



THE
SHAMROCK
SPRING 1959

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'Rithmetic to Rockets

The Story of Clarendon College

BACK in the days of late 1800s, institutions of higher learning were relatively few and far between in the still-young West. A number of colleges had sprung up in Texas, but most of them were in the southern and central parts of the state.

The Panhandle—a vast and rich expanse comprising more area than the entire state of Mississippi—was attracting settlers by the thousands. As the population increased at a rapid pace, the need for a college in the area increased just as steadily.

The citizens of Clarendon, a small town in the southeastern part of the Panhandle, saw the need for such an institution. They decided something should be done. Thus it was that two years before the turn of the century, the Methodist Church, South, founded the first college in the Panhandle.

Known as Clarendon College, the institution served its community for more than a quarter century as a junior college before a transition to senior college standing proved unsuccessful. Its successor—Clarendon Junior College—took up where the original two-year school left off and has fulfilled the educational needs of the area for more than 30 years.

Today, Clarendon Junior College, an A Grade institution, is considered one of the better two-year colleges in the state, keeping pace with the times by offering a complete and up-to-date curriculum. The college is also keeping pace with the Space Age, boasting one of the few rocket clubs in the country. Students build and fire their own rockets, all under the strict supervision of college instructors.

It has been a long and uphill climb for the college which was founded in a virgin territory for higher education. But based on the premise that education can best be offered in the familiar and home-like atmosphere of a small institution where “the individual is a name, not a number,” the college has continued to grow and prosper.

Clarendon College was founded as the result of the perseverance and determination of the early-day citizens of the city. A committee of townfolks started a subscription campaign in the summer of 1897 to build the college. This list was presented by a special committee to the District Conference of the Methodist Church, South, which met in Memphis, Texas, in November of that year. The group offered to erect a two-story brick

building on a four-acre campus which would in turn be deeded to the church.

The Conference received a similar offer for a college at Goodnight, a small town located 20 miles to the west of Clarendon. Rev. W. B. McKeown, a member of the Conference Board of Education, was assigned to investigate the proposals.

Rev. McKeown recommended the Clarendon project be placed on the list of Methodist schools. Rev. J. W. Adkisson was elected its first president and classes were scheduled for the Fall of 1898.

The promised building was not complete when Fall arrived, but classes opened as scheduled on September 5 in the Methodist Church. Harwood Beville was credited with being the “first student” at Clarendon College when he allegedly won a foot race for the honor.

All 75 students who enrolled the first year were grade school pupils. Each was eligible to enter public school, but their parents preferred to send them to Clarendon College because “there can’t be a college without students.” They had contributed to the construction of the college and were making sure it would be a success.

It was the same Rev. McKeown who recommended the college be built in Clarendon that succeeded Rev. Adkisson as president. It was also the same Rev. McKeown who inspired the following editorial in the Clarendon Press:

“His bishop assigned him to the Panhandle





*First graduating class-1904.
Seated are E. Rosemond
Stanford and Maude
McLean. Standing are
Effie Ferguson,
Mary Peebles, Fletcher
Isbell and W. Jess
Stanford.*

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION
Texas Tech University,
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79409

territory where rattlesnakes and sinners outnumbered Christians 15 to 1. But the story of his ministry was one of the sagas of the Old West. McKeown supplanted his Bible with a pair of six-shooters and tackled the West on its own terms and won the respect of its citizens. He preached in barrooms, railroad stations or in the open — wherever there was an audience to listen.”

It was the indomitable spirit which prompted the continued growth of the college. The enrollment increased steadily and today the Panhandle boasts many who proudly proclaim Clarendon College as their alma mater.

Clarendon College was 27 years old when its first real trouble began to brew. It had become a four-year senior college in 1925, but after two years in this status, it soon became apparent that something must change.

The school's indebtedness had been paid, but the material improvements requested by the Methodist Conference had not been completed. Only

part of the endowment for the college had been promised and not enough funds were available to complete the gymnasium for which the corner stone had been laid.

There had been rumors from the beginning of the school term that the college might be moved from Clarendon.

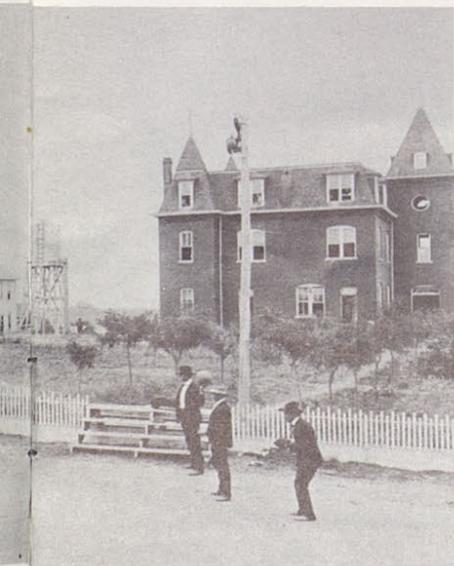
It was at this juncture that Dr. R. E. L. Morgan, president, requested the Northwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Church to name a committee to settle the question once and for all. Despite the pledges of the citizens of Clarendon to endow the college with the needed funds if it would remain in Clarendon, the Committee announced on March 1, 1927, its decision to move the institution to Amarillo.

The proposal hit a snag, however, when suitable finances could not be arranged in Amarillo and the Conference voted to give the original endowment for Clarendon College to McMurry College in Abilene.

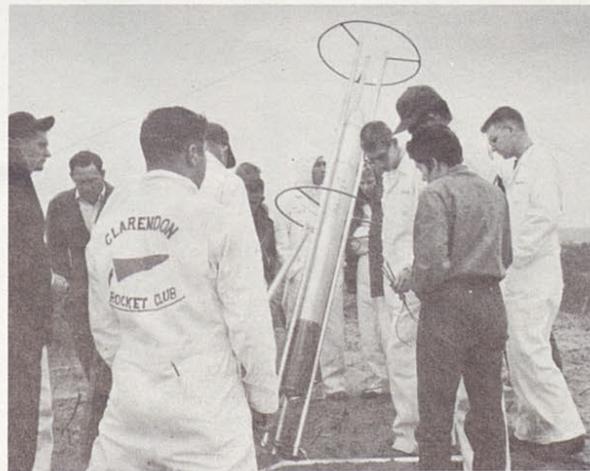
Thus came the end of one era — and the beginning of another.

