Chapter 38

The Butterfield Overland Stagecoach through Guadalupe Pass

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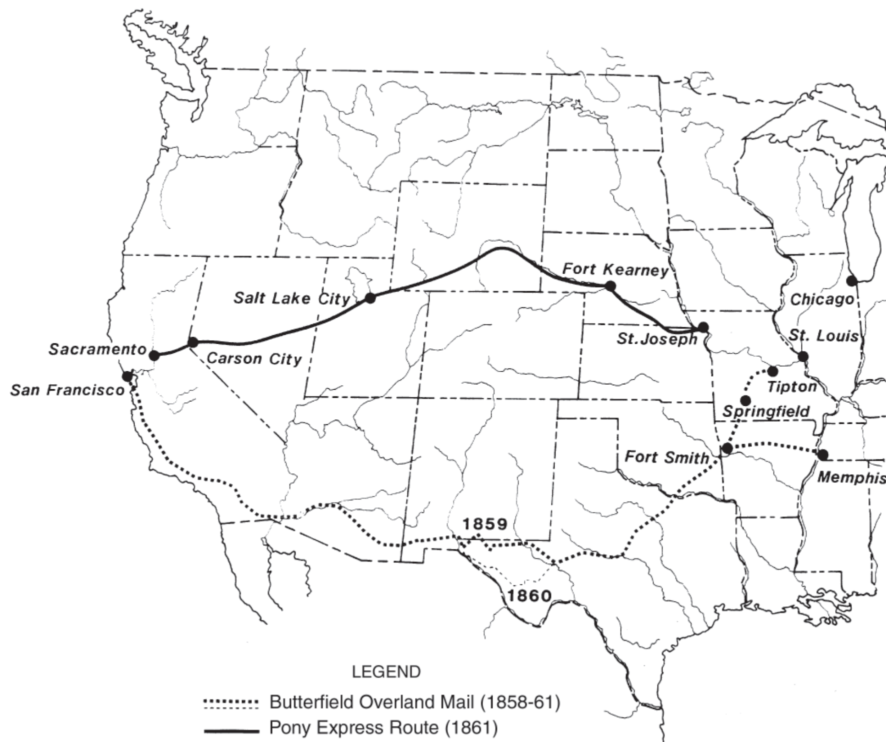
The Mexican War ended with the United States purchasing large tracts of land in what is now the southwestern part of the United States. The war also settled the right of Texas to enter the Union and, just two years after that, gold was discovered in California. So many people rushed to California just two years later and in 1850 California joined the Union. It's hard for me to realize that this happened 26 years before Colorado had enough people to join the Union. At any rate, there was a great clamor in congress and in the East and West both, especially the West, for an overland mail service, an overland mail contract, and an overland stagecoach. As usual, congress did nothing and then finally in 1857 they authorized an overland mail contract. They made the mistake of leaving the choice of the route up to the postmaster general. Well, it so happened that the postmaster general was from the South, and he insisted on a southern route.

At about that same time, an interesting character by the name of John Butterfield came on the scene. His home was in Utica, New York, and as a boy the sound of the stagecoach as it roared by in a cloud of dust thrilled him. He determined that when he grew up he wanted to be a stagecoach driver, and he did. He was so good at it that he was soon made manager of the line and he branched out

Figure 1. Butterfield overland mail and pony express route.



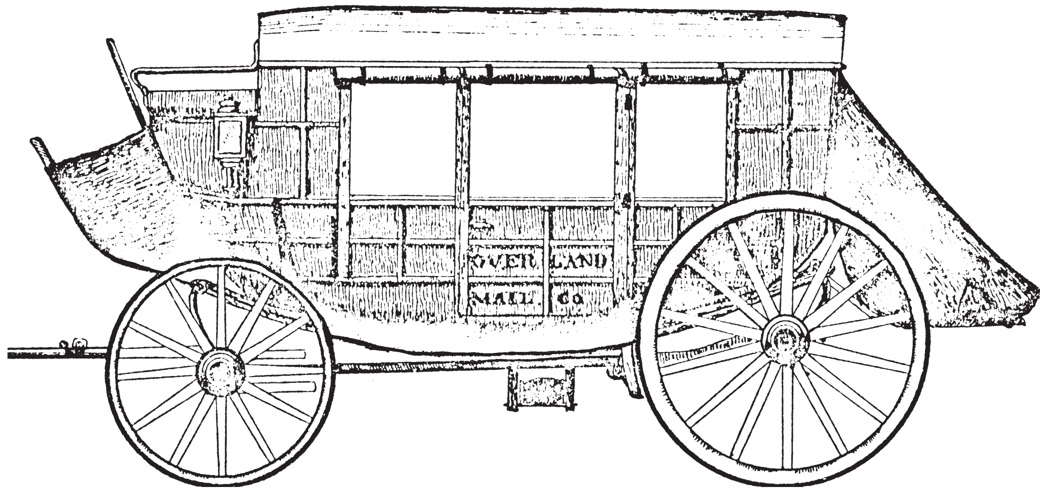


Figure 2. The Butterfield "Celerity" stage wagon was designed in the coach factory of James Goold in Albany, New York, where, in 1857, 100 of these wagons were built and placed in the overland service in 1858. They were more adaptable to the roughness of mountain and desert country than the regular high bodied coach. The seats were not upholstered but were constructed so that the backs could be lowered to make a bed, permitting the passengers to take turns sleeping at night. This type of vehicle was used exclusively between Springfield, Missouri; or Fort Smith Arkansas; and Los Angeles, California. Drawing by R. P. Conkling.

to form stagecoach lines of his own, which he later converted into railroads. By then he was wealthy. He invested heavily in real estate and in steam ships on Lake Erie. As a staunch Yankee, Butterfield submitted a bid for the northern route of the overland mail to commence from the railhead of Saint Joseph, Missouri. The route would go up into Nebraska, Wyoming, Salt Lake City, across Nevada and across the scenic Sierra Nevada into Sacramento, with the mail going on down by steamboat to San Francisco. But as a practical stagecoach man, he realized that the heavy snows of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada would be formidable barriers to any efficient schedule for the mail, and a more practical route lay to the south. Butterfield made a very shrewd suggestion of two routes: one starting at Saint Louis and the other one starting at Memphis, and the two routes joining at Fort Smith, Arkansas, then going through Indian Territory across Texas and what was later New Mexico, Arizona, and California. He won the $600,000 a year mail contract and he organized the overland mail company with a capital stock of $2 million. He spent $1 million of that the very first year on equipment and supplies. One thing he did was purchase stagecoaches from three different makers. One particular manufacturer from Albany, New York made the Celerity Wagon. Butterfield thought that the design with the front wheels smaller than the rear wheels would be much better in the Rocky Mountain West, and it was.

Several years earlier Butterfield had joined with two other New York State express owners, Henry Wells and William Fargo, to form the American Express company. He remained the director and vice president of that firm until the day he died, and that firm is still alive and kicking today. Nobody thought Butterfield could meet the stiff mail contract of two stagecoaches per week with a maximum travel time of 25 days between Saint Louis and San Francisco. They accused him of stock throwing. Why, that was an average of 112 miles a day. Existing lines were only making 25 miles a day. He simply had heard the post horn again and could not resist this biggest challenge of his life, because he was already wealthy and really did not need that job. Those who scoffed at the project did not count on the hard-working genius of John Butterfield. He never took a day of vacation in his life. He pored over the reports of boundary commissioner Bartlett and Army Cap-

tains Marcy and Pope. The existing mail line from San Antonio to San Diego over the Jim Burch line was a very haphazard affair. One or two wagons a month plodded along and stopped each night for the passengers to cook their own meals and bed down on the ground. Well, that just was not the way John Butterfield operated. He built stagecoach stations all along the route. He put his coaches on a schedule. The meals were ready for the passengers when they arrived, and he only allowed 20 minutes for meals and less for a change of horses. He also put lanterns on his coaches so that his stagecoaches rolled both day and night. But what a task—almost 3,000 miles of mostly unimproved trail through hostile Indian country! Postmaster General Brown called this the longest stagecoach line in the world. It was actually 2,795 miles long. There were only three cities along the entire route. Franklin, which we know as El Paso, Tucson, and a small town of 6,000 people called Los Angeles. He built 139 way stations along this route. That was expanded later to 150. His son, Daniel Adams Butterfield, drew up a schedule between these stations. Old John had a photographic memory and his associates were inspired by his enthusiasm. He could tell you the schedule and the mileage between any of those stations, though he never saw most of them.

Our knowledge of the Butterfield stage comes from two chief sources. First, the *New York Herald* was the only newspaper that thought the event was important enough to send a 23-year-old cub reporter with the interesting name of Waterman Lily Ormsby along on the first stagecoach west. His interesting narrative was published in serial form as it was received. Second some 70 years later when Roscoe Conklin retired from the Army in El Paso, he and his wife drove along the entire 3,000 mile route three times, documenting both the route and the preservation of the stations, and their three-volume report is an invaluable contribution.

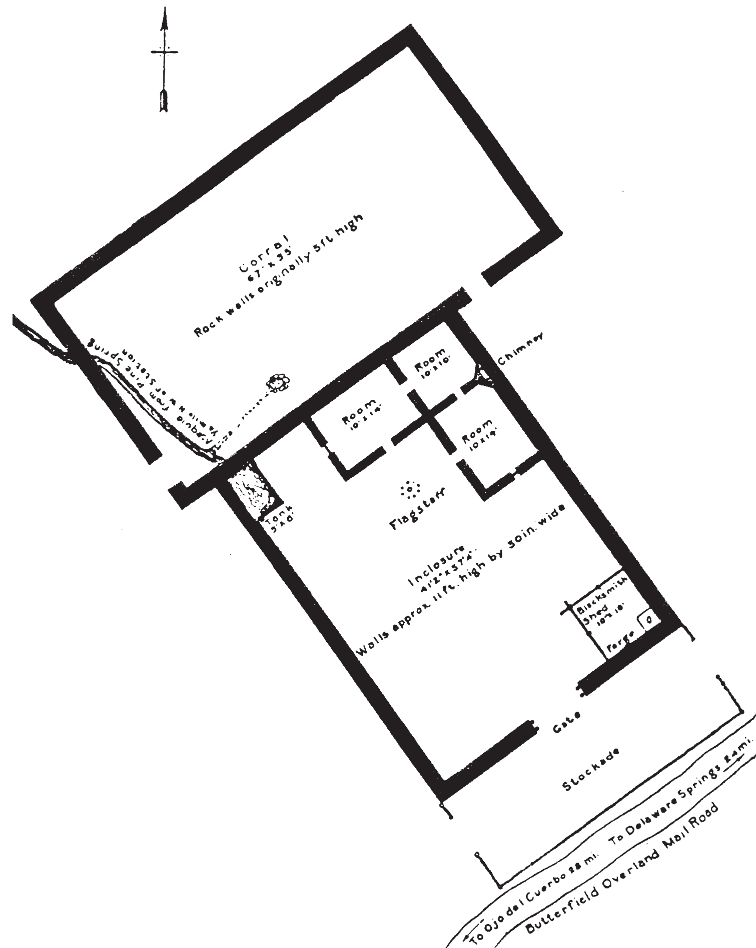
On September 14, 1858, a coach started out from San Francisco and two days later the train took the mail and five passengers from Saint Louis westward to the rail's end at Tipton, Missouri. John Butterfield and Waterman Ormsby were two of the passengers. Since the project was bound to fail, nobody saw them off. The first stagecoach driver was his son, John J. Butterfield, Jr., and he drove the stagecoach all the way to Fort Smith, Arkansas, except when the old man himself took over the reins. Parent Butterfield disembarked the first stagecoach at Fort Smith, and that's as far west as he ever got. The first stage went through Indian Territory and crossed the Red River into the northeast corner of Texas at Colbert's Forge. They went through the tiny hamlets of Gainesville and Sherman and they went on to Fort Belknap and Fort Phantom Hill. Both of these posts had been abandoned by the Army, but Butterfield went into the ruins and built stagecoach stations in both of them. From Fort Phantom Hill they went through Buffalo Gap, 11 miles north of Abilene, and they came to Fort Chadburn. This first Butterfield stagecoach trek was ignored by the eastern United States, but in every fort and town in the West that it came through, it set off riotous demonstrations. The arrival of the first westbound mail in Fort Chadburn was an occasion for celebration on the part of the drivers, and Ormsby said they appeared to have been having a jolly good time for a long time before we got there. Any excuse, you know.

