

# **Panhandle-Plains Historical Review**

## **XCI 2020**

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## Director's Comments

The past several months have been an unprecedented time in our recent history and created challenges for our society as well as the museum. I have been amazed at initiative of the museum staff and their ability to think creatively and get the museum up and running in a social distancing world. Due to COVID-19, PPHM closed their doors in early March and reopened to the public at reduced capacity after Memorial Day. Below are some of the projects staff and volunteers worked on during this time.

**Collecting Experiences:** Through the Research Center, the Panhandle community has the opportunity to ensure that future generations understand our COVID-19 experiences. PPHM set up a page on our website encouraging Panhandle residents to submit written, photographic or video accounts of thoughts and experiences during the pandemic. These could be essays, journals, or other narratives, describing the day-to-day activities, reaction to local and national events, and thoughts on the future. So far, we have received over 65 text documents and two videos and we are continuing to collect.

**#PPHMATHOME:** Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum Outreach staff decided if the museum can't be open, then we would bring our museum into people's homes with #PPHMatHome. This was a daily posting online of art, artifact and public programming video experiences to our over 17,000 social media followers across three platforms (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter). PPHM staff members collaborated during this time for a special series called "My Museum Collection." During this one week, every day a different staff member shared pieces from their own collections at home, encouraging our followers to do the same from their "museums at home." This was well received by our followers and collections shared by staff members included film cameras, teacups, vinyl records, and Southwestern art.

**Virtual Trivia:** In addition to the family-oriented programming, PPHM launched a Virtual Trivia Night that happened weekly in May and monthly in July and August that targeted an adult audience. Pub trivia is very popular in the area and without the opportunity to go to a pub, the museum saw an opportunity to bring the trivia to the people. We educated and engaged with the community, while having fun at the same time!

**Research Center:** The COVID-19 pandemic prevented outside researchers from visiting the Research Center for over four months. Despite

that reduction in physical access, over 200 research assists were recorded through the closure in March. The Research Center staff continued to provide reference services remotely during the closure, responding to 475 telephone, email, and mail requests through June 2020.

In addition to these activities, the museum staff had to shut down or alter interactive exhibits before reopening which was a giant undertaking. Despite the pandemic, the museum continues to get visitors and everyone has been good about masking up! The staff at PPHM have done an amazing job continuing to adapt to our changing landscape and I am thankful for their dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Mallard".

Interim Director, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum  
Dean, Sybil B. Harrington College of Fine Arts & Humanities

## From the Editor

The *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review* represents one of the longest running historical journals in Texas. The 91st edition continues the tradition of presenting important aspects of Panhandle, state, and southwest history while placing the essays in the context of the times.

This edition reflects the diversity off the Texas Panhandle. The five articles of the journal show the relevance of the region's history. The first article recognizes the one-hundredth anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote. Dr. Marty Kuhlman shows that the Panhandle had activity such as a member of the National Woman's Party from Amarillo. The support for women's suffrage appeared stronger in the Panhandle than other parts of Texas as men in West Texas voted for a state amendment while men in East and South Texas voted against it. The second article tells of a woman in Amarillo who broke into the male dominated career of historian, journalist, and broadcaster. Dr. Donna Murdock interprets the life of Laura V. Hamner. The article also comments on how history is retold. Minor league baseball has played an important role in the growth of Amarillo. Dr. Brian Ingrassia utilizes his expertise in sports history to look at the importance of baseball in the city's history. He follows the changes of the sport in Amarillo from the first professional baseball team in the city in 1922 all the way to the 2019 season of the Amarillo Sod Poodles. The next article by Jim Matthews celebrates the life of Frank Ford, a pioneer in the production and marketing of organic food. Ford and his all-natural store in Hereford gained national attention. The last article recognizes a deadly pandemic of over one-hundred years ago. Without national or state leadership, local communities such as the local government of Amarillo led the response to the Spanish Flu. The articles of the 91<sup>st</sup> edition of the *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review* illustrate the diversity of the history of the Texas Panhandle.

As always, there are a number of quality reviews of books our readers may find interesting. A letter from Jessica Mallard, the temporary director of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, describes many of the activities and exhibits during the past year, and the way the museum dealt with the challenge of the Coronavirus pandemic. A list of the many members of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society recognizes the value of those who support the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. Supporters help the museum accomplish its mission of keeping the region's history alive.

I am always open to any suggestions on ways to improve the journal or ready to consider possible submissions. I will strive to continue the high quality of historical writing that reflects the importance of the region and the state.

Marty Kuhlman





“Cartoonist Nina Allender’s view of the July 4th demonstration as drawn for the National Woman’s Party publication, *The Suffragist*.” Image courtesy of the National Woman’s Party archive.

## Women's Suffrage in the Texas Panhandle

Marty Kuhlman\*

The call for woman's suffrage in the United States has a long history, going back to the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. A movement for suffrage in Texas also began in the last half of the nineteenth century. The Texas legislature had allowed women to vote in the state primary by 1918, but a number of citizens disapproved, and the right to vote in the primary only passed with the impeachment of anti-suffrage Governor Jim Ferguson.<sup>1</sup> Although not much attention has been paid to the Texas Panhandle as far as woman's suffrage was concerned, activity did take place. The Panhandle was closer in physical geography to a number of western states than many parts of Texas, and Panhandle residents also seemed to share a similar view on woman's suffrage with states such as Colorado, which had allowed women to vote in 1893, Kansas in 1912, and Oklahoma in 1918, than with parts of its own state.<sup>2</sup> Women in the West were often involved in jobs traditionally done by men and gained rights such as voting earlier than women in the East.

Texas documents mentioning women's suffrage have been gathered by Ruthe Winegarten and Judith N. McArthur in *Citizens at Last: The Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas*. The first documented mentioning of giving women the right to vote came at the 1868 Texas Constitutional Convention when delegate T. H. Mundine put forward a declaration that qualified citizens should be allowed to vote "without distinction of sex."<sup>3</sup> Opposition quickly appeared, and a delegate stated that women had an "inborn refinement" and should "shrink from... the busy noise of election days."<sup>4</sup> The resolution died in committee.

The first organization dedicated solely to furthering woman's suffrage in the state was the Texas Equal Rights Association (TERA) formed in 1893. All of the founding members came from East and South Texas.<sup>5</sup> Although there were no members from the Panhandle, there must have been some discussion of the topic in that region. In 1888, the Women's

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Picture of the Equal Suffrage League at West Texas State Normal College from the 1912 yearbook. Courtesy University Archives Collection in the Cornette Library at West Texas A&M University.

Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) became the first organization in Texas to support women's suffrage arguing that putting "the ballot in the hands of women is the surest and shortest way to prohibition."<sup>6</sup> A chapter of the WCTU was established in Canadian in 1902 to fight against the saloons in that town.<sup>7</sup> In her article on the WTCU in Canadian Hillarie Easley-McPherson writes that the Canadian chapter was primarily involved with furthering prohibition but "actively worked to promote suffrage."<sup>8</sup>

The issue of women's suffrage appeared in Canyon at West Texas State Normal College (WTSNC) established in 1910. The vast majority of the student enrollment was female as the normal college was a school for training teachers. Students had become involved with the suffrage question as the 1912 yearbook, *Le Mirage*, contained a photograph of an Equal Suffrage League that had been organized at the college. The Equal Suffrage League represented one of the few suffrage organizations in Texas at the time. There were no statewide organization as TERA had ceased to function by 1896.<sup>9</sup> The Texas Woman Suffrage Association started in 1903 but lasted only through 1905. There was not another statewide organization until 1913.<sup>10</sup> The Austin Woman Suffrage Association was the only documented active suffrage organization in the state between 1907 and 1912.<sup>11</sup> WTNSC, however, at least gave the Panhandle an early suffrage organization.



"Baylor suffragette campaigns for votes, '15." Image courtesy of The Texas Collection at Baylor University

The Equal Suffrage League at WTSNC appeared on campus in 1912. The following poem was under the yearbook photo. "Equal suffrage, we beg for thee/ May we hide our wrongs in thee./May the ballot men have stole/ From their soiled hands be removed;/ If polluted, here's the cure;/ Equal suffrage'll make it pure./ 'Vote for women' is our cry;/ We will scream it till we die./ When we pass this earthly pale,/We may go to heaven or- well,/ Matters not our lot may be-/ Equal suffrage makes us free."<sup>12</sup> Suffragists often made the argument that allowing women to vote would purify government. For example, Sue Greenleaf delivered a speech at the second convention of the TERA titled "Equal Suffrage Means Purer Laws."<sup>13</sup> The WTNSC group had adopted the discussion point that men had "polluted" the ballot and that only

extending the right to vote to women could make it "pure."

In March of 1912, the *Randall County News* covered a debate between co-eds over women's suffrage. Willie J. Eakman, Loretta Wiggins, and Sula Eakman took the affirmative while Eva Parsell, Bess Mitchell, and Lena Harrison argued against suffrage for women. All the participants were seniors and graduated that year. The different groups marched around the auditorium at the college singing pro- or anti-suffrage songs before taking the stage. The *News* recorded that both sides had strong arguments, but the affirmative "was much stronger in delivery." A group of male students burst into the room to protest the meeting and carried a banner proclaiming, "We need protection." Others dressed up as old men carrying baby dolls, implying that if women were given the right to vote babies would be neglected and men would have to care for them. The evening ended when history professor Margaret Cofer read an essay titled, "Shakespeare's Opinion on Woman's Suffrage."<sup>14</sup>

The Equal Suffrage League did not appear in any of the other WTNSC yearbooks, but suffragists remained active on campus and paraded in chapel in 1916.<sup>15</sup> Other Texas colleges also started organizations of suffragists

around this time. First mention of a suffrage organization at the University of Texas appeared in the 1912 yearbook. The motto of the club was “No votes, No babies.”<sup>16</sup> In 1915, a suffrage club organized at Baylor University.<sup>17</sup>

The movement expanded in the state with the 1916 convention of the Texas Woman Suffrage Association held in Dallas.<sup>18</sup> Suffrage groups organized in a number of Texas cities with a group established in Amarillo by June of 1918.<sup>19</sup> One of the nation’s leading suffragists came out of Amarillo as well. Lucile Shields was born in West Point, Georgia and moved to and grew up in Childress. She married Alexander Shields, who sold furniture and men’s clothing, and moved with him to Amarillo in 1905. Lucile became an active member of the National Women’s Party (NWP) in 1917.<sup>20</sup>



Lucile Shields, born West Point, Ga., Home Amarillo, Texas. On picket line July 4, 1917. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns started the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, later changed to the NWP, in 1912 as a suffrage organization that utilized direct action such as picketing as the best strategy to win a national woman’s suffrage amendment. The NWP came into Texas in March of 1914 and helped to publicize a suffrage organization in San Antonio.<sup>21</sup>

As a member Shields traveled to Washington D. C. where she joined a number of NWP demonstrations. She recalled receiving telegrams from Paul requesting Shields to join a protest.<sup>22</sup> To bring publicity to their movement suffragists demonstrated in front of the White House. Police would often show up to break up the demonstrations, and a number of suffragists were arrested. Shields was first arrested on June 25, 1917. She marched with eighteen other suffragists in front of the White House, lined up against the fence, and unfurled pro-suffrage banners. Fourteen of the protesters, including Shields, were arrested and released on bond.<sup>23</sup>

An article on the front page of the July 7, 1917 edition of *The Amarillo Daily News* proclaimed, “Local Suffragist is Back in Jail.”<sup>24</sup> On July 4, 1917, Shields and 12 other members of the NWP marched in front of the White House in a “Silent Sentinel” picketing. They carried banners reading,

“GOVERNMENTS DERIVE THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED” and “MR. PRESIDENT WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE?”<sup>25</sup> One banner had a quote from one of President Woodrow Wilson’s speeches to highlight the hypocrisy of not allowing women to vote in the United States: “WE WILL FIGHT FOR THE THING WE HOLD NEAREST OUR HEART—FOR DEMOCRACY—THE RIGHT OF THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY TO HAVE A VOICE IN THEIR GOVERNMENT.” The “Silent Sentinel” was defying a ban on picketing along the White House fence. A crowd had gathered in hope of seeing a confrontation between the police and the protesters.

The crowd was not sympathetic to the protesters as the onlookers were described by suffragists in a professional correspondence to the *Evening Star* in Washington, D.C., as “a gang of toughs and hoodlums.” Most of the crowd viewed the women as unpatriotic since they were demonstrating when the nation was at war. The “ruffians” tore down banners<sup>26</sup> and yelled, “Send them over to the Kaiser,” “They are idiots,” “They have no sense,” and “They ought to be sent up for life.”<sup>27</sup>

The police stopped the march and arrested the demonstrators. The crowd cheered as the peaceful protesters were bundled into police wagons. Suffragists blamed both political parties for not fighting for women’s suffrage



Woman suffrage pickets at White House, 1917. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

and lauded the women arrested as “the last martyrs to Republican and Democratic Prussianism.” Of the thirteen arrested only two, Shields and Iris Calderhead of Kansas, came from states west of the Mississippi River.<sup>28</sup> Judge Andrew Mallowney charged the protesters with “blocking traffic.” Mallowney handed down a sentence of three days in jail or a \$25 fine. The judge offered to release them on personal bonds if they would promise “not to bother the President” during these “abnormal times [United States entry into World War I.]” The women refused to make such a promise and refused to pay the fine. They all chose the three days in jail.<sup>29</sup> Alexander Shields had accompanied his wife to the protest. When Lucile rejected his offer to pay her bail, he replied, “It’s up to her.”<sup>30</sup> The judge continued to lecture the women surprised that “ladies of education and refinement” would rather go to jail than pay the fine. The women filed off to the police van and went to jail singing suffrage songs. The judge did scold two men arrested for tearing suffragist banners for an “unmanly, undignified act.” They were fined as well.<sup>31</sup>

Alexander Shields accepted his wife’s role as a suffragist and never objected. Lucile Shields did state in a 1933 interview that her suffrage work did cause a breach between her and her family.<sup>32</sup>

Shields temporarily left the suffrage movement and went to New York “to take up aviation and become a government flyer.”<sup>33</sup> She was involved for a year in “doing war work,” but returned to the movement in 1919.

When she returned to the movement, Shields participated in “watchfire demonstrations.” Watchfire demonstrations were the burning of President Woodrow Wilson’s speeches in Lafayette Park in front of the White House in January of 1919. Protesters accused Wilson of hypocrisy since he spoke of spreading democracy while women in the United States could not vote. Burning the speeches led to Shields and another Texas suffragist, Elizabeth Kalb of Houston, being sentenced to a \$10 fine or five days in jail. They both chose five days in jail.<sup>34</sup>

The NWP had used hunger strikes by arrested women to gain publicity and sympathy for the movement. Both Shields and Kalb joined in on a hunger strike while in jail. Upon her release five days later Shields told reporters, “Only the fact that you can give up your freedom for the sake of a greater freedom makes imprisonment endurable.” Kalb, who had to be carried to the NWP headquarters on a stretcher because of her weakened condition, added:

It seems incredible, but suffrage prisoners are forced to believe that the United States Senate would rather have women sub-



Far Western delegates to Woman's Party conference. L to R: Miss Emma Wold, Portland, Oregon; Mrs. Wm. Kent, San Francisco, Cal.; Mrs Lucile Shields, Amarillo, Tex.; Miss Sybil Moore, Seattle, Wash., [11/11/22] Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

jugated to imprisonment than grant them the freedom which they know will inevitably be theirs. Until President Wilson is as earnest in his championship of democracy at home as he is abroad, we can hope for no change, apparently, in the attitude of the powers that be. As long as women are not free, we are going to protest at the cost of health and strength against their political bondage.<sup>35</sup>

Shields spent another three days in jail for applauding arrested suffragists in court.<sup>36</sup> Shields also helped to organize a demonstration in New York City opposing Woodrow Wilson.<sup>37</sup> She was also present, although not arrested, at a demonstration in which the effigy of Wilson was burned.<sup>38</sup> The Texas chapter of the NWP wrote a telegram in 1919 to state Senator Morris Sheppard and United States Attorney General Thomas W. Gregory urging them to investigate the legality and justice of the arrests of Shields and Kalb for “peacefully petitioning the Government for redress of grievances.”<sup>39</sup>

Shields continued her work for women's rights even after the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed. Some of the supporters of women's rights saw the amendment giving women the right to vote as the end of the journey. The NWP saw it is a starting point and met in the following years to discuss the next move such as an equal rights amendment. In 1922, Shields was a delegate to the Woman's Political Party conference. She

served as a far western delegate, as she had lived in Texas for many years, and also as a southern delegate, as she and her husband had recently moved to Miami, Florida.<sup>40</sup> Shields believed that men would never willingly relinquish congressional seats and that a woman's political party might be needed. A campaign for an equal rights amendment was needed, according to Shields, and such an amendment was as fundamental as the suffrage campaign had been.<sup>41</sup> In 1924, she went with a delegation from the National Women's Party to the White House to urge President Warren G. Harding to back legislation removing discrimination against women in federal laws.<sup>42</sup>

As individuals struggled on the national scene, the Panhandle showed support for a state amendment giving women suffrage. As mentioned earlier women had gained the right to vote in the state primary in 1918. Since Texas was a one party state (Democratic candidates nearly always won state elections), the right to vote in primaries was tantamount to full suffrage in state elections. When given the opportunity, Panhandle women did register for the primary. In Amarillo, 2,112 women registered in 1918 to vote in the Democratic Primary as compared with 2,072 men. Amarillo had a population of approximately 15,000 in 1918, and the number of women registering made up a significant portion of the eligible female population.<sup>43</sup> Amarillo women registered at a rate almost twice that of the estimated statewide enrollment of women.<sup>44</sup> The number gives evidence of the desire of Panhandle women to vote.

There did seem to be at least more proportional support for woman's suffrage in the Panhandle than elsewhere in the state. In May of 1919, Texas



Southern Delegates to Woman's Party Conference. Mrs. Lucile Shields, Amarilla [sic], Tex., Mrs. John D. Wilkinson, Shreveport, La., 11/11/22. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

had an election proposing a number of amendments to the state constitution including one giving women the right to vote. The amendment lost with a vote of 166,893 opposed or 54 percent of the state's vote and 141,773 or 46 percent in support of women's suffrage.<sup>45</sup> Out of 25 counties that make up the Panhandle, however, all of the counties except for Hutchison favored the amendment. The final vote out of these counties was 4,582 or 66 percent of male voters in the Panhandle favoring women's suffrage and 2,320 or 34 percent opposed.<sup>46</sup> The greatest support in the Panhandle

came from Deaf Smith County with nearly a six to one vote favoring suffrage at 206 to 32.<sup>47</sup> The South Plains, which shared the western orientation of the Panhandle, supported the amendment at 2,790 votes or 66 percent to 1,460 or 34 percent in opposition.

The Panhandle vote was different than most of the other regions in Texas. As a region the 38 counties that make up East Texas opposed the suffrage amendment with 28,318 votes or 54 percent of the ballots cast in the region against and 23,856 or 46 percent supporting the amendment. The most opposition came from the 40 counties of South Texas with 24,080 or 61 percent against and 15,303 or 39 percent in support.<sup>48</sup> No matter how the state voted the following week Congress passed a national amendment supporting women's suffrage, and Texas became the first southern state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment on June 28, 1919.

The editor of *The Canadian Record*, L. P. Loomis, also illustrated the pro-suffrage feeling in the Panhandle. In an editorial after the state election, Loomis wrote, "Well, the tallow dippers [old-fashioned thinkers] of Texas had the laugh on us the way they swamped Woman's Suffrage but the National Congress came to our rescue and enacted a federal Woman's Suffrage law, and we who laugh last laugh best." Trying to change the minds of the "tallow dippers" would be "like trying to transform the ideals of a lifetime to try to make the mind of a gentleman of the old days accept woman in any other light than a retiring, quiet creature who took no part whatsoever in public life."<sup>49</sup>

Although there was not a great amount of suffragist activity in the Panhandle, students at WTNSC did become involved in the movement and organizing when there weren't many other suffrage organizations in the state. Residents of the Panhandle also backed suffrage as evidenced by the vote on an amendment. Even on the national stage Lucile Shields struggled for a national amendment. Although supporters of suffrage came from all regions of Texas, the Panhandle gave support.

## Endnotes

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Laura V. Hamner before the Laura V. Hamner Texana Collection, 1958. Photo courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives.

## Laura V. Hamner: Making Collective Memories in the Panhandle

Donna F. Murdock\*

Laura V. Hamner, a newspaper columnist, radio show host, and book author, believed the Panhandle was the “grandest spot on earth.”<sup>1</sup> For over thirty years, she collected and publicized Texas Panhandle history, winning a Texas Heritage Foundation Medal in 1963 for her efforts. Recognition of her great role in bringing a sense of shared history and belonging to Panhandle residents was widespread during her lifetime, so much so that Loula Grace Erdman once called her “Mother to a Region.”<sup>2</sup> However, despite being widely recognized and much-lauded during her lifetime, her work has not received much treatment since her death in 1968.<sup>3</sup> This article works to address that long neglect by focusing on Hamner’s role in helping to construct enormously popular “collective memories”<sup>4</sup> about Texas Panhandle settlement.

W. Fitzhugh Brundage defines “collective memory” as “organized, explicitly public representations of the past.”<sup>5</sup> Such public representations are usually deliberate constructions that take material form in monuments and museums, as well as books, newspapers, and radio programs.<sup>6</sup> These public representations fix potentially fluid memories into more static histories and then give them the stamp of collective approval. As such, they help to construct a sense of who belongs and who does not in any given community.<sup>7</sup> Because they do this in part by emphasizing the memories and perspectives of some groups over others, such collective memories are political and contestable.<sup>8</sup> It is important then to ask what kinds of collective memories did Hamner produce, and why? To what extent was she contesting dominant narratives of her time?

Hamner was a woman writing popular histories about ranching and settlement, and thus represented a challenge to the male-dominated field of history she joined. Further, she wrote women into the story, challenging

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narratives that tended to neglect women's contributions to settlement. At the same time, Hamner did not challenge narratives about Anglo dominance and superiority in the West, and instead romanticized settlement through gendered representations that emphasized Anglos' heroic masculinity and self-sacrificing yet capable femininity.

Like other women building collective memories at the time, Hamner was not particularly objective or dispassionate about Panhandle history. Instead, she was consciously patriotic about Panhandle history and felt it her personal mission to teach others to love the Panhandle as she did. She sought to instill a sense of belonging and ownership over Panhandle history in her audience. According to a close friend, Hamner's writings "Trumpet the strength, goodness, and courage of most of the dwellers, city and country, of the Panhandle. That is exactly what Laura wants her writing to do."<sup>9</sup>

While Hamner's intentions were patriotic, that is not to say she fabricated the stories she wrote. Instead, she constructed collective memories—those publicly shared and collectively authorized reconstructions—out of the personal memories narrated to her by those who lived through them. From her earliest years in the Panhandle, she collected stories about those who settled it, faithfully recording their memories in her notebooks. Herself a settler, she saw the world much as other settlers did.

### Collecting Memories During Her Early Years in the Texas Panhandle

In 1891, Hamner left her home state of Tennessee to join her sister's household in Washburn, Texas, and her parents followed soon after. As Louis Fairchild notes in *The Lonesome Plains*, the Panhandle was one of the last regions settled for farming, and although the population grew during the 1890s, density still remained at less than 1 person per square mile in 1900. Single women between the ages of 15 and 30 were especially scarce in the region, up from only 40 ten years earlier, but still uncommon.<sup>10</sup> Isolated from the society and amenities she was used to, Hamner recalled her initial dismay at these conditions: "it was all so strange, so rough."<sup>11</sup>

But she soon adjusted. With a Licentiate of Instruction from Peabody College in Nashville, Hamner was contracted to teach in the small settlement of Claude, Texas. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, about 25% of white, native born women worked outside the home, and of these, only 10% worked in the professions, most of them schoolteachers and administrators who either married late, or not at all.<sup>12</sup> Hamner was courted during these early years, and would not have been precluded from marriage by her profession,<sup>13</sup>

but later wrote that her familial obligations had dissuaded her from marrying.<sup>14</sup>

Her responsibility for the family had intensified when she started helping her father publish the *Claude News*. It was not uncommon for western papers to use family members, including wives and daughters, to help fill labor gaps, and Hamner's education would have made her valuable to the paper.<sup>15</sup> In fact, many educators became journalists after moving out west,<sup>16</sup> and there is much to indicate that Hamner began taking research and writing seriously long before she made a career of it. For instance, she became a charter member of the Texas Women's Press Association in 1893.<sup>17</sup> She inquired about membership in the Texas State Historical Association in 1917, suggesting that she was beginning then to think of herself

not just as a newspaper woman but also as an historian and biographer.<sup>18</sup>

In this, Hamner joined other white, middle-class women who were important producers of collective memory during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Groups such as the Daughters of the Republic of Texas ("DRT") and the United Daughters of the Confederacy ("UDC") are perhaps best known for their efforts to preserve public monuments,<sup>19</sup> but women also created collective memories through cultural productions such as writing. For instance, Laura Lyons McLemore notes the involvement of the DRT in promoting Texas history education, and argues that textbooks written by women in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were the principal sources of historical memory for Texas schoolchildren at that time.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, being a schoolteacher was not only one of the more prestigious occupations for women in the frontier west, but it was also one that carried with it the responsibility to "produce and mold literate, responsible citizens."<sup>21</sup> Women took this seriously and participated actively in the movement popularizing the collection of local histories.<sup>22</sup>



Laura V. hamner. Image courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives.

As a well-educated woman with experience as both a journalist and an educator, Hamner was especially well-placed to engage in this work. Her employment also gave her the opportunity to interact with more Panhandle residents, providing introductions that she might not otherwise have gotten. Hamner frequently recounted the story of how sending Colonel Charles Goodnight a payment reminder for his paper subscription resulted in her writing his biography some thirty years later.<sup>23</sup>

Having worked for her father's newspaper, she was familiar with the methods of journalism.<sup>24</sup> She did not simply take remembered accounts as fact. Instead, she cross-checked the stories by questioning multiple participants, and cross-checked again by circulating drafts of stories to those involved before publishing them. In fact, Hamner was frequently praised for the authenticity of her histories, and argued herself that her real western histories worked against the overwrought western dramas of television and dime novels. She still receives high praise for this work: Sylvia Grider and Lou Rodenberger in *Texas Women Writers* call her a "pioneer in grass-roots research into the folk culture and ranch life of the Panhandle."<sup>25</sup> If her reconstructions were stylized and idealistic then, it was because she and her fellow settlers remembered themselves that way.

### **A Challenge to Dominant Narratives?**

In terms of the political effects of Hamner's work, the fact that she was a woman engaged in collective memory construction itself constituted a challenge to the prevailing discourse of "true womanhood."<sup>26</sup> In its strictest interpretation, this discourse required women to eschew public life and to exhibit "piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity."<sup>27</sup> Hamner challenged this not only through her own role as a public historian, but also by writing women into the western histories that were then dominated by narratives of men's achievements on the frontier.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, her gendered representations were fairly stereotypical. For instance, her representation of women relied upon common practices women used during the period to expand their "true womanhood" roles to include more public activities. On the frontier in particular, this expanded role for women was considered necessary for settlement.<sup>29</sup> Beverly Stoeltje argues that "bravery and endurance in women were highly valued on the frontier" noting that the dominant ideals on the frontier emphasized women's willingness to endure the hardships of frontier life while also bringing "civilization" in the form of schools, religious observance, and the like to their communities.<sup>30</sup>

Stoeltje identifies three feminine stereotypes in women's western writing of the period, including "refined ladies," the genteel, sensitive and frail women of the "true woman" discourse; "helpmates" who were capable of both bringing "civilization" to the frontier and taking on the hardships necessary for survival; and "bad women" who were more likely to populate the saloons of dime novels and movie westerns than women's writing about the west.<sup>31</sup> Stoeltje argues further that the "refined ladies" who came west had to adapt their behavior in order to survive settlement long enough to contribute to it. It is these women who became the true "helpmates" referred to above, combining the gifts of refined society—education, caring for the sick, and religious observance—with bravery, endurance, and physical stamina.

To a great extent, Hamner shared this view of the ideal Western woman, and saw herself in this same light. A "refined lady" when she first came to the Panhandle, she often reported having told another woman when she arrived that she had never so much as washed a handkerchief.<sup>32</sup> She was later ashamed of this story, and adapted her attitudes and behavior to frontier life, so well in fact that in 1906 she filed a 160-acre claim in Oklahoma. She got help building a one-room house and for almost two years, traveled there as often as she could. But she finally sold it to a neighbor after her parents convinced her that she was most needed in Claude.<sup>33</sup> Rather than becoming a helpmate to a husband, she became her parents' sole source of support and comfort, and after their death defined her own career as one of service to the larger community.

The bulk of her research and writing was based on her early collection of men's stories. Struggling to support her parents in Claude, she became postmaster in 1913 and found herself with ample time to write down the stories told by the men who came for their mail. She eventually filled 49 notebooks, and used much of this material to write *Short Grass and Longhorns*, her acclaimed history of Panhandle ranching.<sup>34</sup> When the Panhandle Old Settlers' Association was formed in 1914, Hamner was elected to serve as Secretary.<sup>35</sup> She also began to serve as informal historian and biographer of the group, and published an article about a reunion at the Goodnight ranch in *The Fort Worth Star Telegram*. In it, she included a few glowing remarks about the men gathered there: "this is what this country has made, and what it tends to make even yet—men who are big, unafraid, honest, virile, and free."<sup>36</sup> Stoeltje identifies this figure as the "settler" man, the "aggressive, ambitious, self-confident man who tackles the frontier and succeeds in every effort", and who requires the feminine helpmate in order to found Anglo civilization in the West.<sup>37</sup> Hamner's career was built upon her skillful representation of this idealized

Panhandle man, and throughout her life, exhibited every sign of believing in the truth of her representations.

It is important to recognize, as do Marianne Hirsh and Valerie Smith, that although women's history can constitute a kind of counter-narrative to dominant perspectives, the gendered and racial politics of such histories are not inherently progressive. Alternatively, such histories can be constructed as a form of "nostalgic narrative" that represents a "yearning for an idealized past."<sup>38</sup> Hamner's intentions in writing this way about women and men are difficult to discern as she left no diary or public statement about her gendered politics. However, she did clearly support dominant views about the superiority of Anglo settlers over other groups.<sup>39</sup> As the daughter of a Confederate soldier who also belonged to the UDC, she sympathized with this group's perspectives on Anglo superiority.<sup>40</sup> Although she did at times express admiration of historic Native American cultures, and wrote about Matthew "Bones" Hooks, the famous African American horse wrangler, in a more admiring and respectful tone, Hamner's writing in general did not challenge Anglo-dominant narratives of the West.<sup>41</sup> In this, her writings were much like those of other women writing about the frontier. Nina Baym argues in *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927* that most of the women authors writing about Western settlement in this period "sought to place themselves advantageously within it rather than write against it."<sup>42</sup> Like other women's writings, Hamner's work forcefully echoed dominant narratives about Panhandle settlement, and although it would take some time, it was ultimately this fact that would make her career.