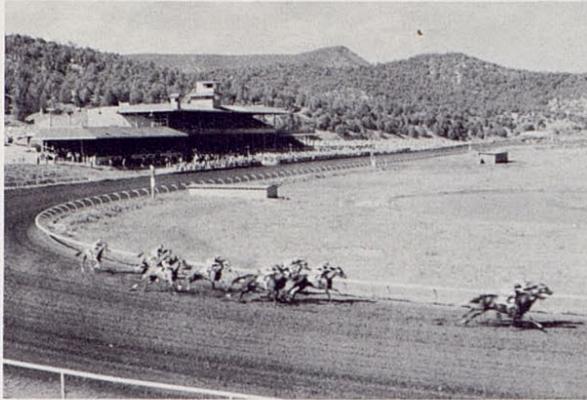
The citizens of Clarendon, sticking by their determination for a college of their own, proposed

Continued on Page 15



*Windmill and watertower
were prominent on 1903
campus of Clarendon
College. There was no
gate and students
entered campus by steps
over the fence.
Rocket is readied for firing
by students. After
blast-off rocket will attain
approximate speed
of sound.*



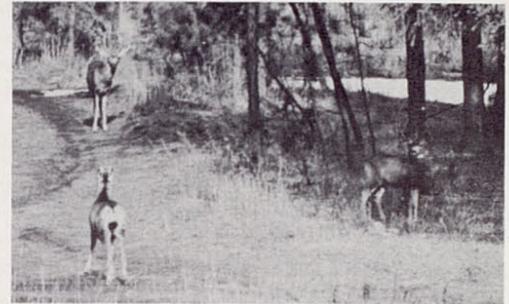


Horse racing and golf are popular sports at Ruidoso. A field of nine rounds the first turn at Ruidoso Downs and, right, players wait to tee off at the lush Cree Meadows course.

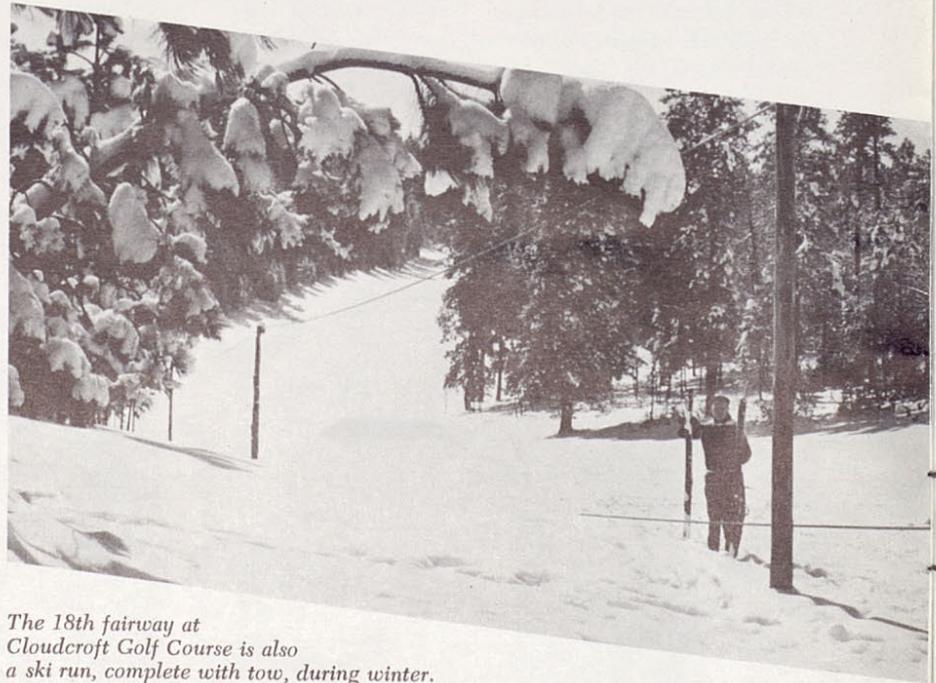


*Winter or Summer,
The Ruidoso-Cloudcroft Area
Offers Southwesterners*

A Sportsman's Paradise



Road to Mon Jeau Lookout near Ruidoso leads to deer almost hidden in forest.



The 18th fairway at Cloudcroft Golf Course is also a ski run, complete with tow, during winter.



IF VARIETY is the spice of life, a sportsman's activity should be well flavored in the Ruidoso-Cloudcroft area of Southeastern New Mexico. Here an area which offers diversity of recreational activities is truly a year-round playground.

In this Funland of the Southwest, a sports enthusiast can schuss down a snowy mountain slope, play golf in the cool mountain air, angle for elusive trout, or hunt out trophy specimen of deer, bear and mountain lions.

He can also ride horseback over mountain trails, explore for archaeological treasures, attend colorful Indian ceremonies, or camp out in the open — all in the cool peaceful serenity of mountains and pines.

Ruidoso and Cloudcroft are 50 miles apart and are on different mountain ranges. They are two separate and individual communities, each vying for its share of fame and fortune.

Yet because of their same general proximity to nearly a million people in Eastern New Mexico and West Texas and because of their similar climate and terrain, both play important roles in providing recreational facilities throughout the year.

Ruidoso was founded 35 years ago as a health resort in the White Mountains of southern Lincoln County. The town didn't grow much until after 1950 when the population increased from 845 to nearly 4,000 at the present time. Vacationing summertime residents usually swell the count to something like 20,000, most of whom spend from one to four months in the city's 3,000 privately-owned cabins.

Weekend visitors during the summer racing season of May 30 to Labor Day have often pushed the population figure upwards to 40,000.

Wintertime sports have been hampered in recent years by light snowfalls. But usually enough snow

covers the slopes of Cedar Creek Run near Ruidoso to provide thrills for beginning skiers.

The skiing picture at Ruidoso may take on a new outlook in the near future. Pending the results of a current snow survey, a new \$2 million-plus lift and ski area is being planned for the Snow Bin, a heretofore undeveloped area north of Old Baldy, Ruidoso's most prominent landmark and highest peak in the Southern part of the U. S.

Plans are also being studied for the construction of a Santa Claus Ranch, a Disneyland-like amusement park for the small fry.

One of the greatest attractions for summer sportsmen is Ruidoso Downs. Legalized pari-mutuel betting poured more than \$8 million over the boards last year as visitors tried their luck at both thoroughbred and Quarterhorse racing.

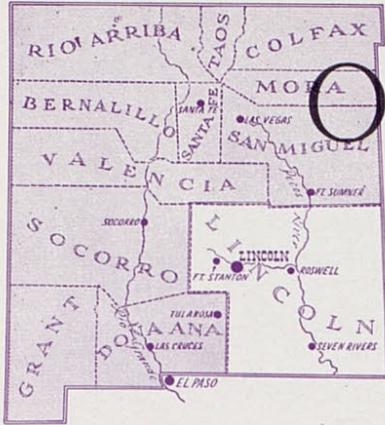
Of this amount, 15 per cent was retained by the track which is plowing back much of its profits to improve facilities.

Cloudcroft is probably best known as the home of the nation's highest golf course. Nestled snugly at 9,000 feet atop a ridge of the Sacramento Mountains, the Cloudcroft Lodge, stately mansion-like structure, houses summertime golfers and wintertime skiers alike. The steep grassy fairways of the 18-hole golf layout serve as ski runs during the winter months.

Hunters have dubbed the Cloudcroft area as "trophy buck country" because of the size of the deer which abound in the pine-covered mountains. Wild turkeys and bear are other favorite targets for hunters who visit there.

