



# THE CYCLONE



## WTHA 2008 Conference in Canyon

The eighty-fifth annual conference of the West Texas Historical Association is scheduled at West Texas A&M University in Canyon on April 4 - 5, 2008. For those arriving on Thursday evening there will be an "early bird" reception and dinner beginning at 5:00 p.m. at Feldman's Field House. This is followed at 7:00 p.m. by the WTAMU Distinguished Lecture series in the Alumni Banquet facility featuring Pulitzer Prize winning author, Jared Diamond. On Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. there will be a tour of the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum.

Conference sessions will begin Friday at 1:00 p.m. on the second floor of the Old Main building at West Texas A&M. Some 38 papers and one panel discussion



Registration at the 2007 WTHA conference. will be presented in sessions from Friday afternoon through Saturday morning covering all phases of West Texas history and culture. A president's reception will begin at 6:00 p.m. on Friday evening at the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum, followed by the banquet featuring guest

speaker Robert Mallouf of the Center for Big Bend Studies. His topic is "Riders of the Rim Rock: Horse Nomads in the Big Bend During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century."

On Saturday, the association's awards and business luncheon will be held at the Panhandle Plains Historical Museum featuring an address by WTHA president Travis Roberts entitled "The Trans-Pecos Region: A Review of 500 Years of Its People, Its Places and Its History." Following the luncheon a special program is available including a tour of Palo Duro Canyon ending with dinner.

Hotel accommodations for the conference have been made at the Best Western Hotel in Canyon, (806) 655-1818, for \$85.95 per night and the Holiday Inn, (806) 655-4445 for \$85 per night.

## Soash

by Bob Burton

Winds sweep the plain, stirring the limbs of mesquite trees and whistling around crumbling masonry. Cattle stroll among the ruins, clipping mouthfuls of grass. Neither the wind, nor the cows care what these brick walls are, or were, or were supposed to be. It matters not that these thick walls were once a bank, or that foundations lurk among the grasses for churches and homes. They don't care, but once, almost a century ago, people had lived here in hope. They had hoped for a city, surrounded by prosperous farms. They had hoped for a good life under the West Texas sun. And they had hoped for a railroad.

The ghost town of Soash began, of course, with a man named Soash---William Pulver Soash, land seller extraordinaire. Young, aggressive, and self-assured, he had built his Soash Land Company into one of the largest real estate companies in the United States, with operations in several states. He brought trainloads of Midwesterners into the Texas Panhandle to



prospect for farmland and town lots in the Soash-created towns of Ware and Olton.

Early in 1909, Soash contracted to purchase 110,000 to 175,000 acres of C. C. Slaughter's Long S Ranch, northwest of Big Spring. Within months, a bank and a hotel, both large, permanent structures, had been erected on this land, near the corner of Howard County. Other structures were growing at their side, forming the modestly-

named town of Soash. Construction of water works and an electrical plant was underway. Homes were rising and sod was turning. And there was railroad talk.

From the beginning, the town of Big Spring had wanted a transportation link with the plains to the northwest. One of the first roads established when Howard County was organized was a link with the Bull Creek Road in Borden County, which climbed the Caprock onto the plains. Eventually, north-south railroad projections began to appear. Some of these projects crossed the Texas & Pacific at Big Spring, but planned crossings ranged from Midland to Sweetwater. The only way to guarantee a north-south railroad through Big Spring was for the citizens to build their own railroad.

Citizens organized the West Texas & Northern Railway in 1905 with headquarters in Big Spring, but failed in the project. The WT&N was revived in 1907 under new ownership, but now the headquarters and projected crossing were at Stanton. Contractor T. J. O'Donnell (cont. on page 2)

# From the Executive Director



Dear Fellow Members of the Association:

Happy spring to all of you and best wishes on the coming rains. As you can see I am optimistic even though West Texas has been dry most of the winter season with nary a drop of moisture since Thanksgiving. Reports from visiting friends and association members Suzanne Campbell and Shannon Strum from San Angelo, and T. Lindsay Baker from Stephenville confirm the same from their respective areas. Nevertheless, we will abide and the rains will return in due course—perhaps in time for the upcoming annual meeting April 4-5 in Canyon.

Jean Stuntz, the chair of our local arrangements committee, reports that everything is in order for a great meeting at West Texas A&M University. The conference will take place in “Old Main” on campus, and our banquet and luncheon will be held at various venues in and around the university and the city.

Regrettably, we won't have the chance to watch B. W. Aston take on the 72 ounce steak Thursday night at the Big Texan. Instead Marty Kuhlman reports that we will be having a great dinner at Feldman's diner at 5PM in Canyon. Afterwards Jared Diamond, author of *Guns, Germs and Steel* (1998 Pulitzer Prize Winner) will speak at West Texas A&M as part of its distinguished lecture series. So, get registered as soon as possible. Conference updates are available at WTHA.org.

See you in Canyon.

