later, a position at Douglass opened up and she was able to teach in El Paso.

El Paso’s ethnic diversity helped to ease discrimination. Charlotte Ivy wrote that the segregation laws of Texas were commonly ignored in El Paso, not only by citizens but by city officials as well. Segregated libraries allowed blacks to check out books. In one instance, Lula Mae Traylor, who went to a drugstore fountain to order ice cream to take out, was seated and given a menu instead. So taken back, she ordered and ate, reporting that the incident caused no trouble.

However, in her interview with Ivy, Washington recalled that African Americans in El Paso were forced to sit in the back section of street cars and had to sit in the balcony of movie theaters unless they went to the Mexican theaters. Although El Paso practiced segregation in many areas, there were other places that African Americans could go to escape this. Most would go just across the border to Juárez, Mexico, for entertainment where blacks were welcome, thus helping to enhance the economy there.

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In an interview with Dailey and Navarro, Washington recalled her parents instilling in her the values of right and wrong, values that were reinforced by the church. For more than 60 years, Washington was a member of the Second Baptist Church, established in 1884. Washington’s family lived about five blocks from their church and she, her siblings and mother did janitorial work there, in addition to attending services.

Washington believed the church holds an important purpose for women. She said that “the role of women is to instill good principles and

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Janice Woods Windle directed the El Paso Community Foundation for more than three decades. (Photo courtesy of Janice W. Windle from painting by Nestor Valencia)

Janice Woods Windle is well known for her books, True Women, Hill Country and Will’s War, novels based on her ancestors, but these historical novels are only the beginning of what she has accomplished. Janice Woods Windle has continued the legacy of her family by shaping El Paso through her work with the El Paso Community Foundation.

Janice Woods was born into a long line of strong family members, who made their own impact in this country. In a February 2010 interview with EPCC student Keila Giallanza, Windle spoke fondly about one of the major influences of her life: her mother, Virginia Bergfeld Woods, who paid her way through college during the Depression by teaching seven different grades in the same classroom. Her father inspired his daughter to act upon her beliefs. Her great grandmother Georgia Lawshe Woods became a blockade runner in the Civil War. These family members, and so many more, taught and molded Janice Woods Windle into the person she is today.

Janice Woods was raised in Seguin, TX, 35 miles east of San Antonio. Her parents were avid historians who researched life during the Texas Revolution, the Civil War and other topics. Her mother taught second grade for 38 years. As a child, Janice spent time with her parents in public libraries as they researched. After graduating from high school in 1956, she attended the University of Texas at Austin. During her freshman year, she met Wayne Windle, who grew up in Texarkana, TX.

In 1961, the couple was married in Seguin, Wayne Windle continued his studies at the University of Texas Law School. Janice Windle worked as a secretary to State Representative George McCoppin, a Texarkana Democrat, from 1958 to 1961. In 1958, the couple had their first child, Wayne Wilton Windle, named after his two grandfathers: Wayne’s father, who had died two years earlier, and Wilton, her father.

In 1961, the Windles moved to El Paso, where Wayne had accepted a job. Janice Windle said in a fall 2010 interview with EPCC student Keila Maynez that she loved the El Paso area, enjoying the mountains and traveling to Mexico. She and her mother attended the University of the Americas in Puebla, Mexico, during summers to study Mexican culture. Windle transferred to the University of Texas at El Paso after they moved, where she graduated with a bachelor’s degree in political science and public administration.

Once in El Paso, the Windles had two more children, Virginia Laura Windle, born in 1963, named for Janice’s mother and paternal grandmother. She is married to Randy Shapiro and lives in the city.

Charles Kendrick Windle was born in 1966. The Windles lost this son in 2000 when he was murdered during a carjacking in Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

Janice Windle worked for El Paso mayor Fred Hervey in the 1970s, with one project in particular that would provide her with skills she would later put to good use. She was assigned to design a plan to preserve the Magoffin Home and prevent the city from tearing it down. Then in 1974, Mayor Hervey appointed Windle director of El Paso’s Bicentennial Commission which planned the year-long local celebration of America’s 200th birthday in 1976. Among the accomplishments of the commission was the acquisition of the Magoffin Home for restoration and placement on the list of historical sites.

Out of work at the end of 1976, Windle went job hunting. In 1977, she landed the position of executive director of the newly formed El Paso Community Foundation, dedicated to helping fund charitable organizations. The notion of raising money for “good things” was very appealing to her. The foundation was formed by El Pasans who wanted funds to stay in El Paso. The idea began with several local organizations including the El Paso Bar Association, United Way, Junior League and the Chamber of Commerce. The Robert and Evelyn McKee Foundation, a charitable entity begun in 1952, paid all the Community Foundation expenses, including Windle’s salary, for the first 5 years.

The Community Foundation has grown from nothing to $100 million in permanent funds although it is considered a small foundation, as Windle said, “in the world of foundations”. The foundation has given $88 million to nonprofit organizations at the same time it has been growing. In 2010, the foundation awarded $3,703,590 to area organizations. In 2009, it gave 121 college scholarships to area students.

In speaking with Maynez, Windle emphasized that anyone can donate to the Community Foundation. Its website provides a Spirit of Giving Catalogue listing the needs of dozens of groups in the El Paso area. Windle told Giallanza that donors range from the very wealthy to one elderly couple who gave $5 a week towards the renovation of the Plaza. Windle, like her father, encourages others to support what they believe in, as she has done.

Through the Community Foundation, the Plaza Theater, built in 1929 downtown, was saved from demolition in order to build a parking lot in the mid 1980s. Windle recalled in the interview with Maynez that it was a “precious treasure”.

Windle led the Community Foundation for 33 years before retiring. Working with the foundation has been “absolutely wonderful,” she said during the interview with Maynez. It has enabled her to meet presidents of the United States and other countries, personalities like Jonas Salk and Bishop Desmond Tutu, as well as people such as the huge Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Most of all, it has allowed her to help people work together to aid those in need. She said she has been “very blessed” to have a job that has been so personally educational.