Cloudcroft, too, offers horseback riding, hiking, camping, exploration and sundry other phases of recreational activities.

If one likes mountains, pine trees, cool summer nights, and pure air to breathe, he will probably find the Ruidoso-Cloudcroft area a good place to live — as well as an outstanding place to play.



OLD LINCOLN

Landmark of a Legend

Lincoln County in early 1880s comprised southeast corner of New Mexico. Rock tower — or Torreon — was built by settlers as defense against Indians. In store in Old Lincoln, Mrs. John Boylan scoops spice from an old-time bin.



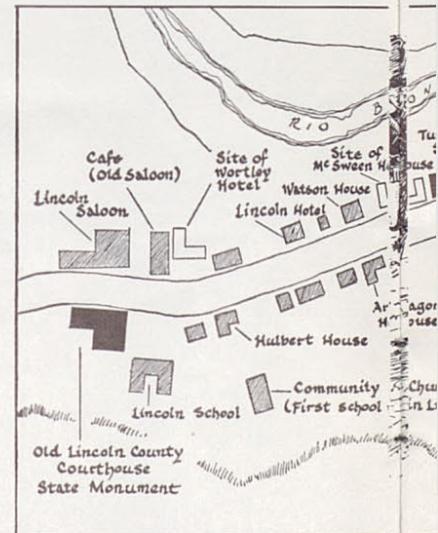
THE WINGS of progress that have lifted most of Eastern New Mexico to heights of prosperity have scarcely cast a shadow on Old Lincoln. This town's most exciting days were lived long ago and the past is the community's greatest attraction.

Spanish pioneers settled the area in the early 1850s and named their headquarters La Placita del Rio Bonito—the village by the pretty river. Later settlers used both La Placita and Rio Bonito as the town's name. Then, in 1869, following the States War, the community was re-named Lincoln. In the war Confederates from El Paso in a band called Baylor's Rangers put skittish Union troops to flight and took New Mexico. Later the Confederacy began to wonder about the tactical value of their conquered territory and decided the Union was welcome to it. Federal forces returned and brought with them the name of their leader—Lincoln.

Biggest industries in Lincoln's early days were cattle and supply contracts for the nearby army post at Fort Stanton. Too, the Mescalero Apaches provided a good market for trader's wares.

It was a feud between merchants that gave Lincoln its days of greatest excitement. L. G.

Lincoln is arranged along a single street. Map shows buildings which played prominent roles in early days of bloody range war.



Murphy & Company was the largest store in town and competition was unwelcome. When a young Englishman, John Tunstall, and a Kansas attorney, Alexander A. McSween, opened a rival firm, the Lincoln County Range War was born.

Trouble brewed for several months then reached a boiling point in 1878 when Tunstall wrote an open letter to a newspaper charging the sheriff of Lincoln County with using county revenue to pay debts incurred by the owners of L. G. Murphy & Company.

On February 18, 1878, an armed posse sent by Sheriff Brady and led by J. B. Matthews, headed for Tunstall's ranch with a warrant to seize some cattle. Tunstall was on his way to Lincoln when he met the posse. The posse wantonly killed the Englishman and headed back for town as Tunstall's cowboys milled in disbelief on the scene.

One hot-headed cowhand swore on the spot that he would avenge his employer's death. Several others said they would join William Bonney — alias Billy the Kid — in his quest for vengeance. It was the strange affection of this young rider for his boss that turned the incident into a blazing range war. Billy claimed that Tunstall was the only man who ever treated him properly. To the young gunman friends were scarce and in Tunstall's death he had lost his best one.

Within a month the Kid and his cohorts had killed Sheriff Brady. In the meantime Murphy had taken on a partner, James Dolan. Murphy and Dolan then decided to avenge Brady and the vicious circle of murderers and avengers became a prairie tornado.

The Dolan gang was called the Seven Rivers Warriors after Dolan's ranch. They headquartered in the Murphy-Dolan Store. McSween and the Kid used the Tunstall-McSween store. Neither



Billy the Kid made his last escape from jail in the Lincoln County Courthouse after he shot a deputy sheriff from the window at upper left.

side could claim victory after many small battles, then, on July 19, 1878, following a three-day shoot-out in Lincoln, the McSween house was burned and seven men were killed. McSween was among the dead, but somehow Billy the Kid managed to escape.

In 1880 Pat Garrett, sheriff at Lincoln, captured the Kid at Stinking Springs. The Kid was moved from Santa Fe to Mesilla, where he was convicted of Brady's murder. Garrett brought Billy to Lincoln to hang him on May 13. But on April 28 the gunman made his dare-devil escape from the Lincoln Courthouse. He shot two guards while in irons and rode away.

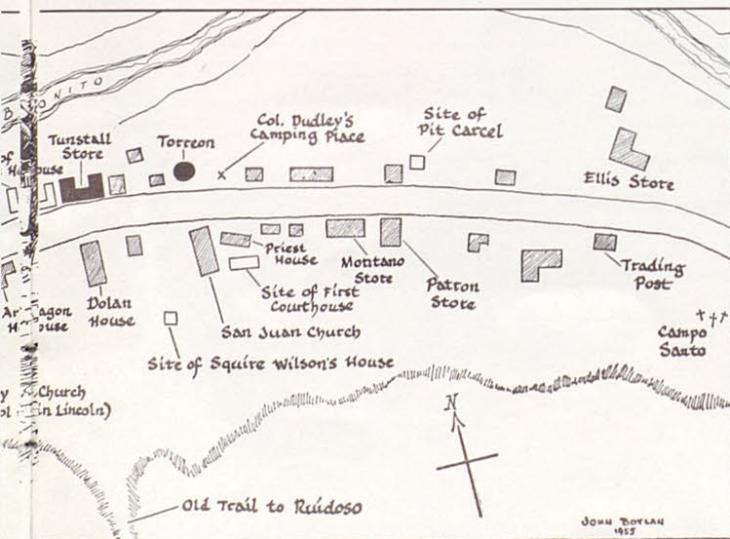
Later Pat Garrett killed the famous badboy in Fort Sumner and the bloody days of Lincoln Town were ended.

In 1949 the New Mexico Legislature created the Old Lincoln County Memorial Commission. The group found the historic little town still in good repair and untouched by industry and modern architecture.

The old boardwalks were replaced or rebuilt. The Wortley Hotel is scheduled to be rebuilt of adobe on the original site and general restoration is in progress.

One of Lincoln's memorable old structures is the Torreón, a tower of mud and stones built by the first settlers as a defense against the Indians. The Torreón is still in good condition and John Boylan, custodian at the courthouse has keys to its bulky door.

The frontier still lives in Old Lincoln thanks to the Memorial Commission and men like Boylan who have taken a personal interest in preserving something of lasting historical and sentimental value.



