



THE CYCLONE



Lubbock Hosts 2009 Conference



WTHA Presidents Tiffany Fink and Shirley Eoff.

At its eighty-sixth annual conference in Lubbock on April 2-4, 2009, the West Texas Historical Association presented 59 papers and panel discussions in 23 sessions. These included presentations by the East Texas Historical Association, the Texas Oral History Association, the Permian Historical Society, and Center for Big Bend Studies.

B. W. Aston, J'Nell Pate and Fred Rathjen were awarded the distinction of Fellow for significant contributions to the history of West Texas and distinguished service to the West Texas Historical Association. Other awards presented at the conference included the Mrs. Percy Jones Award for best article in the *Yearbook* to Gregg Fehr for "Harbingers of Change: Wind Turbines and the Dawning of a New Age in Texas Energy History," the Rupert N. Richardson Award for the best book on West Texas history to Bill Neal, Abilene, for *From Guns to Gavels: How Justice Grew Up in the Outlaw West*, and the Best Student Essay Award to Ruth Ann Shirley for "Prisoners Among Prisoners: Conflicts at Camp Berkeley, Texas."

Congratulations to Tiffany Fink of Abilene, WTHA president for 2009 and to

vice-president, Keith Owen of Lubbock. New board members for 2009 are Tracy Stewart of Hereford, Ross McSwain of San Angelo, Tom Crum of Granbury and J. Tillapaugh of Odessa. In 2010, the association will hold a joint meeting with the East Texas Historical Association in Fort Worth, Texas on February 26-27.



B.W. Aston, J'Nell Pate and Fred Rathjen were recognized as 2009 Fellows of the WTHA.

Three Way School, Bailey County

By Jack Becker

A cement slab is all that is all that remains of a once proud but small school, located in extreme west Texas about seven miles from the New Mexico state line in south-central Bailey County. Three Way School, located about a tenth of a mile west of Farm to Market Road 1731 and one-half mile north of Texas 54 was about 32 miles southwest of Muleshoe and about 70 west of Lubbock. Its unusual name came from the fact that in 1945 three independent school districts (Goodland, Watson, and Wilson) combined into one. Later in 1946, Three Way consolidated with Stegall School District and with Bula School District in 1975. At one time the school educated the children of southwest Bailey County and a small part of northern Cochran, an area covering about 252 square miles.

When the schools combined for the 1945-46 school year, children in grades one through four went to Watson School



for classes. The school building in Maple, (Wilson School) was moved to Three Way site and children in grades five through eight went to school there. High school students went to Goodland School for classes. In its first school year, Three Way Schools opened their doors to 349 students on its three campuses.

As the years passed, Three Way School continued to grow as the school board voted funds for the construction of new facilities. In 1965 the school expanded when a new library room, and new English and business classrooms were added to the existing school. In 1974

the school expanded again, as construction of a new home economic complex, administration offices, and kindergarten room were completed. The students of Three Way School did not have long to use the new facilities for in May of 1977 a tornado demolished part of the school. The vocational/Agricultural shop building, football field, and three teacher's apartments in the barracks were destroyed in a storm that included high winds and golf ball sized hail.

To help attract and keep qualified teachers in the isolated school district, Three Way School built apartments for teachers on the school grounds. The Quonset-like buildings, across the road from the school were constructed after the severe storms of 1977. Later a trailer was added. With a total faculty of as many as eighteen teachers, more than half of the entire teaching staff could live on school grounds in housing provided by the school district. (continued on page 2.)

From the Executive Director



Dear Fellow Members:

Remember, membership renewals begin soon and run from November to November. Our fees are still a bargain at \$20 and the Family rate is \$25. And, you can always give gift memberships.

We will be mailing out membership reminders along with updates on the upcoming East Meets West meeting scheduled for February 26-27 in Fort Worth. As many of you know we will be gathering with our East Texas Historical Association counterparts in a historic first time joint meeting. It should be a big meeting. Don't miss it.

I just returned from Nacogdoches where our joint WTHA session was very well received at the East Texas Historical Association meeting. Bruce Glasrud (Seguin), Leland Turner (Lubbock) and I reprised a session on the future of West Texas history. It was originally presented at the Lubbock meeting.

Many thanks go out to everyone who attended the WTHA annual meeting in Lubbock. We had over 200 folks making it one of the largest meetings in recent memory. All of the sessions were excellent. Congratulations to everyone.

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of five long-time and distinguished Association members. Kenneth Jacobs (Abilene), Elmer Kelton (San Angelo), Fred Rathjen (Canyon), Gerald Raun (Alpine), and Lou Rodenberger (Baird) and passed away this year. Each made an indelible imprint on West Texas through their writing, presentations and their friendship with all of us. Adios.

Tai

In Memory . . .



