Documenting Mexican Fort Worth

If an historian’s tools are written records and tangible artifacts, how does he write a history of an undocumented people? In order to write the history of Mexicanos in Fort Worth, Carlos Cuéllar, author of *Stories from the Barrio: A History of Mexican Fort Worth*, quickly realized that he would have to add oral history to the scant written documentation available.

The result is a book blending archival research and in-depth interviews with a wide range of people from the Mexican community, giving a broad overview of this distinctive population. *Stories from the Barrio* traces the history of Mexicans in Fort Worth from approximately 1872 to the present. Cuéllar interviewed three generations of Fort Worth Hispanics—descendants of the first Mexicanos who emigrated to the U.S. following the Mexican revolution in 1910, the next generation who struggled with balancing assimilation and their unique culture, and the Chicano movement generation who fought for, and won, political and economic power.

Cuéllar’s task was to spin whole cloth out of bits and pieces, threads really, of family stories. His investigation into families’ lives, supplemented with the limited written materials, is organized in themes reflecting how the Mexican population grew—early arrival, employment, religion and education, community life and institutions, art, and political power.

Piecing together the colorful past of the earliest barrios, Cuéllar shows how patterns of settlement were dictated by job and housing availability. He explores the many ways Mexicanos made their
livings and describes the limitations placed on their achievements by discriminatory practices. Finally, he celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit that drove Mexicans in Fort Worth to succeed.

Carlos Eliseo Cuéllar is assistant professor of history at Texas A&M International University in Laredo. He received his Ph.D. in Latin American history from TCU. In addition to his teaching duties at Texas A&M International, Cuéllar serves as director of the D.D. Hachable Honors Program at the university. He is director of the Guerrero Viejo Archives Preservation Project to microfilm and digitize over 250,000 church and municipal documents dating back to the 1750s. *Stories from the Barrio* is his first book.

TCU Press announced *Stories’* publication at an autograph party hosted by State Representative Lon Burnam in July. It was an emotional evening; many people, some in tears, thanked the author for resurrecting half-forgotten memories and for affirming their lives and culture. Representatives of city and state government took turns congratulating the author for his achievement—former city councilman Louis Zapata presented Cuéllar with the key to the city.

Cuéllar has been a hit at half-a-dozen other book signings, and he has been asked to speak at conferences and book fairs. Fort Worth historians welcomed the publication of the long-overdue history; the public has embraced the book; the Texas literary world is taking notice; and orders are steadily coming in. In fact, a second printing might be in order. We at TCU Press couldn’t be prouder.

---

**What’s Ahead for TCU Press?**

Some exciting projects loom on our horizons. Next spring we’ll publish *Texas Literary Outlaws: Six Writers in the Sixties and Beyond*, by Steve Davis. Steve is assistant curator of the Southwest Writers Collection, and he mined that archive for material about the lives and careers of Billy Lee Brammer, Gary Cartwright, Dan Jenkins, Larry L. King, Bud Shrake, and, to a lesser extent, Peter Gent. This fascinating and lengthy study is a perfect fit for TCU Press—we have published and/or reprinted work by Gary Cartwright, Dan Jenkins, Larry King, and Bud Shrake.

Larry King writes, “Steve Davis is far too polite and political to rank the order of Talent of us famousarthurs revealed in this fine book, and I am too modest to comment. I did learn a lot about my writing colleagues, however, including confessions they failed to make during our wilder drankin’ and dopin’ days. I would enjoy this book even if I were not its obvious star.”

Jim Lee, our acquisitions editor who is often introduced, to his amusement, as one of the godfathers of Texas literature, is hard at work on *Adventures with a Texas Humanist: Essays on Texas Literature and Folklore*. The book will feature several new essays—including two on J. Frank Dobie and Larry McMurtry—in combination with rewritten pieces from Jim’s long career as an essayist.

Fall 2004 will be sort of a Bryan Woolley season. Bryan, who writes features for the *Dallas Morning News*, is the author of several novels and essay collections. Now he’s put together *Texas Road Trip: Stories from Across the Great State*, with wide-ranging pieces—a horse-breaker/poet in Alpine who reads Yevtushenko; people in Lamesa who own one of the last drive-in theaters; first-person pieces about growing up in Fort Davis; going to the State Fair of Texas; descendants of Quanah Parker; and a tour of Route 66. As series editor of the Texas Tradition Series, Jim Lee has chosen Bryan’s novel, *Sam Bass*, for the fall season. Fred Erisman will write the afterword.

