



The

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Issue 1, Fall 2000



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The Bloomberg, Texas Bank Burglary

by Glenn Elliott &
Robert Nieman

Co-author's note:

From 1949 until 1961, Glenn Elliott served as a Texas Highway Patrolman. From 1961 until his retirement in 1987, he had the distinguished honor to serve as one of Texas' most elite—a Texas Ranger. As a Ranger he was described by Jim

Ray, Chief of the Criminal Law Enforcement Section of the Texas Department of Public Safety, as "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, field [Texas] Ranger that has ever lived."

Glenn's good friend, Paul Harvey, dedicated a "page" on his national radio broadcast to Glenn on August 26, 1987, the day of Glenn's retirement. In part Paul Harvey said, "I don't know what you know about the Texas Rangers, but they are an elite corps of lawmen—respected at all levels of law enforcement and revered in their home state. And if you had to pick one to represent the best of the best, that one would be Ranger Glenn Elliott." Perhaps Glenn's last sergeant, David Byrnes, summed it up best: "Glenn was Mr. Ranger."

When Glenn allowed me the honor of assisting him with the writing of his autobiography, Glenn Elliott: A Ranger's Ranger, two things that he was enormously proud of quickly became evident: his work ethic and his fellow lawmen.

Glenn's work ethic was unflagging—hundred-hour weeks were common. In his thirty-eight year career with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Glenn had six captains; each told him that he did not have to work as hard as he did. Perhaps they did not know Glenn as well as they thought they did because Glenn, being the man he is, did have to work that hard.

Glenn took enormous pride in working with other law enforcement people and agencies. This sentiment was reciprocated by his peers, as evidenced in the few (of many) testaments cited above.

When Glenn and I were discussing what to submit for this magazine, I frankly wanted to do another story. I feel that his

greatest single work was solving the Inez Phillips murder by Stanley Faulder; it took Glenn two long, hard years to solve this case. But Glenn was adamant that he wanted the Bloomburg Bank burglary case presented.

Not only was the Bloomburg robbery his first major case after becoming a Ranger, but it also showed clearly how cooperation between different law enforcement agencies can solve a crime that otherwise might go forever unanswered. Sadly we hear in the news today of far too much distrust and jealousy between agencies—agencies whose first priority should be to the citizens they serve. Regretfully, all too often it seems the goal is personal glory, either for the individual or the agency.

Because of Glenn's exemplary work on this case, he received letters of commendation from his captain, Bob Crowder and his colonel, Homer Garrison. Colonel Garrison was a featured speaker at the 1962 National Police Association in Washington, D. C. Glenn's work and report impressed him enough that in his speech he used the Bloomburg Bank burglary as an example of how police departments should work together.

§

Often when I was in Dallas, I visited a roundtable meeting of police officers from the Metroplex[1] area. Over lunch, officers would discuss various crimes and criminals that concerned their areas. The officers were from nearly every branch of law enforcement: Rangers, Highway Patrol, sheriff's departments, numerous local police departments, and federal agencies— including the FBI. The first thing that struck me was the way they shared their information, just the way law officers should. Because of these meetings and the comparing of notes as to what assumed criminals and their known and/or suspected activities were in each officer's area, there is no telling how many criminals ended up in prison.

I realized the advantage of such a meeting in my area and decided to try and create a similar organization in East Texas. I shared my idea with Gregg County Sheriff Noble Crawford and he agreed that we needed to copy the Dallas effort. On April 6, 1970, I wrote a letter— which Noble and I both signed—and sent it to police departments all over the area. I contacted fellow state, local, and federal officers in western Louisiana, southwestern Arkansas, and, of course, East Texas. Thus was born the Ark-La-Tex Peace Officers Meeting. The way I visualized the organization (and the way it turned out) was that it would be an unofficial organization with no president, secretary, or any other officers. We started, and remained, simply a group of peace officers getting together once a month to discuss common problems.

I was amazed at the turnout we had at our first meeting at the Downtown Motor Inn [2] in Longview on April 23. Looking back, I should not have been. I don't care that the news media and movies love to portray the police as being nothing but a bunch of on-the-take, crooked drunks, and just plain no-goods. Maybe there are a few officers like that, but believe me, their numbers are small. If you look, what you will find are thousands-upon-thousands of overworked and underpaid officers out there doing the best they know how every day.

Like any organization, it took a lot of work to keep the Ark-La-Tex Peace Officers Meeting going. Once a month I made sure that I contacted all the

different departments in the area and reminded them of our meeting. By doing this I was able to keep a good attendance until the day I retired. You can easily see the pride I took in our meeting. It was a well-placed pride, and I can truthfully say that many cases that might have gone unsolved were brought to a successful conclusion through the sharing of information with other officers over lunch.

A police officer's first and only reason for existence is to serve and protect the public. And that is done by working together. There is no accomplishment that I achieved during my thirty-eight-year career that I am prouder of than having a reputation of working with my fellow officers—all officers: local, state, and federal.

Even though the case described below happened more than seven years before the birth of the Ark-La-Tex Police Officers Meeting, few cases exemplify police agencies working together better than my first major felony case as a Ranger—the Bloomburg, Texas bank burglary [3] in early 1962. I worked hand-in-hand with Texas and Louisiana sheriff departments, city police departments, a juvenile delinquent officer, a probation officer, and the FBI. This was truly an example of police working together to protect and serve.

Ever since the first bank opened, I suppose someone has tried to rob it. The Bloomburg State Bank offered an enticing target. Many factors made it ideal for thieves and burglars: besides being a small bank with little or no security and in a town that had no local law enforcement, it was also located near the borders of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. These features made it ideal for thieves to make their getaways and try to create confusion over jurisdiction.

At approximately eleven o'clock on a freezing cold Friday night, March 16, 1962, unknown persons broke into the Bloomburg State Bank. Using an acetylene torch they cut the combination out of the bank's vault door, forced out the vault locks by hand, and entered the vault. Inside the vault was a Mosler safe.



We found the knob from the safe on the floor, where the thieves had tried to gain entry. Since the safe was equipped with a time lock, however, the thieves were unsuccessful at opening it. The dial cannot open a time lock until the appointed time has arrived. But these bank burglars were determined and experienced, and they had an answer to a time lock—take the whole safe.

The Mosler safe measured 34 inches by 22 inches and was freestanding. In order to get it outside, the burglars placed several large books on the floor and pushed the safe onto them. Attaching a cable from a winch truck they had stolen in Atlanta, Texas, they pulled the safe out of the west rear door

of the bank and onto the sidewalk. Once outside, they loaded the safe on the bed of the winch truck and calmly drove out of town. Like I said, they were experienced and well prepared.

The books used to move the safe out of the bank.

The burglars got off with \$28,323.50 in cash—both coin and paper—plus an additional \$5,000 in money orders and U. S. Government series "E" bonds.

No matter what era people live in, they always fondly remember "the good old days." Invariably things were better "then," people cared more "then," and they definitely got more involved "then". And the smaller the community, the better things were "back then." Small communities cared much more for their neighbors, and in small communities where everyone knew everybody, they did not hesitate to get involved "back then." Oh, really? In 1962 Bloomburg was, and still is, a small rural community in the northeastern Texas county of Cass. Its population on a busy week was only a few hundred people. During the burglary the thieves made no attempt at secrecy. Several citizens heard the burglars banging away in the bank. One man lived in the bank building directly over the vault and admitted, as did several citizens, that he heard the burglars between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. Some even acknowledged not only hearing, but also looking out their windows and seeing the winch truck in action. Not one person reported anything to the authorities. So much for how much more people were involved "back then" in the "good old days."



The following morning at 7:30 I received a call from Cass County Sheriff Bill Dowd, asking if I would assist in the investigation. Bloomburg is about seventy-five miles from Longview, so I did not arrive at the crime scene until 8:45. I have investigated countless crime scenes, but I have never seen one filthier. There was tobacco juice all over the floor. But that didn't stop us. Over the weekend, Sheriff Dowd and I investigated not only the bank, but also the immediate area around Bloomburg, asking questions and looking for evidence.

We also broadcast the description of the burglary throughout the country. As professional as this job had been, there was little doubt in our minds that this was not the thieves' first job. By comparing notes with other departments, we could put together a pattern. And once we had a pattern, we could narrow the field as to who we were looking for.

I surveyed the bank employees as to whether any questionable-acting person had been in or around the bank in last few days. The bank manager, E. D.

Simmons, reported that an unknown man, about thirty-five years old and acting very suspiciously, had indeed been in the bank about a week before asking to change a ten-dollar bill. Also, on the previous Wednesday, March 14, an unknown female had inquired about opening a savings account. People living in urban areas may find it strange that bank employees remembered two unknown people being in the bank, but Bloomburg is a typical small, southern town: strangers entering their bank would be noticed.

We discovered that the truck that had been used to hoist the safe, a 1947 three-quarter-ton pickup with a winch, had been stolen the night of the burglary from Atlanta, Texas. We located a site about one mile from the bank where the burglars had unsuccessfully attempted to move the safe from the winch truck to another vehicle. Also, a 1956 Chevrolet pulpwood truck had been stolen in Bloomburg on the night of the burglary, but it had been abandoned where the transfer had been attempted. It had apparently been stolen to obtain its gasoline. A hole had been punched in the bottom of the gas tank.

On Monday, March 19, Sheriff Dowd and I drove from Bloomburg to Hosston, Louisiana, forty miles away. We had contacted all the police departments in the surrounding area and made them aware of the burglary and the methods used. Consequently, when Bossier Parish Deputy Frank Goodman recovered a stolen winch truck about a mile and a half from the Red River bridge between the Louisiana communities of Hosston and Plain Dealing, we were contacted immediately.

We were looking for a 1947 one-half ton Chevrolet. This, however, was a 1946 Dodge, two-and-one-half-ton winch truck, stolen the night before from a Carl Baker in nearby Bradley, Arkansas. Even though this was not the wrecker used in Bloomburg on Friday night, we were sure our thieves had used it. Paint samples taken from the back of the wrecker matched the color of the missing safe.

On Tuesday, March 20, I again traveled to Shreveport to visit Homer Bryant, Chief of the Criminal Division of the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Department. I brought Chief Bryant up-to-date on the case. Listening attentively until I finished, he gave me several names of people who he thought were capable of having pulled the burglary and then known to be in the Shreveport area. One was familiar—Ivey Lee Umphries. Ivey Lee had already been convicted twice in Texas for burglary and was currently free on bond for safe burglary and armed robbery in Louisiana. Reportedly he was living with this girlfriend, also a suspect in the bank burglary. But when shown pictures of Umphries and his girlfriend, the bank's employees were unable to make a positive identification.

On Thursday, March 22, I returned to Shreveport. After gathering information from the Shreveport Police Department concerning Umphries, I went on to Shreveport's sister city, Bossier City, to visit with its police department. They had information that Umphries worked for a sheet metal company in Minden, Louisiana. This company had furnished the money for his bond for the above-mentioned burglary case.

Leaving Bossier City, I met Bossier Parish Deputies Frank Goodman and Roy Bain and Sheriff Bill Dowd at the Highway 2 bridge where it crosses the Red River. Deputies Goodman and Bain had found a spot under the bridge where something had been buried. We believed our missing safe had been temporarily deposited here.





The winch truck used to steal the safe

Checking the area around the bridge, we found tire tracks that matched those of the stolen Bradley winch truck that had been recovered only about a mile and a half away. The deputies had also discovered the footprints of several men and one woman (we could tell by the depth of the heels

imprints that she had worn eight-inch, spiked heels); several pieces of rope; a clipboard with the name of a Minden, Louisiana company written on the top; several pieces of chain; and numerous paint scrapings from several nearby small, low-hanging tree branches.

It was not hard to piece together what had happened. The burglars were running out of darkness and they had to stash their cache until it would be safe to travel with it. After all, it would have been rather obvious that something was amiss if they had been seen driving down the highway with a safe sitting on the back of a wrecker. They had stolen the Bradley wrecker to lift the safe into another vehicle. Finishing with the wrecker, they had driven it a short distance away and abandoned it.

Early morning travelers had seen the wrecker sitting close to the bridge but had thought nothing about it. This region is known as the Big Thicket because of the heavy growth of pine trees. One of the biggest industries is logging; therefore it was common to see logging equipment—and a winch truck is a common logging tool—early in the morning. Loggers are a lot like farmers: it is seldom that the rising sun does not find them in the fields.

We left the river location and went to Minden, Louisiana There we contacted Webster Parish Deputy Buster Atkins and asked for his help in locating the owners of the company, whose name we found on the clipboard. Atkins informed us that two brothers owned the company, but they had moved to Monroe, Louisiana.

Checking further, we learned from Haynesville, Louisiana, Probation Officer Kendrix [4] that the brothers had been on probation but their time had expired. We also found that they were reportedly in deep financial trouble.

In the ensuing weeks we continued to gather information. We learned from the FBI that bank burglaries in Nash, Oklahoma; Lena, Mississippi; and Bernard, Kansas, matched the M. O. of the Bloomburg Bank burglary.

On May 15, the Bloomburg safe was recovered near Cotton Valley, Louisiana, about seventy-five miles from Bloomburg, in the Dorcheat Bayou at a place



called Uncle Ralph's Fishing Camp. The safe had been opened. Unfortunately we were unable to recover any evidence that would help us with the case.

By this time, however, we felt we had sufficient cause to request warrants for Ivey Lee Umphries and the owners of the Minden, Louisiana sheet metal company. We went to Queen City, Texas—you never know when you leave Atlanta and enter Queen City—

and secured arrest warrants for all three from Cass County Justice of the Peace John Hanes.

We sent a message to the owners of the sheet metal company that we had a warrant for them and it would be best if they came in voluntarily. The two brothers contacted us and agreed to meet Sheriff Dowd and me in Longview, and at the appointed time they showed up. We wasted no time and quickly started questioning them. Three hours later both still denied any guilt or knowledge of the burglary. They went so far as to agree to take a polygraph test in Dallas.

On Thursday, March 29, the brothers, Sheriff Dowd, and I traveled to Dallas. Results of the polygraph showed that neither had been present when the safe was stolen, but both did show a strong reaction when Bloomburg was mentioned. Both claimed under further interrogation that they had thought of Bloomington, Illinois, when Bloomburg was mentioned. Maybe so—that is where they were arrested after escaping from the Mississippi state penitentiary where they were being held on a three-year sentence for burglary. After completing the polygraphs, both were returned to Longview, where they had left their car, and were allowed to return to Louisiana.

On Monday, April 2, I received a call from Bossier Parish Juvenile Officer Otis Allen. On Saturday, March 31, Sergeant Daniels of the Shreveport Police Department had brought in for questioning a sixteen-year-old boy who was the son of one of the owners of the sheet metal company in Minden. He had been going to different stores with a black, wooden box filled with almost two hundred dollars in coins, trying to exchange the coins for paper bills. Becoming suspicious, one of the clerks notified the police. All weekend he had been questioned. At first the boy claimed that he had found the money under a bridge. When taken to the bridge, however, police found there had been no evidence of any activity for a long time. As he would do several times, the boy changed his story.

The following day found me again in Louisiana. Happy Ewing, also from the Bossier Parish Juvenile Department, questioned the young man for three hours. All that the boy ever admitted was that he had gotten the money from someone close to him, and that if he talked, he would be in trouble. So he would not talk.

It's funny what you remember about events. The thing I remember most about the questioning was the large plug of tobacco the boy chewed. Just as we began his interrogation the young man put a huge wad of tobacco in his mouth. I have always had little regard for chewing tobacco: if there is a nastier habit, I don't know what it is. Before he put the wad in his mouth I reminded

him that we had no spittoon and he would not be allowed to spit on the floor. Since I never have liked seeing someone spit into a cup, just where did he plan on spitting? In his best "I'm a real he-man" tone of voice, he said, "I don't need anything to spit into, I swallow."

So we let him chew—and swallow. Three hours later he was greener than fresh spring grass. Looking at me with the sickest eyes you have ever seen, he mumbled in a feeble little voice, "I'm sick. I gotta go to the bathroom." Considering the amount of tobacco juice in his stomach, I was amazed he had survived as long as he did. I have to give it to the boy: he was tough—he never did own up to where he got the money.

