

# Saddlebag Newsletter

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A supplement to the *WWHA Journal*  
Available On-Line via [www.wildwesthistory.org](http://www.wildwesthistory.org)

Welcome to the *Saddlebag* Newsletter. If you have Wild West news, please contact the editor at the e-mail address shown at the top of the *Saddlebag* page. We reserve the right to include or not include any materials submitted to us.

## October 2023

### **WWHA On-Line *Saddlebag* newsletter:**

Hello, members and friends of WWHA. This is to announce that starting with the November issue of our newsletter you will have a new editor. Pam Potter will be replacing me in this role. She is a fully able and qualified person to “be in charge” of this publication. She loves WWHA, knows her “stuff” about who we are and who we want to be, plus having been our president and on the board from the beginning, 2008, she will keep you “in the know” on our activities, plans, and news.

I am leaving this role as newsletter editor now, as I will the role of journal editor at the end of the year. I was the newsletter editor for WOLA – Western Outlaw-Lawman History Association, for several years before I became that organization’s journal editor. Then, at the merger of WOLA and NOLA, I became the journal editor and Chuck Parsons was the capable editor of the newsletter the first few years (all hard copies, mailed to the membership). I have been editor of both the journal (print only) and the newsletter (in print and on-line) now for a good long while.

Passing on this newsletter to Pam, I have great confidence that she will do a fine job. You may start now sending her news for the November and December issues: [spiritwind2@hotmail.com](mailto:spiritwind2@hotmail.com).

### **WWHA December *Journal*:**

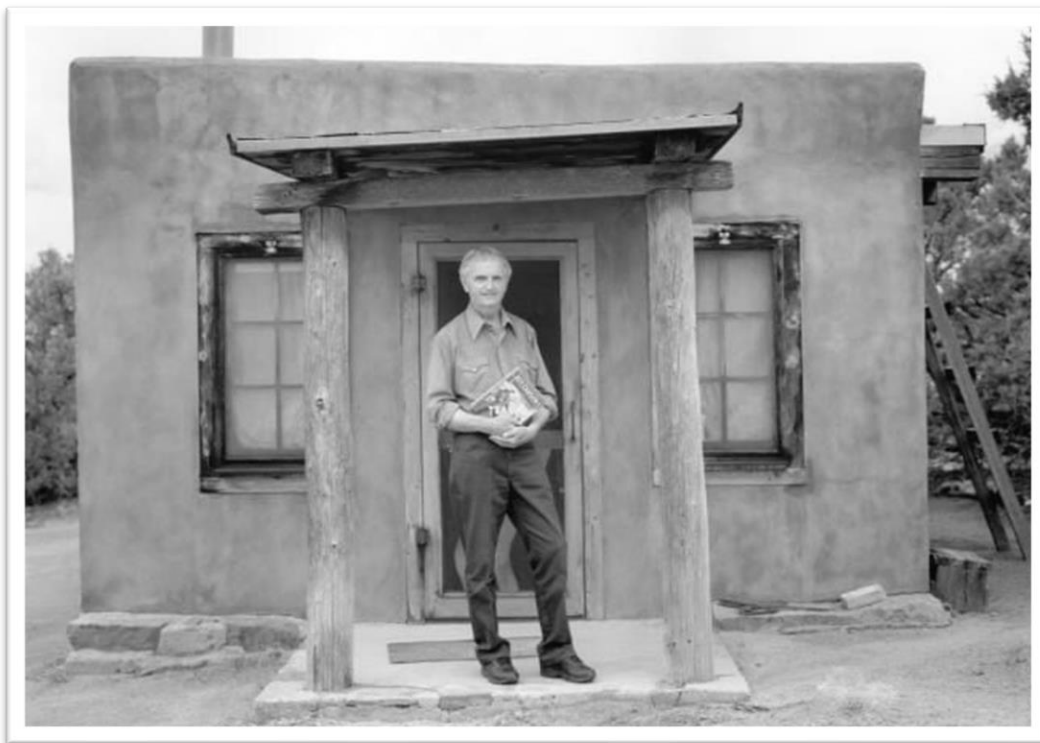
The December issue of *WWHA Journal* is well in the works. Unless the Christmas mail rush hinders things, the USPS should have it in your mailbox the first week of December.