### A Writing Career on Hold

In the 1920s, as women gained the right to vote and economic opportunities opened up for them, Hamner began to pursue professional writing more vigorously.<sup>43</sup> She and fellow journalist and friend Phebe K. Warner issued a call for the first meeting of the writers' group Panhandle Penwomen ("PPW") in 1920.<sup>44</sup> PPW membership provided women who "exhibited independent and courageous attitudes" the impetus and encouragement to publish their writings.<sup>45</sup> Spurred by PPW, she also began writing to other authors asking how she might best publish the research she'd been collecting. Jack Potter of Kenton, Oklahoma wrote to Hamner in 1921 to say he thought she could "get up a good book as there is so much history attached to the Panhandle." He advised her to attend reunions and make the acquaintance of "Old Time pioneer cattle men" saying "they have enough history hid away in their minds to keep [you] going for years."<sup>46</sup> Not long after this exchange, she joined Colonel Goodnight and other



T-Anchor Ranch House, 1938. Standing left to right: John Arnot of Amarillo, Mrs. W. C. Baird of Canyon, Mr. J. C. Christian of Claude, Mrs. John Arnot of Amarillo, Mr. Walker of Hereford, Laura V. Hamner of Amarillo, J. R. Bradley. Seated left to right: Isaac Jenkins of Canyon, Mrs. Cal Walker of Hereford, Mr. Ed Baird of Canyon, Harry Ingerton of Amarillo, Judge L. Gough. Image courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives.

men she knew for a ranch reunion, soon becoming the only female member and Secretary of “The Old Cowpunchers’ Roundup of Each Other on the T-Anchor Range.”<sup>47</sup>

Although Hamner was getting more serious about writing professionally, she was also still responsible for her parents and so sought more lucrative employment. She turned her sights to Amarillo, a burgeoning city by then, as agricultural production and then the discovery of oil in 1917 led to prosperity and immigration-fueled population growth.<sup>48</sup> Aided by family friends, she ran for rural school superintendent, campaigning from Claude, and won in 1922. She then moved her parents up to the city so that she could continue caring for them while she worked.

She did continue to write however, and had some luck with this as the market for her ranch histories grew. Jeff Roche argues that in order to stabilize Panhandle identity in this time of rapid change, “elites with the most at stake used the iconography of the pioneer ranching experience as the lingua franca to articulate their vision of community.”<sup>49</sup> Their efforts to make ranching history the defining feature of the region’s collective memory helped Hamner, who began to publish with more regularity, including several stories in *The Cattleman*, *The Amarillo Sunday News Globe*,

and the *Dallas Morning News*.<sup>50</sup> She was asked to present a paper at the meetings of the Texas Folklore Society in 1925,<sup>51</sup> and in 1928 won an award from the Poetry Society of Texas for her poem “November Prairies.”<sup>52</sup>

However, her writing career was limited during this period by her family responsibilities. Although her father died not long after moving to Amarillo, her mother lived until 1925, requiring increasing levels of nursing care from Hamner. After her mother’s death, Hamner was diagnosed with breast cancer, and her economic situation grew precarious as a result of her parents’ and her own medical bills. By 1934, she was deeply in debt, and having lost her home to foreclosure, was living in the Herring Hotel.<sup>53</sup> The opportunities that had opened up for women in the 1920s evaporated in the face of the Great Depression, and she lost her position as school superintendent to a man.<sup>54</sup> At age 63 and reliant now upon her writing skills, she turned to the biography of Colonel Goodnight she had been preparing titled *The No-Gun Man of Texas: A Century of Achievement*. The “century” in the book’s title did not reference Goodnight’s age, but rather the state’s 1936 Centennial celebration of Texas’ independence from Mexico.

### **The 1936 Texas Centennial Celebration and the Goodnight Book**

Along with the Great Depression and dust storms, the decade of the 1930s brought to Texas cultural producers the chance to participate in collective memory construction on a large scale.<sup>55</sup> Depression-era economics moved the Centennial planning committee to use the celebration as an opportunity to “market Texas to the rest of the country” and so draw tourism and other sources of income to the state.<sup>56</sup> Light Townsend Cummins argues that the Centennial celebrations were “a significant factor in codifying the singularity of Texas exceptionalism and regional uniqueness.”<sup>57</sup>

Hamner self-published the Goodnight book, and marketed it for use as a school reader appropriate for the Centennial. In a promotional brochure for the school board, she wrote:<sup>58</sup>

The Centennial has developed a spirit of patriotism, admiration and quest for knowledge of the various aspects of Texas History... The ten-gallon hats, the cow-boy uniforms, and the romance of the range told in poetry and music are ever constant reminders of the time when Texas’ chief industry was cattle raising. . . And yet how little does the youth of Texas know the origins and the history of these expressions . . . A search through volumes of Texas

literature will reveal that for the first time is the real, romantic and authentic story of the plains contributed by the “No-Gun Man of Texas”.<sup>59</sup>

Capitalizing on the authenticity of her work, Hamner urged principals and teachers to order her reader for their students. She wrote that the story was “full of action and western spirit and told in the authentic language of the western vernacular.” Comparing it favorably to popular movie westerns and dime novels, she argued her Goodnight history was “as fascinating as the wildest ‘wild west thriller’ and yet authentic in every detail.”<sup>60</sup>

Her strategy was successful. The book was not only used by the Texas public school system, but also received a good deal of positive press, much of it focused upon the book’s authenticity. For instance, a review printed in the *Hillsboro Evening Mirror* claimed that the book:

...removes the stigma placed on Texas by the fiction writer of a land of bandits and two-gun bad men, and reveals a land of opportunity for the individual.... It is an inspiration to young and old and will increase your love and admiration both for the early pioneers and for the state which they made great.<sup>61</sup>

Her success was remarkable given the competition she faced in writing about Goodnight, a former Texas ranger and one of the most famous cattlemen of the era. In an unpublished autobiography, she wrote that after years of collecting stories and correcting them through correspondence with Goodnight,<sup>62</sup> she learned that Irvin S. Cobb had been to visit Goodnight and planned to write a book. Cobb was an American author of more than 60 books and 300 short stories, and was the highest paid staff reporter in the United States while writing for the *New York World*.<sup>63</sup> She recalled: “I could not cope with Irwin Cobb (sic) so I wrote and sold articles.”<sup>64</sup> Instead, she published “When Goodnight Took Roundance” in the 1922 issue of *The Cattleman* and wrote several other articles for local papers as well.<sup>65</sup> When “no Cobb book was ever mentioned,” she renewed the book efforts, but then “again came a blow. Evetts Haley was going to write Goodnight’s history... again I was defeated, I could not cope with Evetts although I had 100,000 words written.”<sup>66</sup>

It is no accident that Hamner felt defeated by male competitors for Goodnight’s story. Haley for instance was “a key figure in the construction of Texas historical discourse between the 1920s and 1960s....”<sup>67</sup> But the field of cultural production about Texan identity was at the time generally dominated by Anglo male authors, and their stories focused on the

experiences of Anglo men. Indeed, Cummins and Mary L. Scheer argue that the quintessential Texan identity as these men constructed it was both Anglo and “patriarchal.”<sup>68</sup> Angus Lauchlan in *Constructing White Texas Maleness* argues further that “these men vigorously asserted a vision of Texas which was based around the potency of the state’s manhood.”<sup>69</sup>

Rather than challenging this view, Hamner agreed with it. In fact, she worked to incorporate the expected virility of Texas men into her own writing. For instance, on an early draft of the Goodnight book, a reader commented: “say Laura, make these fellows HE-MEN in their conversation! They talk like they were in a parlor!”<sup>70</sup> She listened, and a quick read through the book turns up several references to Charles Goodnight’s virility and masculine toughness. Although she never saw his “youthful body,” she describes it as “virile, his muscles flexed into steel, his joints as supple as fine wire.”<sup>71</sup> Telling of his early life on the range, she sees him “riding fearlessly but warily, tending his cattle, protecting his neighbors.”<sup>72</sup> When he became manager for the JA ranch, she says he worked alongside his men, but “seldom laughed and talked” with them. She calls him at one point “a dominant man, fearing nothing”<sup>73</sup> and also a “rough, swearing man.”<sup>74</sup> This was a vivid portrayal of the common “settler” figure that Stoeltje notes was so admired on the frontier, and it would have resonated with what her readers expected to learn about Goodnight.

But it was perhaps the “swearing” part of the story that did the most for her career. The tale of her meeting with the state textbook committee was told by Walter Prescott Webb—one of the key figures dominating the field of Texas history during this period. In an article titled “Some Panhandle Historians” for the 1938 Golden Anniversary edition of the *Amarillo Sunday News and Globe*, Webb wrote: “in some respects the most remarkable historian in the Panhandle is Miss Laura V. Hamner.”<sup>75</sup> His article goes into some detail about her marketing efforts, but most admiringly told of the day she met the state textbook board as “a single individual competing with powerful publishers who had skillful agents working in their interests.” He reported that in the lobby of the hotel that night, “every book man had heard of her marvelous achievement and was talking about it.” According to Webb, Hamner won the book contract because she had a sense of humor about the “damns” she had included in Goodnight’s speech, agreeing to remove them with the comment “what are a few damns among friends.” Hamner always denied having said this, but did describe later using the word “damn” in conversations with admirers in order to capitalize on the popularity she gained from this story.<sup>76</sup> Regardless of what was actually said in that meeting, the inclusion

of Goodnight's swearing in the original manuscript, her supposed response to textbook committee complaints, and Webb's publication of the story all helped to solidify her reputation as a woman who was not too squeamish to write about ranching men authentically.

Although the Goodnight book was ultimately a "big man" story suitable for the glorification of Texas manhood, Hamner also mentioned women's contributions in it. These mentions are few, mostly concerning Goodnight's wife Mollie,<sup>77</sup> and she did not receive recognition for it. Indeed, Webb makes no mention of her treatment of women in his review, perhaps due to his own belief that women had not really contributed to the settlement of the plains.<sup>78</sup> However, Hamner herself must have believed women were an important aspect of her work because the foreword to the book argues that it is important because it:

...gives us the other side of the picture and visualizes home life in pioneer form, school life and church life in their infancy, and tells us not only of the great business men and pioneers but introduces us to the heroic women who left their comfortable homes in the East and came with their husbands to what was supposed to be a wilderness.<sup>79</sup>

Hamner's portrayal of Mollie Goodnight is highly reminiscent of the idealized frontier woman discussed earlier. She is presented as a refined lady who over time becomes the helpmate so admired in Hamner's part of the world.<sup>80</sup> Of the lady, Hamner writes: "Mollie Goodnight had no household chores. Housework on that ranch was a man's job, a burden too heavy for the frail shoulders of the nervous little school teacher."<sup>81</sup> What the refined lady contributed to the ranch was religious observance, "giving culture to the ranch home," and providing "love and laughter in a grim, loveless world."<sup>82</sup>

But the woman as Hamner saw her was also clearly adapting to frontier life, just as would be expected of her. In addition to the culture and love she brought to the ranch, Hamner credited Mollie Goodnight with the development of the Goodnight buffalo herd, thus solidifying her role as cooperative spouse helping to build the family legacy.<sup>83</sup> She is further attributed with great courage, issuing an ultimatum to her husband after she has been sent away to California for her own safety:

She was coming home and nothing that anyone might say could keep her away... she knew only that starting a home in the wilderness had for her a greater charm than living at ease

in California. Like her husband, she enjoyed making something worthwhile out of something useless.<sup>84</sup>

An ideal helpmate, this representation of Mollie Goodnight emphasizes her capacity to bring culture and refinement to the Panhandle, as well as her bravery, determination, and ingenuity. Hamner's treatment of this woman marked the beginning of a career that regularly included women's contributions to the settlement and development of the Panhandle. Her commitments to telling women's stories alongside those of their men never faltered, but at this point in her career, it went unremarked.

In contrast, her portrayal of the heroically virile Charles Goodnight was quite successful, finally launching her into a professional career as a regional historian. The book had solidified her reputation as an authority on Panhandle history, and in 1936 she was named Area Supervisor of the Federal Writer's Project for 48 counties in West Texas.<sup>85</sup> Over the next two decades, she would become known across the Panhandle as a well-respected journalist, historian, and radio show host. Just as in her earlier work, her later writings celebrated Anglo settlement through laudatory treatments of the men and women of the Panhandle, and her audiences responded enthusiastically.

### **Newspaper: "Talks to Teens" and "Spinster on the Prowl"**

While working for the Federal Writer's Project, Hamner had consulted with a number of local experts including *Amarillo Globe-News* editor Gene Howe,<sup>86</sup> for whose paper she wrote a number of articles, including over a dozen for the Golden Anniversary Edition in 1938.<sup>87</sup> In September of that same year, she began writing a weekly column titled "Talks to Teens" for the Sunday edition of the paper.<sup>88</sup> The format was so successful that it ran for twenty-six years.

"Talks to Teens" was originally pitched as an advice column to the teenagers Hamner had taught for so long. By 1938, women were well-established in the field of journalism as well as magazine and book publishing, but in keeping with the continued force of the "true woman" discourse, were mostly writing about topics considered of special interest to women such as advice, fashion, homemaking, society, family and children, women's sports, etc.<sup>89</sup> It thus made sense to pitch the column as "advice" but in fact, "Talks to Teens" gave little advice. A friend wrote:

'Talks to Teens' is a deceiving title for a column that addresses readers of all ages, discusses books, adventures in good foods,

scenery, quaint customs, exotic words and their meanings. And almost never gives advice.<sup>90</sup>

Hamner herself characterized “Talks to Teens” as a “small-town, home-folksy, neighborly” column.<sup>91</sup> She used it to promote knowledge of regional and family history among young people, harking back to her days as a school teacher and superintendent, and drawing upon women’s traditional responsibility to raise responsible citizens.<sup>92</sup> For instance, she wrote to teens: “I wish you would write me a letter telling me of some other salt lakes in the Panhandle....Let one of the first English papers you write when school starts be about salt in the Panhandle.”<sup>93</sup> In the November 12, 1939 “Talks to Teens” column,<sup>94</sup> Hamner instructed readers to write out information about parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents including a life history narrative as well as place and date of birth, marriage, death, and burial. The instructions were well-heeded by her audience, and in the March 10, 1940 column, she noted that she had heard from seventy-one schools in twenty-seven different counties, and would send out 175 awards to those who had done the best job.<sup>95</sup>

The gendered politics of “Talks to Teens” are interesting, but also somewhat opaque. Hamner wrote the column across several decades, including during the mobilization of women’s labor during World War II and the later retraction of those efforts in the 1950s.<sup>96</sup> Through all of that period, she did not express many opinions about traditional gender or its transformation.

However, while she did not advocate for women’s rights directly, she did write in a way that suggests her own continued commitments to women’s capacity to contribute to the larger society. For instance, she tended to address girls and boys neutrally, aiming instructions at a generalized audience rather than differentiating by gender. Most instructive, she tended to write supportively about women’s pursuit of meaningful and successful work outside the home. Hamner praised farm women who contributed to the success of their country,<sup>97</sup> and also took approving note of entrepreneurial women.<sup>98</sup> Encouraging young people to pursue their dreams, she cited the example of a young woman who wanted to arrange flowers for a living and became “well-known and well-paid for doing the thing she loved to do.”<sup>99</sup> In another column, she wrote about a beautician who “was left a widow thirteen years ago with no money and three children.” The woman’s response to this tragedy was to go to school, open three beauty shops, and send her three children to college with the money she earned. Hamner exclaimed, “Her story makes me ashamed of my record.”<sup>100</sup> Of course, Hamner’s record was nothing to be ashamed of.

She had supported both herself and her parents with her work outside the home as schoolteacher, postmaster, and school superintendent and had reason to be proud of those accomplishments.

By 1941, Hamner was supporting herself with her writing, and started a second column entitled “Spinster on the Prowl.”<sup>101</sup> It was initially published in the *Wichita Falls Times* as a report on schools she visited in the area,<sup>102</sup> and quickly became part of the *Amarillo Daily News* line-up, expanding to include stories about Hamner’s travels in the South and Southwest.<sup>103</sup> According to Hall, Hamner thought the title funny.<sup>104</sup> In fact, among Hamner’s papers are a couple of documents suggesting that she had written about the topic humorously more than once. The first document suggests she might have written an article entitled, “Confessions of an Old Maid” in 1909,<sup>105</sup> and the second is her unpublished autobiography, “Spinster on the Prowl”, in which she wrote of being “playfully” asked by a noted author, “Do you ever regret not having married?” to which she replied, grinning, “Well, I’ll give you the same answer the Quaker old maid gave to a similar question, ‘it would take a might good husband to beat none at all.’”<sup>106</sup>

The joke did not tell the whole story. At the same time Hamner was proud of her accomplishments and supported women’s career pursuits, she also expressed regret over living alone at the Herring Hotel, and resentment that caring for her parents had been a deterrent to marriage and children.<sup>107</sup> Ultimately, she was ambivalent about her own independence from the traditional “true woman” discourse, and it is possible that this personal ambivalence influenced her larger perspective on women’s role in society as well. It is hard to know without more information, but in any case, Hamner never lost her sense of humor, and her audience must have appreciated it for the “Spinster on the Prowl” column ran until 1963.<sup>108</sup>

### **Radio: “Light ‘n Hitch”**

Hamner began her radio career at a time when Amarillo’s population and economy were growing dramatically. The economy boomed with oil and carbon black production, a burgeoning tourist industry and war-related activities such as the Amarillo Army Airfield, the Pantex Army Ordinance Plant, and the Exell Helium Plant.<sup>109</sup> This industrial growth of course brought with it new residents to the city, which renewed efforts to define Panhandle identity and belonging. This, combined with a national effort to soothe tensions from the recent depression and growing talk of war, created a market for soothing and nostalgic radio shows. A further boost to such efforts came on October 13, 1940, when President Franklin Roosevelt opened the Mobilization for Human Needs (a fund-raising drive for

Community Chest Funds) with a radio address in which he argued citizens needed stories of “grit and sacrifice...daring and devotion” to boost their “morale.”<sup>110</sup> This call was tailor-made for a collective memory producer such as Hamner, and she pitched to KGNC a radio show about Panhandle settlement that emphasized ways in which Panhandle settlers had used grit and sacrifice to build their future.<sup>111</sup>

It was not a hard sell. By the 1940s, radios were an expected fixture in most homes, and it was not unusual for women to host their own shows. As was the case with newspaper journalism during this period, women’s shows targeted female audiences and tended to cover issues thought specifically of interest to women.<sup>112</sup> Regional histories were also fairly common radio fare in the 1930s and 1940s, and thought to appeal to the whole family.<sup>113</sup> Hamner was known as a regional history expert who told settlement stories the way locals wanted to hear them told, and after an on-air tryout, the show ran once weekly in a 15-minute spot for the next 21 years.<sup>114</sup>

“Light ‘n Hitch” opened with strains from “Home on the Range” and the tagline “A Dramatic Portrayal of Old and New Days by Laura V. Hamner Who Knows and Loves the Panhandle.” As a prelude to the first episode, KGNC explained its purpose in airing the show:

KGNC wishes to bring ... the wonderful story of the Panhandle with all of its glamour, its romance, its drama, its comedy. KGNC wishes you to become interested in all of our great region....We selected this speaker because she has made a special study of Panhandle history...More than all, we chose her because of her great love of the Panhandle.<sup>115</sup>

Her love of the Panhandle was crucial, for “Light ‘n Hitch” was designed to promote regional pride in the Anglo project of settlement.<sup>116</sup> With the first episode’s airing on August 6, 1941, Hamner firmly established Anglo ownership over the territory:

For years this region lay wrapped in a vast silence broken only by the rumbling noises of huge herds of buffalo, the occasional yells of Plains Indians following the herds and the furtive sounds of hunted men and desperados...White men dared not bring their families lest they be attacked by Indians on their periodic raids. At last buffalo hunters made their way southward... in the early seventies Fort Elliott was established and never again were the Indians so bold in their marauding. The land became safe for

home making. White men started ranches and built towns. The Panhandle of today was started.<sup>117</sup>

The Anglo perspective which saw the Native American response to Anglo encroachment as “marauding” likely made sense to KGNC which billed itself as “the national broadcasting company’s outlet serving a territory as large as Pennsylvania with a population 97% native born white American.”<sup>118</sup>

Hamner’s radio shows helped to solidify this population’s sense of pride and belonging, but also reinforced the idea that hard work and sacrifice would pay off. For instance, in many radio episodes, Hamner told stories of farming families suffering privation and sacrifice in order to build lives of future prosperity. One episode told the story of the Skipworth family’s 1891 settlement of Kress, Texas. It began with a story about a new dugout home, and a honeymoon spoiled by the rain that kept coming. “Rain.... rain... rain..” says Hamner, until the wedding gifts were wet, and even “their chickens were drowned.” Like most of Hamner’s stories, the episode continued on from this bleak beginning to more years of hardship until finally the couple’s doggedness paid off. By the end of the story, they lived in a nice wooden house, ran their own store, and had helped found the new town of Kress.<sup>119</sup>

Hamner’s radio histories also emphasized the traditional gendered representations of virile men and self-sacrificing women that had been so familiar to her earlier audiences. In an episode concerning “what the woman pioneer did to this section at large,” Hamner extolled “the main contributions of the woman pioneer to the Panhandle: permanence, dignity, courage of the weak, ambition, beauty, and culture.”<sup>120</sup> In another episode, she told the story of a Mrs. Bachmann who says: “I will never be more miserable than I was when I first came here. Our money was invested in this land and we had to stay, but I nearly died of loneliness.” Mrs. Bachmann’s story is full of coyotes, unfriendly neighbors, and fear, but ends on a note of triumph as her family ultimately owns four sections of irrigated farm land.<sup>121</sup> Bringing pioneer women’s stories of grit and sacrifice into the contemporary era, Hamner devoted an entire episode to Vera Back who was nursemaid by the age of ten to her dead brother’s young children, but later became a successful schoolteacher, and even taught in the electrical branch at the Amarillo Army Airfield before becoming the owner of an insurance agency.<sup>122</sup>

It is somewhat ironic that Hamner’s traditional frontier themes were so popular during the wartime mobilization of women’s labor, but according to Emily Westkaemper, radio programming directed toward women during the war was especially likely to emphasize women’s “work, loyalty,

and self-sacrifice.” This suggests that Hamner’s gendered representations would have resonated with much of the other radio work of the time, and functioned to promote women’s contributions to the larger war effort.<sup>123</sup> At the same time, they promoted idealized images of settlers and their work to spread Anglo culture throughout the west.

This was definitely the way her radio listeners understood their history. Hamner encouraged this by regularly seeking audience advice about stories she was preparing as well as suggestions for future stories.<sup>124</sup> The residents of the Panhandle responded by asking her to do stories about their towns, as when a letter from a representative of the Pampa Chamber of Commerce offered to pay her expenses and make all arrangements if she would do their story in time to advertise the upcoming rodeo.<sup>125</sup> Other listeners wrote with answers to questions she had asked, corrections to stories she was researching, and hopes she would wish relatives a happy birthday on air.<sup>126</sup> Students even wrote to her asking for help with their research papers.<sup>127</sup>

Audience response was testament to both her popularity and the reach of the collective memories her stories helped to construct. In fact, the show’s emphasis, tone, and style were a great hit with listeners, who began writing to KGNC right away. A postcard dated August 21, 1941 reads, “I wish you knew how many people are listening with great interest to the broadcast by Laura V. Hamner. It carries an element of love of our country which is splendid and needed.”<sup>128</sup> A listener wrote, “Only one who has known this country intimately and has loved it well and long could recall it so vitally and sympathetically as you do.”<sup>129</sup> And another listener wrote, “They are helping to keep alive the true spirit of the west which so rightfully belongs to the Panhandle of Texas. Let’s Keep That Spirit.” [emphasis in the original]<sup>130</sup> Hamner’s style was so pleasing to her audience that one listener wrote, “you make history sound like cake and ice cream.”<sup>131</sup> Her radio voice was apparently quite good, but more importantly, her histories were pleasing to her audience in part because they were familiar tales of heroism and sacrifice resulting in great achievements. As Roosevelt had argued, such stories of “grit” played an important role in wartime morale, but they also contributed to the construction of belonging among Anglo residents of the Panhandle.

In July 1942, KGNC gave Hamner a merit award with the following praise for the show:

...conscientious, as well as brilliant and vivid portrayals of our pioneers in the Panhandle Plains Area. ... We sincerely believe that you have rendered a particularly splendid service in keeping

alive the traditions that this great Panhandle Plains Area was built upon.<sup>132</sup>

The goal of “Light ‘n Hitch” was not to challenge dominant views of Anglo superiority, but rather, to tell the story of settlement as both she, and other settlers, saw it: the achievements of white men and their helpmate wives. Hamner won many awards from KGNC for her service, and the enormously popular show was memorialized when Hamner published a compilation of radio episodes in the book *Light ‘n Hitch*.<sup>133</sup>

### 1942 “Short Grass and Longhorns”

During the early years of the “Light ‘n Hitch” show, Hamner continued work on the ranching history she had begun all those years ago as postmaster in Claude. More than any other of her works, the book *Short Grass and Longhorns*<sup>134</sup> won her critical acclaim and recognition as an expert on Panhandle history. Unlike the Goodnight book, *Short Grass and Longhorns* was not self-published, but rather was published by the University of Oklahoma Press. It was taken seriously by reviewers as an “authentic” history book for adults, not just a school reader, and generated such a high volume of demand that it was quickly reprinted twice.<sup>135</sup> Given the book’s popularity as well as the authority Hamner was able to claim as a cultural producer with knowledge of the Panhandle, it is worth examining the kind of collective memory generated in the book.

Westerns continued to be popular through the war,<sup>136</sup> but the ranch history Hamner produced was particularly well suited to meet the wartime demand for boosting American morale. In the book’s first chapter, Hamner pinned the success of the cattle industry on “two potent elements: the stamina of the cattlemen themselves and the loyalty of their cowboys.”<sup>137</sup> She highlighted the masculinity of both groups of Texas men to great effect, in part by drawing comparisons between American men and the elite British men who owned several of the early ranches. For instance, her Texas ranchers were daring and courageous men, but they were also conspicuously democratic in the way they ran their ranches. According to Hamner, the hired hands working on these ranches were only loyal to men who recognized their “unquestioned freedom of soul.”<sup>138</sup> She contrasts this democratic masculinity with that of those “titled Englishmen with Old World ideas of the relation of master and servant.”<sup>139</sup>

It was not just their democratic nature that distinguished the Americans from the British, the Americans were also much braver. For example, of Texas men such as “Daring Bill Curtis,” a former Texas Ranger whose

ancestor had “signed the Declaration of Texas Independence,” she wrote, “As a boy, he had learned to shoot with both hands with equal dexterity... [and he] feared nothing.”<sup>140</sup> Of Scotsmen, she wrote: “The least untoward condition might send them scurrying to cover in their own Scotch heather... apprehensive of they knew not what.”<sup>141</sup>

Just like the men, Texas women were portrayed as loyal and brave, tough and capable. Hamner was aware that many women experienced loneliness on the frontier, but she argued that despite this fact, they remained loyal to their husbands and to the enterprise of settlement.<sup>142</sup> For instance, she detailed some of the difficulties of housekeeping on the frontier, saying that although women faced “every inconvenience of living...they met these conditions with stout hearts that harbored no rebellion.”<sup>143</sup> On the Bugbee ranch, wife Molly “objected” when her husband tried to spare her some hardship, arguing that she: “was young and strong and it would not hurt her even to help cook the meals, and she did not want to rear children who were too soft to stand discomfort.”<sup>144</sup>

The women Hamner wrote about in *Short Grass* were not just brave and hardy. Like the ideal frontier women who adapted “true womanhood” to their conditions, Hamner portrayed many of these women as also bringing a “motherly” touch to the frontier. For instance, Mrs. Hays, the wife of Springer ranch manager, “mended the clothes of the cowboys... cooked for the boys, nursed them in illness... all that a loving mother would do...”<sup>145</sup> A true helpmate to her settler husband, the idealized wife on the frontier would not only brave difficult and dangerous conditions, but would also contribute to the development of the ranch by tending to the needs of everyone involved in it. For cowboys, who sometimes were quite young when they began their labor but who were perpetually seen as junior to the rancher, a woman’s role was ideally that of the caregiving “mother.”<sup>146</sup>

Reviewers did notice this time that Hamner included women’s stories in her ranching history and they approved of her treatments. Stanley Walker wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune* that “some women of gallantry and fortitude are treated with the respect they deserve.”<sup>147</sup> Hugh Cowdin wrote for the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* that “today we can enjoy and realize the epic qualities of what these men and women did in the panhandle, but at the time life was drudgery. Particularly was the life of the women hard.”<sup>148</sup> Hilton Greer of the *Dallas Morning News* wrote that the book reveals “the courage of the first few women who pioneered in the dugouts” as “sticking in the new and lonely land called for fortitude and resourcefulness.”<sup>149</sup>

However, as Hilton Greer also noted in his *Dallas Morning News* review, the book “deals chiefly with the hard-bitten, tough-fibered men who made the ranches.”<sup>150</sup> And like the book, the majority of reviewers were

also focused on her portrayal of ranching men. A few selections help to illustrate the degree to which her treatments of Texas masculinity resonated with them. The *San Antonio Express* wrote: “Heroic figures, 20<sup>th</sup> century patriarchs with fighting spirit, stride through those pages.”<sup>151</sup> An earlier review written by the same paper read: “to Miss Hamner the early-day cattleman of the Panhandle was a businessman, trained in a hard school, who succeeded when he had strong will, native ability, and persistence.”<sup>152</sup>

Amarillo newsman Wes Izzard<sup>153</sup> was especially captivated by Hamner’s portrayal of the contrast between Texas and British men in the story. In a review for the *Amarillo Globe-News*, he wrote at some length:

at the end of the scale was the weak and maudlin Lord Aberdeen who gave his name to the Rocking Chair headquarters; at the other the mighty Charles Goodnight, king of the JA’s. And in between were all manner of men—tough Texans and effete easterners; carefree cowboys and English remittance men; honest men and thieves; clowns and clergymen.<sup>154</sup>

Even C. L. Sonnichsen, one of Texas’ most important historians,<sup>155</sup> wrote a review of *Short Grass and Longhorns* for the *El Paso Herald Post*. In it, he said the book “shows first of all that the region is ‘Straight Texas,’” (emphasis in the original), full of “big ranches, big men, barbed wire, and cows.”<sup>156</sup>

Reviewers also commented on the authenticity of her portrayal. Hal Borland wrote in the *New York Times Book Review* that Hamner “is obviously a tireless researcher and she has gone to headquarters for her material—virtually all of it is taken from the memories of men and women who had a part in early Panhandle history.”<sup>157</sup> John Lynch wrote for an Amarillo paper that Hamner, “succeeded in capturing with a native freshness the nostalgic tang of the range... one of the most colorful, authentic, and interesting writers of her day.”<sup>158</sup> He added, “We were deeply impressed by the Amarillo woman’s character delineations and her faithful adherence to fact”.<sup>159</sup>

Once again, Hamner had skillfully rendered the men and women who settled the Panhandle as her audience wanted to see them. The book’s great popularity, as well as the overwhelmingly positive response of reviewers, demonstrates the degree to which her vision of courageous, morally upright, traditionally gendered, and democratic Anglo settlers resonated with her audience. The patriotism for both Panhandle and the United States more broadly would have generated broad appeal during a time of war, but the popularity of the book was also due to the way in which *Short*

*Grass and Longhorns* validated both Anglo settlement, and those who participated in it.

## Recognition

With the critical acclaim garnered by *Short Grass and Longhorns*, Hamner forged a lasting and successful career as a cultural producer who could bring authentic Panhandle settlement history to life. Unlike other women who made gains during the war only to see them rescinded during the postwar years, Hamner never lost the ground she had won. Instead, she continued the successful runs of her radio program and newspaper columns (even adding two more entitled “Plains Names” and “Tri-State Scrapbook”) and published many more articles as well as three more

books before her death in 1968.<sup>160</sup> Long before that, she had gained a great deal of public recognition for her achievements.

Shortly after publication of *Short Grass*, Hamner began to win awards. She was named 1945 “Woman of the Year” by *Progressive Farmer* magazine for her “service to Texas rural women.”<sup>161</sup> In the same year she was elected to membership in the Texas Institute of Letters.<sup>162</sup> A 1950 KGNC Mother’s Day radio address given by Dean Walter H. Juniper from West Texas State College named Hamner “Panhandle Number One Mother of 1950.” An excerpt from the radio address demonstrates recognition of her role in helping to create a regional sensibility in Panhandle residents:

Our honored mother brought forth the children of her mind and great heart as her gift to all who are and will be sons and daughters of the Texas Panhandle.... Somehow as a newcomer from far away, she saw the meaning of the West in better perspective than did those who had lived there all of their lives...