Indians, having raided the corrals a few days earlier, left only wild unbroken mules. When they hitched the wagon to these wild mules, they dashed off in a mad plunge through the trees where the top of the wagon with its canvas covering was completely demolished. This threw Ormsby out of the stagecoach and he almost refused to go any further, but he did so, saying, "If I had any property, I certainly would have made out a hasty will." They then crossed the Colorado River [of Texas] and ruts can still be seen there where the Butterfield stages crossed. The adobe station there fed him a breakfast of mesquite beans and pork. I thought mesquite beans in September were hard as a rock, but that's what they apparently had.

On they went to the head of the Concho River, which was the start of a long 75-mile trek across the Ano West Tecano, which had no water whatsoever. The head of Concho Station was one of the chain of 25 stone and adobe fortified stations that were built by Butterfield between there and Mission Canyon in Arizona. These were built along the Spanish posada style with a high -walled corral and small rooms attached to the inside walls. There was only one entrance wide enough to admit a coach and team in case they were being chased by Indians. Ormsby wrote that they came to the head of the Concho at 2:30 in the morning of Saturday, and the Dutchman who was head of that camp had breakfast for them at 2:30 a.m. I do not imagine they were sleeping too much in that bouncing coach anyway. There were no cushions in those coaches, but the backs of the seats did recline so that they could take turns sleeping—maybe. The Dutchman gave them a breakfast of broiled bacon, short cakes, and coffee, which was considered quite an aristocratic meal for so early a settlement. At least an hour was lost in catching and harnessing more wild mules for the team and for the cavalcade which had to go with them, because there was no change of mules for the next 75 miles. Their wagons were well supplied with canteens of water.

Well, from the head of Concho they went across the dry desert and went through Castle Gap and arrived at the Pecos River at the famous Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos. Here, they did not cross the Pecos. They took an improved road from there up to what's

Figure 3. The Pinery Station ruins stand on the north side of Highway 62, opposite Pine Spring camp on the summit of Guadalupe Mountain Pass. The location is in Culberson County, Texas, Township 1, Block 65, Section 44, previously on the property of Walter Glover and the Grisham-Hunter Corporation, now within Guadalupe Mountains National Park.



now the New Mexico state line. It was a road built by Captain John Pope, who had the idea. He knew that the Llano Estacado would be a formidable barrier to railroads if they did not drill some water wells. So he got some money from congress and got water- well drilling rigs run by a steam engine, and the boiler had to be transported all the way from Indianhoma down on the Gulf Coast, up through San Antonio and up this way. Well, those sand dunes on the east side of the Pecos are quite a formidable barrier to transportation, so John Pope had to build a road from Horsehead Crossing up to Pope's camp. He drilled those three wells, which are really interesting to geologists; he abandoned his camp after the last of the third wells because the rusty Pecos River water had rusted his boiler out in August 1858. So Butterfield took over Pope's camp a month later. They went three miles farther on the Pecos River and crossed at a nice rock crossing there and then headed up Delaware Creek. The next station was at Delaware Springs. They had a nice meal there consisting of jerked beef, bits of bacon cooked over a fire of buffalo chips, served with raw onions and wormy crackers.

Ormsby also reported on the hydrogen-sulfide smell of the springs, and if you have been to Delaware Springs, you know it's still bubbling hydrogen sulfide to this day.

The next station was the Pinery Station in present day Guadalupe Mountains National Park. The entire station was not quite formed at that time, only the corral had been built. The crew was still living in tents, but they fed him a grand meal of venison pie and baked beans. Water came from Pine Springs by means of an acequia which is an open ditch, to the tank in the northwest corner of the Pinery Station. Ormsby was moved by the beauty of the area: "It seems as if nature saved all her ruggedness to pile it up in this colossal form of Guadalupe Peak, sometimes called Cathedral Peak, which rears its head up 4,000 feet above the level of the plain. The wild grandeur of the scene is beyond description. The road winds over some of the steepest and stoniest hills I have yet seen. It is enough to make one shudder to look at the perpendicular side of the canyon."

Ranger Roger Reisch and I have both walked out to the Butterfield line from the old road parking area, down the canyon to the present highway. We are both of the opinion that the rock work which you see there on the north wall above the present highway is probably the stone work of the Butterfield engineers to get them through Guadalupe Pass. Conklin's drawing of the station at the Pinery shows the rock walls of the corral were originally five feet high. The rock walls of the fortress area, with its only one gate entrance, were 11 feet high and 30 inches thick.

The first stagecoach went through Guadalupe Pass then again climbed to higher ground at the bottom of the pass, and it was here that the first westbound and eastbound Butterfield mail coaches passed each other at 7 p.m. on September 28, 1858. Both were several hours ahead of their schedule. The trail continued northwest across the Salt Flat graben to the Cornudas Mountains, the station at the tinaja of Hueco Tanks and on into the town we know as El Paso. Captain Henry Skillman drove the first westbound stagecoach all the way from Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos to Franklin, and when it got to Franklin, it was several hours ahead of schedule. This first stagecoach passage went on through New Mexico and one reason that the Butterfield line was successful was that the Army had just completed negotiations and peace treaties with the Apaches. Mangus Coloradas and all of the resident Indians watched the first stage go by, as did Cochise, watching them go through Apache Pass in southwestern New Mexico. They went on through Arizona and Ormsby describes their arrival in San Francisco. "Just after sunrise the city of San Francisco came in sight, and never did a traveler enjoy a more distant sight. We struck the pavement and to no little surprise of everybody, we finally drove up at the stage office with our driver giving a shrill blast of his horn. It was just 23 days, 23 hours and a half from the time that John

Butterfield had taken the bags at St. Louis." I had the satisfaction of knowing that the correspondent from The *New York Herald* had kept his promise and come through with the first mail. He was the only passenger to do so, and the only one who ever made the trip across the plains in less than 50 days.

Well, San Francisco went wild. They had a great celebration. They had Waterman Lily Ormsby give them a speech and the same thing happened in Saint Louis when the eastbound stage came in.

In recent times commemorative transportation monuments have been placed at the Pinery Station. One was placed by the Highway Department of Texas and another by American Airlines, whose airmail route recognized the original Butterfield Trail as its route flying over the Guadalupe Mountains.

So far as we know, the Butterfield station stagecoach line was eminently successful. It was only short-lived because the Civil War severed the line in March 1861. As far as we know, it never failed to meet that contract schedule. John Butterfield suffered strokes and died in 1869. His son, Daniel Adams Butterfield, became a brigadier general and served as chief of staff to the infamous General Joe Hooker, who commanded the Army at the Potomac. While with this army, he composed the bugle call that we know as Taps.

Chapter 39

Felix McKittrick in the Guadalupe Mountains of Texas and New Mexico

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I thought I'd cover a little bit on Felix McKittrick, who has been sort of a shadowy figure here, and yesterday I ran into somebody who said, "What are you go - ing to talk about?" I answered, "About everything we know about Felix McKittrick, so someday when I'm gone they can put on my tombstone, 'he knew all there was to know about Felix McKittrick,' and somebody else can say, 'Who were either of these two guys?'"

At a symposium on the Guadalupe Mountains, it is fitting that a geologist, R. S. Tarr, State Geologist of Texas, makes one of the first records of McKittrick Canyon in an official report in the mid- 1890s. Stories about Felix McKittrick sandwich in nicely between the Butterfield stagecoach days and Mr. Pratt.

The name "McKittrick" has become at - tached to a number of the landforms in and about the Guadalupe Mountains of west Texas and southern New Mexico, but by the mid- 20th century, its origins had become as ephemeral as the wisps of clouds that hide among those peaks and canyons.

The search for McKittrick was launched by a distant kinsman who happened upon the sign for the canyon of that name in the late 1920s. Time did not permit this chance encounter to develop into a search, but James McKittrick of Pana, Illinois, returned in 1965 to the Carlsbad area to question some of the older residents. He would find several versions of the story, and learn that the name most often mentioned was Felix McKittrick. A National Park Service naturalist, Peter Sanchez, remembered seeing a reference to Captain Felix McKittrick in a magazine article.[1]

The inquiries reached the pages of the *Dallas Morning News* in June 1965 when the patron saint of chili aficionados, Frank X. Tolbert, devoted a column to the McKittrick mystery. Tolbert offered his readers "Kid McKittrick," an obscure gunman supposedly killed in the El Paso Salt War, and another "old-timer's" recollection of a "part - Delaware" McKittrick who worked on a ranch near present - day Carlsbad.[2]

By August of 1965, James McKittrick had a reference to Felix McKittrick from Denton, Texas, and his captaincy of a Confederate cavalry unit. His Carlsbad sources had remembered a McKittrick associated with the Chisum cattle operation.[3]

Guadalupe Mountains National Park Superintendent Donald Dayton continued the inquiries as late as 1975 when another McKittrick relative, Billy S. Th - ompson, wrote for information on the name of the canyon. Dayton had little to go on beyond the material generated by the 1965 letters of James McKittrick. Th - ompson and Dayton apparently let the matter rest after an exchange of information.[4]

After the flurry of activity on McKittrick in the period between 1965 and 1975, the references to a person by that name were limited to the dugout in the canyon[5] and speculation bolstered by J. E. McKittrick's Carlsbad inquiries. Some people remembered he was a cattleman, and others that he was an outlaw.

In 1994, a new round of interest in the facts on McKittrick began to generate discussions and tentative inquiries into available sources. One book in the park library listed McKittrick as Chisum's foreman, and placed him in charge of one of two herds brought into New Mexico in 1866. Further, Felix McKittrick was listed as a rancher on the eastern slope of the Guadalupe Mountains, and a canyon on the south end of the mountains is named for him.[6] The additional link to the John Chisum cattle empire, and the later troubles in Lincoln County, introduced an element of possibility that the heretofore shadowy Felix might be chronicled with the better-known figures of that era.

The key to Felix McKittrick did involve looking at Chisum, and in contacting his relatives in Kentucky, principally Billy Thompson. From McKittrick's roots in Mackville, Kentucky; his arrival in Denton County, Texas, and association with John Chisum; his move to New Mexico; and his final relocation to Arizona and his death there, a series of images collects into the most complete picture to date.

