

# Museum News

## Here comes the cavalry!!



Photo courtesy of Ada Lee Robbins

**HI-YO!!** - A Cavalry Brigade of some 1500 men and horses stretches out on the Dryden-Langtry portion of US Highway 90 in the 1930s. The men were coming back from yearly maneuvers at Fort D.A. Russell at Marfa.

The Museum is soliciting old photos from local residents and really hit the jackpot in October! Ada Lee Robbins brought an old cavalry photo to be scanned into the Museum collection. She didn't have any information about the photo other than the obvious, so there was some detective work to be done.

The signpost in the photo indicated that the brigade was 39 miles east of Dryden, so whatever they were up to, they were probably going back to their point of origin.

Another clue, on close examination, was a regimental flag for the 5th Cavalry. Farther down the line is another flag and possibly another, so this was a combined group moving in a convoy.

The final piece of evidence from the photo was the pavement. The original Highway 90 was dirt and gravel, begun about 1926, and not paved until the 1930s. The photo could not have been taken earlier than the '30s, nor later than about 1939 when all US cavalry divisions were mechanized and the horses disposed (a not too proud mo-

## October visitors...

Although October was not as spectacular as September, it seems that visitation is picking up.

We had a total of 7 official visitors for the month, but we had several townsfolk drop by for an unofficial visit.

As people learn that we are keeping regular hours (10 to 12 and 1 to 4, M-F, with Saturdays by appointment) they are beginning to venture out more.

Hopefully, as word spreads and more deer hunters and Thanksgiving visitors arrive, November will be even better.

Looking ahead to December, the weekend of the 3rd promises to have the town bulging at the seams. On that fateful weekend we have the Christmas on Mainstreet evening, the Nopalito Market on Friday and Saturday and the

annual Hunter's Feast that evening. It promises to be a very exciting time with lots of visitors in town.

The last Nopalito Market Day on Labor Day weekend was a blowout, far surpassing everyone's expectations. Planners are expecting an even greater turnout.

And so we, at Terrell County Memorial Museum, hope to have an outstanding day and break our September record!

If you are going to have visitors in town be sure and include the museum on your itinerary. We will open on Saturday if that will help out. Just call 432-345-2936 to make an appointment.



## Cavalry continued from page 1

ment in US military history!!)

From here the researcher went to the Terrell County history book for more information.

An article about the Hunn family, latecomers to Terrell County, revealed that the father was a Colonel in the cavalry and was stationed here in the Mexican Revolution days (1910-1920) to protect the border. The Hunns liked the area so much they bought a ranch when they retired and settled here.

Colonel Hunn was responsible for designing the motorized vehicles that would replace the cavalry mounts. In his family history he remarked that in 1936 he was sent with the new vehicles to Fort D.A. Russell in Marfa for the last maneuvers using horses at that camp. The 5th Cavalry from Fort Clark and the 15th Cavalry from Ft. Brown (Brownsville) came by mounted convoy to Marfa, via US Highway 90.

So here was a likely candidate for our

photo. The details matched with the clues and this seemed to be the ride home from that event. The cavalry brigade at Marfa was decommissioned in a solemn ceremony and the oldest horse of the regiment, Old Louie, was ritually put down and buried on the spot, with a commemorative marker and bronze plaque.

Further research in the *Sanderson Times* revealed that every fall from the '20s through the end of the mounted cavalry period in the late '30s, maneuvers were held at Fort D.A. Russell and later at Balmorhea. So, the photo could have been from any of the maneuvers held after about 1930.

The photo in this newsletter does not do the subject justice. The original is approximately 12" x 17" and the detail is exquisite. The *Times* said there were up to 1500 horsemen in a Cavalry Brigade. The trip to Fort Clark was quite a ride, but for those going to Brownsville, it must have been grueling!

