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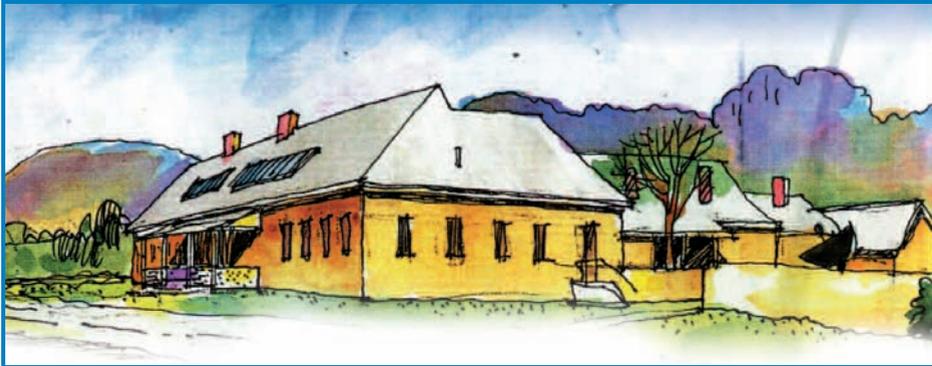
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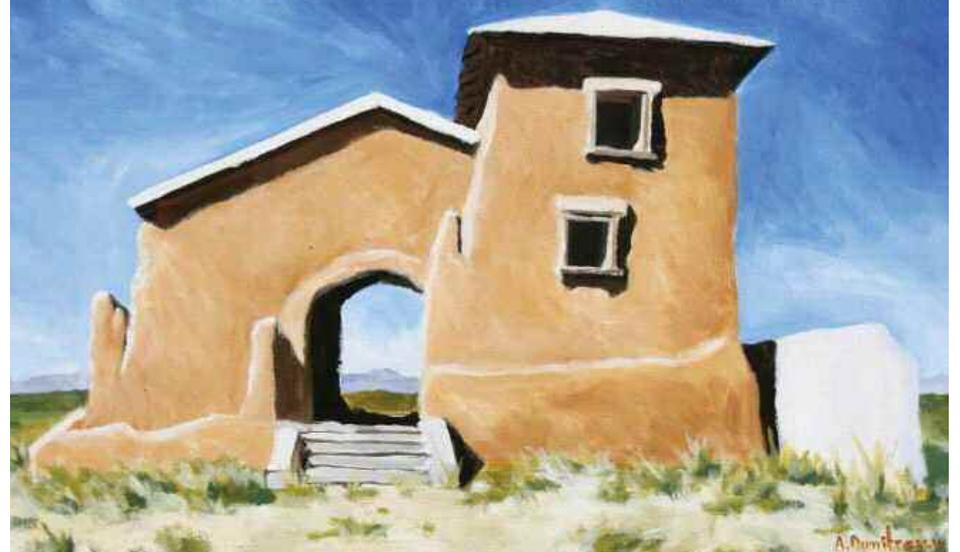
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On a corner in south Alpine a cottage garden is being created that proves it can be done and done very well in West Texas. The owner loves plants, and that is evident in the diversity in his garden. Part of the gardening adventure for him is “expanding his knowledge of plant material.” He loves gardening which is evident in the selection of plants that he’s chosen to create his work-in-progress. An architect by profession and an accomplished painter, he has created gardens in each of the many places he has lived around Texas over the years. These loves and talents are evident in the rejuvenation of the old adobe home on the property, the beautiful furnishings and the way the home and garden complement each other.

As with most gardens, the design and choice of plants is very individual and reflects the tastes and interests of the gardener. There is a vision for the big picture and an organized layout. The overall structure is provided by a number of large trees, some of which, like the peach tree that anchors the northwest corner of the house and the aspen on the northeast corner, are holdovers from the previous owner. On advice from a local landscape architect, Mexican elders, Lacy oaks, red oaks and a Texas mountain laurel were chosen to punctuate the space between the house and the rather spacious yard.

The property is bounded on the south and east by tall Afghan pines, on the west by a high adobe wall and on the north by a wooden fence. This arrangement contributes to the success of the garden by providing a buffer from the relentless wind and ruthless sun that can dry up a West Texas garden in no time.

The organization is realized through a series of rectangular beds that frame the house on three sides with a broad walkway between the beds next to the west-facing covered porch and several additional rectangular raised beds to the west and southwest of the house that form a low terrace. On the north side, the path to the front door is a rather more cozy-looking flagstone. Within this rather formal basic structure, the plants, especially in the beds up next to the house, are soft, colorful and overflowing. Some plants, like the native Blackfoot daisies originally planted in the raised beds, have been allowed to “travel” outside the confines of the beds. In other places, natives like globe mallow have showed up on their own and been allowed to stay.

There is a relaxed yet dynamic, almost wild, quality to the garden that

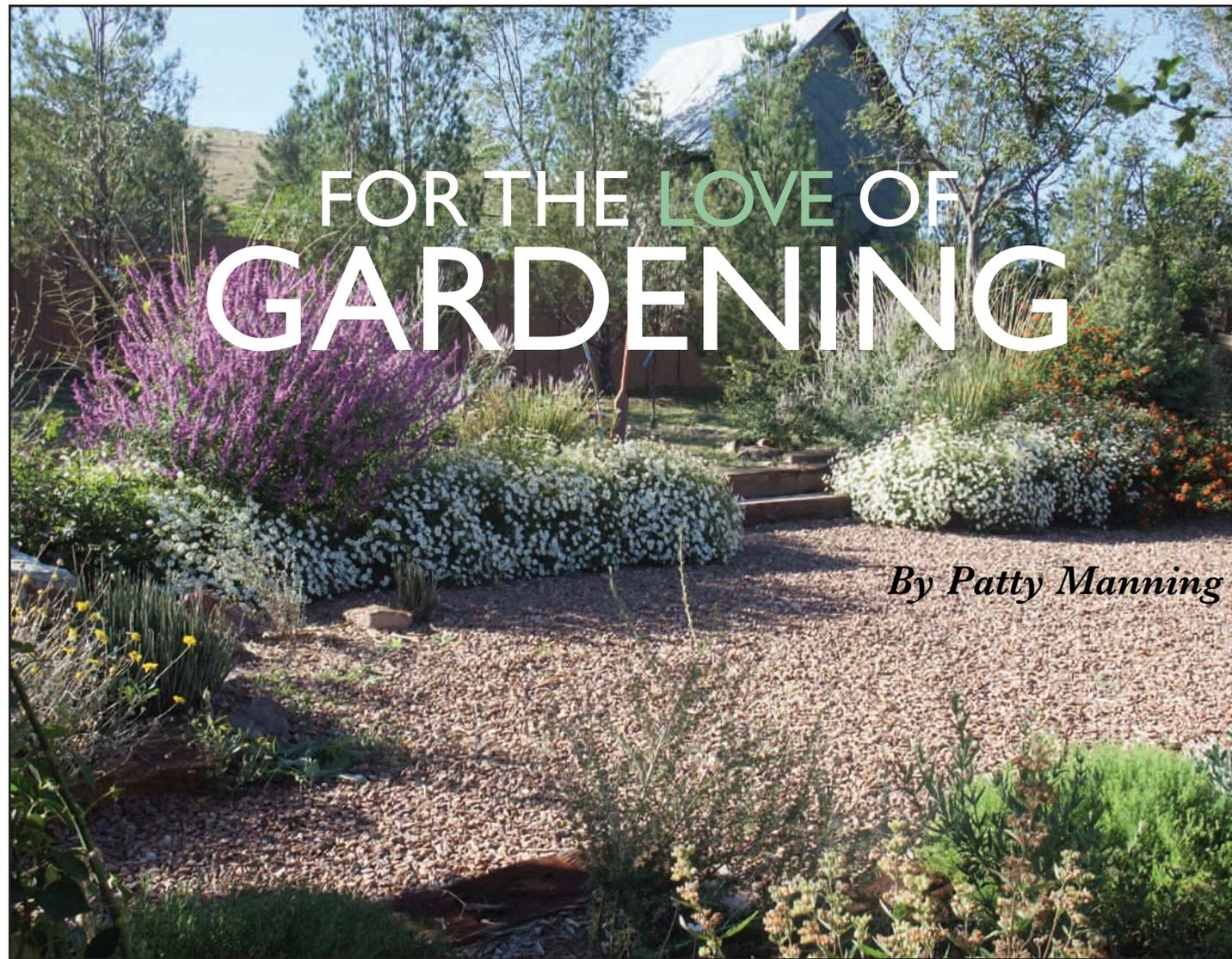


Photo by Mike Schroeder

Low plants travel over the edge of the raised bed. The riot of color and texture in the bed contrasts with the calm gravel pathway.

indicates the kind of gardener who simply loves to garden. This gardener enjoys trying out new plants or moving existing plants to new places in the garden. He orders many of these plants and gets some suggestions from a local nursery whose owner is a kindred spirit in the quest for and subsequent appreciation of new plants.

In order to “create a garden that stays pretty as long as possible,” the beds on the west side of the house are crammed with a wonderful combination of species, both native and non-native. Various types of roses with successive bloom times twine in and out and around. Tall light blue hyssop, Mexican bush sage, blue knight buddleia and feathery Russian sage contrast beautifully with large, dark green rosemary in the background. These greens and blues provide a backdrop for lively red pinks and yellows of various species of penstemon, golden yarrow, agastache, damianita and low growing perennials like

Atlas daisy and cultivars of oregano and thyme. Many of these plants also have lovely fragrances, which waft across the porch. He’s done an excellent job of stacking the plants from tall to short so that the plants can be seen and in general don’t shade each other out.

Along the flagstone path on the north side more colorful perennials lead up to the front door. Under the peach tree there is Mexican feather grass with red flowered Darcy sage, fall flowering sedum and a striking pink flowered penstemon. On the side next to the wooden fence are more Russian sage, valerian and an incredible hybrid gaillardia called “oranges and lemons.” Under the pre-existing aspen the old fashioned non-native perennial bouncing bet is planted.

On the southwest corner of the porch, native shrubs such as Apache plume, scarlett bouvardia and Texas kidneywood provide diversity of color and texture. In general, “non-aggressive”

plants have been chosen, in the sense that most are without nasty thorns. However, there are also sun-loving succulents out away from the house that make wonderful specimen plants: various agaves, sotols and cacti. In general, plants with similar watering requirements are together, which is a smart idea in any garden.

The cottage garden feel is reinforced by the use of a few quirky non-plant elements that add rustic touches. Round sections of old tree trunks are strategically placed here and there. Pots of staggered heights and contrasting colors are paired with agave and prickly pear that echo the color contrast. An upended old iron pipe is planted with bunches of candlelilla. Twisted, gnarled branches from the existing tree of heaven make an attractive trellis from which hung strings of white lights. It’s pretty cool looking –

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## Editor's Notes



Here we go with the Big Bend's most beautiful time – fall after the rains. The hills and mountains have been green all summer thanks to a long rainy season, creeks are running, and nature is taking time to show off before winter sets in. And you can wear a

sweater again!

Enjoy this issue of *Cenizo* as you're enjoying the cooler temperatures and the shortening of the days.

Not all of the Far West Texas landscape is stark and monochromatic – take a look at an Alpine garden that's a perfect English cottage garden – and it's all done with native plants. Native plant guru Patty Manning shows us how.