Laura V. Hamner signing copies of *Prairie Vagabonds*, ca. 1955. Original photo by Ed April of the *Amarillo Daily News*. Image courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives.

By giving unselfishly of herself, Miss Hamner has made us all more conscious of our home sweet home in the Panhandle.<sup>163</sup>

The gendered language used to describe Hamner as a “mother” and her work as a “service” to others clearly invokes the still-resonant discourse of frontier femininity in which women’s achievements outside the home were acceptable, and even admirable, as long as they were re-framed as forms of service or care-giving. In the Texas of the 1950s, such discourses were still useful and even women working for women’s legal rights used what one author calls “maternalism” to cloak their support for women’s rights in the discourses of traditional femininity.<sup>164</sup> Nearing her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday when she was named “Number One Mother of 1950,” and having always seen her work as a form of service, Hamner must have thought this language appropriate and even laudatory.

What made her writing a service to the Panhandle was that she wrote about it in glowing terms that were, at the same time, terms that would have been familiar to other settlers and their children. There was little challenge to their own views of settlement or Anglo society in her work. In recognition of that fact, in 1958, Amarillo’s Mayor John Armstrong declared September 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> “Laura V. Hamner Week.” In doing so, he meant to honor her role in recording “the lives of hundreds of men and women who have built upon the prairies and breaks of the Texas Panhandle a great civilization.”<sup>165</sup> A newspaper article about the award emphasized the value of her idealized stories about settlers and settlement:

She found the glory of the High Plains and the people here. And she has captured that glory for the nation and posterity in her careful collection of the colorful stories of this land... She tells of pioneers on the move, of great women bringing dignity and culture into primitive surroundings, of men’s struggles to develop law and government in town and country.<sup>166</sup>

In fact, Hamner’s work resonated not just with the Panhandle, but across Texas. Also in 1958, she was named “Texas Press Woman of Achievement” by the Texas Women’s Press Association for “advancing the cause of women in journalism in Texas.”<sup>167</sup> She was the focus of a Texas Senate Resolution in support of her winning the National Women’s Press award.<sup>168</sup> A few years later in 1963, she was awarded the Texas Heritage Foundation National Liberty Medal, “given in recognition of outstanding contribution to Texas literature and the writing of Texas history.” The newspaper article announcing the award explained: “The medals are presented to Texans



**Laura V. Hamner**  
Who knows and loves The Plains, and  
is probably America's Eldest Active  
broadcaster.

Image caption: "Laura V. Hamner, Who knows and loves The Plains, and is probably America's Eldest Active broadcaster." Image courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum archives.

for outstanding achievement in the arts and literature and in recognition of the work designed to preserve Texas heritage."<sup>169</sup>

The political effects of Hamner's work as a collective memory producer are complex. The obvious public enthusiasm for her writing suggests that she was not engaging in what would have been unpopular counter-narratives about the process of settlement and those who were dispossessed by it. Indeed, as did other female cultural producers of her time, Hamner felt keenly her responsibility to educate both young and old audiences in "the strength, goodness, and courage of most of the dwellers, city and country, of the Panhandle."<sup>170</sup>

She believed wholeheartedly in promoting Panhandle residents' sense of ownership and pride over their history, and viewed that history as the achievement of virile Anglo men and their "helpmate" wives.

What is different about her work is that she did focus on the women

more than was customary in the typical ranching histories of the period. She wrote Anglo women into ranching history when that field was dominated by male writers, and even more interesting, she was recognized by male reviewers for her authentic portrayals of both men and women in the Panhandle. To a certain extent then, she was participating in early efforts to build the field of women's history, and demonstrated a life-long commitment to ensuring that women's contributions to the development of the Panhandle would be recognized. In her newspaper columns in particular, it is possible to see her approval of women's economic pursuits as a kind of frontier fortitude translated into present-day career paths. Like other women of her time, she found ways to carve a life for herself apart from the demands of "true womanhood," and helped to encourage recognition of other women's efforts to do the same.

## Endnotes

1. "Light 'n Hitch" radio script no. 402 dated 14 January 1951. Accessed 16 June 2015 via <http://www.swishertx.com>.
2. Loula Grace Erdman, "Mother of a Region," Laura V. Hamner Collection, Collection I, Box 9, Awards and Recognition II, Panhandle Plains Historical Museum (hereafter Hamner Collection PPHM), Canyon, Texas. A 20-page manuscript titled "Mother to a Region" prepared by Loula Grace Erdman, Canyon, Texas. On page 19 she writes, "Dr. Walter Juniper, dean of West Texas State College, once conducted a radio program. When time came for a Mother's Day number, he looked around him for an outstanding mother to honor. Finally, he decided to choose Miss Laura. 'Some women mother children,' he explained. 'Miss Laura has gone at things on a larger scale. She has mothered a region.'" There is no evidence that this story was ever published by Erdman, but Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 3, Folder 8, 1954, letter from Jack Cason to Loula Grace Erdman dated 20 May 1954 suggests he believes Erdman is preparing an "Unforgettable Character" story on Hamner for *Reader's Digest*.
3. There are only three published sources that deal with Hamner's life and work in any depth. The most thorough examination of her family and early life is a biographical account in an unpublished dissertation written by Myra Dorris Hall, *Laura V. Hamner: A Woman Before Her Time* (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, Texas, 1988). For Hamner's life as it relates to her involvement in the Panhandle Penwomen, see Betty Holland Wiesepape, *Lone Star Chapters: The Story of Texas Literary Clubs* (Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 70-100. A short piece on Hamner written by Deolece Miller, "Miss Laura of Amarillo," appeared in *Texas Parade Magazine*, December 1954. Unpublished biographical manuscripts written by friends and family, as well as an autobiography written by Hamner herself, are located in the, but most focus on her early life rather than later career.
4. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) is the original source for much of the scholarship on this concept. According to Sarah Gensburger, "Halbwachs' studies on collective memory: A founding text for contemporary 'memory studies'?", *Journal of Classical Sociology*, Vol 16(4), 396-413, 2016, Halbwachs was concerned with developing a theory of memory at a time when sociologists were working out the relationship between the society and the individual.
5. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 24. See also Gregg Cantrell and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, eds., *Lone Star Pasts: Memory and History in Texas* (Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 1-13.
6. Cantrell and Turner, *Lone Star Pasts*, 4-5. See also Maurice Halbwachs, "Individual Consciousness and Collective Mind," *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 no.6 (1939):818-

- 822, where he argues that one cannot find evidence of collective memory in individual minds, but only in publicly manifest form, most often materially as in flags, crowns, medals, monuments, books, movies, etc.
7. Cantrell and Turner, *Lone Star Pasts*, 2. Chris Weedon and Glenn Jordan, "Collective Memory: Theory and Politics" *Social Semiotics*, 22, no.2 (2012), 143, state that collective memory "helps to create, sustain and reproduce the 'imagined communities' with which individuals identify and that give them a sense of history, place and belonging." See also Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-98), who is particularly influential in thinking about the relationship between national identity and collective memories. See also Gensburger, "Halbwachs' studies on collective memory," 405, who says Nora is an historian principally concerned with political commemorations of French history.
  8. For more on the political uses of collective memory, see Chris Weedon and Glenn Jordan, "Collective memory: Theory and politics," *Social Semiotics*, 22, no.2 (2012): 143-153, as well as Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction," *Signs*, 28, no.1 (2002): 1-19.
  9. Ruby Cook, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 13, Folder: Ruby Cook Notes for Biography I, 13.
  10. Louis Fairchild, *The Lonesome Plains: Death and Revival on an American Frontier* (Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 29.
  11. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" (Autobiography), 16.
  12. Claudia Goldin, "The Work and Wages of Single Women, 1870-1920," *The Journal of Economic History* 40, no.1 (March 1980): 81-82.
  13. Sylvia Hunt, "To Wed and To Teach: The Myth of the Single Teacher," in *Women and Texas History: Selected Essays*, eds. Fane Downs and Nancy Baker Jones (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1993), 127-142.
  14. Ruby Cook, 'Lonewolf," Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Box 13, Ruby Cook Biography of LVH, 11-12, 14.
  15. Barbara Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers on the Western Frontier* (University of Nevada Press, 1992), 109-110.
  16. Cloud, *The Business of Newspapers*, 110.
  17. Wiesepape, *Lone Star Chapters*, 71.
  18. General Coorespondence 1917, Laura V. Hamner Collection, Box 3H 139, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History (hereafter Hamner Collection DBC).
  19. For more on the DRT, see Joel D. Kitchens, "Making Historical Memory: Women's Leadership in the Preservation of San Antonio's Missions," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* CXXI, no. 2 (2017): 171-196; Holly Beachley Brear, "We Run the Alamo, and You Don't: Alamo Battles of Ethnicity and Gender" in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 299-317. For more on the UDC, see

- W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "No Deed But Memory," in *Where These Memories Grow*, 1-28; Kelly McMichael, "Memories Are Short but Monuments Lengthen Remembrances': The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Power of Civil War Memory" in *Lone Star Pasts*, eds. Cantrell and Turner (Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 95-118.
20. Laura Lyons Mcemore, "Early Historians and the Shaping of Texas Memory" in *Lone Star Pasts*, eds. Cantrell and Turner, 31-32. Mcemore chronicles the role of early historians in Texas, and notes the DRT's efforts to promote the collection and publication of Texas history. She notes that the DRT actually shared historical information with one of the earliest school history textbook writers, Anna Pennybacker, whose intention was to promote "true patriotism" in Texas schoolchildren.
  21. Courtney Ann Vaughn-Roberson, "Sometimes Independent but Never Equal: Women Teachers 1900-1950: The Oklahoma Example," *Pacific Historical Review* 53, no.1 (February 1984): 40, 44.
  22. Katharina Hering, "That Food of the Memory Which Gives the Clue to Profitable Research": Oral History as a Source for Local, Regional, and Family History in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century, *The Oral History Review* 34, no.2 (Summer - Autumn 2007): 27-47.
  23. Ruby Cook Correspondence, Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Box 14, Miscellaneous. Handwritten manuscript, no page numbers.
  24. Hering, "That Food of the Memory," 28-29 notes that the interview was the primary method used to collect local histories. According to Rebecca Sharpless, "The History of Oral History," in *Handbook of Oral History*, eds. Charlton, Meyers and Sharpless (Alta Mira Press 2006): 32-33 notes that the interview became a key journalistic method from the 1860s onward.
  25. Sylvia Ann Grider and Lou Halsell Rodenberger, eds. *Texas Women Writers: A Tradition of Their Own* (Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 13.
  26. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2, part I (Summer 1966): 151-174.
  27. Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," 152.
  28. Anne M. Butler, "The Way We Were, the Way We Are, and the Way Ahead," *Western Historical Quarterly* 36 no. 4 (Winter 2005): 423-427 discusses the lengthy process by which western women's and gender history has been incorporated into the larger field. For more on the impacts of these incorporations, see Margaret Jacobs "Western History: What's Gender Got To Do With It?" *Western Historical Quarterly* 42 no. 3 (Autumn 2011): 297-304; Natasha Mayne, "As Far As The Eye Could See: Cormac McCarthy, Myth and Masculine Visions in the 'New' American West," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 20, no. 2 (December 2001).
  29. Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," 151-174 also discusses the extension of "true womanhood" from the family to the larger community. For "true womanhood" on the frontier, see Adrienne Caughfield, *True Women and Westward*

- Expansion* (Texas A&M University Press, 2005). See also, Beverly J. Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed": The Image of the Frontier Woman," *The Journal of American Folklore* 88, no.347 (Jan-Mar 1975): 25-41.
30. Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 37, 41.
  31. Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 27, 40. The stock character categories listed are Stoeltje's but I find them useful for describing Hamner's treatments as well. Baym, *Women Writers of the American West*, 3 argues that women writing about the West between 1833 and 1927 avoided the violence typical of dime novel and movie westerns.
  32. "Light 'n Hitch," Episode #315, May 15, 1949. Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 2, Vol. 8, 238-268. After recounting this story, she reports that she was later ashamed and began washing her own clothes right away.
  33. Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection II, Box 5, "My Oklahoma Claim"; Hall *Laura V. Hamner*, 95-97. See also Sherry L. Smith, "Single Women Homesteaders: The Perplexing Case of Elinore Pruitt Stewart," *Western Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (May 1991): 163-183 for more on single women who filed claims on the frontier.
  34. Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 108; Wiesepape, *Lone Star Chapters*, 90.
  35. "Panhandle Pioneers," *Fort Worth Star Telegram* 16 February 1915. The clipping recounts the formation of the Panhandle Old Settler's Association in 1914, listing Hamner as Secretary and James N. Browning as President.
  36. Laura V. Hamner, "Page in Frontier History Turned Back by 'Old Timers' Recounting Early Panhandle-Day Stories at BBQ" *Fort Worth Star Telegram* 21 September 1919, 8.
  37. Stoeltje, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 31.
  38. Marianne Hirsch and Valerie Smith, "Feminism and Cultural Memory: An Introduction," *Signs*, 28, no. 1 (2002): 9.
  39. See Light Townsend Cummins and Mary L. Scheer, eds., *Texan Identities: Moving Beyond Myth, Memory, and Fallacy in Texas History* (University of North Texas Press, 2016), 7, for more on the dominance of this narrative in Texas history.
  40. Hamner held meetings of the Amarillo chapter of the UDC at the Herring Hotel, and lead informational sessions on the Confederacy for the group, "UDC Chapter Meets at Home of Mrs. Cleo G. Clayton" *Amarillo Globe Times*, 9 May 1938, 8. The DRT made her an honorary member of the group in 1956. Imogen Whittington to Laura V. Hamner, 12 March 1956, Hamner Collection PPHM I, Box 3, Folder 2.
  41. An adequate exploration of her complex representations of non-Anglos deserves a separate article that is in preparation now. In this article, I take a closer look at Hamner's racialized representations of Anglo settlers only.
  42. Nina Baym, *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927* (University of Illinois Press, 2011), 4.
  43. While the post-suffrage era 1920s did expand opportunities for women across the country, these did not necessarily translate into gender-neutral political or economic

- power. Instead, dominant ideals about women's roles as caregivers continued to shape their influence. For instance, Judith N. McArthur, "Maternity Wars: Gender, Race, and the Sheppard-Towner Act in Texas" in *Texas Women: Their Histories, Their Lives*, Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Stephanie Cole, Rebecca Sharpless, eds. (University of Georgia Press 2015), 255-256, notes that many women who were politically active in 1920s Texas "created careers for themselves during the progressive era by claiming expertise in areas where men had no vested interest in excluding them."
44. For a comprehensive account of the PPW and Hamner's participation in founding and guiding the organization see Wiesepape, *Lone Star Chapters*, 70-100.
  45. Wiesepape, *Lone Star Chapters*, 77.
  46. Jack Potter to Laura V. Hamner, 14 March 1921, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 139, General Correspondence 1921.
  47. According to a newspaper clipping "Cowboys Talk Over Bygones," "exclusive dispatch" from Canyon Texas, September 17, the initial reunion involved only those who had worked on the T-Anchor ranch. Included in Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 139, General Correspondence 1922. In 1924, membership was expanded to anyone who had settled the Panhandle prior to 1890, with an exception made for Hamner, see "All Old Timers Will Be Guests At Roundup: Anchor Boys Decide to Make Summer Meeting Open to All," 11 May 1924 *Amarillo Globe-Times*, 8. An announcement for the 1924 reunion, in the form of a letter to the "Cowboys of the Panhandle" signed by Judge L. Gough, President, and Laura V. Hamner, Secretary, 29 July 1924. Included in Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H139, General Correspondence 1924.
  48. Paul H. Carlson, *Amarillo: The Story of a Western Town* (Texas Tech University Press, 2006), 79-118.
  49. Jeff Roche, *Cowboy Conservatism: High Plains Politics 1933-1972* (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 2001), 31.
  50. Hamner, "Barb Wire and the Panhandle" *The Cattleman* (August 1922); Hamner, "Castro County Wins Her Bet," *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* 1928, newspaper clipping included in Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3K 125, Scrapbooks Vol. 3.; Hamner, "How Sweetwater Became a Hard Nut" *The Dallas Morning News* 18 January 1931, newspaper clipping included in Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3K 125, Scrapbooks Vol. 3.
  51. J. Frank Dobie to LVH, 8 July 1925, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 139, General Correspondence 1925.
  52. Poetry Society of Texas to LVH, 11 February 1928, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 139, General Correspondence 1928.
  53. Ruby Cook, "Going Somewhere Lady" manuscript and "Character Talks Back," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 13, Ruby Cook biography synopsis; LVH to Ruby Cook, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 14, Ruby Cook Correspondence 1961-77, page 5; Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 143-148.
  54. McArthur, "Maternity Wars," 252, writes that that after women failed to materialize

- as a voting bloc, women's legislation across the country languished. Once the Great Depression set in, women across the country began to lose employment to men. See, Estelle B. Freedman, "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s" *The Journal of American History* 61, no.2 (September 1974): 380.
55. Kenneth Ragsdale, *The Year American Discovered Texas: Centennial '36* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1987); Leigh Clemons, *Branding Texas: Performing Culture in the Lone Star State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 104-106; Light Townsend Cummins, "From the Midway to the Hall of State at Fair Park: Two Competing Views of Women at the Dallas Celebration of 1936," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 114, no.3 (2011): 225-251. Cummins, 227 argues that the Centennial celebrations have "been seen as a significant factor in codifying the singularity of Texas exceptionalism and regional uniqueness"; Angus Lauchlan, *Constructing White Texas Maleness: From the Texas Centennial of 1936 to the Aftermath of President John F. Kennedy's Assassination in 1963* (Dissertation Submitted to the Department of History, University of London, University College, 2005). Lauchlan, 35 notes that the Centennial "provided a platform for breast-beating on the subject of how best the Texas image, and historical Texas maleness, should be represented."
  56. Clemons, *Branding Texas*, 105.
  57. Cummins, "From the Midway to the Hall of State at Fair Park," 227.
  58. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, autobiographical manuscript, 36 to 39.
  59. Printed Documents 1942-1951 and Undated, Promotional Brochure, no date, Hamner Collection Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 147.
  60. "Sent to Principals and Teachers," 20 March 1937. Correspondence No Gun Man 1935-41 and Undated. Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H146, typewritten document "Sent to Principals and Teachers," 20 March 1937.
  61. Review, *Hillsboro Evening Mirror*, n.d., Correspondence No Gun Man 1935-41 and Undated. Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 146. Typewritten newspaper review attributed to the *Hillsboro Evening Mirror*, no date.
  62. Earl and Vada Vandale Collection, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Box 2H 464, "Goodnight (Charles), Notes by List of Questions sent to Col. Goodnight by Laura V. Hamner and His Responses." This folder contains several letters from Charles and Corinne Goodnight to LVH answering questions she has asked about his life, as well as a list of questions she had posed for them to answer. Hereafter VCHamner Collection DBC.
  63. William E. Ellis, *Irvin S. Cobb: The Rise and Fall of an American Humorist* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2017).
  64. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" autobiographical manuscript, 36-39. A slightly different version of the same story can be found at Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "I left Memphis 2," p 24.

65. Laura V. Hamner, "How Charles Goodnight Took 'Roundance'" *The Cattleman* IX, no.3 (August 1922): 9-13, 38-45. Hamner also wrote articles for local newspapers about the Goodnights: copies of these can be found in VCHamner Collection DBC, Box 2H 480, and Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 522 and 3K 125.
66. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" autobiographical manuscript, 36-39. Haley's biography came out in 1936: see J. Evetts Haley, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1936).
67. Lauchlan, *Constructing White Texas Maleness*, 105-06.
68. Cummins and Scheer, eds., *Texan Identities: Moving Beyond Myth, Memory, and Fallacy in Texas History*, 7-8.
69. *Ibid.*, 26.
70. Laura Hamner, Historical Narrative, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 152, Historical Narrative, Laura V. Hamner's Writings, 27.
71. Laura V. Hamner, *The No-Gun Man of Texas: A Century of Achievement 1835-1929*, (Amarillo, TX: Laura V. Hamner, 1935), 9.
72. *Ibid.*, 28.
73. *Ibid.*, 91.
74. *Ibid.*, 145.
75. Walter Prescott Webb, "Some Historians of the Plains Region," *Amarillo Sunday News and Globe*, Golden Anniversary Edition 1938, Section A, 17-18.
76. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" (Autobiography), 43. Hamner recounted that she refused to read the curse words during the meeting and instead, said: "I'm a lady in spite of hell." After the story recounted by Webb began to circulate, she claimed that people started asking her, "You are having a damn good time, aren't you?" In response, she started to "use an oath" in her answer to make everyone laugh. A slightly different version of the same story can be found at Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "I left Memphis 2," p 29.
77. Hamner, *The No-Gun Man*, first uses her maiden name, Mary Ann Dyer, and then switches to the nickname, which she spells "Mollie" throughout.
78. Lauchlan, *Constructing White Texas Maleness*, 64-66. Lauchlan argues for the dominance of Webb's contention in The Great Plains that women were repelled by the plains such that they did not contribute much to its settlement.
79. Hamner, *The No-Gun Man*, vi. Foreword written by R.W. Hall, Chief Justice of the Court of Civil Appeals, Seventh Supreme Judicial District, Amarillo, Texas, July 31, 1935.
80. Other writers of the time represent Mollie Goodnight in a much more stereotypically "refined lady" fashion without any evolution in character over time. For instance, see Stoeljte, "A Helpmate for Man Indeed," 30 quoting Willie Newbury Lewis, *Between Sun and Sod* (Clarendon, Texas, 1938), 57. Lewis wrote: "set by circumstances amid

surroundings too uncongenial to her highstrung, sensitive temperament, she was dashed and buffeted by the winds of western life till her frail body broke.”

81. Hamner, *The No-Gun Man*, 147.
82. Ibid, 147-148.
83. Ibid, 158.
84. Ibid, 155.
85. “Name Miss Hamner Area Supervisor,” *Amarillo Globe-News* 29 January 1936, Page 2, Column 2; “Seek Topics for Project: National Guide Book Will Be Published in Near Future,” *Amarillo Globe-News*, 20 January 1936, page 9, column 4. The Federal Writers’ Project (“FWP”), was a relief program for writers under Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration (“WPA”) which encouraged collective memory making by hiring writers to create national regional guidebooks through extensive interviewing and data collection. Hamner had been a local supervisor, covering 20 counties in the Panhandle, but when named Area Supervisor became responsible for Districts 16, 17 and 18, covering 48 counties in West Texas. She was supervising eight researchers and collaborating with local experts to collect information for the National Guide Book. Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers’ Project* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); David Eldredge, *American Culture in the 1930s* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008). For more on the subject of how well minority groups were integrated into the FWP, see Catherine A. Stewart, “Committing Mayhem on the Body Grammatic: the Federal Writer’s Project, the American Guide and Representations of Black Identity,” *Long Past Slavery: Representing Race in the Federal Writer’s Project* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 35-61.
86. Roche, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 44-45; “Help to Build Book of Texas: 12 Appointed Consultants on Amarillo Section for Guide Book,” *Amarillo Globe-News*, 22 January 1936, p 7, column 1.
87. Hamner, “Uncle Seab,” *Amarillo Sunday News and Globe* 1938 Golden Anniversary Edition, Section 2, page 20, column 3; “Gabriel Over the Plains,” Section B p 24, column 1; “Stupidity of Plains Buffalo was Partly Responsible for Its Rapid Extinction,” Section D, page 12, column 1; “Bachelor Dugout Dwellers Near Claude,” Section D, page 13, column 1; “Cap, Cape, and Charlie,” Section E, page 13, column 1; “Chisolm Trail Was Named for a Trapper Not a Cattleman,” Section E, page 15, column 1; “Panhandle Ranch History At a Glance,” Section E, page 17, column 6; “Trail Driving Required Skill and Courage,” Section E, page 30, column 1; “Hill Grove is Picnic Spot for the County,” Section G3, page 31, column 7.
88. See Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 165-166 for a lengthy discussion of how the column got its full name, “Talks to Teens of Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.”
89. Maurine H. Beasley and Kathryn T. Theus, *The New Majority: A Look at What the Preponderance of Women in Journalism Education Means to the Schools and the Professions* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985); Maurine H. Beasley and Sheila

- J. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* (Washington, D.C.: The American University Press, 1993); Patricia Bradley, *Women and the Press: The Struggle for Equality* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005). According to Bradley, the “human interest” story, which she says is characterized by a “rise and succeed” narrative, was also a special preserve of women journalists, 103.
90. Deolece Miller, “She Walks on Tiptoes,” Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Awards and Recognition I. This quote is taken from a biographical document titled “She Walks on Tiptoes” by Deolece Miller, page 5. A similar document entitled “Short Grass Laureate” also written by Deolece Miller was prepared in support of Hamner’s election to the Texas Institute of Letters. Included in Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Awards and Recognition I.
  91. Ibid. This quote is taken from a marked-up draft of a biographical document titled “She Walks on Tiptoes” by Deolece Miller, page 10.
  92. Vaughn-Roberson, “Sometimes Independent but Never Equal” 44.
  93. Laura Hamner, “Talks to Teens,” 10 September 1939, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks, Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens, September 1939.
  94. Laura Hamner, “Talks to Teens,” 12 November 1939, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens September 1939.
  95. Laura Hamner, “Talks to Teens,” 10 March 1940, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens, September 1939.
  96. Claudia Goldin and Claudia Olivetti, “Shocking Labor Supply: A Reassessment of the Role of World War II on Women’s Labor Supply,” *The American Economic Review* 103, no. 3 (May 2013): 257-262; Taylor Jaworski, “‘You’re in the Army Now’: The Impact of World War II on Women’s Education, Work, and Family,” *The Journal of Economic History* 74, no. 1 (March 2014): 169-195.
  97. For example, the column dated 24 December 1939 credits a Mrs. Masterson who “did her part in developing this country,” Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens September 1939. Another column dated 8 October 1939 tells at some length the story of a Vena Hightower who is so patriotic that she “holds out her loving mother hands to her country and gives her baby without regret,” Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Notebooks, Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens September 1939.
  98. See Ruth Milkman, *On Gender, Labor, and Inequality* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 13-46 for more information about women’s employment during the Great Depression.
  99. Laura Hamner, “Talks to Teens,” 22 October 1939, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens September 1939.
  100. Laura Hamner, “Talks to Teens,” 15 October 1939, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 5, Vol. 2, Talks to Teens September 1939.
  101. According to Beasley and Gibbons, *Taking Their Place*, 15-16, this would not have

been all that unusual. The authors note that women's opportunities in journalism began to grow with the advent of U.S. involvement in WWII as women were hired to replace men who had gone off to war. By 1943, women made up 53% of the staff of many small-town newspapers.

102. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 6, Spinster on the Prowl #1, 11-28-41 to 12-30-42. This information gleaned from a handwritten document headed "Spinster on the Prowl, Wichita Falls Times (emphasis in the original), listing dates with schools visited by Hamner. The folder includes a newspaper clipping titled "A Spinster on the Prowl" with handwritten publication information *Wichita Falls Times* and dated 28 November 1941.
103. Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 170.
104. Ibid.
105. General Correspondence, 1909, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 139, General Correspondence 1909. It is curious to find in this collection a handwritten letter from "Sammy" to Holland's Magazine dated 31 December 1909 asking for the name of the anonymous author of an article published in their January issue entitled "Confessions of an Old Maid." It is possible that Hamner is that anonymous author, and that the editors forwarded the note to her.
106. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" (autobiography), p 2.
107. In a "Talks to Teens" column dated August 4, 1946 Hamner states "being a spinster is not so bad as it may seem, but I've been denied one pleasure by not marrying," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection 1, Notebooks, Drawer 5, Volume 7 "Talks to Teens" September 1945; in her unpublished autobiography "Spinster on the Prowl," she writes that she is generally happy as a spinster but has "sometimes longed for husband and children" and also had to "withstand the pitying looks" as well as "cruelly blunt remarks," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5.
108. Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 170.
109. Carlson, *Amarillo*, 140-143.
110. Holly Allen, *Forgotten Men and Fallen Women: The Cultural Politics of New Deal Narratives*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 136.
111. Laura Hamner, "Spinster on the Prowl," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5, "Spinster on the Prowl" (autobiography), section heading "Radio Work," 1-2.
112. Sue Carter, "Women Don't Do News: Fran Harris and Detroit's Radio Station WWJ," *Michigan Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 77-87; Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting 1922-1952* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 130-150; Anne McKay, "Speaking Up: Voice Amplification and Women's Struggle for Public Expression," in *Women and Radio: Airing Differences*, ed. Caroline Mitchell (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2000), 187-206.
113. Emily Westkaemper, *Selling Women's History: Packaging Feminism in Twentieth-*

- Century American Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017).
114. Laura Hamner to Ruby Cook, Ruby Cook Notes for Biography, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 13 "Ruby Cook Notes for Biography I", page ix of letter written and signed by Hamner. She recalled that she went to Raymond Hollingsworth and asked him for a spot on his program. Before putting her on-air, he wanted to see a sketch. When she gave him one, he commented, "that is not a radio script." "What is a radio script" she asked. "I don't know. I know this ain't it." She figured it out, got her on-air tryout, and "delighted Raymond." See also Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 170-175 for more on Hamner's method and earnings.
  115. Laura Hamner, "Light 'n Hitch," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 2, Vol. 1 "Light 'n Hitch" 1-24, marked-up radio script titled "Introduction to First Program," p. 2.
  116. Carlson, *Amarillo*, 121-122, 170. According to Carlson, the population of the area has been predominantly white since Amarillo was founded. He asserts that there were 1600 African Americans living in Amarillo in 1930, and while he does not give the number of Hispanics living there, he does mention their work in the cotton fields south of town. The war brought an increase in both the African American and Hispanic populations and by the 1950s, African Americans made up about 6% of Amarillo's total population. Hamner did include some stories about Mexicans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans in her radio and newspaper work, but as noted earlier, the portrayals were often racialized.
  117. Laura Hamner, "Light 'n Hitch," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 2, Vol. 1 Light 'n Hitch 1-24. This is a marked-up radio script for episode 1, dated 6 August 1941, page 1.
  118. John G. Ballard to Laura Hamner, 14 July 1942, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 1, Folder 2, Hamner Correspondence 1942-April 1945. Letter from John G. Ballard to Hamner, 14 July 1942, announcing their decision to give her a Merit Award. The letter is written on KGNC letterhead which makes the claim to a "97% native born white American" audience along the bottom margin.
  119. "Light 'n Hitch" radio script no. 402 dated 14 January 1951. Accessed 16 June 2015 via <http://www.swishertx.com>.
  120. Laura Hamner, "Light 'n Hitch," 269-321, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Drawer 2, Notebooks, Vol. 9, "Light 'n Hitch." This quote is taken from episode 315, dated 15 May 1949, page 7.
  121. Laura Hamner, "Light 'n Hitch," Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 152, Historical Narratives, "Light 'n Hitch." This story is taken from episode 52, dated 5 August 1942, pages 5-6.
  122. Laura Hamner, "Light 'n Hitch," Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 152 Historical Narratives, "Light 'n Hitch." This story is taken from episode 469, dated 27 April 1952.

