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Interview no. 19.2

Chris P. Fox

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Chris P. Fox (1897-)**
INTERVIEWER: _____
PROJECT: Speech
DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 19, 1970
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

(Vice President of the State National Bank in El Paso, Director of Public Relations.) Born in El Paso in 1897; graduated from El Paso High School; elected Sheriff in 1932-1942; presently with the State National Bank; known as "Mr. El Paso."

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Speech given at the quarterly meeting of the El Paso County Historical Society entitled "Why Are Things as They Are, and By Whom?"

16 pages

**See also No. 214

Speech given by Chris P. Fox to the El Paso County Historical Society on February 19, 1970.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I want to congratulate you "fortunate people" who are here tonight to listen to this more or less messed up presentation.

You have observed on these walls a few odds and ends of historical memorabilia, which in a way support my topic for tonight, "Why Are Things as They Are, and by Whom?" And I might add that one cannot do justice to this topic in one session. Perhaps it could be done, but I am not the one to do the job. But we will determine that later on; as of right now, we will do the best we can. And right here I want to remind you that the topic tonight is not "How" but "Where" El Paso grows.

Again, this evening's presentation should be covered in four sections and separated roughly to within the confines of our former and long time ago four City Wards. I am sure that those of you who came from bigger and perhaps more affluent and sophisticated areas of the United States know what wards are. And I would like to add that everything is not bad about wards, either. There is much more to them than "ward healers." Many good people live within their borders, who look upon their particular ward as their own little city.

In mentioning the word "city," I must tell you that our City Planning Department has done an outstanding piece of work in putting together in four volumes what we might call "The Four Wards of El Paso," mainly, "A Short History of Northeast El Paso," "A Short History of Northwest El Paso," "A Short History of South El Paso," and "A Short History of Ysleta." At one time or another, all of the areas covered by these "histories" have been subjects of violent and lengthy campaign issues. Really, they provided what we can properly say, "much political hay." Perhaps the proper term would be "campaign issues."

It is true that communities grow because of climate, the flora and fauna, the

water available, and other natural resources and geographical locations, or a combination of them all, plus transportation; and, of course, the most motivating influence of them all, the people who live in the area and have an honest belief in its future and are willing to manifest a great deal of personal restraint insofar as selfishness is concerned. If you have too much of that "selfishness," the full benefit of all the community's assets are not available to everyone. There is evidence that there has been much selfishness in El Paso's history. Look at the pictures from the State National Bank Then and Now Library that are on the wall. As a native of this city, I feel that one of the greatest motivating influences for growth and development of El Paso revolved around the efforts of the early day real estate man and/or developer, those who were in the promotional field in that long ago. Now, let's be specific. I am referring to the honest, laboring types who had faith and, I might add, the means to make a city, to build a city in which they had and continued to cast their lots.

El Paso has always been influenced by the developer, or to many he has always been known as the real estate man, and his kind. My parents, in a way, were in the real estate business, too. I shudder when I recall how many times they would build a house and we would move to a new one after the other one had been sold. Yes, indeed, it was my job to see that the window shades that we took out of one house were made to fit in the new home. It was a case of shorten and stretch. There were many individuals in the real estate business, like my folks, with whom it was a side line. My father was a hard-working machinery salesman over this vast southwestern territory for the firm of Kra^okauer, Zork, and Moye. My mother raised a family. And between the two of them they would do some house building and speculation on the side; and I might add that at times they did very well. But individuals about the mid-'30s faded out of the real estate moonlighting business. It was pretty well taken over by firms who were established for that purpose.

Over in that corner this evening you will see and read the names of real estate

men who operated in this area between 1900 and 1908; duplications have been eliminated. There you will see the names of many fine people, people who contributed greatly to building this community. Bear in mind, now, that the real estate man of that day and time was, with few exceptions, a developer too. Also, it was his sole occupation and he was kept quite busy with buying and selling and developing and selling a little insurance here and there, and participating usually in a generous way in all the affairs of the community. Yes, many of them covered the town from one end to the other as they went about their duties in the horse-and-buggy days of that pleasant long ago.