A new slant on rock art from the folks at SHUMLA in Comstock may have you looking at ancient cave art in a new way. Del Rio writer Bill Sontag enlarges on this study of pictographs in the Lower Pecos.

Imperial may be the “smoked turkey capital of Texas,” but a whole new kind of turkey farming is happening in Alpine. Sandra Harper tells us about raising heritage turkeys – birds that please the eye as well as the palate.

Day of the Dead means the annual clean-up and reunion at the Terlingua Cemetery. Have you ever wondered about that plot of rocky soil? Read Danielle Gallo's story on who's buried in the Terlingua Cemetery and wonder no more.

Poems that bring the Big Bend to life by three area poets will stir you.

And if you're one of the folks who think “we wuz robbed” when Presidio County split and moved the county seat to Marfa, read all the gossip details in Bob Miles' story.

Photojournalists often seem to take pictures of

just the facts, but there's an artistic side, too, as Barbara Richerson shows us in the photo essay.

Thinking of a road trip? Travel with brothers Bill and John Stough as they discover that you *can* go home again – sort of.

Jim Glendinning introduces us to three area musicians who are not only important parts of the varied Big Bend musical scene but who make big contributions to their communities.

Some details on the rainy season and its importance in the Trans-Pecos. Cathy Hoyt takes us underground and into the mountains to reveal what goes on when the rains come.

Life along the Rio Grande has always been edgy. And at the Johnson Ranch in the 1930s the landing strip brought the famous, the infamous and many who would be World War II military heroes. Historian Glenn Willeford gives the details.

Pull up a chair and tell a tale with Folkways' Marie French. This one's about how the Rio Grande came to be. If you don't like it, you can make up your own!

And finally see what all you know about Big Bend Bugs with Charlie Angell's Trivia quiz.

As always, our thanks to our advertisers who know that advertising is half of what they do. Their financial support of *Cenizo* is an investment in our community. Telling our unique story increases tourism, supports writers and artists, reminds us of our place in history and preserves that history for the future.

Hope your Trans-Pecos autumn and the holidays are beautiful. See you in the New Year!



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# Cenizo Journal

Volume 2 Number 4

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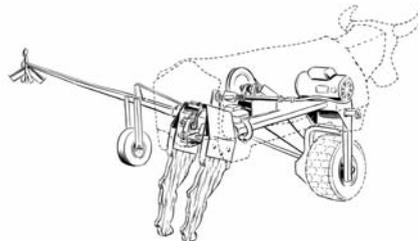
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**Cover:** "Watching the Heavens" by Gary Nored. The sun sets and the moon rises at the McDonald Observatory's Harlan J. Smith Telescope.

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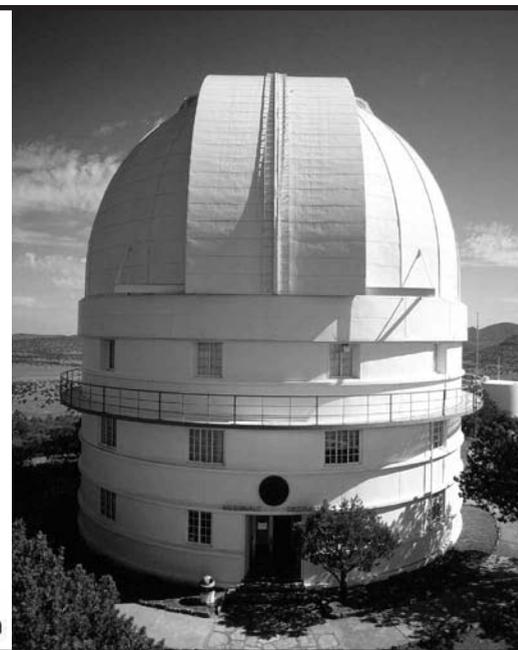


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# Reverential Art in a Land of Spirits and Panthers

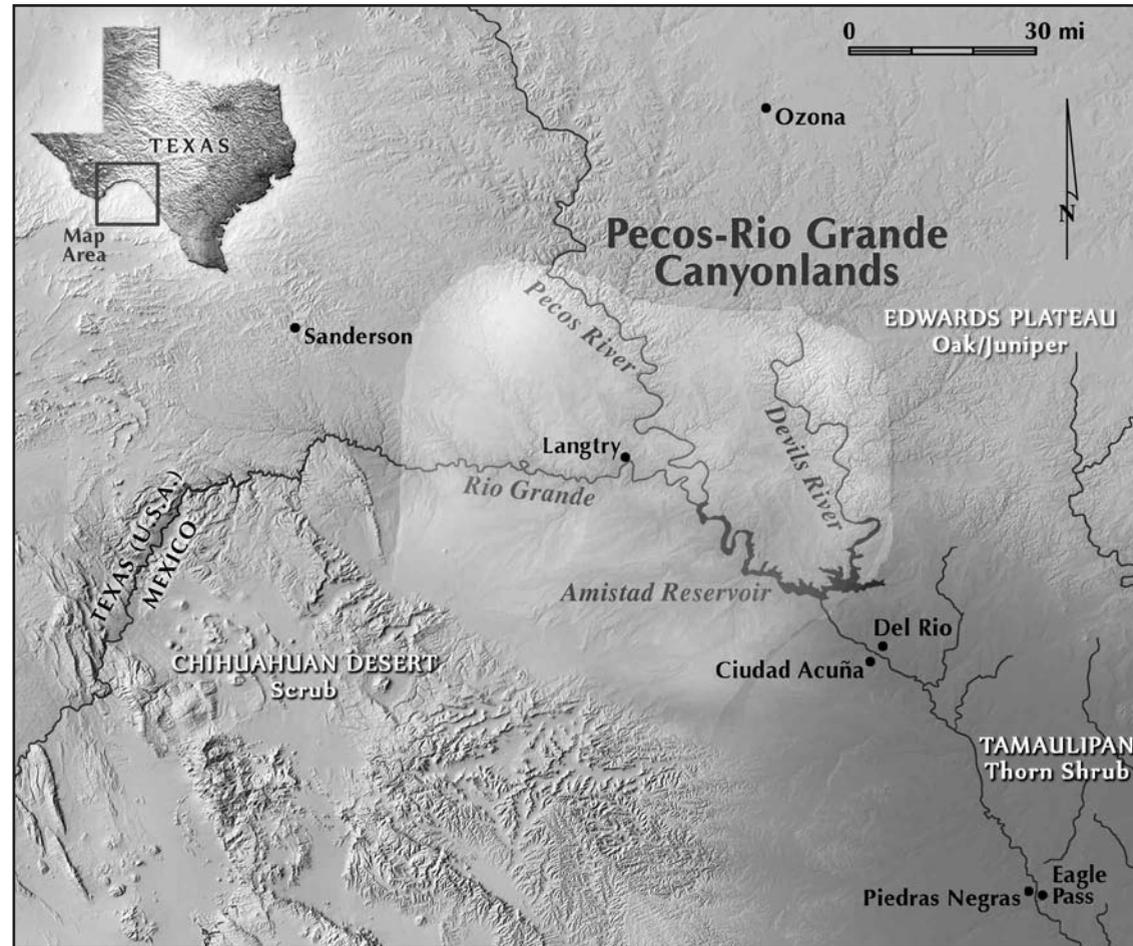
by Bill Sontag

Artistic traditions spanning 1,250 years – all emblazoned on canyon walls of the Rio Grande, Devils and Pecos rivers – give mute voice to Middle and Late Archaic peoples and the silent spirits they worshipped. Equally clear is the reverence held by these prehistoric Trans-Pecos denizens for the flora and fauna of which they were a part in the Lower Pecos canyonlands.

Scattered westerly from the confluence of the three rivers are thousands of colorful figures clustered throughout the region. Several may be seen by those willing and able to make the effort. Not surprisingly, newcomers are cautioned, “You’ve really got to want to get there to get there.” To some sites, journeys are demanding, while at others just seeing the art can raise one’s pulse more than the hike back to a parked car or tour bus.

In 250 known Lower Pecos panel sites of pictograph images (painted, rather than pecked or incised, as is the case with petroglyphs), the ancients made significant sacrifices to record ... Well, what? “We’ll probably never know what these images meant to those who painted them,” goes the shelf worn mantra of some archeologists and rock art aficionados of the Lower Pecos cultural region. But that – some say – is changing.

Dr. Carolyn Boyd, founder and executive director of SHUMLA, a renowned center for education and research of ancient Lower Pecos lifeways, believes rock art in this region is supremely functional, not a matter of simple aesthetic reflection. In *Rock Art of the Lower Pecos*, the 2003 published version of her 1998 doctoral dissertation from Texas A&M University, Boyd explores the intensely spiritual purposes of the 4,000-year-old visions committed to limestone.



Map by Kerza Prewitt

“America’s sublime antiquity has the lure of a mystery greater than the ruined cities of the old world.”

– Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad booklet, c. 1900

“Images are considered sources of power; they are potent and important. An art object is valued in terms of what it can do, socially and spiritually, rather than what it looks like. The art works – it performs,” Boyd declares. She believes early archeologists failed to integrate understanding of the rock art’s significance with their disproportionate emphasis on material culture –

woven sandals, atlatls, coprolites (feces), earth ovens and lithic tools (knives, scrapers, spear and dart points). This oversight, Boyd explains, was largely attributable to “Western conceptions of art as superfluous, decorative and non-utilitarian.”

Surely “Western conceptions” had little to do with designs of the Great Sphinx and the Second Pyramid of Giza,

built under the rule of Khafre, fourth pharaoh of Egypt, circa 4568-4542 BP (before present). So, only a paltry few centuries before Archaic nomads here began recording visions of spiritual transformation, gargantuan stone sculptures and tombs of the Near Eastern deserts grandly exhibited functional relationships between art and utility.

Cast-metal cooking pots

unearthed from the Bronze Age of China are not judged by contemporary standards of “beauty,” but they do represent a level of technology and symmetry when contrasted with art of other civilizations. And the National Gallery of Art’s *Golden Age of Chinese Archeology*, edited by Xiaoneng Yang, explains that archeologists assign a graceful, 4,000-year-old, 9-inch painted pottery jar to the Lower Xiajiadan culture, crafted during the earliest stages of Lower Pecos rock art. Both vessels are contemporaneous, on opposite sides of the world, with early Lower Pecos-style rock art.

Though several styles and periods of art are seen in the Lower Pecos, Boyd has focused her energies on the polychromatic (multicolored) panels painted between 4,200 and 2,950 BP across this sprawling region, roughly the size of Connecticut. She is most concerned about erosive influences that threaten the paintings: events such as flood damage in narrow canyons, insect infestations, scouring effects of wind-borne dust and sand and traffic by livestock seeking cool summer shade and shelter from winter’s “blue northers.”

Brainless, unreasoned vandalism has taken a toll in some sites, too, though most accessible rock shelters are under the watchful, educated eyes of interpretive guides doubling as resource stewards. Still, neophytes to the rock-art experience – and a few who return after long absences – lament the art’s eroded condition. To which, some docents and guides quip, “If you think this is bad, ask your local Sherwin-Williams dealer for house paint guaranteed to last 4,000 years!”

Using chemical analyses and accelerator spectrometry radiocarbon dating, archeologists have determined the age and composition of the



Photo by Bill Sontag

The Panther is one of the iconic images appearing in many Lower Pecos rock shelters. This image is 13 feet long from tail tip around the body axis to the nose.