Born in Mackville, Kentucky on November 26, 1828, Felix was the youngest son of Robert McKittrick and a grandson of Captain John McKittrick, Revolutionary War veteran and founder of the Kentucky community. Felix had an older brother, Fielding, and upon their father's death the two youngsters were cared for by a guardian appointed by provisions of the will. The brothers shared in the estate in the equal amounts of $302.01. On February 24, 1846, Fielding apparently leaves Mackville, and no further references appear.[7]

The United States entry into the Mexican War provided McKittrick with his first chance to leave Mackville during service in Captain Mark R. Hardin's Company I, Fourth Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers from October 4, 1847, until July 25, 1848. The honorable discharge issued in Louisville, Kentucky, provides the best description of Felix McKittrick: age 19, with grey eyes, light complexion, and five-feet-nine-inches in height. His listed occupation is cabinet maker.[8]

Even before the Mexican War, Texas had issued lands to a number of impresario colonies to bring in settlers. By the mid-1840s, one of the largest—the Peter's Colony—would bring the first of over 2,000 Kentucky families to an area stretching from the present-day cities of Denton to Abilene.[9] The colonists would provide a buffer for the western push into the Indian frontier, and reinforce the Peters' claims to a vast empire.[10] Among the Kentuckians moving to the colony by the early 1850s is Felix McKittrick.

Denton County will grow from the scattered communities like Alton and French Settlement which listed among their prominent citizens Jim and John Chisum, Emory Peter, and Felix McKittrick. By 1854 McKittrick will have been elected sheriff, and be listed with Peter and the Chisums as prominent cattlemen. The money from his father's estate and land apparently provided McKittrick with the means to a secure future in Texas.[11] By 1860 McKittrick had real estate valued at $1,700 and a personal estate of $20,000.[12]

Also by 1860, Felix McKittrick had returned to Kentucky and married Almira Peter, sister of Emory. The ceremony was performed in Mackville by the Reverand John S. Coy on January 26, 1860. Emory Peter also married a Kentucky bride, Eliza McKittrick, likely a cousin of Felix. Both families would experience loss before 1860 ended, with Almira dying November 11, 1860, along with her newborn child. Eliza Peter would also be lost under similar conditions. Her body was sent home to Mackville.[13]

One of the first associations of McKittrick and Chisum was recorded in Denton in 1860 when they located the body of John B. Denton for whom the county was named. Chisum kept a promise to his father, Claiborne Chisum, to recover Denton's body, and he had it

reburied near the Chisum home. By the time of the discovery, McKittrick and others are cattlemen like Chisum.[14]

The outbreak of war provided McKittrick with new avenues for leadership, but his Civil War service will also result in the beginning of a long direct association with Chisum. On February 8, 1862, Felix will assume the captaincy of Company G, 18th Texas Cavalry in Denton. Though the unit will serve with Walker's Texas Division; Granbury's Brigade, and see action in Atlanta, and with Hood in Tennessee, he will resign for health reasons. McKittrick's request for resignation on November 8, 1862 was granted four days later.[15] The medical problems are not specified, but he was able to contribute to the war effort. One year later the Chisum operations moved from Denton County to the Concho River country, and while the cattle were being relocated, Felix and six other hands worked to build cabins and pens.[16] Chisum, McKittrick, and others would bolster the war effort as contractors for the Confederate government, and be canny enough to exchange their Confederate dollars for cattle.[17]

The end of the Civil War opened new markets for Texas beef in the industrialized north, but lucrative markets already existed in New Mexico. General James H. Carleton's unfortunate reservation experiment at the Bosque Redondo created a government contract for beef to feed the Navajo survivors of the Long Walk and Mescalero Apaches forced from the Sacramento and Guadalupe Mountains.[18]

The two "Long Rail" herds under Chisum and McKittrick drove from the Concho range to the Pecos, striking Horsehead Crossing en route to the Bosque in December 1866. Later that year 10,000 head of cattle would be seen on the Pecos route to the New Mexico free grass.[19] The Chisum herds traveled freely on the first trip, but the Horsehead route would ruin more than one cattleman.

Even the trail-hardened Chisum outfit fell victim to the Apaches. Pitser Chisum took over a herd of 1,200 steers at the Pecos and quickly lost them to the raiding Mescaleros at Black River. Another herd of 1,000 head, plus 150 horses and mules disappeared into the Sacramento Mountains. No government claims were ever paid on these loses.[20]

Despite the risks, other Texans like Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving were bringing additional herds over the trail they pioneered, and the route the "Chisum Jinglebobs" used the previous year. Anticipating the competition, Chisum men had quickly settled on available water, claiming the range along the face of the Guadalupes, up the Pecos to the Bosque Grande. Rattlesnake Springs, below the Carlsbad Caverns, McKittrick Canyon, and later McKittrick Spring, were all held by men associated with the growing Chisum empire.[21]

Attacks on the cattlemen continued into the 1870s with the Chisum outfits hit by Comanches raiding out of Texas. A roundup crew under Felix lost 80 horses in one raid, and one of the hands went down under the bullets of the raiders.[22] There were so many raids by Mescaleros and Comanches that the Chisum hands were on foot during the branding season in 1874 and 1875, and at least one herd coming up the Pecos was left with only the horses the men on guard were riding. Moving the herd only three or four miles per day, the outfit took 15 days to reach the Bosque Grande Ranch.[23]

Chisum moved his headquarters to the South Springs, near present day Roswell, in 1874, and McKittrick followed, building the first house on the Jacobs Ranch.[24] McKittrick became the overseer of the agricultural operations for Chisum, and grew wheat, buckwheat, and rye on his adjoining acreage.[25]

During the buildup of the South Springs property, another possible scheme came to light and tied McKittrick and his friend Chisum into the Lincoln County troubles. The Tunstall Store in Lincoln showed ledger entries for John H.

Tunstall's payment of taxes for a number of prominent ranchers including the old Texas partners. McKittrick and Chisum are listed together in the accounts.[26] The pair also appears with Robert Beckwith in 1874 in the Robert Casey ledger from Lincoln County.[27] Many ranchers depended on credit, but the Tunstall tax payments lead to speculation that McKittrick and Chisum planned to transfer land to Tunstall.[28] The South Springs land was not the only holding of McKittrick, and he sold a ranch on the Rio Hondo to George Taylor after his farming venture took shape.[29]

The McKittrick-Chisum connection seems solid into 1878 with Felix signing for improvements on property belonging to Chisum, Hunter, and Evans at Croton Springs in Arizona. Chisum had closed out much of his New Mexico holdings to Hunter and Evans, and resumed business, presumably after settling with the commission company.[30] In a deposition to the government regarding his claim for losses to the Comanches, Felix testified he was bossing trail herds destined for the Apache reservation in Arizona, and represented Chisum while there.[31]

As the Lincoln County troubles heated up, McKittrick went his own way, and established a ranch near Seven Rivers. In June 1880, the census enumerator found Felix, age 50, widowed, and listed as a dealer in cattle. He is listed as a native of Kentucky. Living with McKittrick is Charles Thomas, 25, also listed as a dealer in cattle. Thomas, like many of the Seven Rivers ranchers, was a Texan.[32]

Joining the Seven Rivers ranchers put McKittrick between his former friend and partner Chisum, and the group of small ranchers, mostly south Texans. At the time he was known to be friendly to Chisum's enemies.[33] McKittrick's new partner, Charley Thomas, was riding with Billy the Kid when the Kid killed would-be gunman Joe Grant in the Hargrove's Saloon in Fort Sumner.[34] The Kid and Thomas were on speaking terms, if somewhat strained, with the Chisum roundup crew on the day they all went to the saloon.[35]

Chisum's herds were targeted by outlaws all over the region, and brands were burned over his Long Rail, while the "jingle bobs" were lopped off, eliminating his signature earmark.[36] The description of the McKittrick-Thomas herd leaves no doubt about their origins. The pair operating out of their McKittrick Spring dugout soon boasted quite a number of cattle with their own signal markings. The herd had no ears, no horns, and was branded 666 on the shoulder, sides, and hip. Chisum was said to have remarked, "They call me the cattle king, but I think Mac has me bested." To which McKittrick replied, "I'm one of your best scholars."[37]

The bold inroads into Chisum's cattle would not be tolerated. Pitser Chisum reported the thievery in 1879 when he wrote Fort Stanton's Commander Henry G. Carroll about stock with unusual marks. Most of the brands registered went to names previously unknown among cattlemen, Chisum noted.[38]

Hiding places for stock were numerous in the Guadalupe and Sacramento mountains. Many ended up in McKittrick Canyon, a place identified with Felix, though the Apaches received the blame for many of the thefts.[39]

McKittrick was still in business in 1882 when John Meadows went to work for him while waiting for a job with a friend moving to the territory. While working with Felix, Meadows witnessed an event involving lawman Pat Garrett and McKittrick's sense of fairness and humor. Garrett had arrested Hugh Beckwith for murdering his son-in-law, William H. Johnson, and was taking his prisoner to Lincoln. Needing to see to another warrant, Garrett left Beckwith in the custody of Felix and Meadows. McKittrick let Beckwith sleep outside the dugout, unguarded, and the sunrise revealed no prisoner in sight. Garrett accepted McKittrick's story, and Meadows always believed that the lawman feared a mob in Lincoln would have lynched Beckwith, so he contrived an escape that left two men a way out.[40]

The lawlessness in Lincoln County would prompt Chisum to enlist his own "warriors"—hired gunmen—to patrol

his ranges. Many Texans moving west from other range wars found employment with the Jingle Bob King.[41]

McKittrick may have also partnered with another veteran of the Chisum outfit, Emory Peter, his brother-in-law and fellow Kentuckian. Family traditions place them at McKittrick Canyon after both left Chisum.[42]

The days were long gone when Felix McKittrick would be the joker-in-residence at the South Spring Ranch and the trusted friend and partner of John Chisum. By 1885 he was gone to Arizona, and he wrote Walter Thayer of Carlsbad inquiring about the people they both knew on the Pecos. Felix had not heard from any of them in a long time, and by 1889 had sold his cattle to Charley Thomas. He let Thayer know that many of the Pecos battlers were using other names out in Arizona.[43] Indeed many were living north of Clifton, Arizona, in the Blue Range seeking refuge and anonymity like Felix.

Some time after his move to Arizona, Felix returned to Kentucky and visited Mackville. His family remembered the visit, and he was perceived as a real westerner in their accounts.[44]

The account of his death lists the cause as drowning and records that Captain Felix McKittrick was found February 22, 1901, in the Blue River. He had fallen over the front of the wagon and his head was in the water. His team of horses had not moved. A former acquaintance added some details, "Cap" McKittrick would come by Clifton, get too much to drink, and tell tales about the old days in New Mexico and Arizona.[45] He was buried in the Blue Cemetery.

McKittrick's estate at the time of his death consisted of a claim against the United States government for the attack by the Mescaleros on the Chisum roundup crew on the Pecos. Felix filed the claim on July 31, 1879, and it was pending when he died. He left any proceeds to two of his nieces back in Kentucky. Emory B. Peter acted as executor. Peter joined S. S. Burdett, an attorney from Washington, D.C., in bringing the case to a close in February 1903 when the award of $1,680 was paid to the estate, less $260 to Burdett. Through the years the government had sought to throw the [Indian depredation] case out because (a) Felix had not filed in a timely manner, (b) because the Indians might have been Comanches, and (c) in a final insult, because the claimant had resided outside the United States and was not a citizen, based on the fact that Felix had been in Mexico, serving as a soldier in the Mexican War.[46]

Many characters in the history of the "wild west" suffer from efforts to make them bigger than life, and their associates get painted with the same brush. Chisum's great herds and experiences in Lincoln County furnish material for endless versions of that event. McKittrick, by comparison, lives on the periphery, but is no less colorful, and by the sheer accident of living amidst geologic wonders and natural beauty will in no small way be remembered always. McKittrick Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains and McKittrick Canyon in the Blue Range of Arizona are fit monuments.

Endnotes

1. Jeter Bryan, "Never Mind: McKittrick Canyon Search Fun, But Fruitless." *Current Argus*, Carlsbad, New Mexico, Sunday, March 14, 1965. James McKittrick talked to a rather long list of old-time residents of the Carlsbad and Seven Rivers area. His letters are in the files at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, but there is no documentation of his conversations with the local people he contacted.

