

# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW



J. CISNEROS -89

*Pasajero del Camino Real*

**Doña Ana County Historical Society**  
Volume IX, No.1 Las Cruces, New Mexico January 2002

PUBLISHER  
**Doña Ana County Historical Society**

EDITOR  
Rick Hendricks

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Robert L. Hart and Jeffery P. Brown

TYPOGRAPHY, DESIGN, PRINTING

Insta-Copy Imaging  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

COVER DRAWING BY  
Jose Cisneros  
(Reproduced with permission of the artist)

The *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* (ISSN-1076-9072) is published by the Doña Ana County Historical Society for its members and others interested in the history of the region.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Doña Ana County Historical Society.

Articles may be quoted with credit to the author and the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. The per-copy price of the *Review* is \$6.00 (\$5.00 to Members). If ordering by mail, please add \$2.00 for postage and handling.

Correspondence regarding articles for the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* may be directed to the Editor at the Doña Ana County Historical Society (500 North Water Street, Las Cruces, NM 88001-1224). Inquiries for society membership also may be sent to this address.

## **SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW**

---

Volume IX, No. 1

Las Cruces, New Mexico

January 2002

---

### **ARTICLES**

<a href="#">Antonio Severo Borrajo: Hispano-Mexican Patriot Priest</a>	
Rick Hendricks .....	1
<a href="#">The Origins of Sierra County: Political and Economic Roots</a>	
James B. Sullivan .....	6
<a href="#">Fred R. Higgins: Lawman of Southeast New Mexico</a>	
Elvis E. Fleming .....	14
<a href="#">Technology, Politicos, and the Decline of a Sierra County Seat: Hillsboro, 1884-1939</a>	
James B. Sullivan .....	20
<a href="#">Some Notes Regarding Aviation Activities of New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in the Early to Mid-1940s</a>	
Joe Gold .....	27
<a href="#">Harvesting the Crops: Axis Prisoners of War and Their Impact on Dona Ana County During World War II</a>	
Wolfgang T. Schlauch .....	30
<a href="#">The History of Stahmann Farms, 1926-1990</a>	
Theresa M. Hanley .....	38
<a href="#">The Cabin on Aragon Draw</a>	
Philip L. Duncan .....	45
<a href="#">A Glimpse of the Past with Jerry Holguin</a>	
Stephanie Elisabeth Cuellar .....	52
<a href="#">Our Historic Home</a>	
Natasha Elliot .....	53
<a href="#">A Son of Dona Ana County</a>	
Katherine Emerick .....	55

### **BOOK REVIEWS**

<a href="#">Ralph Adam Smith, <i>Borderlander: The Life of James Kirker</i></a>	
reviewed by Rick Hendricks .....	58
<a href="#">Lindley J. Stiles, <i>I Never Rode Alone: My Boyhood on a New Mexico Cattle Ranch</i></a>	
reviewed by Marc Simmons .....	58
<a href="#">Charles L. Kenner, <i>Buffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry, 1867-1898: Black and White Together</i></a>	
reviewed by Robert L. Hart .....	59
<a href="#">Martin Gemoets, <i>A Short Story of War, 1944-45 in France and Germany</i></a>	
reviewed by Bob Hart .....	59
<a href="#">Don E. Alberts, <i>The Battle of Glorieta: Union Victory in the West</i></a>	
reviewed by Robert L. Hart .....	60
<a href="#">Lindley J. Stiles and Simmie G. Plummer, <i>Half a Man on a New Mexico Cattle Drive</i></a>	
reviewed by Marc Simmons .....	61
<a href="#">Barbara A. Babcock, <i>The Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway</i></a>	
reviewed by E. Donald Kaye .....	61
<a href="#">Rita Sanchez, <i>Cochise Remembers Our Great-Grandfather, Charles Henry Coleman: A Primary Document in Southwest History</i></a>	
reviewed by Richard Griswold del Castillo .....	63
<a href="#">Marci L. Riskin, <i>New Mexico's Historic Places: The Guide to National and State Register Sites: New Mexico's Historic Places</i></a>	
reviewed by E. Donald Kaye .....	63

---

**The Doña Ana County Historical Society thanks the following for supporting this issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical review:**

Glennis L. Adam and Martin Ditmore

Ray and Kathy Black

Bowlin's Mesilla Book Center

Larry Brenner

COAS: My Bookstore

Doris and Martin Gemoets

Win and Ed Jacobs

Joseph E. Lopez, "The Old Vaquero West"

Matrix Capital Bank

E.L. and Josephine O. Mechem

Chuck and Jean Miles

Morgan and Joyce Nelson

Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Owen

Marcie Palmer

Robert O. and Pamela Pick

Paul and Beverley Pirtle

Lou and Pat Sisbarro

Steinborn Inc., Realtors

Colonel Leonard R. Sugerman, USAF (Ret.)

Elaine Szalay

Wells Fargo Bank

Harvey R. and Julia K. Wilke

Yucca Tree Press

# Antonio Severo Borraajo: Hispano-Mexican Patriot Priest

by Rick Hendricks

In *The El Paso Salt War of 1877*, C.L. Sonnichsen, described what he called the Salt Ring as being made up of W.W. Mills, A.J. Fountain, Louis Cardis, and Father Antonio Borraajo, the parish priest of San Elizario, Texas. Sonnichsen went on to describe Father Borraajo in this way:

In person he was a tall, slender old man with bent shoulders, long gray hair, and black, blazing eyes set in a thin, white face. Temperamentally he resembled a volcano—was always sure he was right, and was always determined to have his own way...

In religious matters he was desperately in earnest. No couple need apply to him for wedding rites unless both of them could go through the catechism, the Hail Mary, and a good deal more; but if they knew all the answers, he might contribute a cow out of his own corral to start them off as householders. Religion was behind his dislike of the American invaders of his stronghold. They set up secular schools under his nose; they even prevented him (for sanitary reasons, they said) from burying his dead in consecrated ground beside his church. He became a very bitter man over all this, and often shook his gray mane in exasperation as he uttered his favorite ejaculation: "Ba, ba, ba, que burrada!" —what asininity!<sup>1</sup>

A similarly negative perception of Father Borraajo comes from Sonnichsen's description of the bitter dispute between the Bishop of Durango and the American Catholic Church, in the person of Jean Baptiste Salpointe.

When he least expected it, an order was issued from Rome removing the left bank of the river from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durango and attaching it to the Diocese of Tucson. Borraajo was a secular priest under the supervision of the Bishop of Durango, and he should immediately have given up his charge and gone to Mexico. But he was loath to leave the game when he was ahead. The Americans appealed to Bishop Salpointe at Tucson when they saw that Borraajo was going to delay as long as he could. The old priest heard about it and said he was not leaving at all. Finally the good and gentle Bishop Salpointe

had to come over to see about it. He set out from El Paso one morning, but was stopped at Socorro by Borraajo and a band of his followers. There was a terrible scene. The Bishop heard himself called by hard names and threatened with dire consequences if he proceeded. The driver of the episcopal carriage raised an expressive shoulder and advised against going on.

Nevertheless the Bishop went ahead and succeeded in reaching San Elizario without loss of dignity. Nobody in town dared take him in, however, and he had to camp out for the night. In the morning he returned to El Paso.

Borraajo was triumphant again. He jibed at his enemies, it is said, even in the pulpit, calling them pelados, Protestants, and worse. Ultimately the case was acted on by the Bishop of Durango, and Borraajo moved to a smaller parish at Guadalupe on the Mexican side of the river, but he did not go in peace. The Reverend Pierre Bourgade, later Archbishop of Santa Fe, eventually took charge of the parish. He testified that Borraajo "used his influence to estrange the people of my parish from me," and even "tried to make the people believe that he would come back here again."<sup>2</sup>

Sonnichsen notwithstanding, the historical Father Borraajo has remained somewhat a mystery. The work of Father Gerard Decorme, S.J., provides the basic facts. Antonio Severo Borraajo was born in the parish of San Miguel de Taboada in the diocese of Orense in the region of Galicia in northwest Spain.<sup>3</sup> He was ordained in 1849 for work in the American mission field. J.M. Odin, Vicar Apostolic of Texas traveled to Spain and France in search of priests. On this journey he met Father Borraajo, who by that time had earned a doctorate in religious sciences, and recruited him to serve Spanish-speaking Texans. Borraajo was given the parish of Nacogdoches in 1850, but when Jean Baptiste Lamy, Vicar Apostolic of New Mexico, passed through, Borraajo joined him on his trip west. On 24 June 1851, both were in El Paso. Father Ramón Ortiz met them but said he could not hand over the missions until he heard from his prelate, Bishop Jose Antonio Laureano Lopez y Zubiria in Durango. Lamy and Borraajo then made the long trek to Durango and back. Curiously Borraajo merits not a single mention by Lamy's

biographer, Paul Horgan.

Again in El Paso, Ortiz offered Borrajo a post as an assistant in Ysleta and Socorro. In Ysleta, Borrajo recorded his first baptism on 19 January 1852. He had a falling out with the Tiguas and in 1855 he went to Santa Fe. He apparently returned to Texas, serving in the diocese of Galveston. In early 1863, he returned to the El Paso area at Father Ortiz's invitation, serving as an assistant at San Elizario and Socorro.

In 1869 the immense bishopric of Santa Fe was divided, and Salpointe was named Vicar Apostolic, that is he was to oversee an area that would soon become a bishopric at which point he would become its bishop. The territory included southern New Mexico and the El Paso Lower Valley. This action gave notice of the new diocesan boundaries to Bishop Jose Vicente Salinas, but he, as had his predecessor, refused to deliver the local parishes without a direct order from Rome. As 1870 ended and the new year began, Salpointe visited his new territory, but no one greeted him. Father Borrajo tried to continue guiding the life of his parish, even as Anglo-Americans poured into southern New Mexico and the greater El Paso area.

Father Decorme ventured an evaluation of Father Borrajo as a priest, saying that there was no doubt that the administration of his parish was of the highest standard and according to canon law. Borrajo's sacramental record books were neat, punctual, and exacting as was his administration of the sacraments.

In the face of the challenge presented by the arrival of Protestants, Masons, French priests and other undesirable folk, Father Borrajo remained rigid in opposition. He was a demanding instructor of children but was capable of giving a cow to newlyweds or a goat to a child at first communion. Decorme judged him to be an unquestioned leader.

In December 1872, on orders of Bishop Salinas in Durango, Father Ortiz handed over the missions to Father Olivier Ruellan, acting for Bishop Salpointe of Tucson. Father Borrajo resisted until May 1873 when he had a delegation from the town of San Elizario hand over his church, being unwilling to do so personally. He was then named priest of the poor Mexican community of Guadalupe. From there he continued to be active in the politics of the Salt War. He survived until 22 December 1896, nine months after his friend Father Ramón Ortiz died. Both are buried in Juarez.

The microfilm collection of the Archivos Históricos del Arzobispado de Durango housed at the Rio Grande Collections at New Mexico State University's Branson Library contains a collection of documents written by or to Father Borrajo. In these documents his thoughts and actions unfold, telling the story in his own words. Here then are some of Father Borrajo's own words describing a tumultuous time of change for Hispanic Catholics in southern New Mexico and El Paso's Lower Valley corn-

munity and his ideas on how to better an admittedly difficult situation.

On 29 September 1871, Father Borrajo wrote Bishop Salinas in Durango concerning the arrival of Father Jallet, a French priest, in San Elizario, and offered his view of the question of jurisdiction over the area churches.