Tai

## Rare Artifacts to Go on Display at Texas Tech

From August 25, 2008, to April 4, 2009, visitors to the Southwest Collection / Special Collections Library can journey back in time to a Texas at the end of the medieval period and the start of the early modern world, as revealed by rare and precious items from the holdings of museums, libraries and private collections from Texas, New Mexico and California.

Generously funded by the Program for Cultural Cooperation between Spain's Ministry of Culture and United States Universities, Humanities Texas, and the Helen Jones Foundation, **“The Medieval Southwest: Manifestations of the Old World in the New”** highlights connections between late medieval / early modern Europe and contemporary culture.

The exhibit is organized around the following themes: The Age of Expedition, Institutionalization, and Contemporary Echoes. Artifacts on display include finds from the Coronado campsite in Blanco Canyon, period arms and armor, 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century maps and books, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish trunk, finds from excavations at the Mission and Presidio of San Sabá, a variety of musical instruments from the middle ages to their more contemporary versions, and devotional items involving Our Lady of Guadalupe. Also featured will be items more familiar to members of the West Texas Historical Society: saddles, spurs, and other artifacts that document the spread of ranching culture from Europe to the Americas.

Exhibit hours are Monday through Wednesday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. The Southwest Collection/Special Collection Library is located at 15<sup>th</sup> and Detroit on the Texas Tech University campus. For more information, please call Lynn Whitfield at (806) 742-3749 or visit the website at <http://www.swco.ttu.edu/medieval/index.html>.

Please note the closing date for the exhibit coincides with the WTHA conference in 2009.



## Soash

(cont. from page 1) was ready to start construction when a crisis on Wall Street caused the promoter to withdraw.

Stanton citizens took control of the WT&N and appointed O'Donnell to the presidency. He set to work and built a roadbed between Stanton and Lamesa. He had a few ties laid when Santa Fe officials approached him early in 1909. The result of that meeting was that O'Donnell dropped his efforts to build the WT&N in exchange for a grading contract on a Santa Fe line from somewhere in Lubbock County southwards to Lamesa, and other compensation.

Alarmed citizens of Big Spring asked entrepreneur W. P. Soash to help them build their own railroad line to a Santa Fe connection at Lamesa. He decided to take the entire project upon himself. So construction could begin as quickly as possible, he decided to finance the railroad out of pocket and float bonds later. He chartered his company as the Gulf, Soash & Pacific Railway and made surveys, expecting to start construction in September 1909. A three-mile line would extend south of Big Spring, but the immediate construction was a fifty-mile line to the northwest. This would pass through the town of Soash and terminate about six miles east of Lamesa on land that Soash owned.

Before construction began, Soash consulted with Santa Fe officials in Chicago, who informed him that they could not build to his terminal. By contract, the railroad was obligated to build to Lamesa if a line was built in that direction. Soash inquired what the Santa Fe would do if he persuaded Lamesa to move to his terminal. The Santa Fe would follow Lamesa to its new location in fulfillment of the contract.

Soash quickly had a new townsite for Lamesa platted in a location of his choice. To the citizens of Lamesa, he offered free lots in the new town equal to the old. Lamesa, however, had just won a bitter county seat fight and also held the Santa Fe contract. The only person surprised when Lamesa refused to move was W. P. Soash.

He upped his offer. He tried to buy the WT&N roadbed. He begged the Santa Fe to encourage Lamesa to move. He failed. Construction of the Gulf, Soash and Pacific Railway never began, but Soash had spent his own money on the project. He had even taken a full page ad in the Santa Fe's employee magazine. A few months later, Big Spring offered another promoter \$65,000 for a railroad connection with Lamesa. Soash promised \$75,000 for it to pass through his property.

But a drouth was settling into West Texas. Farmers on Soash lands had been guaranteed adequate rainfall. They continued to farm as if they were back home in the Midwest. As the drouth continued, settlers began to leave. Trainloads of new settlers stopped coming. The population of Soash, Texas dropped to a few dozen. By the time the drouth lifted in 1912, Soash Land Company was bankrupt.

William Pulver Soash would have other promotions, but the town that bore his name was doomed. When the next drouth hit in 1917, the remaining population left and the post office closed after being open only eight years. Today, the city of hope is on private property, hidden behind thorny fences and trees, haunted by cows, wind and dreams.

# Old Mobeetie – The Capital of the Panhandle

by L. F. Sheffy

[Article condensed from the 1930 Year Book.]

In the summer of 1875, one might have seen a long caravan of wagons loaded with lumber and supplies drawn by oxen and mule teams wending its way from Dodge City down the Jones and Plummer Trail. The destination of these freighters was Hidetown on Sweetwater Creek in Wheeler County. They were hauling government supplies, and their arrival at Hidetown was an official announcement that the outposts of civilization had been pushed further into the unsettled southwest. For two days these wagons kept pulling up to a rise of ground about two miles from Hidetown where their freight was unloaded.