Ben Ficklin

Pioneer M

NONE of the frontier characters that stirred the public imagination came freighted with the same keen sense of expectancy as the man who brought the mail. Even today people who are isolated, not necessarily by space but by loneliness, are visibly moved by anticipation of the arrival of the mail. A century ago on the distant borders of America, courage accepted the challenge of distance and danger, and rode with the mighty compulsions of honor, pride and duty to see that the mail went through.

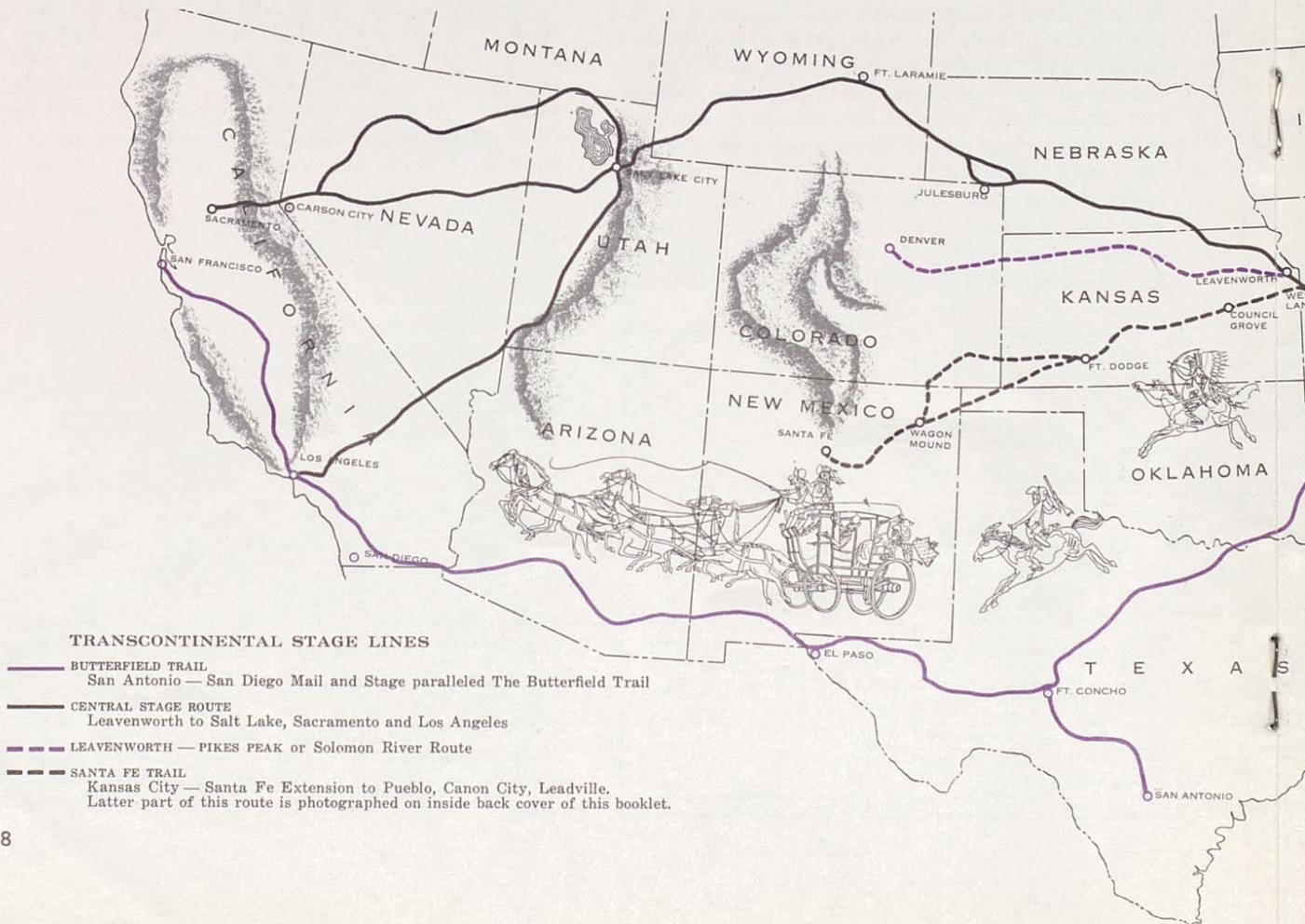
More prominent names can be found in the records, but perhaps none can better symbolize the colorful times and character of this business than that irrepressible Virginian, man of wit and daring, cultivated gentleman and tough-fibered frontiersman, Benjamin Franklin Ficklin.

His Virginia-born father, also Benjamin Ficklin, was a tobacco manufacturer, a Baptist minister of firm and uncompromising views, and a magistrate of Albermarle County. He settled near Charlottesville, vigorously to pursue his and the Lord's business while building up an estate of 1300 acres called Pleasant Green, where his son Ben, was born, December 18, 1827.

The old man moved to Charlottesville to raise his family, process tobacco, and, in his joint re-

ligious and legal role, give everybody fits who trespassed the limits of his rigid conscience and the state's Sunday laws. From such blood, and from such an atmosphere, came the vigorous stagecoach operator and frontier mail man, Ben Ficklin—who was to be as much at home at fighting Indians and hanging outlaws as in cultivated conversation in the best society in Virginia and Washington.

At seventeen young Ben enrolled at the Virginia Military Institute, and left a record that is vivid in that proper and distinguished institution until this day. As a fomenter of pranks and a breaker of rules he had no peer. He jarred officers and



Mail Man

by J. Evetts Haley

cadets alike from their military bearing by setting off cannon and rockets at the most impromptu times; he outraged the superintendent by painting that dignitary's horse, Old Coley, into the semblance of a zebra with white and red paint; and he created so much unseemly furor that he was kicked out of school.

He immediately joined the army and on the basis of his military training set out as a corporal to help win the Mexican War. Within a year he returned, and with disarming audacity and short-lived professions of good behavior, induced the great mathematician, Colonel F. H. Smith, superintendent of the Institute, to take him back into



One of the few if not the only picture of Ben Ficklin in existence.

those honored halls—where fond memory still recalls his genius.

When reprimanded for absence from review, and called on for the reason, he formally responded, in writing, that he “dreamt” he was “officer of the day,” and signed his report as “B. F. Ficklin, Ex-Corporal, U.S.A., fought through seven battles in Mexico—severely wounded and left for dead on the field . . .” Somehow he stayed until graduation, July 4, 1849, ranking twentieth in his class of twenty-four. When presented with his cherished diploma, he thrust it through with his bayonet, shouldered his gun, and with mock military precision, marched from the graduation hall. Surely nothing good could come of such a rebel!

Inevitably, he fell victim to the charm of adventure in the newly opened West. Turbulent Texas was drawing men of spirit, and with its discovery of gold California became the lodestar for those who lusted most for fortune. Just when Ficklin headed west is a matter of conjecture. In time he became associated with the greatest firm of frontier freighters in all history, Russell, Majors and Waddell, who sent a herd of cattle from the Missouri border to the gold fields in 1854. Possibly Ficklin first went west with it, since Senator W. M. Gwin, of that state, making his way by the long overland trail toward Washington that year, had, as his horseback companion over part of the route, the imaginative genius from V.M.I.