And watch for much more—a history of Fort Worth’s Lena Pope Home, a photography book about Oaxaca’s Day of the Dead, a study of Fort Worth’s notorious Marshal Longhair Jim Courtright, a history of live theater in Fort Worth, and a proposed series of Texas biographies.
TCU Press lost a devoted friend with the September 21\textsuperscript{st} death of Donald Worcester. A renowned author, historian, and teacher, Don was a lifetime honorary member of the Editorial Advisory Board and served as advisor and booster since the early 1980s, when the Press was revitalized.

TCU Press was proud to reprint Don’s children’s books—\textit{War Pony}, \textit{Lone Hunter and the Cheyennes}, and \textit{Lone Hunter’s Gray Pony}—as the first entries in its Chaparral Books for Young Readers. The three are now available in one volume, \textit{The Lone Hunter Books}. Don wrote the text for \textit{The Texas Cowboy}, a lavish book showcasing work of members of the Texas Cowboy Artists Association, and was co-author, with the late Maurice Boyd, of the landmark books, \textit{Kiowa Voices I: Ceremonial Dance, Ritual, and Song} and \textit{Kiowa Voices II: Myths, Legends, and Folktales}.

His books included \textit{The Apaches: Eagles of the Southwest}, which won the Southwest Book Award and a Spur Award from Western Writers of America. \textit{The Texas Longhorn, The Chisholm Trail, Man on Two Ponies}, and \textit{A Visit from Father}, are also among his many books. He won three Spur Awards in three categories and in 1988 received the Western Writers Golden Saddleman from WWA for lifetime achievement.

Chair of the TCU History Department from 1963 to 1972, Don was devoted to students and teaching, supervising countless dissertations, encouraging young faculty to publish, and tirelessly reading manuscripts and offering suggestions.

In the words of Don’s colleague and fellow author Paul Boller, “If you ever knew him, even briefly, you would always remember him.” Like Paul, we treasured our friendship with him and will miss him greatly.

\textbf{SOME FACTS ABOUT TCU PRESS}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{Year established:} 1966
  \item \textbf{Books in print:} 208
  \item \textbf{Books published annually:} 6 - 9
  \item \textbf{Distribution:} TCU Press belongs to a publishing consortium headquartered at Texas A&M University Press.
  \item \textbf{Staff:} Judy Alter, director
  James Ward Lee, acquisitions editor
  Susan Petty, editor
  \item \textbf{Editorial Advisory Board:}
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Larry Adams, associate provost for academic affairs, TCU, ex officio
    \item Joyce Pate Capper, former president of the Tarrant County Historical Society
    \item Theresa Gaul, assistant professor of English, TCU
    \item Douglas Harman, director, Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau
    \item Max Lale, past president, Texas State Historical Association
    \item Joyce Gibson Roach, author, historian, and folklorist
    \item Gleniece Robinson, director, Fort Worth Public Library
    \item Bob Seal, director, Mary Couts Burnett Library, TCU
    \item Gene Smith, professor of history, TCU
  \end{itemize}
  \item The TCU Press is an affiliate member of the Association of American University Presses.
  \item \textbf{Questions:} Call us at 817-257-7822; write to Box 298300, Fort Worth, Texas 76129; or e-mail, tcupress@tcu.edu.
  \item \textbf{Check our Web page:}
  \url{http://www.prs.tcu.edu/prs/}
  \item \textbf{Toll-free orders:} 1-800-826-8911
\end{itemize}
The **TCU Press Annual Autograph Extravaganza**

**Friday, December 5, 4:00 – 7:00 P.M.**

**The Fort Worth Botanic Garden**

3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard (off University Drive)

**The Friends of the TCU Library present**

Elmer Kelton

“Christmas at the Ranch”

Authors will include Judy Alter, Beth Alvarez with *The Texas Almanac*, Randolph Campbell, Mary Cimarolli, Luther Clegg, Carole Nelson Douglas, Glen Dromgoole, Helen Green, Sylvia Grider, Marilyn Komechak, Julie Lake, Dave Lieber, Jerry Lincecum, Quentin McGown, Kerry Newcomb, June Osborne, Rena Pederson, James Reasoner, Clay Reynolds, Carol Roark, Lou Rodenberger, Irene Sandell, Rebecca Sharpless, Carlton Stowers, Bryan Woolley, and others.

The TCU Press Annual Autograph Extravaganza is presented by TCU Campus bookstore in conjunction with the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and The Friends of the TCU Library.