After a few busy weeks with hammer, saw, and trowel, Fort Elliot was built upon this elevated ground and was to become a sentinel and a vanguard of a civilization that was soon to follow. The building of this fort was prophetic of the passing of the Indian from this section of the frontier. Hunters had preceded these soldiers by a few short years, and they were rapidly clearing this land of the buffalo that had grazed upon its prairies since the days of DeSota and Coronado. By so doing they were helping the government in the solution of the vexing Indian question by cutting off the Indian's food supply. (Thus the government looked on with tacit approval while these hunters and traders cast the Medicine Lodge treaty into oblivion and opened up a vast empire for the white man.) Buffalo and Indian trails were soon to become old landmarks and new trails were soon to take their place. These were wagon trails which led from the camps of buffalo hunters to Fort Elliot and Hidetown, to Springer's Ranch on the Canadian River, and to Camp Supply of the North Canadian. All of these trails were finally to converge at Dodge City, Kansas, where buffalo hides by the hundreds of thousands were stacked to be shipped to the tanneries in the East. With the establishment of Fort Elliot, the government had come to raise its protecting hand over this region and to check the raids of the Indians against Anglo-Americans who were fast following upon the heels of the buffalo hunters into this unoccupied territory.

In another way the state government was soon to extend a helping hand in the matter of organization and protection in this new land. By a legislative act of August 21, 1876, the last of Young and Bexar counties was



Old Mobeetie around 1900 (photos from the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum).

transformed into fifty-four new counties. Thus the whole map of the Panhandle was completely changed at one stroke, and Northwest Texas had come to be incorporated into the organized part of the state. Clay County, which had been organized in 1875, was made into the administrative and judicial center of all of the counties in the extreme northwestern portion of the states.

With such constructive and protective measures as these, settlers soon began to come into this part of the state. Fort Elliot being a government post was naturally the focus of the gradual extension of a frontier settlement into Northwest Texas from the south and also from Dodge City on the north. From 1875 to 1879, there grew up within the shadow of this fort one of the Panhandle's oldest and most historic towns—Mobeetie.

Mobeetie takes its name from the small stream on which it is located. The town was situated about a mile from the fort on account of the government having reserved three sections of land for its own use. The settlers grouped themselves as closely about the fort as possible in order to be protected against bands of Indians which might be wandering about in search of scalps and booty. By 1879 there was sufficient civilian population collected here for organizing purposes, and in that year Wheeler County was organized with Sweetwater as the county seat. When this step was taken, twenty-six counties in the northern end of the Panhandle were detached from Clay County and attached to Wheeler for judicial purposes. With this Mobeetie and Wheeler County became the judicial and administrative center of an area of approximately fourteen thousand square miles embracing eight million acres of land. Mobeetie will always be known as the mother city of the Panhandle. During the decade from about 1879 to 1889, this parent city and county nurtured and helped to mold this vast

territory into organized county units as they came of age.

There grew up contemporaneously with Mobeetie two other towns within this region which claim with it the honor of being the three earliest towns in the Panhandle section. One of these was Tascosa, one hundred miles to the west of Mobeetie on the Canadian River. Much has been written about this rollicking western town of the plains, and as a result, it is perhaps much more widely known than Mobeetie. Its Boothill cemetery, its Hogtown addition, its noted gunmen and bad whiskey, its famous gambling houses and notorious women have given to it a name in the Panhandle's early history that will not soon be forgotten. Indeed Tascosa had a character and a history that was distinctive. It was strictly a cowtown of the West. It lived its life and passed from the stage of history. The vague mounds of dirt which mark the lines of its former streets, and the lonely Boothill cemetery whose inmates silently sleep above the turbid waters of the Canadian are about all that is left to tell the tale of what was once one of the most unique and stirring towns of the West.

The third member of the trio of Panhandle towns was Old Clarendon. It was located on Carroll Creek a few miles about the present town of Clarendon. It was here that L. H. Carhart, a Methodist minister, made an expensive attempt in 1878 to settle a colony of farmers. Like Mobeetie and Tascosa, Old Clarendon had a character and a history all its own. While the *Tascosa Pioneer* could proudly boast that its people were "whole-hearted and exceptionally civil" in spite of the fact that its social regulations had been "guiltless of church or Sunday school," this Christian colony at Old Clarendon boldly set forth from its beginning on a program of the strictest temperance by announcing that all property would be sold with the proviso that no intoxicating liquors of any kind should ever be sold on the premises. This colony was sarcastically dubbed "Saint's Roost" by its contemporaries and was in a situation very similar to the people who were led into the Babylonian captivity of old. Their moral and spiritual ideals could not be made to harmonize with those of the Gentiles of the great American desert. Moreover, they were a colony of farmers who came from the older states, and their eastern methods of farming were not sufficiently adaptable to farming in

this more arid region. Therefore this Christian colony of the Plains was the first to give up in its struggle for existence. With the coming of the Fort Worth-Denver railway in 1887, its people were quick to see that both nature and railroad promoters were against them, and the old town was moved almost bodily to the new town of the same name on the Fort Worth and Denver road.