2. Frank X. Tolbert, "Tolbert's Texas: On the McKittrick 'Mystery'" *Dallas Morning News*, June 1965. The clipping copy I have has no date other than this. Tolbert did make a plea for preserving the beauty of McKittrick Canyon.

3. Letter, James E. McKittrick to Peter Sanchez, August 10, 1965. Copy in Guadalupe Mountains National Park files.

4. Letter, Guadalupe Mountains National Park Superintendent Donald Dayton to Billy S. Thompson, October 14, 1975. Copy in Guadalupe Mountains National Park files.

Dayton replied in part, "No definite factual evidence has surfaced as to whether the Felix McKittrick who enlisted in the Confederate Army in Denton County, Texas, was the same man who later worked the cattle lands with John Chisum, and who spent time in the area of what is today Carlsbad and the Guadalupe Mountains."

5. Guadalupe Mountains National Park re - port: "Known Structures in Guadalupe Mountains National Park." The second structure listed is the McKittrick dugout in McKittrick Canyon.

6. Frank Collinson, *Life in the Saddle*.

7. Washington County, Kentucky records re - ferred by Billy Thompson; Fred L. McKitrick, *The McKitricks and Roots of Ulster Scots* (Baltimore, Gateway Press, Inc. 1979); Letter: Beulah Thompson to Billy Th - ompson, October 25, 1975. The Fred McKitrick genealogy study contains gaps, but establishes the McKitricks (McKittricks) as Scots, later settled in Ulster, Ireland. Felix will always be referred to as Irish by writers who knew him. Beulah Thompson repeats the family tradition that Fielding ran away with some type "show." She gives 1885 as the date of a return trip Felix made to Mackville.

8. Bounty-Land Warrant Application 29.577.160-47, Mexican War. National Archives, Can 2187-Bundle 176.

9. T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star* (New York, Macmillian, 1974), 284.

10. Ty Cashion, *A Texas Frontier: The Clear Fork Country and Fort Griffin, 1849–1887* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 23

11. Ed F. Bates, *History and Reminiscences of Denton County* (Denton, McNitzky Printing Co., 1918), 137, 306.

12. Census of the United States, Denton County Texas, p. 433. In what will cause con - fusion later, McKittrick lists his age at 30. His occupation is stock raiser.

13. Washington County, Kentucky: marriage records p. 110; Denton County Historical Commission, IOOF Cemetery Survey, 1982, p. 71, Almira's birth date is January 18, 1834; Beulah Thompson letter, October 25, 1975. Mrs. Thompson confirms that Almira died soon after childbirth, and the child also died. She noted that Felix was no stranger to trag - edy.

14. R. G. Johnson, letter of October 30, 1900; in *Denton Record-Chronicle*.

15. Confederate Archive, Chapter 1, File Number 92, page 30, received from David Williams, letter February 5, 1995. Felix's medical report shows six cards for his time in service.

16. Harwood P. Hinton, "John Simpson Chisum, 1877–84," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 31 (July 1956), 177–205.

17. C. L. Douglas, *Cattle Kings of Texas* (Fort Worth, Branch Smith, Inc.), 115.

18. Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West 1846-1890* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 84–85.

19. Clayton W. Williams, "That Topographical Ghost-Horsehead Crossing." *Old West* (Winter 1974), 50. Charles L. Pyron, traveling the El Paso-Guadalupe Mountains–San Antonio route estimated the numbers of cattle. Horsehead Crossing is accurately located in the Williams' article.

20. Douglas, *Cattle Kings*, 118; Collinson, *Life*, 142.

21. Eve Ball, *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos*, (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1969), 132; Lily Klasner, *My Girlhood Among Outlaws*, (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1972), 35, Edited by Eve Ball. The Rattlesnake Springs are identified with Hank Harrison, and the reference here is that he brought a few cattle and held the land. This may explain the actions of people like McKittrick who owned cattle in Denton County. If so, the Chisum outfit seems to be a large organization with many "partners." The Klasner book links McKittrick to the canyon for a long period of time, noting he camped there for years and "made it his headquarters." By the time the army pursues the Mescaleros into the canyon they have abandoned their camp and left the stock. McKittrick was not occupying the canyon then.

22. T. Dudley Cramer, *The Pecos Ranchers in the Lincoln County War*, (Oakland: Branding Iron Press), 56.

23. Mary Whatley Clark, *John Simpson Chisum: Jinglebob King of the Pecos*, (Austin: Eakin Press, 1984), 24; J. Frank Dobie, *The Longhorns*, (New York: Bramhill, 1982), 75.

24. *Roswell Record*, "Something More of the Past," M. A. Upson, April 15, 1892. Ash Upson is the same person who appears on the census at the Heiskell Jones Ranch and the ghostwriter of Pat Garrett's book on Billy the Kid.

25. Clarke, *John Simpson Chisum*, 113; Mary Hudson Brothers in *A Pecos Pioneer* reports the same information on the farming activities.

26. Frederick Nolan, *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 132, 142. Tunstall's entries are not dated after July 21, 1877.

27. Robert Casey, Biographical File, J. Evetts Haley Collection: J. Evetts Haley History Center, Midland Texas.

28. Nolan, *Lincoln County,* 170.

29. Sid J. Boykin interview with J. Evetts Haley, June 23, 1927, XIT Ranch, Volume 1, JEH Library, Midland, Texas.

30. Letter, Harwood P. Hinton to Alex Williams, May 15, 1978.

31. RG-123, *Records of the United States Court of Claims, Indian Depredation Records, Case Files, March 5, 1891–March 17, 1894; September 21, 1917.* Felix McKittrick, Case Number 5936.

32. U.S. Census, County of Lincoln, Territory of New Mexico. Taken by A. H. Whetson, June 1880. McKittrick and Thomas are Family 31. Their near neighbors are Family 33, the Heiskell Joneses, including boarder, Ash M. Upson.

33. Letter: A. A. Anderson to Almer Blazer, October 31, 1931. Robert Mullin Collection, Nita Stewart Haley Memorial Library, Midland, Texas.

34. Pat F. Garrett, *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954, 1980), 87. This is the book likely ghostwritten by Ash Upson.

35. Robert M. Utley, *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 131–132.

36. Hinton, *J.S. Chisum,* 332.

37. Mary Hudson Brothers, *A Pecos Pioneer*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1943), 50.

38. Hinton, *J. S. Chisum*, 330.

39. Klasner, *My Girlhood*, 35.

40. Early Experiences of John Meadows, Tularosa: J. Evetts Haley Library, Midland, Texas.

41. Clarke, *John Simpson Chisum,* 25.

42. H. P. Hinton to Alex Williams, June 19, 1978. Sharon McKittrick Brown related the family story to Tom Brown of Artesia.

43. Letter: Felix McKittrick to Walter Thayer. Original belongs to Mary Helen Brunt, Carlsbad, New Mexico.

44. Letter: Beulah Thompson to Billy Thompson, October 25, 1975.

45. Solomonville, Arizona, *Bulletin*, March 8, 1901; Letter: Anderson to Blazer.

46. RG-123, Case Number 5936.

Chapter 40

The Career and Contributions of Wallace E. Pratt

JIM W. ADAMS is an American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) certified petroleum geologist in Midland, Texas. He was instrumental in securing corporate funds for park preservation actions on the Wallace Pratt residence, Ship-on-the-Desert. He worked as a geological advisor for Exxon, U.S.A. for 43 years.

Wallace Pratt was born in 1885 and raised on a farm in northern Kansas. Being number six of 10 children, he had to earn his own way through college. He graduated from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1907 and a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1908. He was unable to find a job as a geologist, so he stayed in college and received a Master of Arts Degree in 1909. He then signed on as a geologist with the Division of Mines of the Philippine Islands. When he returned to Kansas in 1915, he earned another degree as Engineer of Mines. He then took a job with the Texas Company in old Mexico where he was thrown in jail and rescued with other Americans by gunboats.

He began his long successful career with the newly formed Humble Oil & Refining Company in early 1918. As their first geologist, he was named chief geologist in Houston; he later became a director and vice president. Wallace Pratt's success as an oil-finder came chiefly through his brilliant mind and his capability as an organizer. He quickly hired a staff of 10 geologists and insisted on their being closely associated with all drilling wells. He started a research laboratory where they could study cores and well samples. He cleverly integrated oilfield scouts, landmen, geologists, and geophysicists into his exploration department, so when any of these people got a lead on a new prospective area, the Humble Company could move quickly to acquire valuable leases at low cost.

His thinking frequently ran contrary to prevailing geologic prejudices of the day. So many of his ideas have become accepted by modern-day geologists they don't seem spectacular unless we notice just how early Pratt came to his conclusions.

1917: Pratt was a founder of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) and their fourth President.

1919: Pratt was a member of the team that went to New York to secure money for a badly needed refinery and a pipeline from the Ranger Field to the Gulf Coast. Standard Oil Company of New Jersey purchased a half-interest in Humble at that time for $17 million. Because of Texas law, however, it was agreed that "Jersey" would not interfere with Humble's board of directors.

1920. Pratt realized that the gas produced with oil was helpful to push the oil through the reservoir rock into the well bore. This started him on a lifelong quest to prevent the burning of gas flares: Pratt was probably the first person to recognize the reservoir recovery factor. He said, "I can't get away from the idea that the flow from such wells does not represent the total volume of oil in the reservoir.... I doubt if these wells flow as much as 50% of the total volume available."

1921: Pratt said, "Our first great exploration success…resulted purely from a breakthrough we made in geological knowledge." He was poring over the field maps late one Saturday night on the kitchen table of his field geologist in Mexia, Texas. The rock structure had been mapped as an anticline, but the data just didn't fit that explanation. Finally it dawned on Pratt that the mecha-

Figure 1. Wallace E. Pratt. Photo courtesy of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

nism trapping the oil was a fault, not an anticline! Three new oil-finding concepts entered his mind that night:

1. Faults can trap petroleum; this was a sealing fault (they were generally considered to leak).
2. The fault plane dipped at an angle to the west (the prevailing thought was that they were vertical).
3. The dip on the fault meant that acreage west of the surface expression might be productive, yet this area was not even leased!

Wallace Pratt was so excited that he telephoned the president of Humble at 2:00 am Sunday morning requesting permission to lease as much acreage as he could get. He was given $400,000 authority; 175 of 180 wells drilled on this acreage were productive. Using these new concepts, Pratt's team was very successful also in the Luling and Powell fields. He doubled Humble's production from 8 million barrels of oil in 1920 to 17 million in 1923. Humble thereby passed up Texaco as the largest producer in Texas.

It was also in 1921 that he first became interested in McKittrick Canyon. "I had been told simply that it was the most beautiful spot in Texas, so I drove 100-odd miles in an old Model T to see for myself…. So over a period of years and largely with borrowed money, I gradually achieved full ownership of McKittrick Canyon and its surrounding acreage." His first interest was strictly for the scenery, but he soon came to realize that he had purchased one of the world's most outstanding exposures of an ancient carbonate reef.

1925: Pratt was at first slow to use geophysics in oil prospecting, but by 1925 he had nine crews in the field including magnetometer, gravity and seismic. During the early 1920s, Humble participated in drilling most of the major Texas oilfields; nearly all of the larger (lease) trades were negotiated by Wallace personally. He was also elevated to Humble's board of directors that year.