Archaic-period paint. Mineral pigments such as red and yellow ochre were blended with animal fat (such as deer bone marrow), then emulsified to applicable texture with the soapy root residue of yucca and sotol. Studies of the calorie-meager diets of Archaic peoples further demonstrate the value natives placed on the spiritual importance of the painted images. They literally moved nutrition – in the form of fat – from the “family table” to “paint pots” of the shamans.

Archeologists often quibble over imponderables in their discipline, but one consensus is solid. The first step to the stewardship of antiquities lies in two words: baseline data. In essence, what’s the best information obtainable about the current condition of the Lower Pecos rock art? In 2009, SHUMLA researchers initiated high-density laser scans of rock art to secure computer models with accuracy measured in tenths of a millimeter, showing every nook, cranny, crevice and placement of paint in a rock shelter. Draped with current high-resolution photos, the record is complete and useful for comparisons with future digital images and historical

prints and slides from the site’s photographic heritage.

Photo comparisons have already revealed a crisis of infestations of mud dauber nests at Panther Cave. The nests are believed to rip ancient paint from the walls each time abandoned clay tubes fall. Before construction of Amistad Dam – even before humans first applied paint to the rock shelter walls, four millennia ago – this lithic perch was a mere overlook into the 104-foot abyss of the Rio Grande. But with inundation by Amistad Reservoir to a conservation pool level of 1,117 AMSL (above mean sea level), only 27 feet below Panther Cave, the now-famous rock shelter became riparian habitat, adjacent to and interactive with the swollen river’s moisture and biota.



SHUMLA’s research efforts are magnified by generous photographers – amateur or professional – or inheritors of photographic collections. Contributions are scanned onto the organization’s server at Comstock, and originals are safely returned to owners.

The premise of many modern archeologists – students as well as fledglings and veterans – is Boyd’s affirmation of a growing conviction: “Prehistoric art is not beyond explanation. Images from the past contain a vast corpus of data – accessible through proven, scientific methods – that can enrich our understanding of human lifeways in prehistory and, at the same time, expand our appreciation for the work of art in the present and the future.”

**SHUMLA:** [www.shumla.org](http://www.shumla.org)

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Photo by Regina Boling

A three-month-old Bourbon Red struts his stuff in the mountains of Far West Texas.

# HERITAGE TURKEYS

## To eat them is to save them

by *Sandra Harper*

While “long lived, naturally mating and slow growing” would partially define the human animal, it’s also a description of the heritage turkey. Add to these criteria “raised outside in a historic range system,” and you have a description of the heritage turkey breeds recognized today by the American Poultry Association. Like other native American foods – the tomato, the potato, the squash and the pepper – the turkey traveled around the world for about 90 years before being carried back to North America in 1607 in the holds of ships by European colonists to the settlement at Jamestown.

Fast forward to 2010 in the Big Bend

of Texas. Since late spring, 19 heritage turkeys have been living happily in the pens and fields of Regina Boling’s small farm on the southeast edge of Alpine. Regina, a vivacious, fair-headed woman who seems to never stop working – a prerequisite for a farmer – started raising chickens a few years ago and has eggs galore that she sells at the Alpine Farmers’ Market.

In May she received a different kind of poultry from the supplier of her chicks – several mailing boxes of two-day-old heritage turkeys. She had ordered Naragansetts, bourbon reds, chocolates and blue slates – all turkey breeds that were on the critical, threat-

ened or watch lists of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy.

This once popular domesticated farm animal was driven to near extinction by the rise of the broad breasted white, which from the 1940s to 70s was the most highly-engineered industrial breed in the world. Bred to be fat and large-breasted, their tiny legs were so shortened by the commercial breeding program it was impossible for them to mate or even stand. Only white birds were selectively chosen to assure that no shopper would find a carcass dotted with off-putting dark pinfeathers. The shrinking gene pool produced brain-damaged and diseased turkeys in need of antibiotics. Mercifully, at the age of 12 weeks they would be slaughtered. The white miracle-of-science bird spent its short, miserable life crammed into a shed with thousands of others just like it.

One of the outcomes of agribusiness is the destruction of diversity. Successful at eliminating the competition, generating enormous profits and, they would argue, feeding more people, industrial food producers have destroyed many, perhaps even most, of the plants and animals native to the planet.

Beginning in the 1950s, George Nicholas’ broad-breasted white scientific creation began to take over the turkey market and insert itself at the center of every Thanksgiving and Christmas meal and deli counter across the country.

Today the turkey industry has consolidated into three corporations that control the breeding stock: Hybrid Turkeys of Ontario, Canada; British United Turkeys of America in Lewisburg, W. Va.; and Nicholas Turkey Breeding Farms in Sonoma, Calif.

Even the agro-deformed broad-breasted white shared a common ancestor with the heritage breeds: the wild turkey, *Meleagris gallopavo*, native to North and South America.

Two thousand years ago early Mesoamericans and the Hopi domesticated the wild turkey, a 10-million-year-old bird whose poults fattened on insects and chased lizards. Growing turkeys in the Rio Grande region ate acorns, prickly pear, persimmons, berries of the agarito and the hackberry and mesquite beans. This West Texas forage diet made for a delicious wild-tasting bird.

### THE NATURAL LIFE OF A HERITAGE TURKEY

Since 1977 the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) has been the pioneer in the United States working

to conserve historic breeds and genetic diversity in farm animals. “Keep them on the foot and on the hoof,” declared Marjorie Bender, who leads the ALBC’s heritage turkey conservation efforts.

The heritage turkey census in 1997 counted only 1,500 birds. By 2006 that number had grown to over 10,000, a rise that had been brought about by the conservation efforts of ALBC, Slow Food and farmers who raised the birds for market. “To eat them is to save them,” Bender and her allies taught us.

“Staying connected to the past gives us opportunities for the future,” Bender said enthusiastically on Kate Manchester’s radio show, “Edible Communities.” As Americans have grown more interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced, farmers have brought the heritage turkeys back into food production and saved them from extinction. Raising the birds locally has linked them intimately to the community and to the environment.

In West Texas, the heritage turkey farmers are few and far between. The farmers who would be inclined to raise the birds already raise chickens. Because of blackhead, a protozoal disease sometimes contracted by chickens, agricultural extension agents have advised against allowing the fowl breeds to mingle. Keeping the two separate translates into more work for the farmer.

But the prospect of extra work and the fear of blackhead did not deter our local turkey farmer. Regina has settled on a flat dusty piece of land exposed to the sun. She gardens around her house where the chickens and turkeys live, and in her vegetable garden she always grows more than she needs to feed them.

When I visited Regina, her turkey poults were 2 weeks old and living in a space just off her kitchen. “They peep the same as chicks,” she said, “but their necks are longer, their feet are bigger, and they have bumps on their heads.” The fleshy protuberance atop their beak is called a snood.

The poults were milling around inside a cardboard box originally made to contain a recliner chair. A red heat lamp kept them warm. Hilde, Regina’s schnauzer, jumped on to her perch, a chair next to the box, and hung her head inside, watching the poults’ movements. Already the poults were used to the dog. Nearly every one of them was focused on Regina’s voice and kept their eyes trained on her.

“I can tell they’re more curious than chickens,” Regina said. She grabbed one up and spread its wings, which were

already quite large and colorful. I've always noticed the hands of people who are good with animals – strong, confident – and the gentle way they handle everything from newborn lambs to spirited thoroughbreds to farmyard poultry.

"This is the Naragansett from Rhode Island," Regina said. "It's the biggest breed I have. They make good mothers." Regina preened the poults, picking a bit of wood shaving that had caught in its wings. She let the dog Hilde lick the bird.

I picked up an irresistible beauty whose feathers were a bluish gray. "That's the blue slate," Regina told me, "a 2,000-year-old breed from Mexico." The small bird wriggled and peeped loudly until I let her beak rest in the cup of my hand. She went silent and docile, letting me pet her.

Once the chicks were 5 weeks old Regina moved them to their outdoor pen, where they set to dust bathing. "I don't like to lose animals," Regina told me. "I'm not raising chickens and turkeys to have an animal slaughter them. I'm going to make the effort to keep them safe."

To keep her turkeys safe Regina has built a large impenetrable pen with cattle panels covered in chicken wire. She dug a moat around the perimeter of the pen and buried chicken wire to discourage predatory diggers. The fowl fortress was topped with 2-inch heavy-duty netting that would deter a mountain lion or a hawk. Inside the pen stood a very nice camping trailer, once used to haul kayaks to Baja where Regina set up camp on the beach. Now the trailer had been re-purposed and christened the turkeys' house. Unlike industry birds these turkeys can roost, run and fly and require accommodations suitable to their lifestyle.

Regina told me about a day in July when she was working outside. "I yelled, 'whoopee!' and a gang of them answered me with gobbles." This was their first gobble.

"I know you're a tom,"

Regina said to the ones who were strutting and beginning to fan their tail feathers. "The necks of the toms are redder than the hens," Regina pointed out. "The toms are neck wrestling but none of them are aggressive."

Turkeys are different from chickens, of course – but how? Regina noticed immediately that the turkeys didn't come running when she filled their water troughs or fed them scraps the way the chickens did.

Regina appreciated the special turkey qualities. "They are calmer than my chickens. They're curious and like to be around people. They're always listening to voices."

It turned out the turkeys loved Marfa Public Radio. Whenever Regina played the station, the turkeys would wander in together and listen along. The "Nature Notes" show gave them animal noises to gobble along with.

I wondered if it were possible to have a favorite turkey. "The chocolates," Regina said smiling. "They are more trusting and calm. They always come up to me to see what I'm doing. And they follow me around."

In November, when the turkeys are 6 and a half months old, Regina will have found someone to slaughter the birds. Their natural growing cycle will have given them time to grow strong bones and healthy organs before developing a good oxygenated muscle mass. Because they have spent their days walking and running and flying, their meat will be succulent, with a chewy texture. The summer rains that greened the grounds around Regina's house will have provided abundant forage for the birds. Their varied diet will enhanced the woody flavor of their meat. The socializing and exploring they did every day stimulated their brains and kept them happy.

"There's been so much interest at the farmer's market in having a heritage turkey for Thanksgiving," said Regina, "I won't be able to satisfy every-

one. I'll save some back for breeding. And I want to taste one myself!"

## TURKEY TO THE TABLE

Dan Barber, the chef and director of Stone Barns, a farm and restaurant in New York that highlights the resources of the Hudson Valley, works with his farmer who raises bourbon reds. "On our farm we marry old-world systems with new world innovation," Barber explained on the "Edible Communities" radio show. "It's the key to a sustainable food system."

Even though the heritage birds took longer to raise, which increased the cost of labor and food, Barber was enthusiastic about "the fantastic flavor" of the naturally raised birds.

Barber advised against bringing the heritage turkeys. "The notes of turkyness would be lost in brining, would mask the subtleties of the flavor." He cooks his heritage birds slowly at 280 degrees and tests the meat with a thermometer without touching the bone. He removes the turkey from the oven when it reaches 140 to 150 degrees and lets it rest before carving. "Good ecology makes good gastronomy," Barber observed.

The principled commitment of celebrated chefs like Dan Barber and the determination of area farmers like Regina Boling inspire us to join the local food revolution, to reject the industrial turkey and to encourage our local farmers to raise the heritage breeds.