While these towns were somewhat different in the constitutional makeup of their peoples, their history is in many ways similar because of the problems that were common to a frontier environment. Mobeetie was perhaps the most typically representative town of them all because of the varied character of its people. It was never a large town, but it was a thriving business center. Located almost at the southern extremity of the Jones and Plummer trail, it was the distributing center for much of the territory mentioned above. Being located also beside a government post, it came to be looked upon as a kind of center for law and order. Its official connection with the older and more settled portions of the state, and its association with the military post gave to it a kind of prestige of which its sister towns could well have envied it. These things helped to give to Mobeetie a certain amount of stability and permanence which its contemporaries did not have.

To draw an accurate pen picture of this historic Panhandle town would be a difficult task even for the skilled artist, but Mobeetie's physical appearance must have presented a picture similar in some ways at least, to the medieval towns of Europe. The fort served in many ways the same purposes as the medieval castles of old. This rectangular fort with its stables and parade grounds attached must have presented an imposing sight, set upon this hill overlooking the struggling little village with its few rock houses, its adobes, its tents, and its dugouts. Someone has said that this village and fort presented a picture more beautiful than any medieval castle of Europe to the traveler who would approach it in the early morning from a distance and see it mirrored and apparently elevated into the heavens by the mysterious pranks which only the mirages of the plains can play.

What then about the people of Old Mobeetie in the early days? Its citizenship was varied almost to the point of being cosmopolitan. Mobeetie was not different from any other pioneer western town in its first class of citizens. History tells us that every stop of westward advance in our American civilization has been preceded by the hunter and the trapper. The settlement of Mobeetie was no exception to the rule. As indicated above, Hidetown was the forerunner of both Mobeetie and Fort Elliot. It was here that many of these transient hunters and trappers collected thousands of hides to be freighted up the trail to Dodge City. After the

passing of the buffalo, many of these adventurers abandoned their nomadic manner of living and came to be perhaps the largest element of the first citizenry of Mobeetie in the very earliest days of its existence. Many of these people gained a livelihood by hauling wood and hay to supply the soldiers and horses at Fort Elliot. Others came to be engaged in farming and stock raising on a small scale along the valley of Sweetwater Creek. Many of these also found it profitable to supply the fort with vegetables and milk and butter. A few others probably continued to search for the furs of the wild animal life that was rapidly passing away. The Panhandle is still fortunate in having a few of those stalwart men and women as a part of its citizenry today.



**Soldiers at Fort Elliot**

A second element of Mobeetie's early population was its soldiers. They were not only a symbol of protection for the town, but they were also splendid patrons of its business enterprises, not the least of these being the saloons and dance houses. The sleepy atmosphere of this western fort fostered the spirit of idleness among these army frontiersmen as they lolled upon their bunks or whiled away their time in the town's saloon parlors until roll call demanded their presence again at the barracks. These four or five hundred men stationed at the fort were an important factor in the social and economic life of this western village. The mere furnishing them with supplies helped to increase the bank accounts of the merchants; it swelled the profits of the saloon keeper, and was quite an item in the supply of ready cash for the people who were more dependent.

It was also from the fort that there came an important part of the town's more select social set. The commanding officers of the fort and their wives and families helped to give [the town] somewhat of a refined and cultured tone. The most cordial relationships existed between them and the more substantial elements of the civilian population. These two groups spent many an evening together around the card tables or in other forms of social past time. This good fellowship which existed between these two groups of citizens of Old Mobeetie has given to its early history a tinge of local color that is unique among these western towns.

Perhaps the most numerous and the most characteristic group of citizens of Old Mobeetie

were her cowboys. From 1879 to 1889 this town was the metropolis of a ranching territory that extended to a distance of about one hundred miles in every direction. It also skirted the great cattle trails which led to the Northwest. Rath and Hamburg's general supply store was one of the town's most important institutions. It was the general depository of all goods that were distributed in the eastern Panhandle, and was the main connecting link between this section and the firm of York, Parker and Draper of Dodge City, Kansas. In the heyday of Mobeetie's existence, this store handled over \$100,000 worth of goods annually and carried everything from a dime ring to coffins and from drugs to hardware. Grouped around this thriving business center were a few smaller business enterprises, and especially the less substantial but more profitable thirteen saloons.

For miles and miles ranch hands came to Mobeetie for their bacon, beans, flour, tobacco, whiskey, and other necessities. It was here also that many chuck wagons came to replenish their chuck boxes before moving on further north up the trail. There was scarcely a day in the working season that did not see a dozen or more cowboys riding in from these chuck wagons, or perhaps coming in from weeks, or even months, of work on the range to slake their thirst at the town's bars and to stake their summer's wages at an evening poker game. This made the hitching racks of Old Mobeetie another one of the town's most important institutions. They have a history that is unsung and unwritten but significant nevertheless. Hundreds of cowponies have found a welcome rest around these hitching posts while their riders reveled in the pleasures which the town afforded them until their heads were dizzy and their pocketbooks were empty. "It was no uncommon sight to see fifteen or twenty cowboys ride into town and ride right into the Exchange Saloon and order the drinks to be served to them on their horses and then they would take in the town. I have seen both sides of the street at Mobeetie lined thick with saddle horses and extending from one end of the street to the other," says J. M. Shaw of Canadian. This metropolis served from five hundred to a thousand cowboys when the ranges were being worked, and when these cow hands came to town, they spent their money freely as long as it lasted. They seldom failed to notify the people of the town of their departure by shooting out the lights or shooting up the town. "Many times have I seen a cowboy riding through the streets of Mobeetie shooting a pistol with one hand and taking a drink from his whiskey with the other," says Mrs. Temple Houston. "Sometimes they would ride up and down the streets of the town by twos shooting and yelling as loud as they could. But they were harmless and did not mean to give any trouble," she added in an assuring manner that betokened a sympathetic