Many newcomers as well as old timers asked the question as to why El Paso seemed to grow up in such a topsy-turvy manner--crooked streets, one subdivision running off at a 45 degree angle from another, dead ended streets, and all of that. Most of the reason for that was, of course, using the early trails in the downtown area as the basis for a street pattern in later years, and also because the moving of earth during that period of time was quite a laborious chore, as it was done with the help of a railroad plow, slip scrapers, Fresno scrapers, horses and mules, and a great amount of pick and shovel work. So naturally they didn't move a vast amount of earth to make a level area, or to project a street in a straight line. Of course, the time I am talking about, the developer could open any site that he had title to, and there would be no requirement for him to submit his plans for approval to the City, nor was he required to provide paving or curbing. He just dragged the mesquite and cactus and weeds and a few lumps here and there, and as far as he was concerned he was well on his way to creating a new subdivision. I might add that then, and for a number of years, caliche, which was that wonderful building product of nature, was used for road beds and surfacing of many of our residential streets. It worked out well when kept wet, but the springtime breezes would waft this talc-like substance into every nook and cranny of the home and, of course, on Mondays, the ever-evident wash on the line. You see, the iron tires

of the wagons and buggies and the iron shoes on the horses and the mules did a great job of pulverizing the caliche. About the time the automobile began to arrive on the scene, real pavement was on the way. I always like to give great credit to the women of El Paso, because they toughed things out and there were many days that tried their souls severely. But they stuck it out with their men and their families and kept things together, and played a terrific part in bringing about a better day.

As for the "tools of the trade" of the early day land merchant, they really represented little; but of course the main item in his sales arsenal was a means of transportation. He could not sell anything if he could not get the prospective buyer to look at it. There was no mail-order buying in those days, no big ads in faraway metropolitan newspapers. Then the prospective customer wanted to "eyeball" that patch of sand and cactus that he was going to buy. Those of you from the West Coast know the Southern California land story which revolved around the families Van Nuys and Huntington, with their big yellow and red cars running on their shiny rails to their outlying areas. In a way, we had a Huntington or a Van Nuys or a combination of both right here in El Paso in none other than Frank Tobin, who was a real estate man and developer of no small proportions in Northeast El Paso. The Tobin Park area still bears his name. His first project was Tobin Addition, which is in the Washington Park-Coliseum area. But in later days he began to stretch his wings and his eyes turned toward East El Paso, and he bought a lot of acreage and built about a four or five mile rail line, branching off the main EP&SW line at a siding we now call Plane Fort. He also got a little car that would carry about 15 passengers and on regular schedule he would take people out to see a "new great city a-making" by the name of Tobinville. Indeed, he probably had the prettiest crop of cactus and sand and mesquite lumps that could be found anywhere, and on Sundays he would hold barbeques out there and would pay transportation by rail from downtown El Paso to Plane Fort. And on his choo-choo he always served good ham and it was

interesting to see people walking around in the weeds. My parents bought some land out there, and it wasn't too many years ago that it was sold. Frank Tobin was in a way a super salesman of his time. He would get people out there and they would decide that they wanted this, that, or the other, and he would put down a stake and put their name on it; and later on the necessary papers would come through and they would have property in Tobin Addition, for better or for worse.