Contents will include: An essay on whether or not Dave Rudabaugh lived on into the 1900s, despite the many stories of his death in 1886 in Parral, Mexico. A beautifully constructed article by scholar Lynda Sanchez titled: “Stirring the Warriors Soul: Apaches Ride With Pershing.” An article on a little known aspect of Oklahoma history by Jim Fulbright, “Three Sands Oklahoma: A Reckoning for Two Corrupt Lawmen.” Another intriguing article by the writing team of James Allen Bailey and Margaret Boykin Bailey, “A Review of Jim Younger’s Suicide Investigation.” And, the first *Journal* article by our new editor, Matthew “Matt” Bernstein, “The

Tall Sycamore of the Rio Grande.” No, it’s not an article about trees but one that tells the “life story” of William L. Rynerson, who served as New Mexico’s District Attorney for the Third Judicial District, during the Lincoln County War. Plus, Erik Wright, our “Interviews” columnist will have an interview with Matt that will tell you more about him and his plans for our *journal*. I will also have some surprises for you with interesting things I’ve been saving for the right time, plus my “Goodbye” editorial, the usual “Letters to the Editor,” news and announcements, closing with our “Reading the West” column of book reviews and announcements of new releases.

## **Marc Simmons, 1937- 2023: Prolific author drew deep from the well of Southwest history**

We are sorry to announce the death of western historian and author Marc Simmons, September 14, 2023. We have gathered comments from several of his friends and fellow historians, such as Lynda Sanchez and Mark Gardner, as well as the *Albuquerque Journal* newspaper to relate a sincere appreciation for Marc’s decades of work in the fields of Wild West and New Mexico history.



**New Mexico historian Marc Simmons is shown at his home near Cerrillos, New Mexico. Simmons, who produced more than 40 books, died in Albuquerque on Sept. 14. He was 86. (Courtesy of Mark L. Gardner)**

Marc Simmons once said that everything he had done since the sixth grade was directed toward finding out about the history of the Southwest. “It’s so exciting — like a dramatic well you can keep drawing from,” Simmons told an Albuquerque newspaper reporter in 1991.

Simmons never came up dry. He wrote, edited or contributed to more than 40 books. Among those he authored are *Ranchers, Ramblers and Renegades*, *Yesterday in Santa Fe*, *Coronado’s Land*, *Murder on the Santa Fe Trail*, *The Little Lion of the Southwest: A Life of Manuel Antonio Chaves*, *When Six Guns Ruled*, *Witchcraft in the Southwest*, *Kit Carson & His Three Wives*, and “*Albuquerque: A Narrative History*,” the last of which received the Western Writers of America Spur Award in 1982.

“I think he was one of a handful of great New Mexico historians,” said Paul Hutton, distinguished professor of history at the University of New Mexico. “He didn’t publish big books. He published little books because he would never stop researching. But he knew everything and he knew everybody.”

Simmons died on Sept. 14 at La Vida Llena retirement community in Albuquerque. He was 86. “It’s always sad when you lose someone like Marc,” Hutton said. “It’s like losing a library.”

Simmons was born in Dallas and developed his passion for history early on by reading novels of the old Southwest and histories and memoirs of frontier times. After earning an undergraduate degree at the University of Texas, Simmons pursued graduate work in history at UNM, studying under Dr. Donald Cutter, distinguished professor of Spanish borderland studies.

In 1963, looking for a quiet place to write his doctoral dissertation, Simmons moved to a remote location near Cerrillos and built a house out of adobe bricks he had made. “I thought I was going to stay here just a short while and then go off and be a history professor at some Ivy League college,” Simmons said in a 1991 newspaper interview. “But I was born to live in the boondocks of New Mexico.”