Windle, however, had other interests besides the foundation. She had written folk stories about her and her husband’s family for years. Her bestselling novel True Women was born in a unique way. Windle told Maynez that Wayne, her oldest son, was soon to be married and she came up with the idea to create a cookbook for him because he loved to cook and had worked in a restaurant as a teen. She told her mother about the idea and the two of them wrote a cookbook. Windle stated that three generations of their family had written since the Texas Revolution: Euphemia Ashby King, Windle’s maternal great-great-grandmother; Betty Moss King, her maternal great-grandmother; and Virginia King, Betty’s daughter and Windle’s grandmother.

In addition to recipes, these women had provided advice in the book on how to take care of a rattlesnake bite, how to treat horses with pneumonia and other home remedies, along with other lore. Windle thought it would be fun to include this folk wisdom

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Andy and Syd Cohen: The Men Behind the Name

By Alejandra Aiken, Paul Carrillo and Celina Delgado

Many little boys have a dream as they play America's game, baseball: the dream to one day hit a grand slam homerun to win the game or to strike out a famous hitter. These were not just dreams for brothers Andy and Syd Cohen: they were real events. Andy and Syd both spent most of their lives playing and coaching the game they loved.

Andrew (Andy) Howard Cohen was born in Baltimore, MD, on Oct. 25, 1904. Sydney (Syd) Harry Cohen was born less than two years later on May 7, 1906. Their father, Manus, was a cigar maker and had a passion for baseball. According to Rabbi Steven J. Rubenstein, Manus played semi-pro baseball before his career as a cigar maker. Andy was seven when he, his mom Lena, Syd and his sister Eva moved to El Paso because Lena suffered from respiratory problems.

Andy Cohen played for the New York Giants in 1926. (Photo courtesy of the University of Texas at El Paso Library, Special Collections Department)

The Cohen brothers started playing baseball for the local little league teams which gave them the knowledge needed to have successful baseball careers later. Johnny Ward, in an article for the El Paso Times on Jan. 31, 1938, said that Andy and Syd both played in sandlots in El Paso's Boyland League during their youth.

Andy and Syd graduated from El Paso High School. Andy in 1922 and Syd in 1924. Andy excelled in baseball, basketball and football. In Andy's junior year, he led the basketball team to the first state championship held in Texas, winning the award for outstanding sportsman of the tournament and being named to the all-state team as a forward. He played every position on the baseball and football teams and halfback on the football team. Winning a scholarship to the University of Alabama, he was the first Jewish person to be made team captain of the baseball team there, according to his daughter, Marina Lee. He left the university his senior year in order to coach baseball at Waco University.

Syd played baseball and basketball in high school, being captain of the baseball team. After high school graduation, Syd attended Southern Methodist University and played baseball for one year. Then he joined his brother at the University of Alabama to play baseball there. Soon after, the Cohen brothers started to make history as Jewish players and were later recognized by the El Paso community for their involvement in sports.

Andy first played in the minor leagues in 1925 with the Waco Cubs in the Texas League. His skills, along with his last name, got the attention of New York Giants manager, John McGraw. There were many Jewish players, but they did not have the total package that McGraw was looking for when he went searching for the next baseball hero. Peter and Joachim Horvitz, authors of The Big Book of Jewish Baseball, wrote that McGraw "had a dream: to have a Jewish star on his team" and he would accept nothing less. To McGraw, having a Jewish star player meant that his team would now be able to attract the Jewish community to the ball park, thus increasing the revenue for the Giants. Given this, the Giants purchased Andy's contract from the Waco Cubs in 1926 for $25,000, the same amount for which the entire Waco team had been purchased.

Andy had replaced Roger Hornsby, New York Giants' hall of fame second baseman. Ironically, Andy's first game as a Giant was against the Boston Braves, Hornsby's new team. Thanks to Andy's base hits, the Giants went on to beat the Braves. Peter and Joachim Horvitz wrote that a large group of Jewish fans carried Andy around the field after the win.

Syd Cohen is shown in his San Francisco Seals uniform in 1928. (Photo courtesy of the University of Texas at El Paso Library, Special Collections Department)

To Andy, keeping his Jewish last name meant much more than it meant to McGraw. According to Richard Vidmer in an article for The New York Times, Andy decided to keep his last name even after several of his friends suggested to him that he change it to a non-Jewish last name. He wanted to show the world that he was proud of his heritage, and he did not want to hurt his mother by playing under another name. In El Paso's Greatest Sports Heroes I Have Known, Ray Sanchez maintained that Andy Cohen did for Jews in baseball what Jackie Robinson did for blacks in 1946, when he was signed by the Dodgers, breaking the color barrier in professional baseball.

Andy received well deserved attention from his team, the media and baseball fans, which not only earned him many gifts of appreciation, but also the chance to speak to local boys' clubs, something he really enjoyed doing. After spending three years in the majors, Andy continued his career in the minor leagues for the next 40 years as a player, coach and manager. Thanks to Andy, it was easier for Syd and other Jewish players to obtain baseball contracts for their skills and for the potential income they could bring to the team.

Syd's career went in a different direction from his brother's. In 1931, he joined the Mexican-based Nogales Internationals in the Arizona-Texas League. The Horvitz book said that Mexican fans wanted more Mexican players on the team, and when the American coach tried to cut the only Mexican player because he was not very good, fans went wild and the military was called in to reestablish order. So when Syd returned to the tournament and being named to the all-state team the next game was struck out for the last time, both by the pitching of none other than Syd Cohen. Another New York Yankee, Lou Gehrig, also had an extremely difficult time facing the left-handed Syd. In the seven times that Gehrig came to bat against Syd, he struck out five times.

Syd spent some 29 years working in professional baseball. When his days in the major leagues were over, Syd went on to play in the minor leagues and also managed teams in El Paso, Tucson, Juarez, Los Mochis and Monterrey. "Pablo Garcia" returned to Mexico as Syd Cohen where he coached the Juarez Indios to their first Arizona-Texas League pennant in 1950.