*For references to heritage turkeys, go to [cenizojournal.com](http://cenizojournal.com) and click on this story.*



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# DESERT BURIALS ~

## Laid to Rest in Terlingua Ghost Town

by Danielle Gallo

It's said that the Indians believed the Big Bend to be the God's repository for all the leftovers of Creation, a sort of cosmic dumping ground for the terrestrial scraps and trimmings. This is felt most poignantly, perhaps, in Terlingua, where bizarrely shaped mountains tilt crazily over plains of yellow, red and blue clay, all eroded into crenellations like melting spumoni, and majestic spires and peaks rise like cathedrals adjacent to formations shaped like lumps of oatmeal dropped from a height.

Terlingua Ghost Town appears to have sprung full-grown from its paternal soil. The walls of ruined stone and adobe houses mimic the broken silhouettes of the surrounding mountains, and the difference between a path blazed a decade ago and one disused for a century is discernible only to a trained eye.

The Terlingua Cemetery sits on the edge of a small canyon or large arroyo, the last row of graves seeming in danger of being eroded into the void with the ancient cattle fence that delineates its boundary. It is situated on a low, broad flat just between the Ghost Town and FM 170, a treeless, unsheltered rectangle ablaze and nearly shadowless under full sun. Creosote encroaches on the graves like secondary markers, and the incessant keening of cicadas issues in a drone, giving a sense not so much of a mourning song as of the desert declaring that life goes on as usual, indifferent to the place or circumstance.

The count of graves in the cemetery varies, but general agreement numbers them at over 400. The graves are most-



Photo © 2010 Ara Gureghian

The Terlingua Cemetery, owned by Bill Ivey, is a repository of Big Bend history past and ongoing.

ly humble mounds of stone, or barrows, placed close together in meandering rows. The wooden crosses that marked the heads have succumbed in many cases to the elements and have been laid across the mounds, while others lean to one side or the other, trying to keep a grip in the rocky soil. There are a few tombs encased in stone, adobe and concrete, with niches built in to their heads or sides to hold candles and mementos, called grutas. These usually denote a person of means. Some of the graves are marked only by a gentle mound in the earth, often with a creosote bush at the head or foot, as though the desert is providing for the neglect of

humans.

Burial in the Big Bend was accomplished by digging a grave, burying the person and then constructing the rock mound or barrow over the site. Bodies were not simply covered by the stones, as the mounds may suggest. It is likely that the mounds were used to prevent animals such as wolves, which were common in the Big Bend until the turn of the century, from digging up the graves.

Glenn Willeford, in his book *Cemeteries and Funerary Practices in the Big Bend of Texas, 1850 to Present*, shares an interview he recorded with Manuel Granada, a Terlingua mining town resident. Granada says that the Chisos Mining Company

would furnish the casket, "fixed nice...with some kind of cloth around it." Miners would be pulled off their duties to dig the grave: "The graves were deep; they used bars to dig and then they had a big round rock they got from the arroyo or somewhere, and they would put the dirt in and tamp it with that rock."

The cemetery and the small church up on the hill in the Ghost Town, Santa Ines, are of course deeply intertwined. The church was named after the 12-year-old martyred Roman saint, who was burned at the stake for her faith, because ground was broken for its construction in 1903 on her feast day, Jan. 21. Today, the tiny sin-

gle room with its plank floor and beadboard ceiling faces a simple wooden altar with an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe hanging behind it. Rough wooden benches repose against the back wall, waiting to be called into use. The building is adobe on a stone foundation, with remnants of adobe plaster still clinging to the exposed block walls. Granada tells us that the casket would be carried by six men from the church to the cemetery, with the pallbearers being relieved at the halfway point due to the distance between the two.

The earliest recorded interment in the cemetery came a mere nine months after ground was broken for the church: H.S. Cook, a 34-year-old man, was laid to rest here on Sept. 11, 1903 – the same year that the Chisos Mining Company recorded its first recovery of mercury. The mine was the largest of nine operating at different times in the Big Bend and was one of the largest in the world through World War I. Its owner, Howard Perry, employed a doctor to check his mine workers regularly for mercury inhalation. Perry paid the doctor by taking one day's pay per month from each and every one of his employees. The presence of this doctor is the main reason why the Terlingua Cemetery boasts a much more complete record of burials than many of the other "official" cemeteries in the Big Bend, where attention to paperwork was somewhat lax due to distance and the lack of proper medical care.

There were between 1,500 and 2,500 residents of the area during the heyday of mercury mining, and the majority of

them lived and worked in and around Terlingua. Far from the cemetery being filled with miners who died in accidents or from mercury poisoning, there are only about 40 recorded accidents at the mine, not all of them fatal. There was only one case of mercury inhalation in the entire area, and it came from a small, privately owned mine.

One event that did add many graves, however, was the influenza pandemic of 1918. This was a world-wide infection which killed an estimated 675,000 Americans alone, 20 times the number of Americans killed in the Great War. By mid-October the epidemic was in Fort Stockton, but the *Alpine Avalanche* reported in its Oct. 31 edition that no cases had been found as yet in Terlingua.

That had already changed, though the *Avalanche* didn't know it. Robert L. Arthur, the Chisos Hotel's cook and a man with a reputation for imbibing, got to feeling under the weather. His illness went unremarked, assumed to be the effects of drink, until he fell into a coma several days after having been taken ill. He died several hours later, on Oct. 30, 1918 – the first Terlingua victim of the epidemic.

Arthur's body was removed immediately to Alpine in the hopes that this would prevent a spread of the infection, but within two weeks the entire community was in the throes of

influenza. Robert Cartledge, who with his brother Wayne managed the mining company for Perry, noted that there had been few graves in the Terlingua Cemetery prior to the epidemic, but that, "They sure filled that damned graveyard up." The toll was highest among the Mexican workers. It is estimated that over 2.8 percent of the Hispanic population of the Big Bend died from the disease, as opposed to less than 1 percent of the white population. There are reports of mass graves for victims of the influenza, but these have never been found to date in Terlingua.

Willeford reports in his book another interview with a Ter-

lingua resident, Maria Bermudez, whose father was a mine worker. She tells of the pre-burial practices in the south Big Bend:

"My daddy die about four or five...in the afternoon. The next day you have to bury... and they put an iron (on his stomach), so it wouldn't swell up, you know...the one they used to put on the stove, to heat and do ironing."

Bermudez also tells of how the funeral director in Alpine, a Mr. Livingston, would never come down to Terlingua for a death. She says that Mr. Cartledge or the manager of the Chisos Mining Store, Mr. G.E. Babbs, as well as the mining company doctor, would come

to see the body.

By 1947, Terlingua was empty and the mines shut down, but its repopulation in the years that followed keeps the cemetery part of the living history of the region. The Terlingua Cemetery is still used by residents of the town and surrounding area, so that new graves are added and old graves are maintained. The town turns out on Nov. 2, the Day of the Dead, for the annual ritual of cleaning, maintaining and decorating the graves in the traditional manner, with colorful silk flowers, bright stones, bottles and candles. Most of the new graves are similar in style to the old ones, with stone mounds or circles

and handmade markers. The Terlingua Cemetery, unlike most of the other Big Bend cemeteries, was never segregated, so the graves of Anglos mingle with those of Hispanic mine workers and settlers.

Unusually for the Big Bend, the graves face east rather than west, perhaps so the departed can, like the living, enjoy the nightly display of sunset colors on the Chisos Basin in the distance.



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The road,  
but an etching now,  
scribes the way still  
to that dusty relic  
locked against sunburned slopes.

Dirt Devils whispering by  
carry their cargo of grit and scorching wind,  
affording bantam relief  
from heat impossible to breathe.

Echoes of hard times,  
happy families  
and sad exodus  
ring the stillness.

Urged by curiosity and imagination,  
visions unlikely and distorted...abound.

Amused spirits  
stooped and bent  
from labors indescribable  
and weathered as the crosses standing sentinel  
over graves of citizens forgotten,  
follow and touch,  
living again...  
if only for a moment.

Heavy with nature's offering,  
trees of wild persimmons  
await a hand...familiar  
but lost to the irretrievable past,  
to harvest their gift.

Broken glass,  
once unclouded,  
now waxes opaque and purple,  
fashioning jewels  
never to be worn.

Wild river and stoic mountains,  
blowing winds of heat and bitter cold,  
scarring sands and rain unequalled,  
mentors all,  
urge this small scar to heal;  
to return to the land.

Adobe melting,  
iron rusting,  
wood in decay,  
SanVicente...good journey.

*Gary Cardwell*

## Terlingua Bones

Ground the color  
of bone holds  
men and monsters

No one saw the  
Reptile swim  
No one saw it  
Settle dead to  
The bottom of  
That shallow sea

Becoming the same  
ground I walk on

Terlingua's heyday  
of mercurial  
Life and death  
Played out on  
Boquillas dirt

holding crosses  
marking bones  
in this land of  
fallen stone

*Larry Millar*



## Booked Up at the Last Picture Show

The Royal is only a sign  
with two standing walls.

An energetic woman tends  
planters overflowing with red

blooms on the sidewalk  
in front, talks about math

and school administration,  
points out McMurtry's

bookstore scattered in four  
buildings around the square.

We have coffee at the Wildcat,  
two stocky farmers joke

about their golf games  
over Mexican omelets.

Out the plate glass window  
Sonny and Duane toss a sack

of money like a football as they  
play through the intersection,

wiry farmers and roughnecks  
ask if they'd heard of tackling.

The waitress tells us Sam the Lion's  
Pool hall is next door. It's now

a gift shop. She says the coach's  
house, where Sonny smiles

for a moment, is really  
over in Olney. At the corner

Sonny brushes back Billy's hair,  
and a real estate lady, who says

she is originally from Pennsylvania,  
tells us about the theatrical

performance next weekend.  
We browse through four stores

of books while a beat up Ford  
pickup chugs around the square

wondering where the dust has gone.  
The last thing we see is the Royal's sign

shrinking in the distance.

*Clarence Wolfshohl*



Photo courtesy Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas.

The three room adobe courthouse in the northwest corner of the present Jeff Davis County courthouse square.

# PRESIDIO COUNTY

*By Bob Miles*

Even today you can find old-timers in the Fort Davis area who are still upset by the 1885 election which moved the county seat of Presidio County to Marfa. The path to that controversial election was a winding one.

Presidio County was first created by the Texas Legislature in 1850. Due to the scarcity of settlements in the area and the presence of hostile Indians, the county was not organized. A second attempt in 1858 was again unsuccessful. In 1870, a third attempt was made and some county officials were named with the county seat at Fort Stockton, but things just seemed to fizzle out.

In 1875, Presidio County was finally successfully organized with Fort Davis as county seat. Presidio County then consisted of some 12,000 square miles of today's Presidio, Jeff Davis and Brewster counties and small portions of Culberson and Hudspeth counties.

If there had been an election naming Fort Davis the county seat, the records were lost or destroyed, which led to

## Presidio County

*Formed from Bexar County  
Created January 3, 1850  
Organized March 13, 1875*

*So named for the early  
"fortress garrisoned by soldiers"  
erected for the protection  
of the Big Bend missions.*

*County Seat  
Fort Davis, 1875  
Marfa, 1885*

- Texas Highway Department  
1936

problems years later. Fort Davis would have been the obvious choice, as it was the only settlements of any size in the new county.

A three-room adobe courthouse was constructed on land donated by Fort Davis merchant Whittaker Keesy in the northwest corner of the present Jeff Davis County courthouse square. Prisoners excavated an 18-by-20-by-8-foot cellar beneath the sheriff's office which

served to hold prisoners chained to the walls. One or more iron cells in the upstairs room held common drunks, female prisoners and less dangerous guests.