Simmons, in fact, lived at his isolated home until 2017. One building grew into six separate ones. He used propane to operate a stove and refrigerator, and he eventually had a phone installed. But he never had electricity or indoor plumbing, and he wrote his books, magazine articles and newspaper columns on a manual typewriter.

Mark L. Gardner is an accomplished writer of popular histories of the Old West and a musician specializing in the historic music of the American West. He was also a close friend of Simmons. Gardner said Simmons shunned as many modern conveniences as possible, presumably preferring to stay as closely connected as possible to the past he loved. “But if he heard about a new book he wanted, he’d call me up and say, ‘Mark would you be able to go online and order this from Amazon for me.’”

“No one influenced my career more than Marc,” Gardner said during a phone interview from his Cascade, Colorado, home. “He was there for me when I was a budding writer. He couldn’t have been a better mentor to me. I ascribe all my success to him. There was no greater thrill than to send a piece to Marc and get his approval.” A common interest in the Santa Fe Trail forged Simmons and Gardner’s friendship. Gardner said Simmons co-founded the Santa Fe Trail Association and also campaigned for and contributed his own money to the restoration of the Pigeon’s Ranch building, which played a significant role in the Civil War battle of Glorieta Pass.

“He was a juggernaut for the Santa Fe Trail,” Gardner said. “No one was more important to saving the trail. And he sold a collection of Indian pots to help stabilize the Pigeon’s Ranch building.” He said his favorite Simmons books are “*Kit Carson & His Three Wives*” and “*Southwestern Colonial Ironwork: The Spanish Blacksmithing Tradition*.”

“That speaks to the breadth of Marc’s work,” Gardner said. “He could write popular history, but he did material culture study that was as good as any museum curator could turnout. He went to school to be a farrier. Marc went to Spain to research colonial blacksmithing. He spoke Spanish fluently.” And he loved books. There were thousands of them at his Cerrillos outpost.

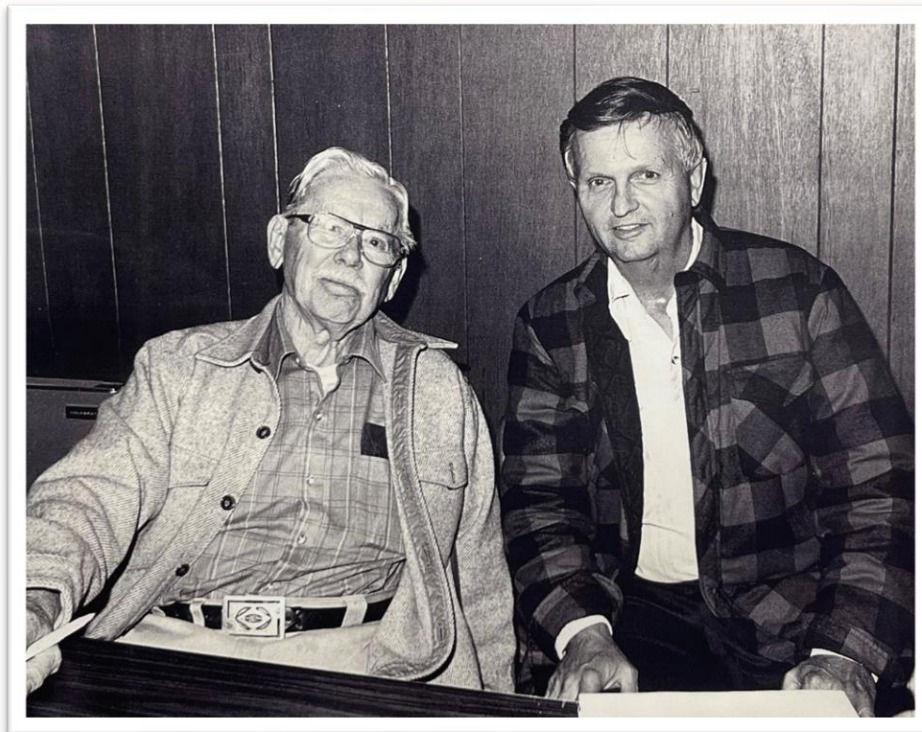
“We went book hunting together,” Gardner said. “He’d say, ‘I just going along. I’m not buying any books.’ And he’d end up with a \$75 stack of them. He had so many books, he’d forget and buy one he had. And then he would give it to me.”