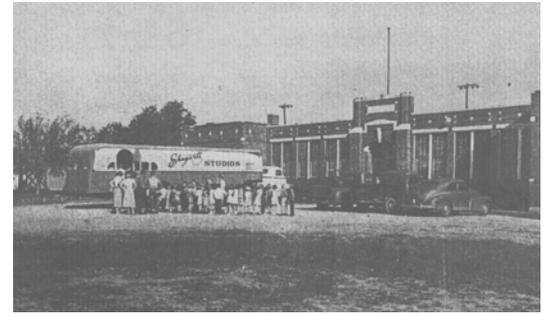
Elmer Kelton, noted journalist and author and past president of WTHA, died on August 22. He was 83. Kelton was born April 29, 1926, at Horse Camp in Andrews County and grew up on the McElroy Ranch in Upton and Crane counties. He completed his education at the University of Texas after serving in Europe during World War II.

Kelton married Anna Lipp of Ebensee, Austria in 1947 and began a career in agriculture journalism at the *San Angelo Standard-Times* in 1949. He became editor of the *Sheep & Goat Raiser* magazine in 1963 and associate editor of *Livestock Weekly* in 1968, retiring in

1990. Kelton maintained a parallel career as a freelance writer, beginning with short stories in the post-war pulp magazine trade, progressing to novels, non-fiction books and countless magazine articles. In all, he wrote more than 40 books, including *The Time it Never Rained*, *The Wolf and the Buffalo*, and *The Good Old Boys*, which became a Turner Network movie directed by and starring Tommy Lee Jones. Kelton was named the number-one Western writer of all time by the Western Writers of America. The WWA voted him seven Spur awards for best Western novel of the year and the career Saddleman Award, and he received four Western Heritage Wrangler awards from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

He is survived by his wife Ann Kelton of San Angelo, sons Gary Kelton of Plainview and Steve Kelton of San Angelo, daughter Kathy Kelton, also of San Angelo, four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. He is also survived by his brothers, Merle and wife Ann of May, Texas, Bill and wife Pat of Atlanta, Texas, and Eugene and wife Peggy of McCamey.

Those wishing to honor his memory may give to the Tom Green County Library's Elmer Kelton statue fund through the San Angelo Area Foundation at 2201 Sherwood Way, Suite 205.



Three Way School

(From page 1) One distinguishing fact of Three Way School, besides its name, was its location. Although situated on twenty acres of donated land it was not situated near a town of any size. Three Way School sat in a field surrounded by thousands of acres of cotton. In fact, there was no viable town in the Three Way district when it closed its doors, although the little town of Maple was about a mile southeast of the school.

In a school district like Three Way, which covered a large area, many students spent long hours riding the school bus to and from school. Many students rode the bus more than 14 miles one way; but students learned to make good use of their time. One student remembers spending her time on the bus reading class assignments and doing math problems, basically anything that did not require "good penmanship," for the bumpy roads would not allow that.

In 2002 the school graduated its last senior class-one girl and six boys, thus ending over fifty years of educating southern Bailey County and northern Cochran County children. Although the first year 349 students enrolled in school, attendance steadily dropped until only seventy children attended the school in 2002. Changes in Agriculture and rural economies slowly drained population away from Three Way, as it did from many other small rural Texas schools. Changes in farming offered few agricultural jobs to young farmers of child rearing age. In a way, the school population mirrored the decline in population of Bailey County. After years of often tremendous growth the population of Bailey County peaked in 1960 at 9,090. Afterwards the population steadily dropped to where in 2000 the population stood at only 6,594, with more than half (4,530) living in Muleshoe.

For a time interested citizens and the school board struggled to keep Three Way School open, but declining enrollment and lack of adequate state funding doomed the school. When enrollment dropped below 90 students, state funding all but dried up. When it became evident that Three Way School would have to close, the people of the school district voted to consolidate with the Sudan School District. For a while the buildings of Three-Way School remained housing a museum dedicated to the school and the students who attended school there. Unfortunately that is gone too.

West Texas Pioneer Women: “The Wilder, Stronger Breed”

by Lou Rodenberger

[Condensed from the 2001 Year Book. Rodenberger originally read this paper at the 2000 WTHA meeting in a special plenary session titled “West Texas History: Looking Back, Looking Forward.” After publication, the essay won the Mrs. Percy Jones Award for the Best Article in the Year Book.]

Arkansas native Shirley Abbott came to Texas to attend college at Texas Woman’s University in Denton early in the fifties. Soon, it seems, she categorized her classmates into two distinct groups. Here is how she judges Texas women at last century’s midpoint in her memoir *Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South* (1983):

About half the students were Southerners from Louisiana and Arkansas and Mississippi, as well as the farm country of east Texas (with a few girls from Houston and Dallas mixed in), but the rest were Texans from the high plains, and they were noticeably different from the rest of us. They were a wilder, stronger breed: beside them we Southerners looked positively dainty. They were unfeminized. They had no interest in clothes, wore their hair cropped, slept late on Sunday mornings while we were putting on our pretty little hats and waiting for the bus to go to Sunday School. . . . They all played golf and tennis, fenced like masters, and won their lifesaving badges, apparently, while still in grammar school. I was frightened to death of them. . . .”