1926: Pratt recommended that Humble hire its first petroleum engineer. With John Suman, he supported increased conservation measures, wider well spacing, and more reservoir research. Pratt urged the Railroad Commission of Texas to force operators to reinject panhandle gas to maintain reservoir pressure, and Humble started this practice on its own leases in many fields.

1927: Humble discovered the Sugarland (Texas) Field as the first major field discovered by seismic methods. Under Pratt's leadership, some 300 geologists and landsmen met in Iraan, Texas, to effect the first voluntary production proration agreement in the huge Yates Field.

1928: Humble voluntarily joined its first field unit by turning over a lease to Conoco in Coleman County, Texas. Unitization is accomplished for energy conservation by water flooding or other means with one company operating the entire field for the benefit of all lease owners. Upon the strong recommendation of one of his geologists, Wallace Pratt started leasing in what later proved to be the large east Texas Field.

1929: Pratt's company started a public information campaign to permit state agencies to prorate oil and gas production and permit unitization of fields to conserve energy. Humble also helped the State of New Mexico draft a model conservation law; it also proposed the formation of the Interstate Oil Compact Commission.

1930: Between the time that Dad Joiner's well in east Texas received its first show of oil and the final completion of the well, Wallace Pratt leased another 12,000 acres for $500,000. He correctly surmised that the first three scattered productive wells were part of one long productive trend and leased accordingly. It took nine years to develop these leases, but on their own, they tripled Humble's 1930 reserves and made it the largest operator in the field with 16% of the proven acreage. Of course, this prolific uncontrolled field caused the price of oil to drop below $0.10 per barrel during

America's Great Depression, and hard times came to the oil patch until World War II.

In a letter I received from Wallace Pratt, which I treasure, he wrote: "We built our first home in McKittrick Canyon in 1930 (we had to go clear to Sweetwater, Texas, to get a stonemason). Our first home was located at the mouth of North McKittrick where it joins Main McKittrick. Our first home is generally known as 'Pratt's Hunting Lodge' although we have never hunted nor permitted hunting on our property. Both of our homes are constructed of fine-grained closely laminated, silty limestones of the marine facies of the Bell Canyon. Both were included in our gift of McKittrick Canyon to the National Park Service to become the nucleus around which it accumulated all of the present Guadalupe Mts. National Park."

Also during this year, Pratt's geophysicists developed the industry's first gravity meter to replace the slower torsion balance.

1931: Pratt converted all Humble seismic crews from refraction surveys to Everett L. DeGolyer's more progressive reflection surveys. He also established a training section for professional personnel.

1933: This was a banner year for 48-year-old Wallace Pratt. He was made a vice president of Humble Oil. He learned how to fly, bought an open-cockpit airplane, and built a landing strip on the McKittrick Canyon Ranch so they could enjoy it more. During his lifetime, he also flew this plane to New York and Alaska. It was also in 1933 that Pratt accomplished what was to him a highlight of his career: he negotiated a lease of the huge King Ranch, the largest single lease ever written: over one million acres in 11 counties of south Texas. The lease terms were specified by Robert Kleburg of the King Ranch, but the integrity of Wallace Pratt was a key factor in these negotiations. Pratt had infuriated Kleburg 15 years earlier when he canceled a lease because of checkerboard provisions that he felt were not in the best interests of Humble or the King Ranch. Pratt's argument was that if 10 different companies operated wells on the ranch, who would Kleburg go to when someone ran in to his pet bull? Facing a $3 million inheritance tax and not wanting to sell part of their prize herds, Robert J. Kleburg, Jr. came around to Pratt's way of thinking. Kleburg's terms of this new lease were:

1. No lease bonus!
2. Humble would lend the ranch $3,500,000 at 5% interest
3. Annual rentals of $127,824
4. ? royalty on production
5. 20 year lease (renewed until year 2000)

Humble's president was opposed to this lease in rank wildcat territory during the height of the Great Depression. With low oil and gas prices, he wanted Pratt to get partners to spread the risk. Gulf, Shell, and Texaco all turned down the chance to participate. Wallace Pratt remained optimistic: "Unlike most of my fellow geologists, I was convinced that hydrocarbons are normal constituents of marine sedimentary rock" (Copithorne 1982). Pratt's arguments were so impressive that Humble's board of directors not only approved the King Ranch lease, but gave him authority to lease an additional two million acres between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande. It took many years to develop the King Ranch, but Pratt's lease yielded Humble over 1,000 oil and gas wells. When these large gas reserves were discovered, there was no outlet, so Pratt personally pushed gas contracts with refineries in the Houston area and got a pipeline built to supply them. The huge King Ranch gas plant that was necessitated by these transactions also generated profit for Humble.

1933: The discovery of Tomball, Pledger, and Greta fields added a trillion cubic feet of gas to Humble's reserves. Humble also started running Schlumberger electric logs in 1933.

1934: Humble's discoveries at the Means Field (Andrews, Texas), Tom O'Conner (south Texas), and Hastings Field added 315 million barrels of oil to Humble's reserves, thus exceeding the reserves of Gulf and Texaco combined. Wallace

Pratt did an extensive study and found that oil consumption was exceeding even the good rate of discovery. Despite the glut of oil in east Texas, he predicted that the United States would someday need to import oil; therefore, he accelerated leasing 50% greater than 1933!

1935: Pratt's exploration team discovered the Anahuac Field (200 million barrels of oil) while the Katy Field yielded Humble's largest gas reserves.

1936: Amelia Field was a Humble seismic discovery while Talco yielded another 80 million barrels of oil reserve.

1937: During the Great Depression when the price of oil fell to less than $1 per barrel, many oil companies ceased leasing and reduced drilling and began laying off professional personnel. Wallace Pratt's genius lay in pursuing a course directly opposite to that of industry. He reasoned that leases were cheap and personnel were cheap, so he expanded lease acquisitions, drilling, and hiring. The official history of Humble states: "Pratt's courage—his willingness to think and act independently—merits special emphasis. At the very time when much of the American Oil Industry had greatly reduced…its search for oil, he led his company in an unprecedented campaign for building up its reserves. He persuaded his associates on the Humble Board…by the persuasiveness of his facts and arguments" (Larson and Porter 1959). "Pratt's high standing outside the company was an important factor…he worked for the advancement of petroleum geology, better production methods, and the conservation of resources… In the lease market, he had a reputation for fair trading…. He was an outstanding geologist as well as an administrator" (Larson and Porter 1959).

1937 also brought the discovery by Humble of Friendswood Field near Houston, of North Crowley in Louisiana, and Wasson Field in west Texas. In this year of Humble's largest expenditure for leases ($8 million), Wallace Pratt (June 30, 1937) was made a director and executive committee member of Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. He left Humble but not without some trepidation. He said, "My instinct has always been to distrust any enterprise that requires a new set of clothes" (Copithorne 1982).

During Pratt's tenure with Humble (from 1918 to the prorated year 1937) he and his exploration team succeeded in raising the company's reserves from 32 million barrels of oil to 1.9 billion barrels of oil, more than twice that of its nearest domestic competitor. They increased production from 11,759 barrels of oil per day to 138,660 barrels per day, with a capability of 150,000 barrels per day. By 1941 production on Pratt's leases had risen to 149,972 barrels of oil per day with remaining oil reserves proven at 2.7 billion barrels (14% of our nation's total) plus 6.6 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Wallace and Iris Pratt moved to a flat overlooking Central Park in downtown Manhattan.

1937–1945: Wallace Pratt's career with "Jersey" was also successful. He set up an office in France that discovered the Parentis Field (France's largest oilfield). He was also instrumental in establishing sound relations with the government of Venezuela that were very important to Jersey's large operations there.

The Humble Company's contribution to the war effort during these years was outstanding. Many employees served in the Armed Services, others in Oil Planning Boards in Washington. Humble's greatest contribution was in oil production, the largest in the nation; pipelines—the "Big Inch" pipeline from Texas to the East bypassed German submarines in the Gulf of Mexico; and refining—Humble developed high-octane airplane gasoline and also made valuable synthetic butyl rubber from patents obtained from I. G. Farben of Germany during the 1920s. Events in the life of Wallace Pratt during the war were:

1941: He delivered four lectures to the Department of Geology of his alma mater, the University of Kansas, which contained his most famous quotation:

"Where oil is first found, in the final analysis, is in the minds of men" (Salvador 1982).

1942: Pratt was made a vice president of Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.

1943: Wallace and Iris Pratt were marooned one week in the McKittrick Canyon cabin by a flash flood. This caused them to think about building another house on the ranch.

1944: He predicted the discovery of important oil deposits on the North Slope of Alaska. Humble secured leases there and participated in the Prudhoe Bay discovery.

1945: At the age of 60, Wallace Pratt retired from Standard Oil of New Jersey, but did not retire from geology. I have often marveled that this active man, with the entire world at his fingertips in that office in downtown Manhattan, chose to move to the solitude and quiet of McKittrick Canyon. For the next 15 years, he didn't have a telephone and lived 10 miles from the nearest neighbor and 60 miles from the nearest post office. Wallace and Iris Pratt built a larger home near the mouth of McKittrick Canyon out of the same type of limestone flagstones as the cabin. This was the famous "Ship-on-the-Desert" that was designed on the lines of an oil tanker. It is long and narrow with railings above the first story protecting extensive sun decks. A second story "bridge" is located in the center which features large picture windows with magnificent views: McKittrick Canyon to the northeast, the Delaware Basin to the south, and Capitan Peak to the west. Access to the bridge is by a unique circular stairway: one vertical pole with radiating steel plates and circular handrail like that in a submarine.

Wallace Pratt was very fond of the wooden bookshelves that he had especially built while in New York. He brought these with him when he retired to the ranch and he donated them to the National Park Service where they can be seen in the Ship-on-the-Desert today. When Exxon closed their office in Midland, Texas, I requested that they donate books to fill these bookcases. They graciously gave "The Ship" a complete set

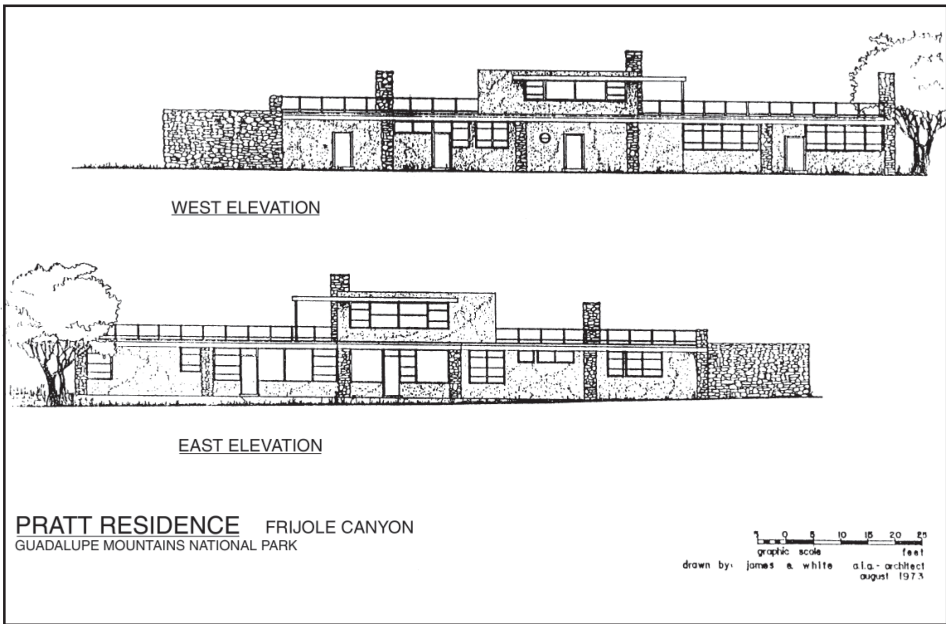

Figure 2. The second Pratt residence, Ship-on-the-Desert, in the Guadalupe Mountains. Drawing by James E. White, A.L.A. Architect, August 1973.

of bound American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletins (1917–1997: 80 years!) and a complete set of the Journal of Sedimentary Geology (1933?–1996).