understanding of these excrescencies of a more sober inner man. "Mobeetie was a live burg in those days," says J. M. Shaw, "but there were many good people there and most of these cowboys were steady citizens of this western frontier country."

Such a town could not have been without its professional gamblers and noted women. The early history of Mobeetie would not be complete if it left out an account of such institutions as Feather Hill and such characters as Mother Lemly, Dolly Varden, Frosty Toombes and James McIntyre. Even Sheriff Henry Fleming was shrewd enough at cards to win a herd of eight hundred cattle in one night at the gaming tables. But too much emphasis should not be placed upon this type of Mobeetie's early citizenship, for this was a very small element in the town's population and was to be found in all the frontier towns of the west.

One of the most important groups of people connected with this Panhandle capital was her legal lights. These formed a kind of nucleus of the town's most influential and substantial citizenship. Their profession carried with it a certain amount of prestige, and besides they represented law and order. No town of the Panhandle has ever yet produced a more brilliant array of attorneys than this early frontier town. The Woodmans, the Bakers, the Rithings, the Houstons, the Grigsbys, and the Willises, the Turners, and others have been a very potent factor in the building of law and order in Mobeetie and the Panhandle. For Mobeetie was not only a metropolis of the Panhandle in those days, but it was also the chief seat of justice. It was pretty largely through these men that the law was enforced and justice administered in Wheeler and the counties which had been attached to it. Like the Assize Judges of Old England, these lawyers and judges of Mobeetie journeyed by buckboard over narrow trails and unbridged streams to Old Clarendon and Tascosa to bring criminals before the bar of justice. In this open range country, where the individual was wont to vaunt his freedom, too strict an interpretation and too rigorous an enforcement of the law might be met with open defiance, and it was only such men as these who understood the real spirit of the laws of the west. It is said on good authority that on one occasion a judge at Mobeetie fined a citizen for being late at court. Every kind of explanation was offered in the attempt to get the fine remitted to no avail. Finally as a last resort the judge was treated to a good drink of whiskey with the result that the fine was forgotten. The story goes that on one occasion when Judge Willis and other attorneys were traveling to Tascosa to hold court, they got stuck in the quicksand of the Canadian and the river was up. All of them jumped from the hack into the water, which was over their heads, and they had to scramble for their lives. The judge

always took his law books with him, and in the excitement someone noticed them floating down the stream and yelled, "Someone save the law." Whereupon Judge Willis, who was rather corpulent and who could not swim, replied, "To hell with the law. Save the judge."

These sessions of the court were not altogether looked upon as being places justice was dispensed. They also furnished a splendid opportunity for social gatherings and were looked forward to by most people with pleasant anticipations and somewhat as occasions for celebrations. Those who attended the sessions of the court often brought their camp outfits with them, and people coming from widely scattered sections would camp together for several days. Other events such as horse racing, cock fighting, etc. were planned during the sessions of the court. The *Tascosa Pioneer* for May 4, 1889, announced to its readers that, "District Court meets a week from Monday, and we look for music and fun then. Lawbreakers will need to look wary on that day, and so will the state because we look to see the bar represented by nearly all the illustrious lights of the Panhandle." The following weeks' issue of the *Pioneer* explained what disposition had been made of the civil and criminal docket in one column and gave results of the races in the next.



By 1889 the Panhandle was beginning to reach its first stage of maturity. The first period of settlement had begun, and the final period of county organization was soon to be completed. That spirit of independence, so common to all frontier regions, was not lacking in this northern Panhandle section. The *Pioneer* on the date of June 15, 1889, in discussing "Panhandle Day" at the State Fair at Fort Worth impetuously raised the question, "Does the Panhandle in this sense possess the wide significance given it of late by ignoramuses? Does it cover an unlimited extent of territory, embracing everything northwest of Fort Worth? What we want to get at is, do we bona fide, genuine Panhandlians have to divide our honors of that day and mix and mingle with the Hardemanites, and the Wilbargerites, and the Baylorites, and the Wichitaites, and the way down residents of Clay and Montague and Wise? Because if we do our day's sport will be spoiled entirely. An answer to this question will greatly oblige us all. The *Pioneer* is of those who expect to go, and having all along fought their encroachments upon our hard earned 'rep,' we still object to contaminating our skirts and compromising the superiority of this 'upper and better country'—

the only real Panhandle. Condemn 'em, they can't clothe themselves in our name."