Andy served in the Army during World War II and married Barbara VanDuzer on April 21, 1945. He and his wife had three children: Marina Cohen Lee, Cathy Cohen Souers and Hank Cohen. Marina Lee works in advertising and media and is a writer in El Paso, Cathy Souers is a veterinarian assistant in California and Hank Cohen is CEO of Trifecta Entertainment & Media in Los Angeles. Andy also had three grandchildren.

According to Marina Lee, the University of Texas at...
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Coxey’s Army, was scheduled to arrive in El Paso. Fiery orators easily turned residents against these protestors, who wanted the federal government to provide jobs for them. The sheriff and town marshal called for armed volunteers to repulse the marchers and keep them out of El Paso. The sheriff stated that Hart, known for his own skills in oration, shamed the townsfolk for attempting to shoot “defenseless men whose only crime was that they were ragged and hungry.” Instead of violence, Hart said, “let us greet them with bread.” Marchers were met not with guns, but with food. This was an example of the compassion Hart displayed throughout his life.

According to Roderick, Hart developed a reputation “as a fearless writer and an honest, incorruptible newspaper man.” This reputation led Hart to be elected the 11th President of the Texas Press Association in 1890. In 1896, Hart was also selected the Democratic candidate for Congress for the 13th District, but he lost by a narrow margin to J. H. Stephens. In May 1898, Hart was asked to recruit a company of soldiers for the Spanish-American War, which he did through the Times. In three days, 115 men had signed up. Hart was given a commission as Captain and would be known by that title the rest of his life. The war ended before the men finished their training in Galveston. Although Hart’s company never saw combat, President McKinley chose Hart as a member of the Cuba Commission to negotiate Spain’s surrender, as he was fluent in Spanish, among other languages.

According to an El Paso Herald-Post article dated March 4, 1938, Hart acted as an interpreter for Maj. Gen. William R. Shafter after the surrender of Santiago. Hart then served on the staff of Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, who was made military governor of Havana and Pinar del Rio and was also a member of the American evacuation board.

After a year in Havana, Hart returned to El Paso. He began crusading against open gambling and brothels, helping to bring about reform through the mayoral election of Charles R. Morehead in 1902. Morehead and Hart also shared a belief that El Paso needed an adequate supply of well water from the mesas, instead of the muddy Rio Grande. This ultimately led to a municipally owned water company in 1910, ending Hart’s decade-long crusade for “Pure Mesa Water.” Hart also spent years advocating for a railway to extend north from El Paso. The line, which would eventually run all the way to Kansas City, MO, connected El Pasoans with the cool summer air of Cloudcroft, NM.

Hart was elected President of the Southwest International Miners’ Association in 1902 and shortly thereafter began writing to the Texas State Legislature to establish a school to serve El Paso’s extensive mining industry. This materialized in 1914 with the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, today known as UTEP.

After a previously unsuccessful attempt at retirement, Hart sold the Times on April 22, 1910. For the first time in more than 25 years, Hart’s voice was silent in the press.

Although he remained an El Paso resident, Hart spent his summers in Mountain Park, NM, where he died of a heart attack on July 15, 1918. After the largest funeral in El Paso’s history, Hart’s body was placed in the family tomb built on the homestead and later moved to El Paso’s Evergreen Cemetery in 1936.

Hart never married, but he was considered a charming “man about town.” He was a gifted orator as well as editor. He played the trombone in the McGinty Club band and baseball to entertain El Pasoans. He served his country as an interpreter, and he served his city as a volunteer firefighter. Hart also helped to organize the El Paso Pioneer Association and was the permanent vice president.

To honor Hart’s military service, in 1938, Spanish-American war veterans formed the Juan S. Hart Camp. In 1973, Hart was inducted into the El Paso County Historical Society’s Hall of Honor for being a leading voice as a pioneering editor for almost three decades in all endeavors to move El Paso forward as a city.

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in the cookbook along with a one page summary about each of the three women, and she did just that. At the rehearsal dinner for the young couple, the reaction to this cookbook from her son’s friends made her realize that she could write more about these women and people she knew. Windle began to write a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s. As Windle went on to write books about her life when she was in her 70s, she wrote a book about her life when she was in her 70s.

True Women, published in 1993, deals with ancestors on both her mother’s and father’s sides, with action beginning in 1754 and ending in 1946. The title is taken from an 1868 Reconstruction Convention committee report stating that “true women” did not desire the right to vote. Windle worked all week at the foundation and then flew to Seguin on weekends to interview family members. She signed a contract with Putnam Publishing House and won a $100,000 advance. The book sold more than 500,000 copies. True Women was turned into a CBS miniseries starring Dana Delany and Angelina Jolie and was made available as a DVD in 2004.

Hill Country, Windle’s second novel, is about the life and political activism of her paternal grandmother, Laura Hoge Woods. She often wrote President Lyndon Johnson, the son of her best friend, expressing her opinions, and he once called her for advice on how to end the Vietnam War. She told him his problem was that “you do not have enough Texans in your cabinet.” Woods had begun to write a book about her life when she was in her 70s; she won election to public office at 87. When she died in 1966, she left a cardboard box marked “For Janice when I’m gone,” providing material which Windle used in the book, published in 1998.

Janice Windle’s third novel, Will’s War, published in 2001, is based on the trial her granddaughter, Will Bergfeld, of German descent, had to endure for suspected treason during the World War I era. Windle credited her lawyer husband for helping her to re-create the trial. The story is told through Bergfeld’s wife, mother and sister, who were with him during the six-week trial. It took Windle 17 years to complete the series of books. Windle said that without her husband’s help and encouragement, her writing career would have ended early.

Like her grandmother, Laura Woods, Windle was always interested in politics. She worked actively on various political campaigns, including those for former president Lyndon B. Johnson and former Texas governor Ann Richards. Known throughout the country for her dedication to supporting organizations, she has received numerous other awards.