I once made the mistake of calling this house the "Ship-of-the-Desert." Wallace Pratt quietly corrected me: "No, Jim, the Ship-OF-the-Desert is a camel." The National Park Service has now designated this building as The Wallace Pratt Ship-on-the-Desert Research Center, and it is a useful dormitory for research geologists, biologists, botanists, ecologists, environmentalists, and cave experts needing a home within park boundaries.

During his retirement years, Pratt set up a consulting office in Carlsbad to which he would commute in his airplane or in "his" of "his-and-hers" Mercedes Benz—back in a time when NO Americans bought foreign cars.

He also drilled a few oil wells on his own, many of which were successful! It was also in 1945 that Pratt was named the first recipient of the highest honor awarded by AAPG: The Sidney Powers Memorial Medal. In presenting this medal to him, another pioneer oil finder, Everett L. DeGolyer aptly summarized Pratt's contribution by saying, "He has raised the profession of petroleum geology to an eminence and a dignity which it would not otherwise attain." To all such honors, Wallace Pratt modestly replied, "I was lucky. The time just happened to be ripe for someone with my bag of tricks to come over the pike."

1946–1947: Wallace Pratt traveled extensively as one of the first AAPG distinguished lecturers. He predicted that enormous quantities of oil and gas would be found by offshore drilling on continental shelves all over the world, and that eventually we would need to use solar energy also.

1948: The Pratts lived in Washington where he served as assistant chairman of the National Security Resources Board. It was at this time that the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers awarded him the Anthony Lucas Medal.

1950–1959: Many more honors came to Wallace Pratt. The president of Columbia University, Dwight D. Eisenhower, gave him the university's James Forman Kemp Medal. API presented him with the Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement. Both AAPG and the Roswell Geological Society made him an honorary life member. I attended the latter presentation where the president talked at length about all of Wallace Pratt's achievements. When Wallace was finally allowed to speak, he thanked the president and quietly added: "I got so enthused listening to that marvelous introduction that I couldn't wait to get up here to hear what I had to say."

1960: When Iris Pratt's arthritis needed more treatment, they moved to Tucson, Arizona. As a young geologist, Wallace had longed to see granite, which Kansas did not have at the surface. He was overjoyed to spend his last years walking around some of the oldest granite on the continent. They first offered the McKittrick Ranch to son, Dr. Wallace Pratt, Jr., provided he would live on the ranch. He wasn't interested. This triggered the first of three acreage donations totaling about 5,632 acres to the National Park Service which he felt would be the ablest custodian of the beautiful scenery of McKittrick Canyon as the nucleus for the future Guadalupe Mountains National Park. This grant was made with concurrence of his heirs. They donated about one-third of their acreage to the park including the McKittrick cabin and the Ship-on-the-Desert and retained about two-thirds as a working cattle ranch. Then Wallace and Iris Pratt built a third house on the ranch for the enjoyment of the family. The following year, Iris persuaded Wallace very reluctantly to give up flying at the age of 76.

1969: Wallace was the keynote speaker at the dinner honoring him and others being inducted into the Permian Basin Hall of Fame in Midland, Texas. Throughout his life, he was a generous contributor to the University of Kansas and the AAPG where an office tower at the Tulsa head-

quarters is named after him. But one of his most lasting gifts was the one he gave to you and to me: the everlasting beauty of the Guadalupe Mountains and their canyons. Today when we come to the visitor center we hear a tape extolling the natural beauty and geological significance of this "prettiest spot in Texas." It is Wallace Pratt's voice urging us to enjoy the same things he enjoyed here: "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, and sermons in stones."

Wallace Pratt stayed up late on Christmas Eve in 1981. He was dictating letters to his friends. He passed away as gently as he lived on Christmas Day at the age of 96. As Pratt himself said many times to others: "Vaya con Dios."

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Chapter 41

The Role of History in Managing NPS Areas

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If mountains are good for the soul, then the Guadalupe Mountains are good for my soul. Having grown up here, they have been part of my existence for as long as I can remember; they were magical and mystical and very seductive for me as a boy scout. I went camping and hiking in and around them during the 1950s. I knew men who had hiked to the top of the Guadalupe Peak and I held them in awe. I could imagine that, but I never did it until about five years ago. I am sure it was a lot easier when I did than when they did. My first excursion into the Guadalupes wasn't until 1963 as a laborer at Carlsbad Caverns when Dick Stansbury, who then was chief of maintenance for the park, and I went out to McKittrick Canyon to the Wallace Pratt Lodge, the first Pratt cabin. (Just for the record I picked up trash the first season and cleaned toilets the second season.) I think we got a refrigerator out of there and took it to the dormitory at Carlsbad Caverns. That was my first entry into the heart of the Guadalupe Mountains. I was of course quite taken by that. I remember that when I was returning from Vietnam in 1966, I had shipped back and spent a month in San Diego and then got a leave of absence, or whatever you call it, furlough. I remember getting on the bus in El Paso and getting a left hand seat so I would be sure and see the Guadalupes as they loomed ahead. And it wasn't until I went through Guadalupe Pass I knew that I was home and everything was going to be okay. I have a painting of the Guadalupe Mountains in my dining room so that I get a good dose of the Guadalupes every day, and I plan on a long engagement with the Guadalupes, getting to know more of it over a long period of time. My will stipulates that after my demise and cremation, I am to be sprinkled in the Guadalupe Mountains. I can't say I'm looking forward to that, but it's there nonetheless.

Let's talk some history. One hundred years ago, William James wrote of being in the mountains of North Carolina and seeing what he perceived as pure squalor. "The forest had been destroyed," James wrote. Settlers had killed all the trees, planted their crops around the stumps, and built crude cabins and crude fences. The result was hideous, a sort of ulcer, without a single element of artificial grace to make up for the loss of nature's beauty. Ugly indeed seemed the life of the squatter. But as he became better acquainted with the region and its inhabitants, James began to view the landscape through their eyes. "When they looked on the hideous stumps," he wrote, "what they thought of was personal victory. The chips, the girdled trees, the vile split rails spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil, and final reward. The cabin was a warrant of safety for self, wife and babes. In short, the clearing which to me was an ugly picture on the retina was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very paean of duty, struggle and success" ("On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" in William James: Writings, 1878–1899).

Perceptions shape the way we look at things: the natural world, history, other cultures, our own culture, the federal government.

Perceptions shape the way we look at things: the natural world, history, other cultures, our own culture, the federal government. Perceptions are based on our own experiences, knowledge, ethnicity, social circles, economic status, political outlook, and geographical roots. Even as we thought we understood the concept of nature, William Cronon, Richard White, and others are challenging us to think about it in new

and different ways, even suggesting that wilderness is a cultural construct and not an environmental abstract. Bill Cronon in particular has opened our minds to the idea that the American landscape of 1492 and after had been shaped and molded by Native Americans for generations, and the concept of virgin forests was, in reality, not so real.

Historians regularly deal with the wonderfully interesting intersection of history, myth, and culture. Many of our most cherished cultural traditions are built not on solid historical documentation but on cultural traditions that help us make sense of a sometimes confusing and dissonant past: Washington praying in the snow at Valley Forge, Betsy Ross sewing the first flag. I'll not mention Washington chopping down the cherry tree.

The National Park Service harbors its own cultural traditions. For decades the Washburn expedition of 1870 through Yellowstone served as the genesis of the national park idea. It is now more completely understood as the origin of a happy partnership linking first the Northern Pacific and later other railroads with tourism and national parks. (For years the diorama of the expedition in the Department of the Interior museum carried the mythic tradition. A second label put up in recent years adds an additional layer of understanding to that event.)

What is a useful history to one generation does not work for the next, thus prompting a reconsideration or reassessment.

But we don't like to have our perceptions of truth challenged, our contemporary perceptions or our perceptions of the past. We get comfortable with the worlds we create, and yet we know instinctively that our truths are not universal, that others have perceptions that are different from ours, and that the open discussion of those differences can be intellectually and emotionally stimulating and—gasp—may even prompt us to modify our previously assumed truths. Historians in particular see their work as evolutionary. What is a useful history to one generation does not work for the next, thus prompting a reconsideration or reassessment or to use the other "R" word, revision, of the past. Indeed, history has a way of bringing us up short. Just as we think we have it all figured out: everyone in their place, events all in order, someone, usually a historian or writer of some vision comes along and stirs the pot, reorders the past, adds new players to the game, gives us a different perspective on the past, encourages us to think differently about what we thought we knew, adds a new and different voice to preconceived notions about "the olden days."

That is as it should be, the way it has been since written history began. We know this in our personal lives. We know that our perceptions of events change as we age, as we mature, as we move from place to place, as we learn more through reading and thinking about events we witnessed earlier. (Those who have experienced war certainly know that firsthand accounts of battles differ depending on whether the author was an officer or enlisted, whether the account was written immediately after or decades later.) It is, I think, those evolving perceptions about the past that imbue the profession of history with the excitement that currently characterizes its conferences, journals, and stimulating discussions over breakfast and beer. A sense of anticipation: what will Bill Cronon or Donald Worster or Patty Limerick do to us next?

Interesting then—isn't it?—that as a society we have trouble accepting different interpretations of the past. We tend to want a seamless unchanging past; one that reaffirms assumed truths; one that minimizes conflict and embraces a dominant narrative of progress, upward mobility, and success all leading to happy endings—sort of an Ozzie and Harriet version of history. The western writer Wallace Stegner thought the formation of a mythic past, personal and collective, cuts us off from not only our past but from ourselves, and thus hinders our ability to know how to adapt wisely and responsibly to our environment and to changing contemporary conditions. Our understanding of the past is not a monolith, rigid and static, but dynamic and fluid, and we search for truths knowing that ultimate truth will

always elude us. Historians also understand now that our understanding of history comes not just from the written record but from various remnants from our past. Perhaps Stegner said it best (I am a Wallace Stegner fan) when he wrote, "The past becomes a thing made palpable in the monuments, buildings, historic sites, museums, attics, old trunks, relics of a hundred kinds; and in the legends of grandfathers and great-grandfathers; and in the incised marble and granite and weathered wood of graveyards; and in the murmuring of ghosts" (from Wolf Willow 1962).

It is the historian's responsibility to listen to those murmurings and legends, visit monuments and graveyards alike, examine "relics of a hundred kinds." Historians look for and interpret stories. Historians in the National Park Service look for stories that connect us with specific places. They link relics—those physical, tangible reminders of our collective past—to us in the present and give them purpose and meaning. Historians approach natural parks no differently than they do cultural parks; indeed, over the past decade or so, we have seen the lines blur between our artificially imposed labels of "natural" and "cultural." Is Saratoga National Historical Park with its forests and fields and creeks a natural park or a cultural park? The blending of professional sensibilities at such places is a healthy development for the [National Park] Service, as I will note later.

Because we now recognize the impact of human occupation on all of your parks, we recognize increasingly that historical information provides the beginnings of a framework for understanding the natural processes of place. To know that indigenous people used fire on a regular basis to renew vegetation, clear land, or herd wildlife gives us insights regarding nature of the landscapes we have been charged with preserving.