I left Louisiana and returned to Marshall, Texas, to question Ivie Lee Umphries. Since the burglary, he had dropped out of sight and we had been unable to locate him. But it turned out we did not have to; he dropped himself right into our laps. He had been in Henderson, Texas, shacked up with some ole gal who was not his girlfriend. But enough fun is enough. He figured he better get his girlfriend's car back to her before she caught him with another woman. Leaving Henderson in a drunken stupor, he got nearly to Marshall before running off the road. Investigating the accident, the Harrison County sheriff's department arrested him for DWI, carrying a pistol, and operating a motor vehicle without a license.

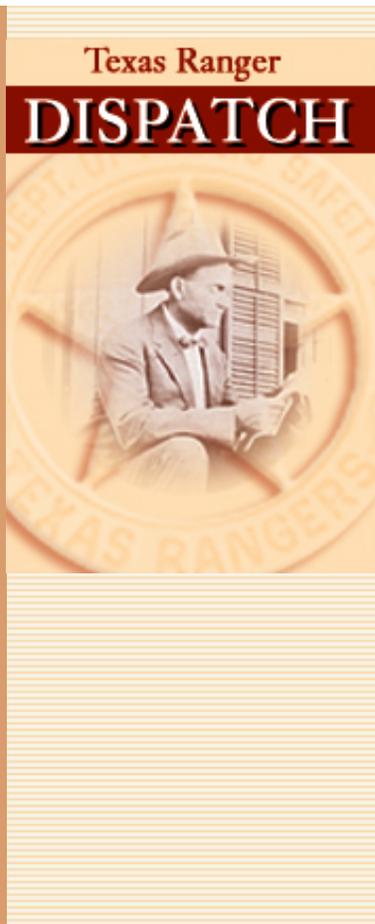
Under questioning, he not surprisingly denied any knowledge of the Bloomburg burglary. He also refused to take a polygraph test. I was confident we had the right man, and I knew that he was not going anywhere; too many people wanted the pleasure of his company. Cass County, Texas, wanted him, as did Caddo Parish, Louisiana. Ivie Lee must have felt he was playing against a stacked deck; even his bondsman had filed to be relieved of his obligation on Ivie Lee's bond.

We were confident we had our man, but we just could not find the undeniable piece of evidence that would put him away. We could not charge him, and he eventually found another bondsman and hit the street again. But ole Ivie Lee just could not stay straight.

On December 7, 1962, Sheriff Dowd, Texas Ranger Red Arnold from Mount Pleasant, FBI agent Sam Cotton, and I drove to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to pick up Ivie Lee. At the time of the burglary we had broadcast the serial numbers of the money orders throughout the region. In Hot Springs, Ivie Lee had passed one of the stolen hundred dollar Republic Express money orders renting a room at Dan's Courts. Before he could get very comfortable, the Hot Springs Police had him in custody. When arrested, he also had on his person seven additional one-hundred-dollar and two fifty-dollar Republic Express money orders—all from Bloomburg.

This case is a classic example of departments working together for the citizens: Texas Rangers, county and parish sheriff's offices, the FBI, local police departments, probation department, and even the juvenile department all pulled together to get the case solved.

Postscript: I have always enjoyed visiting with senior citizens in nursing homes. A few years ago I was visiting a local nursing home in Longview when I saw a familiar name on one of the doors—Ivie Lee Umphries. I stopped in to say hello. I'm afraid Ivie Lee was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He no longer knew anything or anybody. He died shortly thereafter.



Glenn Elliott was born in Texas on August 1, 1926, on a small farm in Fannin County. Glenn began his life as a law officer during World War II. He entered the Army in 1944, where he served in the Philippine Islands as an MP. After the war, Glenn began a distinguished thirty-eight-year career with the Texas Department of Public Safety. Glenn served as a Highway Patrolman stationed in Longview until October 8, 1961, when he became a Texas Ranger stationed in the Longview-Marshall area.

During his illustrious career, Glenn has shaken the hand of every president from Harry Truman through George Bush. Governors, senators, representatives, nationally known celebrities, fellow law officers, and citizens are proud to call Glenn their friend.

On August 31, 1987, Glenn retired. On a ranch east of Marshall, Texas, his retirement party attended by over four hundred. He now spends his time tending his farm at the home place in Windom, promoting his autobiography, *A Ranger's Ranger*, giving speeches, and meeting with friends.

Glenn is married to the former Catherine Cooper. They have two children, Diane and Dennis.

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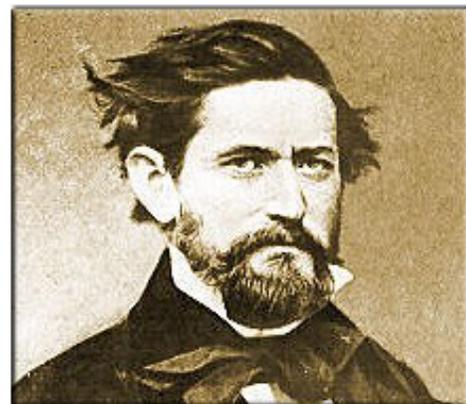
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Captain Jack Hays by Bill O'Neal

Jack Hays was a remarkable frontiersman who proved especially courageous and innovative in battling horseback warriors. A famed Texas Ranger, he also marched off to the War with Mexico, joined the California gold rush, and became a prominent leader in America's westernmost frontier.

John Coffee Hays was born on January 28, 1817, in Wilson County, Tennessee. In Tennessee he became an expert rider, hunter, and marksman. When Hays was fifteen, his parents were killed by yellow fever. Relatives took the remaining seven orphans into their homes, and Jack went with two of his siblings to the Mississippi plantation of an uncle. Jack soon struck out on his own, learning the surveyor's trade.

The teenaged surveyor had his first brush with Indians in Mississippi. Hays and his companion George Work were warned by a trapper that unfriendly Indians were in the vicinity. A morning or two later, Hays and Work were riding down a trail when they sighted a band of mounted Indians ahead. Work was unarmed and Hays carried only a single-shot pistol, so the two young men turned their mounts. The warriors charged, and Hays and Work galloped away.

One Indian raced close enough to shoot Work's horse. The animal collapsed, but Hays turned back to rescue his companion. "George," said Hays, "take my horse and lasso the first Indian that comes up." Hays sprinted behind a nearby rock while Work swung into the saddle. A moment later a brave rode onto the scene and Work dropped a lariat around him. Hays shot the Indian dead, vaulted astride his pony, and Hays and Work galloped away from the war party.

After two years as a surveyor, Hays had earned enough money to pay for a year's schooling at Nashville's Davidson Academy. In 1836, the adventurous Hays was attracted to Texas after hearing of the stand at the Alamo. He arrived too late to participate in combat, but en route he clashed with a bully

and shot him to death in a tavern fight.

Hays enlisted in a company of Texas Rangers led by the famous scout Deaf Smith. Stationed near San Antonio, Hays skirmished against Mexicans, acquired land, and found time to resume his surveying activities. He became acquainted with Flacco, a Lipan Apache chieftain who provided Hays with many insights into Indian warfare. Hays learned that while Apaches preferred to attack from ambush, Comanches were far-ranging raiders, especially during periods of the "Comanche Moon." The Comanche was an open-field fighter whose favorite tactic was to charge and then to fall back in the center following a counterattack. But as their enemies would surge forward, unyielding Comanches on the wings would suddenly sweep in to flank the foe. Hays would frequently turn that maneuver against Comanche war parties during future battles.

On August 10, 1838, Hays was one of twenty Rangers under Colonel W. H. Karnes who were taking a midday break at the Arroyo Seco. Suddenly more than one hundred Comanche warriors rode into sight and charged the Rangers. The white men led their horses behind the creek bank and then scrambled to find cover in the brush. The Comanches rode in a circle, filling the air with arrows.

Hays aimed his rifle at the chief and felled him with an accurate shot. The Indians promptly fell back, demoralized at the loss of their leader. Half-heartedly they launched a second charge but were quickly driven back. Another barrage of arrows preceded a third advance. The fight had left the Comanches, however, and they rode in to retrieve the fallen braves. A score of Indians had been slain and another twenty wounded. The Rangers had suffered no fatalities, but most of their horses had been killed by falling arrows.

During surveying trips, Hays had become friendly with numerous Delawares and he agreed to accompany seventeen braves on a trapping expedition in the fall of 1838. The party went on foot, not wanting to bother with horses and hoping that horse-stealing Comanches would avoid them. But soon one of the party returned with the news that a large band of Comanches had slain his companion.

Vengefully the Delawares and Hays took up the Comanches' trail, trotting tirelessly for days until their foes were located in a camp beside the Rio Grande. The Delawares and Hays crept near under the cover of darkness, surrounding the camp except for the river side. They dozed until dawn; but when the first Comanche brave stirred, he was shot down by a rifle slug. A volley of arrows and rifle balls followed. Then the Delawares sprinted in for hand-to-hand slaughter. Brandishing a knife and tomahawk, Hays joined in the destruction of the stunned Comanches. Some of the Comanches found safety in the river, but most of the raiding party were slain.

In the fall of 1839, following the killing of eighteen San Antonio residents near the Alamo City, Colonel Karnes led a punitive party that included Hays. Near present-day Fredericksburg, Hays and three other scouts found the camp of thirty Comanche warriors under Chief Isomania. Karnes led his men in surrounding the camp, but the slumbering Comanches were roused by the sounds of a frightened pony. Karnes and the Rangers attacked, killing twelve horses before the warriors managed to fight their way to safety.

On August 12, 1840, Hays fought in the famous Battle of Plum Creek, where two hundred Texans under Felix Huston challenged five hundred Comanches

returning from a devastating assault on Linnville and Victoria. The frontiersmen carefully trained their rifles on the charging Indians, but their fire took little effect. During a brief lull, however, Hays told his companions that the Indians were carefully employing their rawhide shields. He advised them to hold their fire until the braves had loosed their arrows and then to pour a volley as the Comanches wheeled about unprotected.

The Indians soon charged again, firing their arrows and turning their ponies. A hail of rifle balls swept several warriors off their mounts. The chief was among the dead, and the Comanches broke. The Texans pursued in a vicious running fight for a dozen miles. Nearly one hundred Comanches were slain, but not a single white man was killed. For his part in this triumph, the twenty-three-year-old Hays was commissioned a captain by Republic of Texas President M. B. Lamar. He was also asked to raise a company of Rangers.

Within a matter of weeks, Captain Hays led his Ranger company in pursuit of two hundred Comanche raiders who had stolen a number of horses and mules from settlements west of San Antonio. Hays, pushing ahead of his men, was the first to sight the Comanches at a crossing of the Guadalupe River. He ordered his men to dismount, tighten their saddle girths, and check their weapons before remounting. Then Hays led a charge through a hail of arrows. The Indian line was shattered, and when their chief was shot out of the saddle, the warriors turned their ponies to flee. Hays and his Rangers gave chase, inflicting numerous casualties before finally breaking off pursuit.

A short time later Hays led thirty-five volunteers, including several Lipan scouts under Flacco, in search of Comanche encampments. A camp was discovered near the headwaters of the Sabinal, and Hays ordered a quiet advance just before dawn. Hays and his men charged while the Comanches still slept, and the startled Indians fell back. But when the chieftains observed how few their attackers were, they rallied their braves and pressed a counterattack.

Hays formed his men into a square, and they retreated slowly before the Comanche onslaught. At last, accurate fire drove the Indians away. Hays and his men turned on them, clubbing their rifles for the assault. The Comanches took cover on a nearby hillside, but Texan firearms soon drove them into a retreat to the northwest. The Indians were unable to recover sixteen dead; only one Ranger was wounded. Flacco testified to Hays' raw courage in battle: "Me and Red Wing not afraid to go to hell together. Captain Jack heap brave; not afraid to go to hell by himself."

On July 1, 1841, Hays and twelve Rangers had pursued a band of raiders from the San Antonio vicinity to Uvalde Canyon. The Rangers closed in on a camp in a thicket, and Hays led two men into the thicket to try to flush the Indians. The hostiles, numbering a dozen, alertly fired a volley of arrows. Hays' two companions were badly hit, and an arrow clipped Hays' finger.

Hays helped one of his men to safety; then he returned with a double-barreled shotgun to protect the other Ranger. Only one of the eleven braves was armed with a rifle, but the others were well equipped with bows, arrows, knives, and tomahawks. Hays allowed the hostiles to close to within fifteen feet. Then he arose and blasted two braves with the shotgun. He drew his pistol, but the Indians had fallen back, and Hays sprinted out of the thicket to obtain a rifle. His men remained mounted, surrounding the thicket while he returned to duel the warriors.

Back in the thicket Hays began to pick off Indians. After three hours, only the

warrior with a rifle continued to offer resistance. At last the two men traded shots simultaneously. Hays was grazed in the shoulder while the brave fell, badly hurt. The other ten warriors lay dead, and a woman was taken prisoner.

Soon thereafter Hays set out with forty Rangers on another scout for hostiles. Breaking camp on the Medina River, the Rangers rode into an ambush at Bandera Pass about half an hour before noon. A Comanche war party had concealed themselves along the brushy, boulder-strewn defile. Bandera Pass is one hundred yards wide, five hundred yards long, and fifty to seventy-five feet high. When the Rangers were in its middle, the Indians opened fire.

Several Rangers were hit and their mounts became panicky. Hays ordered his men to dismount and tie the lunging animals to nearby trees. The Rangers formed in a circle as the Indians charged. The warriors were driven back, but their chief quickly launched another attack.

Peter Fohr was shot through the body with an arrow, and Sam Luckey went down. The Indians closed and the fighting became hand-to-hand. A brave shot Andrew Erskine in the thigh with an arrow, but the Ranger gamely charged, brandishing his five-shooter. Then, as Erskine fired, the barrel of the flimsily-made pistol dropped off. Luck was with him—the gun exploded enough to shatter the Indian's bow. As the warrior tried to stab Erskine with an arrow, Creed Taylor shot the Indian to death.

The Comanche chief fired a ball into Sergeant Kit, and Acklin shot the chief with his pistol. Acklin and the chief drew their knives and grappled, hacking at each other with gleaming blades. At last a blood-covered Acklin stood up, triumphant over the Indian leader.

An hour of vicious fighting had passed, and the Indians withdrew. Hays had lost five dead and five wounded, and several horses were dead or disabled. Hays led his battered command back to San Antonio.

Hays immediately took the field again, leading four dozen men in search of Comanches. On July 19, 1841, at the head of the western branch of the Rio Frio, Hays flushed several Comanche hunters and pursued with twenty-five Rangers. After an eight-mile chase, an encampment was sighted. The hunters warned their tribe, and one hundred mounted warriors quickly formed a screen for their retreating dependents.

Though Hays pressed forward, the mounts of his men were tired and the Comanches successfully conducted a delaying action. As his horse faltered, Hays talked a well-mounted volunteer into a temporary trade of animals. The new steed surged closer to the line of warriors and Hays fired his pistol; then he tried to turn back toward his men. But the startled horse took the bit in his teeth and galloped toward the hostiles. Flacco, the Lipan scout, spurred to keep up, and the two men thundered into the midst of the Comanches. Hays triggered revolver balls into a warrior on each side; then he wheeled about with Flacco trailing just behind. One brave tried to block the way, but Hays shot him and the two men spurred into the open.

When he returned to his men, Hays decided he had no chance of overtaking the Comanches. Flacco muttered that his leader was "bravo too much." Hays concluded that ten Indians had been slain and several wounded. A Mexican prisoner was found murdered and hanging by his heels in the deserted Comanche camp.

Later in 1841, Hays and a party of surveyors and scouts encamped at Crabtree Creek. One morning Hays decided to inspect nearby Enchanted Rock. Armed with a rifle and two five-shooters, Hays rode to the precipitous landmark and climbed to the top.

While he was scaling Enchanted Rock, he was spotted by a large war party of Comanches. Hays kept them at bay for a time, but finally about twenty braves began to close in. Hays shot several warriors. He then readied his knife—he had lost his powderhorn and the loads in his gun were exhausted. But Hays' men had heard the sound of his weapons; as they rode to the rescue, the Indians called off their attack and withdrew.