I had never seen or met Father Jallet until the middle of August when he arrived here. I received him in my home as a Catholic priest. In the few dealings I had with him, he seemed to be a good priest. When he showed me the licenses he had from the most excellent Mr. Dubuis, bishop of Texas, I think I correctly understood the bishop by permitting Father Jallet to say two masses in this parish, which is under my charge. If by chance this is incorrect, please let me know.

As far as I know, the bishop of Texas has never exercised jurisdiction as far as the presidio of El Norte, although before the war with the United States there were posts for the mail and military forts to protect the road from San Antonio to here. Presently, this community lies in the shadow of the forts and posts. Most of the people are Mexicans (almost the only Catholics) who came from the Mexican frontier. It was settled before the annexation of Texas to the United States. For this reason, I presume that in ecclesiastical matters it continues as before, a part of the diocese of Durango. This is because it appears to be a branch of the same tree that is growing and spreading wherever it finds space.<sup>4</sup>

That same month of September 1871, Jose de JesOs Baca, priest of Mesilla; Jose Antonio Real y Vazquez, priest of Franklin, Concordia, and Ysleta; Antonio Severo Borrajo, priest of Socorro and San Elizario; and Juan de Jesús Trujillo, a priest with twenty-five years of service in New Mexico and recently arrived in the area gathered to draft a proposal for the erection of a bishopric of El Paso del Norte, Mexico.<sup>5</sup> In his own hand, Father Borrajo set down the particulars of the proposal.

Some years ago, after the United States usurped from Mexico a great part of its territory, the bishops of the United States, perhaps poorly informed about the religious situation in the usurped territories and without consulting the Mexican bishops who had legitimate jurisdiction and administration over these exclusively Roman Catholic territories, proposed to and asked His Holiness for bishops or vicars apostolic for these territories... Perhaps these bishops believed in good faith that they were going as missionaries of the gospel to plant for the first time the tree of the cross or the Roman

Catholic religion in this land where it was already producing fruit, and they began to work very actively, there can be no doubt. But they began with little knowledge and less prudence. Rather than cleaning and pruning the tree of suckers and withered limbs, keeping everything that was green so that it could continue to produce fruit while being renewed and flourishing with vigor, it seems that they have proposed to plant a new tree from which they promise abundant fruit. In this way they have set their hands to all the established discipline. They changed the Hispano-Mexican calendar and the Roman Toledan Ritual, substituting for all the religious practices and customs of the Spaniards, which had been fostered in these pueblos by Jesus Christ, their own Franco-American ones. This produced indignation among the people who are yet new to the faith, and first disgust and then sadness or indifference and doubt and finally apostasy in many of them.<sup>6</sup>

In the shadow of the usurping government, they come as a devastating flood, erasing the footprints of the first apostles of this new world, substituting for Roman Catholic customs without admixture of any others so that soon they appear as Catholic as Protestant. They are more in agreement with the new conquerors for whom Religion is nothing more than a word that means nothing in particular, neither positive nor negative.

Mexicans under the government of the United States are like the Jews in the Babylonian captivity, the Irish under the government of Great Britain, Poland under the government of Russia, and Italy under the government of Victor Manuel. The only difference in favor or against the Mexicans is that in those nations the people were oppressed more for religion than anything else, and the Mexicans are stripped of their property and civil and political rights without being bothered about their religion.

[Given this situation] it occurs to us that establishing a vicariate apostolic in El Paso del Norte that would form a part of the province of Durango. . . would be the way of remedying the evils we have indicated. A vicariate apostolic or bishopric with its see in El Paso, Mexico, would consist of Dona Ana and El Paso Counties in the United States and the cantons of Bravos and Galiana in Mexico.

Borrajo continued with a characterization of the newcomers to San Elizario.

North Americans and people from other nations... only come to live among the Mexicans for the love of gold and riches. They only

believe in the Almighty Dollar.

Finally, Borrajo expressed this thought.

Because the Mexicans are the ancient owners of this land and almost the only Catholics in it, it appears unjust and inappropriate for them to follow in religious matters the customs of their adversaries, even if they are good, especially when the fundamental laws of this country declare that there is no human power that can intervene in the rights of man to worship God according to his conscience.

On 10 January 1872, Father Borrajo wrote Bishop Salinas about education reform in Texas and the new school teacher in San Elizario.<sup>7</sup>

Three months ago they organized in this parish the state schools, obligating everyone to send to them their sons and daughters. They hired the most corrupt males and females as teachers, the worst of which we have here. The first action was to prohibit young children of both sexes from taking religious books or tracts to school because these schools are atheist and propose to cultivate only knowledge, leaving the will to the mercy of the world, the devil, and the flesh. The teacher we got in San Elizario, who says she is a Catholic (in the style of Victor Manuel or we might say Enlightened Catholic Liberal), came to see me, it is my understanding, to reproach me for not having pews in the church for civilized people as is the style in the United States (where the churches give way to Protestant customs and seem more like theaters than houses of prayer). I paid her little attention. Believing she could convince me, she said she had been in Paris. I answered that I had been there too. She left, according to what I am informed, very angry with me. They tell me she has written the bishop of Santa Fe, the governor, and I don't know who else.

On 11 April 1872, Father Borrajo wrote to Vicar Apostolic of Tucson Salpointe, who was then in Las Cruces. Defending his decision to delay handing over his parish to Salpointe's representative, Borrajo explained it this way.<sup>8</sup>

Seeking only the glory of God and the good of the people's souls, there is no reason for us to rush. What His Holiness decrees definitively must be (if it be God's will) respected and faithfully fulfilled, as much by the illustrious bishop of Durango as by his clergy and the faithful of this vicariate without the need of the enemies of God, be they Masons, or Catholics like Napoleon or Victor Manuel, greatly rejoicing while the truly faithful and practicing are scandalized. Illustrious sir, it is in your interest not to

come to exercise your jurisdiction with evil antecedents, trampling the common people, even though later you can rely on the substantiation of consummated facts.

The picture that emerges from Father Borrajo's own writings is different from that painted by his contemporaries, many of whom were his political enemies or cultural adversaries, and by historians, no matter outstanding, who have relied on them as sources. The Father Borrajo we see is an articulate, outspoken, radical, given to violent rhetorical expression. First and foremost he was a passionate defender of what he termed the "Hispano-Mexican" expression of Catholicism in the face of what he saw as the Franco-Anglo expression of Catholicism. Moreover, he was a patriot, a fighter dedicated to the preservation of Hispano-Mexican culture and way of life.

An exchange of letters between Bishop Salpointe and the defiant Hispanic priests, Fathers Baca, Corral, and Borrajo in November 1872 signaled that the end of the fight was near. They are reproduced here in their entirety in translation.

Mesilla, 24 November 1872<sup>9</sup>

Most Reverend Bishop Salpointe, Bishop of Doryla and Apostolic Vicar of Arizona, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned, priests of the Bishopric of Durango, charged by the most reverend bishop of this diocese with the spiritual administration of the pueblos of said diocese of which your excellency has decided to take possession within a few days, wishing to maintain every consideration due your excellency in your character as bishop and vicar apostolic and wanting also to fulfill well the duty as shepherds of the flocks that are entrusted to us respectively with great sacrifice and some harm to our parishioners because of the absence that momentarily we consider necessary to make from our parishes, have gathered to consult and come to an agreement on the conduct we must observe in this case, which is so urgent and awkward, in which your excellency by your will puts us. We have decided to come into your presence and with the greatest respect and consideration that is possible for us show you the reasons we have to oppose your decision and the harm to the glory of God, good of the souls, and even for the honor of the episcopal dignity that will result from putting it into effect.

1. The reasons we have for this opposition are based our duties as subjects of our bishop and our duties of the shepherds of our sheep. Because of our duties as subjects of our

bishop we are obliged not to recognize the authority of another foreign pastor, to obey and fulfill exactly the dispositions of our bishop. He stated to his vicar from El Paso on 6 December 1871 "I must communicate to you that regarding the Vicariate Apostolic of Arizona, I sent an explanation to the Holy See showing the inconveniences that would result from adding these parishes to the Church of North America, and I expect a response. Until it comes to me, and I communicate it to you, change nothing in these parishes." Up to the present date, we have not received an order to the contrary.

2. Our duties to our parishes are, among others, to administer to them the Holy Sacraments and teach them that it is not permissible (and sometimes improper) to receive the Sacraments unless it is from the minister under whose charge they are.

3. The harm that will be done to the glory of God and good of the soul if this is carried out is first, among several others, that this causes a schism, because we are not free to cede. Indeed, if we were, we would renounce with pleasure all our rights and earthly goods, because one does not scratch at the soil of the Lord; second is that on the day after your excellency has taken possession, any Protestant minister or from any other sect, can present himself saying that he is a legitimate pastor. If it is now permissible for us to resist for lack of notice from our prelate, his priests and the persons who follow them would have no reason to oppose the ministry of the Devil, who against your excellency's will tries to be their true pastor.

4. The harm that can result to the dignity that your excellency has invested in this is that it is within your excellency's will to suspend the execution of the extreme decision you have made before our legitimate bishop orders us to deliver it. Having not done so, one could suspect that ambition and avarice are the motives that precipitate so strange an action. Even though your excellency has motives for taking possession, What difference can a few days, more or less, make that our parishes are administered by Apostolic Roman Catholic priests placed by the bishop of Durango or by those your excellency wishes to place?

By virtue of what has been expressed and for the good of the faithful, who with so much effort you excellency must administer, we beseech you in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord that you leave us in peace while our illustrious prelate does not order us to

deliver possession to you. We promise that as soon as we receive the order we will satisfy your excellency, leaving our posts to you. In the meantime, it is not permissible for us to abandon them without sin, which we do not plan to commit.

Your excellency's sure servants, with the consideration you deserve, attentively kiss your hand.

José de J. Baca  
Jesús Corral  
and A.S. Borrajo

Las Cruces, New Mexico<sup>10</sup>  
November 24 1872

To the Reverend Fathers J. de Jesii Baca,  
JesUs Corral and A.S. Borrajo en La Mesilla  
My dear sirs:

In response to the presentation you personally delivered to me today in which you tried to justify an opposition to the exercise of my jurisdiction over the parishes or part of parishes that up to now you have administered, I shall tell you that your opinion is based on a false principle. Therefore the arguments you present are not germane to the question. Certainly, were it as you suppose, that by my will

I wanted to extend my jurisdiction over that of another, I would take the observations you make to me into consideration. At the very least I would be frightened about the spiritual harm that could result because of your opposition, and I would cease to give you occasion. But it is not by my will that I go forward with this business. I am going to take new a jurisdiction because it is given to me by my superior and the superior of those who had it before, the Holy Father. It is out

of obedience to his will that I shall take it. Now, if some, against all justice, want to oppose the bull that places me in possession, more than incurring canonical punishment that will be meted out to them, they will have to respond before God for the scandals that this will cause among the faithful.

Your humble and obedient servant in Our Lord, J.B. Salpointe, bishop of Doryla and vicar apostolic of Arizona.