In 1986, Simmons was badly injured in a head-on automobile collision on N.M. 14 near Golden. His neck and multiple other bones were broken. He had to leave his Cerrillos home to recuperate, but he returned there when was healed up, and that’s where he remained until the spring of 2017, when a neighbor checking on him found that he had collapsed. Simmons was treated for dehydration, and he moved soon afterward to La Vida Llena.

Hal Simmons, his brother, said he went to bed on Sept. 14 and did not wake up.

“He’s joined that pageant of history — Kit Carson, Manuel Chaves, Don Diego de Vargas, the Comanches and Cheyenne and the Bent brothers,” Gardner said.

In 1991, Simmons said he and other historians had just scratched the surface of New Mexico history, that there were tons of stuff still to be uncovered. “Unfortunately, I won’t be around to do all of it,” he said. “Somebody else will have to pick up the wand.”



All, since people are finding out about Marc Simmons passing I thought I would share a couple of images of Marc. The one attached is of Marc with his friend and fellow author (of Shane and other classics) Jack Schafer. Those guys represented the old Santa Fe, the cultural integrity, care and research done by such men and women.

Marc shunned computers, yet he wrote 40 plus books and dozens, if not hundreds, of articles about New Mexico. He researched in Spanish and Mexican archives as well as those U.S. libraries and other great facilities in New Mexico. He wrote about ranching, rogues, Native Americans, Hispanic history and culture, the art of the farrier (they called him the farrier with a PhD.); the city of Albuquerque, Billy the Kid, the McComas kidnapping, metal and iron work of early day New Mexico and on and on.

Marc always responded, when folks wrote to him, in that beautiful Spencerian handwriting of his. Marc was truly an inspiration and was always willing to help younger writers. He gave talks and helped people appreciate our New Mexico patrimony. He shall be missed.

*Lynda Sanchez, Lincoln, New Mexico*

## **New Site Manager, Lincoln, New Mexico:**



There's a new manager in town! This month, Oliver Horn started in his new role as manager of Lincoln and Fort Stanton Historic Sites. You may know him already: last year, he was part of the team that worked on the Cultural Landscape Report for Fort Stanton. While Oliver conducted his research on Fort Stanton's history, he and his team relied on this community's deep pockets of knowledge and passion to sharpen the report's perspective on this place.

Now, he will do this every day as manager of both Lincoln and Fort Stanton. With his connection to this community and his intimate knowledge of this area

and the Southwest in general, he hopes to address the needs of these sites in meaningful and substantive ways.

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to work on Lincoln and Fort Stanton Historic Sites, two of the most historically rich and significant sites in New Mexico," he said. "I believe they are essential to understanding the history of our state, and I hope to help raise broader public awareness of their importance. I also look forward to engaging members of the surrounding communities who are passionate and knowledgeable about the sites."