In February 1842, Hays and a crew of six men were surveying a tract of land north of San Antonio. While they worked, they were surrounded by a war party that launched arrows from distant cover. Hays infuriated his attackers by continuing to run his line, pausing occasionally to snap off a shot whenever a brave crept too near. At last, rifle fire drove the frustrated warriors to retreat.

In March 1842, Comanche warriors executed a raid near San Antonio. Hays gave chase with fifteen Rangers and twenty-seven volunteers. On March 11, the trail became fresh after the pursuers crossed the Nueces River, and Hays sent a volunteer galloping ahead on his own horse as a solitary decoy. Within an hour the courageous decoy came racing back with Comanches close behind. Hays remounted his own horse and led a charge.

Close to one hundred warriors formed a line and loosed a volley of arrows, but Hays and his men did not falter. A hand-to-hand melee followed. The Texans exacted a toll with rifle and pistol fire, but several of their number were wounded before the Indians broke off the fight.

By this time, numerous admirers were convinced that Hays was the best Indian fighter in Texas. San Antonio thrived under the protection afforded by Hays and his Rangers, who often were feted by prominent citizens after returning from a successful scout. Hays fought against General Adrian Woll during the notorious 1842 Mexican invasion of Texas, and during the following years he was unusually active against bandidos.

In 1843, a boy rode into Hays' Ranger camp blurting that his family had been jumped by hostiles several miles away. Hays and his men galloped to the site. Two children lay dead, the father was seriously wounded, and a seventeen-year-old daughter had been carried off. The sobbing mother was in shock.

Hays left two men behind and then rode in pursuit. An hour later the Comanche camp was discovered near the Llano River. Hays waved a revolver in his right hand and led a charge. The startled Indians scrambled for weapons, but within moments the warriors broke for the river. After a running fight to the river, the surviving braves splashed across the shallow stream and fled into a grove.

Hays reined his men in at the riverbank and counted casualties. Two Rangers were dead and five wounded. Five Indians had died. A search turned up the seventeen-year-old girl, dying among some trees near the camp. The murdered girl was buried at the crest of a nearby peak.

In April 1844, more than two hundred Comanche warriors charged Hays and fifteen Rangers in Nueces Canyon. Hays directed his dismounted men to keep

their horses nearby and to hold their fire until he triggered a signal shot. Coolly, Hays waited until the galloping braves were almost on top of his command. The volley at close quarters decimated the Comanche line, and rifle and pistol fire sent the hostiles reeling back. Hays aggressively ordered his men into their saddles and pressed a counterattack. A flurry of revolver balls at close range toppled more warriors, and the Comanches dropped their lances and raced away at top speed.

After inflicting heavy punishment, Hays called off the chase. A recruit named Paddy stated that a wounded Indian had crawled into a nearby grove. Hays cautioned Paddy to leave the brave alone; pursuit into the thicket might prove fatal. Heedless of the warning, Paddy announced that he was unafraid of a crippled Indian. He plunged on foot into the thicket. Moments later he screamed in pain. Four Rangers leveled their pistols and moved in. The warrior was sighted and promptly shot to death. Paddy lay fifteen feet away, an arrow through his chest.

On a later occasion, the Comanche war chief told a friendly Delaware that he never wanted to fight Hays again. "Every one of his men had as many shots as I have fingers on my two hands. I lost half of my warriors in the battle, and many others died along the route when returning to my country."



Colt's .36 Caliber Texas Patterson Revolver

Hays again was called upon to raise a company of Rangers. He equipped fifteen experienced men with two new revolvers, an extra cylinder for each gun, a rifle or shotgun apiece, and various other sidearms. On May 31, 1844, after three weeks on the trail, two Rangers were robbing a bee tree near Sister's Creek when they sighted a Comanche war party arrayed in a battle line.

Hays led his men in a charge, but sixty yards from the waiting Comanches he saw a second and a third rank behind the first. Hays wheeled and ordered his men into a stand of timber to the side. As they approached the timber, concealed Comanches showered them with arrows. But Hays plunged into the position and a score of bowmen sprinted for their horses. Every fifth Texan now became a horseholder, and the others deployed to meet the Comanche charge.

The warriors absorbed a rifle volley; then raced to the attack as the white men supposedly reloaded. But the Texans stood up and poured a hail of pistol balls into the startled Comanches. Warriors and ponies were felled and the Indian charge was shattered. The chiefs assembled their discouraged braves at a distance for a council, but Hays remounted his men and led a

counterattack.

The Comanches fired arrows and hit three Rangers, but companions rode near and kept the wounded men in their saddles. Hays and nine men thundered through the Comanche line, knocking warriors off their ponies with pistol balls. The Indians fell back, ducking behind their shields and riding zigzag to escape the hail of revolver fire.

One brave rushed Sam Walker. The Ranger shot him, but a second warrior lanced Walker from the rear. John Carlin shot the second warrior in the head; another Ranger pulled out the lance and helped Walker reach a nearby thicket. At the edge of the thicket, Ad Gillespie tumbled from his horse, pierced by an arrow. The Comanche chief leveled his lance and galloped toward the fallen man, but Gillespie killed him with a shot in the head. Two Rangers sprinted on foot to Gillespie's side and dragged him into the trees. When their chief fell, a number of warriors charged Gillespie and his companions. Hays and several other Rangers drove them back, but they retrieved the corpse of their leader and withdrew, wailing a death chant.

The Rangers tried to tend their wounded, and three men extracted arrows from each other. Hays ordered his able men into the saddle and led seven Rangers in a tenacious pursuit. Revolver fire emptied several more Indian saddles, and a running fight disintegrated into a rout. The chase continued until darkness began to fall. Hays turned his men back toward the thicket, where eight injured Rangers were readied for the return to San Antonio. It was estimated that three dozen warriors had been slain, and Hays credited the revolvers with the triumph over heavy odds.

On June 8, 1844, Hays and fourteen Rangers encountered a large war party of Comanches near Walker's Creek. The Indians rode to the crown of a steep hill, formed a battle line, and began shouting taunts at the Texans. Leading his men forward at a slow trot, Hays cupped his hands and roared insults at the chief. Hays maneuvered his men into position, formed a V, and charged. The Indians surged toward the Rangers, who fired a rifle volley and broke the Comanche attack.

The hostiles quickly regrouped, and Hays directed his men to drop their empty rifles and draw revolvers. The Indians pressed in and employed lances and bows and arrows. The Rangers popped away furiously with their revolvers. Within fifteen minutes more than a score of Indians had been slain, and nearly all the Texans and numerous warriors were wounded.

The Indians broke off the fight, but with his customary tenacity, Hays rode after the retreating foe. A running fight lasted for two miles before the chief rallied his braves for a counterattack. Hays directed his outnumbered men to fight in relays: several would ride ahead and fire their pistols; then another squad with reloaded revolvers would replace them.

At last the chief organized another assault within sight of the Rangers. Hays asked if anyone still had a loaded rifle. Ad Gillespie, although reeling from a wound, dismounted and drew a bead. When the chief was just thirty yards away, Gillespie shot him in the head. The chief fell dead and the demoralized Indians broke. Hays led a brief pursuit but called a halt after killing a few more braves. Four Rangers were wounded and Peter Fohr lay dead on the field. Twenty-three unrecovered Indian corpses were counted, and perhaps thirty braves had suffered wounds.

A notable change of pace took place in San Antonio during the spring of 1844. Hays and his Rangers competed in a rodeo against fifty vaqueros and an equal number of peace-seeking Comanche braves under Chief Buffalo Hump.

In March 1846, six hundred Comanches raided below San Antonio, and Hays pursued with forty men as the Indians headed north with their stolen livestock. From their route, Hays deduced the Indians would pass near a landmark called Paint Rock. Hays led his men cross-country and reached Paint Rock about midnight. The Rangers slept a few hours in the thicket and were well rested when the Indians rode into sight just before dawn.

A volley of rifle fire struck unsuspecting warriors, who wheeled their mounts and rode out of range. The Indians greatly outnumbered the white men, and they formed for a charge. Hays allowed the Comanches to gallop within fifty yards of his position before ordering a volley. The Indian line staggered and fell back.

On their second charge the warriors tried to advance in a half-circle, each brave dropping behind his horse and clutching hair rope woven into the mane. Few Comanches were hit, but several ponies were dropped and the attack soon was called off. A third charge came close before being repulsed by point-blank revolver fire.

Intermittent fighting continued through the day. That night the Indians camped nearby, creeping in under cover of darkness to carry away their dead. Occasional firing made sleep difficult.

At daybreak the Indians launched a furious charge. Warriors came in four waves and were held at bay only by the final revolver rounds. Several braves next climbed to the top of Paint Rock and ineffectively fired arrows at the Rangers. Texan rifles felled some of the snipers and drove the rest away. Sunset found the Rangers still pinned down, and for the second night in a row Hays shared most of the guard duties with Ad Gillespie.

On the third day, the Comanches hurtled forward at dawn. Several warriors came to within forty yards of the Texans before falling back. At about ten o'clock in the morning, the chief reorganized his men for another assault. When they again advanced, Hays drew a bead on the chief, whose rawhide shield already had turned more than one Ranger bullet. But the chief swung in the saddle and Hays shot him in the side. He fell dead and his warriors raced forward to retrieve his corpse. A hail of rifle fire forced them back, and Hays sent a Ranger galloping out with a lasso. The Texan threw a loop around the fallen chief and dragged the body back to the thicket.

The outraged warriors charged furiously, but the Rangers stopped them with accurate gunfire. The Comanches fell back, reformed their line, and charged again. The Texans fired, and the warriors promptly turned their ponies and galloped to the northwest. Within a few minutes, Hays led his men onto their trail. The Comanches had retreated so quickly that six braves had been left behind, guarding the stolen livestock and unaware of danger. Hays and his Rangers killed all six of those Indians and retrieved the settlers' animals. Ranger Emory Gibbons had been wounded in the forearm, while the Comanches had suffered perhaps one hundred casualties.

Hays was unusually busy during the Mexican War. He traveled to Washington, D.C., raised two regiments of troops, distinguished himself in combat, and married eighteen-year-old Susan Calvert. The couple had six children, but only two survived infancy.

After the war, Colonel Hays was commissioned to lead the "Chihuahua-El Paso Pioneer Expedition." Hays and seventy-two men headed west to locate and open a wagon road between San Antonio and Chihuahua. In the barren country west of the Pecos River, the party ran out of food and water and was reduced to eating panther meat and grass. Hays served briefly as Indian commissioner for the newly acquired Gila River country and he was involved in several profitable business enterprises.

In 1849 Hays, like so many other Americans, was attracted to California. He promptly won the sheriff's post in the first county election conducted in San Francisco. Hays attracted votes with a spectacular display of horsemanship in the streets of the boomtown.

A Pauite uprising erupted in 1860 near Virginia City, Nevada. The worst incident was the ambush of Major William M. Ormsby. This resulted in the death of forty-six volunteers. Hays was asked to lead the "Washoe Regiment," a collection of somewhat unsavory citizens. The elusive Indians were reluctant to fight, but on May 29 the Battle of Big Meadows produced seven dead warriors. Hays knocked the chief off his horse with a spectacular shot at great range.

Some minor skirmishes followed, and on June 2 Hays led three hundred men against more than eight hundred Indians. In hand-to-hand fighting, Hays dislodged the hostiles from their position. Hays' group suffered eleven casualties. At least thirty Indians were slain and fifty families were captured during the three-hour battle.

Hays had a number of business interests, served as federal surveyor general of California for several years, and was one of the founders of Oakland. He installed his family at Fernwood, a splendid eight-hundred-acre ranch on the present location of the University of California. By the time he died in 1883, Hays had accumulated an estate of a half-million dollars, and he was acknowledged as one of California's leading citizens. His final words were, "It's San Jacinto Day!"

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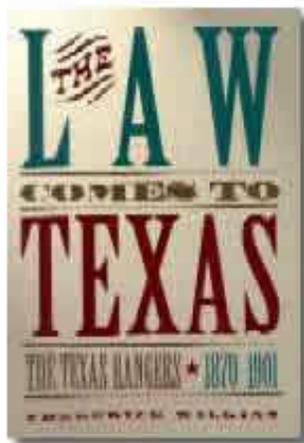
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**Book Review:
The Law Comes to Texas:
The Texas Rangers 1870-1901**

**by Frederick Wilkins
Reviewed by Chuck Parsons**

State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin, Texas 78761. 416 pp., 6 x 9 inches, photos, bibliography, index. Paper cover - \$19.95, ISBN 1-880510-61-8. Hard cover - \$29.95, ISBN 1-880510-60-X

Most historians and western buffs have considered Dr. Walter Prescott Webb's *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense* (1935) the bible of Ranger history. Although it may be premature to label this new book a full replacement of that classic, this publication by historian Frederick Wilkins must be considered a major contribution to Texas Ranger history. The third in a series of four, *The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers 1870-1901* covers in detail the period from Reconstruction through the turn of the century.

To the general reader, the most popular era of Ranger history remains the "Wild West" period. This was a time when there were constant Indian raids on the Texas frontier, Anglo and Mexican outlaws to fight, as well as numerous family feuds in the eastern half of the state. With the Civil War demanding the strength of Texas on southern battlefields, the Indians pushed the frontier back eastward. This created a line roughly from Dallas through Austin, south to Corpus Christi. All the territory west of this imaginary line and El Paso was considered frontier.

Thanks to white outlaws and county feuds following the war, not only did Indian raids multiply but lawlessness in the settled portion of the state increased as well. All this activity pushed to the forefront such personalities as John Wesley Hardin, John Ringo, Scott Cooley, and the Horrell clan.

Wilkins devotes a sparse first chapter to the social situation from war's end

until the creation of the Frontier Battalion, and he dedicates only a few pages to the State Police organization created by Governor E. J. Davis. The election of Richard Coke as governor tossed out Republican rule and set the stage for a new type of law enforcement. Coke created the Frontier Battalion in mid-1874 and chose Civil War veteran John B. Jones as its commander. The six companies of the battalion varied greatly in strength through the years, originally mustering in fifty or more young men willing to fight Indians and outlaws. Lack of legislative support forced the company commanders to drastically reduce their numbers through the decades. The initial purpose of the force was to take back the frontier from the Indians to make the state safe for white settlement. It took a while to conquer the Indians, with the help of the U. S. Army, and it took longer to reduce the outlawry and bandit raids from across the Rio Grande. Nevertheless, by 1900 the frontier was gone, the railroad crisscrossed the state, the telegraph carried messages from Ranger camps to headquarters in Austin, and Rangers were often as much detectives as they were lawmen on horseback.

The gunfights and confrontations between Rangers and outlaws, such as the Sam Bass street fight in Round Rock in 1878 or the Ranger arrest of the Brassell murderers in DeWitt County in 1876, resulted in great publicity. However, the vast amount of Ranger work was less exciting: many a Ranger scout failed to produce even a sighting of an Indian trail. Before the days of fingerprints and other methods of determining proper identity, an arrested man often had to be released because of mistaken identity. Sometimes the pursuit of fugitives only resulted in tired horses and disappointed men. And paperwork seemingly increased unreasonably through the years: more than one captain complained of filling out all the necessary forms, filing endless reports, and keeping track of enlistments. All this they considered "administrativa." Every Ranger was more comfortable chasing a wanted man than filling out a form for the adjutant general!

Wilkins assimilates a great amount of material in preparing this history. Most of the original reports and letters written by Rangers to and for the adjutant general are still preserved in the State Archives in Austin, a wonderful source of material for writers of history as well as a gold mine of ideas for the novelist. A number of Rangers left their memoirs in later years, as well as even an outlaw or two such as John Wesley Hardin. Wilkins makes judicious use of all these source materials.

To this reviewer, the virtual absence of contemporary newspapers used as sources is a weakness. The reports from the Rangers in the field are disappointingly brief—sometimes no more than the name of a man captured or killed and the number of miles covered in his pursuit. The contemporary newspapers, although occasionally garbled and often biased, still provide a great addition to our knowledge of both the Rangers' work as well as the activities of the men they pursued. Even though it is time-consuming, carefully reading the files of the Galveston Daily News, the San Antonio Herald and Express, or the Austin Statesman, to cite but several, provides valuable additional material for a study of the Texas Rangers.