---

RICK HENDRICKS, a former editor of the Vargas Project at the University of New Mexico, is the current editor of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 C.L. Sonnichsen, *The El Paso Salt War of 1877* (El Paso: Carl Herzog and the Texas Western Press at the Pass of the North, 1961), 10
- 2 Ibid., 23-24
- 3 Gerarde Decorme, "Las misiones del Valle del Paso, 1559-1960" (Unpublished document).
- 4 Antonio Severo Borrajo to Bishop Jose Vicente Salinas, San Elizario, 29 September 1871, File on El Paso del Norte and San Elizario, AHAD-493, frame 494-553.
- 5 Fray Angelico Chavez, *Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1678-1900* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1957), 258, 262.
- 6 [Jose de Jesus Baca, Jose Antonio Real y Vazquez, Antonio Severo Borrajo, and Juan de JesUs Trujillo], Proposal for the creation of a bishopric of El Paso, September 1871, File on El Paso del Norte and San Elizario, AHAD-493, frame 494-553.
- 7 Antonio Severo Borrajo to Bishop José Vicente Salinas, San Elizario, 10 January 1872, ibid.
- 8 Antonio Severo Borrajo to Vicar Apostolic Jean Baptiste Salpointe, San Elizario, 11 April 1872, ibid.
- 9 Jose de Jesus Baca, Jesus Corral, and Antonio Severo Borrajo to Vicar Apostolic J.B. Salpointe, La Mesilla, 24 November 1872, ibid.
- 10 Vicar Apostolic Jean Baptiste Salpointe to Jose de JesUs Baca, Jests Corral, and Antonio Severo. Borrajo, Las Cruces, 24 November 1872, ibid.

# The Origins of Sierra County: Political and Economic Roots

by James B. Sullivan

**B**efore April 1884, there was no Sierra County in Territorial New Mexico. The territory that would one day make up this political entity originated from parts of three adjacent counties: Doña Ana to the south, Grant on its western edge, and Socorro to the north. Grant County, itself, created 30 January 1868 in honor of the Commander-in-Chief of the victorious Union armies and soon to be nominated presidential candidate, Ulysses S. Grant, was once part of a giant Dona Ana County.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1850s, a group of Hispanic colonists in the area of Socorro moved south down the river into unoccupied lands settling in a series of villages they named San Ygnacio de la Alamosa, Alamocita, Canada Alamosa, and later Rio Palomas among others. The rich patron and leader of the first colonists to establish San Ygnacio in 1859 was don Stanislado Montoya. His acknowledged wealth exceeded ten thousand dollars. He employed four servants in his entourage.<sup>2</sup>

By sharp contrast, most of his fellow colonists possessed no more than a few hundred dollars of recorded wealth, if that.<sup>3</sup> These first settlers were very poor and many did not even own their own weapons. One sympathetic commander at Ft. McRae, Captain William French, noted in a letter of 1865 to the assistant adjutant that he had advised those Hispanos who had recently suffered flood damages to seek new lands away from the river bottom.

The Canada being a very fertile strip of valley watered by a fine stream I encouraged those who had lost their crops to go there and plant all the grain they could. I loaned them all the spare muskets I had, gave them ammunition and promised to increase the detachment as soon as possible so as to afford the greatest protection. I loaned them arms on my own responsibility not having instructions to do so from higher authority. I expect to have to pay for one of the muskets it being taken by the Indians. The Mexican to whom I loaned it being to [sic] poor to pay for it himself.<sup>4</sup>

This encouragement and promise of additional support probably marks the genesis of the third settlement at Canada Alamosa. Frequently, these first settlers lived in makeshift *jacales*, homes made of sticks and mud. The three initial settlements were all located in what was then southern Socorro County. Perhaps the colonization enterprise proved too taxing or anticipated profits fizzled. In any case, Montoya soon abandoned the group and



Map

returned to a region more to his liking at San Antonio south of Socorro.<sup>5</sup>

Despite their humble beginnings, these Hispanic pioneers prospered even without "*el patrón*" or the U.S. Army. Not until 1863 did the U.S. government first garrison troops at Ft. McRae across the river from San Ygnacio de la Alamosa. The new military post was named after one of the Union commanders who died at the Battle of Valverde that same year, resisting the Confederate invasion of New Mexico. This first wave of settlement was soon followed by a second when mines began to open up in the Black Range. Mining towns soon began to appear. Residents of these early gold and silver camps were predominantly Anglo. These inhabitants continued



Charcoal portrait, Constancia or Crisostema (Tafoya) Sullivan, circa 1871



Charcoal portrait, John Sullivan, circa 1871.

to refer to the riverine villages as “Mexican towns.”<sup>6</sup> On occasion, troops from Ft. McRae or Ft. Craig, a bit farther north, resided within the Rio Grande villages and some of the mining camps as well. The soldiers provided military protection from hostile Indian attacks.<sup>7</sup> This was most crucial during the rainy season when Ft. McRae, located on the east bank of the Rio Grande, would often be isolated from San Ygnacio de la Alamosa and its west bank successors by swollen river waters.

The second village of Alamocita, established in future Sierra County, grew up directly across from Ft. McRae and shared the same western riverbank. Both of these two pioneer settlements were later inundated following the completion of the Elephant Butte Reservoir in 1916. A third village, Canada Alamosa, encouraged by French in 1865, situated about nine miles up the Rio Grande tributary took roots. It was settled largely by people moving from Alamocita.<sup>8</sup>

The populations of these earlier settlements along the Rio Grande or its tributaries, unlike the mining camps, were predominantly Hispanic. There were a number of exceptions. One example was a newly discharged soldier in Company B of the Fifteenth Infantry stationed at Ft. McRae named John Sullivan. John grew up a young farm boy in Monticello, New York, located only about seventy-five miles northwest of the metropolis, as the crow flies, and not far from the Delaware River separating the state of New York from Pennsylvania. He enlisted in New York City with Company B of the Thirty-fifth Infantry in November 1867 for a three-year stint in the U.S. Army.

John was first ordered to Indianola on the coast of Texas to help police military Reconstruction. After just a little over one year, his unit was moved to Ft. Stockton, where it was reorganized as Company B of the Fifteenth Infantry. He then moved overland with his unit to the Territory of New Mexico where he spent the remainder of his tour of duty. Fort records catch glimpses of Private Sullivan supervising work details at Ft. McRae. His primary duty, however, was serving as a teamster hauling supplies by wagon to the fort, before the advent of railroads into the territory.<sup>9</sup> He continued to do this for some time even after he left the army.

The young trooper followed the path of many discharged soldiers completing tours of duty in the western territories. Upon his release from active duty in 1870, he decided to adopt this new land and remain in New Mexico. Three years later, in 1873, he married Constancia Tafoya, a *senorita* from one of the first pioneer Hispanic families to set down roots at San Ygnacio de la Alamosa.<sup>10</sup> His bride, born in 1858 at Valverde, was only fifteen years old.<sup>11</sup> Her mother may have given birth to her as the Tafoya family migrated south. Sullivan had first married Constancia’s sister, Crisostema, immediately following his discharge, but his first bride soon died, possibly from one of the fevers that swept through the villages. Two masterful charcoal portraits of John and his new wife, probably done by some passer-by, provides a visual depiction of the two major sources of the people of this region — Anglo and Hispanic.<sup>12</sup>

After settling down with his new bride, John Sullivan



Hillsboro Courthouse 1884-1939

became a prominent farmer and rancher at Canada Alamosa. He also began to refer to his adopted community as Monticello in honor of his New York hometown in Sullivan County. His friend and future brother-in-law, a French-American, Aristide Bourguet, operated the local mercantile store with his brother Alphonse. They began to use the designation of Monticello on advertisements. When Aristide served as the first postmaster in 1881, the U.S. Postal Service adopted the official name of Monticello.<sup>13</sup> Despite this government name change, Canada Alamosa continued to be used throughout the 1880s and will be used herein rather than Monticello.

Canada Alamosa was located about nine miles downstream from the military satellite post of Ojo Caliente, established in 1874. The Southern Apache Indian Agency, responsible for the Mimbres Apaches (also called the Ojo Caliente Apaches), operated out of Ft. Craig, Canada Alamosa and finally Ojo Caliente.<sup>14</sup> The name Ojo Caliente refers to a major natural landmark of this region. About eight to nine miles up the canyon from the town, hot spring waters gurgle out from under the rocks and flow rapidly into the box canyon that carries the Alamosa River toward its meeting with the Rio Grande. Today these waters are channeled underground once they leave the valley's fertile farmlands. The Ojo Caliente post, constructed near this spring, offered the perfect place for weary troopers to refresh themselves after a long march or a day in the saddle.

Settlement patterns typical of the Rio Grande watershed changed rapidly with the discovery of gold and silver in the mountainous western part of the future

county.

Chloride Flat was the site of the first major strike in the region in 1870.<sup>15</sup> By 1877 additional mineral strikes, surrounding the new mining center at Hillsborough, increased the resource value of the lands which would one day become Sierra County. These developments undoubtedly made government decisions to provide assistance in the form of military protection more likely than would have been the case if economic development had been restricted to agriculture alone. The town of Hillsborough and the immediate vicinity were all part of the Las Animas Mining District. Kingston was New Mexico's number one producer of silver in the late nineteenth century and lay directly to the west of Hillsborough at a distance of about nine miles.

Lake Valley, the third largest mineral producer of the region boasted the single richest silver discovery in nineteenth-century America. The horn silver taken from its chief mine, The Bridal Chamber, amounted to \$2.5 million. The silver was so pure that it could be sawed from its underground lode rather than blasted free by conventional mining techniques.<sup>16</sup> Together, gold and silver strikes stimulated a surge of miners into a region hitherto restricted to small hamlets and villages along the Rio Grande.

Severe Apache raids launched first by Victorio and his Mimbres (Ojo Caliente) band of Apaches in 1877 and again in 1882 and 1885 by Geronimo's raiders caused chaos in the area. These threats undoubtedly slowed new arrivals to the region.

Rancher and farmer John Sullivan encountered the chronic threat that plagued many early settlers of future Sierra County in 1878. That October, the former soldier wrote back to his family in New York about the hazards of ranching in territorial New Mexico. "The man wants us to take the cows now, but I do not want to on account of (the fact that) the Indians (have) been killing so many cattle at present."<sup>17</sup>

A Michigan mining engineer, Frank Robinson, passing through in October 1880 and visiting the mining town of Hillsborough recorded his observations of the destruction he encountered following Victorio's raid.

In fact every mile of stagecoach riding has braced me up. It is glorious weather — the heaven nothing but blue, the air warm and lots to interest one in the curious hues of the coun-

try. I now travel on a buckboard and have for the last 40 miles. All along the road are the marks sad and savage of Victorio and his band of 300 Apache. From this town (Hillsboro) one year ago went out 15 young men to attack them. A few hours later came back 8 — all that were left. Ranches are deserted, mining stopped and business unsettled or rather that was the case until recently by those terrible raids.<sup>18</sup>

The constant threat of Indian raids made communications with any of the three county seats of Socorro, Mesilla (later Las Cruces) or Silver City hazardous. This pressured the inhabitants of the region to seek their very own county.