In 1882, Chinese workers of the Southern Pacific completed the railroad line from El Paso to Marfa. The railroad bypassed Fort Davis, either because the founding fathers there did not want the noise or, more likely, because of the difficulty and expense of establishing the route through the mountains.

As a town began to grow up around the Marfa water stop, John Dean, sometimes county attorney, acquired a section of land along the tracks. He and some other merchants and speculators began working to change the county seat to Marfa, still little more than a water stop and shipping depot for cattle. Dean maintained that no election had been held to make Fort Davis the county seat and, as no records existed to the contrary, an election was necessary.

The election was held on July 14, 1885. The form of the

ballots is the basis of most of the old-timer's resentment, yet that, too, remains controversial. According to most accounts, County Judge J. H. Slaughter specified the ballots would read "For removal to the town of Marfa" with a blank provided for voters to check and "For remaining at Fort Davis" was to be written or printed on each ticket voted. Those wishing to keep the county seat in Fort Davis had to write it in.

Cecilia Thompson supports this version in her *History of Marfa and Presidio County, Texas*, whereas Lucy Miller Jacobson and Mildred Bloys Nored in their *Jeff Davis County, Texas* book say there is no foundation for this legend.

There was also discussion at the time that Dean had bought votes for the move, among other improprieties. The vote was 391 for moving to Marfa and 302 for remaining in Fort Davis. The county records were soon removed to Marfa, some say in the middle of the night. Legal wranglings went on for a time, although most were soon settled.

A new courthouse was built in Marfa in 1885 (on some of Dean's land) and, although Brewster and Jeff Davis counties formed as separate counties in 1887, those counties were expected to pay a share of the courthouse. (Since it had taken a while for the formation of the new counties to be approved by the legislature, and they were part of Presidio County when the courthouse was built, Brewster and Jeff Davis were expected to help pay for the building). The resulting lawsuits continued in the courts for many years, but ultimately the two counties were required to pay their share.

And some are still upset about it, not altogether in jest.



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# Photo Essay

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by *Barbara Richerson*

Working as a photographer for Sul Ross State University provided so many photo ops. My students and I covered just about everything connected with

the university. We shot sports, theater productions, university events and classes and labs and photographed a number of well-known people along the way. In the 80s and 90s, the job

was accomplished with Nikon manual cameras and black and white lab work. Starting in 2003, we used Canon digital cameras and Adobe Photoshop. The object was to get the picture that

told the story and sparked an interest in the viewer. Often we needed to tell the story with a single picture.

Here are some of the shots I got along the way.



Shooting a hot air balloon rally is exhilarating. I like to get there as the sun rises and walk around and around as the crews inflate the balloons and get them in the air. They are huge and beautiful, fragile but powerful, and there are so many views to catch. One of my favorites is shooting through the opening, sometimes getting the burst of flame, sometimes a silhouette of the crew working. Looking for that one perfect shot drives me on, year by year.



In the frenzy of covering the Triathlon at Sul Ross and catching the long line of runners, the exhausted bicyclers and the splashing of the swimmers, I almost overlooked the rows of trophies, awaiting their tired, but happy, owners.



At Sul Ross State University, we have a lot of sports teams, and we try to photograph most of the games. Our goal in shooting is to catch a great action shot, whatever the sport, and the key is to have the ball in the picture. My students and I put a lot of effort into perfecting our reflexes to catch that ball. However, as this photo illustrates, there are other views to notice, like the backlit hair of these softball players.



Photo by John Stough

Mule Train Packer, an intrepid hiker, and the Window.

# FALL ... TWO THOUSAND AND NINE

By *Bill Stough*

Mother overheard Brother John and Brother Bill talking one day about how it would be good to make a trip to the Big Bend. Brother Bill spent five or six years out there in an earlier era, but Brother John had never been to the Big Bend. He wanted to see that country and the Marfa Lights and add a notch to his "hiking stick" which already boasted the Appalachian Trail from bottom to top and Eastern Canadian wilderness pathways. Brother Bill figured it would be good to be on the road, wear a cowboy hat, eat some real Tex-Mex and try to remember...faded memories so long out of focus they seem more like lonely lies. Then one day in the fall of 2009:

We took off on an Old Coots' loop around West Texas. Heading west out of Corsicana on Texas 22 early of a morning more like 20 year olds than like being on the very brink of three score and 10. We loaded a little bitty rent car with camping and hiking things and blood pressure pills. Sun barely up behind us.

Brother John is a backpacker, as lean and tough as the last of the Mohicans, who has the entire Appalachian Trail and most of French-speaking Canada heading his bona fides and is planning to walk the West Coast from Méjico to Canada pretty soon.

I'm a used-to-be-cowboy, mule train packer and pencil pusher and currently a potbellied layabout. Between us, we have a respectable amount of been there, done that. As has been said in a few smoky ol' bars, "This ain't their first rodeo."

About 45 minutes out from Corsicana, and we are at Hillsboro where we cross I-35 and just stay on 22. Hillsboro, population not so very many, was where we got lost for the first time on the first day.

Back on 22, we ease on west. Morning Coffee time when we get to Hamilton, and we pull into a little convenience store on a corner 'cross from the Courthouse. Place serves everything from Danish to tacos to pizza to chili

cheese dogs to deer jerky. There's a showcase at the front of the store that displays tacky little doo-dads, cigarette lighters with rhinestones, martial arts many-bladed weapons and Elvis dolls.

In a corner by the front window is the dining section furnished with two tables and a sign that reads "No Smoking between 11 and 12." The lady behind the counter says she manages two other stores but likes this one best because it has no beer sales. Maybe she thinks beer drinkers are worse than smokers. I guess both need lots of space.

We used to live in Goldthwaite when we were just kiddos. So we ate lunch there and told the stories about those times that our folks had told us about. War time stuff as in WWII, and we remember troops marching past our house on the road out of town. Nearly everything was rationed for the war effort, i.e. shoes, tires, gasoline and such and how folks shared and pitched in to help when someone needed a little more...like when Brother Bill swallowed

a penny one morning and the local Doc said Fort Worth had the only Doc with the tools to get it out and Brother Bill was just a-choking and a-choking. So neighbors gave them gas cards and a good spare tire or two and the next-door family took care of Brother John while the folks drove the better part of the day and night getting to the Cowtown hospital around 1 a.m.

We looked when we went through San Saba but didn't see Tommy Lee Jones nor nary a mention of him.

Connected with U.S. 377 South at Mason and on down to Junction...got lost for the second time on the first day. Junction is not much bigger than Hillsboro. Rode around muttering about road signage for awhile and found 377 again.

By this time, we were in the heart of "Hey, get yore tag an' let's go shoot a ol' deer" country...last time I saw so much camouflage was in Iraq. Camou hats, boots, britches, gun stocks, 4x4s, four-wheelers, deer feeders, deer stands,

butcher shops specializin' in dressin' deer and makin' camouflage deer sausage.

Afternoon Coffee Time when we get to Rocksprings. Angora goats feed like deer so there are bunches of both in and near Rocksprings. Found only one open coffee shop and went in ordering pie and a cup of joe. Plenty of pie but no joe. The ol' boy says if we ain't in a hurry, he'll make some. The only time anybody was ever in a hurry in Rocksprings was when Rancher Jake was late for the kick-off at an Angoras' football game. We sit down at the smaller of the two tables and pass the time reading signs on the wall. Brother John finds the Angora Football Team Game Schedule poster on the wall. Headline on the schedule was "HIGH EXPECTATIONS...GO ANGORAS...NO EXCUSES." But that's OK because those ol' kids will have plenty chances to fail as time goes by...

Then on down to Del Rio, Hwy. 90 and an Amistad Lake campground. Cold, windy night.

Before they "damned" the Devils River, Vernon and me camped and fished on the banks of what was then the prettiest West Texas river ever. Now it's under water for the most part where we waded and fried our catch and slept on the ground. But before, it was the country where "Zapata" was filmed with Brando and Quinn and before that the Goat Gland Doctor lived in Del Rio and broadcast literally to the world from Acuña on the Méjico side of the Rio Grande. Some of *No Country for Old Men* looked like it was filmed downtown but not the part with Tommy Lee.

For the time being, Del Rio is a Border Patrol town. They check you out coming and going at little roadside outposts where they have drug dogs, guns and a coffee pot. They make sure no terrorist, smuggler or folk wanting to work breach the frontier before the Wall is completed. The agents look like they are about 12 years old packing cap pistols. They are all colors and genders. They say, in low tones, "Where ya coming from? Where ya going?" Are ya a U.S.

citizen? Have nice day!" Like ol' Dangerfield, they don't get no respect.

Next morning we found Jim and Holly's beer joint, pool hall and café open in Comstock. They were both there when we went in so we all said our mornin's and so forth and Holly asked what was y'all needin' and Brother Bill said coffee. Holly said the pot is right there he'p yo'self.

After awhile Holly asked if we needed breakfast. Well, we did, and she sat us down at a kitchen table and served up the usual to me. Brother John got his with chorizo, a Mexican thing that I talked him into. It was Jim that told him what it was made of...pig lips and ears. Brother John said later he was glad to have eaten the stuff but that once was enough since it took several days to get past it.

We chatted with Jim since Holly fixed his breakfast as well and sat him down at the table with us. We speculated on where all the horny toads and javelinas had gotten off to. Consensus was poison (acid rain, lead and so on) and a cold spell that froze the baby pigs. Jim said a lot of cross-country bicyclers came by looking pretty wore out and causing pickup truck drivers to get put out 'cause the bicycles tended to hog the road, especially when pedaling in packs. Then we said our so longs and so forth and headed on to Marathon... Gateway to the Big Bend National Park.

By this time the lies were coming back to me. Shared a few with Brother John such as stacking four truck inner tubes on top of a red VW Beetle and leaving Alpine...looked like big ol' licorice doughnuts tied to the roof...and getting to Lajitas, lashing 'em up like a flat diamond and then floating down the Rio Grande through Santa Elena Canyon.

We had a choice of two filling stations in Marathon, and both were in spitting distance of each other. I choose the one with the three hands sitting on the stoop out front. Pulled up to the pump, got out and one of the hands said, "No gas. Don't work." I was glad they didn't have to get up. Went next door and filled up.

Drove on up to the Basin Campground and pitched the tent. I used to guide trail rides out of the Basin to the South Rim and to the Window, so I spent some time just looking to see if I could see any changes...and there was one. Our corral and bunk house/kitchen/tack room was gone. No trace. Those times erased from the face of the Chisos. Told Brother John the lie about the time Shorty bucked me off in the middle of a bunch of dudes and made me famous.

We found the javelinas that Comstock Jim speculated had all been killed off. They were rooting around the campground oblivious to the tourists. Fat little fellers, and they cared not the least when people in short pants took javelina digital pictures. Suppose the next time anyone sees a horny toad, it will be a fossil.

Next to our tent was a big "bear box" made out of iron with a door latch that even beings with opposing thumbs found difficult to open. The sign said to put all your stuff and groceries in the box so bears would not come around and eat you up in a feeding frenzy. Brother John slept in the tent. I slept in the car on account of the night was cold – and it was sort of bear proof.