Attempting to cover such a huge subject as the Frontier Battalion is virtually impossible without occasional errors. The hard-core western buff will catch these without difficulty: the only Underwood in the Sam Bass gang was Henry, not John; Sergeant N. O. Reynolds did not ride into Round Rock alone within moments of the street fight—he came in two hours late with ten men; John Selman was not killed by George Scarborough in a dispute "over a card game."

Nevertheless, *The Law Comes to Texas* is an impressive work. It is a necessary book for any western buff or more serious historian to have. With the two preceding volumes by Wilkins, *The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845* (State House Press, 1996) and *The Highly Irregular Irregulars: Texas Rangers in the Mexican War* (Eakin Press, 1990), this multi-volume history will stand strong for many years.

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The Mervyn Mystery...Solved! by Chuck Parsons

Alone and standing among the sleeping rangers I have gazed on the face of him I guarded, John Wesley Hardin, the gentlest sleeper of them all. . . his sleep was calmer than the moonlight stream flowing past me to the sea. If any demons ever haunted his bedchamber, they kept aloof of his bivouac. Were the irons on his limbs the potent charms that awed them, or, was it the cold blue gleam of the sentinel's Winchester?

- Mervyn, 25 September 1877, writing from Comanche.

We are so accustomed to thinking of a Texas Ranger as a man with a six-gun smoking or a Winchester belching lead. The image is so much more dramatic if he is astride a lathered horse, galloping after a handful of Comanche or Kiowa braves, or perchance chasing a fugitive running from a county sheriff.

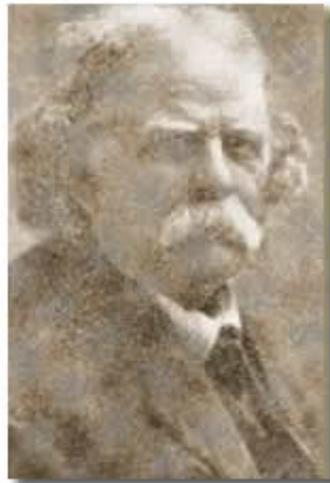
But that is not always the true picture. Perhaps the striking contrast of the image of the Frontier Battalion Rangers of the 1870s and the life of the men after retiring from the service is no greater than when considering the life and career of Mervyn B. Davis (1844-1912).[1] The following briefly recounts Davis' contribution to the establishing of law and order, his solving of a minor mystery, and his life outside the Rangers.

A number of years ago, while doing some preliminary research on the life and career of N. O. Reynolds, Lieutenant Commander of Company E during the 1870s, I found several letters printed in the widely circulated Galveston Daily News.[2] The series of four letters was composed between September and early December 1877 and written from the four Texas towns of Austin, Comanche, Menard, and Llano. The only identification of the man who wrote the letters was the signature "Mervyn." Rarely in that era was a correspondent identified by his real name; more often a pen name was used, such as "Alamo" or "Pidge" or "Texan." I published those four letters in 1988 with some annotations in the Brand Book of the English Westerners Society.[3] The letters describe the commander of the Frontier Battalion, Major John B. Jones; discuss and describe the trial of John Wesley Hardin for the killing of Charles Webb; provide a brief account of an Indian raid into Kimble and Menard counties; and provide a humorous description of a nightmare of Ranger Mervyn.

At the time of initial publication, all that was known for sure was that the Ranger who had composed these letters was a member of Reynolds' Company E. The muster roll for that period contains the following names, and all that could be said with certainty at the time was that the mysterious "Mervyn" was one of them: 1st Sergeant C. L. Nevill, 2nd Sergeant H. W.

McGhee; 1st Corporal J. W. Warren; 2nd Corporal G. F. Walker; privates A. Anglin, J. H. Bates, J. M. Braden, William Clements, C. R. Connor, M. B. Davis, W. T. Derrick, J. H. Gibbs, J. B. Gillett, T. P. Gillespie, J. H. Grizzell, W. P. Hughes, D. L. Ligon, H. Maltimore, M. S. Moreland, L. W. Rogers, H. J. Thomas and R. C. Ware.[4] The only conclusion made at that time was a plaintive "One of these Rangers composed the 'Mervyn' letters!"

Sometimes good fortune comes from unexpected places. While browsing through the Index to Indian Wars Pension Files 1892-1926,[5] my eye fell on the name of M. B. Davis. The proverbial light bulb was lit. Researching further, it was obvious that the M. B. Davis whose widow was applying for a pension based on his service in the Frontier Battalion was the same M. B. Davis whose name appears on Reynolds' muster roll. A key bit of information found in the application was that M. B. Davis died on June 18, 1912, in McLennan County, Texas. Further, the Davis couple was married on December 8, 1883, in Tarrant County, Texas. Prior to his Ranger service, Davis had served in Company G, Tenth Virginia Cavalry and Company E, Fifty-ninth Virginia, Army of Northern Virginia.



One of the few surviving images of M. B. Davis

By discovering these dates, a brief summary of M. B. Davis' life was then obtainable from obituaries in the Waco newspapers, other publications, and perhaps census records. The Waco Daily Times Herald carried three items relevant to Davis' passing in the issues of June 18, 19, and 20, 1912. Each item provided a little more information. A brief editorial page notice—four paragraphs—appears in the issue of June 18, noting how many hearts were saddened that day "because of the death of one of its best beloved citizens, Captain M. B. Davis." The editorial points out that when Waco was a village, Captain Davis "took up the fight in an

humble way for a Greater Waco." He was the "Grand Old Man" in newspaper circles, and his acts of tenderness and love "were not confined to human beings but extended to beasts and birds."

After reading these articles, I knew that the mysterious "Mervyn" had a full life span, possessed a loving heart, and was a Captain—besides having been a private in Reynolds' Company E!

The news items of June 19 and 20 tell of the funeral services, identify the six active pallbearers, and list by name the thirty-nine honorary pallbearers and the hundreds who called to pay their last tributes of respect. These hundreds included "every walk of life, rich, poor, Jew and gentile." So many floral tributes were delivered it was impossible to see the grave. Some were piled on his daughter's adjacent grave.

I found further information through census records. The 1850 Henrico County, Virginia, census lists the family of Davis' father, J. Lucius Davis. The head of household was quite wealthy, claiming real estate valued at eight thousand dollars. His wife Elizabeth and six children are named, one of whom is identified as Bathurst, five years old.[6] This lad was Mervyn Bathurst Davis.

The 1860 census does not mention M. B. Davis. Possibly Davis had relocated in Pennsylvania, as in 1870 in the Susquehanna County census M. B. Davis

does appear—twenty-nine years old, a blacksmith.[7] This perhaps might have been the right man, but there is more certainty with the 1880 census, as M. B. Davis appears in Bexar County, post office San Antonio. In this census, Davis was a thirty-six-year-old journalist, has a wife named Susan, and has four children: daughter Constance Welley (ten years old, born in Pennsylvania); son William F. Hartson (thirteen); Burdie E. Hartson, a five-year-old daughter, and an eleven-month-old son named Quinton B. Davis.[8] This seemed to provide the evidence necessary to conclude that the M. B. Davis of the Pennsylvania census was the same man.

The 1900 McLennan County census was most informative. It shows that M. B. Davis was born in October 1845 in Virginia and then lived at 2012 Austin Street, Waco. Apparently Susan Davis had died, as Davis' wife is listed as Celeste Bassett Davis, born in May 1848 in Michigan. There were two children living with them: Constance, twenty-nine, born in Virginia; and M. B., Jr., born June 1879 (the Quinton B. of the 1880 census). Mrs. Davis is shown to have borne three children, and all were then living.[9]

But what of M. B. Davis' Ranger service? The service records show that Davis was mustered in at Camp Bear Creek, Kimble County, by Major Jones on September 1, 1877. He was then thirty-three and thus the oldest man in the company! He was issued a \$28 Winchester. Although earning \$90 in that first quarter of service, he was issued only \$68.15 because \$28 was deducted for the Winchester, \$1.10 for side lines and hobbles for his horse, and \$39.05 for a debt owed to Lieutenant Reynolds. There is no indication as to what the \$39.05 debt represented.

Davis may have been away from the service in December, but the second pay record reveals that he had money due for service from January 1 to February 28. Captain D.W. Roberts signed the record. The third pay document shows that Davis served from March 1-31 and was honorably discharged from the service on March 31, 1878.[10]

Prior to his joining the Ranger service, Davis worked for the Daily Reporter of Waco. During his few months in the Rangers, "Mervyn" wrote his four fascinating letters to the Galveston Daily News. Since his primary career had been journalism, perhaps he joined the Frontier Battalion because it provided the opportunity for adventure, a popular subject matter for his writings.

The first letter was written at Austin on September 20 and is, as his self-provided headline read, "A Complimentary Sketch of the Frontier Battalion's Gallant Leader." This paean informs the News readers of Major John B. Jones' early life: how he "hastened" to Virginia to serve in the Confederate Army when war broke out, and how he served under such popular generals as Speight, Harrison, and Polignac. The letter relates the formation of the Frontier Battalion and Governor Richard Coke's offering to Jones of the position of commander "which the major with his wonted energy to set to work and recruited and organized up to the standard contemplated in the act [creating the battalion]." After taking command, Jones "met and defeated the Indians in fifteen battles." The praise continues as Jones is depicted several times fighting "hand to hand with the savages" and always proving himself a soldier and a hero. "Impervious to the extremes of cold or heat, able to endure the tortures of hunger and thirst, a Bedouin in the saddle," Jones led his "wild Rangers" through "the gloom of midnight, along the forest trails, and the wolf and the owl fly from the path . . ." But the "red fingered murderer he drags into light to toil in chains or dangle at a rope's end, as justice decrees."

Private Mervyn B. Davis was not content to praise only his commander in this

first letter; he also compliments his companions as well. He describes the 150 men composing the battalion as "almost without exception brave, able-bodied, deadly shots, and perfect horsemen." Further, he states that Major Jones was "very select in recruiting men and has gathered into the battalion quite a number of scholars whose attainments would grace any position in life." With these last words was Mervyn actually describing himself?

The second Mervyn letter was written at Comanche on September 25 during the trial of noted man-killer John Wesley Hardin. It appeared in the News of October 3 and also the Galveston Daily News of October 8. The headline "John Wesley Hardin at Comanche" certainly caught the readers' eyes at that time as Hardin's capture in Florida on August 23, just a month before, had been front-page news across the state. Here Mervyn provides a brief description of Hardin and how the Rangers guarded him. A few lines appear about the trial, followed by closing lines that have frequently been quoted:

But I have guarded this wild man, the report of whose bloody crimes has caused so much shuddering, whose name was a 'bug bear' to the timid tourist in Texas. Yes, I have guarded him at midnight, when the moonlight was reflected on the cow house. Alone and standing among the sleeping rangers I have gazed on the face of him I guarded, John Wesley Hardin, the gentlest sleeper of them all. Sometimes a troubled look disturbed his countenance for an instant; once he murmured "Johnny", his little son's name, but in the main his sleep was calmer than the moonlight stream flowing past me to the sea. If any demons ever haunted his bedchamber, they kept aloof of his bivouac. Were the irons on his limbs the potent charms that awed them, or, was it the cold blue gleam of the sentinel's Winchester? Perhaps some spiritualist can answer.

Here is revealed not only Mervyn's sense of responsibility, but also his eye to nature and his ability to create beautiful imagery. The final four sentences were reprinted in the Austin Daily Democratic Statesman of October 18 and are introduced with this brief statement: "A poetical correspondent says of John Wesley Hardin 'alone and standing among the sleeping rangers. . . .'" One wonders if Hardin, whose capture resulted in Rangers John B. Armstrong and Jack Duncan receiving the \$4000 reward, was ever guarded by a single Ranger!

A third letter is unsigned, but it is believed that Mervyn composed it as well because it was written during the same time period and in the place where Company E was stationed. The letter mentions Corporal J. B. Gillett, who was with Reynolds at this time. This is the briefest letter, but Mervyn explains the reason for its brevity: "with the utmost difficulty" was he able to write "these hurried lines . . ." as the Rangers were then following the trail of a party of Lipan Indians who had raided into Kimble County the preceding week and had stolen a number of fine horses. Even though the three-paragraph letter is principally informative, the nature allusions are strong:

The rivers are teeming with fish, and the forests skirting them abound with the finest game—deer, turkeys, etc. It is a wild and rugged country, but for sheep and all other kinds of stock it is as good as the world can offer anywhere. This is also a fine pastoral country, well watered and rich in grass.

Were such phrases as "teeming with fish," forests "skirting" the rivers, and "a fine pastoral country" part of the average Ranger's vocabulary? Or part of the average reader's of The Galveston Daily News?

The fourth and final letter is from Llanotown (now simply Llano). It is dated

November but printed in the December 7 issue of the News. It is headlined "A Texas Rangers [sic] Dreams" with the sub-headline, "Experiences of a Night in Camp on the Banks of the Colorado."

As the letter depicts, Rangers crossed over to the Llano side of the Colorado River as the sun was setting on the evening of November 26. There were a dozen in the party: seven Rangers, Llano County Sheriff J. J. Bozarth, Colonel Wright, a livery man of Llano, and three prisoners: George Gladden, sentenced to a term of ninety-nine years in the Huntsville penitentiary; John Ringo, later to gain world-wide fame in Tombstone, Arizona, territory; and one Mitchell. The prisoners were all "heavily ironed." Immediately Mervyn noted the beauty of nature: "The great glow gave a deeper tint of scarlet to the wild sumac, dyed with the tint of autumn and waving like red suction flags over all the flowers of bankrupt summer." Mervyn could not resist describing nature. "The purple skies faded, but our camp fires glowed brightly on the boughs of the trees, and we fell to work with a zest upon the fried bacon, bread, and coffee that bespoke the hungry men." At midnight "your correspondent" was awakened to take his turn at guard, then the "waning moon was dancing on the rippling sheen of the Colorado as I took my post to watch the sleepers and the glowing coals beneath the big log."

In the lengthy letter, Mervyn describes how, as he stood his post, the "two hours passed swiftly by." After having aroused the next man, Mervyn wrapped himself in his blankets and, with his head on the saddle, saw in the glowing coals the faces of loved ones. The faces in the embers "once beaming brightly with hope and love, now turned to dust and ashes." When he whispered to one of the faces, a "radiant angel arose above the blaze and sailed upward, smiling as she passed beyond the moon."

Then the nightmare began, for when Davis awoke he discovered Corporal J. W. Warren, "a good and faithful Ranger, a brave soldier . . . Oh, horror! he was dead." And the sheriff, the liveryman, the other Rangers—all but the three prisoners—were dead. The prisoners were gone; their shackles lay beside the dark pit.

What followed was indeed a nightmare. Ranger Mervyn buckled on his cartridge belts, knife, and revolver. He seized his Winchester, approached the pit, and gazed into the gloomy depths. Beholding "apparently miles into the bowels of the earth . . . a voice . . . broke the stillness." The voice came from a "tall form dressed in a hunting shirt of the olden time."

What Mervyn heard was a "tone of voice resembling the winter wind moaning through the forest." The phantom guide flew downward and Mervyn noted the changes (and revealed at the same time his knowledge of geology): "Stratum after stratum we passed, argillaceous quartz in thick veins; coal, iron, silver and petrified monsters with tons of ivory in a single tooth . . ." until they reached the center of gravity, where the devil welcomed Molock, Mervyn's "guide."

The "frowning devil" demanded that Mervyn fall down and worship him. Instead, the Ranger pumped a cartridge into his Winchester and aimed "full at his horned head." Before he could fire, Mervyn was "pitched into a burning cauldron" where the heat exploded the cartridges in his gun belt.

Awakening then, Mervyn realized a "chunk of fire had rolled against my back and burned off the tail of my overcoat." The burning into his backside had caused one cartridge to explode—"Hence the dream."