Abbott’s memoir thrives on overstatement, but she may have been close to the truth when she presumed from observation that West Texas women were a wilder, stronger breed. Studying the histories and first-hand accounts of pioneer West Texas women will convince readers that the independent spirit Abbott perceived in her individualistic classmates was a trait they came by naturally. Their mothers and grandmothers had nurtured that independent spirit through example.

For fair assessment of the character of early West Texas women, however, there is still another perception of West Texas frontier women that seems apt. The Lubbock writer Jane Gilmore Rushing’s



Early settlers in the San Angelo area. (courtesy of the Fort Concho archives)

cycle of novels about the “too-late frontier,” as the state’s Rolling Plains area was often labeled, illuminates its history in human terms. Rushing discovered in her personal retrospective analysis of her fiction that a character representing what she later recognized as the Grandmother of West Texas appears in almost every one of her novels. Based on her memories of her maternal grandmother, Rushing describes this sturdy figure who became template for the pioneer woman who often dominates the plots of her fiction:

Grandma wasn’t a changeable person. She was full of fun; she liked to laugh. She had a strong romantic streak in her. . . . But overshadowing these light-hearted traits was her iron-bound Puritan morality, which formed the firm foundation of her being. She might not have much schooling, she would say, but she knew right from wrong. That certainty never wavered. She built her whole life on it, and she expected everyone else to live the same way. You might have thought she was a gossip; she simply didn’t think it was right to cover up wrong-doing in the community.

Rushing concludes with a description of how once her grandmother decided to come to West Texas, she was determined “to stay on the right course.” She found fording the Brazos a “terrifying ordeal” and she settled down in an “unpainted box-and-strip shack, with a dirt-floored shedroom for the kitchen,” but Rushing says “there was no way she was going to weaken and beg her husband to take her home again, though she cried sometimes in the night for the white-painted house and flower-filled yard that she left ‘back yonder.’”

A survey of the personal history of many of these West Texas women pioneers, often first-person accounts or narratives

reconstructed from interviews, reveals that depending on their subject, both Abbott’s and Rushing’s judgments are valid.

As early as 1833, Mary Austin Holley’s observations of women’s lives in her cousin Stephen F. Austin’s colony on the Brazos inspired her to point out that “necessity has taught many of the more elevated rank in life, a hardihood and courage truly surprising in the gentle sex. . . . Living in a wild country under circumstances requiring constant exertion, forms the character to great and daring enterprise. Women thus situated are known to perform exploits, which the effeminate men of populous cities might tremble at.” Later she describes women riding fifty miles to parties with party dresses in their saddle bags and concludes that “women have the capacity for greatness but they require occasions to bring it out. . . . Many a wife in Texas has proved herself the better half, and many a widow’s heart has prompted her to noble daring.”

West Texas frontier life provided ample occasions for bringing out “greatness” in the women who came with their families to make new homes in an often hostile environment. They were, as Holley predicted and Abbott observed, “a wilder, strong breed” from the beginning, but many of them also could have easily modeled for Rushing’s Grandmother of West Texas.

Ella Elgar was only sixteen when Texas Ranger Tom Bird persuaded her to become his wife. Tom mustered out at Fort Griffin two months after their marriage and became a buffalo hunter on the Dickens-Cottle County line. Home for Ella was a buffalo hide teepee in an isolated camp with no companions except for the wife and little son of another hunter. In her autobiography, published belatedly sixty years after she had recorded her life history, Ella reveals creativity both in occupying her lonely hours while her husband was away and in the outlet she chose for her artistic energies.

Tom had given his young wife a rifle and soon she could use the gun expertly, so she says she was never afraid, but she could pass only part of her time alone perfecting her marksmanship. She had

always wanted to try her hand at carving stone. She writes in her memoir,

There was one thing I was attracted by when we first arrived at this place. That was the gyp rock. This rock is just the same as marble with the exception that it is not quite as hard. This was about the first industry that took hold of me when we got settled, whittling and shaping things out of this rock.

Later, she reports that she was contented since she had her gyp rock to carve and her marksmanship to practice. She says that she even wanted to challenge Tom to a shooting contest but that he seemed too proud to accept the challenge. However, she writes, "I busied myself mostly with my carving in the rock. I enjoyed it so much. Little Porter Jones and I would take strolls down on the creek and pick up choice pieces of rock that worked beautifully. There were so many different colors and shades."

When Tom took a job as a cowboy on the Pitchfork Ranch a few months later, they stored many of their belongings in the abandoned rock house that the hunter Jones had built for his family. Among those belongings were Ella's rock carvings, now sixty in number. When Tom returned to collect her treasures, he found they had been stolen along with other possessions left there. Ella mourns, "It almost broke my heart when I found I had lost them. I simply lay awake nights and grieved about them. There was at least two years' solid work on them without any stops. . . It was all my first work and improvements."