123. Westkaemper, *Selling Women's History*, 129.
124. Bruce Lenthall, *Radio's America: The Great Depression and the Rise of Modern Mass Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 62.
125. C. H. Walker to Laura Hamner, 7 July 1948, Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection I, Box 2, Folder 7, July-December 1948.
126. Mrs. Arthur Cooper to Laura Hamner, 16 August 1944, Hamner Correspondence, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 1, Folder 2 Hamner Correspondence 1942-August 1945, page 2 of letter from Mrs. Arthur Cooper to Hamner dated 16 August 1944 with information about Floydada history; Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 145 Correspondence Radio Program Light 'n Hitch 1946, letter from Louise Perry Spicer to Hamner dated 19 May 1946 correcting information from Hamner's Ochiltree story; Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 143, General Correspondence 1951 is a letter from C.M. Flowers to Hamner dated 15 December 1951 asking Hamner to announce on her show the 100th birthday of "Grandmother Vaughan."
127. Marjorie Varner to Laura Hamner, 6 December 1945, Hamner Correspondence, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 1, Folder 2 Hamner Correspondence 1942-April 1945, letter from Marjorie Varner to Hamner dated 6 December 1945 asking Hamner for help with her English homework, a book report on *The No-Gun Man* and its author.
128. Julia B. Michener to KGNC, 21 August 1941, General Correspondence, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 140, General Correspondence 1941, postcard from Julia B. Michener to KGNC dated 21 August 1941.
129. Ruth Dimmick Jackson to Laura Hamner, 9 June 1942, Correspondence, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 145, Correspondence Radio Program Light 'n Hitch 1942. Letter from Ruth Dimmick Jackson to Hamner dated 9 June 1942.
130. Postcard to KGNC, unsigned, n.d., General Correspondence, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 140, General Correspondence 1940.
131. Jack Cason to Laura Hamner, 4 June 1946, General Correspondence, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 141, General Correspondence 1946 May-December. Letter from Jack Cason to Hamner dated 4 June 1946.
132. John G. Ballard to Laura Hamner, 14 July 1942, Hamner Correspondence, Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 1, Folder 2, Hamner Correspondence 1942-April 1945. Letter from John G. Ballard to Hamner, 14 July 1942.
133. MacMillan Company to Laura Hamner, General Correspondence, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 140 General Correspondence 1944 July-December. Letter from the MacMillan Company to Hamner rejecting her proposed book "Light 'n Hitch in Texas" shows that Hamner began considering a compilation long before it was eventually published in 1958 by the American Guild Press of Dallas. See Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 213-227 for more on the book and its publication.
134. Hamner, Laura V., *Short Grass and Longhorns* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942). The actual publication date was May 10, 1943, but the copyright date was

1942. Hamner Collection DBC, Box 4M411 letter dated 3 July 1942 from Lottinville at the University of Oklahoma press to Hamner suggesting a winter publication date. Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411 typewritten manuscript "Subsequent History of the Book" by Hamner notes that November and December of 1942 were spent getting illustrations together and indexing the book, and that the "publication date had been set for February 20th, but the binders were not able to meet this date. The book was published May 10, 1943." See Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 176-186 for more on Hamner's research and obstacles to publication.
135. Savoie Lottinville to Laura Hamner, 16 eember 1944, General Corespondence, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411, letter from Savoie Lottinville of University of Oklahoma Press to Hamner dated 16 December 1944 "your book is in process of being manufactured in its third printing."
136. Lance Bartelsen, "How Texas Won the Second World War," *Southwest Review* 76, n. 3 (Summer 1991): 309-335.
137. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 15. Later on the same page she notes the "strange, strong tie" that existed between cattleman and cowboy, calling it "a social structure somewhat patriarchal in character." See Jacqueline M. Moore, *Cowboys and Cattlemen: Class and Masculinities on the Texas Frontier, 1865-1900* (New York: New York University Press, 2010) for more on the use of "boy" to designate the hired hands, and its basis in social class distinctions.
138. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 77.
139. Ibid.
140. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 117-118.
141. Ibid, 122.
142. See Fairchild, *The Lonesome Plains* for more on loneliness as a common complaint among women settlers.
143. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 11.
144. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 56.
145. Hamner, *Short Grass*, 41.
146. Moore, *Cowboys and Cattlemen*.
147. Stanley Walker, "Panhandle Old-Timers," *New York Herald Tribune*, 4 July 1943, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 412.
148. Hugh Cowdin, "Panhandle Beginnings: Short Grass and Longhorns Found a Cattle Empire," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, Sunday, June 13, 1943, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411.
149. Hilton R. Greer, "Authoritative Record of Panhandle Ranching," *Sunday Dallas Morning News* May 30, 1943, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411.
150. Ibid.
151. "A Chronicle of 'Short Grass and Longhorns,'" *San Antonio Express*, 19 May 1943, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411.
152. "Panhandle Ranch History is Told in New Volume: Author of 'Short Grass and

- Longhorns' Visitor Here," *San Antonio Express* , 14 September 1942, Hamner Collection DBC Box 4M 411.
153. See *Handbook of Texas Online*, H. Allen Anderson, "IZZARD, WESLEY SHERMAN," accessed July 25, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fiz01>.
154. "Laura V. Hamner's Story of Plains Ranches is Must Reading," *Amarillo Globe-News*, n.d., Hamner Collection DBC, Box 4M 41.
155. See *Handbook of Texas Online*, Dale L. Walker, "SONNICHSEN, CHARLES LELAND," accessed July 25, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fso15>.
156. C. L. Sonnichsen, "Straight Texas," *El Paso Herald-Post* , n.d., Hamner Collection DBC, Box 4M 411, handwritten below "about May 22, 1943."
157. Hal Borland, "On the Long Prairie," *New York Times Book Review*, 25 July 1943, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 4M 412.
158. John Lynch, "We'll All Live Through it," *Amarillo Times*, 20 June 1943, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 4M 412, handwritten notation at bottom.
159. *Ibid.*
160. See Hamner, Laura V., *Prairie Vagabonds* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955); Hamner, Laura V., *Light 'n Hitch: A Collection of Historical Writing Depicting Life on the High Plains* (Dallas: American Guild Press, 1958); Hamner, Laura V., *Somebody Might Come: A Story of Modern Southern Hospitality in the Hills of Alabama* (Dallas: American Guild Press, 1958). Several unpublished manuscripts were still being circulated to publishers when she moved to a nursing home in Alabama where she died in 1968. See Hall, *Laura V. Hamner*, 230-249 for more on Hamner's last years. Evidence that she had several manuscripts in circulation to readers and/or publishers can be found at Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Boxes 1, 4 and 5.
161. "Woman of the Year," Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Awards and Recognition II. A certificate recognizing Hamner as 1945 "Woman of the Year" for her "service to Texas Rural Women" dated 1 January 1946.
162. William H. Vann to Laura Hamner, n.d., General Correspondence, 1945, Hamner Collection DBC, Box 3H 141, General Correspondence 1945, letter to Hamner from William H. Vann from the Texas Institute of Letters announcing her election dated 1 November 1945.
163. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection II, Box 5. Typewritten manuscript, heading "K.G.N.C. 3:30" begins "and now our tribute to a panhandle mother," and states "I want to call her the Panhandle Number One Mother of 1950" and ends 3 pages later "Miss Hamner has made us all more conscious of our home, sweet home in the Panhandle." The third page also includes the phrase "On this Mother's Day 1950." A typewritten copy of the first page of the same manuscript is found at Hamner Collection PPHM, Collection 1, Box 13, Ruby Cook Notes for Biography 1. This version includes reference to "ob Hutebox of Yesteryear" Mother's Day Program,

- KGNC, Amarillo, May 14th, 1950, 3:30 pm with attribution “written and presented by Walter H. Huniper, Dean, West Texas State College, Canyon (typos in original).
164. According to Nancy E. Baker, “Hermine Tobolowsky: A Feminist’s Fight for Equal Rights,” *Texas Women: Their Histories, Their Lives*, Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Stephanie Cole, Rebecca Sharpless, eds. (University of Georgia Press 2015), 434-456, even women fighting openly for women’s equal rights in Texas during this period used the discourse of “maternalism” to frame their work as an extension of their traditional female role.
165. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Personal/family history. A copy of the proclamation on City of Amarillo letterhead, signed by Mayor John Armstrong, dated 28 August 1958.
166. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Notebooks Drawer 1, Biography of Laura V. Hamner As Told in Letters #2, a newspaper clipping dated 11 September 1958 “Plains Author is Honored: Amarillo In Tribute to Laura V. Hamner, by Patricia Masterman, no other publication information.
167. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Awards and Recognition I, a “golden scroll award” cites Hamner as a Texas Press Woman of Achievement “for outstanding service toward advancing the cause of women in journalism in Texas” dated 1 November 1958, signed by Violeta Mahood and Eve Bartlett.
168. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 9, Personal/family history, copy of Senate Resolution No. 525 sponsored by Hazlewood, 3 pages. On page 3 “Resolved, that the Senate of Texas salute Laura V. Hamner, and extend to her its enthusiastic support in the competition for the National Award of Achievement, from the National Federation of Press Women”, signed Ben Ramsey President of the Senate, with certification of its adoption by the Senate on 7 May 1959 signed by Secretary of the Senate Charles Schnabel, with the official seal of the Senate of Texas affixed.
169. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection 1, Box 13, Ruby Cook Notes for Biography I, a newspaper clipping with no publication information, titled “Granted Foundation Medal: Amarillo Author Honored.” The article states that she was given the Texas Heritage Foundation National Liberty Medal “in recognition of outstanding contribution to Texas literature and the writing of Texas history” at a Panhandle Penwomen program given in honor of Hamner’s 92nd birthday.
170. Hamner Collection PPHM Collection I, Box 13, Ruby Cook Notes for Biography I, 13.





Potter County Stadium sign, April 15, 1958. The first home game in 1958 was against the Western League's Pueblo Dodgers. Amarillo Globe-News collection, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

# The Yellow City's Tenuous Hold on the Gold Sox: Affiliated Texas League Baseball in Amarillo, 1959–1982

Brian M. Ingrassia\*

In 2019, affiliated minor-league baseball returned to Amarillo for the first time in almost four decades when the San Antonio Missions of Class AA Texas League moved to the High Plains to become the Amarillo Sod Poodles. Throughout the season, over 400,000 fans flocked to a new \$45.5-million publicly financed stadium, called Hodgetown, to watch the Double-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres. Playing before crowds more typical of Class AAA teams, the Soddies capped the season by defeating the Tulsa Drillers in the league championship series. Down 3-1 at the top of the ninth in game five at downtown Tulsa's ONEOK Field, top Padres prospect Taylor Trammell—acquired mid-season from the Cincinnati Reds organization—belted a grand slam, followed by a three-run blast from Hudson Potts. Amarillo won, 8-3. It was Amarillo's first league title since 1976, when the Gold Sox also won as a San Diego affiliate.<sup>1</sup> Cheering crowds greeted the team bus when it arrived back in town after midnight. The victorious season seemed to demonstrate the city's energy. Sod Poodles general manager Tony Ensor enthusiastically claimed Amarillo had “the best fan base” in “the best city in all of our league [of] baseball.” Even though 2019 was the second consecutive year the Padres' Class AA team contested the league championship, Ensor attributed victory not to the “talent” on the diamond but to the “heart and character” that Amarillo fans had “instilled in our guys.”<sup>2</sup>

The history of affiliated baseball, though, is more complex than one city's excitement for its team or one team's rise to the top. It is often the story of small-city teams following the lead of the major leagues and struggling to fill seats. This history has deep roots. While legend places baseball's origins in 1840s Cooperstown, New York, the national pastime developed in antebellum cities and spread as the nation consolidated during the Civil

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War era. The Cincinnati Red Stockings toured the country as the first fully professional club in 1869, and by 1876 the National League (NL) began with eight teams; a quarter century later, it merged with the upstart American League (AL). Professional baseball became an enduring part of American metropolises, especially with construction of large stadiums. Currently, there are thirty Major League Baseball (MLB) teams. For well over a hundred smaller cities, pro ball manifests itself in the minor leagues. While scholars use baseball's history to shed light on urban society, culture, and race relations, the story of the minors is often overlooked. As scholar Neil Sullivan has shown, the minor leagues consistently played a subservient role.<sup>3</sup> And while regional historians have explored many aspects of Amarillo history, they have paid virtually no attention to baseball.<sup>4</sup> The story of Amarillo's first era of affiliation, 1959–1982, serves as a case study illustrating how minor-league ball often only tenuously thrived in a mid-sized city. Amarillo, a quickly growing High Plains boomtown, tried (not always successfully) to incorporate itself into post-World War II networks of sport and economic development. Yet the city often found itself beholden to forces originating far from the Panhandle, such as actions taken by MLB or the federal government.

As an introduction to the story of Amarillo's relationship to organized baseball, it is necessary to understand the history of affiliation. The phenomenon of MLB teams forming "farm systems" with minor-league clubs originated after 1920. Previously, MLB owners occasionally stashed players on minor-league teams, but clubs were independently owned. This arrangement changed when Branch Rickey, general manager of the small-market St. Louis Cardinals, purchased or made arrangements with minor-league teams. (Later, Rickey famously integrated baseball by signing Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers). Rickey's first farm team was the Texas League's Houston Buffaloes, and more followed. By the late 1930s, at the end of the Great Depression, the Cardinals had dozens of affiliates, controlled hundreds of players, and sold prospects to other teams. The Cardinals' famous "Gashouse Gang" teams won several pennants in the 1930s, but their success came at a cost to the minors. In 1928, Rickey even moved one affiliate, the Syracuse Stars, to Rochester, New York because the latter city built a new stadium in a nice part of town. Historian Benjamin Rader writes, "With the establishment of the farm systems ... the minor leagues increasingly became agencies for the development of big league players rather than enterprises shaped by their own ends." Scholar G. Edward White notes that Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis opposed the innovation because it limited minor-league autonomy, inhibited players' chances of advancing, and allowed MLB

owners to promote prospects without considering the impact on farm teams. Yet Landis could not eliminate farming. Although it might weaken minor-league teams' prospects for winning or for building local civic pride, the process was too valuable to organized baseball. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, other teams forged affiliations. By the postwar era, farm systems were standard.<sup>5</sup> Critics called it "chain store" baseball,<sup>6</sup> but that did not stop cities like Amarillo from seeking big-league ties.

Amarillo was established as a railroad junction in 1887, grew into a transportation hub by 1900, and saw continued growth, especially after the discovery of fossil fuels in the area and the alignment of Route 66 in 1926. During World War II and the Cold War, the city boomed, with federally funded military facilities like Pantex and the Amarillo Air Force Base driving population increase.<sup>7</sup> Amarillo topped 50,000 residents by 1940 and had almost 75,000 a decade later. As in other cities, Amarillo's popular culture options grew with its population numbers. By the early 1900s, Amarilloans had amusement parks and motor speedways.<sup>8</sup> Professional baseball became another one of the city's pop-culture offerings in the so-called "Roaring Twenties." The Yellow City first saw pro baseball with the arrival of the Amarillo Gassers in 1922, but the West Texas League folded the next year. Amarillo did not have a stable team until the Class D Gold Sox of the West Texas-New Mexico League debuted in 1939 at new Gold Sox Field at the Tri-State Fairgrounds. Play was interrupted during World War II, but it resumed afterward, when the league moved up to Class C.<sup>9</sup> Baseball's popularity grew as veterans returned from the war and started families. Across the nation, minor-league attendance peaked at 42 million in 1949, and the Texas League drew over two million in one postwar season. But things changed when many white Americans moved to suburban neighborhoods, often relying on Veterans Administration (VA) financing through the GI Bill. Families bought televisions for air-conditioned homes, and in 1951 MLB relaxed rules for broadcasting big-league games. Meanwhile, professional football exploited the new medium more effectively than did baseball. Attendance in the minors declined throughout the 1950s.<sup>10</sup>

Amarillo saw strong minor-league attendance in the 1950s. The Gold Sox moved up to Class B in 1955, attracting approximately 129,000 to Gold Sox Park that year.<sup>11</sup> In 1956, the Gold Sox joined the Class A Western League. At that time, Amarillo was the only Western League team without MLB affiliation, but it did craft a working agreement with the Sacramento Solons of the Pacific Coast League (PCL), which then had a unique "open" classification understood to be the first step in a bid (ultimately unsuccessful) to attain major-league status. Despite the PCL's



Opening game, Potter County Stadium, May 5, 1957. The stadium was funded by a \$375,000 bond issue approved by Potter County voters in January 1956. When the state-of-the-art park opened in 1957, Amarillo was a member of the Class-A Western League. Amarillo Globe-News collection, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

aspirations, the minors were generally declining. In 1956, MLB established a “Save the Minors Committee” and Commissioner Ford Frick announced a \$500,000 “stabilization fund.” Still, by 1957 minor-league attendance had fallen over two-thirds from eight years earlier, to 15.5 million—even lower than overall gate admissions in 1939.<sup>12</sup>

Although attendance was good in Amarillo, substandard Gold Sox Field was a liability. To join the Western League, Amarillo had to promise a new stadium. If the ballpark was good enough, moving up to Class AA Texas League might even be a possibility. On January 21, 1956, Potter County residents voted on a bond issue and tax reallocation to provide \$375,000 for a concrete-and-steel stadium. *Amarillo Daily News* sports editor Harry Gilstrap wrote daily columns outlining the new park’s benefits, stressing repeatedly that taxes would not be raised to pay for the stadium. Instead, stadium rental and tax reallocation would pay off the bonds. Voters approved the measure by a margin of 1,836 to 525. Construction began on new Potter County Stadium (as it was then called) in 1956. It seated 4,669 in a configuration with 1,994 chairback reserved or box seats as well as 2,675 bench-style general admission seats, with possible expansion to around 7,500 total seating. The state-of-the-art ballpark, based on the example

of Class AA and AAA parks in the region—probably including fields in Dallas and Denver—opened in May 1957, with the Gold Sox winning both games of a doubleheader against the Pueblo Dodgers. Attendance was a robust 3,264, which nevertheless fell short of a sellout.<sup>13</sup>

Amarillo's stadium represented a shift in baseball's relationship to cities. Between 1953 and 1961, six MLB franchises moved to cities previously lacking big-league teams: Milwaukee, Baltimore, Kansas City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Minneapolis. Transplanted teams often occupied new stadiums, some of which were publicly financed structures on the urban fringes, with plenty of parking. The prototype of the suburban MLB ballpark was Milwaukee's County Stadium, built with public funds in 1953.<sup>14</sup> In Amarillo—a city that had no streetcar service after 1926 and thus relied on automobiles—pro baseball had been only been accessible by car after 1939. The new county-financed Potter County Memorial Stadium (as it was later called) was built next to old Gold Sox Field, and therefore located several miles from downtown.

Although the minor leagues' popularity was declining nationally, Amarillo—with about 138,000 residents in 1960—saw strong attendance.



Parking lot, Potter County Stadium, May 5, 1957. Ample parking was a key feature of post-World War II baseball stadiums, in both the majors and the minors. Amarillo Globe-News collection, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

Its new stadium was a logical site for a farm team at a time when MLB was poised for expansion. MLB responded to possible formation of a competing Continental League (spearheaded by Branch Rickey) by adding teams in Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC, in 1961–1962. Around this time the minors, including the Texas League, experienced changes alongside those of MLB. The Lone Star State’s eponymous circuit was formed in 1888, with teams in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio. It began racial integration in 1952, five years after MLB.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, some Texas teams were lucky enough to move up within organized baseball’s hierarchy. By 1959, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston had risen to Class AAA (the highest minor-league designation, created in 1946), and Houston soon became a big-league city with arrival of the Colt .45s in 1962. The remaining five Texas League teams were now all MLB affiliates: Austin Senators (Milwaukee Braves), Corpus Christi Giants (San Francisco Giants), San Antonio Missions (Chicago Cubs), Tulsa Oilers (St. Louis Cardinals), and Victoria Rosebuds (Los Angeles Dodgers). Amarillo beat out Harlingen for a sixth team in 1959, and the Gold Sox joined the Texas League as a Baltimore Orioles affiliate.<sup>16</sup>

Amarilloans were excited about affiliated baseball. Before the 1959 season, fans bought over \$40,000 of advanced tickets. On the evening of April 9, the city closed off the 700 block of Polk Street for a two-hour “Gold Sox Day” rally, complete with music from the Al Rogers Band, dancers from the Gene Galle School of Dance, and prizes given by local merchants. About 400 people attended. Postwar gender roles were on display, with a pageant featuring nine swimsuit-clad young women. Radio broadcaster Dick Risenhoover (later the voice of the Texas Rangers in the 1970s) served as one judge. Mayor John Armstrong crowned Joy Kotara, “a shapely 18-year old brunette” as “Miss Gold Sox.” The next day, the team headed to Oklahoma to defeat the Tulsa Oilers, 2-0, before 2,628 spectators braving 49-degree weather. Amarillo expected a sellout crowd for its home opener on Sunday afternoon, April 12. Dignitaries present in the audience included league president Dick Butler and Gold Sox president Jay Taylor—a prominent Amarillo oil- and cattleman. The Amarillo Air Force band performed the national anthem while the local United States Army recruiting office provided the color guard. But even with reduced-price tickets for children and military personnel, 41-degree weather limited attendance to 2,533. Kotara, wrapped in furs, waited to be presented to the crowd in her bathing suit. Amarillo lost a close game, 3-2. The next evening’s game was shifted to warmer afternoon hours; only 411 showed.<sup>17</sup>

Despite Amarillo’s obvious enthusiasm for its affiliated team, 1959 was an inauspicious time to gain a minor-league ball team. Nationally,



Joy Kotara, Miss Gold Sox, April 9, 1959. To promote the team's entry to the Class-AA Texas League, Amarillo hosted a "Gold Sox Day" rally and a "Miss Gold Sox" pageant, which displayed 1950s gender norms. Dick Risenhoover, future radio broadcaster for the Texas Rangers, was one of the pageant judges. Amarillo Globe-News collection, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

the mound after each out, rather than circulating it around the infield. In 1963, the league tried to speed games further by introducing a twenty-second time clock for pitchers, reducing warmup throws, and limiting time between inning halves to ninety seconds.<sup>19</sup>

Amarillo was also part of an effort to expand the national pastime across the border, another means of potentially reinvigorating minor-league ball. From 1959 to 1961, the Texas League experimented with an "interlocking schedule" with Liga Mexicana (Mexican League, founded 1925). This collaboration debuted just a few years after Liga Mexicana attained non-affiliated, minor-league status in 1955, when organized baseball tried to exert control over the Mexican League, which had raided talent from U.S. teams in the late 1940s.<sup>20</sup> In the so-called Pan American Association, Texas League teams played three-game series at home and away with each of six Mexican League teams. In May 1959, for instance, Poza Rica visited Amarillo while Austin traveled to Nuevo Laredo. In mid-July, the Liga Mexicana All-Stars defeated the Texas League All-Stars, 9-3, before 19,000 fans at Mexico City's Parque del Seguro Social (Social Security Park). Two weeks later,

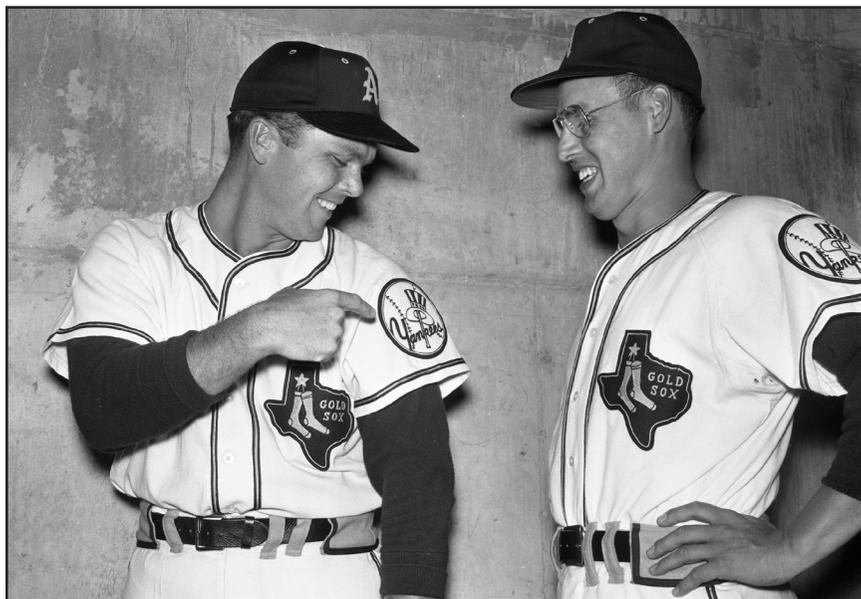
attendance was down to twelve million. In January, the twenty-two minor leagues (a twenty-third might not stay afloat) met in Chicago and extracted a promise for "financial backing" from MLB.<sup>18</sup> The Texas League even experimented with rules to shorten games and, hopefully, attract more spectators. One change, which Commissioner Ford Frick did not approve, would have made batters go directly to first base on intentional walks. Another, which Frick allowed, had the catcher throw the ball directly back to

Amarillo hosted the Mexico City Tigers, followed by Gold Sox home and away series against Monterrey. In the postseason, the Austin Senators beat the Mexico City Red Devils for the Pan American Association title.<sup>21</sup>

Some observers thought these transnational games provided a “Latin American flavor” appealing to Mexican-American fans in Texas cities.<sup>22</sup> Jay Taylor later recalled the agreement was a “gimmick.” Whenever Mexican League teams came to town in the early 1960s, he said, the Gold Sox promoted the contests in the “Mexican part of the Pahandle,” especially in Amarillo and Hereford. Such advertisement, Taylor recalled, would “practically fill up the ballpark with Mexican Americans.” For radio broadcasters, these games could be somewhat challenging. Dick Risenhoover, who recreated away games using the Western Union telegraph feed, wryly recalled it was difficult to do so with games from Mexico unless one were fluent in Spanish.<sup>23</sup> The interlocking schedule ended after 1960 and the championship series was scrapped after 1961. Attendance was high, but cross-border baseball relations may not have been helped by Texas League teams winning the Association title three years in a row.<sup>24</sup>

Amarillo had a Texas League team for most (not all) of the twenty-four seasons from 1959 to 1982, but quality of play was inconsistent and the team switched affiliations several times. In 1959, outfielder Al Nagel was named rookie of the year after leading the league with a .342 batting average and 117 RBI, and shortstop Jerry Adair was called up to the Orioles at the end of the season. Yet the Gold Sox ended the 1959 season in fifth place, one-half game behind the San Antonio Missions. Even worse, the newly affiliated team attracted Amarillo’s fewest spectators since World War II. The Orioles, who reportedly did not have enough minor-league prospects, ceased affiliation. The next year, Baltimore affiliated with Victoria, Texas, before moving to Ardmore, Oklahoma; each arrangement lasted just one season. Meanwhile, the Gold Sox signed a three-year working agreement with the New York Yankees. Amarilloans anticipated the Yankees’ abundant stock of prospects would make the Gold Sox a “first-rate club” that might lure over 100,000 spectators. In anticipation, Amarillo’s stadium was updated with additional seats and bleachers.<sup>25</sup> Yet attendance actually went down, both locally and throughout the league. Amarillo attendance declined from 80,154 in 1959 to 52,783 in 1960 (a thirty-four percent drop), while Texas League attendance dipped from 559,438 to 489,547 (about twelve percent). A Sunday “Family Day” doubleheader in August 1960 drew 1,170 fans, but only 472 paid for tickets.<sup>26</sup> One critic called the Texas League’s future “questionable.”<sup>27</sup>

After falling to last place in 1960, Amarillo finished first in 1961, with an outstanding 90-50 record. Local attendance was up to 85,386, even though



Gold Sox players, l-r, Joe Miller, catcher, Joe Arenivar, 1B, April 14, 1960. From 1960 to 1962, the Gold Sox were a Class-AA affiliate of the New York Yankees. The 1961 season was one of Amarillo's most successful, in terms of both wins and attendance. Amarillo Globe-News collection, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas.

Texas League attendance went down slightly.<sup>28</sup> Even with this success, attendance that memorable season was not as good as many had hoped. Risenhoover later recalled it was always a struggle to get people in Amarillo to come out for any sports other than professional wrestling or drag racing. Ticket sales were inhibited by what Taylor called “erratic teams,” caused by MLB clubs calling up players mid-season. It also did not help that concession stands could not sell beer, due to the ballpark’s location at the Tri-State Fairgrounds. Taylor bluntly called the policy “stupid.” It was the only park in the region without beer sales, he said, and even a fan who was not a big drinker liked “a can of beer and a sandwich” during the game. Risenhoover, reflecting on his Amarillo years, figured the city could only maintain a team because it was a decent-sized town with a “rather nice facility” (Potter County Memorial Stadium), and because local owners like Taylor had deep pockets and were “willing to foot the deficit” when gate receipts fell.<sup>29</sup>

The 1961 season was good to Amarillo, yet the Gold Sox dropped the first round of the playoffs to the Austin Senators. In the eighth inning of game four at Austin’s Disch Field, players brawled when Amarillo’s star infielder Phil Linz was tagged out at home and punched the umpire. The next night,

future Hall of Fame knuckleballer Phil Niekro, aided by a homer from Tommie Aaron (Henry's brother), led the Senators as they dispatched the Gold Sox in eleven innings, 8-7.<sup>30</sup> Besides Linz, future Yankees who played in Amarillo in 1961 were pitcher Jim Bouton and outfielder Joe Pepitone. Bouton later gained fame for several successful seasons with the Yankees and a 1969 resurgence with the expansion-franchise Seattle Pilots. His notorious, 1970 tell-all memoir *Ball Four* skewered former teammates, including Mickey Mantle and Pepitone.<sup>31</sup> In 1962, when Bouton, Linz, and Pepitone all moved up to play for the Yankees, the Gold Sox fell to last place in the Texas League, with a dismal record of 56-84. Even though league attendance increased significantly—aided, in part, by clubs relocating, respectively, from small-market Ardmore and Victoria to larger Albuquerque and El Paso—Amarillo's attendance fell to 52,257, down almost thirty-nine percent from 1961. The Yankees cut ties with Amarillo in October, stating a desire to locate their Class AA affiliate closer to Class AAA Richmond. One month later the Gold Sox inked an agreement with the Chicago Cubs.<sup>32</sup>

Television and MLB expansion continued to threaten the minors. One wag called minor-league ball a "corpse."<sup>33</sup> By 1963, there were eighteen leagues with teams in 129 cities, compared to fifty-nine leagues in 448 cities in 1949. Attendance bottomed out in 1963, with fewer than ten million nationwide.<sup>34</sup> In a climate of declining interest for anything but the big leagues, teams used novelty promotions to attract fans. In Amarillo, promos included Kids Night (twelve and under free) or Cowboys Night: "wranglers" on horseback got free admission, and the stadium provided hitching posts.<sup>35</sup> "Pony Night" was a particularly good draw, since giving away a \$150 pony lured many families with children.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, as clubs struggled to fill seats, leagues continued to dissolve or merge. In 1962, the six-team Texas League considered linking with the Southern Association's four teams in Tennessee, Indiana, and Arkansas, but the deal did not go through.<sup>37</sup> MLB subsidization seemed the only solution. Organized baseball implemented a Player Development Plan in 1962, which provided "financial aid" to minor-league teams in return for the nearly unrestricted right to move players between affiliated teams. Each big-league franchise provided about \$50,000 for an affiliate's spring training, transportation, salaries, and uniforms. A new classification scheme of AAA, AA, A, and Rookie leagues—replacing the former hierarchy that included B, C, and D leagues—was established in 1963.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between MLB and the minor leagues grew even closer, but as Amarillo soon found out in 1963, this cozy relationship was not always a good thing.