No hint is given in the service records or scouting reports as to why Private M. B. Davis chose to leave the service. Prior to relocating to San Antonio, he spent some time in Austin. In January of 1878, while still in the Rangers, an "original address" penned by Davis was to be read by a Mrs. Versay. Other events of this cultural evening included instrumental music, a vocal duet, and a vocal solo. No hint is given as to the subject of the "original address." [11] On March 20 it was reported that Davis was in command of a detachment of Rangers stationed at the General Land Office in Austin. But the detachment had left Austin on the nineteenth, leaving Davis in charge, alone, "to guard papers." [12] Davis was in the news again a year later. In March 1879 he was accused by J. C. Clark, the "fat barber," of writing an article published in the Austin Gazette, which was not to his liking. The Gazette editor, John D. Elliott, and Clark scuffled. Davis made a complaint in Justice Court on February 12 against Clark. Clark was acquitted, as Davis did not choose to appear in court against him. [13] On March 7, 1879, Davis gave a "humorous lecture" on the subject of "superstition." Other events provided entertainment for the price of fifteen cents for gentlemen, ten cents for ladies, and five cents for children. [14] The following month Davis was noted as editing a short-lived Austin Saengerfest newspaper. [15] Then on May 21, 1879, a window fell while Davis was sleeping; the bottom of the sash struck him on the temple and "hurt him severely." [16]

By 1880, as previously noted, Davis was in Bexar County working as a journalist. From 1883 to 1885, he worked in Fort Worth for the Dallas Weekly Herald. Occasionally Davis visited Austin to see old friends and his visits were recorded in the Statesman. In December 1881, Davis offered a five-dollar reward for the recovery of a white mare lost on the grounds of the Texas Military Institute. [17]

During this period occasional news items appeared about Davis but none pertained to his work as a journalist. About noon on April 6, 1883, a "furore [sic] of excitement was created" by "an encounter" between Davis and J. H. Selden. Selden was having a statement published in the Fort Worth Democrat accusing Mrs. Selden of adultery with several men in Michigan and Texas. Davis' wife was from Michigan and Davis felt the need to defend the honor of her home state. Davis sought out Selden and demanded a retraction and spit in his face. Later Davis beat Selden on the face and head with a "heavy cavalry boot," breaking his nose and inflicting serious wounds. Davis was arrested by Sheriff Walter T. Maddox for aggravated assault but gave a bond of five hundred dollars. No further details have been learned in this matter. [18]

In 1885, the Dallas Weekly Herald carried a circular that identifies Davis as acting superintendent of Wells, Fargo & Company's Express in Houston. Davis then moved to Dallas where he worked for the Dallas Morning News. In 1886 he was transferred to Waco as a correspondent. It was here that he gained his greatest recognition as a journalist and also as a public speaker. He supposedly delivered hundreds of addresses in Waco and the environs, and it was said of him: "No Wacoan could say more, in fewer words, and that everything uttered by him was timely and to the point." [19]

Although an altercation occasionally provided high-action news reporting, and it is his brief career as a Ranger that concerns us here, M. B. Davis' greatest contribution lies not from guarding John Wesley Hardin while he slept in chains, but from his work as a preservationist. In 1881, with Champe Carter McCulloch and H. E. Ambott of Waco, he formed the first Game Protective Association in Texas. As the association's secretary, he campaigned to alert the public to the need to protect wildlife. A chapter of the Audubon Society was formed in 1899 in Galveston, but most of its members

were killed in the great Galveston Storm of 1900. An attempt to reestablish the society was made in 1903. In 1904 until 1912 Davis was secretary of the Texas Audubon Society. In 1907 he was instrumental in having the 1903 Model Game Law reenacted. This resulted in requiring licenses for resident and non-resident hunters, with the revenue from licenses and fines to be used for game protection and propagation.

In 1910 he was elected an honorary life member of the Museum and Scientific Society of Houston. Davis was instrumental in forming the Texas Humane Society in Waco. In 1912 he served on the Constitution and By-laws Committee of the Texas Game and Fish Protective Association.[20] One of Davis' memorable addresses, "The Birds of Texas," appears in the Texas Department of Agriculture Bulletin entitled "The Use and Value of Wild Birds To Texas armers and Stockmen and Fruit and Truck Growers." It was originally delivered before the Texas Farmers' Congress in 1907.[21]

Davis is buried in the Oakwood Cemetery in Waco beside his daughter, Constance L. Davis, who had preceded him in death on March 27, 1906, at the age of thirty-five.

And while guarding the sleeping John Wesley Hardin in Ranger camps, did Mervyn Bathurst Davis strain his ears to hear the hoot of an owl, or other night sounds of birds which were so plentiful then, but a few decades later were almost extinct?

Notes

[1] Stanley D. Casto, "Mervyn Bathurst Davis" in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: The Texas State Historical Association, 1966), Vol. 2, 532-33. The only reference to his Ranger service is that he served two short periods as a Texas Ranger in the Frontier Battalion.

[2] The letters appeared in *The Galveston Daily News* of 26 September, 3 October, 10 November, and 7 December, 1877.

[3] Chuck Parsons, "Mervyn - A Poetical Correspondent", *The Brand Book*, (London: The English Westerners Society), Winter, 1988/89.

[4] Muster roll of Lt. N. O. Reynolds, 1 September 1877. Original is in the Adjutant General Files, Texas State Archives, Austin.

[5] Virgil D. White, transcriber, *Index to Indian Wars Pension Files 1892-1926* (Waynesboro, Tennessee: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1987), Vol. 1, 378.

[6] Henrico County, Virginia Census, 2 August 1850, 539.

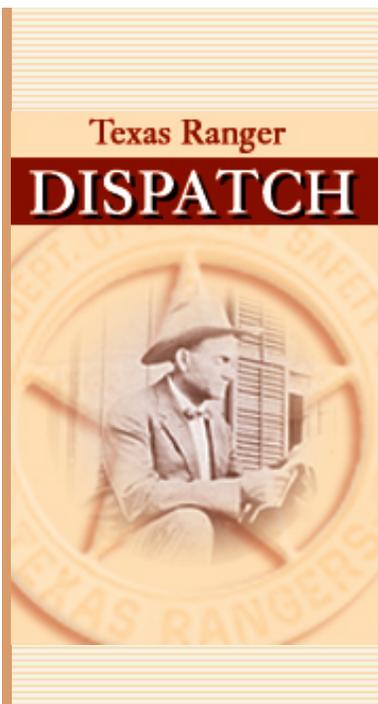
[7] Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania Census, 2 August 1870, 277.

[8] Bexar County, Texas Census, 7 June 1880, 77.

[9] McLennan County, Texas Census, 12 June 1900, E.D. 75, Sheet 14.

[10] Ranger Service Records in M. B. Davis file, Texas State Archives, Austin.

[11] *The Daily Democratic Statesman* (Austin), 11 January 1878.



[12] Ibid., 20 March 1878.

[13] Ibid., 13 and 14 February 1879.

[14] Ibid., 7 March 1879.

[15] Ibid., 3 April 1879.

[16] Ibid., 22 May 1879.

[17] Ibid., 1 December 1881.

[18] The Dallas Weekly Herald, 12 April 1883.

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The Rangers and the Writer (middle) Walter Prescott Webb, with (top) Texas Rangers Frank Hamer, (bottom) Manny Gault

Walter Prescott Webb
1888-1963

by David Stroud

It was difficult to know what to say.

After all, there had already been seventy-two other presidential addresses to the American Historical Association, and just because Walter Prescott Webb was president now (1958),^[1] the choice of a subject did not come easy.^[2] He decided to use his own experience as a warning to the young historians present: "Listen to my story, make notes on my education, graduate record, and college career, and then be extremely careful to avoid following the example of one who has done nearly everything wrong. Seeing what I have done, they will know what not to do."^[3] The story of the man who spoke these words is the narrative of a man who combined only a little formal education with a stroke of luck to produce "his generation's foremost philosopher of the frontier, and the leading historian of the American West."^[4]

Dr. Walter P. Webb is conceivably the finest historian Texas has ever produced. Not only did he give us the definitive history of the Texas Rangers, but he also wrote or edited more than twenty books before his death in an auto accident. However, this paper is not a review of those works, but more a narrative of the man behind the pen. The story of how a young farm boy from Panola County achieved an education is more fascinating than most novels, and what Webb accomplished with that education should serve as a guiding light for all historians.

Casner P. Webb and his wife Mary Kyle^[5] moved from Mississippi to East Texas in 1884 in search of opportunity and a new life.^[6] Their son Walter Prescott Webb was born in Panola County on April 3, 1888.^[7] The family then moved to the German settlements of South Texas, where they had relatives.^[8] In 1892 the Webbs moved again, this time to Stephens County in West Texas because there were large amounts of cheap land there.^[9] Casner homesteaded a quarter section.^[10] Walter's father was not only a farmer, but also a self-educated schoolteacher who never held more than a second-grade teaching certificate. He received between \$250 and \$300 a year for teaching a five-month term.^[11] Here in the dry land of West Texas, Walter began his education on the frontier by the direct method that enabled him to understand much of what he read and to "see beyond some of it".^[12]

Young Walter began his formal education at the age of five because the local teacher, Melissa Gatewood Jones, recognized that he had an unusual mind. She obtained permission to let him attend the one-room school. Walter was a good student and listened to each lesson. His favorite subject was geography,[13] and geography would play an important role in the books that he would later write. One day Walter was sitting in class when the teacher selected a student and asked, "Where do you live?" The student answered, "Texas," and was instructed to point out Texas on the large wall map. The student pointed to South America. Walter's hand shot into the air as he said, "He comes a long way to school." [14]

By the time Walter was ten, reading had become a passion. He would read anything he could find and hoped one day to have a book of his own. His family bought coffee and beans that were produced by "Arbuckle's Brothers" and the bean bags came complete with Mr. Arbuckle's signature on them. If a person saved enough of the signatures, he received a premium. Walter saved these signatures and when he had ten of them, he used them to get the first book he ever acquired, *Jack the Giant Killer*. [15] Later he received a file of Tip Top Weekly that dealt with the doings of Frank Merriwell of Yale University, and from Merriwell he got the first faint desire to go to college. [16]

Because Walter was the man of the house while his father taught school, there was very little time for formal education. But his father often told him that there was a better life than the one they were leading. "The best life belongs to the professional man," Casner told him. [17] One day when Walter was fourteen years old, his father made a casual remark that would have enormous influence on his life. Casner told Walter that he should become an editor when he grew up. The young man did not tell his father that he had no idea what an editor was. He found out on his own, and later went to watch one in action. The nearest editor was in the town of Ranger; his name was Williams and he worked for the *Record*. [18] Webb saddled his horse and rode to Ranger, nine miles from his home. After finding the office of the *Record*, he worked up his courage, then opened the door and walked in. Williams was busy pecking out a letter on an old Oliver, the first typewriter Walter had ever seen. The young boy just stood there staring as Williams pecked away. After a while Williams looked up and asked, "What do you want?" Walter told him that he wanted to see an editor. "You've seen one," said Williams as he went back to pecking on the Oliver. Walter just stood there looking around the office as Williams pecked. He noticed a wastepaper basket stuffed full of exchanges, with others piled on the floor around it. Again the boy worked up his courage and asked if he could have a few of the old exchanges. Williams said yes. Walter picked up as many as he thought he could take out of the office.

One of the papers Walter had taken from the *Record's* office was the *Sunny South*, a pro-Confederate weekly that was edited by Joel Chandler Harris in Atlanta, Georgia. [19] Walter read the paper and discovered that he could subscribe for three months if he sent in ten cents. But ten cents was a lot of money and very hard to get. For this kind of money he would have to go to his parents. One night his father was out so Walter asked his mother for the dime. After he explained why he wanted it, she sat for a while to think it over. Soon she got up and walked to a secret hiding place. She got a dime and handed it to Walter. No one would ever give him a more important coin. [20]

The family became regular subscribers of the *Sunny South* and enjoyed reading it. One of the features of the paper was a little column presided over by Mrs. Mary E. Bryan. [21] Walter wrote her that he was a country farm boy with very little education, but he wanted to become a writer. He also mentioned that he was the son of a country schoolteacher who had been crippled in an accident. Could someone tell him how he could become a writer and get an education? Walter signed the letter "Prescott" because it seemed "high-sounding" to him-about as "high-sounding" as a boy in Stephens County would hear. [22] "For some reason,

probably because it was so recognizable as a youth's clumsily honest appeal for advice,"[23] the letter was published. It appears in the May 14, 1904, issue of the *Sunny South*.^[24]

Young Webb was plowing the new-cleared land when his sister returned from the mailbox with a letter for him. "It was the most marvelous letter he had ever seen; the envelope was of the finest paper, the handwriting bold and black on the glossy surface."^[25] The back of the envelope was sealed with red wax stamped with the letter H.^[26] The address on the front was so general that it is a wonder that the letter found its way to Webb.^[27] To help it on its way, the sender had added an additional clue on the bottom left-hand corner: "C/O Lame Teacher."^[28] The letter still may never have reached Walter had the Postmaster not been a Confederate veteran who read Webb's issues of the *Sunny South* before delivering them. He had remembered Walter's letter.^[29] The young boy opened the letter and read:

Dear Junior-I am a reader of the *Sunny South* and noticed your letter in the "Gossip Corner"-I trust you will not get discouraged in your aspirations for higher things, as you know there is no such word as failure in the lexicon of youth; so keep your mind fixed on a lofty purpose and your hopes will be realized, I am sure,-though it will take time and work-I will be glad to send you some books or magazines, (if you will allow me to) if you will let me know what you like-

Yrs truly
Wm. E. Hinds
489 Classon Ave.
May 19/04 Brooklyn, New York^[30]

Hinds meant what he said. Soon he was sending the boy a steady flow of the best magazines and books on writing. The *American Boy*, *National*, *The Outlook* and other publications joined with personal letters from Hinds to encourage Walter to write his own letters of description and narrative.^[31] Each Christmas, Hinds sent Walter a tie that "was in a class by itself in Stephens County."^[32] The books and magazines fired his desire for an education. Walter's father wanted to help, so he made a deal with his son: if Walter believed he could pass the teaching examination after one year of local school, the family would move to Ranger so he could attend school there. Walter sold his horse for sixty dollars and used the money for books. He swept the floor of the school to pay for his tuition.^[33] At the end of the school year he passed the examination and received his second-grade certificate permitting him to teach in rural schools. During his lifetime Webb received many certificates, but he always thought that one outranked all the others.^[34]

Walter took a job teaching in a one-room school in East Texas. He taught all grades and did the school chores as well. One of his pupils was a ten-year-old half-breed Indian named Henry Woods. Each morning Henry came to school early to help Walter with the chores. One morning the twenty-year-old teacher arrived at school well ahead of his usual schedule. Instead of going about his chores, he sat down and began writing. He was writing a word sketch of the young student who helped with the chores. About half an hour later, Henry came in and Webb told him to be seated. Walter read while Henry listened. When the reading was finished Henry looked up and said, "Professor, that was purdy."^[35] Fifty years later Webb told a friend, "He was my first audience, I've been writing ever since."^[36]

Walter saved his money. After another year of school, he passed the examination for a first-grade certificate. Walter was as happy as any man could be. He was making good money and enjoyed his job. But he felt a little guilty quitting each day at four o'clock while the farmers were still in the fields. Then in 1909, there

came a letter from Hinds asking Walter what his plans were. Was he going to college? If so, what college? The question caused Walter to see that his teaching was merely a means rather than an end. There was more in the letter and he never forgot what he read: "The best thing in life is to help someone, if we can. . . . and perhaps I can say, 'Why, I helped J. Prescott Webb when he was a young man'." (For years Hinds never got Walter's first initial right.)[37]

In September 1909, Walter Webb enrolled at the University of Texas with two hundred dollars and an agreement that he was to notify Hinds when the money ran out.[38] He planned to write fiction but he had so much trouble with the English courses that he became discouraged.[39] After two years at the University, the bill to Hinds amounted to five hundred dollars and Webb dropped out of college to earn some money. Hinds was not a rich man, so Walter alternated between studying and teaching. But Hinds always made it possible for Walter to finish each year he had started at the university.