Yes, the real estate man/developer of that day and time did the best he could to keep things pumped up during good times and bad. One not to be outdone by Frank Tobin's choo-choo was a Mr. William Moeller, and he had his office in the old Herald block where the Mills Confectionary is today. He ran big ads and he was generally a big, hard-working operator; and to put the frosting on the cake, he bought himself a monstrous automobile, a 1906 Autocar. It was really a pistol. It was not unusual to see him speeding around the best he could over our bumpy streets and roads with prospective happy customers in the car. If my memory serves me correctly, he lived on North Ochoa Street, across from the old Mesa School, about 909 or 911, and had a large family, and some of them I knew quite well. One thing I specifically remember with the advent of the streetcar was a real estate firm headed up by Mr. W.H. Austin, who decided to create a development out near Fort Bliss, or the Nations Well, where the Biggs Field balloon hangar was in later days. One Sunday my mother, father and I got on the Fort Bliss streetcar and rode out to the end of the line, and there we were met by Mr. Austin and his two-horse buckboard. The rest of the way was through a portion of the Fort Bliss reservation and then on out through the weeds and mesquite hummocks. We looked over Nations Acreage, and of course we were given an opportunity of seeing Alhambra Heights. My parents bought some of each and our family retained title to them until World War II, when the government said they needed it, and we were paid not much more than what the property cost. And of course, the taxes we paid on it through the years "went up the chimney" of patriotism.

Earlier this evening different people have asked about different streets, why they were named, etc., etc. Time will not permit a lengthy discussion of this interesting subject. How did all the important people settle on San Antonio, Myrtle, Magoffin Avenue, etc., and later on moved northward over into Sunset Heights and up on Montana? Well, in the first place, it was more or less a very simple reason. The people lived on San Antonio, Magoffin and Myrtle, those of some wealth and importance, for the reason that it had a streetcar system. It provided transportation, even if it was only a mule-car, but to be superceded in later years, around the years 1902 or 1903, by the electric cars. Also, it was close to town and they could either walk or ride their bicycle. You know, at that time when you walked to town, you didn't destroy your status symbol. It meant that you could walk and still be a nice person; you know, generally accepted.

There were four elements in the early time of El Paso that, all put together, contributed immeasurably to its progress and citizens' comfort: the electric streetcar, the automobile, the paved streets and a good water supply. I recommend that you look over there on the wall and see that heroic aerial photograph taken by the U.S. Boundary and Water Commission. I contend it is one of the greatest pictures that was ever taken of El Paso. I am sure that Ponce de León would be happy with it, too. You know, they say that he started a place called El Paso, and I imagine that from his present viewpoint, he is quite happy about the whole thing. In talking about important real estate sales, the sale when a whole city was sold--well, the title of the same is over there on the wall; it is also outlined in the Plaza on a bronze marker provided by the State National Bank--was in 1857 when W.D. Smith sold the property called "The Town of El Paso" for the fabulous sum of \$6,500 to J.S. and H.S. Gillett, J.F. Crosby, J.W. Martin, and Vincent St. Vrain. After purchasing the same, they had it surveyed by the famous Anson Mills. The Mills map is still famous today. It showed downtown El Paso much like it is at the present

time, including the public square, which they at that time donated to the future City of El Paso. You will recall that it was in 1873 when our city was incorporated. It was a fine town of its time, and it is an equally fine town of today. And as they said then (and it would hold true today) it was a haven for the weary traveler and has seen and heard the marching of Spanish Colonial times, saw and heard the rumbling oxcart, the first U.S. soldiers, and later the covered wagons, then the famous Jeff Davis Camel Corps, the stagecoaches, the blast of six-guns, and the shrill of the first locomotive whistle. And slowly they saw law and order emerge. Right in the Plaza, time brought concerts, both musical and political, patriotic speeches galore, Presidents' visiting, and through the years the marching soldiers of our wars. Our City Fathers designated the area as "The Plaza" in 1889, but in 1902 the City Council permanently named it San Jacinto Plaza. Yes, all of this stems from that first great land sale.

I wonder if any of you remember--there must be someone in this room that does, perhaps not any older than I am--who recalls that enterprising land merchant, W.F. (Floyd) Payne, who for years had his office in the Angelus Hotel building on the northwest corner of Main and North Mesa. Do any of you remember him? If so, raise your hand. Well, obviously this group is made up of people that are of the younger vintage. Be that as it may, he was a pioneer community booster and a real estate man who shook things up around here--he really did!--in more ways than one, mainly with his large revolving electric sign in the shape of a globe of the world. As it revolved, the people would gawk at it whether it be day or night, and the horses would shy. On this globe was his famous slogan, "Buy Now. There Never Will Be Another Land Crop." Do you get that? There will never be another land crop!