In 2008, Windle became President Emeritus of the foundation, “focusing on [its] supporting organizations, donor relations and fund development,” according to El Paso Inc. Janice Windle works every day at the Community Foundation. This “true woman” still has something you love to do, don’t stop.
Ingeborg Heuser Brought Professional Ballet to City

By Iriana Fogle and Kathryn Guerra

Ingeborg Heuser brought professional ballet to El Paso. According to the El Paso Times, Berlin (The German State Opera in the 19th century and the leading German choreographer of the 20th century, Rudolf von Laben, encouraged her to love the arts, as did her grandmother, a concert singer.

Heuser told El Paso Times reporter Ed Kibble in 1977 that her earliest ambition was to dance. “When you want to be a dancer,” Heuser stated, “it’s just in you.” From a very young age, she choreographed impromptu dances for her playmates and it was one such dance that began Heuser’s career. After she entertained a group of people at the Berlin Zoo, one of the spectators convinced Heuser’s mother that her daughter should be in dance school.

At the age of seven, Heuser auditioned at the Children’s Ballet School of Deutsche Oper, Berlin (The German State Opera in Berlin). According to the Times, however, it was Heuser’s comedy routine that got her accepted. “It seems I was fearful that the examiners wouldn’t notice me, so I decided to make them laugh,” Heuser said.

After a year of receiving dance education in the classroom, Heuser made her stage debut as a little Moor in the opera “Aida.” Most of Heuser’s early stage appearances were walk-ons, for which she earned the equivalent of $2.50 each performance. If she danced, she received $3.

Although dance training took up a great deal of her time, Heuser still had to complete her academic education, and as a result, her daily routine began early in the morning. “My mother woke me up, dressed me and poured coffee down me,” Heuser explained in the Times. Then it was off to school. Between stage calls, she read and studied and made it home about 1 a.m.

Although many of this type of childhood might seem difficult, for Heuser it was wonderful to grow up playing in the theater. She said, “How many children get to play with live elephants? How many get to play with knights in shining armor? Who gets to live in such a fantasy world? ... It was a life of great, great richness.”

Heuser was accepted as an apprentice at age 12 for the Deutsche Oper Corps de Ballet, from which she received her dancer’s diploma at age 14. At 15, Heuser was accepted as a dancer in the company and she began her solo career. Among her teachers were Victor and Tatjana Gsovsky, the latter being “one of the most important influences on German ballet in the 20th century and the leading German choreographer of the 1940s and 1950s,” according to the Oxford Dictionary of Dance.

Between rehearsals and productions, Heuser found herself at Magoffin Auditorium on the campus of Texas Western College, today’s University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Heuser told the Times that she remembered thinking how she would love to put on a production in such a wonderful theater, but it was a trip to Scenic Drive that sold Heuser on the city. Heuser told the Times that the view of three states and two countries impressed her. “I decided I wanted to bring dance to El Paso.”

Heuser began teaching in Virginia Weaver’s dance studio, and within two years, she opened her Ballet Centre Guild of El Paso at 929 Reynolds St. for students four years of age and older. In 1958, the Ballet Centre had its first performance in Magoffin Auditorium.

It was during one of the Ballet Centre’s early performances that Heuser’s long-standing career at UTEP began. In a 2006 UTEP online news article, Laura Ruelas wrote that in 1959, then-chairman of UTEP’s Music Department, E. A. Thornodsgaard, was so impressed with Heuser that he established the Texas Western Civic Ballet and hired her to run it. The dance company later became the University Civic Ballet and then Ballet El Paso in 1977. In 1980, ballet classes officially began at UTEP, the first university in the UT System to ever offer ballet. For many years, UTEP offered a major in ballet.

Heuser eventually turned over her Ballet Centre to a longtime student, David Duran, so she could dedicate more time to the university. Over a 47-year tenure at UTEP, Heuser produced more than 35 ballets. Some of her original choreographed works include “The Red Shoes,” “Firebird,” “Carmen,” “Peter and the Wolf,” “Hansel and Gretel,” and of course, her best known and long-standing holiday production of Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker.”

Not only did Heuser teach and choreograph for UTEP, but she has also had many guest instructor assignments in Berlin, Rome, Mexico City, Houston and Los Angeles. She has been a guest choreographer in Alabama, California, Utah and Italy. Heuser also directed three tours of Northern Mexico, all highly successful.

Heuser’s passion for ballet can also be seen in the success of her students, many of whom have gained national and international acclaim and have been accepted by major ballet companies all over the world. According to the personnel page of the El Paso Conservatory of Dance, Heuser can boast of five gold and bronze medal winners in national and international competitions among her former students.

According to a 1964 El Paso Times article, Heuser’s former student Barbara Begany joined the San Francisco Ballet after graduation from Burges High School. On a visit to El Paso in 1964, the ballerina emphasized that Heuser demanded “hard work and dedication as a prerequisite of perfection.” In an interview for the article, Heuser said of Begany, “Many people have talent but that is not it. Many will work but do not have the energy. Ballet takes tremendous energy, and she has it.”

Besides dance, Heuser taught Begany other skills: knitting and costuming. With the money she made from her knitting, Begany paid for dance lessons for eight
Garrett continued from page 4

appreciation of a composer’s accomplishment by granting a monthly stipend to Garrett for the duration of her lifetime.

According to Hall, Garrett joined the Red Cross in 1917 after the United States entered World War I. She entertained soldiers at hospitals and training camps, including Fort Bliss. She ended up moving to New York to further help the Red Cross. During her time in New York, Elizabeth met and became good friends with Helen Keller, the deaf and blind author, speaker and social activist. They worked together for the Red Cross, making appearances at hospitals and visiting wounded soldiers. Garrett also worked with the New York Commission for the Blind and for women’s suffrage.

People from all over came to listen to Elizabeth sing and play the piano. She even played for prisoners. After one such appearance at Sing Sing Prison, one of the prisoners wrote a poem in tribute to her. In part it said:

They call her blind, yet she could lead
A thousand soul-sick men
And show the message all could read
Of love and peace and hope.