Less than ten years after their marriage, Tom was discovered dead in a lonely cow camp. Ella describes in detail the tomb marked which she lovingly carved out of gyp rock for her husband's grave. It was one of her last sculptures, although throughout her memoir she reveals that she never lost her desire to work in stone. Raising two young children and keeping a frontier home left her no time to be ambitious, however, but somehow Ella managed to make everyday life creative. Her handiness with a needle earned the admiration of cowboys who knew her. Ranch hands were eager to buy gloves and the elegantly beaded buckskin vests she created. She reports that selling her handiwork to her cowboy market provided a "comfortable living" for her two children until the cattle herd she had developed

began to pay off. Ella Elgar Bird's determined practical use of her creative talents made her a proudly independent woman for nine years. She had several marriage proposals during that time, finally deciding to accept one when she realized how much she treasured her longtime friend Auguste Dumont's company.

Ella Elgar Bird Dumont proved that with grit and imagination she could make a living with her talents even if it meant abandoning the art she loved most, but if any West Texas pioneer filled the role of the "wilder breed," it was Idella Smyer, usually called Aunt Idella by her friends and neighbors. Panhandle historian Laura V. Hamner's narration of Idella's life in West Texas in *Light and Hitch* reveals that the author was intrigued by the strength and humor of this tough woman. Idella grew up in Wise County, where she trained horses from early childhood and rode race horses as a jockey. In 1885, at age fifteen, she married and moved west with her husband Henry Smyer in 1890. Idella led a peripatetic life for the first two years of her marriage. Living first in a tent in Seymour, the Smyers later moved to Know County. No matter what their living circumstances were, Idella continued to produce a child almost every year.



By 1892, the family settled in Floyd County, where they began to build a cattle herd. It was Idella who kept the cattle business growing while Henry established a freight hauling business to supplement family income. By now there were four children. Idella was soon recognized as one of the best cattlemen. She fought prairie fires and blizzards, while her family steadily increased to include twelve children. When her children were old enough, they picked out the horses they wanted for their own and broke them for riding. Hamner reports that "Idella Smyer's idea of training children was to make them tough, able to take care of themselves in any emergency. They rode wild horses, they drove like the wind, they hunted wildcats, wolves and antelopes, they camped out alone. They feared

nothing." Idella added in her interview with Hamner, "It took guts and nerve to get along then."

This remarkable woman, Hamner concludes: ". . . was a woman of unusual strength, both physical and mental. She ran the ranch, made plans for the family, made business decisions. She handled situations without gloves, using plain cowboy English and going straight to the heart of the situation. She could brand, rope, bulldog; she could tail up a weak cow, or dose a sick one; she could do anything with a horse, and horses were dearest to her heart."

No anecdote of the many Idella's friends cherished reveals Idella's personality more true to character than the account of her first encounter with a parking meter in Lubbock. When Idella returned from shopping to find a ticket under her windshield wiper, she was soon in the police station demanding a dollar for the ticket. "This says that you'll give me a dollar for this ticket," she informed the cop in charge. He patiently explained that she owed the dollar for overparking. Idella explained that was not the way she read it, and furthermore, she was collecting money for upkeep of the Lorenzo cemetery, and she needed that dollar. Hamner reports that the officer handed over the dollar. Furthermore, she "took up twenty-two dollars right there in the police station and left—without paying for overparking."

Another of the extraordinary women in Hamner's collection of personality profiles is Ellen Carter, wife of a rancher on the Pecos whom his wife described as "never happy unless he was two hundred miles ahead of the railroad." When Ed Carter left for one of his long trips to the trading post, he warned Ellen that she should ask the cowboy Tom to sleep in the dining room and protect her from harm. Ellen ignored his advice. She had her Winchester so she felt she could take care of herself. When she shot a wolf tugging at a cowhide in the front yard late that first moonlit night, she thought the report was louder than usual. Since the gun did not recoil, she knew she had loaded it properly. Checking the dead wolf next morning, she found Tom examining the animal. He was puzzled, too, by the "awful noise" his own gun made when he shot at the wolf. Then Ellen and her would-be protector found two bullet holes, only two inches apart. Ellen

was determined to know which of them killed the wolf. "Search me," the cowhand said. "Guess we'll have to split the honors."

Ellen Carter proves herself to be one of the most ingenious of these "wilder, stronger" West Texas women. Even though the ranch hands preferred blackeyed peas, which they brought from the trading post by the sackfull, Ellen hated this Southern specialty. She saw her chance to rid the kitchen of the despised legume when a skunk invaded the food storeroom. When Charlie the cook bent over to persuade the skink gently to leave, Ellen took advantage of her cook's habit of stashing his pistol in his back pocket. Ellen slipped the gun out and fired over the skunk, which on cue sprayed the pea sack. Her mission was accomplished—so Ellen thought. Charlie had a solution, however. He would sink the sack in the river and let the running water cleanse the sack's contents. Ellen was forced then to resort to subterfuge.

The cowboys were all devoted to Ellen, so she had no trouble persuading San the cowpoke to go down and cut a hole in the sack. Much to Charlie's disgruntlement, he found no peas when he went out to retrieve the sack. All winter, Ellen enjoyed the memory of both her clever ploy and the substitution of red beans on the menu. Then, that spring, a delighted cowboy rode up with his slicker filled with blackeyed peas, "young, tender, ready to snap for cooking." Excitedly, he told Ellen and the elated Charlie that they could have blackeyed peas the whole summer from the four-acre patch growing mysteriously down on the riverbend flat. Hamner reports that "Ellen Carter knew when she was whipped."