Hillsboro, a major center of the region's mineral wealth, lay near the juncture of two major watersheds, North and South Percha. Among area towns, Hillsboro quickly rose to the lead as a potential county seat because of its central location and its growing population of more than four hundred people.<sup>19</sup> Among the earliest prospectors to arrive in the region by the 1870s was a vigorous, ambitious, young man born in Chicago, Illinois named Nicholas Galles.<sup>20</sup> In New Mexico, Galles joined other gold seekers W.H. Weeks, H.H. Eliot, and Joe Yankee in choosing the name of the new regional mining center. The miners placed potential names in a hat and drew the winning name of Hillsborough. The openings of five stores, a respectable hotel, a lumber yard, a soda water factory, a couple of smithies, a drug store, livery stable, and Sadie Orchard's bordello (which moved away from Kingston), all bespoke the new town's rapid growth. By 1892 the completion of a magnificent Victorian courthouse added a note of legitimacy and permanence to the new county.<sup>21</sup> The chosen name of the county seat, Hillsborough, stuck, but gradually it was shortened to Hillsboro. Many of the area's prospectors and businessmen were originally members of General Carleton's California Column, which arrived in 1862.<sup>22</sup> Although Galles was not a member of the California Column, his future business partner, Canadian-born George Perrault, did come with Carleton's troops. The two men soon decided to forego the immediate rewards of a mining bonanza in favor of the slower but more reliable route to riches offered by running the country store. Galles soon joined Perrault, and their general merchandising emporium was called: Perrault and Galles, Dry Goods, Clothing, Furnished Goods, Boots and Shoes.<sup>23</sup>

During the Geronimo uprising, the multi-talented "Nick" Galles captained a local militia group mustered to repel any threat to the community of Hillsboro. Mindful of the military inadequacies of units, such as the Fifteenth Infantry, which served Ft. McRae, Galles and his junior officers, John Ellis and William Arden, wrote, territorial Adjutant General Edward L. Bartlett, pleading for an appropriate military force, "Our home is (in) the moun-



Nicholas Galles.

tains near and close to the home and frequented haunts of the Apache where an Infantry man is useless, powerless, to act, to assist or rescue his neighbor from danger."<sup>24</sup>

In the sense used by the Pulitzer Prize winning, American historian, Daniel Boorstin in his book, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, "Nick" Galles was indeed, a "Go-Getter." Galles

aggressively added to his multiple roles of prospector, storekeeper, teacher, and part-time militia leader that of local postmaster of the growing mining town of Hillsboro. He also won a spot as a county commissioner for Doña Ana County serving with C.H. Armijo and Amado Arviso. Running on the Republican ticket, Galles got himself elected to the 1884 Territorial House of Representatives representing the combined counties of Doña Ana and Lincoln.<sup>25</sup> Doña Ana County then included his adopted home of Hillsboro.

In Santa Fe, "Nick" Galles managed to get himself named to serve on three legislative committees. These included ones dealing with the judiciary and the railroads, but most important for his self-assigned mission, was his selection as chairman of the Committee on Counties.<sup>26</sup>

The new legislator wasted no time in gaining support for his number one priority — a new county for the mining district surrounding Hillsboro. On the morning of Friday, 23 February 1884, he presented a petition from the united citizens of the counties of Grant, Doña Ana, and Socorro asking for their own county.<sup>27</sup> The Hillsboro storekeeper personally established himself as a strong law and order advocate, initiating legislation creating the New Mexico State penitentiary and sponsoring a bill allowing business men like himself to garnish the paychecks of debtors who failed to satisfy their creditors. On 5 March, Chairman Galles reported out of committee Bill 22 calling for the creation of the new county of Sierra.<sup>28</sup>

There was no assurance Galles's request would ever make it out of committee much less gain full legislative approval. Efforts to create counties such as "Victoria" and "Mogollon" died in the Territorial Legislature that same session. As late as 1909, an effort to create a new county, with the exotic name of Pyramid, died for lack of sufficient support.<sup>29</sup> The bill proposing the creation of Sierra County faced immediate opposition. The Socorro

County delegate, R.E. McFarland, representing one of the three counties, which would lose territory if the Sierra cession ever materialized, tried to get Bill 22 reconsidered by amending it, but Mr. Whiteman of Bernalillo persuaded the House to table the proposed amendment in a close thirteen to nine vote.<sup>30</sup> Socorro County's other representative, Mr. Cooney, managed to tack on an amendment to the bill. It required that any territory separated from the county not be exempt from its share of indebtedness necessary to retire bonds issued earlier by Socorro County.<sup>31</sup> As Bill 22 made its way through the territorial legislature, the editor of *The Black Range* at Chloride in the county's northwest mining region voiced opposition to a county seat centered at Hillsboro. He assured his readers of his proper political credentials by pointing out that his newspaper was definitely not a Democratic one, and furthermore, he had voted for two Republican presidents and territorial delegates to the Republican nominating convention three years running. *The Black Range* editor cited the need to complete the Hillsboro-Hermosa road project, which once completed, would mean a trip of only some forty-five miles from Chloride to Hillsboro. Still, the self-appointed booster-editor, hailed the progress of the bill creating Sierra County itself. He noted that it had just passed the lower house with only MacFarland of Socorro County voting against the measure, but also warned that opposition was now brewing in Doña Ana County.<sup>32</sup> That county would suffer the loss of the town of Lake Valley together with all of its mining wealth and prestige.

Citizens in Doña Ana County petitioned the territorial legislature to denounce this proposed loss of valuable county land. This did not bode well for the future of the proposed new county, once the bill reached the upper house of the territorial assembly. *The Black Range* recorded growing opposition. "The County of Sierra made-up of slices from Grant, Doña Ana and Socorro, with Hillsboro as the county seat, passed the House but is lodged in the council against petitions from Doña Ana and Socorro counties and is likely to remain there."<sup>33</sup> Once again, now in the Territorial Council (senate) of the legislature, the bill aimed at creating Sierra County, came under fire. Socorro's territorial delegate, Jose Armijo y Vigil, acting in his capacity as the president of the Territorial Council introduced a motion to table the entire measure and, in effect, kill it.<sup>34</sup>

Once again a new defender emerged. Another businessman now representing Lake Valley, John A. Miller, stood in defense of the bill. Miller's interests mirrored those of his legislative colleague, "Nick" Galles, from nearby Hillsboro.<sup>35</sup> Understandably, time lost in long trips south to Mesilla or Las Cruces (the county seat since 1882) and concerns for the personal safety of travelers and settlers could be ameliorated by the creation of a new county. Council president Armijo, in a last ditch effort to halt the birth of Sierra County, called for a delay of one

and a half hours on the vote by the Council's Committee on Counties.<sup>36</sup> Undoubtedly, he was looking for votes to kill the bill once and for all.

The editor of *The Black Range* provided details on some of the behind the scenes political machinations that took place before the final deposition of the county creation bill, chiding those who had second thoughts about Sierra's good fortune. "Las Cruces gave away Lake Valley and Hillsboro in consideration of getting the county seat of Doña Ana County and a new courthouse. Now they want their gift back. You silly and inconsistent gentlemen."<sup>37</sup> Given the timing of that move, the political maneuvering that led to this moment must have been going on for quite some time.

This entire sudden turn of events remains one of the more tantalizing questions surrounding the emergence of Sierra County, given the opposition it initially engendered. Albert Fountain and William Logan Rynerson apparently acquiesced in this cession of valuable Doña County lands, to include Lake Valley, which became part of Sierra County. These two southern New Mexico politicians had broken with the powerful Santa Fe Ring in 1884 over political spoils.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the timing of this split sufficiently distracted the duo away from developments closer to home. Another possibility may have been that both men truly believed that the Las Cruces-Mesilla region of the territory possessed greater long term potential. The two territorial leaders had personal business and real estate interests in that region. They may have very well concluded that by contracting Doña Ana County's radius of control they were in fact reducing the political and military responsibilities of their chosen region. Victorio's devastating raids, only four years earlier, and Geronimo's more recent foray in 1882, may have caused the mountainous region, northwest of Doña Ana County to appear as more of a liability than a long term source of economic development. As a captain in the New Mexico Volunteer militia, Fountain had participated in campaigns against both Apaches and outlaws in the vicinity of Hillsboro and Lake Valley in a personal quest to bring law and order to the region.

Finally on 3 April 1884, the Council's Committee on Counties voted 5-3 to support creation of the new County of Sierra and to establish the first county seat at Hillsboro. Following the bill's passage through both houses of the New Mexico Territorial Legislature, Governor Lionel Sheldon signed the measure into law on the last day of the session.<sup>39</sup>

The development of mining and the subsequent influx of miners and entrepreneurs produced the conditions and people most responsible for the political genesis of Sierra County. Hillsboro, as a mining center and new county seat, reflected the new social and political realities of town life. Unlike the Rio Grande communities, approximately half of Hillsboro's population was non-Hispanic, and the majority of Hispanics who chose to set

down roots in the new county seat did so in a barrio called "Happy Flat." Capitalizing on new job opportunities, they became businessmen, freighters, miners, and laborers.<sup>40</sup> The confluence of North and South Percha Creeks within the town's borders occasionally caused the Hispanic community to become temporarily separated from the rest of Hillsboro during times of summer rains in the Black Range. The run-off often created a dangerous, surging river of water which threatened both humans and their vehicles if they foolishly sought to traverse this natural barrier during flood times.

The new *Sierra County Advocate* in 1889 described Hillsboro's Hispanic barrio.

In the dark shades of the bluff in the bend of the historic and ever flowing Percha below town is a rainbow of cosy (sic) cottages, owned and occupied by our esteemed and fellow Mexicans. The site of "Happy Flats" is not surpassed by any portion of the city. In short the people look happy, act happy and are undoubtedly happy in "Happy Flats." Although the houses are decided primitive in style and taste, yet everything in and outside the houses betoken enterprise and contentedness. Politeness is an inborn attribute of the Mexican people acknowledged and recognized the world over whenever known.<sup>41</sup>

Although only condescending in this instance, the local press demonstrated intermittently and much more blatantly the cultural and racial clash that inevitably erupted when the two peoples met for the first time. The very choice of a name for the new political entity elicited this kind of response. "The new county contemplated for this section is to be called Sierra. *The Black Range* cannot understand the necessity for going outside the English language for a name. There is a plethora of Spanish in the territory already."<sup>42</sup> With Grant County on its western border, one could understand why some might consider a name more familiar to the new Anglo-American settlers far from their adopted land, but only if they disregarded the fact that the overwhelming majority of New Mexico's non-Native American inhabitants were Hispanics. Many were the offspring of generations of mixing between European Hispanic immigrants and Native Americans in the interior of Mexico, and they had enjoyed two hundred and fifty years of New Mexican history before the territory came under the wing of the American eagle in 1848.

The Hispanic barrio of "Happy Flats" across Percha Creek had fewer of the ghetto associations of immigrant city life on the East Coast. Primarily, it sufficed as a temporary haven for settlers from the Rio Grande watershed who sought to tap the economic opportunities provided by the mining boom of Hillsboro, Lake Valley, and Kingston. The magnetic appeal of these communities lay in the readily available cash so rare in the Hispanic agri-

cultural villages. A ledger, from the Bourguet general store in Canada Alamosa, shows that the prevailing wage for labor in that community was about one dollar per day in the late nineteenth century, and many barter transactions took the place of legal tender. Hay or a day's work often sufficed as a medium of exchange in mercantile business activities.<sup>43</sup>

While mining attracted settlement to Hillsboro, Chloride, Kingston, and Lake Valley, the region's ranching potential surfaced even before the birth of Sierra County. An 1882 edition of *The Black Range* newspaper at Robinson (prior to moving to Chloride) announced these possibilities,

The ranching ground on both sides of the Black Range is being claimed and occupied with marvelous rapidity. Hardly more than a year ago, the settler could have taken his choice of grazing ground on any of the streams for the having. This county (then western and southern Socorro County, but later part of Sierra County after 1884) will soon be as reliable for its stock as for its mines."

John Sullivan, now an established rancher-farmer and a recent captain of an 1885 New Mexico Volunteer militia unit raised in Canada Alamosa, wrote back to relatives in Monticello, New York in 1886 telling of the dramatically changed conditions which followed the capture of Geronimo.