In earlier times all old El Paso subdivisions bore the names of the realtors who promoted them or who originally owned a large portion of the land. In the more recent times, they have gone in for glamour names: Sunrise Acres, Mountainview, Park Foothills, Sunset, Crestmont, Mission Hills, etc.

So the question is, why was Sunset Heights laid out the way it was? It was simply, as we have mentioned before, that the terrain was such and the capabilities of the horse and mule drawn earth-moving equipment was such that they would just knock off a little dirt here and there and put together a contour that would fit the purse. That would hold true for Highland Park and Manhattan Heights, to a great extent. And as for Manhattan Heights, the old Federal Smelter used to be there, but that is another story. Then there was the nob of Golden Hill. But flatter areas such as Government Hill and Morningside Heights and such didn't pose much of a problem and/or cash outlay for development. Way back in the early 1920s when Morningside Heights was being developed, they used to run a sign that read, "Get out of the Smoke and Come Out to the Ozone." Now, the development of Kern Place is a total and complete story in itself and one of greatest interest, and I think that it should be presented to this Society some day by a competent speaker and researcher. It is a great story of an equally great little man. Someone asked earlier what I knew about Woodlawn Park. Well, it was right next to Washington Park. The streetcar company built a loop line off of Alameda Street to reach way down into the bosque adjacent to the river. People would rent a streetcar for the evening and would have what you would call "streetcar picnics" out at Woodlawn Park; and they had tables set up and there was always a place to comfortably hold a beer keg. Of course, during high water time they couldn't go into the place because it was all flooded, and shortly thereafter the mosquitos reigned supreme. I might add that as the streetcars full of merry revelers would come back up Alameda Street and go into their particular part of town, happy voices could be heard singing over the clack of the wheels and the thump of the rails, as they happily sang the songs of the day. Oh, yes indeed, those were simple times, and maybe simple people. And I am sure, though, to the recollections of many, the occasions were simply delightful.

Now as to the coming of the railroads, that is a story also in its own right, and it is a very good story, too. And I am proud that the State National Bank has done so well by that great event in placing two or three bronze markers in commemoration for the interest of the local folks, as well as travelers who come our way. Railroad families in the main built their homes close by where they worked. And I might add that they were the first group of people who really and truly dug in and made El Paso their home, in name and in fact. They were no transients and they approached their community and personal affairs with enthusiasm. They had been knocked around and had gone from here to there and somewhere else; but when they finally came to El Paso, it was done with the solid idea of settling down, raising their families, helping to build a community; and all of that they did. And to them and to their memory, we are definitely indebted.

Now here is something that hasn't been touched on before and it revolved around real estate, per se. Do you know how Houston Square came about? It is located in the 900 block on Montana Street. A few of you may, but I doubt it. Briefly, here is the story. Around the turn of the century or a wee bit before, the then Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad (known to us in earlier years as the GH&SA, which was followed by their counterpart, the T&NO, and finally all was gobbled up by the Southern Pacific System), the GH&SA, teaming up with its brothers, SP to the West, decided that El Paso was exactly in the flat-out middle of their system, their Sunset Route between New Orleans--which was 1211 miles from here--and San Francisco--which was 1218; a total of 2439 miles. But as we were right in the middle, this was the place to have their big general hospital. So, a square block of land was bought, nothing else. They weren't worried about parking automobiles, so a square block at that time was a terrific building area. While they were making further plans, they put a great big, high, eight-foot fence around the property, just the kind of fence the B&B Department of the railroad would build, solid and strong. You couldn't knock it down with a modern-day bulldozer. But as youngsters

in the neighborhood, I recall that we used to pry off a board or two and get inside and look around. I remember one time when it served as a haven of refuge for us youngsters after we had lifted a few vegetables from the Chinese vegetable man and he caught us in the act; and he drove his cart right up to opening and left it there and then came on inside and finally caught us over in the mesquite bushes and really belabored us over our rear parts with the horse whip. He ceased to be our favorite and I know it was perfectly okay by him. In later years across from this property was the home of Mr. S.H. Simmons, the President of the famous El Paso and Southwestern Railroad. I must add that one time we became "messed up" with that Chinaman again. As he took out after us, we saw a carpet hanging over a clothesline ready for a beating. Unfortunately, the Chinaman caught us under the carpet and we received the beating! Enough about the poor old Chinaman.