During Webb's junior year at the University of Texas, he enrolled in a course called "Institutional History" taught by Lindley Miller Keasbey.[40] The course was not "history, or economics, or anthropology, or philosophy, or a good deal of all these and more." [41] The teacher was fascinating and gave Walter a "method of thinking and a point of view"[42] which entered into everything that he ever did.[43] The young historian took all of Keasbey's courses and decided to become a teacher of institutional history. Yet when he investigated, he found there was no such thing as institutional history and Keasbey himself was finally fired. But "Institutional History" looked enough like history on the surface to bring Walter a job teaching history in a public school. Since he was a history teacher with only two elementary courses in history, he decided he would learn something about history and began taking courses in the subject[44]

William E. Hinds changed Webb's life. Whenever he became discouraged and wanted to quit or to go out with his friends and spend money foolishly, Webb would remember that mysterious stranger in New York who trusted him-that man who never asked about grades or refused a request. Each month a check came from Hinds.[45] The team of Hinds and Webb graduated from the University of Texas in 1915 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Ironically, the two men would never see each other. In 1916, William Ellory Hinds died before the young Webb could repay him or present him with a return on his investment.[46]

The next winter, William Hinds' sister came to San Antonio and told Walter all he would ever learn about his benefactor. Walter was not the first young man to receive aid from her brother. She also told Walter that Hinds was an import dealer by trade and a life-long bachelor by choice.[47] Webb never understood how a man in New York could reach down to Texas and "pluck a tired kid off a Georgia stock and stay with him without asking questions for eleven years, until death dissolved the relationship." [48] Walter still owed Hinds seventy-five dollars and there are two different stories about what happened with that debt. One of the stories relates that Hinds' sister wrote that the family had found the notes "from Walter Prescott Webb, each marked 'Paid in Full.'" [49] According to the other story (written by Webb), Walter stated he would pay the money to the sister. After her death, he received a letter instructing him not to pay the seventy-five dollars because there was no one else interested in it.[50] Whichever story is true, Webb would repay the debt of seventy-five dollars many times over by helping other students as Hinds had helped him because " . . . Hinds would have wanted it." [51]

By the time Walter graduated from the University of Texas, he had quite a few years of teaching experience. In 1918, the University of Texas was looking for someone to teach future history teachers how to teach history. Walter had appeared on a program of the Texas State Teachers Association and had given a speech dealing with the teaching of history in the public schools. One of the members who heard him was a teacher from the University of Texas named

Frederic Duncalf. Dr. Duncalf was looking for someone like Webb because none of the history teachers at the university wanted to leave their fields to instruct students on the teaching of history in the public school. When the university heard Dr. Duncalf's report on Webb, they believed that the young graduate was their man. He had written a paper on the subject; had over ten years' experience; and, if his grades were not the best, he still was a graduate of their university. On November 11, 1918, Walter P. Webb became a faculty member of the University of Texas.[52] Forty years later that university would name him as one of its four "most significant living alumni." [53]

Now the time had come for Walter to start working on his Master of Arts degree. He chose the field of history. A series of Mexican revolutions endangered the Texas border and Governor James E. Ferguson increased the size of the Texas Rangers. After the Rangers reached the border, they committed crimes that were exposed by many newspapers. Walter read these headlines and asked himself an important question: "Had anyone written the history of these Rangers?" The answer was no, and he selected these Rangers as his subject. Walter headed west to write the story. He did not know it at the time, but he had found his field. [54]

Writing the story of the Rangers would be Webb's first work with sources. Many of the references were written by "men better with a gun than with a pen," [55] but Walter did not stop with the records. He "went to the places where things had happened" and "sought out the old men, still living then, who had fought Comanches and Apaches, killed Sam Bass at Round Rock, and broken up feuds inherited from the more deadly reconstruction." [56] The historian strapped on a Colt revolver and wore it in places that were so dangerous, people found weapons commonplace. With a captain and a private, Webb visited every Ranger camp on the border. [57] At night he sat around the campfires and "listened to the tales told by men who could talk without notes." [58]

Walter did more than just listen to Rangers tell of fights. In December 1922, he went with Captain Wright and a few other Rangers in search of Mexican smugglers. The little band followed a trail while Webb tried to act brave. After all, he did hold a commission as a Ranger. When the smugglers were found, they resisted the Rangers but lost the quick battle that left three Mexicans dead. [59] In 1920, Walter had written an unpublished master's thesis on the Rangers during the Mexican War. [60] Now he would get an article published. The article was a sketch of the early history of the Rangers. When he received his first check from a publisher, he wondered what had enabled him to "break the barrier separating academic people from paying editors." [61] The difference was that now he had something to say about a subject that he could understand in a way that he could never understand things like the French Revolution or the Renaissance. [62] His subject was the West.

In the spring of 1922, Webb was an instructor in history and working toward an advanced degree at the university. He was in the history class of Eugene C. Barker and the subject of Western expansion was being discussed. [63] Mr. Barker pointed to the Great Plains on the wall map and said; "Here this advance stopped, or moved very slowly for several decades. I am not certain why. Does anyone have a reason to suggest?" [64] After a few facts were mentioned, Walter spoke an answer that would be the central theme of one of his greatest books:

These people came from a timbered country and had developed a timber civilization; when they reached the land where forests ceased, they were confused and did not know what to do. Before they could occupy the country, they had to develop a new way of life, and it took them decades to do it. [65]

This was not the first time that Webb had thought about the people from the east and their encounter with the Great Plains. During the winter of 1922, he had been

working on an article about the Texas Rangers cleaning up oil field towns.[66] One night he read *The Way to the West* by Emerson Hough.[67] Walter disagreed with the list that Hough had given naming the agents used to conquer the frontier. The items on that list did not apply to the Great Plains.[68] The book caused his thoughts to turn to the colonists that had come to Texas with Stephen F. Austin. He thought of the colonists who had settled along the Eastern Woodland on the edge of a new environment, of Indian weapons used by men on horses, and of the invention of the Colt revolver. The revolver had not been with Austin when his settlers first entered Texas, and the pioneers were forced to wait for this "horseman's" weapon. Walter "sensed that something very important happened when the American people emerged from the woodland and undertook to live on the plains." [69] In 1958 he said, "The excitement of that moment was probably the greatest creative sensation I have ever known." [70] He asked himself what else had happened, and the answers he found became a book entitled *The Great Plains*. It was published in 1931.

Once Walter had received his Master of Arts degree, there was gentle pressure for him to get his Doctor of Philosophy. He was advised to go elsewhere to get it. Walter took the advice and entered the University of Chicago. During his oral examination, he "froze" when the first question was asked. They asked him another, but still he was unable to speak. He left the room and went straight to his apartment and told his wife to pack. They were out of Chicago before the sun had set.[71] When he arrived in Texas he made some stout resolutions: he would follow his own intellectual interests and he would stay in Texas to write history as he saw it.[72] Walter received his degree from the University of Texas after Dr. Barker asked Webb for two copies of *The Great Plains* as his dissertation.[73]

When Webb wrote history, he did not write for the critic or the historian who was a specialist in a given field. He wrote to explain something to someone who might know less about the subject than he did. He never considered himself as a western historian, but a historian that just happened to write more about the American West than other subjects. He wrote mainly for one person: an imaginary Bostonian who was not a historian or a teacher, but someone who could be interested in something other than Bostonian history. After he finished writing, he would read it and ask himself if that Bostonian could understand what he was trying to say. If the answer was "no," he would rewrite it until the answer was "yes." [74] Walter was more interested in ideas than facts. Facts were of no use unless he could discover their meanings and could develop ideas from their meanings as few others could.[75] Frank Dobie once said, "Webb could see meaning behind facts." [76] Webb retorted that the reason he saw meanings was because he had to—he never could remember facts. Walter approached historical problems much as a lawyer would. He had his judge and jury in that imaginary Bostonian. He then set out to gather the facts that would support the verdict that he wanted. As he gathered the facts, he would ignore "contrary evidence." [77] Dobie once commented, "Webb never lets facts stand in the way of truth." [78]

As Webb taught and wrote, he was always conscious of that \$75 he owed Hinds. When John Haller enrolled in Walter's graduate course on the American Frontier, Haller had formed a small organization that worked on the trees in the Austin area. He soon found that his organization needed a truck. He decided to approach Dr. Webb with the problem. Webb knew that trucks were very expensive and told Haller that he had one that was not being used. Haller asked if he could rent the truck or buy it. Walter would not consider that but added, "I'll let you use it as long as you want to." [79] Not long after this, Haller decided to buy a chain saw but found himself short of money. He again went to see if Dr. Webb could help. He told Walter that he needed \$150. Webb was silent and looked around the room before he spoke. After losing quite a bit of money on notes, he had sworn never to cosign one again. Nevertheless, he took Haller to meet the president of the bank and cosigned the note. [80]

In 1930, Wilson M. Hudson found himself in need of help. He was to receive his Master of Arts degree the following day, but had no job waiting. He walked along Congress Avenue as he thought of the future. Suddenly someone called to him from a car in the middle of the street. He turned to see Webb and another man. [81] Webb introduced his passenger, "This is Mr. Ferguson, Dean at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College in Nacogdoches. He is taking his doctor's tomorrow. Meet him after the ceremony and he will tell you how to get to Nacogdoches and when to be there." [82]

That seventy-five dollars that William Hines gave was paid back by Walter for the rest of his life. "No one knows how many students he has put through school or helped set up in business." [83] Once a young history teacher was having a trouble with his house and finances. Webb and Dr. Barker, Webb's history professor, bought the young man a house so that he would not have to worry with these problems while beginning his career. Walter always thought this was funny because the next fall the man repaid him by moving to a better job. [84]

In 1961, Webb wrote an article entitled "The Search for William E. Hinds," which was published in *Harper's*. In the article, Webb told how Hinds had helped him. This was his way of creating a literary memorial to his friend and of inspiring others to help people the way Hinds had helped him. After the article was reprinted in *Reader's Digest*, the letters to Webb doubled. Many contained checks for the Hinds Fund he had established to help students. [85] In the last conversation with John Fischer, editor of *Harper's*, Walter said that he "was as proud of that article as anything he [Webb] had ever written because it moved so many people to do something worthwhile." [86]

Walter was a Democrat and never attempted to conceal it. Once he said, "I believe in a strong Republican Party, but not strong enough to win-only to keep the Democrats honest." [87] In 1949, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. published an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* entitled "Does the Republican Party have a Future?" Webb answered with an article in the *Southwest Review* entitled "How the Republican Party Lost Its Future." [88] Walter also touched lightly upon the racial issue and sometimes made people mad at him. Once he told the students at the University of Mississippi that they could handle the racial question by simply getting rich and letting the Negro get rich alongside them. He almost got run out of the state. [89] Shortly before his death he wrote, "The Southerner is so concerned with the racial issue that he has no time for anything else. . . . the issue is too heavy to move; too green to burn; the best we can do for the present is to plow around it and cultivate the rest of the field." [90]

When Walter sat down to write, regardless of the subject, he did it for three reasons: he believed that he had something to say, he believed it was worth saying, and he believed that he could say it better than anyone else. [91] For these reasons he put pen to paper. If he got any money from the writing, that was incidental. [92]

Webb's first major work was *The Great Plains*, published in 1931. In it Walter answers the question: "What happened in America civilization when in its westward progress it emerged from the woods and essayed life on the Plains?" [93] In *The Way to the West*, Emerson Hough points out that the American frontier was conquered by men using the horse, rifle, ax, and boat. Walter did not believe that these were the tools used on the plains. The key to the answer he was seeking lay in the invention of the revolver by Sam Colt in 1836. Walter agrees that the horse was one of the tools used; but as far as weapons, he says that the favorite of the horseman was the revolver and not the long rifle of the woodland Americans. The role of the revolver with the horsemen of the plains was no accident. Webb wrote an article that was published in the February 1927 issue of *Scribner's Magazine* entitled "The American Revolver and the West." [94] In it he tells how and why the plainsmen adopted the revolver. [95] Now that he

understood how the weapons changed, he researched and discovered that the "story of the weapons repeated itself, with modifications, in that of fences and water supply." [96] Then he followed each of the culture complexes to see if they also changed or were modified and if so, where and how. From the study, Walter discovered that the institutions were changed and the result was a new phase of civilization. He explains that the plains environment presented three distinguishing characteristics:

1. It exhibits a comparatively level surface of great extent.
2. It is a treeless land and an unforested area.
3. It is a region where rainfall is insufficient for the ordinary intensive agriculture common to lands of a humid climate. The climate is sub-humid. [97]

There was only one part of the Great Plains containing all three of these characteristics: the area known as the High Plains. This area was in the heart of what Webb called the Great Plains. The Great Plains area extended both to the east and west of the High Plains, and two of the three characteristics were present. [98] As the easterner moved west, he crossed an "institutional fault line" that followed roughly the ninety-eighth meridian. When he crossed this "fault," changes had to be made in order to survive. East of the Mississippi River, life and civilization had rested on the three legs of water, land, and timber. West of the Mississippi, two of the three legs were pulled from under them and civilization was left standing on the one leg of land. [99] To Walter, it was no wonder that civilization "toppled over in temporary failure." [100] It took time to settle the plains because when the easterner crossed this "fault," he was not immediately aware of the changes. After becoming aware of the changes, he was forced to wait for the modification in tools, weapons, and law. [101]

But while the easterner waited, he had to face the Plains Indians. These warriors were as different from the Woodland Indians as the plains from the timber. This tribe was the most effective barrier met by European invaders because they were the only Indians who came into battle mounted. [102] Since their weapons were those of mounted fighters, they enjoyed a distinct advantage over the invaders who used rifles unsuitable for mounted combat. [103] The Plains tribes continued as "lords of the plains" until a modification in weapons appeared in 1836—the Colt revolver. The first of these revolvers was the five-shot "Paterson." [104] The Texans used it so much that it became known as the "Texas" Colt. [105]

The lack of timber was a problem that would be solved by the Industrial Revolution. Without timber in abundant supply, there was no economical way to fence cattle in or keep them out, whichever was preferred by the land owner. The answer came with the invention of barbed wire. Webb explains that the man given credit for the invention of a practical means of fencing was Joseph F. Gidden. Gidden invented the wire in 1873 and sold his first piece in 1874. [106] Barbed wire was used before Gidden's invention, but he was the man that "gave to it the final touch of commercial practicability." [107] Gidden's wire caused changes in both the farming and cattle industry. Instead of using the open range, ranchers began to fence pastures and isolate their cattle, and "through segregation, could introduce blooded stock." [108] The long cattle drives ended and stock farming became the chief occupation on the Great Plains in place of ranching. [109]

Behind the cattlemen came the farmers. The revolver and the fencing were answers to only two of the problems faced on the plains. As stated earlier, one of the characteristics of the plains was the lack of water. Without water, the area would have remained a grazing country. This problem was also solved as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Windmills were improved and put to new uses on the plains. [110] The development of the windmill was an important agent in transforming the so-called Great American Desert into a land of homes. [111] At

first the plainsmen were restricted by the lack of water, but through the utilization of the windmill, they were able to move into the arid regions. The windmill met the requirements of the plains. It was cheap and would deliver a small amount of water as long as the wind blew.[112]

The Great Plains reveals "a basic element in Webb's approach to history: Environment comes first and strongly influences human institutions." [113] Reading the book, one can see the strong influence of the "Institutional History" course that Webb had taken under Keasbey [114] and can understand why he had said that he began working on the book at the age of four. [115]

Most of the reviewers praised *The Great Plains*. *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* states, "The style is marred by unnecessary summaries which lead to repetition of ideas already clear;" [116] but continues, "The result is a book which no student of American social history, at any stage, can afford to overlook." [117] The most severe critic of *The Great Plains* was Fred A. Shannon. He wrote a book denouncing Webb's thesis, his historical method, and his accuracy. [118] Page after page of Shannon's appraisal is dedicated to the destruction of everything Walter had written, from the importance of the Colt revolver in the hands of the Plainsmen [119] to the importance of the horse. [120] Regardless of Shannon's review, *The Great Plains* was the most successful of Webb's books. It was recognized as a landmark in frontier history and won the Loubat Prize in 1931. It finished second for the Pulitzer award for history. [121] Whether Webb was right or wrong in his book hardly seems important, the important thing is that he forced men to look anew at a part of the story of how we came to be where we are and what we are today. [122]