Up before daylight and after Brother John showed me how to pack my pack for easy backpacking, we hiked to the South Rim trailhead. The sign said watch out for bears and panthers...as in big ol' socially challenged mountain lions that enjoyed a hiker from time to time. Sign said if one or both of them were to get after you, you were supposed to appear big and act like an idjit waving your arms and praying by shouting. This would cause the critters to run over each other getting away. But if they don't, you need to fight back...as long as you can. Otherwise, you are supposed to report the encounter to a ranger who will mention it that night at the campfire talk. Also don't let your children out of your sight for even a minute. Kinda like

continued on page 26

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# Voices of the BIG BEND

*Jim Glendinning recreates some of his popular radio interviews from "Voices of the Big Bend," an original production of KRTS, Marfa Public Radio, which is broadcast throughout the region at 93.5 FM.*

*by Jim Glendinning*

## TODD JAGGER

Musician, photographer and business entrepreneur Todd Jagger was born on Nov. 9, 1956 in Washington, D.C. to Mavis and Sid Jagger. Three sisters completed the family. His father was assistant director of the Urban Renewal Agency, and the family lived in Washington until 1961. Early exposure to music started when he borrowed his sisters' 45s and heard rhythm and blues for the first time. He took piano lessons and went to his first Led Zeppelin concert when he was 12. This was the 60s; there was lots of music.

His father moved to Austin and sold real estate. Here Todd went to elementary school, junior high and high school. He started playing with garage bands, "not good but fun," and studied guitar with the renowned Wayne Wood for two years – an experience he recalls with pride.

In 1975, through friends, he met Jimmy Ray Harrell, an intuitive matching of talent which continues today. They started playing their style of music ("throwback music") part country, part blues, influenced by Bob Wills among others. Todd played mandolin, Jimmy Ray guitar, piano and accordion. Todd finished his college education in 1981 at Trinity University in San Antonio with a B.A. in Communications.

Of equal interest to him as music was his photography, which he practiced from an early age. In his younger days, it was his first interest, and he showed good talent. A collection of his photographs are in the Harry Ransom

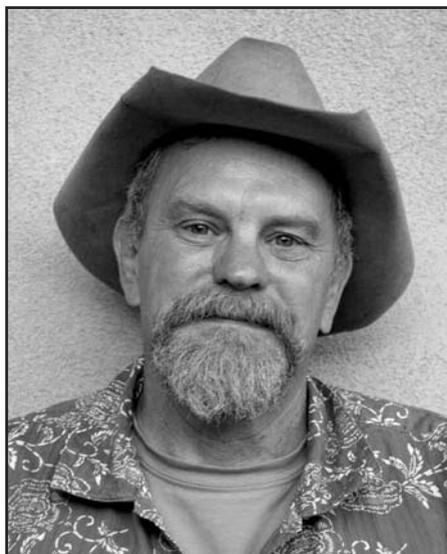


Photo by Jim Glendinning

**TODD JAGGER**  
Fort Davis

Collection at the University of Texas, Austin, the largest photograph collection in the world. His images have appeared in a *National Geographic* book and in national magazines. Inspired by Ansel Adams, his pictures are of border landscapes in Big Bend and beyond. He still carries his camera wherever he goes.

Todd married at age 19 and had a daughter, Charis, born in 1980, and a son, Caleb, born in 1983. There was a second marriage and divorce in the late 80s, and then in 1993 he met Anjela Garcia, with whom he lives in their home in the Davis Mountains.

After a stint with the Austin Lounge



Photo by Jim Glendinning

**RICK RUIZ**  
Alpine

Lizards in 1990, he was ready to leave Austin. In 1991 he moved to Big Bend and got active in business ventures and real estate. He launched the Harvest Moon & Tunes Festival in Fort Davis from 1993 to 1995. There was great music, including the yet-to-be discovered Dixie Chicks, but it was ahead of its time. He also opened a gelateria and a coffee shop and established Overland (1996), the first Internet service provider in the Big Bend.

"Border Blast," hosted by Todd and Jimmy is one of the longest running music shows on Marfa Public Radio. This past August, he and Jimmy Ray



Photo by Jim Glendinning

**LUCY FERGUSON**  
Presidio

organized a Folk Alliance event in Marfa for musicians, which they will repeat. The Border Blasters' (2009) CD is selling well. "Jimmy Ray makes me a better musician," Todd says. "Besides, "we mesh well and have fun."

## RICK RUIZ

"Our mission is to provide dynamic musical performances that are marked by quality and diversity, are driven by passion and are at the service of our customers/audience." So reads the Web page of Grupo de la Paz, an Alpine band headed by Rick Ruiz, known for

many years as Father Rick.

Ricardo (Rick) Ruiz was born in El Paso on Sept. 1, 1966. His father, Manuel, was a silver smith and jeweler, and his mother Julia ran the household of eight children, of whom Rick was the second youngest. The family was musical; an old upright piano graced the parlor, and one brother played cello. Rick's early music inclinations were developed in elementary school choir, and he started piano lessons at age 12. He loved to dance, and drumming was his first musical choice.

Elementary school right on the Mexico border line was followed by Eastwood High School where Rick played soccer. His musical interests remained strong. In his senior year at high school, Rick was active in his church's youth group. After high school he entered the University of Texas, El Paso, while he lived at St. Charles Seminary. He graduated in 1988 with a B.A. in philosophy.

A scholarship to The University of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary, north of Chicago was the next move. He loved the change to a large city with plentiful music performances. At the university Rick directed music groups. He earned his Master of Divinity and was ordained in 1992. Returning to El Paso, he was named associate pastor at St. Pius X Church, his first assignment. His next posting was to Alpine.

He served the area of Alpine, Marathon and Fort Davis for three years as associate pastor under Father Nam Kim and quickly became hugely popular. He could listen, and he could connect with people. His smile was infectious. In 1997 Father Nam Kim left, and Father Rick took over. His band, Mariachi de la Paz, which he founded at this time, was proving popular. After eight years as a priest came the awareness that the calling of the priesthood was no longer so strong. What had been a hobby, playing music, was now a passion. This might have put him at odds with his

church, but from his supportive congregation to the sympathetic bishop, his departure from the priesthood in 2005 was made easier.

Talking five years later about this radical change, Rick reflects on his departure from the priesthood. Playing music simply became his number one objective, he says, without going into details. He has widened the band's repertoire to Tejano, country and rock and added band members. The group today comprises his nephew Jimmy on percussion, accomplished guitarist Tony Lujan from Alpine and, if required, a keyboard player from Ojinaga, Mayito Palomino.

Rick seems at ease having left the church's security for an independent life as a working musician and DJ. "I welcome change: I have a foot in both worlds, and I'm doing what I love."

#### LUCY FERGUSON

Lucy McBride was born on a farm in Cresco, Iowa on June 16, 1967, the youngest of seven girls out of a total of 12 children. Her father Anthony was a farmer who later drove the school bus and played steel guitar. He still plays today at age 88. Lucy remembers singing at age 5 while doing the dishes and also singing in public with her sisters.

Lucy generally missed out on family jam sessions, being deemed too young. She also usually hung out with boys, and perhaps it was these factors which caused her to pick trombone, traditionally a boy's instrument, and compete to gain attention. She liked being better than boys. From the fifth grade she knew she wanted to be a band director. She was well taught at the local high school, from which she graduated in 1985, in band, choir and theater and went on to the University of Northern Iowa to continue her music studies.

There she met a "frisky Texan" from Garland called John Ferguson who was also studying music and played trumpet. John graduated

ahead of her, but they continued dating over the phone until they married in June 1989, shortly after her graduation. There followed intense canvassing to find two jobs in music in the same place. Presidio fell into their laps, and she describes it as a quick and easy hire. Since then they both have been entirely comfortable in Presidio. She loves the place and says "my antifreeze is gone." Their two children, Max and Molly, bilingual in Spanish and English, are equally at home there.

Climate and cultural differences have had little effect on the musical progress of Lucy and John. They started the Resonators in 2004 with Tony Lujan and Terry Davidson plus a drummer. With some changes they have continued, usually managing to play every weekend. Their conjunto music is particularly popular at Hispanic events, but their repertoire is much broader, and to hear the nine-person band in full swing with Lucy's trombone and John's trumpet predominating is something to remember.

At Presidio Middle School Lucy's progress has been equally productive. Lucy has energized her students and taught them well. Recent productions included a jazz concert at a dinner theater event, when 300 parents and friends turned up. She also staged with her music students *The Pirates of Penzance*, and "they loved doing it."

Clearly she is having success. In June 2010 she was awarded the Golden Apple Award for her work ("for the teacher who goes above and beyond"). John is equally active at school and also in local politics (he previously was mayor).

From the fields of Iowa to the banks of the Rio Grande, this music talent has travelled well.



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# The Fifth Season ~ Rain, Sex and Hope

by *Cathryn A. Hoyt*

Spring, summer, fall and winter. In most parts of the country, people settle for four seasons. Here in the Chihuahuan Desert region, we dream, hope and talk constantly about our fifth season – the rainy season. Local wags will tell you that the fifth season starts on July 4th – with a crash of thunder, a gust of wind and a torrential downpour that causes Independence Day celebrants to scurry for cover and ranchers to sigh in relief.

The sighs of relief are due to the fact that, in the Chihuahuan Desert, up to 75 percent of our annual precipitation falls in the summer months. This gift from the heavens results in a frenzy of friskiness as our plant and animal neighbors get on with the business of life.

The first hard rain of the season brings out thousands of fuzzy, bright red velvet mites. They emerge from the soil with only one goal in mind – find a mate. The male velvet mite does most of the work in this timeless dance. He's a gardener by nature, creating a "sperm garden" on small bits of plant material. But gardens need admirers, so he lays an elaborate silk pathway that radiates out from his sperm garden. If a female encounters the path and finds it appropriately enticing, she'll follow it to the sperm deposit and sit in the sperm, thus impregnating herself.

The female velvet mite can lay up to 100,000 eggs. The larvae from these eggs attach themselves to grasshoppers, beetles, butterflies and other arthropods. They get their nutrients by sucking the juices out of their unlucky hosts. After the larvae mature, they return to the soil, where they feed on insect and snail eggs and other tiny arthropods – until the first hard rain of next year, when they emerge to start the cycle all over again.

The rumble of thunder can bring another desert inhabitant to the surface for a frenzy of breeding and feeding. The small spadefoot toad spends most of the year buried in the ground where it can avoid the hot and dry conditions of the desert surface. But vibrations caused by thunder indicate to the toad that moist conditions exist, and the toads begin to emerge in mass. The males seek temporary pools and puddles of water where they immediately send up a deafening breeding chorus, a come-hither call for any female within a half-mile radius.

After breeding, the female lays 3,000 to 5,000 eggs at a time, and the race for survival begins. The eggs must hatch and the larvae must pass through the aquatic tadpole stage before their puddle of water dries up under the heat of the desert sun. Eggs typically hatch in about 36 hours,



Photo by Cathryn Hoyt

Male two-tailed swallowtails gather sodium from rain puddles that they pass on to females during mating.

and the tadpoles metamorphose into juveniles within eight to 10 days of hatching.

While on the surface, the spadefoot toads feed on protein-rich insects that swarm with the coming of the rains. A few good meals increase the fat supplies of the toad enough to allow them to burrow deep into the desert soil and patiently await the thunder of the next rainy season.

Other creatures are drawn to the damp soil left behind by a passing thunderstorm. Male butterflies – especially swallowtails, sulphurs and tiny blues – gather in masses at damp patches of earth, sipping the salts dissolved by the rainwater. If disturbed, they'll burst into the air, swirling around the puddle and eventually returning to continue their feast.