It was over these trails that Ben Ficklin carried the early-day mail, battling Indians, outlaws and weather. Most prominent of the trails were the Butterfield Trail and the Central Stage Route, shown on the map here.

For them there was no greater or more pressing need than some ready means of communication between East and West across the two thousand miles of unsettled Plains and Mountains. Gwin recorded that Ficklin suggested the idea of the Pony Express. Some recent historians discount the claim. But in early accounts of the mail, in the proud and positive traditions of V. M. I., and in the persistent memories of men, Ben Ficklin is recalled as the originator of the idea of that wildly imaginative enterprise that appealed so tremendously to venturesome men. Ahead of that, however, were other ventures.

Ficklin joined Russell, Majors and Waddell, who, with their thousands of mules and oxen, were hauling millions of pounds of supplies across prairie and mountain to distant posts throughout the Indian-ridden West. In 1857 he went with their great wagon trains supplying General Albert Sidney Johnston, over the Great Salt Lake Trail, as he marched west in what is called the Mormon War. The severe winter caught them in the mountains, froze their teams, and came near destroying the army before it straggled into Fort Bridger, in Wyoming Territory. About the time Ficklin got back to Missouri from this harrowing venture, the country was stirred to fever pitch by the news of gold around Denver.

Already two great trails pointed west from St. Joseph and Westport Landing. That to the left was the way to Santa Fe. The other, northward, was the long and trying trail to Oregon, one fork of which cut off to Salt Lake City and Sacramento. In February, 1859, the speculative William H. Russell, head of the firm, projected a central stage and mail route to Colorado, organized the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company to put it through, and made the bold Ben Ficklin a partner and division superintendent. They bought a thousand Kentucky mules and fifty Concord coaches, laid out the line, and started the stages rolling.

Russell, in Washington, soon managed to get a government contract to carry a stagecoach mail from St. Joseph, by Laramie, to Salt Lake City and back on twenty-one day schedules. He and his associates, including Ficklin, then organized the Central California and Pikes Peak Express Company, took over the old concern, acquired George Chorpenning's line extending from Salt Lake City to Placerville, California, and prepared to run a stage and mail line of magnificent conception across two thousand miles of wilderness to the West Coast.

They sent Ficklin to Denver to close their initial offices there and to set up and stock the stage stands along the vast eastern portion of the line. They opened 153 way stations, hired

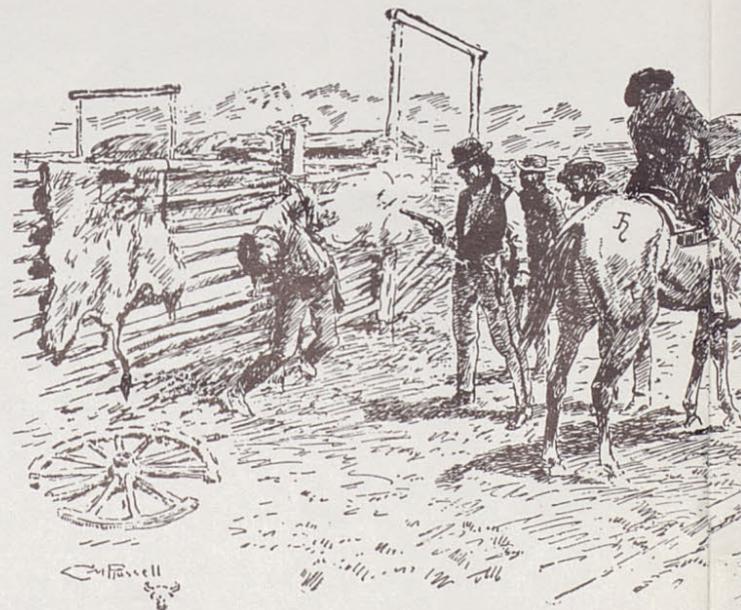
drivers and guards, powered the line with horses and mules, and opened on a weekly schedule in April, 1860. Thus at last the dream of carrying a regular mail between the coasts was a reality, and the drive and courage of the imaginative genius from V. M. I. — with the firm nature of his religious forebears transmuted to frontier realities — was due much of the credit.

Financially the line got off to a bad start. Indians were troublesome, feed and supplies were costly, contracts and rates were insufficient, and losses were compounded by flagrant stealing from its stock and its stations. Russell put the spirited Ficklin, now seasoned in the ways of the West, in charge as "route superintendent."

He rigorously set out to clean up the line, the worst spot of which was the stage stand at Julesburg, at the crossing of the Platte. It was kept by a notorious character called Old Jules, who, with a band of renegades around him, was preying upon the Company. Ficklin told Joseph A. Slade, division superintendent, to get Jules off the payroll and the properties. Jules, in retaliation, waylaid and seriously wounded Slade with a double-barrelled shotgun. Ficklin, who happened to be on the next passing stage, stopped long enough to seize and hang Old Jules, and drive on with little loss of scheduled time — commendable in carrying the mail, but, as it proved, a little too fast in dealing with outlaws.

Jules' henchman cut him down before he had time to choke to death, and then rode off to establish a hide-out along Rocky Ridge. Slade,

Joe Slade — Killer



too, got well, and being a man of commendable resolution, rode up and down the line until he located their hangout. Then, at the head of a punitive party, he rode right in on it, wounded and captured Jules, and put his compadres to flight. He then tied Jules to a post, cut off his ears, nailed one up to dry and shrivel on the fence as a warning to evil men, and draped the other on his watch chain to carry along as a sort of charm. He then finished Jules off by shooting him full of holes, thereby enhancing, tremendously, the public respect for the properties of the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company.

The tension between the North and South was growing, and back in Washington Russell promised Senator Gwin, his California friend, that the company would initiate a Pony Express to prove the superiority of the Central Route. Despite the qualms of his partners, who shied away from the costs, Russell sent Ficklin to take over the line out of Salt Lake City, while he looked after the eastern end. Additional stations were built, horses by the hundreds were bought, lean, light riders were hired, and in early April, 1860, the service was initiated with riders simultaneously leaving St. Joseph and San Francisco. If everything went well, horses were changed every twenty-five miles; riders were relieved every seventy-five; and the mail thundered across the country from rail-head to coast in a breath-taking ten and one-half days' time, at ten dollars for a half ounce letter. With this inspiring feat, the fame — but not the fortune

— of the promoters was made.

Without a mail subsidy or contract the business was doomed to failure. The practical Ficklin journeyed to Washington to urge Russell to reduce the express to a semi-weekly service. Russell vigorously rejected the idea, their differences grew, and soon he was charging Ficklin with "an unlawful ambition to rule or ruin." Ficklin resigned from the great, but failing concern in July, 1860, and, as an experienced enterpriser of thirty-three years of age, made his way back to Washington to seek mail contracts on his own. Then the war broke.