It is not surprising, then, to remember that one of the first studies commissioned by the National Park Service at Guadalupe Mountains National Park was a historical overview of human occupation and use of this park. That was quickly followed by a structural and archeological survey. The latter was accomplished under contract with Texas Tech University during the 1970s where I was then a graduate student in history. (I missed out on that contract, but a year later drove Tech's 1953 surplus Air Force ambulance, all 7,000 pounds of it—you can talk to Paul and Susana [Katz] about their driving it earlier—to the Arkansas Ozarks where I constructed the same sort of structural survey along the Buffalo River.) Baseline information from historians and archeologists enable us to chart a clearer course in all our management activities.

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The second area where historians play a major role in managing natural areas is through the preparation of administrative histories. These studies do not focus as much on the resources of the park, but on how the National Park Service as an agency has managed those resources over time. They provide an introspective look at a federal agency that historically has not been very introspective. If they are worth doing (and they are) they are worth doing right, and that means producing an unvarnished analysis of the failures as well as the successes of park management. These histories should not be laudatory, although praise when deserved is always appreciated. Instead, they should provide us a clear sense of where we have been so we can increase the chances that the decisions we make in the future will stand a better chance of being right (or at least more right). Administrative histories are done individually (involving one park) or collectively (involving multiple parks or processes). Had Hal Rothman stayed around, I would have said something about his work, but since he chose to leave before I talked, I will not mention Hal Rothman and his contribution to our understanding of us and our agency.

I would be remiss in my comments if I didn't mention three recent administrative histories that are shaping the future of natural resource management throughout the National Park Service. Linda Flint McClellan's *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* published by John

Preserving Nature in the National Parks *has been embraced by the bureaucracy and is being used to alter the course of the agency.*

Hawkins University Press provides a historical perspective on how the National Park Service conceived and constructed its own brand of cultural landscapes. Ethan Carr's *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* just out by the University of Nebraska Press is a parallel work that looks closely at the design of complex built landscapes such as historic districts in several national parks. And finally, I must make mention of a book I trust all of you have read or will shortly read: *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* by Richard West Sellars represents the critical analysis of National Park Service management practices at its finest. (They didn't pay me to give this plug, but I notice there are a stack of books out there that I'm sure the purveyors would just as soon not take back to their office. So if you don't have a copy, please get one.) Sellars has provided us an unblinking assessment of how this agency has done during its first 80 years of managing natural resources in the parks. It is critical and fair and it prompted the director to initiate an overhaul of the natural resource management program, an overhaul being discussed and refined this week during the National Leadership Council meeting in Washington. It was not without a little trepidation that Sellars offered his book to the National Park Service. An earlier generation of managers would not have received [it] so acceptingly. I think it is an encouraging sign of the maturation of the National Park Service that *Preserving Nature in the National Parks* has been embraced by the bureaucracy and is being used to alter the course of the agency. We should all be thankful that Richard Sellers had the experience within the agency and the training and perspective of an environmental historian to craft this marvelous book. We should also be thankful that Regional Director John Cook had the vision to support—without hesitation—what turned into an almost decade-long labor of love for both men.

Finally, I should mention the work of other historians whose vision at the global scale help us understand the natural world in historical perspective and the role of human occupation within it. Bill Cronon, Don Worster, and Richard White, among others, have prompted us to think differently, to conceptualize our work more broadly, to examine and question our purpose and goals more thoroughly. Their work constantly reminds us of the seamless interconnections between nature and history, between natural processes and human activities through time.

Managing the national parks into the 21st century will require greater attention to balancing visitor use with preservation of natural and cultural resources. How do we manage wilderness areas that reflect 18th and 19th century human occupation? How do we effectively preserve historic places that contain rare and endangered species? How do we deal with historic places threatened by natural processes?

These are not easy questions, and they do not engender easy answers. Today the National Park Service has not one mandate, but many mandates. We are the creation of congress, and while we take our lead largely from the Organic Act, we also are bound by subsequent directions from congress: the 1935 Historic Sites Act, the 1964 Wilderness Act, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1969 National Environmental Protection Act, and many others. Our job is to balance these various charges in such a manner that respects the integrity and significance of all the resources within our care. During the 1960s the National Park Service divided our resources—your resources—into three categories: natural, historical and recreational. Today the value of hindsight has taught us that a more holistic approach to resource management not only makes more sense, but also matches the reality of our circumstance. Many of our parks reflect an intertwining of the natural and cultural, and yes, the recreational. My personal view is that it is unfortunate that the discipline of cultural geography was not embraced by the National Park Service when it began to be developed during the 1920s. Instead of looking at individual resources, we could have been looking at systems of resources and

appreciated how the natural historically affected the cultural and how the cultural naturally affected the natural. We now know that almost every place we manage was altered in some fashion by human hands prior to our coming on the scene. There are no vignettes of a primitive America. New England was practically denuded of trees by the middle of the 19th century and had been altered extensively prior to 1620. Yosemite was manipulated by fire prior to European exploration.

Our management policies now are, I think, (I hope, since we are revising them this year) less combative between the resources than in the past. Our battlefields and other cultural landscapes are places where the various disciplines come together for common purpose, and that model is being implemented elsewhere, even here in the Guadalupe Mountains. The Vail Agenda suggests that the National Park Service is being looked at as an international model of "conservation and preservation management—a model that can teach valuable lessons to a world increasingly concerned with environmental degradation, threats to wilderness values, and rapid cultural and historical change." To meet that challenge, we must acknowledge the connections between the natural and cultural spheres and manage them as wholes, not parts.

I would like to conclude with three thoughts—all borrowed. The first comes from William Cronon in his introduction to *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Cronon writes, "A cultural tenant of modern humanistic scholarship is that everything we humans do, our speech, our work, our play, our social life, our ideas of ourselves and the natural world, exist in a context that is historically, geographically and culturally particular and cannot be understood apart from that context." The National Park Service is a political entity created by congress 82 years ago. It continues to be shaped by that legislative body. To be effective, we must understand the context of the time in which we were created and understand the context of the times in which we work.

Part of what makes our work so challenging and exciting is that we all don't come to the table with the same set of perceptions, knowledge, and sensibilities. We manage our parks and our resources between and around differing interpretations of the past, different sensibilities of our policies, and differing understandings of our missions. It is those places where disparate points of view rub together—the spaces between—that I and others find so interesting and enlightening. Barbara Kingsolver, author of *High Tide in Tucson: Essays from Now or Never* and many other books, enjoys those conflicting belief systems—those spaces between—between men and women, North and South, white and non-white, communal and individual, and I would add, natural and cultural. It is through our better understanding of, and respect for, the spaces between that we will be able to manage our lands for the benefit of America in the 21st century. It is within this broader social and intellectual framework that the National Park Service reflects the "land, the cultures, and the experiences that have defined and sustained the people of the nation in the past and upon which we must continue to depend in the future."

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Finally, I will turn to Joseph Sax, who in his superb analysis of the origin of the national park idea concluded, "To speak of man as the measure of all things is not only a cliché but to describe a world in which the rhythm of life is tuned only to the pace of human enterprise. It is not that we are necessarily going too fast but that we risk losing contact with any external standards that help us to decide how fast we want to go. It is the function of culture to preserve a link to forces and experiences outside of the daily routine of life. Such experiences provide a perspective—in time and space—against which we can test the value, as well as the immediate efficacy, of what we are doing." Historians function at the intersection of the natural rhythm of life and the cultural context of human enter-

prise. They bring the historical perspective of our natural and cultural worlds to the National Park Service's management table. That table, we now understand, is large enough to accommodate a wide range of perspectives and professions. And we are better managers because of it.

Chapter 42

Eyewitness Details and Perspectives: The Value of Oral History at Guadalupe Mountains National Park

ROBERT J. HOFF has served at Carlsbad Caverns National Park for the past 12 years; he is the park historian. He has held positions in interpretation and visitor services throughout his 27-year career with the National Park Service.

Voices from the past. Voices of people who went before us—and who now consent to share with us what they experienced and felt. The historian who conducts oral history interviews "captures" on tape—and later through transcription—the stories, insights, and perspectives of "people who were there;" actual eyewitnesses to a period of history interesting to that particular historian and to others.

Many of these voices from the past do nothing less than enlarge the horizons and understandings of those of us in the present. Don't we often understand and enjoy more about a historical place or time or person when we take the opportunity to listen to those with personal connections with those places, eras, and people?

In his 1985 book *Oral History for Texans* Baylor University Professor, Thomas L. Charlton, wrote:

> Who can argue against the potential good that lies in capturing the accounts and voices of people employing their memories as they describe their personal and social experiences? Who could possibly oppose the preserving of first-person recordings that may help overcome the growing shortage of personal diaries, elaborate correspondence, and other primary sources which, until recent years, were standard items in families, businesses, and other elements of society?

Charlton, who has been in charge of the Baylor University Institute of Oral History since 1970, notes elsewhere: "Oral history holds out some hope that information thus gathered informally about the past will enable both living and future generations to grasp what it was like to be alive during any given past era." Certainly oral history is a good opportunity to "grasp what it was like to be alive during any given past era."

Many of these voices from the past do nothing less than enlarge the horizons and understandings of those of in the present.

Let me admit right here that oral history is but only one way to understand the story of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. In 1990 Judith Fabry published *Guadalupe Mountains National Park: An Administrative History*, a very thorough, well-organized, and interesting historical account of the park. In addition, Professor Hal K. Rothman is currently preparing a well-researched historical resources study for Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

If such historical studies exist, why should historians bother with conducting more oral history interviews? For several reasons, oral histories have their own value.

1. Oral history interviews often result in fresh "points of view" or perspectives that illustrate an historical topic from a different angle.
2. Oral history interviews often reveal "choice" specific details never before revealed in other sources. Such details may result in some historical person or event coming into better focus; such details may also result in

some new connection being made between a Cause A and an Effect B, between Person A and Person B, or between Motivation A and Behavior B.

3. A person mentioned in an interview often becomes a historical source to be contacted later by the interviewing oral historian. These unexpected "leads" sometimes prove to be rewarding in separate research value themselves.
4. Oral history interviews often present historians with contrary points of view, a reminder that every issue has an array of perspectives, and that all perspectives must be weighed and considered in interpreting history.

"Oral history is as reliable or as unreliable as other research sources. No single piece of data of any sort should be trusted completely."
—Donald Richie

Historian Donald Richie declares that "oral history is as reliable or as unreliable as other research sources. No single piece of data of any sort should be trusted completely, and all sources need to be tested against other sources."

Recently I did an oral history interview with Carlsbad Caverns Management Assistant Bob Crisman. With the help of several others, we conducted 15 interview sessions, lasting a total of 20 hours. Known for his keen interest in history, for his attention to detail, for his marvelous history files kept over 40 years in the National Park Service, and for his devotion to National Park Service goals and ideals, Crisman proved to be a knowledgeable, willing, interesting, and articulate oral history interviewee.

Crisman worked at Carlsbad Caverns National Park from 1957 to 1960 and from 1970 to 1996. He split the 1960s decade about in half working at Montezuma Castle National Monument in Arizona and Fort Davis National Historical Site in Texas. During the period 1972–1987 when Guadalupe Mountains National Park was administered by Carlsbad Caverns National Park, he served first as a staff interpreter and from 1974 on as the management assistant. During these 15 years, he worked directly in the operations of Guadalupe Mountains National Park.

During the interview, Crisman recalled that the bill to authorize the park was signed on October 15, 1966, by President Lyndon Baines Johnson (who himself was the subject of a wonderful 1980 oral history work entitled *Lyndon: An Oral Biography* by author Merle Miller) six years before the park was established. Before the park could be staffed and opened, land and mineral rights had to be acquired.

In those six years before the park would be established (1966–1972), Crisman said, "it was kind of a nebulous period in there; we were getting public use even though we weren't officially opened."