The next of Walter's important works was *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*. Published in 1935, it is considered a definitive of that law-enforcement body. Webb's view of the Rangers is made clear in the preface as he reminds the reader that "the Ranger is no more or less than a human being who stood alone between society and its enemies." [123] The Texas Ranger was not allowed to choose either the weapons or the rules. [124] The book traces the one-hundred-year history of the Rangers from 1823 to 1935, and Walter never permits his reader to forget that the Ranger was a man "who could ride straight up to death." [125] Rupert N. Richardson, of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, reviewed the book and comments, "A Texas Ranger could ride like a Mexican, trail like an Indian, shoot like a Tennessean, and fight like a devil." [126] This is the central theme of Webb's book. "With his skill at simplification he [Webb] shows these traits were evolved in the clash in Texas between and the Anglo-American and the Mexican and Indians whom they sought to overcome or displace. . . . There are passages . . . that might well serve as models of narrative and description . . . history writing that is both a science and art. . . . The book is a fitting monument to a great institution." [127] Mr. Richardson's major criticism of Webb is that he overlooked the Federal forces and selected only the most significant details. [128]

Although seventeen years went into the writing of *The Texas Rangers*, [129] it was not a favorite with Webb. He later wrote a book for young adolescents entitled *The Story of the Texas Rangers*. He was more satisfied with this work because he "left out all of deadening facts." [130]

In 1858 when Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," [131] he was speaking of the slavery issue. In 1937 Webb published *Divided We Stand: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy* to show that the "house" was once again divided and, as before, by sections. In presenting his thesis, Walter again uses the term "fault lines" as dividing lines. He says that these lines represent three fairly distinct cultures: the North, the South, and the West. The "economic imperial control by the North over the South and the West" [132] is the theme of the book. Webb insists that if the frontier was a dominant force, then the absence

of the frontier is also a dominant force. He also states that if the frontier, by giving rise to the concepts of individualism, equality, and self-reliance, had helped in the shaping of democracy in America as historians say it did, then the absence of the frontier would destroy these concepts.[133] The closing of the frontier left people standing in confusion with no sure place to go. But as the frontier closed, then began the rise of corporations. As these corporations grew, the principle of "laissez faire" began to pass away, aided by politicians. When the book was written, there were 180 chartered corporations in the North and 20 in the South and West.[134] The wealth of America, as well as political control, was in the North. Webb states that if America does not get the "house" all one again, there will be a crisis greater than that of 1860. The last chapter of the book is entitled "Is There a Way Out?" Walter says there is-by "the application of the 'good neighbor' policy at home-between the North, South, and West." [135]

In Booklist, H. S. Commage reviews *Divided We Stand*. He says, "Webb's own contribution is in the skillful popularization of the findings of others. . . . His book is meant for the layman, not the scholar." [136] But Commage also states that the "argument is of the utmost significance to the future of American democracy." [137] The *Saturday Review of Literature* mentions that "Webb's argument is realistic and valid. . . ." [138] Walter's "argument" was seen as "invalid" by many who were not the reviewers of books, one of whom was President Franklin D. Roosevelt. *Divided We Stand* was a factor in the president's letter of 1938. The letter declares the South as the number-one economic problem of the nation and expresses "the determination to do something about what he called the imbalance." [139]

After *Divided We Stand*, Webb did not publish another major work until 1952. But these years were not spent resting on past accomplishments. In 1937 he became the director of the Texas State Historical Association, and while he was director, he doubled the size of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. [140] The next year was spent in England as Harkness Lecturer in American History at the University of London. [141] Walter also believed that many young people of high-school age were interested in history. The result was the creation of the first five chapters of the *Junior Historian* in 1940. [142] In 1942 J. Frank Dobie said that when Walter got to St. Peter, he would receive more credit for the *Junior Historians* than all of the books that he [Webb] ever wrote. [143]

The Handbook of Texas was also one of Webb's ideas. It had its beginning in 1939 and became reality in 1952. Although he stepped down as director of the Texas State Historical Association in 1943, Webb remained close to the project. Walter considered the Handbook the "greatest and most useful piece of scholarship . . . ever issued" [144] from the state of Texas. During the Second World War he traveled to Oxford University as a wartime Harmsworth Professor. When he returned to the United States he helped Eugene Barker with a series of test books on American History. [145]

After a non-publishing period of over ten years, Webb produced his best major work, *The Great Frontier*. Webb defines *The Great Frontier* as all the new land that had been discovered by the year 1500. Most of the book deals with this frontier and its relationship with the Metropolis, which Walter defines as the community of Western Europe. From this relationship came the boom hypothesis. This "boom" resulted in the discovery of a land mass that was five to six times larger than Western Europe. The "new" land contained sources of wealth that had not been tapped. This sudden flood of wealth was ever-increasing and created a business boom on the Metropolis "such as the world had never known before and probably never can know again." [146] The boom lasted about 400 years. The results created an abnormal age that the world would have never known had there been no frontier. During the boom the ideas about man, government, and economics became very specialized in order to meet the needs created by the boom. With the passing of the boom, Webb states, the ideals will have to undergo

change.[147] Even if another type of boom comes, he says, changes will still occur because the frontier was unique and its results were unique. Another boom will bring different needs and it will be necessary to specialize in another direction. But the most radical changes will come if there is no substitute boom. [148]

The Great Frontier was considered by Webb as the most important of his works. But when it was ready to mail, he had a moment of self-doubt. He asked himself how the historians and critics would receive such a controversial book. After he thought for a moment he said, "Well, if all you write is what everybody agrees with, you haven't said much." [149] The book had been written with the desire that when the reader completed it, he would feel that the book was without completeness and that it fell short of its possibilities. Walter explained that this had to be the case. As much as he would have liked to have written the complete story, all that was possible was its beginning. Then he gave a warning: He who explores *The Great Frontier* intellectually is subject to the same errors as those who explored it physically. Those who wish to avoid such a risk should never invade any frontier, but should remain close at home. . . ." [150] Doctor Webb believed that the public would not acclaim his boom hypothesis until 1990, but reaction to the book came much sooner.

In 1953, *The Great Frontier* received the Texas Institute of Letters Carr P. Collins Award of one thousand dollars as the best Texas book of the year. [151] It also became Clifton Fadiman's nominee for the Pulitzer Prize. According to H. McWhiney, it was the "most important book written anywhere in the world during this century." [152] Edity Parker reviewed the book for the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* and states, "with the appearance of *The Great Frontier*, Webb takes his place beside the European historians, Oswald Spengler and Arnold J. Toynbee, in their judgment that significant changes are taking place in the pattern of Western institutions." [153] Parker goes on to compare the frontier thesis of Fredrick Jackson Turner with the boom thesis. "The difference between the two frontier hypotheses is the difference between an easel painting and a mural on the same theme. . . . Webb laid out his mural on the grand scale of Western civilization, painting in his central and controlling design and indicating the spaces to be developed by future painters of the historical scene." [154] But not all of the reactions were as good. Many people demanded that Walter be dismissed from the University of Texas. [155] *The Great Frontier* was published during the McCarthy era and some "fanatics, without reading the book, slammed it as an 'un-American' rebuke to 'free enterprise'." [156]

While President of the American Historical Association, Walter told a story comparing the research of a book to two young boys who had been hired to drive a herd of goats through 150 miles of Texas hill country. After the drive started, everything seemed to go wrong. But the boys had gone so far that they did not know where they were. One day the boss lost his temper and took it out on one of the boys. When the boss was out of earshot, one boy said, "Dammit, Fred, if I knew the way home, I'd quit." [157] Walter went on to say that "the journey through *The Great Frontier* was a mental adventure of the first magnitude. . . . It was lonely there, many times I did not know which way to go, and I, like the boy driving the goats, would have been glad to go home." [158]

Doctor Webb seemed to have a solution for most anything that came up. Whenever he began to feel like he was "somebody," he would travel to San Antonio and stand on the corner outside the Gunter Hotel. For an hour he would stand there and watch the people pass. Then he would ask himself how many of those people ever heard of Walter Webb. That put things back into perspective. [159] He also made an agreement with Roy Bedichek to commit one foolish act a year to ward off old age. To fulfill his agreement, he bought an old log cabin for no good reason. The next year he wrote a friend that he had bought a Plymouth and another log cabin. "The car was reasonable but the cabin was

outrageous." [160]

Webb taught in the classroom just as well as he taught through his writing. He had the ability of stirring his students and making them think. He was not a polished lecturer. Many times he would begin a sentence and never finish it. But his seminars were famous and no graduate student in history would think of finishing without being exposed to one. Webb would give his students a problem and then sit back and see where the research fell. [161] He would lose his patience with anyone who had nothing to say. On several occasions he startled university deans and even presidents by putting on his hat and walking out in the middle of a sentence. He was not being rude; he had finished what he had come for, so he left. [162]

When looking at the writings of Walter Webb, some may assume that he is of the Turner School. If *The Great Plains* and *The Great Frontier* are used as examples, then one must listen. But Turner looked at a fragment of the frontier while Webb looked at the entire frontier. If Turner's thesis is true, then Webb's is also true. Webb said in 1958 that he was in the frontier school because of Keasbey. He believed that Keasbey was there because of an Italian named Achille Loria (1857-1943), not because of Turner. [163] If Walter was forced to give an explanation of how he got into the school of the frontier, this was the line of descent that he preferred.



Walter Prescott Webb was killed in a car accident on the night of March 8, 1963. The young man whom a mysterious stranger "plucked . . . off a Georgia stock" had come a long way from Stephens County. Webb was a scout on the frontiers of history. He explored the terrain and spotted the large ideas of the mind. It is up to the ones who follow to document his findings and stake out the section lines with accuracy. His main ambition had been to found a school of

historians who could grasp his main ideas and develop them in a series of books to be written over a long period of time. [164] This school never came into being. But what Webb has done can best be stated with the words he uses in the forward of *The Great Frontier*: "Many explorers made mistakes in the American wilderness, but nevertheless came back with or sent back valuable information." [165]

§

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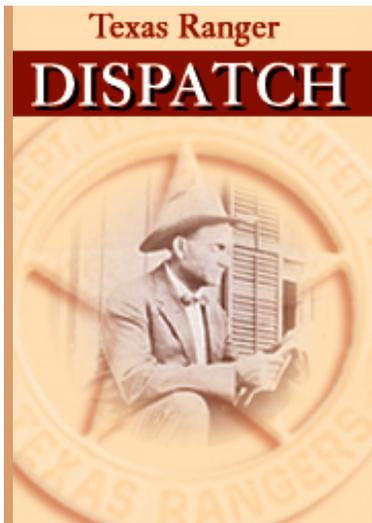
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Forgotten Rangers by Robert M. Utley

Early historians of Texas and the Texas Rangers have found almost nothing positive to write about the Radical Republican administration of Governor Edmund J. Davis, 1870-73. The Rangers of the Davis regime, therefore, are ignored altogether, confused with the hated state police, or dismissed with a few condescending phrases. They deserve better.

With the readmission of Texas to the Union on March 3, 1870, Reconstruction ended in Texas, only to be followed by a governor who stirred as much rancor, conflict, and violence as had Reconstruction. For all its immersion in the momentous issues that split Texans, however, the Davis administration did not neglect frontier defense. For the first time since the end of the war, Texas Rangers would take the field.

Prewar Texans had repeatedly faulted the federal government for not protecting their frontier settlers from Indians. By 1870, Texans complained of a double grievance: Not only did the federal defense line fail to safeguard settlers from murder and plunder, but the federal government itself provided the Kiowas and Comanches with a base of operations. Chiefs of both tribes had made their marks on the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867, by which they pledged to settle their people on a reservation in the Indian Territory, accept a bounteous array of gifts from the Great Father, and learn to support themselves by farming. Under President Ulysses S. Grant's Peace Policy, pacifist Quaker agents set forth to transform their charges into imitation whites.

Only Red River separated the Kiowa-Comanche reservation from Texas, and far from diminishing, the pace of aggressions quickened. After the treaties were signed, the Peace Policy allowed troops in Texas to attack raiders in Texas but barred them from crossing Red River onto the reservation. The big garrison at Fort Sill watched over the reservation itself but could act only on application of the agent—one whose religious scruples enjoined nonviolence. Truly, as Texans charged, Fort Sill became a "city of refuge," where warriors received government supplies and protection while resting between raids.[1]

As Red River shielded the Kiowas and Comanches, even more infuriatingly the Rio Grande shielded Lipans and Kickapoos. All across South Texas, to the very outskirts of San Antonio, these Indians ran off horses and cattle by the hundreds and left dead or wounded any Texan who got in their way. Driving the stock across the Rio Grande, the raiders readily disposed of them to Mexican intermediaries. Influential Mexicans profited from this commerce and authorities made only token effort to break it up. For U.S. troops, of course, the Rio Grande presented an even more formidable barrier than Red River.

A product of the frontier himself, Governor Davis felt a keen obligation to the

anguished frontier families. At his behest, on June 13, 1870, the legislature enacted a measure authorizing him to muster, for twelve months' service, twenty companies of "Texas Rangers"—only the second appearance of this term in law. Each company would number sixty-two officers and men. As usual, Rangers would provide their own horses, six-shooters, accouterments, and camp equipage. For the first time, however, the shoulder arm—breech-loading cavalry carbines—would be purchased by the state, issued to the Rangers, and the cost deducted from the first pay. And pay was promised: from one hundred dollars a month for captains to fifty for privates. The state would furnish provisions, ammunition, and forage. Although organized under the rules and regulations of the U.S. Army, the Rangers would always operate under state control, reporting to an adjutant general authorized by the new militia act.[2]

The enabling legislation remained silent on how to pay for what came to be known as the Frontier Forces. However, on August 5, 1870, the legislature resorted to the novel expedient of floating \$750,000 in state bonds, with interest at seven percent, payable in gold twice a year. These "Frontier Defense Bonds" would be redeemable in twenty years and paid off in forty.[3]

With pay and logistical support promised, ranger companies came together swiftly. Governor Davis appointed the captains, mostly solid Unionists with solid ranger credentials. By the end of 1870, fourteen companies had been organized and posted at key locations on the frontier. The full twenty sanctioned by the legislature never took shape, but for the first time since 1865 Texas Rangers patrolled the frontier.[4]

The War Department lost little more than a month in reacting to the advent of Texas Rangers. On July 19, Secretary of War William W. Belknap declared that the state of Texas would not be allowed to make war on the Indians and that the U.S. military authorities would preserve the peace. The U.S. military authorities, of course, had signally failed to preserve the peace—either in the interior or on the frontier—and the Texas commander, Brevet Major General Joseph J. Reynolds, welcomed the prospect of twelve hundred Rangers on the frontier. He and Davis promptly colluded to sidestep the secretary's edict. In direct violation of the law, Davis placed the Rangers at the disposal of the War Department—i.e. a receptive Reynolds. During the formative months of the Frontier Forces, therefore, ranger officers operated under the command of the nearest senior federal officer. That worked neither uniformly nor well.

General Reynolds, moreover, had flouted the intent of his superiors, and he made matters worse by recommending, as an alternative to the Rangers, the muster of five hundred frontiersmen into the U.S. service. Hopelessly tangling the issue was a dispute over whether the Rangers could draw subsistence at U.S. military posts. By the end of 1870, so confused and frustrating had the bureaucratic squabbling become, Davis had the state assume complete control and support of the Frontier Forces.[5]

On one vital issue, however, the governor had won. No matter what the secretary of war decreed, the state of Texas would make war on the Indians.

Davis's Texas Rangers performed exceptionally well. Their record is especially impressive in view of the short time allotted them. They began to deploy in the autumn of 1870, and the last company was mustered out in June 1871. Such was the state's credit rating that the bonds that were to pay for them proved unmarketable. The state treasury could not sustain Davis's expensive programs, and frontier defense was among the first casualties. Despite their achievements, the Davis Rangers dropped from memory, buried

by the fulminations of early Texas historians against the iniquities of the Davis regime.[6]

Despite the low reputation of the Davis administration, two individual Ranger captains proved particularly capable and energetic and should be noted: John W. Sansom and H. J. Richarz.