Ellen Carter's engrossing tales are retold by Laura Hamner, who herself was a gifted storyteller. Several of these memorable frontier women, however, were accomplished writers who recorded their own accounts of their pioneer lives. Among these chroniclers was Signiora Russell Laune, who unfortunately waited the year before her death at age eighty-one to write her life story. Her autobiography, *Sand in My Eyes*, illustrated by her son Paul Laune, was published in 1956.

Signiora, known by her pet name Nonie, came with her family to Texas in 1890 from Little Rock, Arkansas, so that her ailing professor father could recover

from his health in the more arid Panhandle climate. They settled on a newly purchased farm in Collingsworth County.

Nonie's first impression of the Panhandle landscape inspired poetic description when she observes that the "wide empty land lay in an unbroken circle like a huge table-top. All around, the edge of the circle was ticked in and held neatly in place by the great hoop of blue sky. There was no road, just a trail cut through the sand. There were no trees. There was nothing to see except hundreds of grazing cattle marked with the Diamondtail brand.

Although never as outspoken as Idella Smyers, it was not long before Nonie learned to hold her own in this demanding land. Nonie's father, apparently a humanitarian with conviction, refused to brand his cattle, believing that it was a cruel practice. Soon their small herd disappeared into the free range surrounding their land. It was Nonie who went out into a blizzard looking for strays that first winter. Although the heifer that Nonie found with a wobbly calf was branded, it seemed obvious she and the new-born would not survive in the frigid weather. Determinedly, Nonie wrestled the calf across her saddle. Then prodding and exhausted cow in front of her, she finally reached the barn with both animals. She and her cousin Arthur rubber the heifer down and took her offspring into the kitchen to thaw out. For Nonie this pair would give her a start in the cattle business.



The cow immediately named Bones survived; so did her heifer calf, which also later produced an offspring. Bones, too, had another calf. Nonie was a proud cattle woman. Then, to Nonie's dismay, two years later, a man came by looking for strays and claimed the cow and her offspring. Nonie firmly informed him that he had a cow only because she went out and saved Bones. After much bargaining and a few tears, Nonie finally convinced the former owner to take fifteen dollars for the lot. Impressed by this tough little bargainer, he volunteered to brand her "herd." Nonie proved too long for her

mark so NON became her brand, letters that could be seen a long way, she observes.

Although one of the most accomplished of Texas women autobiography writers, Signiora Laune was not alone in her revelation of the strength of character many West Texas women demonstrated. One of the most remarkable West Texas women came to my attention by chance when I casually pulled a dusty but interesting looking book off the shelf of a Fort Davis bookstore. In 1969, Texas Western Press published the memoirs of Adah Hadlock, described on the dust jacket as "Early Day El Pasoan: Amateur Artist, Champion Golfer; Avid Wildcatter and Gold Seeker." At the time Adah Hadlock was age 86 and near death. She had started recording her life experiences before World War I, but it was after her husband's death in 1965 that she finally decided to finish her manuscript.

Adah Hadlock came to El Paso at age eighteen in 1902. Reared in Hannibal, Missouri, she was already an accomplished golfer when she came west. Within a year after her arrival, she married a young artist, Frank Hadlock, who had come out from Boston. Frank later became a realtor and a successful oil man. Adah accompanied her husband to his drilling sites. She learned the oil drilling process and influenced Frank's decisions on oil field investments.

Wise investment led to wealth, but Adah's life in many ways, though exciting, was also tragic. She lost all five of her children before she died. Her first child did not survive diphtheria she contracted as a toddler. Two sons lived to adulthood only to die in tragic accidents. A second daughter received a brain injury in a fall and died several years later as a result. A third daughter lived to have a family, but succumbed at mid-life to lupus. A devoted mother, Adah sought comfort in experiences she found fulfilling.

Despite the tragedies in her life, her passionate involvement in the activities that she excelled in prove clearly that Adah Hadlock was both a stoic and a woman with courage and daring. Adah was so competent with a gun that she was the only woman allowed on deer hunting trips with her husband and his friends. She was passionate in her search for buried treasure purported to be buried in the desert lands surrounding her hometown. In mining

camp in the El Paso area where Frank often stopped on selling trips, Adah soon acquired the reputation of being a winning poker player, earning both the admiration of the miners and the nickname Alkali Adah. In 1925, Adah, who played golf as ardently as she played poker, organized the Southwestern Woman's Golf Association.

Adah was also intrigued by the oil business her husband began investing in. Finally, after many dry holes, her husband was successful, but it was Adah who made one of the productive decisions. Her husband ordered his driller to shut down a rig. Adah, who spent time observing the operation, says, "When I heard that I raised a mighty howl and said, 'You can't do that! It won't be more than ten feet.' I say, 'GO ON.' But the drillers were taking orders from men, 'He who pays the bills, gives the orders.'"