The Gold Sox were a Cubs farm team for just one year. The team only had a couple of noteworthy players, such as future MLB journeyman infielder Paul Popovich, and ended the season with a dismal 57-83 record. They frequently played before crowds of under a thousand paying spectators. *Amarillo Daily News* columnist Frank Godsoe blamed the “austerity policies” of Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley, especially his practice of “rotating coaches” and fielding prospects at too-high classification levels. Godsoe said even though local “stockholders” were not out to make money—they approached baseball “from a civic standpoint”—they did not want “to be connected with any enterprise which can’t reflect credit on their participation and the City of Amarillo.” There was not much they could do, however, other than to threaten the big-league team in Chicago. Taylor, perhaps goaded by Texas League president Dick Butler, told the Cubs either to field a quality team in Amarillo or “pick up the losses” in 1964. Chicago cut ties with the Gold Sox in November. Taylor and his partners stated a desire to remain in the league, believing Amarillo had the circuit’s “finest facilities,” but another MLB agreement was not immediately forthcoming. The Yellow City did not field a team in 1964.<sup>39</sup>

Amarillo worked to get back into affiliated baseball. In late 1964, the Houston Colt .45s announced they would move the Class AA San Antonio Bullets to Amarillo, due to poor attendance in the Mission City. Amarillo was excited. The team was named the Sonics following a contest won by thirteen-year-old Robert Rogers. The club sold \$70,000 of tickets before the season, and several top-level Houston MLB executives attended opening night. From 1965 to 1967, the Amarillo Sonics were an affiliate of the renamed Astros, who relocated to the futuristic and trend-setting Harris County Domed Stadium (Astrodome) in 1965. The Sonics, part of the Texas League’s new western division, fared poorly in 1965 but made it to the playoffs in 1966, with help from future MLB Gold Glove third baseman Doug Rader. The Sonics were again strong in 1967, before suffering a devastating late-season skid. Attendance was modest. Amarillo drew 80,608 in 1965. To succeed in the 1960s era of MLB subsidies, though, an affiliated team had to draw around 100,000, and the Yellow City was coming up short. When the Sonics’ lease on the stadium was up in 1967, the Astros took a close look at Amarillo. The Sonics had finished second in the regular season yet only ranked fourth in league attendance. The team drew merely 78,654 in 1966 and 74,024 in 1967; during the latter year a local company and the chamber of commerce even bought out the last two games. These lackluster attendance figures were hardly better than 1959. Houston moved its Class AA affiliate to Dallas-Fort Worth’s big Turnpike Stadium (opened 1965), which was later expanded into Arlington

Table 1: Amarillo & Texas League Attendance Figures, 1959-1970<sup>1</sup>

	Amarillo	Texas League
1959	80,154	559,438
1960	52,783	489,547
1961	85,386	468,181
1962	52,257	659,851
1963		
1964	No team	627,041
1965	80,608	860,847
1966	78,654	
1967	74,024	
1968	54,261	798,396
1969	66,045	826,268 <sup>2**</sup>
1970	58,027	754,337

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Austin Statesman and Amarillo Daily News. Data unavailable or incomplete for 1963, 1966, and 1967.

<sup>2</sup> This figure is based on adding up individual team gate for 1969. The newspaper also reported 828,268 (an apparent typo), and the next year reported the 1969 season as drawing 839,268.

Stadium after the Washington Senators moved there to become the Texas Rangers. Some in the Panhandle felt animosity toward the Astros for the club's perceived greed, and over 5,000 fans turned out to Potter County Memorial Stadium to see a new team beat the Dallas-Fort Worth Spurs in 1969.<sup>40</sup>

For the most part, though, Amarillo struggled to fill seats. Poor attendance was a phenomenon throughout the minor leagues, but in the Yellow City it was underscored by federal government decisions that seriously impacted Amarillo's economy. In late 1964, the Department of Defense announced the Amarillo Air Force Base was one of ninety-five military facilities slated for closure; it was shuttered in 1968. School enrollments and church attendance fell, businesses closed, and housing construction all but ceased. Historians note that "excessive dependence" on the base had created "a dramatic but vulnerable local economy."<sup>41</sup> It looked like Amarillo would also lose affiliated baseball, but the city got a reprieve when the Texas League expanded to eight teams in 1968, with new clubs in Amarillo and Memphis. The league now sprawled through five states, including Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Tennessee. Baseball's return to the Yellow City came at another city's expense. The San Francisco Giants moved their Class A affiliate from Waterbury, Connecticut, to become the Class AA Amarillo Giants.<sup>42</sup> Executive Jack Schwartz of MLB's Giants said Amarillo fulfilled the big-league club's "purposes" by having "an active group that is willing to give us strong cooperation."<sup>43</sup> Schwartz spoke at a time when baseball, like the entire globe, was in transition. In 1969, MLB added teams in Kansas City, Montreal, San Diego, and Seattle, even as the number of minor-league teams declined. By the end of the sixties, a mere seventeen affiliated leagues had 127 teams.<sup>44</sup>

The minors saw new, and sometimes strange, changes proposed. When former MLB catcher and manager Bobby Bragan, a Branch Rickey protégé, assumed the Texas League presidency in 1969, he considered outfitting

umpires in colorful turtlenecks or sports shirts, in an odd attempt to raise attendance. The circuit, with several others, also experimented with allowing one player to pinch hit as often as once per inning—a precursor to the AL's designated hitter (DH) rule, introduced in 1973.<sup>45</sup> Minor-league baseball was the venue in which big-league clubs developed talent, and it was so unprofitable that some critics, like Houston Astros' mastermind Judge Roy Hofheinz, considered abandoning it. MLB might instead subsidize college teams in warm-weather regions (including Texas) as a way to develop young talent. Or, suggested Dodgers president Walter O'Malley, an entire minor-league operation could be set up at one location in Florida or Arizona.<sup>46</sup> Despite such suggestions, affiliated leagues persisted.

The so-called A-Giants finished third in the western division in 1968, with the league's sixth best record. Attendance was only 54,261. The next year was better. On August 15, 1969, pitcher Miguel Puente hurled a no-hitter against the Shreveport Braves. Three weeks later, the underdog Memphis Blues swept the A-Giants in a best-of-five championship series. Two Amarillo teammates, future MLB players Dave Rader and Alan Gallagher, were absent due to Vietnam-era military duty. Attendance at the stadium was up to 66,045, a near twenty-two percent increase over 1968, yet this figure was significantly lower than a decade earlier.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, the sprawling Texas League cut its season from 140 games to 136 (three percent) to reduce travel costs; attendance dropped from 839,268 in 1969 to 754,337 (over ten percent) in 1970.<sup>48</sup> Even with fluctuating fandom, one advantage of affiliated ball was the possibility of seeing big-league-caliber talent close to home. As *Amarillo Daily News* columnist Jim Sims once wrote, "If you're interested in seeing future major league stars in action, Memorial Stadium is where you'll want to be tonight."<sup>49</sup> In 1970, future Cy Young Award winner and broadcaster Steve Stone played in Amarillo, along with future All-Stars Chris Speier and Dave "King Kong" Kingman. The following year's A-Giants featured Puerto Rican hurler Ed Figueroa and future 1973 NL Rookie of the Year Gary "Sarge" Matthews. The 1971 team made it to the first-round playoffs of the Dixie Baseball Association—an interlocking collaboration with the Southern League that lasted one season—but lost to the Arkansas Travelers.<sup>50</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Lone Star State's addition of a second MLB team affected West Texas baseball. In 1972, the Texas Rangers began play in Arlington and paid the Texas League an indemnity for moving into its turf. Like most expansion teams, the new club was not great; it barely defeated the Texas League All-Stars in August. Meanwhile, the former Class AA Dallas-Fort Worth Spurs relocated to the Permian Basin as the Midland Cubs. With a metro population of about 200,000, Midland-Odessa

had outstripped Amarillo, which was still trying to recover from the base closure.<sup>51</sup> The new rivalry yielded at least one surreal encounter: an August game at Midland's Municipal Stadium was suspended when "millions" of grasshoppers invaded. "Women screamed, players swung their bats and fans clawed at the insects covering the playing field, the stands and the mercury vapor lights."<sup>52</sup> The next year, with Amarillo stuck at third in the west, vandals—likely players who did not want to play the season's last game—used a "high-pressure hose" to damage the infield and pitcher's mound at Potter County Memorial Stadium, cancelling the season finale versus Midland.<sup>53</sup> After 1973, San Francisco sold the A-Giants to Steve Daly, who was "formerly involved" with Double-A teams in Reading, Pennsylvania and Alexandria, Louisiana.<sup>54</sup> The Yellow City remained a Giants farm-team city just one more year. Amarillo finished only fifth in league attendance in 1974, with 45,712, and Daly soon moved the team to Louisiana to become the Lafayette Drillers. The last game of Amarillo's 1974 season was called off when the umpire, who apparently just did not want to work the game, delayed the first pitch by an hour due to chilly winds. Players on both teams quickly left the ballpark, and the crowd of roughly one hundred spectators (most holding free tickets) went home without seeing a game.<sup>55</sup> Amarillo did not field a team in 1975.

Texas League baseball returned to Amarillo in 1976, when the Alexandria Aces relocated from Louisiana. Factors aiding the move were population, facilities, and climate: Amarillo's economy was bouncing back and the city had about 150,000 people, compared to Alexandria's 40,000. It also had a better ballpark and drier weather, which was important since the Aces had nineteen rainouts in 1975. League head Bragan expressed reservations about the move, yet approved it.<sup>56</sup> Amarillo boosters hosted a "Welcome Back Baseball Banquet" at the Quality Inn in April, but the first home game was hampered by fifty mile-per-hour winds; only 734 showed up for the inaugural match against the San Antonio Brewers (a Rangers affiliate). The Gold Sox, featuring future MLB journeyman pitcher Bob Owchinko, finished the season with an 81-54 record and defeated the Shreveport Captains in a five-game series to win Amarillo's first Texas League pennant. Season attendance topped 81,000, including over 8,000 on July 4 (the Bicentennial) and 2,036 for the final postseason game on a chilly Monday in September.<sup>57</sup> The successful 1976 season, though, did not start a trend. The Gold Sox finished at the bottom of the standings the next three seasons, setting a league record for most losses and fewest wins in a single season (44-89).<sup>58</sup> Starting in 1977, the Texas League played a split season, with each half's winner making the playoffs.

League attendance rose to 826,207 in 1979. Journalists implied this rise back to circa-1969 numbers was a result of the innovative split season.<sup>59</sup>

The revived Gold Sox were a farm team for the San Diego Padres, a 1969 NL expansion franchise that nearly moved to Washington, DC, in 1974, before retired McDonald's tycoon Ray Kroc purchased the club. In his memoir, Kroc floated oddball ideas for boosting attendance at Padres games, including an "electric one-man band."<sup>60</sup> As Kroc's schemes showed, attendance was still a problem throughout baseball. Some Texas League affiliates saw attendance rise when new owners started employing extreme promotional tactics in the mid-1970s.<sup>61</sup> The quality of the product on the field did not always matter; entertaining or enticing fans was more important. Indeed, when the Astros left Amarillo in 1967, one local resident castigated the organization for not boosting the Sonics enough. Successful promotion was not just about selling tickets or advertising, he claimed; it was "something that begins in the winter and is carried on continuously right down to the last day of the season, with a good hard-beating campaign to get the fans into the ball-park." Promotional nights could target secretaries or railroad employees, or feature a home-run contest. "There could be as many promotions as there are home dates."<sup>62</sup>

Someone may have been listening. By the 1970s, promotional affairs such as "Wilson Certified Meats Day" or "Encyclopedia Britannica Night" were routine. The Gold Sox hosted Pantex Night (attendance 3,155) and Big Mac Sunday: if Amarillo won, everyone at the park got a free McDonald's burger. The team regularly held season-ending Fan Appreciation Nights with giveaways. In 1970, lucky fans went home with baseball gloves, a gas grill, gift certificates, or other prizes; eight years later, giveaways included Dallas Cowboys or Texas Rangers tickets, or fifteen gallons of gas—no meager prize in a decade of soaring fuel costs.<sup>63</sup> Though the Padres had a strong farm system, winning Class A, AA, and AAA championships in 1976, it was still difficult for Amarillo to attract fans. Even with its mid-1970s recovery, the Yellow City never reached the lofty population figures (365,000 by 1985) urban planners had predicted in the mid-1960s. To make matters worse, Amarillo's stadium was no longer new, and it was located several miles from the postwar suburban neighborhoods proliferating in southwest Amarillo, built near the Canyon Expressway (now Interstate 27) during and after the 1950s.<sup>64</sup>

The Gold Sox general manager in the late 1970s was a young Bobby Bragan protégé, originally from Illinois, named John Dittrich. His stated goal was to be like Stanley Marsh 3, the eccentric millionaire responsible for iconic art installations including Cadillac Ranch, erected along Interstate 40 in 1974. Or, said Dittrich, he could be a minor-league version

of Bill Veeck, the Chicago White Sox owner who briefly outfitted players in shorts in 1976 and hosted an infamous “Disco Demolition Night” at Comiskey Park in 1979. Dittrich claimed he even considered blowing up country music records to emulate Veeck’s stunt. But no matter what he tried, it was hard to attract more than a thousand paying spectators per game. In fact, only 142 fans showed up to watch the Gold Sox play the Tulsa Drillers the same night as the televised 1979 MLB All-Star game. Dittrich said he offered the starting pitcher twenty bucks if he could pitch a complete game in under two hours; the hurler obliged with a game clocked at 1:58. Besides general late-1970s malaise, a continuing liability was the inability to sell beer.<sup>65</sup>

Affiliated baseball’s days in the Yellow City were numbered, but the Gold Sox went out with a bang. The team made it to the playoffs in 1980, propelled by the pitching of future MLB hurlers Eric Show, Mark Thurmond, and Steve Fireovid. But Amarillo lost to a San Antonio Dodgers team that included former Mexican League pitcher and future Cy Young Award winner Fernando Valenzuela.<sup>66</sup> The next year, 1981, Amarillo’s team was fueled by two future Padres, outfielder Tony Gwynn and pitcher Dave Dravecky, but again lost to a strong San Antonio squad with another dominant pitcher, Orel Hershiser. Gwynn may have been the best player ever to put on a Gold Sox uniform: he was a 1981 third-round draft pick out of San Diego State who was also drafted by the National Basketball Association’s Los Angeles Clippers. The future first-ballot Hall of Famer was promoted quickly from Single-A Walla Walla because he was “just too good for the Northwest League,” according to Padres general manager Jack McKeon. Gwynn, said McKeon, had both smarts and physical talent: “He has good instincts. He’ll get to the big leagues quicker that way.”<sup>67</sup> Gwynn played twenty-three games for Amarillo, belting forty-two hits in ninety-one at-bats, for an outstanding .462 batting average. In 1982, he played at Class AAA Hawaii before making his MLB debut in July.<sup>68</sup> Gwynn retired with 3,141 base hits in 2001, almost exactly twenty years after his stint with the Gold Sox.

For talented players like Gwynn or Dravecky, Amarillo was just “a step on the organizational ladder between Class A Reno and Class AAA Hawaii,” on the way to big-league San Diego. In a story that may have reflected a Tinseltown mentality more than objective reality, the *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1979 that potential big leaguers out on the “arid plains” of the Texas Panhandle were “liv[ing] life day to day with much of the uncertainty [that] cattle must have felt as they milled around watering holes” on late-1800s West Texas ranches. Life was nearly “an aimless existence.” Gold Sox player Dane Ilertsen said: “[T]here’s nothing to do [in Amarillo].

Most of the guys are from California, so we're spoiled. But this is a good environment for us. There's not much to think about but baseball." Ilertsen did not make it in organized baseball past Amarillo, or even past 1979, but one of his teammates did. Future Padres second baseman Tim Flannery, a Tulsa native, said that after living in Amarillo, country & western was his favorite style of music. "There are a lot of nice country places here," he conceded. But the infielder, who led the Texas League in batting average in June, did not want to stay. "Once a month" he felt what he called the "Texas League blues." Flannery admitted: "I'm ready to move up. I'm ready to go." He was called to the majors in September.<sup>69</sup>

The team was about ready to go, too. Beaumont insurance mogul Ted Moor purchased the Gold Sox in 1981 and moved the team to his hometown after 1982. Moor said Amarillo's "hard-core fans" were "the greatest," and he did not "want to give Amarillo a bum shake." But the team had not quite drawn 90,000 in 1981, and lost \$169,805 that year; attendance fell to 51,812 in 1982, with even bigger losses. Moore claimed he did not mind "breaking even," but he had "stockholders" to consider. Meanwhile, the greater Beaumont area had roughly twice as many people as Amarillo, and Beaumont committed \$125,000 from hotel occupancy taxes (HOT) to improve Lamar University's field, where the team would play.<sup>70</sup> Despite this investment, the Beaumont Golden Gators lasted only four seasons before becoming the Wichita Pilots in 1987, later the Wichita Wranglers. In 2008, the team moved to Springdale, Arkansas, where the Northwest Arkansas Naturals are currently the Kansas City Royals' Class AA affiliate.

Amarillo had no affiliated team between the 1983 and 2018 seasons. Instead, it hosted independent teams including the Amarillo Dillas (1994–2004, 2006–2010), Sox (2011–2014), and Thunderheads (2015). But even keeping a non-affiliated team was difficult with a crumbling, near-sixty-year-old park. Potter County Memorial Stadium could no longer qualify as a good minor-league facility. In 2016, the Yellow City co-hosted a team with Grand Prairie, a Dallas-Fort Worth exurb with about the same municipal population as Amarillo.<sup>71</sup> But in late 2016, the AirHogs announced they would not return to the Panhandle. The league commissioner claimed visiting teams "literally threatened not to play" at the decrepit stadium. "They would forfeit rather than play in those conditions."<sup>72</sup> Attendance was pitiful, too. Construction of what was initially called the Multi-Purpose Event Venue (MPEV) in 2018–2019—following a contested vote on whether to use HOT to fund the facility—obliterated such concerns. The stadium, designed by Kansas City-based firm Populous, followed the late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century trend of postmodern, "retro"-style ballparks, and included Art Deco flourishes designed to fit

stylistically into downtown Amarillo. Family-friendly Hodgetown—named for philanthropist and former mayor Jerry Hodge—opened to rave reviews in April 2019.<sup>73</sup>

At the end of the first season of the Texas League's return to Amarillo, things were looking good. A well-designed stadium, hosting a talented team with some of the top prospects in MLB's best farm system, meant big attendance and plenty of civic pride. Historically, though, the success or failure of teams in cities like Amarillo has only been partly due to enthusiasm or talent. Not every team is good every year, especially when prospects constantly shift between farm teams; attendance often drops off after a strong season or two yields to a losing season. Teams frequently move from one city to another, as voters in towns without affiliated ball raise the stakes by appropriating tax dollars to build fancier, more expensive stadiums. Cultural or economic trends affecting attendance can include new media technologies (like television), or big-league expansion. At the time of this writing, it is unclear what enduring impact the global coronavirus pandemic will have on organized baseball. A *Sports Illustrated* cover story has said that even those minor-league teams surviving the pandemic "will never be the same."<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the Sod Poodles' 2020 season was lost to the virus. The irony of Amarillo's first stint in the Texas League was that the Yellow City moved up to affiliated ball right when the minors underwent a period of postwar turmoil and realignment. This historical circumstance may be analogous to the current situation. Even before coronavirus, just a month after the Sod Poodles won the Texas League championship, MLB announced what may be the biggest shakeup of minor-league ball since the 1960s, with dozens of teams facing possible elimination.<sup>75</sup>

For nearly a quarter of a century, Amarillo struggled to retain its identity as a minor-league city. Attendance fluctuated at a level that remained below boosters' hopes or predictions. It was a bumpy ride all the way from affiliation in 1959 to losing the Gold Sox in 1982. And, truth be told, it was not all Amarillo's fault—many of the bumps originated well beyond the Panhandle. A city that depended on federal spending for much of its mid-century growth also depended on the needs and whims of MLB franchises in far-off cities like Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, and San Diego. Aging Potter County Memorial Stadium, a relic of organized baseball's post-World War II trend of automobile-accessible stadiums on the urban fringe, was also a liability. Hodgetown, a glistening downtown park that attracted nearly five times as many fans in a single season as the old stadium ever did, may be the harbinger of a more successful era of Texas League baseball in Amarillo. Yet fans and civic boosters should remember that the fraught history of minor-

league baseball shows how affiliated teams' fates are often determined by circumstances rooted far from the local field of play.

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## Endnotes

1. "They're the Champions," *Amarillo Globe-News*, September 16, 2019: <https://www.amarillo.com/sports/20190915/theyre-champions> (accessed 16 September 2019). Hodgetown regular-season attendance was 427,791 (68 games), averaging 6,291 per game. Overall attendance ranked 22nd in affiliated minor-league baseball, while average attendance ranked 23rd; both figures were second in Class AA, behind the Frisco Rough Riders (of the Texas League): "2019 MiLB/SC/Indy Attendance by Average," *Ballpark Digest*: <https://ballparkdigest.com/2019/09/23/2019-milb-sc-indy-attendance-by-average/?fbclid=IwAR1ejSKvu0W19kgovzSYA-RabGi4IDjJVvdtAAT2JCeIdk3Ut9VQNRkjZag> (accessed 23 September 2019).
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Photograph of Frank Ford holding grain, in front of a wall painted with the words "Arrowhead Mills". Image courtesy of Deaf Smith County Library.

# Frank Ford and the Founding of Arrowhead Mills: A Natural Food Man in the Cowboy West

Jim Matthews\*

If you look at the website for Arrowhead Mills or any of their brochures, you will find that in 1960, Frank Ford turned his back on the use of pesticides and herbicides on his farm in Deaf Smith County in the Texas Panhandle and began to produce organically grown corn and wheat. He invested his life savings in a tractor and a tin roofed stone grinding mill and began a revolution in the natural food industry. Arrowhead Mills soon became one of the largest wholesalers of natural foods in the nation, actively promoting greater production and distribution of organic foods. Ford became a champion of natural food production and possibly one of the best known farmers in the United States. But that is only part of the story.

Born January 16, 1933 in Amarillo, Texas, Jesse Frank Ford, Jr. began farming in 1947 at the age of fourteen on his grandfather's property west of Hereford. That was not his first job. Beginning at age eleven, Frank had worked thirty-three hours a week in a local grocery. Ford later claimed that his father, a county agricultural agent, was a hard, driven man that expected hard work from his son, and Frank did not make peace with him until many years after leaving home. In high school, Frank Ford excelled, becoming an accomplished debater and the valedictorian of his graduating class. He then enrolled at Texas A & M University where he rose to command the Corps of Cadets, graduating at the top of his class with a bachelor's degree in Agronomy in 1955. An evangelical Christian, Ford became an active leader in Campus Crusade for Christ and its affiliate, Athletes in Action while at Texas A & M.<sup>1</sup>

Ford's college experience had a significant impact on the rest of his life. He received practical knowledge in leadership through the Corps of Cadets and learned cutting edge techniques in agriculture through his course of study. His involvement in Campus Crusade for Christ gave him a way

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Frank Ford on farmland at Arrowhead Mills. Photo courtesy of *Mother Earth News*.

to put his Christian beliefs to work, and he continued to be a leader in the organization for the rest of his life. Perhaps most important, he began to see a direct connection between his Christian principles and his commitment to organic food production that helped to define his career.

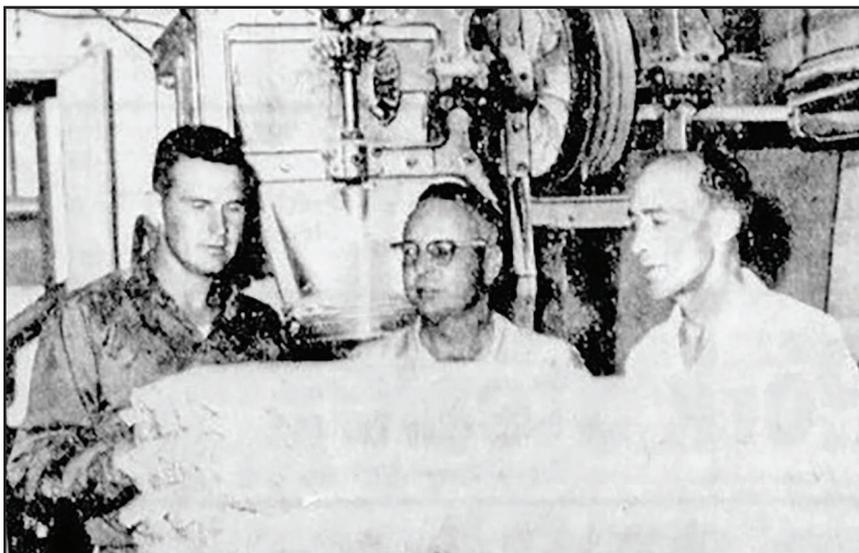
Many of the leading agribusinesses attempted to recruit Ford, but he chose to complete his military commitment. The United States Army commissioned him a second lieutenant and assigned him to the Fourth Division at Fort Lewis, Washington in the army's first nuclear artillery unit. Ford later recalled, "I was commanding, a captain's job, with a nuclear warhead . . . I think they probably chose me because I was idiot enough to sign for all that equipment." In October 1956, he married Marjorie Anne Winn from Dallas, whom he had met in college. After one tour of duty as a battery commander, Ford returned to Texas and was accepted in law school at the University of Texas in Austin. To support himself, he took a position as a clerk for the Texas House of Representatives in 1959. One of his favorite stories from that period concerned the arrival of Lyndon Johnson one day while Ford was talking to Chaplain Clinton Kersey. Ford commented that he had heard Johnson was not very honest to which Kersey supposedly replied, "He's as crooked as a barrel of snakes."<sup>2</sup>

Dissatisfied with the political scene in Austin, Ford returned to Deaf Smith County in 1960 to continue farming. He later commented that although he had a degree in agronomy, "I did not really know much about farming until I got out on the land." Ford bought an interest in the Rodgers Grain Company owned by Hereford businessman Henry Turner, a partner he later described as the "most negative person I ever met." The company consisted of a tin roofed building near Hereford with one stone grinder, one storage bin and an old railroad car which was converted into an office. Of major interest was the stone grinder, since Ford's studies had led him to believe that whole grain flour with the bran and wheat germ left in would provide a better product that he was convinced could be effectively marketed. Marjorie strongly supported and encouraged Ford's commitment to whole grain foods. Her uncle claimed to have overcome heart problems by a diet of natural grains from Deaf Smith County.<sup>3</sup>

In July 1960, the *Hereford Brand* announced that Rodgers Grain Company, "the only local outlet of stone-ground wheat and other grain products," was expanding and incorporating as Arrowhead Mills. Additional wheat storage facilities were to be constructed, and Frank Ford was named sales and promotion manager. Ford stated that their immediate goal was to expand sales into "food markets, health food stores and bakeries." He continued, "Our promotion will be aided by the many articles and books written during the past 20 years about the quality and health value of food raised here. There is also an increasing demand for stone-ground whole wheat flour which we feel can be best served from Deaf Smith County."<sup>4</sup>

Ford had convinced the "negative" Turner to enter the whole foods market, but actually creating a profitable business proved to be a slow process. Later Ford recalled, "I would work 18 hour days, dividing my time between an old 'LA' Case tractor and a \$400 pickup truck which I used to haul cases of stone ground wheat and cornmeal to local food stores." Local for Arrowhead Mills meant anything within a 150 mile radius and Ford considered \$30 in sales to be a good day. "We were a bit undercapitalized in the early days," he commented. To pay the bills, he frequently took construction jobs during the winter for the first few years. "It was hard," continued Ford. "It was the future thing, and it turned out to be 10 years before it took off."<sup>5</sup>

Eventually Ford bought a controlling interest in the company. Arrowhead Mills took seven years to show a profit, but by 1968 the company had started to grow. Ford continued to promote natural methods, emphasizing that nutrition in food had a direct relation to the fertility of the soil. "It is amazing what nature can do when we let it function," Ford insisted, claiming that the important questions to ask in farming remain, "Are you improving



Frank Ford, Palmer Norton and Henry Turner inspect sacks of stone ground wheat. Photo courtesy of the *Hereford Brand*.

the soil? Are the bacteria being increased? Do you find earthworms? Do you see birds flying around and eating little bugs and singing, or are you killing those creatures?" He summarized his method with the statement, "It is common sense to work with nature." That outlook resonated with the growing "hippie" movement that had begun in San Francisco. Ford recalled, "Soon every hippie in California was coming to see me. I was their guru." When the Deaf Smith County sheriff questioned Ford about his many unusual visitors, he insisted "These long haired boys are alright."<sup>6</sup>

Ford found it interesting that a "redneck farmer" from West Texas made a significant portion of his major sales to "longhair hippies" in California. Yet he and the young people from California were brought together because they wanted the same thing, healthful food without the use of chemicals. The "hippies" seemed equally surprised when they would visit Arrowhead Mills and were ushered into the old railroad car office. One young man who stopped in to see Ford on a trip from Los Angeles to Michigan in a Volkswagen bus during the fall of 1971 recalled, "The town (of Hereford) smelled like a slaughterhouse, the little Mexican cafeteria we ate at was incredible, and the peanut butter lasted at least until Thanksgiving." Boyd Foster, who came to work part time for Arrowhead Mills in 1971 and eventually become the company president, later commented, "So during the early 1970s a good part of our customers and clientele were hippy people. Thank goodness a lot of those people have retained their thinking

about eating healthy and wholesome food into their adulthood, when they have given up most of their other hippy ways.”<sup>7</sup>

*Mother Earth News*, founded in 1970 to support the natural foods revolution, interviewed Frank Ford in 1974. The publication consistently referred to agribusiness as “a mindless junkie with an ever increasing need for an ever stronger chemical fix” and claimed that “we now know a whole new generation—tired of watching our natural resources being raped, fed up with tasteless plastic food.” Ford told *Mother Earth News* that the natural food movement would “continue to develop as the public becomes more aware of the ecological destructiveness of bad farming...and of the internal environmental consequences of bad eating.” While the movement gained in popularity, in 1971 Ford began looking for more distributors among “people who had a little store, almost invariably young folks with a big dream and no financial backing.” Seeking constantly to improve his products, he would visit each of these distributors several times a year. “They tell me all the things Arrowhead Mills needs to do better, and I go home and try to do them.” asserted Ford.<sup>8</sup>

The United States banned the use of the DDT pesticide in 1973, further encouraging natural methods of food production. Long concerned about the use of chemicals permanently transforming the soil, Ford told *Mother Earth News*, “You should base your judgment of natural farming methods on whether or not they maintain and improve—or deplete—the soil. If the improvement shows up as a plus in the food, that’s an additional benefit . . . I favor anything that creates a sense of responsibility for the proper use of the land.” He even encouraged competition in organic foods to help the natural food industry grow. “I certainly welcome competition . . . I’ve even helped it,” asserted Ford, “I’ve had some of the largest mills send us representatives so we could teach them how to compete with us in stonegrinding grain.” His company continued to promote the benefits of natural food in several books Ford published including *New Harvest*, *Back to Nature: Nutrition Made Easy in the Home or in the Woods* and *The Deaf Smith Country Cookbook*. In all, Arrowhead Mills publications sold close to a million copies, with *The Deaf Smith Country Cookbook* selling over 300,000 copies by 1980. Ford encouraged the use of recipes that used only naturally grown foods, claiming, “We think our products will help people rediscover the joys of good old-fashioned baking.”<sup>9</sup>

In the early 1970s, Arrowhead Mills began construction on a twenty acre site with four warehouses, 30,000 square feet of storage space, and updated manufacturing and laboratory facilities. Ford and his oldest son, Davis, still did most of the actual farming. The company continued to quadruple sales every year during this period. To sustain that growth,

they identified even more distribution points and began buying produce from other natural growers. This required better transportation than an old pickup truck. The business purchased their own transportation fleet consisting of one refrigerated trailer, four dry freight trailers and two tankers for oils. Arrowhead Mills gradually added different product lines until they distributed over 150 different naturally grown items including beans, seeds, hot and cold cereals, natural oils, pancake, cake and brownie mixes and nut butters.<sup>10</sup>

Even though he no longer produced all of the grains that went into Arrowhead Mills products, Ford insisted on affidavits from every farmer whose produce he marketed. "We deal only with people in whom we have confidence," he affirmed, adding that each product label from Deaf Smith and Arrowhead Mills brands "says specifically what was used and what was not used; that's better than saying whether it's organic." His growers soon included farms in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Kansas. Ford continued, "If we like it, we buy it! I'm a real sucker for good food. Our main emphasis, though, has been to put together a collection of the best-quality grains, seeds and other staples we can find. . . So we're going to stay basic and always try to keep well stocked in wheat, rye, corn, soybeans, rice, sunflower seeds, millet, grain sprouts, lentils, sesame seeds and the like."<sup>11</sup>