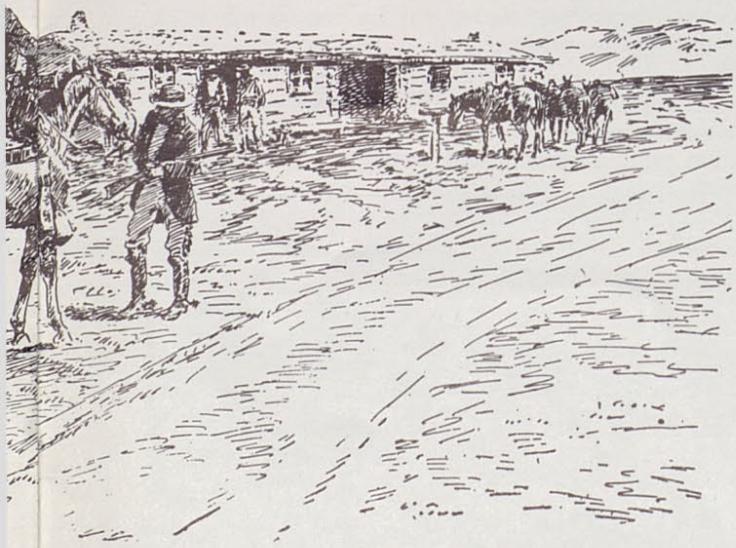
Naturally Ficklin went with Virginia. He became Quarter-Master General of his state, served awhile in the army, became Confederate purchasing agent in Europe, and took to the high seas as a blockade runner, carrying supplies to the beleaguered South. After the War he returned to Washington again to seek contracts for carrying the mail, and in 1867 reached the turbulent southwestern frontier of Texas, to take over and revive a long and dangerous segment of the old San Antonio-San Diego Mail.

He had bid on a small contract for Texas while in Washington in 1857, only to lose it to B. A. Risher. After the war F. P. Sawyer, Risher and C. K. Hall acquired a contract to carry the El Paso mail and sub-let it, without satisfaction to the Texans. When it was re-let in July, 1867, Ficklin breezed into San Antonio to give everybody hope of genuine service.

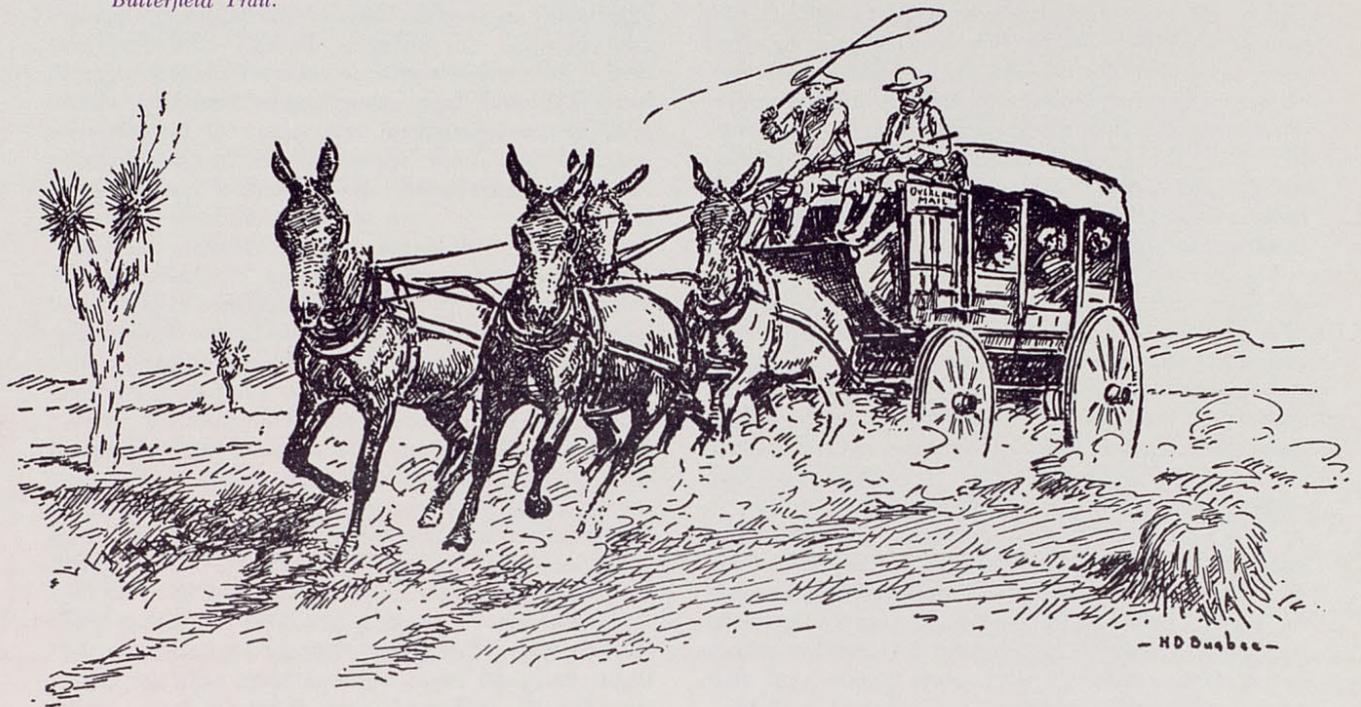
On September 30, he left in personal charge of his first mail to run some 650 miles from San Antonio to El Paso del Norte. Within a few weeks he had re-established the old pre-war stations; had gotten hands, horses and supplies into them; and had arranged with General J. J. Reynolds, who was in charge of the military districts, for protection against the Indians, by placing troops "at intermediate stations" between the army posts. He saw the strategic importance of newly established Fort Concho as a swing station on the long line, and set up his headquarters some three miles away, around which the village of Benficklin grew.

Back in San Antonio he announced expanded service of tri-weekly stages to El Paso, connecting, at Mesilla, New Mexico, with the stage for San Diego, as well as connections with a new line taking off from the old at Fort Stockton, and cutting across that drab desert of greasewood and alkali dust through Presidio to Chihuahua, Mexico.

Hostile men — Comanches, Apaches, and white outlaws — combined with a hard and perverse land to make his business dangerous and difficult. But by May, 1868, *The San Antonio Express* pointed out that he was carrying passengers west at an



*Driver and guard were
ever alert for Indian
attacks on the Old
Butterfield Trail.*



"unprecedented low price" of fifteen cents a mile; at the fantastic time of just six and one-half days for the trip to El Paso.

With Frederick P. Sawyer as his partner, Ficklin reopened the routes from Dallas to McKinney and to the head of the southward-advancing rail lines. He re-established, as well, the route from Sherman to Jacksboro, along the course of the old Butterfield Southern Mail, which connected with their El Paso run at Fort Concho.