Thus the Panhandle had come of age and a new day was dawning. When the organization of counties got well under way, and when the first settlers began to come, the railroads soon followed. The Fort Worth and Denver railway was built almost across the center of the north Panhandle in 1887-1888, and in the same year the Santa Fe penetrated this region from the north. These railroads marked out new lines of settlement and became the main factors in determining the location of new towns. Soon the *Tascosa Pioneer* was boasting of such new towns as Amarillo, Times City, Panhandle City, Miami, Canadian, Higgins, Clarendon and others. This paper rejoiced in the building of these new towns and did not seem to realize what their coming meant for the future of Tascosa and Mobeetie. After the building of the Fort Worth and Denver through Tascosa, the optimistic editor of the *Pioneer* in almost every issue of the paper heralded abroad the coming of the Rock Island to Tascosa. But the rugged banks of the Canadian had sealed the fate of Tascosa's future, and the Rock Island officials sought the more desirable and the more economical road bed which Nature had provided on the west.

Mobeetie like Tascosa entered enthusiastically into the business of railroad building. It is true that the Santa Fe had ignored this metropolis on the eastern Panhandle, but like its sister city on the west, it too looked forward optimistically to the time when Mobeetie would have a railroad. Its citizens even talked of building a railroad from Miami to Mobeetie themselves. The *Tascosa Pioneer* of July 14, 1888, announced that, "Mobeetie is rejoicing over the prospects of getting the Frisco road, prospects that seem growing brighter and more bright. When Gable [sic] blows his trumpet in the far subsequently, Mobeetie and Tascosa will be there, and there are some of them that won't." But the coming of the Rock Island to Tascosa and the Frisco to Mobeetie was the keynote of the swan song that was left ringing in the ears of the people of these two frontier towns as they saw their hopes vanish and their prestige decline. In was finally left to the *Pioneer* to face the stern realities and to write the obituary of the three original towns of the Panhandle. The issue of October 11, 1890, carried the following significant remark: "Time has dealt a little harshly with the three original Panhandle towns. Clarendon was knocked out by the Fort Worth and Denver and had to pick up and move over bodily, Mobeetie was cut off by two railroads and the Fort Elliott post is being abandoned, and at Tascosa the Rock Island delays its coming. Truly this is a world which has no regard for the established order of things, but knocks them sky west and crooked, and lo, the upstart hath the land and its fatness."

## NEWS FROM AROUND WEST TEXAS

The West Texas Historical Association is proud to announce the publication of *Slavery to Integration: Black Americans in West Texas*. The book, published by State House Press (Abilene), was edited by **Bruce A. Glasrud**, **Paul H. Carlson**, and **Tai Kreidler**. All articles in it were originally published in the *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*; all proceeds from royalties go to WTHA.

**Dan Utley** of the THC and **Bruce Glasrud** were inducted as Texas State Historical Association fellows at the association meeting in March.

**Noel R. Parsons**, director of Texas Tech University Press, has been elected to the Texas Institute of Letters. He will be inducted into the organization in April.

**John Miller Morris** won the Robert Calvert Award for the best new manuscript accepted for publication by A&M Press. It was announced at the A&M Press Reception on March 6 at the TSHA meeting in Corpus. He is a previous winner of the WTHA Richardson Award with his book *El Llano Estacado*.

**Clifton and Shirley Caldwell** of Albany received the inaugural Humanities Texas Award on January 24 at the State Capitol. The award recognized the couple's four decades of devotion to and promotion of history through philanthropy, civic leadership, independent scholarship and entrepreneurial activity.

A gallery guide produced by the **Southwest Collection** and **National Ranching Heritage Center** on the paintings, life and style of Frank Reaugh won the Judge's Choice Award during the **2008 ADDY Awards**, annually hosted by the Lubbock Advertising Federation. The exhibition was titled "The Pastel Range: Frank Reaugh, Range Historian." Curator was Andy Wilkinson, artist in residence at Texas Tech's Southwest Collection.

**Paul A. Oelkrug**, C.A., has been named Coordinator of the Special Collections Department at McDermott Library, replacing **Erik D. Carlson**, Ph.D., who left UTD after seven years to become a teaching professor at Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Fla.

**Deborah Sue McDonald** is the new Regional Coordinator for the Texas Plains Trails.

**JoAnn Pospisil** has been appointed director of the Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) Archives. She also is a member of the Exhibit Design and Procurement Committee for the Michael E. DeBakey Library and Museum currently under construction on the BCM campus in the Texas Medical Center, Houston. In addition, she is a member of the Board of Directors of the West Texas Historical Association; is immediate past president, chairman of the Community Awards Committee, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Texas Oral History Association; is treasurer and a member of the Board of Directors of the Spring Branch Addition Civic Association, Inc.; plus is an active member of the Texas Czech Genealogical Society and several other professional organizations.