The Indians are not bothering much here now and we are having fine weather; it is like spring. I would like to be back there for a week and have some (sledding) as I expect you are having plenty of it. We have had snow here yet only in the mountains and the cattle are in good order. I killed a steer today an it neer eat a bit only what (it) picke on the hills of it own accord.<sup>45</sup>

Sullivan died in 1890 leaving his widow, Constancia, with five sons and a daughter to raise. They ranged in ages from fourteen to seven.<sup>46</sup> She never remarried. Her children had to grow up quickly. Despite the loss of the number one breadwinner, the young family prospered in the new county and became Sierra County ranchers, farmers, storekeepers, and local/county officials.

The syntax and grammar of Sullivan's letter to his family back on the East Coast reflected the level of formal education of the more fortunate frontier citizens. Exposed to at least a modicum of education in New York before enlisting in the army, he was actually better educated than many of his fellow frontiersmen. He also showed a developed sense of civic responsibility underscored by his periodic participation in local precinct government as a school director, or election registrar.<sup>47</sup>

For most frontier peoples, the values and skills of survival in the ability to ride, shoot, persevere, and endure remained more valuable than formal education at

this stage of county development. Across America things were changing rapidly as industrialization spurred modern complexity, creating an increased need for more formal education. The first superintendent for Sierra County's public schools, George S. Haskell, reported from Chloride that, "I have in my office a petition for a school where 31 names are signed by their x mark out the forty signatures attached."<sup>48</sup>

By 1884, a combination of mining, ranching, and some farming along the watershed of the Rio Grande laid the economic base for the political roots that took hold in the newly created county of Sierra. Many local political leaders helped to make the new county a political reality. Foremost among the early county leaders was Nicholas Galles. Later Galles would go on to become a major southwestern business leader. He was prominent in the founding of City National Bank of El Paso and First National of Las Cruces. Just prior to his death in 1911, he was serving as president of the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce.<sup>49</sup> As the son of a Chicago wagon maker, he undoubtedly had greater opportunities for education than most other frontiersmen. His multiple roles of leadership in Sierra County life, including the crucial one of lawmaker, qualify him for a special category of founding father of Sierra County;<sup>50</sup> however, the deep ranching, farming and mining roots of his predecessors and colleagues, farmers, miners and townsmen, Anglos and Hispanics, alike, provided the basic economic conditions, which allowed for the birth of Sierra County, when many other geographical entities hopeful of county status arrived stillborn.

JAMES B. SULLIVAN is a professor in the department of Social Sciences at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1911), 2:244; Jerry L. Williams, ed., *New Mexico in Maps*, 2d ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 112.
- 2 John P. Wilson, *Between the River and the Mountains: A History of Early Settlement in Sierra County, New Mexico*, Report 40 (Unpublished manuscript available at UNM), 1985, 34.
- 3 Ibid. 33-35; James B. Sullivan, *A New Mexican Family: Tafsoya-Sullivan and the Origins of Sierra County* (San Antonio, Tex.: Burke Publishing Company, 1994), 7.
- 4 National Archives, RG 93, Ft. McRae, Letters sent, William French to Cutler, Asst. AG, 10 January 1866.
- 5 Wilson, *Between the River and the Mountain*, 34.
- 6 The early press of the region is peppered with this distinction between the mining and farming towns. *The Black Range*, Chloride, 16 November 1883.
- 7 The 1880 U.S. Census shows that at that later date, following Victorio's uprising, fourteen African-American soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry remained stationed at Hillsboro. Darlis Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1989), 52.
- 8 Wilson, *Between the River and the Mountains*, 41-44.
- 9 National Archives, Service Record of John Sullivan, 1867-1870.
- 10 Catholic Church Marriage Records, 31 January 1873, Truth or Consequences N. Mex..
- 11 Family Baptismal Certificate, 1 March 1858, recorded her birth as 18 February 1858.
- 12 Behind the picture in fig.1 of John Sullivan , members of Constancia's family, discovered a picture of a young Hispano woman, fig.2. Although some family members believe it depicts Constancia, its placement behind John's picture has led to speculation it may have been instead his first bride, Crisostema, who died soon after that first marriage.
- 13 University of New Mexico, U.S. Post Office Dept. Records, Records of Appointments of Postmasters in New Mexico 1878-1930; Sullivan, *New Mexican Family*, 53; T.M. Pearce, *New Mexico Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1965), 103.
- 14 James Abar, "Ft. Ojo Caliente, *Desert Magazine*, 12 (April 1959): 19; Joseph A. Stout, Jr. in *Apache Lightening: the Last Great Battles of the Ojo Calientes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974) uses this designation for the Mimbres Apaches. Dan L. Thrapp, in his *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1974), uses the alternate designation.
- 15 Paige W. Christiansen, *The Story of Mining in New Mexico* (Socorro: New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, 1974), 51.
- 16 Ibid., 78.
- 17 Family Papers of Mrs. Shirley Tormey granddaughter of C.P. Sullivan (John's brother), Letter, John Sullivan to Mary Sullivan, 20 October 1879.
- 18 New Mexico State Record Center, Depredation File, Samuel Stillman Robinson Papers, copies of letter, Frank Robinson to Mrs. Frank Robinson, 16 October 1880.
- 19 New Mexico Territorial Census of 1885.
- 20 *El Paso Morning Times*, Obituary, 8 December 1911, 7.
- 21 Darlis Miller, *The California Column in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 53; Mary Frances Beverley, "Sadie Orchard Was a Good O'Girl," *New Mexico Magazine* (July 1983): 40-41; Twitchell, *Leading Fads*, 4:269 n. 604.
- 22 Miller, *California Column*, xii, 13.
- 23 *Sierra County Advocate*, 14 March 1885; *El Paso Morning Times*, Obituary, 8 December 1911.
- 24 Edward Leland Bartlett Papers, University of New Mexico, Box 153, Folder 3, Letter, Nicholas Galles to Adj. Gen., E.L. Bartlett, 5 June and 10 July 1885.
- 25 New Mexico State Record Center and Archives (SRCA), Territorial Archives of New Mexico rolls 105 and 106, frames 1024 and 60.
- 26 SRCA, House Journal 1884-1887, New Mexico Territorial Legislature, 23 February 1884, 3, 66.
- 27 Ibid., 36.
- 28 Ibid., 66.
- 29 SRCA, House Journal, Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly, 1909, Bill 115, 78.
- 30 SRCA, House Journal 1884-87, New Mexico Territorial Legislature, 23 February 23, 1884, 68.
- 31 Ibid., 67.
- 32 *The Black Range*, 14 March 1884.
- 33 Ibid., 28 March 1884.
- 34 SRCA, House Journal 1884-87, New Mexico Territorial Legislature, 23 February 1884, 168.
- 35 SRCA, Legislative Council 1884-87, New Mexico Territorial Legislative, 10, 51.
- 36 Ibid., 169.
- 37 *The Black Range*, 18 April 1884.
- 38 Gary L. Roberts, *Death Comes for the Chief Justice: The Slough-Rynerson Quarrel and Political Violence in New Mexico* (Niwot, Colo.: University

- Press of Colorado, 1990), 125.
- 39 SRCA, House Journal 1884-87, New Mexico Territorial Legislature, 216. 40 U.S. Census, 1880; New Mexico Territorial Census, 1885.
- 41 *Sierra County Advocate*, 26 January 1889.
- 42 *The Black Range*, 28 February 1884.
- 43 Family Papers of Mary (Sullivan) Stone, her mother, Lucy, was a member of the Bourguet Family. Ledger of Aristide and Alphonso Bourguet mercantile operation in Canada Alamosa, entries, Vol. 2, 22 September 1878, vol. 2, 31 May 1880, 1879-82.
- 44 *The Black Range* (Robinson) Socorro County, 6 October 1882.
- 45 Family Papers of Mrs. Shirley Tormey, Letter, John Sullivan to Mary Sullivan, 15 January 1885. SRCA, TANM, roll 86, frames 874-875, Oath of a Commissioned Officer, Captain in the New Mexico Volunteer Militia, 10 August 1885.
- 46 Sullivan, *New Mexican Family*, 40-41, 48-49.
- 47 Sierra County Commissioners Record Book A, 1884-1914, 16, 30. The author of this article is the great-grandson of John and Constancia (Tafoya) Sullivan.
- 48 *The Black Range*, 2 January 1885.
- 49 *El Paso Morning Times*, Obituary, 8 December 1911.
- 50 Johnson recognizes Galles's efforts with the designation of "Sierra County Founder." Jeannette Johnson, "General History of Sierra County, New Mexico," *History of Sierra County, New Mexico* (Truth or Consequences, N. Mex.: Sierra County Historical Society, Inc, 1979), 10.

# Fred R. Higgins: Lawman of Southeast New Mexico

by Elvis E. Fleming

Frederick R. "Fred" Higgins, who served as sheriff of Chaves County from 1899 through 1904, was a colorful and controversial sheriff in the early years of southeast New Mexico. He also served at one time or another as deputy sheriff, Roswell city policeman, and Deputy U.S. Marshal. He was a peace officer at the time when the first and only legal hanging took place in Chaves County and sheriff when the first law officer in the county died in the line of duty. As a deputy U. S. marshal, Higgins went after some of the leading criminals of the times.

Higgins was born in White County, Georgia, on 15 June 1860, the youngest of the five children of Newton and Lucinda Smith Higgins. Family tradition has it that Fred left home as a young teenager and worked on a goat ranch near El Paso. When Fred was eighteen "on the outlaw-border ranch," he lost all his money in a poker game. He disguised himself as a farmer and, with sufficient aces up his sleeve, won all his money back.<sup>1</sup>

Just when or why Higgins came to New Mexico Territory or where he resided at first is not clear, but it is known that he came to Roswell about 1890. On 7 December 1890, he married Katherine "Katie" Hannah Rainbolt, a native New Mexican, in Roswell. She was sixteen years of age, born on 18 March 1874; and he was thirty. Her parents, Liberty "Lib" Ware and Emma Rebecca Pankey Rainbolt, were prominent among the early families in the Roswell area. Fred and Katie had four children: Alfred was born in November 1893; Bertha Rebecca was born 28 January 1895, but died on 5 September the same year; Ralph was born on 3 September 1895; and William was born in July 1897.<sup>2</sup>

It is likely that Higgins went into law enforcement soon after arriving in Chaves County. In 1896, he was a deputy and jailer under Sheriff Charles W. Haynes. Two men convicted of murder were in his charge: Eugenio Aragón and Antonio Gonzales. Aragon and Gonzales were charged with killing Charlie Van Sickle, who had seen Aragón stealing building materials. Van Sickle was a former teacher working as foreman of a construction project at the Zuber Ranch in far northern Chaves County (now in DeBaca County). The murder took place there on 12 February 1894.

Aragón and Gonzales were convicted largely through the testimony of Aragón's two brothers-in-law, Marcelino Sanchez and Valentin Garcia. They were found guilty in trials held in November 1895, then appealed to the State Supreme Court, so the sentence of execution was to be carried out more than two years after the killing.<sup>3</sup>

Vowing to cheat the rope, Aragón told Jailer Higgins, "They will not get the chance to hang me." Higgins may or may not have taken the prisoner seriously. Asserting that the sheriff's office could not afford to forgo the hanging fee, Higgins replied, "If you kill yourself, I will drop you through the trap anyway!"<sup>4</sup>

Aragon managed to cut his own throat with a sharpened spoon on 14 September 1896. Gonzales kept his date with the hangman on the 24th. The hanging took place on the southeast corner of the courthouse square (where the Chaves County Juvenile Detention Center is presently located); a high board fence was put up to keep the event from turning into a circus.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to being a deputy sheriff in Chaves County, Higgins also was a deputy U. S. marshal under Marshal Edward L. Hall and others. That was a common practice in those days, and it often sent Higgins far afield from Chaves County — sometimes for weeks at a time. It was in that position that Higgins encountered some notorious outlaws.