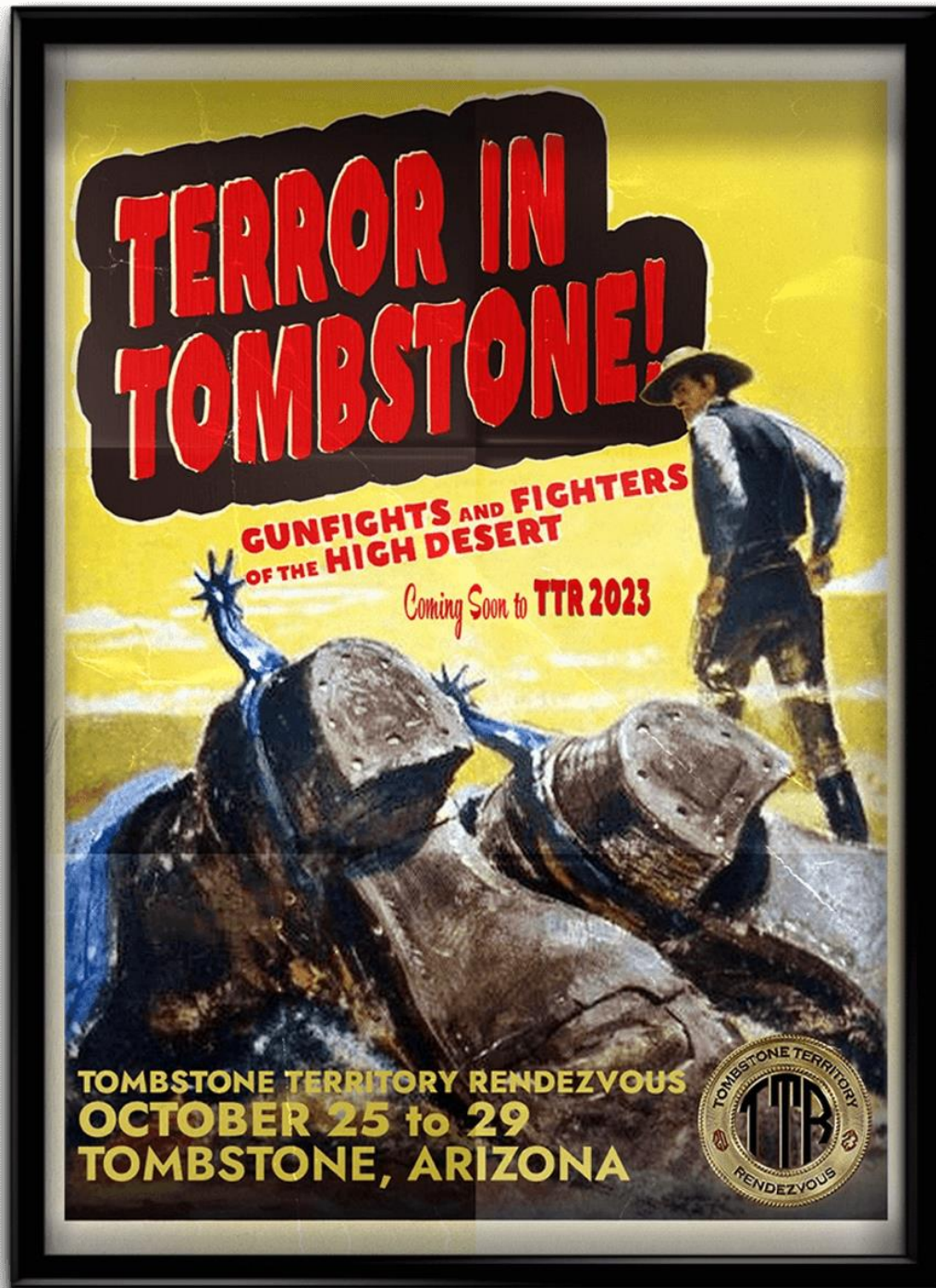
If you see Oliver around the sites, be sure to say hello! He's excited to meet you all.

# **“Terror in Tombstone” Gunfights and Fighters of the High Desert**

## **Tombstone Territory Rendezvous And WWHA Regional Roundup**

### **October 25 to 29<sup>th</sup>**

### **Tombstone Arizona**



**Speakers:**

**Peter Brand, Donna Harrell, Doug Hocking, Paul Johnson, John Kowalski, Mike Mihaljevich, Bob Palmquist, Pam Potter, Chuck Smith, Gil Storms, Mark Warren, Ron Woggon, Roy B. Young, Nancy Sosa, Jean Smith, and more**



### **Our Mission is in The Name: The Texas Center**

Texas turns 200 on March 2, 2036. By that time, there will be another 10-15 million people living here. With this date, and this reality, shimmering in the distance, The Texas Center at Schreiner University will promote the Texas Identity—bold, honest, authentic, and unashamed—in all 254 counties and all 45 million people. It will serve as the place to get to know Texas.