"That made me furious, and it was the first time I ever went over my husband's head. I said, 'I have as much interest in this well as he does and I say *go on* and if you don't get a producer I'll pay the whole cost!'" The driller called the geologist on his talkie-talkie and the geologist told him to do what Adah said and "shut down when she tells you." She concludes that they soon hit pay, surprising a male friend on the site who said, "And I thought I was an oil man." Adah admits she was a bit "chagrined at her 'display.'" She says, "I really shouted and stormed to get my own way."

Adah praises women who made early life better in El Paso. Clearly, early women settlers in El Paso were the stronger breed, and many, like Adah, were daring enough to be thought of as a wilder breed.

These women's stories are drawn from only a few of the many autobiographical accounts of women who came to West Texas to share the honor of settling this "too-late frontier." The narratives of their life experiences prove their mettle, these Grandmothers of West Texas. Jane Rushing captures the universal qualities of these pioneers in her novel *Tamzen*. Tamzen Greer comes to the high plains with her widowed father, a sister, and her brother, to homestead on free range railroad land open finally to settlers in the late nineteenth century. She makes a home, as Rushing's grandmother did, in a box-and-strip house with an unfloored shed room as her kitchen, and encourages her father in his farming efforts. When her father and brother, itchy of feet, wander on west, Tamzen stays, determined to make a life on her farm. When she chooses for her husband the cowpoke Arthur, an Englishman who came west to sample the life

of a cowboy, she convinces him that he can become a farmer. When he voices doubt as they make their wedding plans, he says, "But Tamzen, I don't even know how to plow." Tamzen says, "Well, I'll teach you, Arthur."

If the uninformed treasure the image of the West Texas frontier woman as that exemplified by poor, pitiful Letty in Dorothy Scarborough's novel *The Wind*—this dainty creature from Virginia, who was useless as a cowboy's wife and soon was made crazy by the incessant West Texas wind—it is time to reconsider the stereotype. Like Tamzen, those who stuck it out were worthy representatives of a "wilder, stronger breed," able to prevail as individuals and leaders with determination and purpose. They were truly the Grandmothers of West Texas.

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In Memory . . .



Dr. Lou Halsell Rodenberger, former president of WTHA and Fellow of the Association, died on April 9, 2009, at her home in Cross Plains. She was born on September 21, 1926 in Okra, Texas. Though she attended many schools where her parents taught in West Central Texas, she graduated from Anson as Valedictorian. At age 16 she entered Texas State College for Women graduating with a BS degree in Journalism in 1943. She worked for the *Kerrville Times* before becoming the English and Journalism teacher at Levelland High School in 1947. There she met and married Charles A. Rodenberger September 3, 1949.

When Texas A&M admitted women she

became one of the first graduate students obtaining her Masters and PhD degrees in English. In 1982 she and her husband moved to Abilene where she taught English at Cooper High School and Cisco Junior College before joining the faculty at McMurry University, where she taught for twelve years retiring as Professor Emeritus.

As an author, Rodenberger published a number of books primarily on Texas Women Writers. Her latest book by Texas Tech University Press was a biography of West Texas author Jane Rushing. Rodenberger's best selling book was *Quotable Texas Women* co-authored with Susie Flatau. With co-author Dr. Sylvia Grider she wrote *Texas Women Writers* and *Let's Hear It: Short Stories by Texas Women*. She published many essays and articles with her story of Tom Lea published in the *Round Up* winning the Stirrup Award in 2007 and an article in 2008 winning the 2009 Award from the Western Writers of America.

Dr. Rodenberger was a regent of Texas Woman's University where she was awarded the Distinguished Alumnus Award. She served on the TWU Foundation and was active in the Texas Women's Library. She was a fellow of the Texas State Historical Association, served as President and awarded a Fellow of the Texas Folklore Society, and was a director of Western Writers of America. She was a member of the Texas Institute of Letters and served as director. She also served on the executive committee of the Western Literature Association.

Lou is survived by her husband Dr. Charles A. Rodenberger, daughter Kathryn Sue Wilcox and husband Keith, son Mark Rodenberger and wife Mary Kathryn, numerous grandchildren, and two great-grandsons. She will long be honored for her excellence as a scholar and teacher and for her willingness to serve, but her many friends will remember her best for her kind and generous heart and for her willingness to encourage others.

Judith Keeling of Texas Tech University Press has announced the establishment of the **Lou Halsell Rodenberger Book Prize in Texas History and Literature**, an award for the best manuscript by or about a woman whose writing illuminates Texas history, culture, and letters, especially in West Texas and the border region. The \$1000 prize will be awarded biennially, with the first winner to be announced February 15, 2012. Those wishing to help endow the prize in Lou's memory may make a donation to the Texas Tech Foundation, Inc., Texas Tech University Press, Box 41037, Lubbock, TX 79409-1037.