Well, anyhow, the Southern Pacific decided to extend their operation northward out of San Francisco to the Portland area, then on north connecting with Seattle, all of which made El Paso no longer the focal and/or central point of their operation. So in the year of 1905 they entered into negotiations with the City of El Paso and a deal was made whereby the City Fathers bought that square block of land for \$15,000, \$1,000 down and \$14,000 a year later. There was no interest, and I might add that there was no Government loan, as people in that day and time didn't buy anything until they had the money in their hip pocket. So that's the way it went and today it stands as Houston Square, which might have become the site of the Southern Pacific General Hospital, which went to San Francisco because the corporate offices of the railroad were up there; and I imagine the well-fed President and the operating personnel weren't going to leave there and come down here to get free hospitalization. So time marched on and so did the hospital, all before Medicare.

Now to get on with the Federal Smelter that was located right in the middle of Manhattan Heights and/or upper Memorial Park and right across from Crockett School, it came into being about 1899 as a promotional effort of the times. I am not staying

with cold facts and figures tonight, and I am announcing it that way so that I won't have Millard McKinney after me, because he is the essence of accuracy. I'm just talking. Anyhow, somewhere around the turn of the century, the Federal Smelter came into being and it operated for about two or three years, then it went "kaput." In the meantime, in order to get a fluxing ore for smelting, they had built a small narrow-gauge railroad from that location all around the southern tip of Mt. Franklin past the famous Caples Quarry and on up to and through the Rim Road with a deep cut or tunnel. This cut or tunnel was just about a few yards east of where Dr. Robert Thompson lives today. You probably read about this miniature railroad in the more recent story about the family of Maurice McKelligon. Anyhow, that train would come around and go up through that draw in between Kern Place and Rim Road where the little dump cars would be loaded by hand by tall-hatted Mexicans who would throw the limestones in the cars. The stones were about the size of a bowling ball and there must have been a hundred million of them. They looked like giant camphor balls, for that matter. The Smelter went the way of so many things of that time in the mining and smelting business, and it stood there for a number of years until the Coles Brothers took over what is now Manhattan Heights and sold the Smelter for scrap. And in later years, the slag pile was cleared up and the spur track removed. You will note, as a reminder of the Smelter, that the streets starting at Grant Avenue and running northward were named (some of them have been changed) Lead, Zinc, Silver, Gold, Copper, Federal--maybe not in exactly that order, but the names are correct. You wanted to know why Mexican families then and many of them today call Myrtle Avenue "Calle Muertos." It wasn't because they couldn't pronounce the word Myrtle, but because nearly all of the funeral processions of that time went out Myrtle Avenue, as all of the churches were in the triangular area of Myrtle and Magoffin and Olive and San Antonio, and the funeral processions would go out Myrtle Avenue to either Concordia or Evergreen. So that is how "Calle Muertos" or "Calle de Muertos" came about. As a sideline, it was not infrequent that the thirsty and bereaved mourners

with equally thirsty horses would stop at the old Midway Saloon as they came back from the burial services. The horses were awful tired and the drivers were so considerate of them that they just couldn't pass up that water trough; and of course, they wanted the ponies to have plenty of time to drink, so they just got out of the vehicles and went into that good old cool Midway and took on some refreshments in their own right. When the streetcars came, the horses didn't get so tired; and also, as the automobiles came, that wiped out those thirsty stops at dear old Midway, which was located on the corner of Myrtle and Piedras streets. The big water trough stayed there for many years and is now stored in one of the city warehouses. Enough of mourners and streets and thirsty horses and the old Midway.