This behavior, known as puddling, is believed to enhance the attractiveness of the male and the reproduction success of the female butterflies. Females lose a lot of sodium during the egg-laying process. But they're too busy nectaring and laying eggs to replace it by spending time hanging around the nearest mud puddle sipping sodium. Instead, they compensate for the loss of minerals by receiving a "nuptial gift" of sodium from the male during mating.

Of course, insects and toads aren't the only ones to feel a little frisky during the rainy season. Summer rains bring out the very best in our

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**FARMERS**



Photo by Cathryn Hoyt

Ferns that appeared brown and dead during the summer suddenly abound, green and glorious among the rocks.

desert plants – especially the ferns. Ferns aren't usually the first thing that you think of when someone mentions desert plants, but they should be. Take a peak along rocky cliff faces that face north or east. Seek out shady canyons or explore the cracks between large rocks. You're sure to find one of the 78 species of ferns that calls the desert home.

For most of the year, our xeric-adapted ferns may not look like much. In fact, they'll probably look dead. Gone. A victim of Mother Nature. Curled tightly in upon themselves, the fronds are brown and crispy. Dry as the desert itself.

But give the ferns a little water and the fronds miraculously come to life – often unfurling and turning green overnight. This ability to resurrect from the (seemingly) dead is one of those wonderful adaptations that makes ferns so successful. Special cells on the upper surface of the fern's frond absorb water when it's available and collapse (causing the fern to curl) as conditions become drier.

Most plants can lose about 25 percent of their moisture content before they begin to wilt

and need water. The amazing ferns? They can lose up to 94 percent of their water content while waiting patiently for the next rain.

Some plants, according to old wives' tales, can even be used to predict the beginning of the rainy season. The cenizo, often called the barometer bush, is said to put on a stunning display of purple to pink blossoms to announce the coming of the rainy season. Not so fast, say the experts. Cenizo are most likely to bloom immediately after a rain in response to the high humidity and increased soil moisture. Although – those same experts will admit – the cenizo can bloom in response to high humidity even before the rains begin. So the old wives aren't totally misleading us.

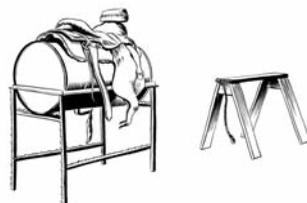
In the spring, hundreds of visitors arrive at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center having just traveled through the glorious bluebonnets and paintbrushes of Central Texas. The golden browns of our winter-dry grasses don't impress them. In fact, they feel bad for us. "We're so sorry," they say, "that you're having such a terrible drought." It takes a golden

tongue to convince them to come back in the summer when the rains bring out the very best of our wildflowers.

Scarlet bouvardia and yellowbells splash the rocky hill-sides with yellow and brilliant red flowers framed by deep green leaves. The beebrush, with its insignificant white blossoms, fills the canyons with the most exquisite fragrance on still summer nights.

But shrubs, while showy, aren't our only wildflowers. The sunset-orange of a flameflower or the tangle of tiny pink spiderlings and sky-blue morning glories will question your whole sense of what a "natural color" really is.

Invite a friend to visit the Chihuahuan Desert region in August, and they're likely to tell you that you're nuts. Visit a desert in the summer? No way. But if you can convince them that our fifth season is the most spectacular, they're likely to never go home.



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# Down on the Rio Grande ~ THE JOHNSON RANCH

by Glenn Willeford

Rio Grande. The name itself intrigues. Actor John Wayne liked it so much, he did a movie along the watercourse that wends through our arid, mountainous Texas and New Mexico terrain (Rio Grande, 1950). In the early 1900s, when many families, both Anglo and Hispanic, resided in the Big Bend region, the desert expanses seemed sonorous and enchanting yet somehow foreboding and surreal. Mystery and surprise loomed around every bend.

The “Big Loop” on the Rio, 16 miles downriver from Castolón, is no exception. There, in Texas’ Big Bend National Park, overlooking a currently desolate stretch of Mexico, reposes the Johnson Ranch Site. Now a ruin, it was once the hub of business activity and acculturation along that span of the “Great River.”

Decided first to the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad by the State of Texas, Section 36 Block 16 (1006.3 acres) was purchased by Dr. J.A. Hardy of Alpine on Jan. 3, 1916. In Sept. 1922, M.L. Hopson obtained the acreage then leased it under the condition that a store or “commissary” building be erected “in connection with the candlewax factory just opposite ...in Mexico.” But, no permanent structures were built until ownership passed to Kentuckian G.N. Graddy (rhymes with “laddie”) in 1924.

Graddy soon began to construct an 80-foot-by-40-foot adobe building on the flat above the river plain. When completed, the enormous structure contained a commissary, or store, at the west end, three or four rooms along the north side and a master bedroom on the east. Between all these was a 20-foot-by-40-foot roofed, screened-in porch. The porch was to become famous



Photo courtesy Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas.

An aerial shot of the Johnson Ranch along the banks of the Rio Grande.

over the years as a social gathering place.

Mr. Graddy had intended to raise tobacco on the irrigable plain below the house. When that failed due to the perennial problem of getting a crop from there to market, he tried watermelons. He became well known for loading his new Buick with melons and driving along the River Road selling the delicacies. Finding that venture unprofitable, the Kentuckian sold out and moved to El Paso in the summer of 1927.

Elmo and Ada Morris Johnson of San Antonio and Sonora took over. Johnson wished to become a gentleman cotton farmer. An irrigation pump was installed beside the river. All seemed to be going well when the pink boll worm showed up in 1928. Johnson then experimented with diverse crops including onions, flowers (for their seeds), various melons and so forth. He also raised a 15-acre truck garden that may have been his most profitable agricultural endeavor, for families and miners – especially miners, who had no time to garden, had to be fed. And the distance to those markets was tenable.

Johnson, striving to survive,

also toyed with tourism. The Great Depression happened along late in 1929. He more or less manipulated the Depression-era Works Progress Administration (WPA) into building a large dormitory-type building about a quarter-mile upstream, intending all along to utilize it for a tourist court. “The WPA building” didn’t work out either. Guests thought it too remote and opted to stay at Johnson’s headquarters.

With the able assistance of photojournalist W.D. Smithers, Johnson got the U.S. Army Air Corps to designate the ranch as an official landing field. Johnson, a jack of all trades, mounted a grader and scratched out an airstrip. The airstrip was quickly approved, and the Army sent in a truck loaded with folding cots and mattresses, not to mention a Signal Corps person and radio. Both Johnson and Smithers were hired as official “border watchers” by the government.

The cots sometimes served as beds for Army aviators. Mostly, fee-paying visitors used them. Johnson’s porch served its purpose well, and the Rio Grande provided both fishing and a fine, willow-sequestered swimming hole.

A guest register was kept on a table within the porch. Thought not mandatory, signing-in was encouraged. Today, maintained in the Archives of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University, the Johnson’s “Ranch Guest Register” remains one of the best remaining primary-source records of human activity in the Big Bend.

Mexicans who crossed regularly and attended Johnson’s for trading purposes included Luis Alonzo (who also worked for Johnson), Feliz Aguilar, Manuel Vizcaino, Mauricio Garcia, Torobio Castro, A. Acosta, Severino Acosta, Reyes Acosta, Ricardo Rodriguez and José Perches. Hispanics living on the Texas side, los Iniguez, Baeza and Holguin, as well as others, often stopped by. All these contacts contributed to the process of acculturation along the Rio Grande border. Even more important was the school provided by Johnson. Not all of the pupils were of Hispanic descent. Stanley and Wilborn, sons of apiculturist Edith Blaine Elliott, attended Johnson Ranch School.

In addition to thousands of regulars stopping in over the years, many famous and otherwise noteworthy individuals visited the ranch. Most of them registered. One who did not was aviatrix Amelia Earhart. In July 1936, June Elkins, a 10 year old, was at the ranch when a sleek black biplane set down. Out of the cockpit stepped Earhart and a handsome fellow, not her husband George Putnam. Someone snapped a photograph, now lost. The two fliers swam in the river and spent the night on the spacious porch. A year later, Earhart disappeared over the Pacific while attempting to reach Howland Island.

The ranch was taken over by the national park in 1943, but between the two world wars many of the famous and

soon-to-be famous signed its register.

These included Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright, then commandant at Fort Clark, Texas, and later a hero at Corregidor after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On Aug. 14, 1945, now liberated from a Japanese POW camp after four years, Wainwright and Gen. Douglas MacArthur accepted the Japanese surrender aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri.

Also at Johnson’s during that time were Major Nathan F. Twining, later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Maj. J.R. Kane, who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for leading the airborne bombing raid on the Ploesti, Rumania oilfields in August 1943.

And there were many U.S. Army fliers in the 30s who landed at Johnson’s and spent the night during flights between San Antonio and El Paso. One trick they all enjoyed was flying their DeHavilland DH-4 biplanes between the points of Mule Ears Peaks. Others flew down and out Santa Elena Canyon. Some of them, including Lt. (later USAF Major Gen.) William L. Kennedy and Lt. (later Col.) John Egan, annually returned for hiking excursions until war broke out on Dec. 7, 1941.

Other important visitors in the late 30s included sculptor Gutzon Borglum of Mount Rushmore fame, novelist John Dos Passos and his wife and many more.

One signature from the 30s is especially fascinating. Of all people, “John Dillinger, Chicago” graces the register. Still under investigation, it is known that Dillinger was at large during the time of the signature. When he broke jail at Crown

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## Coyote and the Rio Grande

by Marie French

*The Rio Grande – a river in constant flux from high waters to low, a river of myth and a river of love. The stories of the Rio Grande started a long, long time ago with a people that roamed the region before these wild lands became settled. This legend is an adaptation of a Mescalero Apache tale. Many Native Americans used stories to explain why things happened. The stories also served as a map through the territories. Each story explained water holes, safe places to sleep or the places that would become familiar as passed down from generation to generation, thus forging the way for each generation.*

One day Coyote was walking along the banks of a dried up arroyo in Far West Texas close to Mexico. It was the end of the summer. The land should be cooling, Coyote thought to himself. But instead the sun was beating down on his back, shining so brightly the leaves were singed on the desert willow trees, and the buzzards were flying overhead. Coyote felt hot and thirsty.

In his most desperate plea and prayer to the Creator, Coyote cried in his very dry and crusty voice, "Creator, please send me a cloud."

A cloud came just then and made shade for Coyote.

But Coyote was still not satisfied. Coyote was just still too darned hot in his opinion. In fact, he was still roasting, and that buzzard, well, he was still circling overhead, as if to remind Coyote that he would soon be his meal for the evening.

So, in Coyote's most desperate raspy voice he called to the Creator. "I would like many fluffy clouds," Coyote called to the heavens.

More fluffy clouds came overhead bumping into one another to shade Coyote. Coyote looked up and saw that not only was the sky covered in clouds, now they looked sort of stormy.

Unfortunately, Coyote was still not satisfied. He was panting from the heat, and he was still hot. So Coyote called out once again to the Creator. "How about some rain?" he panted.

The rain came in a downpour. A gully washer. The rain came down in buckets, drenching Coyote to the skin.

Now Coyote was feeling better, but he still wanted more. He wanted to make sure he never felt the heat of the West Texas sun on

his back without being able to find relief from the heat.