NEWS FROM AROUND WEST TEXAS

The 2009 winners of the **Excellence in West Texas History Fellowship Program** at Angelo State University were **Megan Benson**, who is working on a history of Texas water law, attempts to sell West Texas' water supply, and what this portends for the region's future, and **Daniel Kerr**, who is doing an environmental history of the South Plains, examining how Native Americans, Hispanics, and Anglo-Americans used the region's grasslands, and the environmental changes and consequences that resulted as much of the South Plains moved from a range-grazing economy to a modern dry land and irrigated farming economy. (photo available on CD if you can get it to format correctly)

Keith Owen of Lubbock Christian University has been promoted to full professor.

Thomas E. Alexander, former WTHA board member, has been appointed by Governor Rick Perry to a second six-year term as a Commissioner on the Texas Historical Commission. Tom's book, *The Rattlesnake Bomber Base*, received the Rupert Richardson Award in 2006. His fifth book, entitled *Stanley Marcus: The Relentless Reign of a Merchant Prince*, will be published by Eakin Press this November.

Ken Davis was elected a Fellow of the Texas Folklore Society at this year's 100th anniversary meeting in Nacogdoches.

Arcadia Press recently published *African Americans in Amarillo* by **Claudia Stuart** and **Jean Stuntz**.

Mike Cox had two new books released in August. The first is *Time of the Rangers: The Texas Rangers 1900 to Present* (New York: Forge Books, 2009, \$27.95). This is the second volume of a two-volume narrative history of the Rangers. The first was *Wearing the Cinco Peso: The Texas Rangers 1821-1900*, released by Forge in March 2008. That book is in its second hardback printing and will be out in trade paper in September. The second new book is *Historic Photos of Texas Oil*, (Nashville: Turner Publishing, \$39.95), a coffee table book containing more than 200 images of the early Texas oil industry, including some never before published.

Ben Ficklin, Refined Pirate or Benevolent Benefactor, by **Barbara Barton**, was recently published by Lone Star Productions. The book tells the story of Ben Ficklin's life, from his time as a prankster at Virginia Military Institute to his career with the Pony Express and the Pacific Telegraph Company and as a blockade runner during the Civil War. Finally, it tells how Ben Ficklin's life came to a sudden and dramatic close. *Ben Ficklin* has 208 pages, endnotes, illustrations and an index. It sells for \$16.95. The book may be purchased from Barbara Barton, Box 6, Knickerbocker, TX 76939, bba7303@aol.com.

Dave Oliphant's autobiography entitled *Harbingers of Books to Come: A Texan's Literary Life* has been published by Wings Press of San Antonio. The 548-page book traces the record of Oliphant's writings and publications from 1962 to the present. It includes some discussion of his hometown, Fort Worth, his father's hometown of Baird, and such Texas poets as Walt McDonald of Lubbock, whose work he published through his small imprint, Prickly Pear Press.

Joe W. Specht puts the spotlight on Slim Willet. "'Don't Let the Stars Get in Your Eyes': Slim Willet's Idiosyncratic Chart-Topper Lives On" will be published in the next issue of the *Journal of Texas Music History*, and "I'm a Tool Pusher from Snyder: Slim Willet's Oil Patch Songs" is set to appear in the January 2010 issue of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

The **Vietnam Center and Archive** newsletter, *Friends of the Vietnam Center*, was selected as the winner of The Association for Women in Communications 2009 National Clarion Award for Most Improved Newsletter (Print).

Victoria Lovelady, Communications Coordinator for the Vietnam Center and Senior Editor of the *Friends* newsletter, will be presented with the award at a ceremony during AWC's National Conference in Seattle, Washington on October 17, 2009.

A painting entitled "Buffalo Springs Division-XIT Ranch" by artist **M.S. Franco**, was unveiled at the XIT Museum on August 6, during the 73rd XIT Rodeo & Reunion in Dalhart, Texas. Please check the M.S. Franco website for this painting. www.msfranco.com



A dedication and blessing of the house ceremony made the Daniel Webster "80 John" Wallace House the 48th historic ranch structure at the **National Ranching Heritage Center**. The house was relocated from its site in Mitchell County and restored to its original appearance. The unique cross-shaped house with its screened porches provides the NRHC with an example of architectural design not already featured in the historical park. Mr. Wallace worked as a cowboy, saved his money and bought cattle and land. Illiterate until he was an adult, he learned to read and became a champion of education. At his death, the State of Texas placed a marker noting his gravesite. The **1890 Jail Museum** had a Grand Gala Reopening on August 29th. The gala had a "Turn of the Century" feel complete with a home-style meal, melodrama, street dance, games and activities, and tours of the newly refurbished museum.

On May 28, 2009, the **Vietnam Center and Archive** at Texas Tech celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a formal Ball. Nearly 200 people attended the event including Texas Tech Chancellor Kent Hance and President Guy Bailey, Lubbock Mayor Tom Martin, State Representative Carl Isett, United States Congressman Sam Johnson, and Congressman Randy Neugebauer. H. Ross Perot, Sr. served as the event's keynote speaker. To conclude the ceremony, the Center's founding director, **Dr. James Reckner**, was honored with City, State, and Federal proclamations for his role in developing what is now the largest collection of Vietnam related material outside of the U.S. National Archives. Photos, videos, and detailed information about this event can be found at <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/20th>.