While in New York, Garrett attended the opera, hearing the great Caruso several times.

Fox continued from page 5

on May 8, 1961. Elliot had died two weeks before from a heart attack on April 24. Not only had he greatly increased Josephine’s wealth, but he and his wife had been great friends to Josephine Clardy Fox.

Burns noted that in 1956, Josephine donated land to the Board of Trustees of the El Paso Independent School District for a school to be located at 5508 Delta that would be named in honor of her mother, Allie D. Clardy. In 1951, she gave land on Lisbon Street for a branch library named in her honor.

Josephine also was active in the social scene of El Paso and assisted many organizations throughout the city. She was a member of the El Paso County Historical Society, the National Society of Arts and Letters and other clubs. She supported the El Paso Museum of Art, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the El Paso Community Concert Association, the Dallas Civic Opera and other groups. She often bought blocks of concert tickets and gave them to friends and students. In 1953, she was named to the Advisory Committee of the National Arts Foundation.

In 1959, while dining at the Statler-Hilton Hotel in El Paso, Josephine slipped and broke a hip. Then, in December 1964, she broke the same hip and spent the rest of her remaining years at Providence Memorial Hospital. On occasion, she left the hospital to enjoy herself at dinner and shows with friends at clubs in Juarez. While in the hospital she surrounded herself with her prized possessions, paintings, jewelry and hats. In a July 28, 1970, interview, Joe Moreno, who worked for the Red Cross, performing for soldiers in hospitals and army bases.

Because of the encouragement and support that she received from her family, friends, and teachers, Garrett became a respected singer-songwriter, pianist, teacher and advocate for others with disabilities. She did not give up when faced with adversity, lived life to its fullest and became more independent than many sighted women in the same era. Garrett died on Oct. 16, 1947. She was found on the sidewalk with her Seeing Eye dog by her side. It is unknown whether she died from injuries suffered from the fall, or if she suffered a stroke or heart attack while on her way home.

Throughout her life, Garrett performed across the nation and penned numerous songs about the Southwest, including a song about El Paso written in 1927. At a time where there were no amenities for the handicapped and women were still considered the weaker sex, Garrett overcame her obstacles and proved that anything was possible with determination. She had the ability to portray beauty in her music even though she could not physically see it and had courage and strength comparable to that of her father. Elizabeth Garrett, the "Songbird of the Southwest," conquered her world on her own terms. In the interview with Redfield, Elizabeth said, “Quite frequently my father had to bring harmony with a gun. I always have tried to do so by carrying a tune.”;

The university received a surprise while cataloging the 1,000 books from the Clardy Fox collection. Thirteen of the books contained rare fore-edged paintings, a method of taking watercolors and painting a scene on the right-hand open edge of the book. Dale Walker in his article “Re-discovering Fore-Edge Paintings: Art Beneath the Gilt,” which appeared in the Fall 1970 Nova, stated that one of the 13 is a rare double fore-edged painting. The Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack, compiled by Samuel Watson and published in Dublin in 1786, shows a fishing scene in one direction and a cock fight in the other direction. In 1978, the fine arts building at UTEP was renamed the Josephine Clardy Fox Fine Arts Center in honor of her generosity to the university. Hundreds of her elaborately decorated wide brimmed picture hats were donated to the drama department to be used in costumes.

The contributions that Josephine Clardy Fox gave to the city can still be seen today. The library and school are testaments to the enduring memory of the Clardy Fox family. Fox Plaza remains a neighborhood shopping center, and UTEP continues to benefit from the money generated from the auction. The contributions to the drama department to be used in costumes.

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Nora continued from page 10

The Cohen brothers received numerous awards. According to their biographies on file at UTEP Special Collections, Andy was the first person to be elected to the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame in 1955. Andy received the same honor in 1962. In 1962, Andy accepted the Merit Award from El Paso High School for his great contribution to sports, and the City of El Paso presented him with the Conquistador Award. In 1985, Andy was also named to the Texas Basketball Players Hall of Fame. Syd also won several bowling championships in El Paso. The brothers belonged to numerous civic organizations and coached both basketball and baseball. Andy and Syd Cohen were the first two players elected to the El Paso Baseball Hall of Fame in 1988. Bob Ingram wrote in Baseball: From Browns to Diablos that the Cohen brothers are now considered "the most respected and revered names in El Paso baseball."

With the death of Syd on April 9, 1988, followed by Andy’s death six months later, on Oct. 29, 1988, the El Paso baseball community and the city itself lost two of the greatest baseball players and gentlemen that have called El Paso home. Not many El Pasanos know about the history behind the naming of Cohen Stadium which was built for the El Paso Diablos. Marina Lee, Andy’s daughter, went as far as getting letters from Tommy Lasorda, who was manager for the Los Angeles Dodgers, to lobby city council to name the stadium after her father and uncle. Cohen Stadium is located in Northeast El Paso on the Diana Exit off Highway 54 just before Transmountain Road.

In her letter to City Council, Lee wrote: “It [Cohen] is a name that would bring pride and honor to the stadium, to El Paso and the sport and/or business of baseball. It will always be meaningful.” The meaning behind a name is not the number of friends left behind or the money generated or the number of sports jerseys sold at the end of the day. A name is the mark that one leaves in history and the memories that are left for others to enjoy once that person is gone. Andy and Syd Cohen were a definite example of this. In El Paso, the name Cohen means baseball and the long history of the sport in the city.
Washington continued from page 8

morals in the lives of the people they touch, whether they are African American or not. They should become more involved in community.” She sang in

students to “have certain standards and morals and principles.”

Another way Washington helped El Paso youth was to work as a coordinator for the Miss Black El Paso Scholarship Pageant for about 23 years. Her daughter, Valerie Northington-Geason, emphasized that her mother “was very aware and wanted to keep the African American population here active and involved in the community as a whole.” Northington-Geason commented that Washington “saw an opportunity to get our young ladies involved in a positive light.”