Actually National Park Service involvement in the area had started in 1959 when Wallace Pratt, a highly respected petroleum geologist and conservationist who first came to the Guadalupe Mountains area in 1921, bestowed the first of three donations totaling 5,600 acres in McKittrick Canyon; that land was administered as a detached section by Carlsbad Caverns National Park, like Rattlesnake Springs is today. In the early 1960s, rangers had started living in the Pratt house near McKittrick Canyon with the picturesque name of Ship-on-the-Desert.

In September 1997, the park celebrated the 25th anniversary of its September 30, 1972, dedication. Crisman recalled that at the original 1972 dedication the count was 2,424 people, and "I remember myself and others having to make a lot of phone calls to help generate that crowd. We got a lot of school kids from Van Horn and Dell City out there." Julie Nixon Eisenhower was the principal speaker; Crisman recalled writing suggested material for her to use if she cared to use it. Congressman Richard White, Senator Ralph Yarborough, and Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Nathaniel Reed were present. Also present was Caverns Superintendent Donald Dayton and one of Dayton's predecessors, former Caverns Superintendent "Colonel" Tom Boles (1927–1946), age 90, ailing, and in a wheelchair.

Crisman also noted that the Cavern Supply Company provided a free barbecue lunch for over 2,400 people—a very generous gesture. Cavern Supply was formed in 1927 at the Caverns, the same year that Colonel Boles arrived to take charge.

I asked Crisman if the proposal for national park status for Guadalupe Mountains had been opposed. He replied that, "Beginning in the 1960s, I think people recognized the national significance of the reef and the reef formation. Of course, initially back in the 1930s NPS officials Roger Toll and later Ben Thompson proposed that the Carlsbad Caverns National Park boundary be extended all the way down to Guadalupe Peak and El Capitan, and include all that area including Big Canyon." He added, "In the 1920s and 1930s, Judge J. C. Hunter, Sr., who lived in Van Horn, Texas, had started talking about a state park in that area from McKittrick, El Capitan, and Guadalupe Peak…it was from Judge Hunter's son, J. C. Hunter, Jr., that we later bought the bulk of the land for the park…. So initially this area was looked at as an addition to Carlsbad Cave National Monument, but other folks were looking at it as a state park. But my impression is that by the 1960s many [people] pretty well recognized that the land was probably national park quality."

Once dedicated, the new national park faced major development concerns: water was needed, housing was required, and visitor facilities were essential. The first building was acquired from the FAA buildings at Salt Flat and moved up to the park and became the Frijole information station with Ranger John Hollingsworth living in a back room. On June 6, 1972, when Ranger Hollingsworth was not home, someone tried to burn it down. A motorist passing at 4:20 a.m. reported the blaze and a quick response by firefighters saved this building from total destruction. A can with flammable liquid was found in the building, but no perpetrator or perpetrators were ever caught.

Later a double-wide trailer was moved in as a temporary visitor center. The actual building of a permanent visitor center was much farther down the road than anyone might have suspected. For example, in 1977, according to Crisman, visitation was continuing to climb and reaching 91,878 visitors that year. The Frijole visitor contact room remained just 10-feet-by-15 feet, with one restroom. And one particular day the park hosted 1,000 visitors trying to compete for that one restroom and 10-by-15 room. Crisman said, "we were beginning to get a little desperate for a visitor center by then."

At one point, the amount of money being spent on the National Visitor Center, a railroad station in Washington, seemed to be drawing much negative criticism from congress. At this time the name "visitor center" seemed to be a lighting rod for congressional criticism. In response Crisman reported that they changed the name "visitor center" on all the official paperwork to "operational headquarters." This semantic slight of hand had even a slighter result—nothing.

In 1986, the visitor center reached a turning point when Congressman Ron Coleman, who had replaced Congressman Richard White, secured a $250,000 budget add- on which enabled drawings and specifications to be finished for the visitor center.

In December 1987, congress appropriated $3.65 million to construct a 10,000 square foot visitor center. The long awaited and much needed visitor center was finished in the late 1980s. If the six years which passed between the authorization of the park in 1966 and the dedication of the park in September 1972 had seemed long, the 16 years waiting for a permanent visitor center must have seemed like an eternity. Crisman recalled that on several occasions in reports and other correspondence, officials at the park penned the phrase, "the lack of public use facilities in the new park, coupled with rapidly increasing public use of the area, has created serious problems."

In the 1930s NPS officials Roger Toll and later Ben Thompson proposed that Carlsbad Caverns National Park boundary be extended all the way down to Guadalupe Peak and El Captian.

Crisman noted a serious problem: the lack of a proper contact station actually posed a safety issue, for the park lacked a place to give out safety messages to hikers headed for the backcountry.

The visitor center wasn't the only development-worry facing the determined staff. Housing had to be secured. In the beginning, housing consisted of leftover trailers from the FAA. Recently, I E-mailed a questionnaire to Bruce Fladmark, an area manager at the Guadalupe Mountains in the 1970s. Fladmark wrote me that the trailers were "pre-wornout." Worsening the situation of the poor quality housing in the early years was the incessant wind. Crisman reported that a maintenance boss named Herschel Fowler arrived and had to unload his own stuff into a trailer during 100-miles-per-hour winds. Crisman recalled that Fowler, a particularly gruff, but effective boss, didn't stay at Guadalupe Mountains too long. Crisman conceded that maybe Fowler "had to be a tough guy for tough conditions."

The wind underscored life almost on a daily basis at Guadalupe Mountains.

The wind underscored life almost on a daily basis at Guadalupe Mountains. The unrelenting wind seemed to underscore the harshness of the climate and the remoteness of the region. Crisman told several stories about the wind, including that the wind was once clocked in excess of 110 or 120 miles per hour at Guadalupe Mountains. In February 1979 the wind blew over an 18 wheeler truck and the park's radio antenna. It also blew over two camper vehicles belonging to visitors. Fladmark told me that on the same day Superintendent Donald Dayton and his staff had traveled to Guadalupe Mountains "to speak to the employees and answer questions (quell discontent)." Fladmark added, "The noise of the wind was so loud in our maintenance shed that neither questions nor answers could be heard, so the meeting at least demonstrated adverse living and working conditions to park management. Later that day the wind picked up enough rock to destroy the windshield of my park pickup. I was driving at the time." Once, high winds blew a maintenance employee into a fence, breaking his wrist and dislocating his shoulder. Another time the wind turned the McKittrick Canyon contact station trailer on its side.

The park needed water sources. Several wells were drilled in the main housing and visitor contact area, several unsuccessful before workable wells resulted. In several cases like Pine Springs and Signal Peak, wells were drilled several thousand feet. Dog Canyon required four wells before adequate water supplies were reached.

Water wasn't always in short supply at Guadalupe Mountains. In September 1974, the park got more water than it wanted when McKittrick Canyon flooded, running four feet deep and 100 feet across.

The early efforts for shelter, water, and visitor facilities seemed always tougher because of the wind. Fladmark remarked, "We spun our wheels a lot just to exist there."

"Waiting and more waiting" seemed to be the theme at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in the 1970s and 1980s. Crisman said, "The National Park and Recreation Act of 1978 passed on November 10th, officially designating 46,850 acres of wilderness. Of course, this was six years after the recommendation had gone to Congress, so it did take quite a while to get that approved."

If wilderness preservation in 1978 was part of the big picture at Guadalupe Mountains, an important part of that picture was the protection of the mountain lions residing in the national park. Crisman reported that "Ranger Harry Steed made the big discovery of illegal trapping; he found some traps that were stamped with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish markings, probably set by some area rancher. These people were taking the lions illegally out of the Dog Canyon–West Dog Canyon area and transporting them across the state line. Apparently some [lions] were found skinned, but I don't think anyone ever made a case for convicting anyone. But I think the publicity, the discussions,

and the interviews had a deterrent effect. I think that was the last incidence of anyone, as far as we know, trapping in the park. Of course, our concern was not only losing the lions, but with visitor safety; some of these traps were not far off of visitor trail routes where a visitor could have been injured.

I asked Crisman if that was typical for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to give people traps like that? He replied that, "they would sometimes loan out traps to ranchers in known depredation cases resulting in livestock losses. Harry Steed was in the middle of that situation; of course, tensions increased with the neighbors because of his discovery. Harry was completely businesslike. He was a very professional law enforcement person, though he didn't have that friendly rapport with the neighbors that some of the other rangers had, but he was good at his job. Later on, we switched Harry over to Rattlesnake Springs and replaced him with Roger Reisch, partly to ease the strained tensions with the neighbors.

Crisman shared a lighter story about wildlife in the area. He said, "There was another incident that you may have come across. I thought it was interesting. A black bear, after he was discovered in a nearby alfalfa field, was treed on a power pole down near Dell City. Of course people were standing all around, trying to get him to come down. And, of course, he wasn't coming down until all the people dispersed. Once the people were removed, he came down and headed off toward the park and up toward the mountain."

Crisman also shared an unusual law enforcement story. He said, "In 1980 [there] was the incident about the greyhound bus, one of the law enforcement incidents. I didn't get involved in that, but I did find it interesting in reading and hearing about it. This greyhound bus was traveling through Guadalupe Pass and there was an emotionally disturbed man on board and he decided he was going to attack the driver; there was a Catholic nun on board, who was able to pull him off the driver until the driver could get the bus stopped. Then the guy jumped off the bus and apparently fell about 70 feet there in that Guadalupe Pass area, was knocked unconscious, and the rangers had to get involved and rescue him. I guess they ended up flying him by Fort Bliss helicopters to El Paso. I never did hear the outcome of him or what happened, but at least that got the problem out of the park for somebody else to deal with. [Laughs]"

The following year, a different challenge was posed in an unusual incident. He recalled, "In 1981 a lot of construction going on over at Dog Canyon with many utility trenches opened up. A big old elk had fallen in a utility trench and landed upside down, with his feet up in the air, and with his back and bottom in the trench. Ranger Roger Reisch wasn't sure how he was going to get the elk out of the trench; he went to get rancher Marion Hughes and some of the other neighbors. With the trucks and ropes, the rescuers were able to pull this big elk out of that trench. Apparently the elk wasn't hurt and went on his way after being pulled out; Roger and the others also went on their way."

"And then there was a turkey trapping and relocation incident: Bob Stockwell, who was the county manager at that time, kept reporting to us about these overly aggressive wild turkeys over at Dog Canyon. I think they may have been some that had been fed, and so they'd come up to visitors expecting handouts. So the turkeys were starting to chase the campers around, and the campers couldn't chase 'em back. I think Roger ended up catching several of them with some help. They packed the turkeys by horseback from Dog Canyon over to the McKittrick Canyon area somewhere and turned 'em loose. Later, Roger put his horse in for a performance award." (The horse received a sack of oaks.)

The Guadalupe Mountain National Park stories in Crisman's oral history interview continue, revealing increasing details about life at Guadalupe Mountains.

The Guadalupe Mountain National Park stories in Crisman's oral history interview continue, revealing increasing details about life at Guadalupe Mountains in the 1970s and 1980s, but this paper must come to an end. Other topics discussed in Crisman's interviews include

the proposal for the tramway; the wheel-chair-bound visitors who climbed to Guadalupe Peak; the building of backcountry trails; the intermittent search and rescue efforts of lost victims, including three wilderness study groups; the development of a park's interpretive program; the preserving of historic structures; and more—all against the backdrop of high winds.

For understanding the history and uniqueness of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Bob Crisman is a voice from the past, a voice who can enlarge our horizons and understandings about an incredibly beautiful and special place. All we have to do is listen.