# Searching for roots



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Paul Garza

**LOOKING FOR FAMILY**— *Mr. Paul Garza, left, and his wife visited the Museum in early October, searching for family ties in Sanderson. Working in collaboration with the Museum and Santa Rita Cemetery, represented by Mr. “Chago” Flores, he is trying to find the graves of relatives in Sanderson.*

Paul Garza of San Antonio is trying to find family in Sanderson. He and his wife made an appointment to meet with Bill Smith, curator of the museum, to see what information the museum has on Mateo and Terecita Martinez, his great-grandparents, who lived in Sanderson from approximately 1900 until the early 1920s.

After meeting with Smith and “Chago” Flores, who was representing Santa Rita Cemetery, Mr. Garza and his wife returned to San Antonio and began sending photos by email, in hopes that someone in Sanderson could identify them or even remember his family.

But the task won't be an easy one. The flood in 1965 was particularly damaging to Santa Rita. Many graves disappeared in the flood waters and even the markers were swept away. In doing research on the subject, Smith

found a relatively complete list of those interred at Santa Rita and accounted for by a recent survey. But unfortunately, there is no mention of Mr. Garza's relatives.

However, from documents sent by Mr. Garza, it is relatively certain that his great-grandmother was buried here in 1915. And at that time she was a widow, so one can be reasonably sure that her husband was buried here also, as well as at least one son.

Though we may never know absolutely where they are (or were) buried, the Museum has gained a wealth of early-day photos, thanks to Mr. Garza's generosity.

Hopefully other town folks will be encouraged to bring their early Sanderson photos to be copied at the Museum, to add to the record of our area's rich heritage and culture.

## *A word from the Curator*

Former residents Danny Garza of San Antonio and Bobby Garza of El Paso came to see the Museum but I'm afraid spent most of their time visiting and relating their family ties to Sanderson and telling some hilarious stories about their youth and tales from old Sanderson.

I don't know if Halloween was in the air but the subject turned to "brujos" and "brujas" that supposedly lived in Sanderson in the old days. They told about a lady who made voodoo dolls and put curses on people. And how when they were roaming the neighborhood at night they would run past this lady's place so the "spirits" wouldn't get them!

But mostly their stories were of a happy childhood spent in a small, safe town. They have multiple connections

to families in Sanderson and have fond memories of padrinos and padrinas, tios and tias, and lots and lots of primos and primas. Danny laughed that he had to wear a white suit for confirmation and he said he looked like Colonel Sanders, which had us all chuckling at the mental image. It was a pleasant couple of hours spent with some very nice gentlemen.

But that's what our Museum is all about, reliving the pleasant memories of the past and having a good time. So what if we don't get around to every display, the important thing is that the past is recalled and the old generations are remembered and paid homage. As long as we can tell the stories and remember the old times, those folks will never die. Their memory will remain strong within us and their legacy is secure.

## *Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!*

The Terrell County history book is chock full of interesting stories about the early residents of our town and county. And the great thing is that many of these folks submitted their own stories, in their own words.

The Matt Turners were just one such family who came here from Sheffield in a covered wagon in 1906.

Matt's first job was running the water wagon for Charlie Wilson. Water sold for 10¢ a barrel. Then he worked as a car knocker for the railroad, eventually got hired by the county and helped build the first court house and jail.

About 1910 Matt's father and mother, "Uncle" Dick and "Aunt" Sally Turner moved here and eventually took up four sections on the Pecos River. "Aunt" Sally was a religious woman, but "Uncle" Dick was known to make homebrew, which probably didn't sit well with "the Missus!"



A favorite family story concerned Dick's first car.

He was making a trip to Sheffield and got to going too fast on Big Hill. To quote the book, "I stepped on one crutch and couldn't stop. I stepped on the other crutch and still couldn't stop, so I pulled the mercy brake! I still couldn't get stopped so I hit a pole and busted the 'biler' (boiler.)" And all the time he was yelling, "Whoa, Whoa, Whoa!"