Washington also used her writing and musical skills for the community. From the 1950s through the 1980s, she wrote and edited The Southwest Torch Newspaper, begun in 1937 because local newspapers were not that interested in El Paso’s black population. The paper changed its name to The Good Neighbor Interpreter and covered the activities of the African American community. In the 1970s, she composed the words and music to El Paso’s official song, “City of El Paso.” Washington wrote two other original compositions about El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. Local music legend Ross Capshaw helped her with the musical arrangements for these songs.

In 1983, Leona Washington began her quest to establish a black cultural center. In 1984, she rented the Marshall McCall home, which was for sale, and established the McCall Neighborhood Center. The building itself is a part of African American history. It is the former house of Olalee McCall, a teacher at Douglass who became principal in 1937, and Marshall McCall, El Paso’s first black mail carrier. To this day it serves as an African American heritage and cultural center.

The McCall Center features pictures, books, exhibits and information detailing African American history in El Paso. The center hosts a senior lunch program and promotes events to celebrate important African American holidays such as Juneteenth and Kwanza. Washington made the center the focal point for the black community. Donald Williams, lawyer and McCall Center board member, pointed out in a 2010 El Paso Times article that El Paso does not “have a black neighborhood. … This center is a historical institution that serves as the center of black El Paso.”

In 1991, Leona Washington donated dozens of boxes of photographs and other papers documenting African American history in El Paso to the Special Collections Department of the UTEP Library. One librarian said, “It is the largest collection of its kind we’ve received in recent years. Until now our collection has not had any information on the black community of El Paso.” Washington told Dailey and Navarro, “African Americans need to be proud of the contributions our forefathers have made. … They need to know their history and build on it.”

Washington received recognition for her work in the African American community. In 1984, she was inducted into the El Paso County Democratic Hall of Fame, and in 1991, the El Paso Commission for Women’s Hall of Fame honored her. In the late 1990s, she was awarded the city’s highest honor, the Conquistador Award, given to those who have contributed significantly to El Paso. In 2001, the El Paso Parks and Recreation Department renamed the Missouri Community Center at 3400 E. Missouri Ave. for Washington. It is now the Leona Ford Washington Community Center.

Considered the “unofficial historian of the African American community,” Leona Washington died August 5, 2007, at age 79. Wayne Thornton, writing in the El Paso Times shortly after her death, called her a “community treasure.” He said that Washington “was a visionary and a true believer and extraordinarily gifted in finding that special spark for life in others.” In 2006, the El Paso Association for the Performing Arts honored her with their Image Award, and Heuser was inducted into the El Paso Women’s Commission Hall of Fame in 2009.

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years at Heuser’s Ballet Centre. She made the costumes for two ballets of the San Francisco company with the second skill. Heuser herself designed many costumes for her own productions and those of various operas.

Other students of Heuser’s have gone on to become exceptional dancers and instructors. Renee Segapeli danced professionally for Ballet El Paso for many years, after becoming its youngest apprentice at age 11 and winning several national competitions. In 1988, she and her husband Peter Fairweather, a dancer with Britain’s Royal Ballet, acquired the Cranford School of Ballet in England, changing its name to Southwest Ballet Arts. She and her husband, a former teacher at Ballet El Paso and UTEP, continue to run the school successfully.

Andree Harper, another of Heuser’s star pupils, teaches ballet at UTEP and privately at Champion Studio. In 1974, she was the first to receive a degree in ballet from UTEP. Her first view of Heuser was that she held “a big stick in her hand.” When she got to know her teacher, however, Harper realized that Heuser was tiny and [would] “quietly bat her eyelashes.” In a 2008 UTEP Prospector article, Harper called Heuser a “classical icon” and said she did “great, great things for the ballet program.” Heuser’s dedication to her craft and her students did not come without a price. Her first marriage ended in divorce. After the birth of her second son, Christian, her second marriage also ended in divorce, but personal struggles were not the only battles to be fought.

In 1997, Ballet El Paso folded due to financial trouble. “That really affected me,” Heuser told Maribel Villalva of the Times on Dec. 2, 2006. “After that I even broke my arm [while dancing].” In a personal interview with EPCP student, Iriana Fogle, who was also Heuser’s student, Heuser said that although there are struggles, all will be well in the end. “There is a God of Theatre, and as long as you worship him, you will be taken care of.”

In 2006, Heuser directed her last “Nutmacker,” the highlight of the holiday season for generations of El Pasiones. She directed the “Nutmacker” ballet for 45 years. Heuser’s last performances of the Christmas favorite were held at the Plaza Theater in downtown El Paso.

Ingeborg Heuser retired from UTEP in 2007, a few years after UTEP quit offering a ballet major. The ballet program was moved to the Theater Department from the Music Department, where it had been for decades, and placed under the aegis of UTEP’s Dinner Theater. Retirement did not mean Heuser stopped teaching, however. She still teaches ballet at The El Paso Conservatory of Dance, established by a member of Heuser’s ballet company, Marta Katz.

Over her career, Heuser has received numerous awards from her adopted city, including the “Star of the Mountain” Lifetime Achievement Award from the City Council in 2005 and the YWCA’s REACH Award in 2006. The El Paso Association for the Performing Arts honored her with their Image Award, and Heuser was inducted into the El Paso Women’s Commission Hall of Fame in 2009.

For almost half a century, Heuser has entertained El Pasiones at the theater with her beautiful stage sets, elaborately made costumes and exquisite choreography. Through her dedication and passion, thousands of El Pasiones have been caught up in fanciful stories told with music and dance. Although she had to overcome struggles and make sacrifices, Heuser’s love for ballet and sharing that with El Paso has been paramount because, as she told the Times, “When you’re caught in the dance, you can’t get away.”
small pensions and an option to remain living on the farm. In all his businesses, Moor demanded much of his workers but gave much in return.