On his trips back to Virginia, he devoted his interests to V. M. I., with its fond memories, and to the preservation of Jefferson's magnificent home at Mount Vernon, near the scenes of his boyhood. He pushed his and Sawyer's plans to tie up the mail contracts in Texas — a region vitally in need of his imaginative drive and courageous enterprise, as it suffered the throes of violent Reconstruction.

While in pursuit of his consuming purpose, ironic fate struck him down in his prime at forty-four years of age, with a deadly fishbone lodged in his throat. After laughing in the face of frigid death and starvation on the Salt Lake City Trail; after undergoing every hazard of life with In-

dians and outlaws across mountain, desert and plain with freight trains, stages and Pony Express; after daring service in two wars; and after surviving all the dangers that Texas and the Mexican border had to offer, Benjamin Franklin Ficklin, the great stirring figure of the stagecoach mail, came to this prosaic end at Washington, March 10, 1871.

He was buried in the Ficklin plot in peaceful Maplewood, at Charlottesville, Virginia, beside the stern old father who had watched his son's career with concern while living to a ripe but unadventurous eighty-five, ever confident that a wrathful God would humble the proud, and strike the mighty low.

For much on Ben Ficklin's early life I am indebted to a fine, unpublished paper by Susan Miles and Mary Bain Spence, of San Angelo.

The photograph of Ficklin is reproduced through the courtesy of the Tom Green County Historical Society, of that city.

The Author



*Fifty Miles and 14 Years
From Ground Zero . . .*



Headquarters of Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce reflects city's eminence as missile center.

EARLY Spanish settlers in the Tularosa Basin of New Mexico were impressed by the beauty of giant cottonwood trees and named one of their settlements Alamogordo—meaning Fat Cottonwood. Almost 200 years later another plume was raised over the Tularosa Basin and the awesome Age of the Atom was born.

Even with its many recreational facilities and beautiful vistas, the Alamogordo area is more renowned to the modern world for an ugly scar on the desert fifty miles northeast of the town. A sandy road dead-ends at a spot splotted with bits of heat-fused green glass.

The road stops, but rather than ending, it marks a terrible beginning. Here is Ground Zero of the Atomic Age. On July 16, 1945, the spectre of man's ability to totally destroy mushroomed between two mountain ranges as the world's first atom bomb was fired.

Melted stumps of the bomb's tower are me-

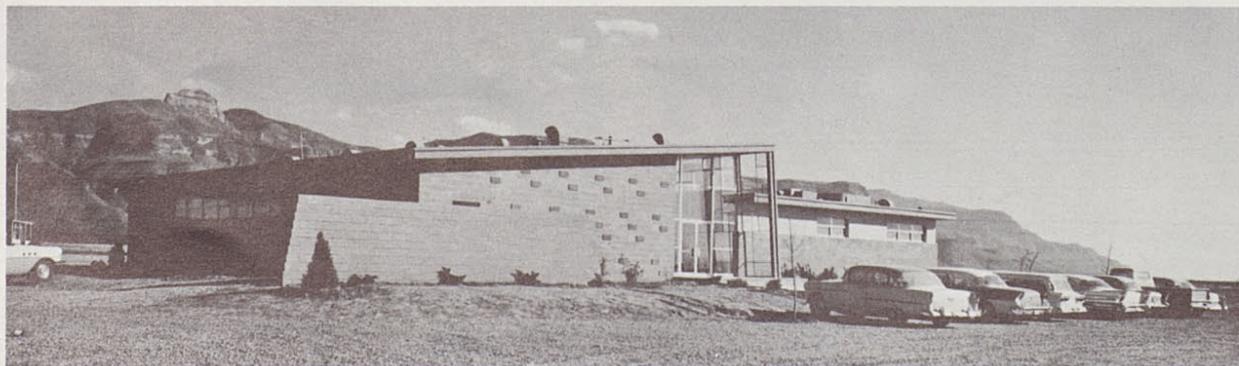
morial to that day fourteen years ago. Today newer weapons—missiles and rockets—fly overhead and once a year a guided tour reaches the spot and church services are held on this unhallowed ground.

Just as the Spaniards looked up at trees for their village's name, modern Alamogordo looks to the sky for her future. Birthplace of the Atomic Age, Alamogordo is now "The Rocket City." On the giant military reservations near the city, rockets are tested on a 24-hour basis each 15 minutes.

Alamogordo has grown rapidly in the decade of the rocket and the atom. In eight years her population has trebled. Today 21,900 persons live here. With an economy geared to the missile and Air Force personnel, retail sales figures have risen from \$10,249,000 in 1950 to \$45,467,000 in 1958. Holloman Air Force Base contributes \$41 million annually to the area economy.

Alamogordo is the crossroads for New Mexico's

The Alamogordo Country Club features one of the most modernistic buildings in Southwest.



Alamogordo Looks to the Sky for Her Future

vast playland. Visitors to Cloudcroft and Ruidoso find Alamogordo is headquarters for the skiing, fishing, hunting vacation paradise in the Lincoln National Forest. Mountains rise on two sides of Alamogordo. To the West are the rugged San Andres. Eastward are the pine-filled Sacramentos. In the basin between these ranges lies Alamogordo, White Sands National Monument and the military installations.

The Sacramento Mountains are the home of the Mescalero Apache. Here descendants of Geronimo live in seclusion on the reservation. Visitors are permitted to view some of their rites and dances at certain seasons, but the reservation is not open for travel.

A few miles from the city are scores of places with tourist interest. Southward a few miles lies craggy Dog Canyon, where crafty Apaches repeatedly lured the Cavalry into massacre. Indian Wells, a complex of watering places in bygone days, is east of Alamogordo. In the mountains fishing and hunting and winter sports lure Southwesterners the year 'round.

Of all the tourist attractions near Alamogordo, none outshines the White Sands. On this 230-square mile national monument pure white gypsum has piled dunes as high as 50 feet. Mile after mile the "sand" stretches north of Alamogordo. Last year 319,815 visitors drove into the dunes for picture-taking, picnicking or just to marvel at the alabaster desert.

The White Sands Missile Range is a 4,000-square mile area set aside for missile testing by the Air Force, Army and Navy. Nearly 13,000 persons are employed by the program. Of this number only 6,000 are military personnel. The firing schedule on the range calls for a test each 15 minutes. If complications arise, no delay is tolerated. The firing is re-scheduled the following week or as soon as a vacancy occurs in the schedule.

Holloman and the White Sands Missile Range are the area's most vital economic factors. Tourism ranks a close second. Alamogordo's third largest industry is the sawmill and wood-processing plant of the M. R. Prestridge Lumber Company. Lumbering around Alamogordo employs almost 400 persons. The Prestridge mill alone has more than 200 employees.

The fantastic growth has not allowed local businessmen much time for recreation. It has been less than a year since the Alamogordo Country Club was built. This \$260,000 structure has turned a part of the desert floor into a nine-hole golf course. Already plans are being made

for expansion of the course and the club facilities.

