



Volume 2, no. 2

NEWSLETTER

January 2001

***From the Acting Director:***

Midway through my tenure as Acting Director of the Southwest Center is the perfect occasion to reflect on this past fall's activities and to look ahead to those planned for winter and spring 2001. The Center, now in its fifth year of operation, is establishing an almost cyclical rhythm of events and programs, incoming fellows, and newly published books. Yet fresh initiatives and ideas continue to percolate as the Center grows and gains increasing national, and international, attention.

We began the fall semester with a symposium based on ISEM's exhibit of Carolyn Brown's stunning photographs, "Sacred Space: Man and the Divine in Mexico, Central America, and the Southwestern United States." Our various book publishing projects added outstanding new titles to our shelf, descriptions of which follow on our Book News page. And in December the Center inaugurated a new program: the Clements Book Prize Lecture. The first winner, Bill deBuys, and his collaborator, Santa Fe photographer Joan Myers, spoke about their book, *Salt Dreams: Land & Water in Low-Down California* (1999). The purpose of the prize is to promote and recognize fine writing and original research on the American Southwest. *Salt Dreams*, the judges concurred, fit the bill on all accounts.

So what is coming up? Beyond the usual compliment of brown-bag lunch presentations and other public lectures (*schedule enclosed*), the major event of the spring will be a

symposium on "The Future of the Southern Plains," co-sponsored by the Center and the History Department. We have lined up a superb group of historians, geographers, and even a climatologist to reflect upon the past of the South Plains and to offer some projections about future trends. Historically, this region – which includes West Texas – has depended upon oil and the livestock industry. Neither has flourished in recent years. Further, all economic development depends upon water, a resource that is fast dwindling as the South Plains continue to suffer from drought.

Scholars including Elliott West, Dan Flores, John Miller Morris, will address issues such as: the transition from family farm to corporate agribusiness, balancing regional growth with environmental constraints, creation of a Great Plains landscape aesthetic and the potential for tourism, drought over the millennia, the changing nature of petroleum production and its consequences for employment as well as public policy, the political culture of the Texas Panhandle, and the impact of Hispanic peoples and institutions on the South Plains.

We selected our presenters on the basis of their areas of expertise but also their reputations as skillful speakers and writers. The symposium will kick off with a keynote lecture by Elliott West on Friday, April 6 and continue through early afternoon on Saturday, April 7. Additional information will follow and we hope you will plan to join us.

**Sherry L. Smith**



## BOOK NEWS

SMU Press released former Clements Research Fellow Nancy Beck Young's book *Wright Patman: Populism, Liberalism, and the American Dream* this fall. A record-breaking number of people came to hear Nancy's brown-bag lunch presentation last November. The SMU bookstore, which provided copies of the book for Nancy to sign, sold almost two dozen. Of particular note that day were Wright Patman's son and daughter-in-law, who drove in from East Texas to hear Nancy's lecture.

The Center's newest book in its publishing-on-demand program arrived in October, just in time for sale at the Second Annual *Legacies* Dallas History Conference. This year conference, which the Southwest Center co-sponsored with a number of historical organizations in the metroplex, took place at SMU. The book, *The New Dallas: Immigrants, Community Institutions, and Cultural Diversity, a Collection of Student Papers* was edited by Dennis Cordell, professor of History at SMU, and Jane Lenz Elder, the Center's associate director.

The latest volume in *The Library of Texas* series, which the Center publishes in partnership with the DeGolyer Library, is *The Adventures and Recollections of General Walter P. Lane*. Jimmy L. Bryan, a Ph.D. student in the Department of History, edited



## ~~~ **Highlight for Spring** ~~~

The Clements Center's largest event this spring will be the two-day Sharp Symposium co-sponsored by the Center and the William P. Clements Department of History at Southern Methodist University. The subject of the symposium, which begins late in the afternoon on Friday, April 6 and continues all day Saturday, April 7, is "The Future of the Southern Plains," an area which includes West Texas, eastern New Mexico, the Oklahoma panhandle, and even southeastern Colorado. Coordinated by SMU Professor of History and Acting Director of the Clements Center Sherry L. Smith, the symposium will analyze that region's historic past and project future trends of such key issues as public lands policy, the oil and gas industry, Mexican Americans in West Texas, water, drought, and global warming.

Prof. Smith has invited a wide variety of participants, including historians Dan Flores (University of Montana), John Miller Morris (University of Texas, San Antonio), Diana and Roger Olien (University of Texas, Permian Basin), Jeff Roche (Trinity College, Connecticut), Yolanda Romero (North Lake College in Irving), Elliott West (University of Arkansas), and author John Opie (New Jersey Institute of Technology) as well as Connie Woodhouse of the United States Geological Survey. These speakers will give lectures based on larger essays, which the Clements Center plans to publish as a book. Prof. Smith will edit the volume. This symposium, which is open to the public, will provide a wonderful opportunity for historians, geographers, climatologists and members of the larger community to come together in serious conversation about an important, but often overlooked, sub-region of the American West.

### *Tentative Program Schedule*

#### Friday Keynote Address:

Elliott West—"Trails and Footprints: Past Patterns of the Southern Plains"

#### Saturday Sessions:

##### Session One

John Opie—"The Future Isn't What It Used to Be': Wayne Wyatt and Fifty Years of Ogallala Aquifer Irrigation"

Connie Woodhouse—"Droughts of the Past; Implications for the Future?"

##### Session Two

Jeff Roche—"Conservatism and Political Symbol: the Future of the Southern Plains"

Yolanda Romero—"The Mexican-American Experience in Twentieth-Century Northwest Texas"

Luncheon Address—Dan Flores—"The Elusively Beautiful Plains"

##### Session Three

Diana and Roger Olien—"Petroleum in the Future of the Southern Plains"

John Miller Morris—"When Corporations Rule the Llano Estacado"

