



El Paso Herald-Post

July 17, 1978

Ms. Grace Halsell
% Stein and Day
122 East 42nd St.
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ms. Halsell:

This the first time I've been moved to write a fan letter to an author, since my job as book editor for an afternoon daily keeps my fairly emotionally uninvolved with my job. I remember your book "Soul Sister" and took time out to read "The Illegals" before passing it on to a more qualified person for review in my column.

Besides being a fascinating read, I was naturally taken with your experiences here in El Paso and astounded at your depth of research and bravery. I am in awe of your ability to gain the confidence of your subjects and obtain such a marvelous first person look at our deplorable wetback situation.

I have only lived in El Paso 10 years but still speak no Spanish, to my discredit. But I have become personally interested in the plight of maids who worked for me, and one family in particular I am still concerned about though Yolanda has successfully fled to Chicago and melted into the teeming morass there. I consistently pay more than the average going rate, but even then I am taking advantage of the help because of the lack of social security, which bothers me.

Another reason I have been interested in you is your background.

Knowing you are from Lubbock, I wonder which branch of the Halsell

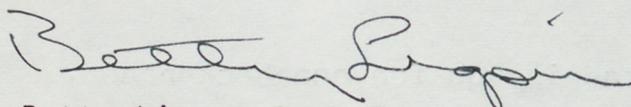
family you spring from. My father was Harry Halsell Gose, named for a man with whom my grandfather was in business in Decatur, Tex. in 1895. I think their relations terminated soon afterward, with some unpleasantness, according to what I can remember, but this surely must be a relative.

And several years ago when we lived in Oklahoma City I contacted other Halsells who lived there because of a book written about the well-known ranching pioneer, W.D. Halsell. I now have a son named Harry.

I hope that if you ever get back to El Paso that you give me the opportunity to meet and interview you. I have given your book to a young PhD history professor at UT El Paso who is one of the favored Mexicans that made it big in the Promised Land. He came here with his people as a young teenager, speaking no English, was thrown into city schools, but managed to survive and come out speaking English without an accent and an impressive scholastic record. He has just had a book published by the University of Texas Press called "Border Boom Town: Ciudad Since 1848."

I think everyone in El Paso, indeed along the border, should read your book. It should do much to foster better understanding of our border problem and see our neighbors in a more humane light. Power to you.

Regards,



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