**Sylvia Gann Mahoney** was the guest speaker at the 2008 Guy Caldwell western Heritage Lecture at Hardin-Simmons University in February. Mahoney detailed rodeo's progression from regional entertainments to international events, from one-horse trailers to multi-horse rigs, from dollar donations to million-dollar sponsorships, from human-judged inconsistency to electronic reliability, and from a ranch-raised cowboy majority to urban cowperson sprawl. Her book, *College Rodeo From Show to Sport* is a chronicle of the sport and has gained a formidable following.

**Cameron L. Saffell** received his Ph. D. degree from Iowa State University in December 2007. His dissertation focused on agricultural history, especially cotton, in Texas and the Southwest. He is currently employed as curator of agriculture at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces.

**Dr. Rob Fink** is at McMurry University as a visiting assistant professor of history. Additionally, Rob authored a chapter entitled, "Semi-Professional African American Baseball in Texas Before the Great Depression" in *The African American Experience in Texas: An Anthology* published by Texas Tech University Press in 2007 and edited **Dr. Bruce Glasrud** and **Dr. James Smallwood**.

**H. Allen Anderson** is working on a comprehensive history of Texas Tech University. It is tentatively a three-year project under the auspices of the University. His official title is University Historian.

**Rusty Hawkins**, a PhD candidate from Texas Tech, has published "Alson Asa Meredith, A Man on Fire," in *Panhandle-Plains Historical Review*, February 2007. Hawkins has presented a number of papers at conferences this spring and has numerous articles recently accepted for publication. He is currently teaching at West Texas A&M in Canyon, Wayland Baptist in Clovis, NM and Clarendon College, Clarendon, TX

In 2008 the **Texas Oral History Association** is celebrating its 25th anniversary. The joint session at the Texas State Historical Association annual meeting in Corpus Christi on March 6 was chaired by TOHA's immediate past president **JoAnn Pospisil** of the Baylor College of Medicine Archives. Papers were presented by current TOHA president **Vernon Williams** of Abilene Christian University, by **Dawn Letson** of Texas Woman's University, and by **Tracy Shilcutt** of Abilene Christian University. A reception was held immediately following the lively joint session. Attendees enjoyed food and drinks as they perused posters and other information regarding various oral history projects. Congratulations TOHA on 25 great years!

During the celebration of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, **Caprock Canyons State Park** near Quitaque held the grand opening of its new Visitor Center in October 2007. Located just inside the park's entrance, the 4,400-square-foot building houses an area for visitor registration, offices for staff, a pavilion, a store, and 24-hour restrooms. Future plans include an interpretive center for displays pertaining to the park's history.

A plaque at the site of the **Highway School in Dickens County** was dedicated in October 2007. Established in 1916, the school continued classes into the 1940s.

As part of the centennial activities for the town of Spur, the **Dickens County Historical Commission** is gathering recipes for a historical cookbook from area residents. Proceeds will help to fund future historical commission projects.



Travis Roberts, Jennifer Spurrier and Troy Ainsworth present a WTHA session at the East Texas Historical Association.

## Call for Papers:

**College Baseball Sports Symposium**, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, July 1-2, 2008. Proposals should be related to college baseball at all levels from its inception to present day. A range of disciplinary perspectives or methodologies are welcome, and topics appropriate to college baseball may come from any number of subject areas, including history, statistics, art and literature, cultural studies, politics, legal and business. *Proposals are due by 11:59 pm (CST) March 24, 2008.* Submit proposals to: [contact@collegebaseballfoundation.org](mailto:contact@collegebaseballfoundation.org)

The **Camino Real Trail Association** invites specialists, scholars and researchers to participate in a session dedicated to the study of the impacts of the road systems and the Camino Reales that molded the social, economic and political fabric that integrated Latin America and formed a crucial part of what may be seen as its deep grammar. The opening session will held in Madrid on June 13, 2008 and the work sessions will be held in Cadiz 16-20, 2008. Presenters will be assigned 30 minutes each. It is suggested that the talk be accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. The official languages include Spanish, French, Italian and English. *The deadline to register papers is April 1, 2008.* Please include your name, institutional affiliation along with the papers' title and abstract. The deadline for the copy ready version will be the 16th. of September, 2008. For further information, please contact: Dr. Manuel Criado de Val, Presidente, de la Asociación Internacional de Caminería [[camineria@ceh.csic.es](mailto:camineria@ceh.csic.es)] or Dr. R. B. Brown, [[rbbrown101@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbbrown101@sbcglobal.net)] International Affairs Officer, CARTA, P.O. Box 15162, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88004-5162.

The *Cyclone* is seeking short articles about historic sites on private land. (See this issue's article on Soash as an example.) We also welcome short write-ups or reports on historic projects in West Texas. Accompanying photos are a plus. You can query the editors at [jbmatthews2@juno.com](mailto:jbmatthews2@juno.com) or 4230 Briarcrest, San Antonio, TX 78247.

## Upcoming Events:

*April 12-13, 2008. Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art Annual Spring Symposium*, Fort Worth, Texas, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Mark Thistlethwaite. Visit [www.caseta.org](http://www.caseta.org) for more information or contact (512)245-1986 or [cd26@txstate.edu](mailto:cd26@txstate.edu).