So again Coyote looked up to the heavens, and this time in his drenched state he cried, "Oh, how about a creek to put my feet in?" said Coyote.

So a creek sprang up beside him as the rains continued to pour down. Coyote then went into the creek to wade in the stream and cool off his feet.

Now feeling rather cocky he looked up to the heavens and said, "It needs to be deeper."

The creek then became a huge swirling river, full, rich with water and rapids. Coyote was swept over and over the rocks by the water. Choking on the water, Coyote nearly drowned. The river spat him up on the banks of what is now the Rio Grande.

Coyote appeared dead. The buzzard overhead finally thought he had his dinner. He landed by Coyote just as Coyote woke up. Coyote screamed "I am not dead!" to the buzzard.

The buzzard flew off in disgust.

Coyote got up and went to the banks of the river, shook off and looked into the Rio Grande River and said a prayer of thanksgiving. That is how the Rio Grande River began.

*Looking at this tale as a map, you can see it is the end of summer, and in Far West Texas we get our rain during the later part of the summer months. You can also see from this story that our weather is still hot. This story also tells us that it is very hot in the latter part of the day, the time of day when the clouds form and the rain comes.*

*This story map tells us that the rains come in gully washers, and that the arroyos can fill quickly with water. This would be a good traveling time for the Native Americans as water would be available. The buzzards are still around in this story, which tells us fall has not set in because buzzards are the harbinger of spring and summer, and they leave in the fall.*

*Lastly, most Native American myths have a lesson, and this one certainly does: don't be greedy, or you may not like the consequences.*

*So the next time you are traveling somewhere, make up your own travel myth, and pass it on. It is a wonderful way to remember the scenic landmarks and to remember the natural history of a place.*



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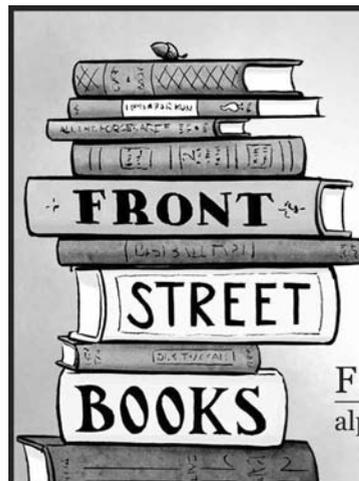
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a restaurant in Marfa

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not kitschy – all is done in tune with a sophisticated, but not stuffy, aesthetic. This well-envisioned garden is totally inviting.

This is no low maintenance garden. The very idea would be contradictory. This is a gardener's garden, and a staff of two part-time gardeners helps with the moving of earth, large plants and other heavy stuff with an enthusiasm for plants and gardens that echo that of the owner. The collaboration has produced some very lovely results.

While it would be a stretch to call it a xeriscape, the garden utilizes many qualities in keeping with that philosophy. The native soil in the beds was amended with a composted cotton burr material, which helps balance the need for good drainage with good water retention. The beds are well mulched and soaker, or "leaky," hoses are used for watering. This combination helps maximize the water that is used. As was mentioned earlier, placement of plants and combinations of plants with similar water requirements means watering can be done more wisely.

This wonderful, imaginative garden requires work, but the rewards are limitless!



Photo by Alice Stevens

The contrasting heights of the pots and the sizes and textures of the plants create a point of interest all year long.

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living in the big city.

The South Rim trail was a booger for me, but Brother John could hike it hoppin' on one foot. I saw lots of views that reminded me of old lies, and I spoke to Brother John regarding such stuff as leaning out of the saddle to grasp a lechuguilla stalk...usually about 7 feet long and narrow like a fishing pole. Then you'd ride up behind another guide and place this stick under his horse's tail. Of course the horse would clamp his tail down and crow hop around causing discomfort to the rider, fear to the dudes and mirth to us ol' rowdy cowhands. I mostly chose to tell him about these old lies when I wanted to catch my breath by sitting on a trail side rock or stump.

By and by, Brother John scooted on ahead to our campground, dropped his pack, came back and got my pack, dropped it off at the campground and skipped on another 3 or 4 miles to see the view of Méjico from the Rim, a true world class vista across a remote country. We used to say you could see all the way to next week. Guess we thought that was a pretty cute remark.

Since I had seen that panorama daily, in all kinds of weather, for a considerable time frame, I decided Brother John would enjoy contemplating such breathtaking beauty without being subjected to my lies.

I hiked on in the wilderness holding to my pint water bottle. On rounding a curve in the trail I met a man and woman. He checked me out and remarked to the lady "Now that's the way

to hike. Don't pack nuttin' but a little bottle of water."

At last, catching up with the packs, I put up the tent, flopped down next to the "bear box," and took a nap. My preference is to travel horseback.

We camped one night down at Boquillas, on the Rio Grande, on account of it was a good deal warmer than up in the Basin, and I wanted to wade across for a beer at the old cantina that saved me from dying of thirst in the days when I was accumulating lies. But we were cheated by the U.S. Government, as ever since 9/11 no one can cross at Boquillas because one might be a mad bomber/terrorist seeking to wipe the U.S.A. off the face of the earth or one could be a foreign merchant peddling illegally imported homemade souvenirs from Méjico to park visitors. I still like that old country, but

politicians and other terrorists have messed it up.

For the most part, that is how we passed the time out there, such as discovering that the Enlightened Bean Café in Presidio is an enjoyable and fit place to sit a spell and think about it all.

And in Lajitas Brother John was pretty disturbed by a Houston slick developer's goofy show of wealth n' waste in a land of scarce comfort and resources. Terlingua and Study Butte are now way over populated thriving communities of recluses who sport beards and wear picturesque beat up old cowboy hats. A similar tribe of river runners and aging hippies are tucked in amongst them. There's even a State of Texas Public Health Clinic open ever so often.

Why, the year I ran hair goats on 16 sections leased from the State, Terlingua was a ghost town with only a beer joint and a Saturday night dance hall still left semi-alive. One evening of Tooter, who ranched just to the northwest of me, got crossways because this hand was eyeing Mrs. Lolita Tooter in an impolite manner in between dances. Tooter went out to his pickup, got his hog leg from under the seat, went back in and pistol whipped the ol' boy knocking him to his knees.

One night I was down at Lajitas, just a trading post and ranch headquarters in those times, and some Mexicans came in with a pack string loaded with wax. Ben and Abe weighed it and paid the señors who traded the cash back for beer. Pretty soon they thought it would be all right to shoot up the place so they did. I hid under a bed and Ben and Abe got their pistols out

and also shot holes in the ceiling, and the señors mounted up and lit out across the river. It was a wonderful country back then, and my lies prove it.

My brother and I drove a good many miles in wide open spaces that 10-day week and talked about if there were any good places left to be a recluse with a HDTV that picked up pro football games all week and the National Finals Rodeo in December.

We motored out from Alpine one evening to look for the Marfa Lights at the old WWII airfield. There were a few lights way off in the emptiness just moving around a bit. Another guy there with some friends talked too loud saying the only Marfa Lights he ever saw wuz in town. Brother John tried to show him what to look for, but I ignored the Marfadite for being as beyond help as a three-legged dog. When I was in school at Sul Ross, we spent many early nights watching the lights that have no explanation. The airfield still had a hangar in those days. Now there's an elaborate vista point. The hangar fell down.

In the Guadalupe we hiked into McKittrick Canyon to check out the hunting cabin built up against the plateau's wall on New Mexico's southern border with Texas. Broad leaf trees and evergreens shaded the remains of what seemed to be better times when cell phones, shopping centers, fast food and so on and so forth had not yet crossed to the western bank of the Mississippi River. Brother John hiked up and over the plateau on the Tejas Trail to the Bowl and back down through Bear Canyon. I fiddled around down on the flat checking out the Devil's Hall just on the

chance it might be mine some day. The ruins of a Butterfield Stage station spoke of a life unlivable today, and the 1920s through the 1940s Frijole Ranch house spoke of the last days of pretty much open-range cowboying. There used to be windmills. Now there are solar panels and wind turbines.

Brother John and I share what seems to me like a black and white silent movie thrown up on the silver screen of West Texas...top of the Chihuahuan Desert, Big Bend, Rio Grande border stream, college town of Alpine, the Davis Mountains Buffalo soldier fort, Marfa Lights, white face cattle, the high lonesome Guadalupe...just flickering away slower and slower.



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Point, Indiana, on March 3, 1934, he discouraged one of his fellow escapees from stealing an overcoat because "where we're going, you won't be needing it."

Rumor has it that some of the Dillinger gang stayed at a tourist court in Balmorhea about the same time. Why

would Dillinger have signed? Possibly to make the FBI think he had slipped into Mexico. Unfortunately for him, he didn't. Instead, the man went back home to Chicago where he was killed by FBI agents on July 22. The real story on Dillinger may never be known.

What is known is that the Big Bend of Texas continues to be, as it has been for centuries, endlessly fascinating.



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## Trans-Pecos Trivia

by Charles Angell

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- The bullet ant of Nicaragua has what is considered to be the most painful bite/sting of all insects. What insect local to our region possesses what is thought by many to be the second most painful?
  - Harvester ant
  - Africanized honeybee
  - Tarantula hawk wasp
  - Giant desert centipede
- The invasive salt cedar (tamarisk) tree has had several species of devouring beetle tested against it in attempts to control and/or eliminate it. Which of the following countries has NOT had its native beetle brought in for this effort?
  - Uzbekistan
  - Greece
  - China
  - Djibouti
- The Big Bend quonker, named for the sound it makes, is what type of insect?
  - Katydid
  - Beetle
  - Cricket
  - Grasshopper
- Texas is the country's number one butterfly state, with over 500 species recorded. How many species have been recorded just in Big Bend National Park?
  - 95
  - 124
  - 140
  - over 165
- The velvet ant, a fuzzy red or white colored insect that scurries along the ground, is actually not an ant but what species of insect?
  - Wasp
  - Millipede
  - Mite
  - Honeybee

**Bonus:** Which above named insect is so aggressive in hunting it has been known to even attack and feed on small reptiles?

Answers: 1-c, 2-d, 3-a, 4-d, 5-a, Bonus: Bonus: Giant Desert Centipede

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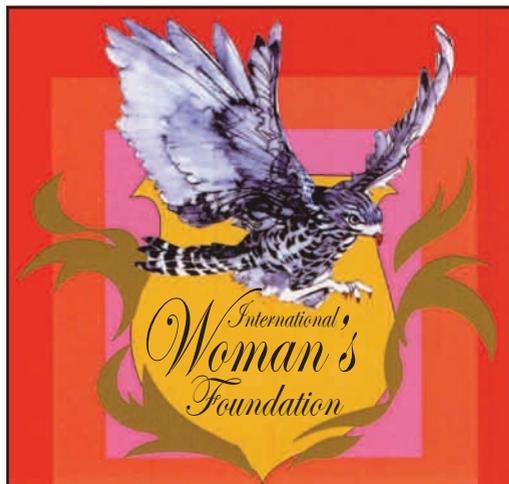
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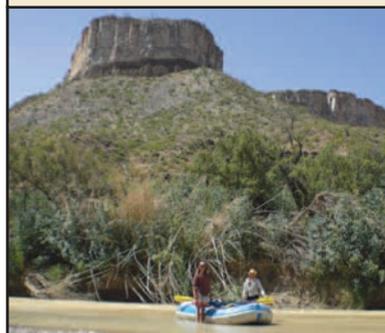


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