By 1940, Moor had also expanded his cattle ranching interests, owning and leasing hundreds of sections of land (a section consists of 640 acres) in Hudspeth County, TX, and northern Mexico between Juárez and Palomas, in addition to his farm in Clint. The land was able to support some 4,000 head of cattle in Texas and another 6,000 head in Mexico. Richeson said that Moor’s two biggest markets were Peyton Park and Company in El Paso and Swift and Company in Fort Worth.

A reader might ask, how could Lee Moor have time to do anything else? However, in the mid to late 1920s, he would join a venture that would become “his leading source of wealth,” according to Richeson. The business? Running natural gas transmission systems, to cities and towns in the Southwest. And so Moor invested heavily and acquired a large number of shares in the business that would soon be known as Southern Union Gas Company. When Richeson wrote his book on Moor in 1974, the company had a plant worth more than $330,000,000 and annual sales of $130,000,00 to half a million customers in the Southwest. Today the company is worth billions and is one of the largest pipeline operators in the country.

The financial empire of the Moors was made possible by several factors, not the least of which was a willingness to work 12 to 16 hours a day, including Saturdays. Moor expected his employees to work as hard and long as he did — and they did. Employees tended to stay with Moor for a long time. He had only one secretary his entire career, Bess Waskey. Likewise, Moor did not race out to buy the newest model of equipment. He was known for repairing vehicles and machinery over and over as long as they were still functional. Nothing was ever wasted, but he was generous to his employees and friends.

Moor was also modest in his appearance; clothes were strictly functional. He did not seek out publicity and had lifelong friends that the Moors made when they were young. As the title of Richeson’s book implies, he kept records and made business plans in small notebooks he carried in his shirt pockets and crammed his wallet full of notes on his various projects. He kept an office of two small rooms in El Paso’s Bassett Tower, giving up his desk for a small table when the space was needed for something else. But he was not afraid to take risks when others folded.

In the 1930s, the Moors became concerned about inheritance taxes, and they started putting their assets into trusts in order to avoid probate. The Moors discussed creating a large trust for a children’s home in El Paso. Richeson wrote that this was probably due to their own experiences during childhood. In December 1949, the trust for a children’s home was established.

Involved in many charitable and philanthropic activities, the Moors were very generous to the community they loved. They made large donations to Providence Memorial Hospital which enabled it to function and to add many amenities, and they gave the University of Texas at El Paso a large tract of land, according to Richeson.

Beulah Moor died on September 23, 1951. Lee Moor died on December 15, 1958, at the age of 88. The El Paso Herald-Post reported in 1973 that the trust which the Moors established for the children’s home consisted of property and cash worth $9 million. Due to Moor’s desire for privacy, the construction of the children’s home, just a block away from the family home, was delayed until after his death.

Richeson wrote that Lee Moor’s personal philosophies served as the basis upon which the children’s home established its organizational principles. According to the Herald-Post, the home was founded to care for youngsters whose home life did not take care of their basic needs. The Moors believed the home should be comfortable and attractive. Richeson said that the Moors believed that no child should be turned away on the basis of their race or religion. The number of children served by the home should be limited, so that each child could receive quality care. Furthermore, Moor felt that the children should receive help until the completion of high school, but if the trustees agreed, they could also receive support for college, which would later be repaid by the student.

The Lee & Beulah Moor Children’s Home opened its doors in December 1959. The main residential campus is located on 13 acres at 1100 East Cliff Dr. The home offered foster care and adoption services, help for unmarried mothers and counseling for children with problems. The children were to eat, sleep and play at the home but go into the community for school, church and some recreational activities. Betty and John MacGuire would serve on the Board of Trustees.

Today, the Lee & Beulah Moor Children’s Home provides residential services, foster care, adoption services, tutoring, recreation, life-skills development and individual, family and unplanned pregnancy counseling, according to their website. Residential services are provided when the parent is unable to provide a safe environment for the child, there has been violence at school or at home or parents have health problems. The anticipated length of stay is 15 months. The parents or their representatives are legally responsible for the children and must visit them regularly.

The campus consists of residential cottages, administrative offices, several nearby group homes, a gymnasium, a library and learning center, a support services building and landscaped areas including playgrounds and gardens. The children also use Camp Leavell, a recreational camp at Three Rivers, NM, donated by businessman Charles Leavell, an original member of the home’s trustees.

In an interview with Anna Hoffer, Jim Thomas, Senior Administrator for Development and Activities, said that in the past 52 years, more than 20,000 children have been cared for at the home. They have been nurtured, loved and inspired. Today, because the economic downturn is putting a strain on family life, there are more children needing to come to the home than they have room for, according to Thomas. He said, “Families are hurting.”

Lee and Beulah Moor’s hard work, business acumen and love of children have made their dream come true, a dream to give children a chance to live in a family atmosphere when their own home situation dissolves or becomes dysfunctional. The home meets the needs of the children and provides an essential service to the El Paso area. The Moors provided everything needed to make their dream come true — money, land, and most of all, Love with a capital L. It is fitting that on Lee Moor’s gravestone these words are written: “Suffer the little children, to come unto me ...” (Mark 10:14).
Lee and Beulah Moor Left Legacy of Love

By Anna Hoffer and Perla Talamantes

Fifty years ago, children from troubled homes had few opportunities to grow up in a nurturing atmosphere. Yes, there were institutions—usually cold, impersonal and often worse than the homes the children left. But 100 and more years ago, children from problem homes were at the mercy of relatives, or often, on their own. This is the story of two such children who grew up, became incredibly successful and decided that they would provide a place for children at risk.

Lee and Beulah Moor chose to live and work in El Paso, and they left a beautiful legacy of care and love through a home which gives children of troubled families a chance at a bright future.

The Lee & Beulah Moor Children’s Home was the result of a long time dream and a generous trust the Moors created. Who were these generous but private people? What caused them to want to design such a place?