*April 26, 2008. The Permian Historical Society* meeting at the Petroleum Museum in Midland, Texas. Events will begin at 9 a.m., include presentations on the history of the Permian Basin during the morning, and a catered lunch at noon. The lunch is usually around \$10, and reservations in advance are always appreciated. For more information, contact PHS President Peggy Kelton at [p\\_kelton@yahoo.com](mailto:p_kelton@yahoo.com) or 432-652-8738.

*April 26, 2008. The 38th annual Ranch Day*, National Ranching Heritage Center, Lubbock. The theme "Rockin' RH Rodeo." The Pitchfork Ranch Cookhouse will be dedicated at 5 p.m. This event will follow the Ranch Day activities, which culminate at 4 p.m. Free to the public.

*May 17, 2008. Fourth Annual Gala Fundraiser*, National Ranching Heritage Center, Lubbock, benefiting the museum and historical park. The theme is "Under The Tuscan Moon." Tickets required. For additional information, contact Marsha Pfluger at the NRHC, (806) 742-0498.

*June 28-29, 2008. Texas' Last Frontier Heritage Celebration & Texas Buffalo Soldier Living History Encampment*, Morton, Cochran County, Texas. Join in a variety of events throughout the weekend, including an American Junior Rodeo Association (AJRA) rodeo, a downtown parade, gospel and patriotic singing groups, a live country music band and dancing for the entire family, and an outdoor Sunday morning community worship service followed by a barbecue and soul food dinner. Tour an authentic Texas Buffalo Soldier camp--brought to you by the Texas Parks and Wildlife

Department Buffalo Soldier Living History Program. On Saturday afternoon, everyone is invited to attend a special dedication ceremony for a new Texas State Historical Marker documenting the "Buffalo Soldier Tragedy of 1877" and related military headstones honoring the four soldiers who perished in this fateful expedition. For information: Dorothy Barker, E-mail: [jodaphil@windstream.net](mailto:jodaphil@windstream.net) Phone: (806) 266-5484.

*July 1-2, 2008. College Baseball Sports Symposium*, Lubbock. Sessions will be held at the Merket Alumni Center, Texas Tech University. For more information contact: John Miller, [john.miller@ttu.edu](mailto:john.miller@ttu.edu) or Mike Gustafson, [mike.gustafson@ttu.edu](mailto:mike.gustafson@ttu.edu).

## Special Exhibits:

*March 29-June, 2008. "Communications: Past and Present," Museum of North Texas History*, Wichita Falls. Exhibit emphasizes Postage Stamp History. Everyone WELCOME! Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday: 10am until noon and 1pm until 4pm. Also open Saturdays 10am until 2pm

*May 2008- November 2, 2008. "Saddles," National Ranching Heritage Center*, Lubbock. The saddles will present every-day working saddles and collectors' prized saddles. A few celebrity saddles will also be included.

*May 2008- May 2009. "The Tooter Cannon Saddle Shop," National Ranching Heritage Center*, Lubbock. Tooter Cannon's authentic saddle shop, which was donated to the NRHC by the famous saddle-maker's daughter, will be rebuilt in the NRHC's west gallery.

*August 2008- February 2009. "Firearms" and "Spurs" National Ranching Heritage Center*, Lubbock. These exhibits should appeal to collectors and aficionados, alike.



Charles Rodenberger, Ken Davis and Lou Rodenberger at the 2007 conference. Ken and Lou were honored for their long time contributions to WTHA.

# Fort Concho

By Robert Bluthardt

Fort Concho National Historic Landmark in San Angelo enjoyed a successful 2007 with a wide range of programs, exhibits, and site improvements. The fort hosted and served over 60,000 guests, an increase of 16% over 2006. Visitors came from several hundred Texas communities, all states but one (we are still working on Hawaii!) and 36 foreign countries.

Special exhibits in 2007 included a "Cowgirls of the Rodeo" photo display, The "Bob Johnson Saddle Exhibit," and a showing of the "Bill Stebbins Weaponry Collection" that was donated to the site.

The annual Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day Program in February featured the one-man show by Bob Snead of El Paso who portrays Lt. Henry Flipper, the first African-American graduate of West Point. Several hundred attended the show to honor an officer who served at Fort Concho in the late 1870s. The fort also hosted the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall in October, attracting several thousand veterans and guests over a very emotional weekend.

The site's living history volunteers participated in events at many Texas forts and sites across the state, including Forts Chadbourne, McKavett, Richardson, Clark, and Griffin, with related fort events in Odessa, Abilene, and Fort Worth. Fort Concho hosted special training weekends for the Field Artillery School and the Frontier Ladies Association.

## THE CYCLONE

*A Newsletter for members of the West Texas Historical Association*

Editors: Jim & Becky Matthews

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

**Browse back issues of the Cyclone at our website <[www.wtha.org](http://www.wtha.org)> maintained by webmaster Lynn Whitfield.**

## WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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

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

On line? Visit our Web Site  
at [www.wtha.org](http://www.wtha.org)



Non-Profit Orgn.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
San Antonio, Texas  
Permit No. 1527