Among the many products Arrowhead Mills sold in the 1970s was the peanut butter that so impressed the young man traveling through in a Volkswagen bus. Deaf Smith peanut butter, introduced in 1970, was made from Valencia peanuts grown in New Mexico. It was processed at Portales Valley Mills and ground with the skins left on, according to Ford's instructions. This made the butter darker and slightly bitter. It proved a popular alternative to the major peanut butter brands, selling over \$2,000 of product a day in 1974. Other popular products utilized non-conventional grains, such as amaranth, blue corn and buckwheat. Boyd Foster noted that by 1990, blue corn products made up eight to ten per cent of sales. Foster also called attention to the popularity of Arrowhead Mills granola cereals, stating that among young people granola had become a "counter-culture, anti-establishment food."<sup>12</sup>

With the success of the Arrowhead Mills brand, Frank Ford became one of the best known farmers in America. Despite his increasing success, Ford continued working full days on his farm. As president of the company, he never drew more than three times the salary of his lowest paid workers. He consistently placed a high value on his employees and insured that they placed their emphasis on developing customer loyalty. "They understand that loyalty to a product is a key to success," Ford

said, “and they’re very consistent with the quality of all the Arrowhead Mills products.” As the company grew, Ford also became more active in the natural foods movement nationwide, serving as the chairman of the National Nutritional Foods Association and on various agricultural advisory committees.<sup>13</sup>

Ford had always been very active in community organizations and local politics. In 1968, he ran for the Texas state legislature. In announcing his campaign, the *Hereford Brand* noted that Ford served as president of the Hereford Migrant Ministry, vice president of the Deaf Smith County Chamber of Commerce and Scoutmaster of the Hereford Boy Scout troop. While he did not win a seat in the legislature, he did remain active in political causes. Years later when he was running for office in California, Ford stated, “I dabbled in politics along the way, but I only ran for office when I was fairly sure I would lose.” One of his favorite stories concerned a visit by George W. Bush to Arrowhead Mills when he was campaigning for the Nineteenth Congressional District in 1977. Bush knew that Ford had significant influence in the Panhandle and hoped to gain his support. They began talking about politics, but Ford soon changed course. He pointed out the importance of Christianity to people in the Panhandle and asked if Bush was living a good Christian life. He told Bush that his lifestyle made a difference to the people he was trying to represent. Ford claimed that for over an hour, he “poured water on his stagnant soul,” referring to Bush. According to Ford, shortly after that visit, Bush met his wife, Laura, they settled down and “seven years later she got him to give up alcohol.” Recalling the incident, Ford said, “George W. was a cocky brat, but he did marry a wonderful lady.”<sup>14</sup>

In late 1984, the United States Department of Energy (DOE) announced that Deaf Smith County had been selected as one of three sites still in consideration for a high-level radioactive waste disposal site. Faced with an increasing accumulation of spent fuel from power plants and nuclear weapons processing facilities across the country, the DOE targeted Deaf Smith as a possible site along with Hanford, Washington and Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Opposition to the project arose almost immediately from farmers and business leaders in the county. Frank Ford and Arrowhead Mills proved to be among the most outspoken condemning the storage of nuclear waste. Ford insisted that the government proposal was not compatible with food production, stating, “The government wanted to drill through the Ogallala Aquifer. They said it would not affect the water – where did they think the water would go?” Arrowhead Mills actively launched an awareness campaign producing pamphlets and newsletters and encouraging their customers and distributors to lobby

against the storage site. Such strong and continued opposition by county citizens forced the DOE to abandon Deaf Smith County as a potential site by the end of 1987. The DOE later chose Yucca Mountain to house the nuclear storage facility.<sup>15</sup>

By 1990 with the passage of the Organic Food Production Act and the advent of natural food stores, Arrowhead Mills became an established leader in the organic market. About that time Ford moved to Lubbock to work directly for Campus Crusade for Christ and their affiliate, Athletes in Action. According to Ford, his work in Lubbock was the next step he was called to make in his life, yet it came at a cost. For the first time in thirty years he did not play a direct role in organic food production. In addition, his wife Marjorie, refused to leave her home in Hereford and that separation eventually led to their divorce. Although he sold his stock in Arrowhead Mills in 1995, Ford continued to talk to the plant manager, monitor progress and offer business advice on an almost daily basis. In 1999, Hain Celestial Group of Melville, New York purchased Arrowhead Mills. At that time, the product line consisted of 220 items and there were eighty full time employees working in a plant that processed “between 10 to 12 million pounds of commodity grains—wheat, soybeans, corn, rye and rice” annually. Ford stated that the company was in good hands, asserting, “They’ve done a magnificent job and the quality is better than it ever has been.” He continued, “I think they’ll go at least another 50 years, and if the Lord’s willing, a few more after that.” Even after the sale, Ford continued to communicate with plant manager, Gary Schultz, regularly.<sup>16</sup>

Also in 1999, the Organic Trade Association (OTA) honored Ford with its Leadership Award “for his pioneering work in developing the infant organic industry and for countless hours spent crusading for organic agriculture.” OTA president Mark Retzloff praised Ford stating, “Frank was a mentor for many of the current leaders of the industry.” Even in his semi-retired state, he continued to lobby and testify to the benefit of organic food production. While in Lubbock, Ford met Shwu Ching Hahn, an avid organic gardener. He later said that he saw such beauty and spirit in her that he proposed marriage on their first formal date. He also claimed that at the time she seemed to be very quiet, but that he “never won an argument with her since we were married.” They married in Lubbock on March 2, 1996 and later moved to Irvine, California to work with the Campus Crusade for Christ ministry providing books and videos to new Christians throughout China.<sup>17</sup>

In California, Ford continued to keep in constant communication with Arrowhead Mills and the organic food industry. By 2008, he was battling leukemia, causing him to withdraw from the primary race for



Frank Ford in California. Photo from the author's collection.

District 49 of the U. S. House of Representatives. Ford died in Fallbrook, California on February 2, 2011.<sup>18</sup> Frank Ford had never been a conventional Panhandle farmer and he remained unconventional throughout his life. His commitment to growing grain by natural methods began at a time that the organic food industry had just begun to gain ground. Through his strong work ethic, compelling personality and willingness to embrace innovation, Ford insured that Arrowhead Mills continued to lead natural food production as it became an important part of agricultural activity throughout the nation. His continuing dedication and support helped develop an entire industry that is still alive and growing today.

## Endnotes

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4. *Hereford Brand*, July 28, 1960.
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8. Williamson, *Mother Earth News*, September/October 1974.
9. *Mother Earth News*, September/October 1974; Telephone interview with Ford, 2008; *Hereford Brand*, June 6, 2010.
10. Telephone interview with Ford, 2008; Southwest Collection interview with Ford, 1991; <http://www.arrowheadmills.com>, Arrowhead Mills website, accessed April 1, 2008 and January 26, 2018.
11. *New York Times*, April 9, 1972; Williamson, *Mother Earth News*, September/October 1974.
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17. <http://www.ota.com>, Organic Trade Association website, accessed April 1, 2008 and January 26, 2018; Telephone interview with Ford, 2008.
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# Spanish Influenza

The disease is La Grippe, and is the same that swept the world in 1889 and 1891.

Most of the cases are ushered in like a bad cold, with headache, pains all over the body, chill, reddened eyes, dizziness, occasionally vomiting and the most noticeable feature is the depression and the marked prostration.

If you are taken sick suddenly, do not wait for severe symptoms, but call a physician immediately, as the disease may become serious in a short space of time.

The disease is conveyed by the secretions of the nose and mouth, and those who are careless in coughing and sneezing, can convey it to any one they come in contact with.

The only preventative is to follow the following rules:

- Keep away from those who have had colds.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, as coughing or sneezing, except behind a handkerchief, is a great sanitary offense.
- Keep your living rooms well ventilated.
- Keep the room where you work full of fresh air.
- Keep the children who have a bad cold away from school or public gatherings.
- Spend all the time you can out of doors.
- Keep your body in a healthy condition.
- Do not neglect what you call a bad cold.
- Keep your home and premises clean and see that the streets and alleys in your neighborhood are in a sanitary condition.

By order of Health Department.

LON D. MARRS, Mayor.

JEFF D. BARTLETT, Manager.

Proclamation concerning the Spanish Influenza in the *Amarillo Daily News*, October 9, 1918. Image courtesy of the University of North Texas Libraries via the Portal to Texas History.

## The Spanish Flu in the Panhandle

Marty Kuhlman\*

In 1918-19, the world suffered through an influenza epidemic which became known as Spanish flu. Between twenty and forty million died worldwide with over 675,000 deaths in the United States. The pandemic came in three waves. In the spring of 1918, the first wave occurred as influenza swept through Europe and parts of Asia but was relatively mild in the United States. Since most people recovered from the attack, the sickness became known as the “three day fever.”<sup>1</sup> The second wave hit in the United States in military installation during the late summer of 1918 and spread to the civilian population with over 100,000 deaths in October.<sup>2</sup> Civilian deaths became apparent by the fall. Texas reported at least 2,100 deaths (not including deaths in rural areas) by the end of October.<sup>3</sup> In only a few weeks the Panhandle of Texas faced the challenges of the Spanish Flu. Citizens of the Panhandle would react in various ways.

One of the first articles in the *Amarillo Daily News* reporting on the severity of the second wave appeared on September 25, 1918. The paper ran an Associated Press story under the headline “Spanish Influenza Causes 112 Deaths Within 24 Hours.” The military reported an explosion of influenza cases with the worst coming out of Camp Devens, 35 miles northeast of Boston, with 10,753 cases.<sup>4</sup> The influenza epidemic hit Boston and Philadelphia especially hard and Texas and the Panhandle braced itself. The October 4 edition of *The Tulia Herald* reported one of the earliest cases in the Panhandle linked to the Spanish Influenza epidemic as John Woods of Kress. Woods was to be quarantined.<sup>5</sup> Woods, who had a long bout with a “slow fever,” recovered as he was working at the Farmers’ elevator in Kress by mid-November.<sup>6</sup>

The official reaction to the epidemic had to take place on a local level as little or no advice came out of Austin. Governor William P. Hobby had been infected on October 8 and spent weeks in Beaumont recovering. R. M. Johnson took over as temporary governor.<sup>7</sup> No advice came out

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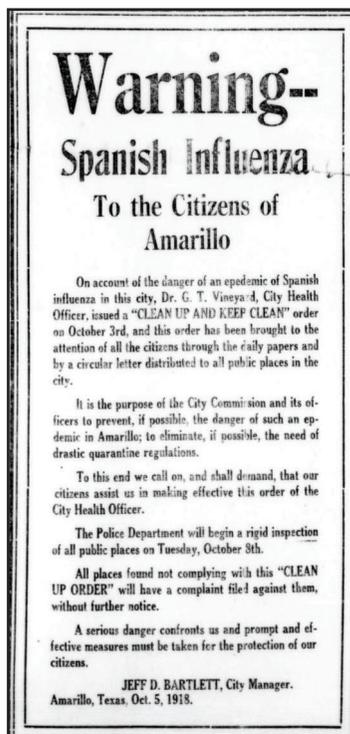
\* Marty Kuhlman has taught history at West Texas A&M University since 1994. He has written a number of articles on the African American Civil Rights Movement in Texas as well as articles on Panhandle history. He is currently editor of the *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review*.

of the White House either. President Woodrow Wilson's preoccupation with ending World War I and then managing the peace meant that he made no public statements about the epidemic.<sup>8</sup>

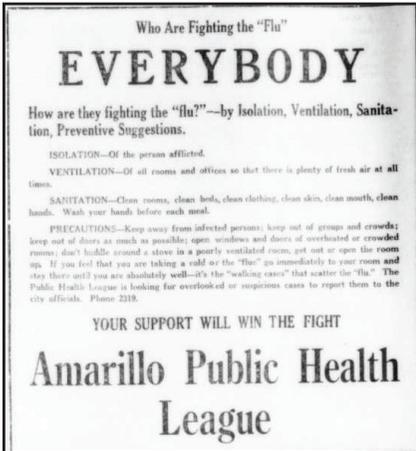
The Panhandle took precautions and learned from the experiences of other regions. Despite evidence of a growing epidemic, Wilmer Krusen, the public health director of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, did little and downplayed the danger. Krusen allowed a Liberty Loan parade to go on in the city, and the disease spread like wildfire.<sup>9</sup> In October Amarillo city manager Jeff D. Bartlett saw the danger and issued a warning to the citizens through the daily papers and "by a circular letter distributed to all public places in the city" that "a serious danger confronts us and prompt and effective measures must be taken for the protection of our citizens." The city health officer Dr. G. T. Vineyard issued a "CLEAN UP AND KEEP CLEAN" order on October 3. The police were authorized to "begin a rigid inspection of all public places" and all places not in compliance would have a complaint filed against them.<sup>10</sup>

The epidemic hit closer to home when the October 9 edition of the *Amarillo Daily News* reported that a former resident of the city had died from the influenza outbreak. Eanard Compton had taught in the Amarillo public schools but left for government service in Washington, D.C.<sup>11</sup>

Amarillo mayor Lon D. Marrs found precautions to be necessary. On the evening of October 14 he issued a proclamation closing public and private schools, "churches, pool halls, billiard halls, picture shows, lodges, clubs, club meetings, businesses and social entertainments, public gatherings." The proclamation warned that the regulations would be rigidly enforced and that arrests of violators would occur. The mayor urged citizens "to report to the City Manager those who fail, neglect or refuse to obey this proclamation." According to the *Amarillo Daily News* the regulations had



Newspaper clipping announcing Dr. Vineyard's "Clean up and keep clean" order in the *Amarillo Daily News*, October 6, 1918. Image courtesy of the University of North Texas Libraries via the Portal to Texas History.



"Who are fighting the 'Flu': EVERYBODY" call to action in the *Amarillo Daily News*, December 15, 1918. Image courtesy of the University of North Texas Libraries via the Portal to Texas History.

a great deal of support as several hundred business men had signed a petition calling for closing places of amusement and prohibiting public gatherings.

The city also published a pamphlet in "flaring colors" written by city health officer Vineyard, county health officer E. A. Johnston, and E. T. Lawler, president of the Potter County Medical Association which would "be distributed to every home and business house in the city today by the Boy Scouts." The symptoms of Spanish Influenza were explained along with treatments. The pamphlet contained basic suggestions such as keeping "out of crowds" and keeping children

off of streets. The mayor's proclamation even warned that the police would be contacted if children were "permitted to loiter, play or visit upon the streets or alleys." Children were seen as being more vulnerable to influenza. The pamphlet also emphasized the benefits of fresh air: "Keep the room where you work full of fresh air" "Spend all the time you can out of doors."<sup>12</sup> *The Tulia Herald* also proclaimed the importance of fresh air urging readers to "Open your windows at night" and even if temperatures dipped, windows should remain open and "extra bed clothing" should be added.<sup>13</sup>

The Amarillo officials continued to be aggressive in fighting the epidemic. Another proclamation appeared in the October 22 edition of the *Amarillo Daily News*. The mayor directed the police to isolate and quarantine "all persons discovered and known to be affected with symptoms of INFLUENZA on the STREETS or at ANY PUBLIC PLACES."<sup>14</sup> Two days later city manager Bartlett gave the struggle against influenza a military flavor. Bartlett called on "our ARMY of CITIZENS... to get rid of every WEED in the city limits; clean up all premises and use plenty of LIME." The notice even referenced fighting influenza as part of the war effort and asked all citizens to "HELP ELIMINATE THE KAISER'S FRIEND- INFLUENZA."<sup>15</sup> An advertisement in the *Randall County News* for Dr. Pierce's Golden

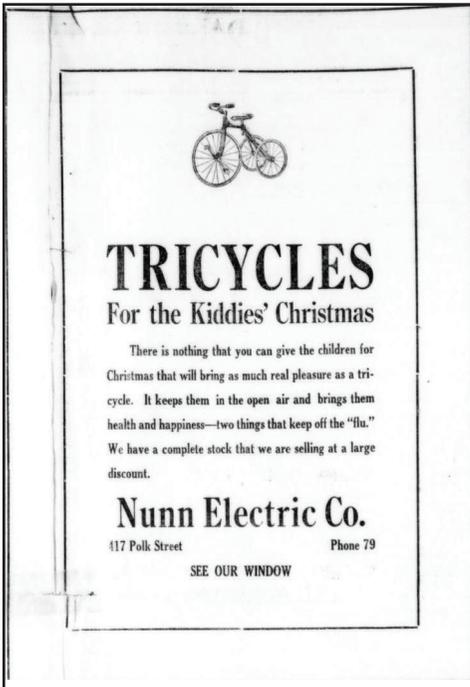
Medical Discovery told readers “Do Not Fear When Fighting Germs or Germans.”<sup>16</sup>

By late October the Amarillo newspapers ran a ‘Daily Health Report’ describing the influenza situation in the city. On November 9 the report done by city manager Bartlett listed 33 deaths from influenza since the middle of October. With a total of 1007 cases nearly 7.5% percent of the city’s population (Amarillo had a population of 15,494 in 1920) had been infected with a death rate from the cases of 3 percent. However, by early November the number of new cases declined while recoveries increased. Thus, the city health board and the city commissioners met and decided it was safe enough to lift the quarantine. The quarantine ended on November 11 just in time for celebrations for the end of World War I.<sup>17</sup>

Amarillo’s public schools remained closed from October 15 until mid-November and closed again on December 6 when the influenza epidemic worsened and did not reopen until January 13.<sup>18</sup> The Tulia Independent School District, however, did not find it necessary to close when the second wave first hit. The school board believed that the flu had subsided until the third week of November.<sup>19</sup> Tulia public schools “and all public places” were closed on November 21 as *The Tulia Herald* reported that the city had been hit “hard” with 300 or more cases. The editor of *The Herald* stated that “It is very seldom that you can find anyone on the streets of Tulia who has not one or more cases in his family.”<sup>20</sup> Tulia had a population of 1,189 in 1920. So if the 300 cases was correct, that would represent 1/3 of the town’s population. The “Influenza Siege” continued as “physicians have been kept constantly busy, going from house to house” and the Hotel Tulia was converted into a hospital since the city did not have its own.<sup>21</sup> In a ten day period in late November the T. A. Ross family suffered the loss of five members to the flu including his wife Ella, 47, and four children, Thomas and Roy, 19, Ruby, 21, and Cora Mae, 27.<sup>22</sup>

After the Tulia schools did eventually close in November, teachers attempted “assisting in home study.” Although the teacher of earlier grades could not stay in Tulia to be involved with home study, parents were advised to make sure “that the children give special attention to reading and arithmetic.” Senior students did meet with teachers a few days each week and were “working in a way that promises much toward their graduation in the spring.”<sup>23</sup>

Local newspapers did print stories on ways to keep people healthy during the epidemic. As early as October 11, *The Tulia Herald* ran an article answering certain questions about Spanish Influenza. The article advised those caring for someone inflicted to wear a gauze mask.<sup>24</sup> One week later the paper again gave the advice of wearing a mask when caring for a patient



Advertisement for tricycles using Influeza hype in the *Amarillo Daily News*, December 15, 1918. Image courtesy of the University of North Texas Libraries via the Portal to Texas History.

and to change the mask every two hours. Due to the shortage of gauze the mask should be boiled for thirty minutes and reused.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, private companies became involved and saw a chance to help their community and make a profit. The *Amarillo Daily News* helped push Vicks VapoRub as a way to fight influenza.<sup>26</sup> The Amarillo newspaper also ran an advertisement in which the Hoover Suction Sweeper was lauded as a way to fight Spanish influenza since “dust breeds germs and disease.”<sup>27</sup> Another ad in December from the Nunn Electric Company told parents to buy tricycles for their children because it would bring them “health and happiness—two things that keep off the flu.”<sup>28</sup> In the same edition

of the paper the Green Brothers Company Installment House Furnishers recognized that due to the epidemic people might not have the money to spend on Christmas. The company wanted to “step in and help you out” reminding shoppers that “you can buy from our store as cheaply on CREDIT as you can for CASH.”<sup>29</sup> The Great Western Cigar Factory even spread the word tht smoking “MILD FRESH cigars will guard against the disease.”<sup>30</sup> One Amarillo store gave up profits. Moore, Mathis & Co. canceled a December 7 sale “because of the seriousness of the influenza epidemic.” The owners hoped to use the cancellation as a part of public relations. The last paragraph of the advertisement proclaimed, “We want the public to know that we are entirely in accord with any measures to stamp out the disease and will co-operate regardless of any temporary business inconvenience to us.”<sup>31</sup> In Canyon, businesses fumigated everyday and urged cutomers to do business by phone.<sup>32</sup>

The Spanish flu came at the end of World War I. Panhandle residents served in the war and some became casualties. During the first month

of the second wave Archie Eugene Key of Canyon was reported as a casualty of the war. (Findagrave.com does show that Key was a victim of the Spanish Flu epidemic and died at a military base in Florida.) Thus, Panhandle residents dealt with the stress of World War I and the epidemic at the same time. Panhandle residents celebrated when the war ended, but these celebrations could have aided the spread of the disease. In Amarillo, many citizens ignored the medical advice to avoid large crowds as “thousands packed the vacant lot opposite the post office and overflowed upon the pavement.” There were also speeches on the courthouse lawn and a number of religious services. The unusually warm November weather of 70 degrees with a temperature of 57 at eight o’ clock might have helped draw the crowd.<sup>33</sup>

And November and December saw the expansion of cases. By the end of December there had been 2,079 cases in the city, nearly 14% of Amarillo’s population.<sup>34</sup> According to John M. Barry in *The Great Influenza* nearly half of those who died were young men and women in their twenties and thirties.<sup>35</sup> Many of these were in the military where young men lived in close quarters. The Student Army Training Camp at West Texas State Normal College (WTSNC) had a number of cases of influenza. Roy F. Mitchell of Tulia died as a cadet in military training only a few weeks after entering the college.<sup>36</sup> Young women also fell to the disease as the Amarillo newspaper listed the deaths of Josephine Cheyne, 23, and Vera Livingston, 21. In the last two weeks of November the cases expanded. By the end of December, the death toll in Amarillo rose to 74.<sup>37</sup>

A number of students at WTSNC fell ill during 1918 with at least three deaths, Florence Elvie Gathings,<sup>38</sup> Pauline Collier,<sup>39</sup> and Mitchell. Joye Mills Braly recalled, “It was the winter of incredible snows and flu. Madge [her roommate] took the flu and I, wearing a cheesecloth mask saturated with campho-phenique [sic] over my mouth and nose waited on her.” Luckily, Braly avoided contracting the flu.<sup>40</sup> (Madge was probably Madge



Advertisement for the Hoover Suction Sweeper using Influenza hype in the *Amarillo Daily News*, October 9, 1918. Image courtesy of the University of North Texas Libraries via the Portal to Texas History.

Rusk who survived and graduated in 1920) WTNSC closed its doors for a few weeks at the beginning of November.<sup>41</sup> The Spanish flu attacked young people no matter their condition. Charles P. Woodburn of Hereford, 37, died in December of 1918 after contracting the flu. *The Hereford Brand* wrote that “he had walked our streets. Big and husky and strong, smiling and radiating good health as always” just a few days before his demise. He had left his home in Hereford to care for his two sisters suffering from influenza in Claude. At the time of Woodburn’s death his wife and sister-in-law back in Hereford also struggled with the flu.<sup>42</sup>

Changing weather in Amarillo did not seem to have had much influence on the toll of the epidemic. In the month and one-half from October 1 to mid-November weather was fair with temperatures in the sixties. The next month and a half was cold- highs in the twenties and snow. Yet there was little distinction between the number of deaths during these periods- approximately 35 in each six week period.

The small communities of Kress and Happy suffered. There was a weekly column in *The Tulia Herald* dealing with the goings on in Kress. The November 8 column began with the sentence, “Kress has little new to report this week. Only- Influenza! Influenza!” Three residents had died that week, including an infant. The Kress school closed the week before because the primary teacher, Anna Clark, had become ill with influenza.<sup>43</sup> The small village of Happy reported, “It seems the flu is loathe to leave us here, new cases appearing every day.” The column named seventeen residents who had become sick during one week in December and added that there were “a number of others.”<sup>44</sup>

The Amarillo newspapers also listed some of local deaths, sometimes giving causes. An early death that may be linked to Spanish flu was Tildon H. Tickett, age 16, who died of pneumonia on October 23.<sup>45</sup> Solon H. Randal, a pharmacist, became one of Amarillo’s early fatalities from the Spanish flu when he relapsed and died on October 30 at the age of 33.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, there were disagreements over how to open up. The Amarillo public schools were scheduled to reopen on January 13, 1919. Yet some people argued that the time was not right. On January 9, the *Amarillo Daily News* published on the front page a letter from Dr. L. N. Pennock questioning the wisdom of opening schools. The city was “playing with fire.” He wrote that people had declared the epidemic over before but had been wrong. There were still reasons to be concerned. As an example, he pointed to nearby Lubbock that recently had to be “closed down.” Thus far Amarillo had not suffered the losses of towns one-eighth its size. Yet reopening the schools could lead to more deaths. The doctor believed that the schools should remain closed until February 24. He somewhat dramatically, although understandable

looking at the previous three months, exclaimed that teachers and students should not be "sacrificed on the altar of education."<sup>47</sup> Very few school age children died in the months after reopening the school.

Closing of schools may not have had a large influence on deaths from influenza. There were 33 deaths while Amarillo schools were closed from mid-October until mid-November. There were 14 deaths while schools were opened until December. Then when schools were once again closed for the rest of the month 27 deaths occurred. However, the important change seen with the second school closing was a significant decrease in the number of cases.<sup>48</sup> Yet Tulia did not close its schools in October and was especially hard hit in November.

Numbers of deaths in the Panhandle are not certain but one way to consider the number is counting burials of those 35 years of age or younger. The Llano Cemetery in Amarillo is a large cemetery and many people from around the Panhandle use this as a final destination for loved ones. Obviously, a death before the age of 35 does not necessarily mean the cause was influenza. At least in October there were the casualties from World War I. Comparing the tombstones in the Llano Cemetery for 1918 during the months of October, November, and December with the previous year, 1917, and the following year, 1919, may give some insight. Graves of persons 35 and under for these three months in 1917 totaled 18. For these three months of 1918 when the Spanish flu raged, graves for those under 35 totaled 62, an increase of 244%. In 1919 for October, November, and December the number of graves fell to 22.<sup>49</sup> Graves for those over 35 increased from 8 in 1917 to 22 in 1918, or 175%, before falling to 12 in 1919. According to Findagrave.com there were eight people under 35 buried in the cemetery in Tulia in 1918 during these three months while there were no deaths of those younger than 35 for the corresponding months in 1917 or 1919.<sup>50</sup>

The second wave of the pandemic was the deadliest for the United States as in the Panhandle. In Amarillo, the official toll of deaths for October through December numbered 74. The harshness of the months of November and December did not continue into 1919 but deaths did occur. When reporting on deaths in Amarillo for the year, city health officer Dr. R. M. Walker stated that deaths "were considerably heavier at the beginning of 1919" due to influenza cases.<sup>51</sup>

Texas residents learned from the pandemic and prepared for a recurrence of the epidemic. State Health Officer Dr. C. W. Goddard sent out a communication in September of 1919 warning Texans to be aware and take precautions. He called for community leaders to have a "CLEAN UP AND ORGANIZATION DAY." He appealed to civic pride as each city should want to be the cleanest. The motto he argued should be "No more

trash, littered back yards or alleys. No vacant lots overgrown with weeds or grass. No more pools of stagnant water.”<sup>52</sup> Tulia mayor Meade F. Griffin called for ‘Clean-Up Day’ on October 3.

Panhandle residents remained vigilante and influenza did reappear in the early months of 1920. When 30 cases were reported in Amarillo, Dr. Walker called a meeting of the city’s Board of Health. Several physicians questioned if the disease was influenza but chose to be “on the safe side.”<sup>53</sup> As cases spread, city organizations practiced the philosophy, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” The Daughters of the American Revolution considered it “wise, safe and sane” to postpone a dance and the play *Womanless Wedding* so there would not be a large crowd in a small space.<sup>54</sup> There was reason to be cautious as by February 6 there were 300 cases reported in the city.<sup>55</sup> The Amarillo chapters of the Salvation Army and the Red Cross organized to help what was being labeled an ‘epidemic.’<sup>56</sup> The city’s schools closed on February 4 because over 25% of students and teachers were out with flu.<sup>57</sup> The schools in Claude were closed for three weeks.<sup>58</sup>

The pandemic proved to be deadly in the Panhandle as in the United States. The residents did take precautions such as Amarillo ordering the close of many businesses. Tulia failing to close its schools in October could have led to the high rate of infection in that town. Tulia mayor Dennis Zimmerman appealed to the citizens in a public notice published in *The Tulia Herald*. He feared that citizens would blame him and stressed that he had no authority to close the schools since the Tulia Independent School District covered the whole county.<sup>59</sup> It is not known whether Zimmerman’s response changed his political future, but in July of 1919, the city commissioners replaced him with Meade F. Griffin as someone “fitted for the honorable position.”<sup>60</sup> In contrast, Mayor Marrs of Amarillo, who had already served from 1908 through 1910, was chosen again in 1917 and served two more terms after the pandemic through 1923.<sup>61</sup> With little guidance from state or national leaders, leadership to fight the pandemic came from local communities. The Panhandle took the pandemic seriously and memories influenced actions for years to come.

## Endnotes

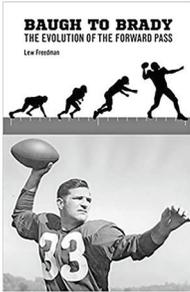
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## Book Reviews



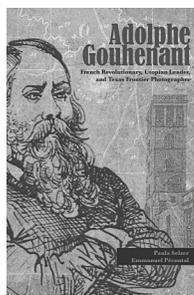
Lew Freedman, *Baugh to Brady: The Evolution of the Forward Pass*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2018). Hardback, \$27.95.

In Lew Freedman's latest book, 2018's *Baugh to Brady: The Evolution of the Forward Pass*, Freedman traces the development of the forward pass from its admission to the game in 1906 to today's pass-happy gunslingers; a time spanning over one-hundred years. Freedman has been a career long journalist and writer, working over seventeen years for the *Anchorage Daily News* before moving onto the *Chicago Tribune* and *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Freedman has received over 250 journalism awards and was inducted into the US Basketball Writers Hall of Fame in 2018. This is his second entry in Texas Tech University Press' Sports series, following his 2014 book *Becoming Iron Men: The Story of the 1963 Loyola Ramblers*.

*Baugh to Brady* begins with the legal adoption of the forward pass for the 1906 college season. At the inception of the forward pass, there were several rules in place that hindered the acceptance of the new weapon; incomplete passes resulted in a turnover on downs and a pass had to be attempted five yards behind the line of scrimmage. Freedman details the early successes and innovations of college coaches Eddie Cochems and Knute Rockne before the inception of the professional game. As Freedman introduces us to the early years of the National Football League, we meet the central figure of the book, Sweetwater, Texas' own Sammy Baugh. While Freedman does guide us in the development of the forward pass, he focuses 14 of his 27 chapters on Baugh and his influence on the game. Freedman anoints Baugh as "the pivotal player in the development of the forward pass" (xii). In particular, Slingin' Sammy Baugh's performance in the 1937 title game, a 335 yard and 3 touchdown affair, opened up the eyes of the league to the possibilities of a pass-first game (94). Beyond Baugh, Freedman introduces us to his rival, Sid Luckman, before breaking past the 1940s for the first time in chapter 21, two-thirds of the way through the book. For the rest of the book, Freedman details the careers of the great quarterbacks who emerged after the times of Baugh and Luckman, from Otto Graham to Johnny Unitas to Brett Favre, and then finally arriving at Peyton Manning and Tom Brady.