Lee Moor was born on Nov. 21, 1870, in what is today Paris, TX. His parents were Sallie and Joseph Fitzgerald Moor, both apparently from Alabama. In the biography Lee Moor: Shirt Pocket Tycoon, Richeson stated that Moor was concerned about the future of ranching in such an arid location, and the Moors sold the ranch in 1903, the profit of which was to be the basis for their later fortune. He and Beulah began ranching south of their Wildy Well home, raising both cattle and sheep, an act unpopular with cattle ranchers.

Through a series of fortuitous situations, Moor made his 10,000-acre ranch in New Mexico contain communities,” as Richeson wrote. When employees became too old to work, Moor provided them retirement homes.

Lee Moor: Shirt Pocket Tycoon

Lee Moor

Hawley Richeson wrote that research indicates that Joseph Moor was a doctor with the 19th Regiment of Dea’s Alabama Brigade during the Civil War. Injuries acquired in battle, along with the Confederate loss, caused him to become withdrawn from his family and society in general, causing problems between the child’s parents.

After Lee Moor’s birth, Joseph took Sallie and his young son to live with her family in Jacksonville, TX. Richeson said that Joseph traveled west, and began ranching near Orogrande, NM. Sallie acquired a divorce from Joseph and remained bitter about it throughout the rest of her life, refusing support from her former husband and denying him any contact with Lee, facts the child would learn only as a young man.

Lee Moor was able to attend school regularly only through the third grade, leaving to help support his mother. He would return to school sporadically until he was 15. The little boy plowed fields with a team even though he could not reach the plow handles, and when he was eight years old, Lee landed a part-time job hauling lumber for a sawmill. He was paid with lumber instead of money, amassing building materials which allowed his uncle to build his mother and him a house.

At 10, Lee went to work as a water boy for the Cottonbelt Railroad. He saw the men he met on the railroad as father figures and considered this period of his childhood his happiest. As Lee grew older, he advanced with the railroad to freight loading and eventually to management.

When Lee discovered the facts about his parents, he decided to meet his father. At 17, he arranged a leave from the railroad. He set out on horseback, traveling over 700 miles west to El Paso. Once there he discovered that his father had a ranch between Orogrande and Cloudcroft, in the Sacramento Mountains in New Mexico. He stayed and worked with his father less than a year due to his mother’s repeated demands for his return.

After returning to El Paso, he resumed his job with the Cottonbelt Railroad, earning regular promotions. He was eventually named station master at Hillsboro, TX, where he met Beulah Ethel Johnson. This was also where his 18-year railroad career ended, when he became infected with tuberculosis.

Beulah Johnson was born in Waco, TX, the daughter of a prosperous farmer. Her mother died when she was only four years old. She had two sisters and a brother along with nine half brothers and sisters from her parents’ previous marriages. Her father died when she was a preteen, and after money her father had left for the children’s support was gone, she was moved from one relative to another for years. She had finished her education and was teaching school in Hillsboro when she met Lee Moor in 1898. He conducted a determined courtship over the next two years, most of it by mail.

Richeson stated that doctors had told Lee that he must move to a dry climate, sleep outdoors and drink goat milk in order to survive tuberculosis. At first, he tried to live in Cloudcroft, NM, but found it too cold in the winter. He then moved down the mountain to High Roller, where he found a rancher who agreed to let Moor sleep in his barn. In return, Moor worked for the rancher as he became stronger.

Beulah Johnson eventually traveled to El Paso and married Lee Moor on April 18, 1900. Their first home was an adobe house on his father’s ranch in Wildy Well, six miles north of Orogrande. After his father and his partner, Oliver Lee, lost their ranch during a prolonged drought, and Joseph Moor returned to El Paso to open a livery stable, Lee and Beulah began ranching south of their Wildy Well home, raising both cattle and sheep, an act unpopular with cattle ranchers.

Through a series of fortuitous situations, Moor made a tidy profit selling more than half of his large flock of sheep.

Richeson stated that Moor was concerned about the future of ranching in such an arid location, and the Moors sold the ranch in 1903, the profit of which was to be the basis for their later fortune. He and Beulah moved to El Paso and purchased a house on Yandell Street in the Sunset Heights area. Since the home had more than room enough for three, Beulah turned the rest of their residence into a rooming house. Moor started a contracting business, using some of the mules he had kept from the ranch.

His next project was a dam project in Chihuahua City, Mexico, where he met George Orr, another contractor from El Paso who helped Moor obtain a job building a railroad from Ojinaga to Chihuahua City. Without complaint, Beulah moved to the railroad camp and began working, bringing water and food to the workers in a mule-drawn wagon. In 1910, the Lee Moor Contracting Company was established by Lee Moor, George Orr and W. A. Rawls. They secured a subcontract to lay track for the Santa Fe Railway Company which would go from Albuquerque to Los Angeles.

The Moors decided to stay in California when the job was finished. With complete control of the construction company, Moor took on the major task of carving out a highway through the mountains from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, uniting southern California with the north. Called the Ridge Route, the scenic road included 697 curves and is one of two California highways to be on the National Register.

Richeson related that while the Moors enjoyed their time in California, they felt that El Paso was home, returning in 1916. The couple built a house at 1100 River St. in 1923. A few months later they adopted an infant girl and named her Betty Lee Moor. She would marry a New York boy who graduated from the University of Texas at Austin, John MacGuire, and the couple would give the Moors two granddaughters.

The Lee Moor Contracting Company prospered for 40 years. During World War II, Moor’s firm was among those which built air bases in West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, including Williams, Biggs, Holloman and Deming Air Force Bases. The company built thousands of miles of railroads, bridges and dams in California and the Southwest.

This part of Moor’s business was phased out in 1955 with its final significant contract being the construction of Paisano Drive in El Paso.

While his contracting business grew, Moor also was acquiring farmland. He eventually would own more than 4,600 acres, including 3,600 in El Paso County and another 1,040 near Tucson, mainly producing cotton. He provided houses for his workers as well as food service, with the result that his farms became “self-contained communities,” as Richeson wrote. When employees became too old to work, Moor provided

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