

**El Paso/Juarez**  
**The International Twin Cities**  
**By Roger Sorensen**  
*Fall 1973 Frontier Magazine*

In 1973 the city of El Paso celebrates her centennial anniversary, marking the one hundred years between the incorporation of the unique border town in 1873 and the metropolitan city of 1973.

The Conquistadores, traveling North on El Camino Real (The Royal Highway) in 1536, found the location of "El Paso del Norte" (The Pass of the North) an ideal base for searching the Southwest.

"El Paso del Norte" remained primarily a base camp for Spanish exploration until development of the two cities began in 1659 with the establishment in Juarez of a mission called Mission de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, which still stands today in the shadow of a modern cathedral. Twenty two years later, a mission was built at Ysleta, now part of El Paso, and other missions were subsequently established at Socorro and San Elizario. Both sides of the Rio Grande were then a part of New Spain, but land along the South bank was the first to be developed on a large scale. By early in the 19th century, Juarez (then Paso del Norte) had become a substantial community with haciendas, vineyards, orchards, and trading facilities.

The end of the Mexican War in 1848 marked the beginning of El Paso as a community. The Rio Grande became the boundary between the United States and Mexico. Almost simultaneously the Gold Rush occurred, prompting thousands to take the southern route through El Paso to California. Two trading posts were established in 1848; a mercantile operation began a year later and others soon followed. The Army established a post in 1849, and the Postmaster General designated the post office "El Paso" in 1852. El Paso was incorporated as a city in 1873 and became the county seat of El Paso County in 1883.

El Paso, together with its twin city, Ciudad Juarez in Mexico, constitutes the largest bilingual community on an international border in the world. Living in El Paso is like living in two countries as the food, architecture, arts, customs and traditions of both countries are evident daily as well as in the holidays and fiestas of each country. The city's location in the Southwest mountain highlands protects it from inclement weather and virtually insures a dry and sunny year-round climate.

El Paso was born as a supply point and resting place where wagon trains once rocked along. Interstate 10, running East and West, speeds travelers thru the lowest U.S. route between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Criss-crossing it is the North-South Freeway, a modern counterpart through El Paso for the route that once connected the colonial cities of Santa Fe and Mexico City.

El Paso has become a major international clothing producer and is the largest U.S. manufacturer of men's and boys' casual wear. The city is a transportation hub and is served by major airlines of both the U.S. and Mexico.

Fort Bliss, which had its beginning in 1849, is now the guided missile training center of the free world.

Today El Paso County's population is 387,000. The figure for Juarez is estimated at 600,000. The two cities thus have a combined population of nearly one million.

A multitude of cultural activities are offered, many of them centered around the University of Texas at El Paso. The El Paso Symphony provides an excellent winter series, with famous guest artists at Liberty Hall, as well as open air concerts during the summer.

El Paso has an excellent museum of art, a zoo, private night clubs, theatrical entertainment, including the newly completed Adobe Horseshoe in nearby San Elizario, which is built on the exact spot where the first European road show was presented in the United States. They feature the finest dining and top Broadway stars. The development of the Pronaf area in Juarez, adjacent to the world-famous Camino Real Hotel, has produced a major new tourist attraction.

Annually, El Paso is highlighted by the Sun Carnival, with its activities centering around the coronation of the Sun Queen, the New Year's Day Sun Carnival Parade and the nationally televised Sun Bowl Game.

The warm, rain-free climate of the border makes golf and tennis year-round sports. In addition avid baseball fans may follow the progress of the Sun Kings of the Texas League. In Juarez, soccer is the sport, with games held every Sunday.

Bullfights are also held every Sunday in Juarez - the only city, outside of Mexico City to host two bullrings.

Racing fans can enjoy themselves to the utmost at the Juarez Race Track featuring both thoroughbred and greyhound racing. Upon entering the lobby of this unique racetrack, it is obvious this is not the usual racetrack.

From the time you enter the lobby, it's easy to see why it is often referred to as the "Taj Mahal" of racing. The circular ramp leading to the upper level seating offers a spectacular view of a huge mosaic mural depicting the history of Mexico, a dancing fountain and a 46 foot handmade chandelier. Between this racetrack, and others located in nearby New Mexico, racing fans find themselves "at home away from home".

El Paso is a vibrant, growing city which combines the friendliness of the Southwest, the heritage of the past, and the bright future of tomorrow.

Frontier Airlines now offers jet service to the city of El Paso with non-stop flights to and from Albuquerque continuing on to Denver and Kansas City making connections to many other Frontier cities.

*(Mr. Sorenson attended North Western Junior College in Sterling, Colorado, and the University of Denver. He was employed as a station agent for Frontier in 1970 and is presently Regional Sales Representative in El Paso.)*

*<The original article misspelled Roger's last name as Sorenson .>*