Freedman's work is extensively researched and *Baugh to Brady* often utilizes quotes and headlines from newspaper articles throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though there is the occasional inaccuracy, the breadth of Freedman's research is impressive and serves to make the mythical originators of the forward pass more realized. *Baugh to Brady* is a lively and detailed account of how football has progressed to its modern, pass-dominant ways. Freedman's friendly and, at times, simple description provides an easy and engaging read that would fascinate football fans ranging from middle school to weathered veterans of football fandom.

Otto Beyer  
West Texas A&M University



**Paula Selzer and Emmanuel Pécontal.** *Adolphe Gouhenant: French Revolutionary, Utopian Leader, and Texas Frontier Photographer.* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2019), 430 pages. Hardcover, \$34.95.

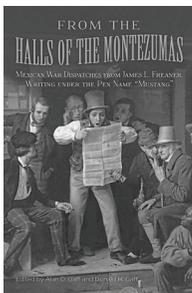
François-Ignace Gouhenant was born in France in 1804 and died in Missouri in 1871. At some point he took the name Adolphe, to honor a child who died in infancy. During more than two decades in Texas, Gouhenant's name was rendered in multiple ways, including a phonetic "Gounah." He married first in 1827, but circa 1860 (around age fifty-six), wedded a much younger woman—without legally divorcing his first wife back in France. At various times he was a socialist leader, a photographer, and a physician. Gouhenant reinvented himself repeatedly, yielding a biography that is seemingly fantastic yet completely believable when read in the protean context of mid-1800s transatlantic travel and the American frontier.

Adolphe Gouhenant's historical significance is multifaceted. In 1831 he built an astronomical observatory tower in Lyon, France. Then he became involved in revolutionary politics and joined a socialist group called the Icarians, led by Étienne Cabet. Gouhenant was tried for his activities, but was acquitted in 1843. In 1848 he left for America. Historians of utopian socialists often focus on Icarian communities in Illinois and Iowa, but another group settled in Texas's Peters Colony. The community eventually dissolved, but Gouhenant stayed in North Texas. He was among Fort Worth's earliest settlers, and in 1851 he established a daguerreotype (photography) studio in Dallas called the "Arts Saloon." Later, he became a respected local doctor, despite a lack of formal training. When Gouhenant died in 1871, due to complications resulting from a railway accident, the

sixty-seven-year-old was traveling to Washington, DC, apparently serving in some capacity as a state geologist. Had he not met his demise in Missouri, who knows how many more times the French transplant might have reinvented himself?

This book, based on extensive research in both French- and English-language sources, fills an important historiographical gap. At present, Gouhenant gets just one (brief) mention in *The Handbook of Texas Online* and is only rarely mentioned in secondary works. Unfortunately, the narrative is tedious, and non-specialists can get lost in the details. Too many letters are quoted verbatim within the text, rather than being relegated to an appendix. The book might also have done a better job of tying together aspects of Gouhenant's mercurial existence within the contexts of nineteenth-century intellectual history. Nevertheless, the authors—one is a Gouhenant descendent, while the other is a professional astronomer and historian—have done an important scholarly service by telling the story of this fascinating individual.

Brian M. Ingrassia  
West Texas A&M University



Alan D. Gaff and Donald H. Gaff (eds.). *From the Halls of the Montezumas: Mexican War Dispatches from James L. Freaner, Writing Under the Pen Name "Mustang"*. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2019), 486 pages. Hardcover, \$39.95.

This volume contains the complete Mexican War correspondence of James L. Freaner (1817–1852), who wrote for the *New Orleans Daily Delta* under the pen name “Mustang.” Freaner served briefly as a soldier—without seeing combat—and then as a correspondent who followed General Winfield Scott’s army in Mexico from the siege of Vera Cruz in February of 1847 until the adoption of the peace treaty in June of 1848. The editor’s note in the introduction explains that Freaner was responsible for convincing diplomat Nicolas Trist to ignore orders calling him home in December of 1847 so that he could reopen negotiations with Mexico, although that episode does not appear in the published correspondence in the volume. Freaner also delivered the draft treaty to Secretary of State James Buchanan in Washington, D.C. before returning to Mexico City.

Freaner’s letters to the *Delta* touch on many topics, mostly military in nature, including details of skirmishes and battles, the health and readiness of

the troops, and individual and group acts of bravery. His admiration of the United States army and its commanders is unlimited, repeatedly describing them as gallant and heroic. Freaner does not hide his contempt for the Mexican army and the Mexican people. The former he calls cowardly and poorly led; the latter are lazy, superstitious, and ignorant. He holds special venom for their Catholic faith and practices. To Freaner it seemed destined that the “Anglo-Saxon race will eventually possess and govern Mexico” instead of the “degenerate race which now cumberes the land” (266).

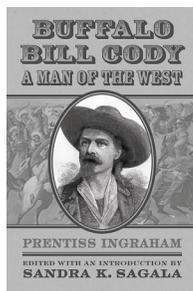
Readers learn of not only the battles of 1847 and 1848, but also about the long occupation of Mexico City after fighting stopped and peace negotiations got underway. Freaner describes the landscape and scenery of the region as well as the people he encounters. There are fandangos, horse races, and festivals to write about, as well as robberies, assaults, and murders. Freaner’s writing is generally clear and sometimes eloquent, but his descriptions of battles lack sufficient detail and clarity at times. Readers hoping to gain more insight into these battles may be disappointed.

Freaner grew increasingly impatient with the long delays in concluding the peace treaty and blamed both Mexican and United State politicians. He appealed to his readers multiple times to treat returning soldiers as heroes and begged the government to provide for the injured and for the widows and children of those who were killed.

Gaff and Gaff do a fine job editing the volume and include brief biographies of key personnel and some nice illustrations from the period. They close with a chapter on Freaner’s life after the war, when he travelled to California to cover the Gold Rush and became involved in politics and business before Indians killed him. This volume will appeal to those interested in not only the war and American politics in the 1840s, but also to those studying the history of journalism and war correspondents. It would make a fine addition to university libraries.

Wade Shaffer

West Texas A&M University



**Prentiss Ingraham. *Buffalo Bill Cody: A Man of the West*, ed. Sandra Sagala.** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 360 pages. Hardcover, \$55.00.

In *Buffalo Bill Cody: A Man of the West*, historian Sandra K. Sagala presents a monograph that compiles the biographical pieces Prentiss Ingraham had published in the *Duluth Press* detailing the life of his companion

William Cody. According to Ingraham, William “Buffalo Bill” Cody was an extraordinary individual that embodied the spirit of the American west. Cody shined as a prominent character in nineteenth century North America. This biography serves to garner appreciation for Buffalo Bill Cody and celebrate the prodigious feats he accomplished in his lifetime. Sagala’s thesis is to bring light to Ingraham’s work that “presented Cody’s perspective on American history, carefully curated for reading audiences” (11).

Ingraham wrote a collection of fables highly embellishing Buffalo Bill Cody’s personal life. It is important to note that the information presented by Ingraham is subjective and highly exaggerated. Ingraham wrote these pieces almost as tall tales in order to keep his readers engaged and to tell a story, not just to tell the facts of an ordinary man. When writing his pieces, Ingraham did not use citations or any outside sources. He only used his memories of Bill Cody and what Cody told him. Readers must beware when reading Ingraham’s work because it is not entirely factual. This biography written by Ingraham walks the line between real life and the content of the hundreds of dime novels Ingraham wrote that highly exaggerated Cody’s life events.

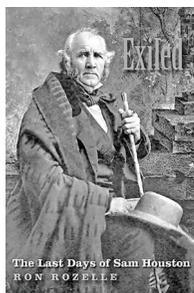
Sagala compiles Ingraham’s pieces together in order to create *Buffalo Bill Cody: A Man of the West*. Along with Sagala’s introduction, extensive endnotes, and appendix of Ingraham’s works based on Buffalo Bill, the reader can easily understand the information Sagala presents, where she pulled the information from, and the extent of how large the collection of Buffalo Bill stories was. Sagala compiled this book in order to garner appreciation for the spirit of Buffalo Bill Cody and how his character and personality completely embodied that of the American West.

This biography is unique as it provides a perspective on major American events from the perspective of one man. According to Ingraham, Cody took part in many major historical events, such as the expansion of railroads in America and the Civil War. Ingraham suggests that although Cody grew into a prominent figure in the American West, he lived a humble life in his adolescent years. This biography documents Cody’s adventures as a young boy in Kansas with his childhood pet, Turk. It also discusses Cody’s transition into Buffalo Bill due to his heroics when facing outlaws, Indians, and Confederates. Along with all of Buffalo Bill’s heroics, Ingraham also discusses his acting career and work in the line of theatre. Many of Buffalo Bill’s performances were the basis for the dime novels that Ingraham wrote.

Ingraham’s *Buffalo Bill Cody: A Man of the West* is suitable for historians and people with a general interest in men of the American frontier alike because it encompasses the ideals of what it meant to be considered

monumental and the types of people individuals idolized. This book is an enjoyable read about the portrayal of Buffalo Bill Cody in the Western frontier and will capture the attention of anyone with an interest in the men of the American west. The way in which Sagala compiled this biography is simple yet effective and continues to hold the readers' attention throughout the extent of the book. Each chapter is fairly short and encompasses a different event in Cody's life while also tying into the prior chapters. Although the chapters do not contain wholly objective, factual information, historians and scholars alike should read it to understand the mechanics of admirable actions in the American frontier during the 1800s.

Sarah Woodward  
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**Ron Rozelle.** *Exiled: The Last Days of Sam Houston.* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2017), 232 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95.

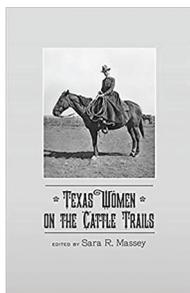
Ron Rozelle's monograph, *Exiled: The Last Days of Sam Houston*, looks at the last years of one of the largest figures in Texas history, Sam Houston. Rozelle discusses Houston's experience in 1850, the buildup to and beginning of the Civil War, and finally Houston's death in 1863. Rozelle also examines Houston's final years and his fall from grace as an opponent of secession. Rozelle tells the story in a personal and intimate style that helps the reader feel close to an important historical figure. Rozelle's work is clearly the product of a great passion for both history and storytelling, and he succeeds in blending the two to create an inviting and engaging story.

Rozelle is an accomplished writer who has published many books and garnered many accolades for his efforts. Rozelle has a background as a writer of fiction, creative nonfiction, and historical fiction; these experiences clearly served him well and helped to create a compelling historical read. *Exiled* was clearly written with the intent to do justice to an interesting story that Rozelle believed warranted telling. Rozelle's work proves as absorbing and engaging as any piece of fiction. Though Rozelle is not strictly a historian, his dedication to research and the conveyance of facts will satisfy any reader. Rozelle's sources encompass manuscripts, personal correspondence, and monographs. Even a cursory examination of Rozelle's sources leaves no doubt that *Exiled* was produced through extensive and impressive research.

The quality of *Exiled* is best exemplified in chapter twenty-one when Houston finds himself at the head of a state readying to secede. What was a chaotic and confusing time is conveyed by Rozelle in a way that reflects the calm steadfastness of the legendary Texan.

*Exiled* is able to boil down and comment on a tumultuous time for both Sam Houston and Texas without losing the readability and personal nature of the account. Rozelle posits in *Exiled* that Sam Houston's effect on the formation of Texas and the expanding United States does not get the discussion and attention it deserves. Rozelle takes the opportunity to reignite the discussion of such an important figure and does not waste it. While the book meets the standards set by academic monographs and accounts, it lacks the interpretive or analytical aspect of many important works of history. However, as a means of bringing attention to Houston's role in the history of Texas and the United States, especially to a non-historically-trained audience, *Exiled* is easily recommended. Rozelle has created an informative and entertaining read that can appeal to casual observers, history buffs, and academics alike.

John Fleming  
West Texas A&M University



**Sara R. Massey, ed.** *Texas Women on the Cattle Trails*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 326 pages. Paperback, \$24.95.

This delightful volume provides enlightening stories of ranching women's lives in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Texas. The edited collection works as a coherent frame to showcase how different women met the challenges of the frontier. A pleasure to read, it upends our traditional imaginings of "cowgirls" and indeed, of Texas women's lives during this period.

A preface and epilogue by Massey, and an introduction by Gibson Roach, together frame the sixteen essays in the collection, emphasizing the extent to which sensationalized images have hindered our ability to understand women's role in the cattle industry. For too long, historians in search of women's participation in western settlement looked either for a "cowgirl" to mirror the lonesome cowboy created in dime novels, or the "little woman" rescued from frontier dangers in so many Hollywood movies. Neither fantasy allowed us to see the myriad daily activities undertaken routinely by farm and ranching women making a living on

the frontier. This collection deftly corrects that myopic picture.

Although the sixteen women highlighted in these essays had diverse experiences, there are some shared patterns. For instance, women often undertook difficult and dangerous tasks because it was necessary for their family's survival. No one on the frontier seemed to find women riding horseback, driving wagons, hauling water, sleeping on the ground, shooting weapons or searching for firewood particularly scandalous or even remarkable. Frontier women, whether elite or not, also often kept the financial books of the family enterprise. In Texas, thanks to Spanish property laws established during the colonial period and later adapted for the state, women could and did engage in business dealings on their own account, buying and selling cattle, horses, and land with their own money. Lastly, women without servants did all these things while also cooking, tending the sick, gardening, and raising children. Many women went "up the trail" with small children in tow, some while pregnant or with infants tied on their backs. Some rode in buggies or wagons, while others were excellent horsewomen. Moreover, these women rode cattle in long skirts and sidesaddle despite the considerable dangers such gear presented.

It is little wonder that historians in the past could not see women's participation in the ranching world clearly. The women in these essays routinely, and as a matter of course, performed both the jobs thought traditionally belonging to ranching men and the jobs that belonged to women. Their peers did not seem to find this fact worthy of notice, nor do the women themselves report feeling that they were particularly unusual. This volume helps to drive home the realization that women, as they so often have, did the jobs of *both* genders on the ranch.

Donna F. Murdock  
Portland, Oregon



**LeRoy Chatfield and Jorge Mariscal. *To Serve the People: My Life Organizing with Cesar Chavez and the Poor.*** (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019), 264 pages. Hardcover, \$21.98.

The mid-twentieth century civil rights movements and its various organizations are often the subjects of modern historical and literary study. *To Serve the People: My Life Organizing with Cesar Chavez and the Poor* offers a detailed look at the interior motivations and structures of early activism and Chicano political movements, rather than an outside perspective. This

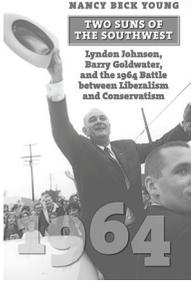
book begins with a short introduction from the prominent Chicano literary scholar, Dr. Jorge Mariscal. He speaks directly to the reader, making sure that they do not expect a traditional historical narrative or biography, but a collection of relevant experiences in a short essay format.

Leroy Chatfield is best known for his time working with Caesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers movement, but he was involved in many other civil rights organizations. *To Serve the People* is split into three parts, each discussing Chatfield's experiences within different political movements. The first unit discusses his time with the Christian Brothers youth group and their activist philosophies that stayed with Chatfield throughout his political career. His experiences there taught him to act on situations, rather than stand by and watch injustices. The second unit covers Chatfield's relationship with Caesar Chavez and the farm workers' movements. Even though this was a relatively short period of his activist career, Chatfield was present for many of the most noteworthy events of the United Farm Workers' organization. Lastly, unit three covers his time fighting against poverty, hunger, and homelessness. He struggles with impartiality when it comes to justice and homelessness. Chatfield's attempts to get others to understand the world from his perspective leave him frustrated.

Throughout the book, Chatfield makes clear that this type of activism is a full time, life-consuming commitment. He had to make his living within the movement, or he would simply not be able to keep up with the constant sacrifices of a high-level political activist. His life within political movements led him to believe that there are certain realities of political life that cannot be shaken. It is these revelations and internal struggles that caused him to shift focus on more than one occasion.

Chatfield describes the thought processes that led him to join movements, as well as detailed descriptions of the world as he saw it at the time. In the many short essays contained in this book, there are lessons about what activism is really like and makes clear that getting involved with labor organizing is no simple task. In order to do what they feel was right, difficult decisions have to be made. This book is for anyone interested in Chicano studies or the rise of grass-roots civil rights organizations from the mid-twentieth century into the modern day.

Patrick Diepen  
West Texas A&M University



Nancy Beck Young. *Two Suns of the Southwest: Lyndon Johnson, Barry Goldwater, and the 1964 Battle between Liberalism and Conservatism*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 304 pages. Hardcover, \$34.95.

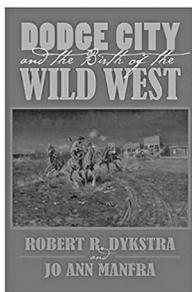
To the casual observer, 1964's presidential election is unlikely to be deemed altogether pivotal. Indeed, overshadowed by period tumult—Kennedy's assassination, Vietnam, and the Civil Rights Movement—1964 seems little more than a proverbial blip on the screen. Nancy Beck Young, though, in her 2019 book, *Two Suns of the Southwest: Lyndon Johnson, Barry Goldwater, and the 1964 Battle between Liberalism and Conservatism*, prescribes a rather different assessment. By carefully contextualizing each party's campaign and their respective ideological underpinnings, Young endeavors to prove that far from being unremarkable, 1964 in fact altered the entire trajectory of American politics. Compelling and prescient both, Young's narrative effectively captures the spirit of the election in a way that is sure to resonate with Americans in 2020.

Reaching back into the 1950s, Young begins her sketch by baring party schism and heterogeneity; the Republican Party under Eisenhower lacked cogent and codified ideology as it was divided internally along both geographical and generational lines. It would thus find itself adrift as the decade came to a close, whereupon the Democrats, who had long been in a state of flux, sought party unity via the election of Kennedy, only to face crisis again three years later. Out of this political milieu arose the two suns of the Southwest—Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas and Barry Goldwater of Arizona—whose divergent worldviews, though both wrought in the Sunbelt, presaged national and longstanding political change. While Johnson's liberal agenda prevailed in 1964, Young contends it was Goldwater's style of conservatism which ultimately triumphed. Indeed, by shifting the balance of power away from the East Coast and toward the Sunbelt, the conservatism conceived in 1964 not only survived defeat at the polls, but in fact burgeoned into a nationwide movement fully matured by the 1980s. Thus, a seemingly routine presidential election was anything but.

As promised, Nancy Beck Young's efforts to illumine and accentuate the oft-ignored ideological complexities and consequent long-term effects of the 1964 election result in a thoroughly absorbing story. Though Young's own political biases do at times tinge the narrative, somewhat undercutting the argument, her efforts are nonetheless laudable and engagingly fruitful.

Those looking to make sense of existing political dispositions need look no further than *Two Suns of the Southwest*.

Courtney A. Crowley  
West Texas A&M University



**Robert R. Dykstra and Jo Ann Manfra.** *Dodge City and the Birth of the Wild West.* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 240 pages. Paperback, \$22.95.

Dodge City, Kansas continues to fascinate the world largely through popular culture media and, in particular, the television series *Gunsmoke*, which was set in a fictional Dodge City and ran from 1955 to 1975.

Nothing affected popular culture like television and films and no genre ever dominated television like Westerns during the 1950s and 1960s. Networks added eighteen new TV Westerns in 1958 when seven of the top 10 Nielsen-rated TV shows were Westerns. In 1959, forty-seven Westerns broadcast each week in prime time, long before cable and satellite television and the Internet. Westerns even had their own “Emmy” category. Feature films such as *Dodge City Trail* (1936), *Dodge City* (1939), *West of Dodge City* (1947), and *The Gunfight at Dodge City* (1959), highlighted front-line actors such as Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, and Joel McCrea. The common denominator in this phenomenon was gun violence, or more correctly given this new publication by Robert R. Dykstra and Jo Ann Manfra, alleged and believed gun violence.

In a 2009 *Western Historical Quarterly* article, Dr. Dykstra posited that with more rigorous methodological study, “[s]ome scholarly consensus might help wrest the portrayal of western lethality from *those with much imagination but limited grounding in history.*” (321) [italics mine]. Forty years earlier—while *Gunsmoke* was still going strong on national television—Dykstra began his campaign to challenge the gun-mythology of the American West in his *The Cattle Towns*. He even faced off with *Gunsmoke* itself: “Tradition relegates cattle town law enforcement to fast-drawing city marshals, each of whom operated virtually single-handedly ... In no case did any cattle town depend upon a lone marshal for its law enforcement.” (122)

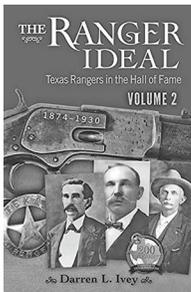
In his newest salvo on this topic, and aided most ably by co-author Jo Ann Manfra, Dr. Dykstra walks us through Dodge City’s beginnings as a supply town for the frontier Fort Dodge to its status as an Old West

tourist destination. Using “Dodge City’s very first gunfight” on September 3, 1872 as the jumping off point, the authors take us through each act of gun violence and homicide, alleged and often reported by “on the spot” reporters with newspapers across the United States. Each “gunfight” is dissected and unpacked to often reveal “fake news.” The authors navigate the popular-culture manufacture of the reputations of Wild West lawmen such as Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson through their penetrating and exhaustive research. And conclude with an examination of Dodge City’s capitalization on purported gun violence and its own status today as a popular culture bucket-list stop, with its slogan “Get the Heck Outa/Into Dodge.”

Both historians are excellent writers and good spinners of compelling stories, rather than journalists-cum-historians who sensationalize sans research. A must-read for all who think they know about the “true” American West and especially for those who have an ax to grind with it.

Michael R. Grauer

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum



**Darren L. Ivey.** *The Ranger Ideal Volume 2: Texas Rangers in the Hall of Fame, 1874-1930.* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2018), 816 pages. Hardcover, \$45.00.

*The Ranger Ideal Volume 2: Texas Rangers in the Hall of Fame* is a well-researched work on the lives and dedication to the job of twelve early Texas Rangers who have been inducted into the Texas Rangers Hall of Fame. Darren Ivey’s biography of these twelve men provides a remarkable amount of detail of the lives of the men who helped mold the iconic organization. *The Ranger Ideal Volume 2* is the second book by Darren Ivey on men who have been inducted into the Texas Rangers Hall of Fame and his intent is to educate the reader on the lives of those men who served at the highest level of distinction with the Rangers. Ivey intends to convey how “They stamped the Texas Rangers with their unique character, and ensured the fame of the service would endure” (ix).

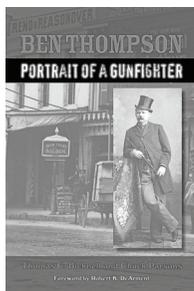
The book is divided into twelve chapters, each dedicated to a different Texas Ranger Hall of Fame member starting with John B. Jones, “The ‘father’ of the modern Texas Ranger service” (1). Originally formed to protect the people of Texas from hostile Indians and other bandits, the force was officially created and funded by the State of Texas as a paramilitary unit but gradually evolved into a police force with traditional duties of investigating

crimes and hunting down criminals. Ivey's extensive research details the lives of these Rangers providing backgrounds to help understand how the men's upbringing and experiences influenced their lives and gave them the skills and abilities to become the outstanding Rangers they were. It provides much insight into how these Rangers dealt with various situations, including some methods that may seem unorthodox, unethical, or even down right ruthless. He does show that some rangers may have used questionable methods to get results.

Darren Ivey spent countless hours researching a large number of sources for his book, *The Ranger Ideal Volume 2: Texas Rangers in the Hall of Fame* and the depth and breadth of information presented is unparalleled. He cites hundreds of sources, from public records, including Civil War records and accounts, to books and manuscripts, and hand written notes. Ivey uses many firsthand accounts of events that took place during each Ranger's life and goes to great detail for each man to show not only the historical events that occurred during their lives, but also how their lives were shaped by their experiences when they were young and how they changed while they were Texas Rangers. Over 300 of the book's pages are dedicated to the notes and references to the materials and sources he used. This book is a detailed historical account of these men's lives and their contribution to the Texas Rangers organization. He describes the good, the bad, and the ugly of the men and the times.

This book should be read by anyone interested in understanding how the Texas Rangers were shaped by some incredible men. While not every man was of the highest moral standing, each man was a significant contributor to shape and build the Rangers into the elite law enforcement organization it is today. It took the exceptional contribution of these men to build this organization and Darren Ivey goes to great lengths to immortalize these men and describe their exploits in his book.

Kennedy Badgett  
West Texas A&M University



**Thomas C. Bicknell and Chuck Parsons.** *Ben Thompson: Portrait of a Gunfighter.* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2018), 688 pages. Hardcover, \$34.95.

Thomas Bicknell and Chuck Parsons embark on an endeavor to demystify a character from the nineteenth century who played many roles throughout his life,

and had an influence on nearly every aspect of Texas' political and social evolution. Ben Thompson had many daring and adventurous roles throughout his life: a Texas Ranger, lawman, Confederate soldier, mercenary, and prolific marksman. These titles gained him quite a lot of notoriety during the nineteenth century, and his bombastic personality both granted him a presidential pardon when in trouble as well as allowed him to be a highly respected public official. There have been attempts to properly document Thompson's life; some date back to the year of his death in 1884 and continue throughout the early and mid-twentieth century. Bicknell and Parsons attempt to separate the man from the myth, in detailed and calculated fashion, regarding the legendary life of Ben Thompson.

Chuck Parsons is an author for *True West Magazine*, a magazine dedicated to showcasing certain figures and events that impacted the western United States throughout the nineteenth century. Parsons has been an author at the publication for a number of years and focuses primarily on history surrounding the Texas Rangers and gunfighters of that time period. Thomas C. Bicknell is an avid history lover who has spent many years researching the life of Ben Thompson. His work has been published in certain periodicals and magazines, such as *True West* and *Wild West* magazines. Both writers keep the historiographical discussion going to show how Ben Thompson played a role in Texas politics during the Civil War and Reconstruction era.

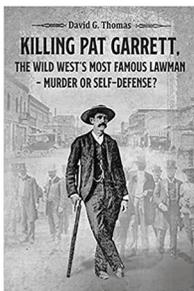
Parsons and Bicknell use a multitude of sources throughout this work including other biographies of Ben Thompson, court cases, government records, newspapers, photographs, and academic monographs related to the era. The two authors aim to build on the present discourse of Ben Thompson by adding new details that have come to light in the century after his death. All endnotes are heavily annotated to provide additional information for the reader in an effective manner.

Readers with a deep appreciation of Western American history and the historiography of the region and era would find this book to be particularly helpful in any research of theirs, as it not only details his life, but the attitude of the people and state he lived in and the hardships faced after the Civil War. Bicknell and Parsons do a great job at keeping the discussion alive by giving a modest account of Thompson's life while also providing a good context of the events going on around him.

The book keeps a nice pace of providing ample biographical information of Thompson's life while also sharing personal details that made him so unique to begin with. Anyone seeking knowledge of the Civil War and Reconstruction era, especially in Texas, should give the book their

attention, as it also helps paint a portrait of what it was like to be a gunfighter during the nineteenth century.

Ben Mager  
West Texas A&M University



**David G. Thomas. *Killing Pat Garrett, The Wild West's Most Famous Lawman—Murder or Self-Defense.*** (Las Cruces, NM: Doc45 Publishing, 2019), 258 pages. Paperback, \$19.95.

Both the title, *Killing Pat Garrett, The Wild West's Most Famous Lawman—Murder or Self-Defense*, and the description on its webpage: “This book is written so you experience his life as he did, as it happened, event by event” read like a dime-novel from the 1870s and 1880s. Take for comparison, the cover title for 1882’s *Lives, Adventures & Exploits, Frank and Jesse James, with an Account of the Tragic Death of Jesse James, April 3d, 1882* and its descriptor on its title page, “A graphic account of the tragic end of Jesse James.”

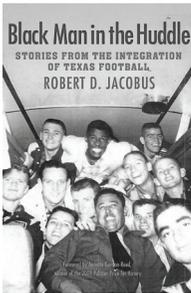
Giving the author the benefit of the doubt, perhaps he was mimicking dime-novels and broadsides of the late nineteenth century with his title and promotional language. My relish for irony was somewhat assuaged if this was his motive. However, if sensationalism is the author’s goal for this new tome on Pat Garrett: mission accomplished. I suspect in today’s “click-bait” society, the author is simply following the new formula. Recent books written on different aspects of the American West lean heavily on revealing something absolutely new and, hopefully, nefarious, such as *Cattle Kingdom: The Hidden History of the Cowboy West* or *Dodge City, Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and the Wickedest Town in the American West*. As journalists who write better than historians keep trying to be historians, stories become axes to grind, “facts” are slanted, and research is frequently sloppy or left undone.

Digitized archival collections online, especially newspapers, have opened worlds for the historian who had neither the time nor the funding to travel the world in search of ferreted-away archives. However, the danger lies in the lack of synthesis in assembling a simple listing of quotations and/or stories from 19<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers. This “just the facts, ma’am” methodology lacks any kind of discrimination about what is relevant to a particular story. The “shotgun full of pasta style” leaves the reader bewildered and out of breath in trying to keep up with every

niggling detail shared. *Killing Pat Garrett* suffers mightily from these traps.

Due not only to his connection with and eventual killing of Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett is also of interest to residents of the Panhandle-Plains region largely to his work as a stock detective after the Cowboy Strike of 1883. The Panhandle Stockmen's Association hired him to lead a company of "Home Rangers" (not Texas Rangers) to drive rustlers from New Mexico out of the Panhandle range in 1884. The never-before-published photographs of Garrett are something of a saving grace for this difficult to read book. Moreover, the nuggets of new information add to our knowledge of "The Wild West's Most Famous Lawman." But they shouldn't be so hard to find.

Michael R. Grauer  
National Cowboy & Heritage Museum



**Robert D. Jacobus.** *Black Man in the Huddle: Stories from the Integration of Texas Football.* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 280 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95.

In 1953, former University of Illinois football player Ben Kelly enrolled at two-year San Angelo College (present-day Angelo State University). Kelly, an African American, made SAC the first college in Texas—and first in the former Confederacy—to integrate its gridiron team.

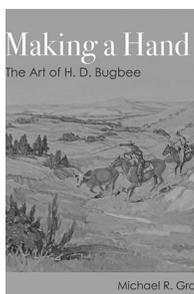
*Black Man in the Huddle: Stories from the Integration of Texas Football* examines the 1953–1970 integration of Lone Star interscholastic and intercollegiate football. Robert Jacobus tells this story in fifteen largely chronological chapters. He shows how West and South Texas were among the first areas to integrate, while East Texas and the Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth areas were among the last. North Texas State College was an exception to this trend: in 1956, present-day UNT was the first four-year college in the former Confederacy to integrate its team. This book is filled with firsts. The 1959 Dimmitt-Tulia game was the first game in the Panhandle in which both teams were integrated. San Antonio Brackenridge defeated Borger in Texas's first fully integrated state championship game in 1962. The Panhandle is prominently featured. Amarillo high school football integrated in 1966; a few years earlier, in 1961, West Texas State College integrated with the addition of running back "Pistol" Pete Pedro. WTSC, which gained university status in 1963, saw significant gridiron

success throughout the decade. Jacobus quotes WTSC's Coach Joe Kerbel as saying, "I don't give a shit if they're from Mars if the kid can play football!" (142). The story of football integration was sometimes about doing the right thing, but more often it was about wanting to win—or at least realizing the need to follow the law. By 1970, with integration of the University of Texas (UT) Longhorns and disbanding of the Prairie View Interscholastic League, segregated Texas football was, essentially, over.