When Fort Bliss was moved out to Lanoria Mesa (where it is located today) in 1893, there were no paved roads, of course, and no streetcars at that time, so the road just wandered out Myrtle Avenue and angled up about where Cotton Avenue is and slanted off to the northeast and on out where Pershing Drive wanders today, on up and through the south entrance, or that which is called the Pershing Gate. Pershing Street used to be called Bliss all the way. Now there is a street called Bliss but it is not of any great length, so Pershing Street is where the old caliche paved road traveled and that is where the escort wagons pulled by mules went their way.

Yes, water, potable water, or commonly known as drinking water, was very important to the progress of El Paso; it played a big part. And drinking water in El Paso got off to a poor start. It was nothing other than water that came from the Río Grande and was placed in wooden barrels (usually empty whiskey barrels) and the dirt and refuse was allowed to settle to the bottom. The top water was skinned off and used for bathing and washing and dishwashing. But if it was to be drunk, it had to be boiled. And well-equipped homes had seven barrels in the rear, one for each day in the week. Our municipal waterworks of the day was started off by the Watts Brothers from St. Louis; they got a franchise to build a water system. Later on they were forced to sell out because the water was bad and people were getting

typhoid at regular intervals. It later became the International Waterworks and later the City of El Paso Waterworks, and is now known as the El Paso Water Utilities, and also by the high-falutin' name of The Public Service Board, which gives it dignity, they say. But we also at times had the Highland Park Waterworks, the Austin Terrace Waterworks, which pretty well took care of Mr. James Graham McNary's empire. Then we had the Zach White Waterworks in the Country Club area. I might add that a windmill with a water tank in the backyard during the early days was a definite sign of affluence, and all of the windmills were either Stover or Eclipse, both good brands. Having your own windmill and your own storage tank wasn't very exciting for the housewives that had them, because they knew pretty well what would come out when they opened the water faucet. But the folks who didn't have that equipment were always subject to the element of surprise; they never knew what the water spigot would bring forth.

El Paso's first sidewalks were wooden and they were few and far between. Later on, some enterprising souls supplemented them with a tar-like substance that was mixed with the sand and called macadam. The wooden walks were tough on bare feet; spinners would come forth. But equally so, during the hot summertime, the tar sidewalks would burn bare feet, and equally so through the soles of shoes. Then along came the Mitchells and the Crocketts with cement sidewalks here and there, which also made for good rollerskating, perambulators, and toy wagons.

You want to know why in the old days and/or why whenever you see a picture of a one-horse small wagon that used to be on every street corner in El Paso... We called them "expresitos;" in other words, "express wagons" who would haul little items here and there and for different stores. Yes, they always did have a dog running underneath the wagon, a hound dog, and this dog did always have a long tail with a hook on the end of it. And the story was that the reason he had the hook in the tail was so that he could hook it around the rear axle and help propel himself down the dusty streets and under the wagons so that he would be out of the sun. How do you like that? Be all of that as it may, wherever you saw a Mexican "expresito" you saw a hound dog

close by. I might add that they could load more furniture on one of those little old wagons than you can in a van today, and the top of the load always contained either a coop full of chickens or a birdcage or two; and usually the lady of the house was sitting right on the front seat next to the driver holding the traditional mockingbird, "chonte," either in or out of the cage.

Around the turn of the century, did they have shopping centers? Of course they did, in a sense. There was Midway at Cotton and Boulevard (now Yandell), Five Points. Alta Vista, Tompkins Street, and out at Lincoln Park. And little clusters of stores they were, with maybe a cantina and a pool hall close by. But they were shopping centers of their day, and neighborhood gathering places.