A rancher and farmer from the Hill Country north of San Antonio, John W. Sansom had campaigned as both ranger private and ranger captain before the Civil War. Unionist convictions drove him from Texas in 1862, and he served through the rest of the war with Colonel Edmund J. Davis's First Texas Cavalry (Union). As a Davis Ranger in 1870-71, he fully lived up to his political and professional credentials.[7]

Captain H. J. Richarz was a veteran of Prussian military service who fled his homeland following the revolution of 1848 and established himself as a sheep and cattle grower west of San Antonio. Nearing fifty in 1870, he had suffered repeated losses to Indians and had fought them as a minuteman during the Civil War. His record as a ranger captain underscored the observation of an acquaintance: "He has a kind and friendly disposition, and has many friends. His judgment of men and things is astute, and he has a blunt way of talking and expressing himself, but his judgment is seldom at fault." [8]

Sansom sheltered his men in the crumbling buildings of old Camp Verde, in strategic Bandera Pass, while Richarz moved into the dilapidated remains of prewar Fort Inge (present Uvalde), long used as hog and cattle pens. Thanks largely to the drive of these captains, the southwestern frontier from the mouth of the Pecos to Laredo came under closer scrutiny than ever before. The favored river crossings of the Kickapoos and Lipans fell in this sector. With their fellow captains John R. Kelso and Peter Kleid to the north and west, Sansom and Richarz maintained a rigorous system of scouts and patrols that disrupted the usual Indian routines. The federal troops at Forts McIntosh, Duncan, and Clark had never kept so constantly in the field. Even though the Rangers could seldom get within rifle range of an Indian, the captains could report that constant and thorough scouting had curtailed Indian raids and given stockmen of the Nueces and Frio ranges a new sense of security.

Still, the work was frustrating because of the sanctuary across the Rio Grande. To compound the indignity, the Indians disposed of their plunder within a river width's view of U.S. troops. The Kickapoos even had the effrontery to send Mexican messengers to Richarz vowing to drive him away and sweep the country to San Antonio. "If it were not for this cursed international law," Richarz proclaimed, "I know very well what to do to clean out these bloody savages on the other side of the Rio Grande." [9]

Rigorous scouting for Indian trails uncovered a class of depredation the Rangers had not been formed to combat but that would increasingly preoccupy them for decades to come: cattle theft.

Returning from the war, stockmen found the ranges swarming with thousands of unbranded longhorns as well as hundreds of would-be stockmen and freebooters of less respectable intent. By 1870, cattlemen with branded herds of longhorns and squads of cowboys to handle them curved west and north from San Antonio to the headwaters of the Llano River. South of the Nueces, a land of defined though unfenced ranches, vaqueros managed branded herds in much the same fashion as they had for more than a century. Texas beef emerged as a profitable commodity, especially after trail drives north to the railroads connected the longhorns with lucrative northern markets.

On the postwar generation of stockmen, burgeoning gangs of cattle thieves preyed mercilessly, even extending their depredations to cattlemen south of the Rio Grande. Emulating the Kickapoos and Lipans, Mexican gangs scooped up Texas herds and spirited them to sanctuary beyond the Rio Grande.

The Frontier Forces had been established to fight Indians, not to deal with criminals. But county law officers seemed powerless, if not actually in league with the offenders; and Davis's state police were preoccupied with combating crime (and political opposition) in the interior counties. Adjutant General James Davidson instructed the ranger captains to arrest cow thieves and turn them over to the local authorities.

Captain Sansom had already discovered ample evidence of cow theft, brand "blotching," and slaughter of cows for their hides in the hilly grasslands at the head of the Guadalupe River and in unorganized Kimble County west of Fredericksburg. His Rangers succeeded in apprehending some of the culprits, but he found the courts unable or unwilling to deal with them.[10]

In addition to the outstanding individual accomplishments of Sampson and Richarz, two companies stood out as distinctive if not wholly unprecedented. Composed of Hispanics, Captain Cesario G. Falcón's unit took station on the lower Rio Grande while Captain Gregorio García's formed around distant El Paso. Falcón campaigned tirelessly. García passed his entire term doing little more than trying to get his men armed and equipped.

From the beginning of their service, the two companies stationed on the lower Rio Grande dealt almost solely with cow theft. Indian raiders seldom found their way that far down the river, but Mexican bandits constantly stole from ranchers on the Texas side. Captain Cesario Falcón in Starr County and Captain Bland Chamberlain in Zapata County campaigned tirelessly and sometimes successfully.

On the northwestern frontier, the Kiowas and Comanches also found the new Rangers worthy foes. Honors for the hardest fight fell to Sergeant Edward H. Cobb of Captain David P. Baker's company, posted to cover the favorite crossings of Red River in Montague County. Baker sent Cobb and eighteen men to camp on the eastern edge of the Cross Timbers, twenty-five miles south of the river. Cobb was a seasoned combat veteran of the Confederate Army but had never fought Indians. Nor had any of his men, most of whom were young and inexperienced—Billy Sorrell was only sixteen.

Early on February 7, 1871, a settler dashed into camp with word that Indians were raiding down Clear Creek, on the open prairies to the southeast, toward Denton. With ten men and the citizen, Cobb hit the trail at once. All day they rode hard, at one point discovering another trail joining the first and indicating a combined force of at least forty warriors. Horses tired and slowed, and one man had to turn back. By late afternoon the Rangers came up with the quarry, half mounted and half afoot, clearly identifiable as separate parties of Comanches and Kiowas. The Indians noted the small number of pursuers and, shouting and brandishing shields and weapons, turned to give battle. Both the Comanche chief and the Kiowa chief, vividly painted and ornamented, rode boldly to the front and taunted their foes with dazzling displays of horsemanship.[11]

Cobb faced a dilemma. The horses were too fatigued to charge or retreat. He had his men move slowly in an arc away from the Indians to the shelter of a

ditch forming the head of Hickory Creek. Once in the ditch and somewhat rested, Cobb suddenly said, "Boys, what do you say to a charge?" No man objected, and the squad assembled and pushed out on the prairie at a slow gallop, heading for the Indians. When within range, the warriors leveled their rifles. Cobb shouted, "Dismount, they are going to fire." Everyone leaped to the ground as the volley cut the air overhead. Scattering in the tall prairie grass, they returned a heavy fire from their Winchester repeating carbines. Time and again the Indians charged; then turned back under heavy fire. Observing that the Rangers had six-shooters as well as repeating carbines, the warriors shrank from risking lives. Both sides fired many shots without doing much damage. As Ranger Andrew Sowell observed, "an Indian is hard to hit; protecting himself with a shield in front spoils the aim even of the best marksmen."

Surmising that the Indians intended to wear down the Rangers, exhaust their ammunition, then charge in to finish them with lance and tomahawk, Cobb told the men to mount and fall back to a low knoll some five hundred yards to the rear where they could better defend themselves. This move proved nearly fatal. As the others rode off, the exhausted horses of Sowell and Gus Hasroot balked. Suddenly surrounded by Indians, Sowell and Hasroot shouted for help, and their comrades wheeled back to their rescue. A big Indian galloped at Hasroot with lance leveled. "The boys all thought Gus was gone up," the company's lieutenant later reported, but at the last moment Gus fired his carbine at such close quarters that the smoke engulfed the Indian and his horse, which reared and threw the dead rider to the ground, breaking the lance.

The rest of the Rangers pitched in and fought viciously at close quarters—thirty paces, remembered Sowell. A pistol ball hit Billy Sorrell in the left side, disabling him. The Comanche leader rallied his men and charged. Cobb and several others shattered the charge, putting a ball through the chief's left eye and killing his horse at the same time. Now, with the sun sinking, the Kiowa chief led his followers to the attack as the Rangers dismounted and spread a protective line in front of the prostrate Sorrell, bleeding profusely from the hip. "The chief came almost at full speed, firing his revolver," related Sowell. "He seemed determined to ride us down." At twenty paces a ball smashed his chest. He dropped his shield and pistol and fell forward. The horse carried him through the ranger line before his weight turned the saddle and dragged the animal to a halt.

As the Kiowas fell back, some of the exultant Rangers followed as fast as their fatigued horses could carry them. Others, at Cobb's direction, ran to secure the chief's horse, for Cobb's own horse had been shot down. While they maneuvered to corral the horse, Sowell and a comrade decided to get the chief's scalp and "rigging." Another Indian charge aborted that move, and the Kiowas succeeded in bearing off the body of their chief.

In the fading light, the Indians abandoned the field. Cobb, mounted on the Indian horse and covered with the chief's blood, led his men from the field. Their ammunition was all but exhausted and Sorrell was in a bad way. They withdrew to the nearby home of a settler. Sorrell almost died that night, but ultimately he pulled through. Several others had taken minor wounds and lost horses, but suffered no greater casualties.

By morning, farmers and ranchers had gathered to give pursuit, but it was too late. Examining the battlefield, they found the bodies of six Indians, including the Comanche leader, and returned with six scalps and trophies enough for all. Cobb's lieutenant reported, "All the citizens say with one accord, and

proudly too, they never saw Rangers like these, to contend with such great odds."

The citizens did not exaggerate. For so few, youthful, and inexperienced men to stand up to four times their number of seasoned Indian warriors was extraordinary. The adjutant general published general orders holding up Cobb as an example for all Texas Rangers.[12]

The feat took on added importance several months later when Captain Baker had occasion to send three Rangers to Fort Sill with dispatches for the Kiowa-Comanche agent. The agent said that in February a wounded Indian had told of a fight in Texas with Rangers. The slain Comanche chief was Young Horseback (possibly the son of the Nokoni Comanche head chief Horseback), and the other dead leader was the nephew of old Satank, the principal chief of the Kiowas.[13]

With the termination of the Frontier Forces in June 1871, Texas Rangers no longer strove to head off Kiowas and Comanches. That mission remained with the federal troops, who did no better. As a substitute for the Rangers, in November 1871 the legislature authorized twenty-four companies of minutemen to serve for twelve months. The new adjutant general (Davidson had absconded with \$37,000 in state funds) convinced himself that the minutemen were more effective while less expensive.[14]

Less expensive they were, but whether more effective is arguable. Forgotten to history, the Frontier Forces of 1870-71 played a brief but creditable role. They deserve to be remembered.



Robert M. Utley served for 25 years in various capacities with the National Park Service and other federal agencies. Since his retirement from the federal government in 1980, he has devoted himself full time to historical research and writing. His specialty is the history of the American West. Nine of his books have been selections of the History Book Club, seven of the Book of the Month Club.

In 1988 Utley was awarded the Western History Association Prize for distinguished published writings and in 1994 the same organization's Caughey Prize for *The Lance and the Shield* as the best western book of 1993. Twice, in 1988 and 1989, he received the Wrangler Award of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center (for *High Noon in Lincoln* and *Cavalier in Buckskin*). In 1994 he received the Spur Award of the Western Writers of America (for *The Lance and the Shield*) and also the Owen Wister Award for distinguished lifetime achievement. In 1997 the Society for Military History honored him with the Samuel Elliot Morison Prize.

Utley began his career in history at Custer Battlefield National Monument, Montana, and served for six summers during his college years, 1947-52. From 1954 to 1957 he was a historian with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense, both as an army officer and as a civilian. He then returned to the National Park Service to serve, successively, as Regional Historian of the Southwest Region in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1957-64; as Chief Historian in Washington, D.C., 1964-72; as Director, Office of Archeology and Historic

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One of the founders of the Western History Association, Utley served on its governing council 1962-74 and as its president 1967-68. He was a member of the editorial board of The American West Magazine 1964-80. The Western Historical Quarterly was launched during his presidency, and he served on its editorial board 1968-73. He was a founder of the Potomac Corral of the Westerners in 1955 and its sheriff in 1973. He was Chairman of the Board of Directors of Eastern National Park and Monument Association 1985-87 and 1989-92. He has appeared frequently on television productions relating to the history of the West.

Born in Arkansas (October 31, 1929) and reared in Indiana, he was educated at Purdue University (B.S. 1951) and Indiana University (M.A. 1952). He holds Honorary Doctor of Letters degrees from Purdue (1974), the University of New Mexico (1976), and Indiana University (1983). He received the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award in 1971.

He served in the U.S. Army 1952-56, attaining the rank of captain. He is married to Melody Webb, also a National Park Service veteran and also a historian.

Books by Robert Utley

A Life Wild and Perilous: Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific (Holt, 1997).

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Notes

[1] The literature of the Fort Sill reservation is voluminous. I have dealt with and documented the subject in *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-91* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 207-14; and *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 140-48.

[2] H. P. M. Gammel, comp., *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, 10 vols. (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 6:179-82. For the militia act of June 14, 1870, and the state police act of July 1, 1870, see *ibid.*, 185-90, 193-94.

[3] *Ibid.*, 6:45-46.

[4] General Order No. 3, Hq. State of Texas, Adjutant General's Office, Austin, August 3, 1870, RG 401 (Ranger Records), Box 1156, Folder 15, Texas State Archives (hereafter TSA). Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas from June 24, 1870, to December 31, 1870 (Austin: Tracy, Siemering & Co., 1870), 6-7, 61-63.

[5] A chronological abstract of the correspondence, War Department, Adjutant General's Office, April 9, 1872, appears in *Claims of the State of Texas*, Senate Executive Document No. 19, 45th Congress, 2nd Session, 1878 (Serial 1780), 10-12. Reynolds to Assistant Adjutant General, Division of the South, Austin, September 30, 1870, Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1870, 41-42. Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas from June 24, 1870, to December 31, 1870 (Austin: Tracy, Siemering & Co., 1870), 6-7.

[6] For the bonds, see Message of Governor E. J. Davis to the legislature, January 10, 1871, RG 301(GC), Box 89, Folder Davis350, TSA; and Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for the Year 1872 (Austin: James P. Newcomb, 1873), 6-8.

[7] John E. Lich, "Sansom, John William," *The New Handbook of Texas*, 6 vols. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996), 5:879-80.

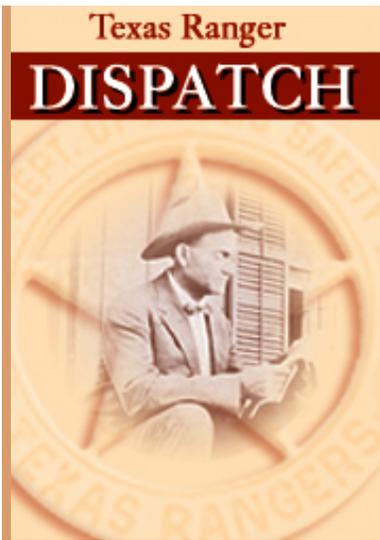
[8] A. J. Sowell, *Early Settlers and Indian Fighters of Southwest Texas* (Austin: Ben C. Jones, 1900; Austin: State House Press, 1986), 202-05, 542-53.

[9] Richarz to Adjutant General James Davidson, Fort Inge, December 4 and 12, 1870, RG 401 (Ranger Records), Box 389, Folder 13, TSA. Periodic reports from Richarz and Sansom are in *ibid.*, Folders 9-16. For Governor Davis's view of the Mexican refuge, see his message to the legislature of January 10, 1871, RG 301 (GC), Box 89, Folder Davis350, TSA.

[10] Sansom to Davidson, Camp Verde, February 17, 1871, RG 401 (Ranger Records), Box 390, Folder 3, TSA. See also same to same, October 17, 1870, Box 389, Folder 10; and same to same, February 28, 1871, Box 390, Folder 4, TSA.

[11] The fight is described in graphic and convincing detail by Ranger A. J. Sowell, *Rangers and Pioneers of Texas* (San Antonio: Shepard Bros., 1884; New York: Argosy-Antiquarian, 1964), 298-345. The official report is also detailed: Lieutenant A. C. Hill to Davidson, Thompsonville Station, Wise County, February 9, 1871, RG 401 (Ranger Records), Box 1156, Folder 18, TSA.

[12] General Order No. 4, Adjutant General's Office, February 27, 1871, RG 401-984: General Orders AGO, pp. 21-22, TSA.



[13] Sowell, Rangers and Pioneers, 345.

[14] Act of November 25, 1871, Gammel, Laws of Texas, 7:36-38. Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Texas for the Year 1872, 8-9.

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