*Black Man in the Huddle* is based on approximately 240 interviews, mostly conducted in 2015 and 2016, as well as extensive newspaper research. The voices of many black players vividly illustrate the painful transition from segregation to desegregation. The many lengthy quotations, however, can be redundant, or leave questions unanswered. Surprisingly, there is virtually no analysis of major football programs at UT, Texas A&M, and Texas Tech.

The history of black football in Texas has undergone a renaissance recently, with Michael Hurd's *Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black High School Football in Texas* (2017) and Rob Fink's *Football at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Texas* (2019). Jacobus's well-researched yet idiosyncratic book is a good read that provides a deep look at sport's role in Texas's black freedom struggle.

Brian M. Ingrassia  
West Texas A&M University



**Michael Grauer.** *Making a Hand: The Art of H. D. Bugbee.* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press,) 116 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00.

Michael Grauer's new biography comes out as part of the Texas A&M University series, "American Wests." As in previous scholarship, Grauer's volume gets close to the subject and gives us lasting portrait of the artist. The reader receives a full and engaging account of the young man and of the accomplished artist.

Grauer traces the family's eastern history. Harold Bugbee's father, Charles, longed for a ranch and his mother, Grace Dow Bugbee, came from an artistic family. In 1913, T.S. Bugbee, Harold's third cousin, invited the family to the Texas Panhandle; within a year, the family had purchased the 3B Ranch in Clarendon, Texas. Young Harold's western education

had begun. Through study, he absorbed the works of Remington and Russell and was soon studying at the Cumming School in Des Moines before returning to Texas.

Bugbee's mentors grow in the 1920s, as he begins a lasting friendship with Charles Goodnight, as he travels to Taos, and as he begins his friendship with W. Herbert "Buck" Dunton. With his work increasingly sought out, he begins his murals for the "Longhorn Room" in the Amarillo Hotel, where cattle deals as well as art were made.

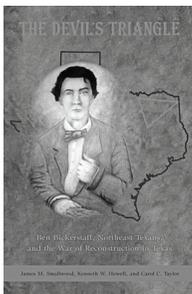
In the 1920s, both T.S. Bugbee and Goodnight passed, and Grauer's biography reveals an artist coming into his own. With scholarship from Byron Price and Brian Dippie, Grauer explores how Bugbee takes his Texas art to New York City in 1933. Bugbee becomes part of the New Deal's art projects and works on mural plans for the newly opened Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum's Pioneer Hall.

Bugbee emerges as both grounded in Texas cattle culture and immersed in American art, with peers that included Benton, Curry, Wood, and others. In the 1930s, Bugbee's reputation grows, and he enjoys the patronage of Texas ranchers and the support of art dealers across the U.S., soon expanding into illustration—as he did for J. Evetts Haley's 1936 biography, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman*.

Bugbee gives back his supporters, helping to secure collections for the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum and teaching art in summer school for West Texas State Teachers College. And eventually, he becomes the first Curator of Art at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum.

As what Grauer calls a "Charlie Russell of Texas," Bugbee brings ranching heritage to the canvas, to the illustrated pages of Western books, and to his murals. He also brings in the influences of other artists east of the hundredth meridian. Grauer's biography portrays an artist with eastern roots whose love for the West is actualized in his teens and twenties and who committed himself to the ranching West. Texas lands formed Bugbee's palette, and the artistic and ranching community has valued Bugbee's "grassroots" connection to its region. Readers will enjoy this "making of a hand"—both in the saddle and in front of the canvas. As the Acknowledgments demonstrate, Grauer's connections to Bugbee's career, and with Bugbee's love for the West, go deep. That connection comes through in this fine biography of a true "cowboy artist."

Bonney MacDonald  
West Texas A&M University



**James M. Smallwood, Kenneth W. Howell, Carol C. Taylor.** *The Devil's Triangle: Ben Bickerstaff, Northeast Texas, and the War of Reconstruction.* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2007), 240 pages. Paperback, \$19.95.

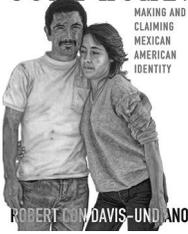
*The Devil's Triangle* by James M. Smallwood, Kenneth W. Howell, and Carol C. Taylor is a detailed narrative of the violence which engulfed Northeast Texas during the era of Reconstruction. The book follows the actions such as murder and robbery by Ben Bickerstaff as well as other outlaws including Bickerstaff's fellow Confederate veterans Cullen Baker and Bob Lee, who created "chaos" throughout Northeast Texas. These men made sure that ex-Confederates would eventually control the South.

The authors are highly qualified to present such a work. James Smallwood has contributed a number of important works to the revisionist historiography of Reconstruction in Texas. Kenneth Howell is a history professor at Blinn College and has edited a number of works on the era. Carol Taylor is an independent historian. In *The Devil's Triangle*, the authors have done extensive research to uncover almost every move of the outlaws and every counter move of the Union army. Manuscript collections from archives throughout the state are used as are collections from the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Accounts from newspapers of the era add to the narrative. Secondary sources also play an important role in bringing the story to life.

The extensive research should shatter a number of myths. The belief that the Ku Klux Klan or those that justified their violence as opposition to Reconstruction is destroyed. Although many of the outlaws tried to represent themselves as defenders of the "Lost Cause," the facts show indiscriminate murders of freedmen and Unionists as well as a "carnival of plunder and robbery." (121) Another myth is challenged. Many southern apologists point to a large "occupation" army as an example of the harshness of Reconstruction. The difficulty the army has in capturing the bandits because of limited soldiers disproves this theory. Actually, Texas citizens are responsible for ending the infamous career of Ben Bickerstaff.

*The Devil's Triangle* brings light to the "Second Civil War" and a part of Texas's history that doesn't always get much exposure. The book is recommended for anyone that is interested in the volatile history of Reconstruction or Texas history. The book also exposes a little of the complicated history of race relations in the United States.

Marty Kuhlman  
West Texas A&M University

**MESTIZOS  
COME HOME!**


**Robert Davis-Undiano.** *Mestizos Come Home! Making and Claiming Mexican American Identity.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 336 pages. Hardcover, \$29.95.

The Chicano Renaissance of the 1960s brought a new appreciation of Mexican-American culture(s) to the United States. As literary scholar Robert Con Undiano-Davis demonstrates in *Mestizos Come Home!*, Mexican Americans have changed since then, in turn bringing about key changes to the larger United States. A homecoming of sorts is necessary, in his view, for “Mexican Americans to complete what they began in the 1960s...by consolidating gains in American culture and society” (6).

Certain reckonings are needed in order to confront the negative impacts of historical legacies. In chapter one, the author analyzes Spanish “casta paintings,” which outlined the strict social hierarchy of colonial New Spain and allows for the remnants of Spanish racism to be deconstructed in modern society. Being of *mestizo* or “mixed” heritage, he argues, helps unpack “the complex label of a people carrying the historical, racial, and cultural baggage” or Spanish constructions of race (56). Defining what it means to be a mestizo in modern times is naturally quite complicated, as mestizos are caught between navigating a hybrid culture while at the same time advancing it in a society that is not always receptive to its needs. Even notions of Aztlán, the famed Chicano homeland, became recalibrated during the globalized 1990s; as the famed writer Rudolfo Anaya wrote in his 1991 essay, “Aztlán: A Homeland without Boundaries,” the homeland idea has been supplanted out of necessity by connections with other displaced peoples in the wider context of the western hemisphere. In chapter four, “Remapping Community,” Davis-Undiano explores how Mexican-American pop culture—from lowrider culture to Day of the Dead celebrations—transcends borders to connect people in ways that Anaya envisioned. Reclaiming the Mexican-American body from racist standards of beauty imposed over the centuries combined with the creatively robust works of writers like Tomás Rivera all help point the way toward a brighter, constructive future, one to which Mexican-American artists and intellectuals have been working toward since the Chicano Renaissance.

*Mestizos Come Home!* is thus more than a work of scholarship—it is a clarion call to Mexican Americans to continue to struggle toward a brighter, more promising future in a world fraught with difficulty. Rarely

does a piece of scholarship transcend narrow intellectualism in favor of a positive outlook on an entire people's future.

Tim Bowman  
West Texas A&M University



**Lucie Genay. *Land of Nuclear Enchantment: A New Mexican History of the Nuclear Weapons Industry.*** (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019), 324 pages. Hardcover, \$65.00.

French historian Lucie Genay's book is not the first to survey New Mexico's nuclear history, but with its social history approach it stands as a lively and important new book in the field. Genay emphasizes that her book (which began as her doctoral dissertation) fills a gap in the scholarly literature that has had a blind spot toward "local consequences," impact on residents whose communities predate nuclear facilities. Genay's approach, accordingly, and a significant aspect of its argument, is the appropriateness of analyzing the subject as nuclear colonization. This wave of federal military-industrial colonization is an extension of US colonization following 1848, which followed previous periods of Spanish and Mexican colonization.

The book is organized chronologically but also according to themes that are, Genay explains, symptomatic of neocolonialism. The first two chapters of the book are the "before" stage which examine New Mexico history prior to WWII, particularly with an eye toward issues of land and territory. Chapter three details the arrival of nuclear scientists to New Mexico, and chapter four discusses local responses to the economic benefit to the region as well as the post-war entrenchment of the industry. Chapters five, six, and seven are the central story of New Mexico's economic boon, federal dependency, and veil of nuclear secrecy. The final chapters deal with the "fallout"—covering long-term environmental, social, and legal impact to the state and its populations.

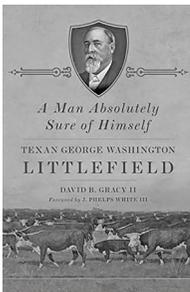
In her conclusion, "Memory," Genay notes that she was struck by the stark contrast in New Mexico of the "haves" and "have-nots" when it came to economic prosperity—a division deepened if not solely attributable to the nuclear-industrial industry. Through her research, she also noticed that in the historical literature, "references to local populations were scarce." These two facts are related—the same people left behind by economic prosperity were left out of histories that tended to focus on nuclear frontierism, scientists, and spies.

Genay's commitment to doing local history, or, more properly, nuclear history through the lens of "local memory," does a great deal to fill in the silences of previous histories when it comes to telling the stories of people whose lives were in many ways profoundly impacted by New Mexico's nuclear history even if they were not directly involved. Her work is thus an invaluable addition to the historical literature of nuclear New Mexico. Moreover, it is exceedingly well written and a pleasure to read.

While Genay's book does not much cross the border into West Texas, it does include testimonies and accounts of the period from Roswell and other communities of the southern plains region. *Land of Nuclear Enchantment* should be a part of every serious collection of 20th century western history and cultural studies. And for residents of the panhandle-plains used to the quiet presence of Pantex Plant in our region, this explication of nuclear New Mexico ought to be of more than passing interest.

Alex Hunt

West Texas A&M University



**David B. Gracy II. *A Man Absolutely Sure of Himself: Texan George Washington Littlefield.*** (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019), 472 pages. Hardcover, \$34.95.

It seems no small irony that this long-awaited major biography of a major benefactor for the University of Texas at Austin (UT) was published by UT's greatest rival, both academically and athletically. But, conceivably there is no irony at all as UT has consciously sought to divorce itself from "historical figures who had a Confederate association or slave ownership in their past" by allowing the Littlefield Society, "its most prominent donor group," to disappear (336). Perhaps the most controversial of these efforts was UT's removal of six bronze portrait sculptures by immigrant artist Pompeo Coppini from the Littlefield Memorial Fountain—intended as a World War I memorial—assemblage, "two with no Confederate affiliation or slave ownership in the past" (336). David B. Gracy's excellent biography of George Washington Littlefield offers a vital context for the subject's contributions to Texas, the University of Texas, and the United States.

Gracy's challenge was not only to counter the recent developments in Austin regarding Littlefield, but was also to measure up against another giant of Texas letters, J. Evetts Haley. Haley's 1943 biography, *George W.*

*Littlefield, Texan*, was also published by the University of Oklahoma Press and copyrighted by the Trustees of the Littlefield Fund for Southern History at the *University of Texas*!

With Haley's expertise and experience in cowboy and ranching history, his biography has a definite ranching slant, while sketching out Littlefield's other areas of interest and commitment to a certain extent. Conversely, Littlefield descendant and scholar Gracy had access to archival materials unavailable or unknown to Haley. Consequently, Gracy's treatment of his subject is a rigorous examination of his subject's life, interests, and especially his commitments to his family, his business interests, his adopted state, and to Austin and the University of Texas. Suffice it to say, there are few stones Gracy left unturned.

George Washington Littlefield became a successful cattleman and businessman after serving with Terry's Texas Rangers during the Civil War. He was one of the earliest ranchers in the Texas Panhandle region, establishing his LIT Ranch in 1877 in Hartley, Oldham, Potter, and Moore counties. In 1901 he bought the first large part of the XIT Ranch sold (the Yellow House Division) on the South Plains. Littlefield also became a successful banker and built the nine-story building in downtown Austin. One of the most lavish, modern, and prestigious buildings in the United States in 1911, the Littlefield bank building in Austin, Texas, held six murals commissioned by Littlefield from famed Taos Colony artist E. Martin Hennings.

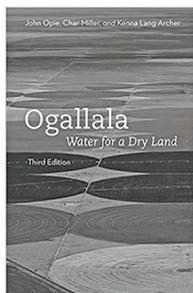
Wanting to be surrounded by depictions of his ranch, cattle, and horses on the Yellow House Ranch and the LFD Farm in the Pecos Valley in New Mexico, Littlefield wanted to make a cultural statement in downtown Austin. He also commissioned sculptor H. Daniel Webster to produce ranching images for the cast bronze doors for the bank.

I was especially gratified by Gracy's thorough explanation of Littlefield's gift of an impressive south entrance to UT. Unfortunately, after Littlefield died, the university altered Coppini's design and today the fountain section is called the Littlefield Memorial Fountain.

In a time of political correctness run amok and knee-jerk reactions that ultimately tear down rather than build up, David Gracy's exhaustive study of George Washington Littlefield provides "good medicine" in light of these controversial cultural affronts. This book is a must-read for those students of U.S. ranching history as well as Texas history and philanthropy in general.

Michael R. Grauer

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum



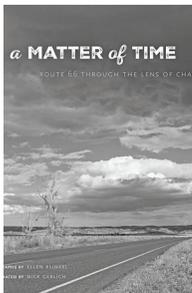
**John Opie, Char Miller, and Kenna Lang Archer.** *Ogallala: Water for a Dry Land.* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 412 pages. Hardcover, \$25.00.

*Ogallala: Water for a Dry Land*, is a landmark study of water sustainability along the portions of the Great Plains fed by the Ogallala aquifer. An “irrigation bonanza,” the three authors note, helped farmers across the region overcome climatological challenges by 1960; however, the continuance of this bonanza ever since has depleted the aquifer to dangerous new lows (2).

In order to advocate for greater environmental sustainability, the authors go all the way back to the aquifer’s formation half a billion years ago, giving readers a greater appreciation for the plains farming lifeblood. Euroamerican farmers understood the region’s ecology little when they began arriving during the 1870s, leading to a series of boom-and-bust cycles that peaked when the region went “from dryland to Dust Bowl” by the 1930s. Agriculture found success in the region with the “industrialization of the Plains” between 1920-1960, when irrigators “industrialized their old fieldwork habits by watering night and day and also on Sundays,” showing a clear break from previously less-intensive practices (121). More pumping and better extractive technologies led to the formation of water conservation districts, which began to dot the region in 1951. Irrigation, nonetheless, has become so extensive that longtime farmers like Phil and Linda Tooms of southwestern Kansas would lack the financial capital to start irrigating for their family farm today (they have been irrigating since 1950). The future of irrigation on the plains thus looks bleak: almost all irrigators foresee a future with far less water, the already parched Texas Panhandle has been beset with drier weather and higher temperatures due to climate change, and collective efforts toward sustainability across Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas—which the authors applaud in the book’s final chapter—still have not proven enough to stem declining water levels in the Ogallala.

In February of 2020, the Center for Study of the American West partnered with Ogallala Commons to host a conference at West Texas A&M University on water sustainability in the Texas Panhandle. In doing so, the organizers represented a “call to action” of sorts in tackling the issues that Opie, Miller, and Archer raise in their book. Nothing could demonstrate more readily the public’s acceptance of the critically important issues raised in *Ogallala*.

Tim Bowman  
West Texas A&M University



**Ellen Klinkel and Nick Gerlich.** *A Matter of Time: Route 66 Through the Lens of Change.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019), 258 pages. Hardcover, \$34.95.

In 1926, Route 66 opened up as a road winding from Chicago, Illinois to the Santa Monica Pier in California. Route 66, or the ‘Mother Road,’ has gained an important part in the pop culture of the United States, from literature and movies such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, in music with the call to “(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66,” and the *Route 66* television program. The iconic road closed down in 1985 but is still a mecca for tourists who yearn for the open road and the history of an early system of travel.

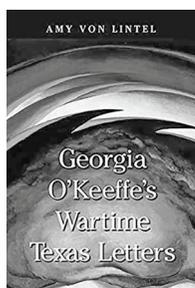
Few people have experienced the road the way Ellen Klinkel and Nick Gerlich have. Through *A Matter of Time: Route 66 Through the Lens of Change* Klinkel, using Klinkel’s photography and Gerlich’s writing, readers are allowed to go on a journey of discovery. Klinkel has taken fine art black-and-white photographs of landmarks along the route, some well-known and some not as well known. She begins with images of where the road began in Chicago and takes us through all of the states where the road existed.

Kirkel’s camera gives us the truth. She takes us into cities like Baxter Springs, Kansas, once bustling in the heyday of the ‘Mother Road’ but now replaced with boarded up storefronts. The unique architecture of once busy gas stations or motels inspire the imagination. What would places, such as the Herring Hotel of Amarillo, have been like during the period? A loneliness can be felt in the pictures as grass grows over the road or the reader can almost hear the crunch of the broken glass in an abandoned room in Glenrio, New Mexico. Time has passed by the “Mother Road,” and we see it in the pictures.

The narration to go along with the photos is provided by Nick Gerlich. The photographs show sites along the route as they are today, but Gerlich’s narrative gives us background. We may see a picture of a bridge and Gerlich tells us where it is and the story behind it. He describes novelties along the road such as the Blue Whale near Catoosa, Oklahoma. Some towns have withered while others try to survive on the popularity of Route 66.

This book should have a great deal of popularity. Anyone interested in Route 66 or American pop culture will find a treasure in *A Matter of Time*.

Marty Kuhlman  
West Texas A&M University



**Amy Von Lintel.** *Georgia O'Keeffe's Wartime Texas Letters.* (College Station: West Texas A&M University Press, 2020), 248 pages. Hardcover, \$28.00.

This collection of letters from the artist Georgia O'Keeffe, as well as analysis by the art historian and O'Keeffe scholar Amy Von Lintel, offers a fresh and often intimate perspective of the artist's life in the four years she lived in Texas between 1912 and 1918. Often overlooked and underrated by art historians, this period of O'Keeffe's life captures the sometimes-complicated foundations of a young artist struggling to make sense of herself and her surroundings. The people, the cattle, and the ceaseless sky of the windy Texas plains had a lasting effect on O'Keeffe, manifesting in her artwork and forever preserved in this collection of letters. Organized chronologically, each chapter presents a new selection of letters, beginning prior to O'Keeffe's return to Texas in 1916 and ending after her arrival in San Antonio in 1918.

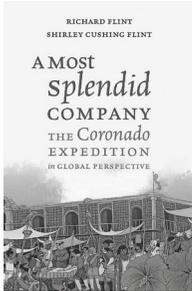
Romantic, even borderline-erotic, O'Keeffe's youth is evident in her early writing. Most of the letters in this collection are addressed to Alfred Stieglitz, who was her future lover and husband, but only a friend and mentor at the time of writing. O'Keeffe's tantalizing letters to Stieglitz reveal a great deal about the ways in which a young, single woman navigated romance and autonomy in the decade prior to female suffrage. O'Keeffe's letters demonstrate a feeling of alienation due to her own "queer" behavior and her peer's responses to it. She expressed an aversion to the cultural expectations placed upon her in a number of letters, such as when she described her frustration with the dress code at her place of employment, West Texas State Normal College. Von Lintel identifies O'Keeffe as a progressive woman who often deviated from, or at least pushed back against, the cultural norms that she felt restrained her.

Von Lintel emphasizes the significance of war in relation to O'Keeffe's work, personal life, and art. Following the United States' entrance into World War I, Von Lintel notes a marked difference in the tone and subject matter of O'Keeffe's letters, shifting from youthful idealism to disillusioned frustration. She mourned for the many young men who left school to fight—many of them her friends and peers. She also described the feeling of wartime anxiety and its effect on her art.

*Georgia O'Keeffe's Wartime Texas Letters* offers a unique perspective on one of the most influential Modernist artists in the United States. Using O'Keeffe's own words, Von Lintel's analysis creates a thoughtful and new perspective of a woman both maddened and inspired by the changing

world around her. O’Keeffe’s letters tell the story of a woman sometimes lost yet standing on the unknowing edge of greatness, navigating through the trials of love, sexuality, societal expectations, and war.

Kirbi Kelley-Diaz  
West Texas A&M University



**Richard Flint, Shirley Cushing Flint. *A Most Splendid Company: The Coronado Expedition in Global Perspective*.** (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019), 464 pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.

This is an impressive book—the result of 15 years of work in archives located all over the world, particularly Spain and Mexico. The authors have spent the majority of their academic careers (38 years) in the study of the Coronado Expedition and *A Most Splendid Company* is the sixth book they have authored or edited on the expedition. In many ways it is a culmination of all their previous work.

In *A Most Splendid Company*, Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint dive deep, as known written records allow, into the lives of the Europeans who made up the Coronado Expedition. It is the authors stated belief that an understanding of the personal histories and motivations of its members, organizers, and funders will shed new light on the expedition. The authors achieve their goal and more as the reader not only learns about the Expedition but life in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, Spain, and Tierra Nueva.

They admit, however, that of the approximately 2,800 members of the expedition, relatively little is known about the more than 2,000 Indian allies from the Central Valley of Mexico who accompanied the Europeans on the expedition. Although many records, personal letters, and memoirs remain after over 450 years, only 387 members of the expedition can be identified by name. Of those the authors found “significant data” on only 234. With these 234 members the authors build an impressive and thorough case for their arguments. Readers will not find more information and careful analysis of the Coronado Expedition in any other source.

The scope and detail of this hefty book is impressive. The authors divide the book into 89 chapters, which vary in length from nine pages to less than two. This arrangement gives the book the feel and appearance of an encyclopedia. Topics as varied as the role Asian luxury items played in

exploration of the New World, the rise of credit in the Sixteenth Century, and the tools, clothing arms and the livestock taken on the expedition, allow the reader to easily “digest” this truly massive, detailed, and readable work. All the chapters shed small and nuanced looks into the expedition.

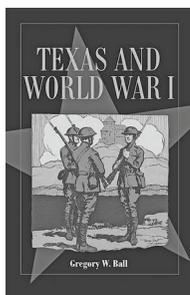
Flint and Cushing Flint divide *A Most Splendid Company* into four parts, arranged in chronological order; Essential Background: Prior to 1530, Before the Expedition: 1530-1539, During the Expedition: 1539-1542, and After the Expedition: After 1542.

There are numerous charts, tables, and a few maps. These are an important addition to the work, which help clarify the text. Three appendices, a bibliography and notes are helpful as well.

The text is redundant at times, but this does not take away from this truly masterful work, which is a must read for anyone interested in Coronado Expedition, the history of the Southwestern United States, Mexico, and to a lesser extent the history of West Texas.

The authors have also put together a digital compendium with the help of Kevin Comerford, Director of Digital Initiatives and Scholarly Communication and Mary Wise, Digital Humanities Librarian at the University of New Mexico. The *Most Splendid Company: A Database of People from Sixteenth Century New Spain* is also packed with useful information and worth a look.

Jack Becker  
Texas Tech University



**Gregory W. Ball.** *Texas and World War I.* (Austin: Texas State Historical Commission, 2019), 150 pages. Paperback, \$20.00.

Gregory Ball’s history of Texas and World War I makes a welcome addition to the many works inspired by the recent centennial of America’s fateful entry into “the war to end all wars.” An introductory chapter, “Origins,” sets the pre-war political and social context. Ball highlights in particular the Mexican Revolution and its subsequent impact, notably the Plan de San Diego, the raids of Pancho Villa, and the national and state military responses. As Ball notes later in his study, Hispanic Texans would endure discrimination after America entered the war. The second chapter chronicles Texas’ entry into the war in the spring of 1917. When considering the national stage, Ball pays attention not only to those politicians, all loyal Democrats, led by Colonel House, who wholeheartedly backed President

Wilson, but also an outlier, Representative McLemore, who opposed America's entry and subsequently lost his seat. As for the state house, legislators stood with Governor Hobby in support of the president. The next chapter chronicles Texas' home-front, and Ball surveys how men and women flocked to serve in the Council of National Defense or the Red Cross. College students joined the Student Army Training Corps, and more than a few colleges were transformed into training centers for pilots and support staff.

Given the importance of agriculture in the Texas economy, it is fitting that Ball devotes significant space to how farmers and ranchers contributed to, and profited from, the war. Industries, for example shipbuilding along the Gulf, also receive attention. Ball also treats how discrimination—really, persecution is likely a better term—of African Americans led to the riots that erupted during the summer of 1917, first at Waco and then, even more disastrously at Houston. Ball also chronicles the widespread fear of foreigners, notably anxiety about possible enemy agents active in the Panhandle or crossing the Rio Grande. German-American residents endured more than their share of this suspicion and, occasionally, harassment for not being sufficiently “loyal.”

Chapter Four is devoted to “Raising An Army,” and Ball points out that the draft proved to be a more divisive issue among Texans than the declaration of the war itself. While only Congressman McLemore voted against the Selective Service Bill, Ball notes that others who resisted, with the Farmers and Laborers Protective Association of America being the most organized. Most Texas men, however, were not “slackers,” and those who did not initially register had simply not been aware they had been selected. Those interested in the formation and conduct of the National Guard will find Ball's account in this chapter particularly informative. The next two chapters treat the training of the Texans who went to war and saw combat on the Western Front. The formation and training of the two “Texas Divisions,” the 36<sup>th</sup> and 90<sup>th</sup> at Camps Travis and Bowie throughout 1917 take center stage. The crowded and unsanitary conditions in the camps resulted in considerable illness, a foreshadowing of the influenza pandemic that would spread a year later. The Air Service training at fields around the state, for example at Kelly Field in San Antonio, is also described in detail, with Ball noting that the significant number of crashes and fatalities demonstrated the dangers of flying in Texas weather.

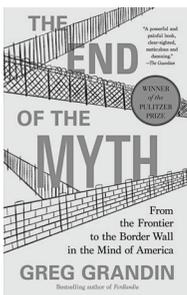
The following chapter then takes us to the front as it chronicles “Texans in Combat,” during the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives in September-October, 1918. The 90<sup>th</sup> divisions was the first to see action, losing almost 1,500 over seventy-five days of action. The 36<sup>th</sup> Division

entered the fray in the last week of September, and Ball does an excellent job of describing its struggles, often the result of poor planning and communications. Like much of the American army in the fall of 1918, soldiers from Texas found themselves mired in mud and stalemate. The chapter concludes with the Armistice and eventual return of the troops to Texas and their demobilization.

Ball concludes his study with a brief chapter on the legacy of the war. He highlights some of the heroes, including David Bennes Barkley, a Medal of Honor winner, whose Tejano ethnicity was not revealed until 1989. A new generation of politicians and military officers also came to prominence, for example Sam Rayburn to General Ira Eaker. While Ball highlights the changes the war wrought in Texas, from the impact of federal spending on the state's economy to a heightened sense of Texas' importance in the union, he notes as well what the war did not change: the enduring discrimination, despite their service, towards both African-Americans and Mexican Texans.

In sum, this is a valuable study, one which provides an excellent, compact survey of Texas and the Great War. I recommend it without hesitation.

Dr. Bruce C. Brasington  
West Texas A&M University



**Greg Grandin.** *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America.* (New York City: Metropolitan Books, 2019), 369 pages. Hardcover, \$30.00.

Yale University American Historian Greg Grandin won the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction for *The End of the Myth*, a provocative consideration of American space and history that runs from Christopher Columbus to Donald Trump, with a strong dose of Frederick Jackson Turner along the way. Grandin's previous books include the bestselling *Fordlandia* (2010) and *The Empire of Necessity* (2014), both award winners. His latest book is essential reading for those of us of the "late frontier" Panhandle Plains, whose museum is a Turnerian tribute to the region's pioneers, who wish to connect history to contemporary events.

Grandin argues that regardless of whether one sees Trump as epitome of or anathema to the American spirit, Trump's need to build a wall and pull up the nation's drawbridge marks the end of the relentless and often reckless faith in frontier expansionism. Trump's wall is "America's new

myth, a monument to the final closing of the frontier. It is a symbol of a nation that used to believe that it had escaped history . . . but now finds itself trapped by history, and of a people who used to think they were captains of the future, but now are prisoners of the past” (9). But Grandin’s book is not an anti-Trump screed; the book is in great part a historical survey of America’s geography and expansionist ideology.

And in this, Grandin’s book is a powerful study of the way in which American history can be understood through spatial dynamics of expansion—frontiers, borders, safety valves, and various attempts to halt and induce settlement. This discussion begins with an early attempt to prevent colonists to cross the Alleghenies, the Royal Proclamation Line of 1763. Grandin also studies the many related examples of US legislation that sought to remove Native Americans, to use race as a criterion for immigration and citizenship, and other cases when the nation attempted to manipulate its territorial space or access to it. Naturally, Grandin considers the major US conflicts, whether Indian wars or fights for imperialistic expansion, the Civil War, or world wars, as related to ideas of territoriality and power in the “mind of America.”

Grandin’s book is a tour-de-force. While it may not be considered, strictly speaking, Western American or borderlands history, it certainly puts many of the most important topics of western and borderlands historians into a broad study of American frontierism. Not that readers won’t find much of interest as discussions of the Texas republic, annexation, border strife, and other matters of regional interest run throughout this fascinating book.

Greg Grandin’s book certainly demands attention. And he certainly is provocative, all along the way and in conclusion: “today the frontier is closed, the safety valve shut. Whatever metaphor one wants to use, the country has lived past the end of its myth” (270). To accept Grandin’s argument is to accept the idea that American expansionism has enabled us to look away from “internal” problems like racial inequality in America. Now that Trump has figuratively raised the drawbridge, we can no longer look away. This is a book that should be read, contemplated, argued over, and taught—what higher compliment can there be?

Alex Hunt

West Texas A&M University

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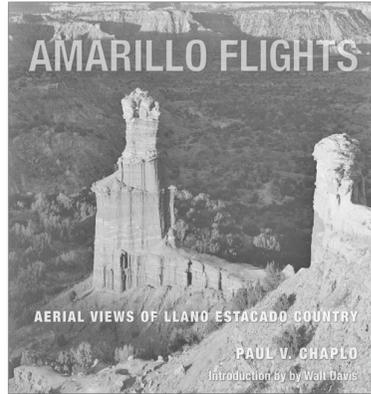
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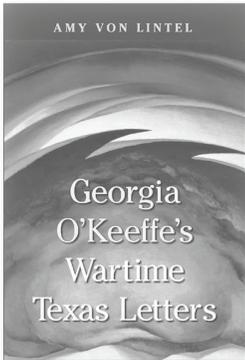
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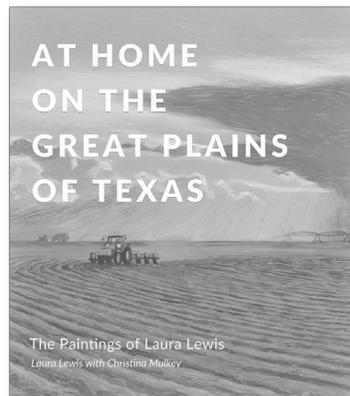
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