The nation's only solar observatory is in the Sacramento Range a few miles from "The Rocket City." At the site of the observatory the government is planning a solar furnace. Here a great mirror will focus the sun's rays into a furnace with 7200-degree potential. Metals will be tested in the furnace to determine which can withstand the heat and pressure of space exploration.

The population of Alamogordo has a high educational level. Technically trained scientists and engineers have formed dozens of professional organizations and clubs. Alamogordo has excellent schools and most of the buildings are new. In the northeast section of town is the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped.

Two bus lines serve the city and a major airline has three flights daily to Alamogordo. The city recently advertised for bids for a new airport in its southwest portion.

Oil activity in the San Andres has been increasing in the past year and several companies are testing the area. Oil, coupled with a waning uranium industry, can play a big part in the future development of the Tularosa Basin's natural resources.

Alamogordo businessmen have organized a development corporation to work with their Chamber of Commerce in securing industry and diversification. The Alamogordo Industrial Development Corporation hopes to parlay a sunny climate and rich resources into a balanced, diversified city with economic roots stretching into Texas, Mexico and the Pacific Coast. In its effort to attract industry, the corporation points out the city's excellent water supply, the availability of highly skilled, well educated working forces and an almost limitless supply of available land.

Former circus musician, O. M. Voyde, holds statuette made from white sand. He developed a process for molding sand more than 25 years ago.



'Rithmetic to Rockets

Continued from Page 3

and carried by a margin of 343 to two a bond issue for \$42,000 to purchase the physical assets of defunct Clarendon College. The Clarendon Independent School District now owned a college of its own and Clarendon Municipal Junior College opened its doors in September, 1928.

The college has moved along at a steady pace since. Today it boasts 128 full-time students and 48 in night classes, including many townspeople. Attendance has been far above the college average with only 12 absences reported in the final 9-week period of the last semester.

Athletics have played a large part in the life of Clarendon College and its junior college successor. The original college was credited with bringing the first inter-collegiate football game to the Panhandle in 1903. The grid sport has long since made its demise, but other activities such as basketball, tennis, track and volleyball have gained eminence among the college's athletes.

The Clarendon Junior College Bulldogs are rated one of the best small school teams in the district and are perennial contenders for the district championship in basketball.

One of the most popular departments of the college today is the science department, thanks chiefly to the intense interest in the Clarendon Rocket Club, an organization made up of college and high school students.

The club was organized in the spring of 1958 to prove that rockets could be fired safely. The group makes its own missiles in the college laboratory and has met phenomenal success in firing them from their launching site on the W. J. Lewis Ranch northeast of the city.

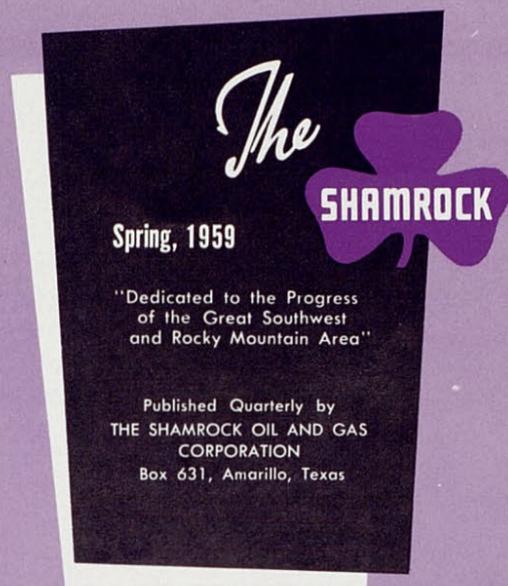
W. W. Cooper, science instructor, is one of the sponsors of the club which now boasts nearly 30 members, including several girls.

"The students have developed a deep interest in rockets and are not only learning that rockets can be fired safely, but are also gaining a wealth of basic knowledge of science," Cooper says.

Clarendon is proud of her college and thousands of alumni scattered throughout the land are quick to proclaim the merits of the small school.

The complete story can not be told in a few pages. But Ethel Harvey, a former resident of Clarendon, has ably recorded many of the glorious memories of the oldest college in the Panhandle in a recent book, "The Athens of the Panhandle."

Those memories, as is Miss Harvey's book, could well be dedicated to those doughty pioneers of education "whose lives were devoted to guiding youth in the search for knowledge."



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CREDITS

ON THE COVER . . .

Summer has passed. And while snow-like drifts of white sand reflect the memories of Winter's icy blasts, Fall's golden leaves still cling stubbornly, awaiting the inevitable advent of Spring.

Even in a world as inanimate as this vast spread of alabaster desert — just as in Man's heart — the Hope of Spring wells eternal.

Cover photo of White Sands by Shamrock staff; page 2 and top page 3, Clarendon Press; bottom page 3, Clarendon Rocket Club; top page 4, Ruidoso News; bottom page 4, Clouderoft Lodge; map on page 8, McCormick-Armstrong, Wichita, Kan.; page 9, Tom Green County Historical Society, page 10, Historical Society of Montana; page 12, Harold Bugbee.

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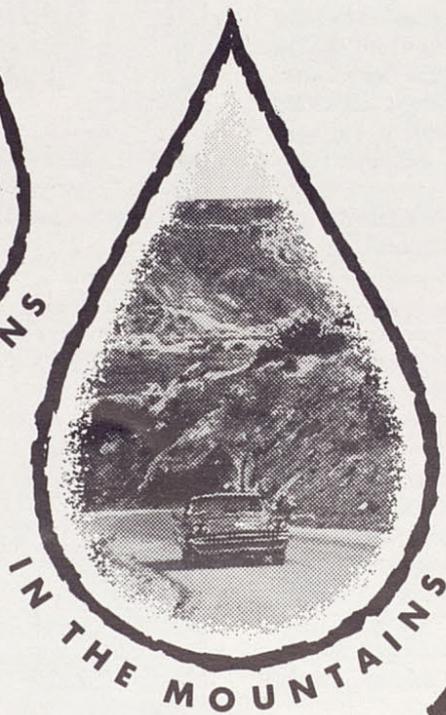
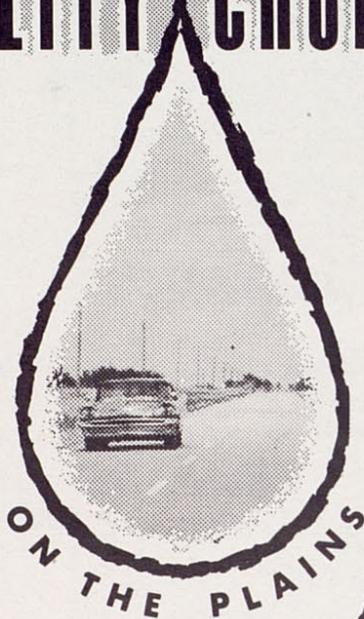
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