In one such case that started in late October 1896, George Musgrave killed George Parker at a Diamond A Ranch roundup some forty-five miles southwest of Roswell. The Diamond A employed them both, and the law wanted both. Parker supposedly was a former Texas Ranger. The two had an agreement in which Musgrave would steal Diamond A cattle, and Parker would steal horses from C. D. Bonney's T Ranch. They would then exchange them, although it is not clear what the profit would be in this arrangement. Bonney managed to recover his horses, so Parker had nothing to trade to Musgrave for the cattle. The upshot of it was that Musgrave killed Parker and took off, accompanied by Bob Hayes.<sup>6</sup>

Charles L. Ballard was another deputy U. S. marshal in Roswell. Ballard got up a posse, which included Higgins as well as Les Dow, sheriff-elect of Eddy County. Soon, these three were all that was left of a larger posse, which pursued Musgrave and Hayes across New Mexico Territory. After one all-night ride, the men came to a Diamond A roundup camp on 18 November some twenty-seven miles southeast of Lordsburg. They hid behind a stack of cedar posts in an old dirt tank. Musgrave and Hayes rode in, and Dow told them to throw their hands up. Instead, they dismounted and began shooting. Hayes died in the shoot-out, but Musgrave got away. Dow had to return to Eddy, but Ballard and Higgins spent weeks scouting around Arizona Territory. They could not find Musgrave, so they finally returned home.

Musgrave had gone back to the "High Five" gang headed by "Black Jack" Christian. After Christian's death later that year, Musgrave headed his own splinter gang and became the most notorious of all the Black Jacks.<sup>7</sup>

In January 1910, while Ballard was sheriff of Chaves County, he heard that Musgrave was in Colorado. He did not find him there but did capture him in Nebraska and brought him back to Roswell for trial. District Attorney Lou Fullen prosecuted him in Judge William Pope's district court, while W. W. Gatewood defended Musgrave. In a surprise verdict, the jury found him "not guilty," presumably because Musgrave had lived an exemplary life as a family man for much of the time since killing Parker!<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1890s, the "High Five Gang," led by William "Black Jack" Christian, was operating along the New Mexico-Arizona border and in central and southern Arizona Territory. They robbed express trains, stagecoaches, post offices, and small isolated stores. They also stole from large ranches, but for the most part ranchers were friendly to the gang. Christian came to be called the "Robin Hood of Arizona" because his gang was so helpful and friendly toward the ranchers where they stopped for grub. Many posses tried to catch the High Five; they all failed.

Black Jack's gang eventually hid out in a cave on a goat ranch about twelve miles southeast of Clifton, Arizona Territory. On 27 April 1897, Ben Clark, deputy sheriff at Clifton, got word that someone had bought ammunition at a store in Clifton. It was learned that Black Jack owned the only gun in those parts that used that particular type of ammunition. At that point, Deputy U. S. Marshal Fred R. Higgins appeared on the scene, under the authority of U. S. Marshal Creighton M. Foraker. Higgins took Clark and three other deputies — W. T. Johnson, William Hart, and Charles Paxton — to the goat ranch. They got there on 28 April early in the morning and hid themselves to watch for the outlaws to come down the canyon for breakfast. At dawn, Higgins and the posse decided to ride closer to the ranch house, when suddenly Black Jack and two others appeared behind them. Paxton yelled, "There they are!"

The desperadoes unholstered their pistols as the lawmen came closer, so Marshal Higgins quickly lay down on the ground and started shooting. Black Jack and the other outlaws turned to flee, but Higgins and all of the deputies were shooting at them. Black Jack was hit, the bullet traveling through his body from the right side to the left just above the hips. He staggered about twenty steps and fell in some bushes. It was not known that he was dead until his body was found a short time later.

Higgins and his posse returned Black Jack's body to Clifton the next evening. There were those present who doubted that the dead outlaw was Black Jack Christian. Even though the post office and express companies sent representatives to investigate, they did not pay the thou-



Fred R. Higgins, Chaves County Sheriff, 1899-1904.  
Photo courtesy Rio Grande Historical Collections,  
New Mexico State University Library

sands of dollars in reward money that they had offered for bringing in the outlaw. Nobody could prove for certain that the dead outlaw was in fact Black Jack Christian.

A few months later, Tom Ketchum was in the area. When he learned that Christian was presumably dead, he decided to adopt his name. He became even more famous as an outlaw than did his predecessor. Shortly, Higgins and Ballard both served in a posse under Tombstone Marshal C.S. Fly, which chased "Black Jack" Ketchum and his gang out of Arizona Territory and back into New Mexico.<sup>9</sup>

Higgins announced on 4 March 1898, that he was running for sheriff of Chaves County. The *Roswell Record* noted,

[Higgins] has always been vigilant, when an officer, in ferreting out crime and in arresting offenders. When not an officer, he has, at all times, stood ready to assist those who were. He was one of Marshal [Edward L.] Hall's trusted deputies and took the field in hunting down and putting to rest Bob Hayes and "Black Jack" in the western part of the Territory last year. His known courage and his ability and tenacity in

hanging on to the trails of offenders has made him feared by the class of people who violate the law. He has been and is now deputy under Sheriff [C.W.] Haynes, and is always ready to go; and when the time comes, acts with coolness and judgment. He asks for the office of sheriff and is willing to stand on his record for efficiency.

Roswell's other newspaper, the *Roswell Register*, that same week commented, "If he is as good at getting votes as he is at trailing thieves and desperadoes, he will make a good race."<sup>10</sup>

Higgins received the Democratic nomination in June and was elected sheriff in November 1898. Fred Stevens ran against him on the Republican ticket; Higgins got 402 votes and Stevens got 162.<sup>11</sup> Higgins took office on 1 January 1899. The sheriff and his family lived across the street from the jail.

Fred Higgins had many adventures while he was in office. On 11 July 1899, he happened to be a passenger on a Colorado Southern train that was bound from Denver to Fort Worth. When the train stopped at Folsom, New Mexico, to pick up passengers, two outlaws boarded the locomotive and held the engineer at gunpoint. They forced him to take the train out of the village and stop it in a little canyon about nine miles southeast near Des Moines. Another man boarded the train there. It was later learned that the leader of this gang was Sam Ketchum, brother of the notorious Tom "Black Jack" Ketchum.

The three masked gunmen forced the engineer and fireman to escort them back to the freight car. As they walked through the passenger car, the desperadoes took turns firing their six-shooters through the roof to warn any of the passengers who might have tried to stop them. They found two small safes in the freight car, and they stacked one on top of the other with a stick of dynamite between them. One of the bandits shot the dynamite, causing a big explosion, which tore the top and sides off of both safes.

The robbers quickly stashed the safes' valuables into a big sack. They jumped off the train and ordered the engineer to fire up the engine and pull out. The gunmen faded into the blackness of the night.

The explosion in the freight car shook the passenger car. Springing into action, Sheriff Higgins yelled for the conductor to douse the lights. Then he and the conductor jumped off the train and crawled to where the gunmen's horses were tied. Between them, Higgins and the conductor had two six-shooters and nine bullets — not enough for a shoot-out with three well-armed desperadoes.

Higgins soon located the bandits' trail, which led through the mountains in the direction of Springer. U.S. Marshal Creighton Foraker, under whom Higgins had worked before, soon had a large posse searching for the robbers. Whether or not Higgins was in the posse is not

clear, but it seems likely that he was. On the 16th, seven of the posse found the trail some twenty-three miles west of Springer and followed it about ten miles into the mountains. They found the robbers as they prepared to encamp. The lawmen demanded that they surrender, but the gunmen started shooting at the posse instead. A forty-five-minute battle ensued, during which Sheriff Ed Farr of Huerfano County, Colorado died, and two other possemen were badly wounded. One of the robbers, William McGinnis, a horse breaker from Magdalena, was also killed. The other two took off into the hills on foot.

Several days later, a twenty-man posse led by a Wells Fargo Express Company special agent brought two men out of the hills and into Springer. They were tentatively identified as G. W. Franks and Sam Ketchum.<sup>12</sup> Foraker later captured another man named Wheeler, who had been seen with McGinnis and Franks. According to Larry D. Ball in *The United States Marshals of New Mexico and Arizona Territories, 1846-1912* (1978), Ketchum was wounded in the fracas, and his arm had to be amputated. He died in prison from the operation.<sup>13</sup> While the value of the loot was never revealed in the public records, Sheriff Higgins believed it was "a good pile of booty."<sup>14</sup>

Black Jack Ketchum tried to rob train in the same place a little later and was caught. His hanging in Clayton in 1901 has caused much sensation in Western history because the outlaw's head came off when he hit the end of the rope.

Higgins ran for re-election as sheriff of Chaves County in 1900. In that contest, rancher John Shaw ran against Higgins on the Republican ticket. Higgins got the nod in a surprisingly close race, 561 votes to 440.<sup>15</sup>

The first peace officer in Chaves County ever to be killed in the line of duty met his death during Higgins' tenure as sheriff. There was a dance in a vacant house in southwest Roswell on Friday night, 8 February 1901. Deputy Will Rainbolt went to the house accompanied by his younger brother "Mody." Rainbolt, who was twenty-five years old, had been a deputy for two years. He was married and had a child. Sheriff Higgins's wife Katie was Rainbolt's sister.

Deputy Rainbolt saw that Oliver Hendricks was carrying a six-shooter at the dance. Rainbolt called Hendricks out and ordered him to surrender his pistol, which he did. He then told Hendricks to get into the deputy's buggy so he could take him to jail. At that point, Nath Hendricks, Oliver's older brother, started interfering and trying to persuade Rainbolt not to arrest his brother. The deputy declined, and Hendricks — apparently believing his brother's life was in danger — pulled his revolver and shot Rainbolt. The deputy's last words, spoken to his brother, were "Mody, they have killed me." The slug had gone through his heart.

Nath Hendricks hurriedly mounted and fled westward. Oliver joined him later at their Eightmile Hill camp, and they proceeded to the west. Their familiarity with the ter-



Tranquilino C. Lopez, 1856-1911. Las Cruces jailer accidentally killed by Fred Higgins in 1911. Photo courtesy of Joseph E. López, San Bernardino, California.

rain and ability to catch fresh horses wherever they went helped them make their escape. An impromptu posse rode out after the killer, even though Sheriff Higgins was in El Paso. The sheriff always kept several saddle horses in his back yard for the possible use of posses, and the horses were pressed into service on this occasion. Without anyone to take charge, the chase was deemed ineffectual, so most of the men soon came back.

Telegrams to locate Sheriff Higgins finally reached him at El Paso, and he got back to Roswell on a special train at two a.m. on Sunday. A large crowd attended Rainbolt's funeral that afternoon at the First Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He was buried at Southside Cemetery.<sup>16</sup>

Sheriff Higgins offered himself for a third term in 1902. Republican W.J. Wilson ran against him, but Higgins prevailed by 775 votes to 451. The vote totals received by Higgins in his three elections give some indication of the growth of Chaves County and the relative strength of the two political parties. In 1898, Higgins got 402 votes and his opponent received 162. In 1900, the numbers

were Higgins 561, opponent 440; and in 1902, 775 to 451, respectively.<sup>17</sup>

Nath Hendricks was indicted in 1901 for killing Deputy Rainbolt, and Sheriff Higgins made several trips as he tried desperately to find him. He had no success for some two years. Finally, he learned that Hendricks was living in North Dakota under the alias "Clayton." He sent word to have him arrested and then went to extradite him back to Roswell in January 1903.