The second annual "Roundup" of the **Wild West History Association** held at the historic Menger Hotel in San Antonio, July 15-18, drew well over two hundred members, vendors and guests. A visit to the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum for the opening reception highlighted the first day. Well known authors and historians provided informative talks the remaining three days with plenty of time allowed for visits to local attractions. WTHA members who participated included **Bruce Glasrud** who spoke on "Blacks and the Outlaw West" and **Mike Cox** who provided an interesting talk about his experience in studying Rangers. The banquet speaker was historian Frederick W. Nolan. Next year the Association will hold its meeting at Ruidoso, New Mexico in late July. To keep abreast of planning and other activities consult the web site: www.wildwesthistory.org.

Fort Chadbourne was given \$1,000,000 to build a visitor's center in memory of **Roberta Cole Johnson** from Brenham, TX, by the executors of her estate **Charles and Joy Blake**. The Blakes are members of the Concho Valley Archeological Society in San Angelo. They also matched the \$125,000 to restore the Butterfield Stage Stop. The roof is currently being constructed. Mr. Blake offered another \$500,000 toward the visitor's center. Construction will begin this year.

WANTED: YOUR VOTE

What are your top ten Western movies of all time? Here is your opportunity to vote for your favorites, whether they are old or new, well-known or obscure, serious or humorous, historically correct or "guilty pleasure." The results will be announced at the next annual WTHA conference. To vote and to see lists of selected top western movies, go to the WTHA website at <http://www.swco.ttu.edu/westtexas>.

THE CYCLONE

A Newsletter for members of the West Texas Historical Association.

Editors: Jim & Becky Matthews

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In Memory . . .



Kenneth R. Jacobs, 75, died Wednesday February 11, 2009 in Abilene, Texas. He was born July 9, 1933 in Franklin, North Carolina. Ken entered the army in 1950 and served during the Korean Conflict. After being discharged, he apprenticed to become a journeyman carpenter in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He worked in several cabinet shops in Iowa and Illinois.

In 1962 he married Marilyn J. Jacobs. They were married for almost 47 years. In 1963 he enrolled in Quincy University in Illinois graduating with a B.A. in history in 1967. In 1968, he took a job teaching history in Sweetwater, Texas, and enrolled in Hardin-Simmons University where he completed his master's degree in 1971. He taught history and studied for his doctorate at Texas Tech University. In 1977 he received his PhD. and in September of that year accepted a position as assistant professor of history at Hardin-Simmons University. Students loved his relaxed manner and the humor in his lectures.

Dr. Jacobs became associate editor of the West Texas Historical Association *Yearbook* in 1978 and editor in 1985. He held this position until his retirement in 1998. He was named Rupert N. Richardson professor emeritus after his retirement.

During his career at Hardin-Simmons University, Dr. Jacobs received many honors. In 1986 he was named Reata man of the year. The next year the faculty voted him the Cullen Teaching Award. In 1989 the students named Dr. Jacobs teacher of the year, an honor he treasured above all others. In 1997 the All School Sing was dedicated to him. Dr. Jacobs was the original faculty sponsor of Theta Alpha Zeta fraternity.

Dr. Jacobs is survived by his wife Marilyn and several cousins. Those wishing to honor him may send contributions to the Kenneth R. Jacobs Memorial Fund with the Community Foundation of Abilene, P. O. Box 1001, Abilene, Texas, 79602 or the donor's favorite charity.

Dr. Frederick William Rathjen, 80, of Canyon died July 19, 2009. Fred was born on Jan. 25, 1929, in Clarendon. He and his parents moved to Corpus Christi when he was 11. After earning a B.A. degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1950, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving during the Korean War. While in the Navy, he married Elizabeth Schweikert on June 28, 1953, in Corpus Christi. On completion of his M.A. in history in 1956 at the University of Texas, he accepted a position at what is today West Texas A&M University in Canyon. He was awarded a Ph.D. in history in 1970. He retired from WT in 1990 and two years later was appointed professor emeritus of history.



Rathjen's groundbreaking book on the early history of the Texas Panhandle, *The Texas Panhandle Frontier*, first published in 1973 and reprinted in 1998, received the Rupert N. Richardson Award in 2000 as the best book on West Texas history from the West Texas Historical Association. In addition to his books, Fred served as editor of *The Panhandle Plains Historical Review* from 1991 to 2000 and as advisory editor and contributor to *The New Handbook of Texas*.

Dr. Rathjen is the only person to have served as president of both the West Texas Historical Association and the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society. He was named a fellow by the Texas State Historical Association in 2007 and received a similar honor from WTHA last spring. He served on the board of directors of the Texas State Historical Association from 2001 to 2005.

An avid outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting, fishing and hiking. His interest in the outdoors led to an active role in the leadership of Partners in Palo Duro and consultation on the development of Wildcat Bluff Nature Center. But he was also a fan of classical music and performed on several occasions with Amarillo Opera.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Betty and two sons. Those wishing to honor his memory may send memorials to Forman/Rathjen History Scholarship, in care of WT Foundation, WT Box 60766, Canyon, TX 79016.

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