I will take the liberty here of making an observation, because we are discussing things of yesteryear, which naturally revolves around buildings of the same, most of which are gone, but many still stand. And I guess the reason is as per that famous architect who made a talk in El Paso several years ago, and part of which revolved around "community or structural blights." He contended that most people associate a blighted area with age, old buildings, old pipes, and just old. But he said that blight of that kind is usually the result of 90% neglect and about 10% age. Well, if you look around a bit, you will find that to be the case. I can show you some 50-year-old structures in El Paso that have been properly maintained, both residential, apartment and business types, and they are good, bright, snappy and habitable, and serving a good purpose. Others of the same age are falling into decay. Of course, the element of absentee ownership and local representation that does not demand proper maintenance is a big factor. I am afraid we will have more "early age blight" in the years ahead than we have had in the past.

Let me get back on the nostalgic track again for a moment and tell you about another hunters' paradise shopping center of earlier days. We used to hunt ducks in the Lincoln Park area where there was a big lake that never went dry, and the ducks and geese liked it as a stopping off place in the late fall and winter. To reach it you

would go to the end of the Washington Park streetcar line and get off at Boone and Alameda, and from there you would walk over to the big lake by skirting Evergreen Cemetery. You could describe it as being located between Concordia and the railroad tracks, and it would reach out as far as Chelsea Street is today, more than a mile and a half long. On your way to the hunting grounds, you would come by a little store operated by a nice Mexican gentleman, and the store was named El Porvenir. That means by rough translation, "the future," or "things to come." He sold odds and ends of things that were used in the neighborhood and also things for the hunter. Then came the little store named El Buen Tono. It had a friendly sound and a friendly person operated the shop. It, like the other, had shotgun shells and other items of chesse and crackers, sardines, and a slice or ham or so, and some sausages--all the things that a hunter would need--and all with plenty of "baloney." The last store was called El Ultimo Balazo. The translation of that means "the last shot," and indeed it was the last shot, because when you left it, there was nothing else except the lake and the boondocks and mesquite and sagebrush, unending and reaching the far horizon. But this little center was different from the others in that it had a tidy, comfortable and well-stocked cantina. And after all of this came the ducks. But of course, if you stayed in El Ultimo Balazo too long, your shooting capabilities were greatly reduced.

Yes, all the items of historical nature that you see about this room belong to the State National Bank, and I am sure that you, like thousands of others in El Paso, are grateful to them for their efforts in trying to hold the history of this town together via works of art, publishing of books, supporting historical groups and erecting some 30 or more bronze marker-tablets all over El Paso. Our Then and Now Library is made up of some 250 items. Each represents considerable expense and a great deal of effort, but they will serve well in not only preserving the past, but showing the way to the future. And through them you can see that good men and women have been involved in, and worked for, this community for a long time. It is a community that has

always been growing. It isn't just something that happened yesterday or today; it has been growing because we have been blessed with good people who have been willing to put back into this community some of that which they have received.

In conclusion, we want to thank the City Planning Department for their assistance in many ways, the El Paso City Lines for their numerous historical contributions, and certainly the El Paso Public Library, and two of our good fellow citizens, Millard and Stella McKinney, who are forever cooperating with and helping others to put El Paso's best foot forward in matters of history and its preservation and other worthwhile endeavors. And in speaking of endeavors, we are indebted, also, to Leon Metz tonight for his help and the help of his staff. Leon, I understand, has committed himself to providing you with a very interesting program at our next quarterly meeting. I know that it will be a good program and will follow through on the theme that we did have a robust, shoot-'em-up town of gore and blood and terrible stuff; but we also had good men and women, stout, rugged, tough, and good souls who fought it through and put together a city and area that has attracted others to come our way and help build for the tomorrows. I might add that law and order did come to this community the hard way and that it represents a saga in its own right. And we hope that Leon will, as they say, "give it a good whirl."

As a supplement, we are giving you the names of some of the old-time builders and developers and real estate men to whom we owe much, and also some of the names of early-day families who lived in the areas that have been discussed in this presentation of mine, which really has been "shooting from the hip" from the standpoint of rhetoric, history and recollection. I hope I haven't bored you beyond the point of endurance, and also want you to know that I am grateful to you for your interest in our home community and the great opportunities that are available to us to further its goodness, as members of the El Paso County Historical Society. Good night.