Hendricks was placed in leg irons in the Chaves County jail. The jailer who had direct responsibility for guarding him was Mody Rainbolt, brother of the man Hendricks was charged with killing! Hendricks accused both Sheriff Higgins and Deputy Rainbolt of mistreating him while he was in jail awaiting trial.<sup>18</sup>

He finally went to trial on 12 November 1903. It was a very sensational event that drew overflow crowds — especially women — to the courtroom. The trial lasted several days with morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Finally a jury decided that Hendricks was guilty of "murder in the third degree."

Third-degree murder was commonly called "manslaughter." Hendricks' lawyers filed for a new trial, which was scheduled for 27 February 1904. District Judge William H. Pope denied the motion for a new trial and sentenced Hendricks to eight years in the penitentiary. His lawyers appealed to the state Supreme Court, but it was three years before it made a decision. Finally in January 1906, the Supreme Court remanded the case to Chaves County District Court for re-trial because Hendricks had been indicted for first-degree murder, but the judge had instructed the jury for third-degree murder. The district court decided to just start over as if no trial had been held. The lengthy, sensational trial ended on 10 June 1906, when the jury decided they could not find him guilty of first-degree murder as that crime is defined in the law. Hendricks went free.<sup>19</sup>

Higgins made a bid in 1904 to run for a fourth term, but he was beaten in the Democratic primary by Charles L. Ballard, who served five years as the last Territorial sheriff of Chaves County.<sup>20</sup> What is known about Higgins' life and career after his term as sheriff is rather sketchy.

Besides his work as a sheriff, deputy sheriff, and deputy U.S. marshal, Higgins spent about two years — c. 1910-11 — as a member of the New Mexico Mounted Police.<sup>21</sup> This law enforcement agency existed from February 1905 until February 1921. It was a small, select group that was organized along the same lines as the Arizona Rangers and was one of the predecessors of the State Police.<sup>22</sup>

As a member of the Mounted Police, Higgins killed a jailer while working in Las Cruces on 18 February 1911. Higgins arrested two men, Manuel Candelaria and Lambert Reinhart, that Saturday night in a downtown saloon and hauled them off to jail. The men threatened to try to pull something, so Higgins kept them covered with his



"The Death Door," showing artist's conception of Deputy Tranquilino López about to open the door to Mounted Policeman Fred Higgins, leading to a scuffle in which López was accidentally shot by Higgins in Las Cruces in 1911. Drawn by Joseph E. López, San Bernardino, California.

weapon. When they reached the jail, he called out for the jailer.<sup>23</sup>

At that point, Reinhart, who was a friend of the jailer, decided to trick Higgins into a dangerous position. Reinhart yelled to the jailer, "Look out! He's got a gun." The jailer on duty was fifty-four-year-old Tranquilino Campos López. López quickly opened the door, and, thinking Higgins was the prisoner, grabbed him around the waist. The two men struggled, and in the course of the fight Higgins' gun went off. The bullet went through López's body, knocking him unconscious. He lived through the night but never regained consciousness. He died early the next morning.

Tranquilino Campos López was a man with a "sense of duty to family, community, and country," writes his great-great-nephew, Joseph E. López. "During the

dark and dangerous days of New Mexico's territorial history, Tranquilino and his [four] brothers answered the call to duty on many occasions, especially during the Victorio [and] Geronimo Apache Wars, and the rustler wars between 1879 through 1886." The López brothers served in the First Cavalry Regiment of the New Mexico Volunteer Militia under Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain.<sup>24</sup>

Tranquilino López had been a farmer at Garfield, then moved to Las Cruces in 1909 to take the job of deputy assistant jailer for the town of Las Cruces and Dona Ana County. López left a wife, three sons, and a daughter.<sup>25</sup>

Higgins was arrested. On Monday the 20th, a preliminary hearing was held before Justice-of-the-Peace Manuel López, and Higgins was bound over to the grand jury on a charge of first-degree murder and held without bail.<sup>26</sup> However, the following day a hearing was held in which Judge Frank Q. Parker set Higgins' bond at ten thousand dollars. Higgins put up the bond and returned to his home in Roswell. The *Rio Grande Republican* concluded, "He has always borne a good reputation, and the killing of López was evidently accidental."<sup>27</sup>

The Dona Ana County Grand Jury indicted Higgins on 6 April. Feelings were running high in Las Cruces, and two witnesses told Judge Parker that in their opinion Higgins could not get a fair and impartial trial in Dona Ana County. Higgins' request for a change of venue was granted on 11 April.

The Grant County District Court in Silver City took Higgins' case. Surprisingly, in view of the circumstances of the killing, a full-fledged trial by jury was conducted on 3 September. The jury agreed that it was not an act of murder and found Higgins "not guilty."<sup>28</sup>

The Roswell City Directory for 1911 lists Higgins' occupation as "ranchman." It also shows that he and wife Katie lived at 401 N. Virginia, along with son Ralph, who was a driver for Gross-Miller Grocery Company.<sup>29</sup> Higgins is not listed in the 1912 city directory for Roswell, but his sons Ralph and William are shown to be living at 323 N. Virginia. The 1913 directory states that Higgins was a Roswell policeman. He lived at 820 N. Main with all three of his sons, although the directory does not list his wife. In 1916, "Frederick" Higgins lived at 207 E. 4th St. No occupation or family members are listed.<sup>30</sup>

Little information about Higgins has turned up as to what became of him after he left Roswell. Higgins and his wife "Kittie" are found in the census of 1920 living in Curry County (Clovis). His relative, Sherri Higgins Clark of Hollis, Oklahoma, believes Higgins died in the early 1940s but has not been able to learn where.<sup>31</sup>

So ended the law enforcement career of Fred R. Higgins. He was an effective, if sometimes controversial, peace officer at a time when gangs of mounted outlaws robbed banks, trains, and stagecoaches; and sheriffs and marshals rode out after them on horseback. Law enforcement has changed a lot in the hundred years since Fred R. Higgins followed the trails of desperadoes.

*Daily Record*, 27 June 1984.

---

ELVIS E. FLEMING is Professor of History, Emeritus, from Eastern New Mexico University. A prolific author of books and articles, Professor Fleming is also a noted speaker and entertainer.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 E-mail message to Elvis E. Fleming, 11 April 2000. Ms. Clark is a descendant of Jason W. Higgins, Sheriff Higgins' brother.
- 2 Sherri Clark; Chaves County Marriage Records, Book A, 47, Chaves County Courthouse, Roswell, New Mexico; United States Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population, Chaves County, New Mexico Territory, 28, household no. 495.
- 3 Elvis E. Fleming, "The First Murder in Chaves County," *Treasures of History III: Southeast New Mexico People, Places, and Events* (Roswell: Historical Society for Southeast New Mexico, 1995), 82-90.
- 4 Cecil Bonney, *Looking Over My Shoulder: Seventy-five Years in the Pecos Valley* (Roswell: By the author, 1971), 22.
- 5 Fleming, "First Murder," 89-90.
- 6 Bonney, *Seventy-Five Years*, 7-8.
- 7 Larry D. Ball, *The United States Marshals of New Mexico and Arizona Territories, 1846-1912* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 204.
- 8 Bonney, *Seventy-Five Years*, 9-10.
- 9 Donald N. Bentz, "Alias 'Black Jack' Christian," *Old West* (Spring 1970): 52-54, 79-80.
- 10 *Roswell Record*, 4 March 1898; *Roswell Register*, 2 March 1898.
- 11 Chaves County Board of Commissioners, Proceedings, Chaves County Courthouse, Roswell.
- 12 Doug Swanson, "Higgins' Shootout in Old Folsom Recalled," *Roswell*
- 13 Ball, *U. S. Marshals*, 207.
- 14 Swanson, "Higgins' Shootout."
- 15 Board of Commissioners, Proceedings.
- 16 Elvis E. Fleming, "Nath Hendricks was Tried Twice for Murdering Deputy Will Rainbolt," *Vision Magazine, Roswell Daily Record*, 4 August 2000.
- 17 Board of Commissioners, Proceedings.
- 18 Chaves County District Court, Case No. 330, "Motion for Appointment of Disinterested Person to Serve Process," 2 November 1903. Chaves County Courthouse, Roswell, New Mexico.
- 19 Fleming, "Nath Hendricks Tried Twice."
- 20 Board of Commissioners, Proceedings.
- 21 Robert J. Tórrez, New Mexico State Historian, Santa Fe. E-mail message to Elvis E. Fleming, 2 August 2000.
- 22 Don Bullis, *New Mexico's Finest: Peace Officers Killed in the Line of Duty, 1847-1996*. Santa Fe: New Mexico Department of Public Safety, 1996, 152
- 23 *Rio Grande Republican*, 24 February 1911.
- 24 Joseph E. Lopez, San Bernardino, California. Letter to Elvis E. Fleming, 26 January 1999.
- 25 Joseph E. Lopez.
- 26 *Roswell Daily Record*, 21 February 1911.
- 27 *Rio Grande Republican*, 24 February 1911.
- 28 Dona Ana County Criminal Case No. 4397; Grant County Criminal Case No. 5928; New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.
- 29 *Roswell City Directory*, 1911.
- 30 *Roswell City Directory*, 1912, 1913, 1916.
- 31 Sherri Clark.

# Technology, Politicos, and the Decline of a Sierra County Seat: Hillsboro, 1884-1939

by James B. Sullivan

In 1884, the territorial government of New Mexico carved out a new county called Sierra from portions of Socorro, Grant, and Dona Ana Counties. Hillsboro, center of regional gold and silver strikes, became the first county seat. Nestled in the foothills leading to the Black Range Mountains, the new center of county government, lay only eighteen miles west of the Rio Grande in the central part of the territory. Sierra County has had two county seats and might very well have had a third if one county representative and some of his constituents would have had their way. Almost from the outset, the location of Hillsboro, as the county seat of the newly created county drew opposition from opponents who questioned the wisdom of locating the county seat there. The editor of the *Black Range* at Chloride, a northern rival of Hillsboro, wrote, "Not a man outside the town so favored but would rather have seen the new town started at any convenient and suitable place. It is remarkable how few friends Hillsboro has." Despite such disgruntled rumblings, Hillsboro maintained its position of county leadership free from any serious rivals until the end of the "Age of Teddy Roosevelt" in 1909.

Transportation access to railroads meant the difference between economic life and death for mining centers like Hillsboro. Two major railroad lines crossed Sierra County. The eastern route connecting urban populations in the north and south of the territory followed the old Camino Real crossing the Jornada del Muerto. Passengers or freight unloaded at Engle in the far eastern sector of Sierra County still had to be ferried across the Rio Grande. Only two days after the bill creating Sierra County was signed, on 3 April 1884, the builders of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad completed a thirteen-mile spur linking the silver producing center of Lake Valley with the Nutt Station depot northeast of Deming.<sup>2</sup> Linkage to the county seat of Sierra County at Hillsboro still required an additional rough fifteen-mile stretch that could only be reached by horseback or the Mountain Pride Stagecoach as late as 1912.

In 1879, when Victorio and his band of Mimbres Apache terrorized county populations, Hillsboro was only two years old. In the aftermath of those raids, a mining engineer from Michigan, Frank Robinson, passing through the region and stopping at Hillsboro, noted the results.