The Texas Center is the leading resource for information on the Texas experience because much is at stake. Writer John Fairbank described history as a “grab-bag from which each advocate pulls out a ‘lesson’” to advance an agenda. George Orwell, in his book *1984*, put it another way: “Who controls the past controls the present: who controls the present, controls the past.”

What are we advocating? We are a blend of people and perspectives, populated by individuals who are living artifacts of the great museum that is the Texas past. This story is not about one agenda or opinion, but many, all intertwined to make a dynamic, chaotic, and bold expression of the American idea. We call our philosophy *E Pluribus, Texas . . . out of many, Texas*.

### **Advancing on Three Fronts:**

1. We engage K-16 education; developing Texas History curriculum for K-12 and college students so that Texas is understood and appreciated by those who are currently here and by those who will arrive in our State over the next 13 years.
2. We are telling the story of Texas in a variety of ways including the TexS lectures, books, Texas Heritage Days, curriculum, and a wide variety of online content for folks who are brand new to Texas history and culture and those who are ready for a deep and nuanced inquiry and serve as a resource for public servants across the state.
3. We support cultural institutions as they tell the Texas story, from the Kerr County Historical Commission to The Bosque County Museum, all the way to the Alamo. We are involved from Galveston to Amarillo, from Houston to El Paso, and a slew of little towns in between.

We have crafted a *Uniquely Texan* ecosystem that describes what Texas *is*, what Texas *was*, and what Texas *can become* in ways that are both experienced and taught formally.

**Use these QR Codes to view engaging videos to learn more about The Texas Center**



### **Our Techniques:**

1. A team of teachers from all over the state are crafting a video-intensive K-12 education package of hundreds of Texas lessons and stories we are calling *E Pluribus, Texas*;
2. to accompany these videos and teach honest lessons about the incredible diversity and indomitable spirit of Texas;
3. This material will be available on a phone app and interactive website;
4. We are serving current and future teachers through workshops and classroom settings;
5. We are building community and social capital throughout the state and will use our educational content to teach natives and newcomers alike about Texas and create a certification in Texas History and Culture.

### **The Arenas**

1. Our tactical efforts emphasize the Texas we love by creating entertaining and educational electronic media content that can be easily distributed throughout the state and by developing and encouraging consumer products.
2. Our strategic efforts are to improve upon the Texas we know across the state, from the capitol to the classrooms, and from historic sites to households.
3. The future of Texas is in its people. We will meet them where they are.

### **Contours of Support**

We raise over \$300,000 per year in **operating capital** to support the ongoing operations of The Texas Center through our *Old 300* campaign of founding supporters, and our *254 Counties* campaign. Our development board, the Empresario Council, advises the director and shapes the Texas Center's strategic direction, and opens doors for presentations, involvement, and support.

We are creating **revenue streams** from individuals and organizations who need our expertise in all things Texas to help them advance their causes or enterprises. We are also creating education materials and programming that will be available by subscription.

To sustain this effort into the future, we will build a robust **endowment** of at least \$6,000,000 to undergird our operations, provide financial stability and working capital for new initiatives. When we finish in May 2026, we will have at least 58 named endowments supporting the Texas Center.

Help us shape the future of Texas. If you are interested in:

- Receiving more information
- Hosting an Event
- Creating an Endowment
- Donating

Contact Dr. Don Frazier, Director, The Texas Center (830) 792-7464, [DSFrazier@schreiner.edu](mailto:DSFrazier@schreiner.edu)  
Danielle Jenschke, Director of Development, (830) 792-7205 or [DRJenschke@schreiner.edu](mailto:DRJenschke@schreiner.edu)