All along the road are the marks sad and savage of Victorio and his band of 300 Apache. From this town one year ago went out 15 young men to attack them. A few hours later



Map

there came back 8 — all that was left. The ranches are deserted, mining stopped and business unsettled generally or at least that was the case until recently by those terrible raids but "Old Vic" is now in old Mexico and there is nothing to fear from him. This a little town but I have found good friends — Yankee people.<sup>3</sup>

The Territorial Census of 1885 showed Hillsboro's population to be about equally split between Hispanics and Anglo-Americans.

Geronimo's last uprising, in the mid-1880s, found the communities of the new county of Sierra much better prepared to defend themselves. Units of New Mexico Volunteers, drawn from the local citizenry, drilled in sev-

eral of the towns much like minute men in an earlier era in American history prepared to defend their families and farms. The newly installed county commissioners petitioned Territorial Governor Lionel A. Sheldon to send them eight thousand rounds of ammunition and four hundred rifles to distribute to the citizens Sierra County.<sup>4</sup> The scare passed quickly when Geronimo was captured and shipped by train to a prison in Florida.

Although rails of steel managed to spark the mining economy and virtually end threats posed by marauding Indians, isolation still plagued the country. National news coverage of the sensational Fountain murder trial in Hillsboro in 1899, brought the first telephone line linking Hillsboro to the outside world.<sup>5</sup> Several factors entered into the first major challenge to Hillsboro's leadership of county government. Most obvious was the decline of silver prices in the 1890s, which made mining that precious metal less and less attractive. In Hillsboro, surrounded by rich silver strikes, symptoms of the coming debacle surfaced quickly. A local physician, Dr. W.G. Beals, who moved to Sierra County from Michigan, visiting the county seat from his nearby Tierra Blanca health spa, broke the news, "I was over to Hillsboro yesterday. It's the only camp that is doing anything and they expect to close down until better times in silver."<sup>6</sup>

Local distress precipitated by the depression caused populism to flare briefly in this silver rich area. U.S. Census figures show that by 1910, Hillsboro's population had dropped by over 28 percent. Two other factors influencing county demographic shifts became operative in the first decade of the new century. First was the advent of a new technology — the automobile — whose effects had yet to be completely understood and appreciated in rural America. Was it a fad or a revolutionary innovation of the new century? At the time this episode unfolded in 1909, the issue was far from conclusive. In Territorial New Mexico, the primary mode of transportation, excepting the iron horse, remained mounted riders or animal drawn, wheeled-vehicles. As late as 1913, the *Sierra County Advocate* reported the presence of only 1,800 automobiles in the entire new state of New Mexico. In several counties, including Sierra, the number of these newfangled machines remained in single digits. Sierra County boasted seven cars.<sup>7</sup> Would automobiles suffer the fate of the Stanley Steamer at the turn of the century or prove a suitable replacement for horses, buggies, and even rails of steel? Official Sierra County stationery reflected the uncertainty. It depicted the traditional horse and buggy front and center, but immediately to its right was a new roadster.<sup>8</sup>



Official Letterhead, Sierra County with roadster right of centered horse and buggy, circa 1916

Only five years earlier, in 1904, Territorial Governor Miguel Otero had purchased two new, yellow automobiles for New Mexico's territorial government from Ford Motor Company for the handsome sum of \$2,400. The steep cost of \$275 for monthly upkeep was discouraging enough. When the exasperated executive discovered there was just one mechanic in the entire territory available to fix the simplest mechanical problems, he unloaded one of the two vehicles for only \$400.<sup>9</sup> Initially, what worked in the cities of America did not necessarily work in the West. How quickly that all changed. In 1908, Henry Ford's assembly lines began mass production of the new Model Ts.<sup>10</sup>

The results of that faraway decision impacted Territorial New Mexico almost immediately. The following year in Santa Fe, Thomas Catron's son, Charles, reported, B.F. Pankey of San Cristobal ranch has a model T Ford which he uses in connection with work on the ranch. This car is called to perform feats that many a good team would quit on, and very often runs seventy-five to a hundred miles in a single day repeating the same performance the following without a single stop. This car is being driven by a man whose experiences with automobiles began with this machine."

A second set of factors, instrumental in explaining the subsequent demographic and political realignments, appeared in close conjunction with the appearance of the new automobile technology intruding into south central New Mexico. By 1906, a new commercial venture, the Victoria Chief Copper Mining and Smelting Company, became operational, using the new railroad depot at Cutter about twenty miles south of Engle. Was this new enterprise the cutting edge of a reinvigorated mining industry in Sierra County? A few tried vigorously to convince the rest it was so. Officials and promoters of the new mining company led by "Colonel" Robert Hopper and his Secretary-Treasurer, Julia Bigelow, lobbied hard to gain support for moving the county seat from Hillsboro to Cutter.



Official Letterhead, Sierra County before the extensive popularity of automobiles in Territorial New Mexico, circa 1911.

Hopper, the major instigator of the removal bill, was a long-time Hillsboro entrepreneur. In the 1890s, he became the president of the Hillsboro Mercantile Company in partnership with Nicholas Galles, a former territorial legislator who was most responsible for the creation of Sierra County, and George Perrault, another early mining pioneer in Hillsboro. Hopper ran a branch office in Kingston, nine miles west of Hillsboro. His two partners operated out of the county seat.<sup>12</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, Hopper became president of the Victoria Chief Copper Mining and Smelting Company with an office address advertised as 100 Broadway in New York City.<sup>13</sup>

Together, Robert Hopper and Julia Bigelow produced glowing promotional reports of a series of rich copper deposits found together with traces of low grade gold and silver ore as well in the Caballo Range. Several mines tapped the touted bonanza. Chief among these was the Marion Mine, with a tunnel of five hundred feet. Hopper and Bigelow's description told of a planned toll road connecting the mines with the railroad. A 1907 article entitled, "A Pleasant Trip to a Great Mine," in *Leslie's Weekly*, a national magazine, addressed prospective investors on the opportunities for shareholders with reassurances to any skeptics.

His (Colonel Hopper's) supreme confidence in the enormous value of the Victoria Chief mines was shown at the outset, when he told friends who desired to secure an allotment of shares in his property, that he would sell to them only on the condition that, if they were dissatisfied at any time within six months after the purchase, he could take the stock back and pay them their money with six per cent interest.<sup>14</sup>

The magazine story acclaimed that stock in the company had soared to \$2.50 per share and would undoubtedly go higher at the next stock offering. Although the promotional literature did not mention Cutter, located twenty miles directly south of Engel, it was near that rail-

head that these mining entrepreneurs and their confederates erected a store and a couple of other buildings. Over twenty years later, a mining engineer's report concerning the Victoria Chief Mining operation concluded that, "the history of the old company is one marked by incredible fraud, misstatements and swindling by the notorious promoters, Miss Julia Bigelow and "Colonel" Robert Hopper."<sup>15</sup> In 1908-1909, however, only the principals were privy to all facets of the scam. An enthusiastic visit by Governor George Curry and a group of boosters from the

Albuquerque Commercial Club to the new community at Cutter seemed to lend legitimacy to an impending move.<sup>16</sup> The next obvious step would be to pass enabling legislation in Santa Fe to effect that transfer of political power. The case for this change of county seat eastward was made even more compelling by the announcement that work on a reclamation dam project at Elephant Butte would begin within sixty days. The February 1909 issue of the *Rio Grande Republican*, published in Las Cruces, enthusiastically trumpeted this new opportunity for regional business.

Thousands will come in and then we will start the trade of other thousands. Let us receive them from Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, California and all the neighboring states. Let us not request too much of them. Let us be fair and give them a "Square Deal."<sup>17</sup>

The new dam site would bridge the Rio Grande and allow communities in the eastern portion of the county, namely Engle and Cutter, new lines of traffic and communication with their western neighbors. All the ingredients were in place for what unfolded next.

The possibility of moving the county seat to the eastern half of the county served by two railroad depots piqued the interest of at least one Sierra County official. Julian Chavez ran for a seat in the 1908 Territorial House of Representatives, the very same year Henry Ford's assembly lines began to crank out thousands of those crazy contraptions called automobiles. If elected, he would serve in the legislative session slated to begin in 1909.

Julian Chaves came from one of the pioneer families of Sierra County. Members of the Chaves family were among the earliest settlers putting down roots on some of the watersheds flowing into the Rio Grande. They included homes at Rio Palomas and then Rio Animas sometime between 1867 and 1873.<sup>18</sup> Life in the region remained so dangerous during those first years that military detachments from posts such as Ft. McRae periodically lived in these villages and provided protection



Stock Certificate, Victoria Copper Mining and Smelting Company signed by Julia Bigelow, Secretary-Treasurer and Robert Hopper, President.

from hostile Indian threats.<sup>19</sup> Food crops from these villages helped to feed the miners in isolated mining communities like Hillsboro. This source of food was particularly vital before the advent of the railroads into the territory.

It is doubtful that Julian Chaves ever had an opportunity for any formal education. The territorial government did not get around to establishing a public school system until 1884.<sup>20</sup> By 1873, Chaves was already seventeen years old, and the riverine communities of Palomas and Animas remained so isolated and sparsely populated that they seldom even had a priest to visit these remote settlements. This left the region ripe for Protestant evangelists. As early as 1873, a frontier John Wesley named Reverend Thomas Harwood, operating out of Albuquerque, visited Palomas where he held a prayer meeting with several members of the Chaves family. Eventually, at least one Chaves became a Methodist.<sup>21</sup>

By the 1880s, many of the residents from the Hispanic communities along the river began migrating into the mining emporiums of Hillsboro, Kingston, and Lake Valley seeking jobs or new business opportunities away from the farm or ranch. Hispanic migrants to Hillsboro tended to congregate in the *barrio* (neighborhood) called "Happy Flat," just on the other side of Rio Percha. Travelers approaching from the Rio Grande would first enter "Happy Flats" before crossing to the main part of town. Sometime before the 1893 depression struck the nation, spreading its misery westward, Julian Chaves, with a family of his own, moved to this barrio.

Despite his lack of formal education, Chaves, now a Hillsborite, plunged into local county politics. He flirted briefly with the new Populist ticket in running for county commissioner in 1894. He lost his first time out but the following year won a spot in county government as probate judge.<sup>22</sup> At least as early as 1905, he abandoned his early populist leanings for the triumphant Republican Party. He subsequently hired on as a deputy-sheriff working for Eduardo Tafoya who won office as a Republican and became the first Hispanic sheriff of Sierra County. Chaves's political education was taking place on the job.

Chaves followed up his initial success in the Republican Party by running for a spot in the lower house of the territorial legislature in 1908. In the ensuing election, Chaves faced Edward d'Oench Tittmann, a newcomer Democrat from back East that very year.

Tittman, born into a St. Louis German-American family, retained close links to the old country. Following the death of his father, his mother returned to Germany so that Edward and his brother might receive the benefits of education in a German gymnasium. He received a law degree from George Washington University in the nation's capital in 1893 and subsequently worked for various newspapers and journals in New York City.<sup>23</sup> A combination of health concerns and the lure of gold caused him to move his family westward to Territorial New Mexico. Upon his arrival on the Mountain Pride Stage Line in 1908 with his wife and children, he worked as the manager of the Ready Pay Company Mine (he was also a part owner) outside Hillsboro. The mine turned out to be a losing operation. His daughter, Sandy, later quipped that their family soon learned why locals referred to the Ready Pay Company Mine as the Never Pay Seduction Company.<sup>24</sup> Later, in 1911, Tittmann passed the New Mexico bar exam and also put his newspaper experience to good use in heading a new Hillsboro newspaper venture, the *Sierra Free Press*. Boldly the newcomer plunged into Sierra County politics and ran against Julian Chaves. The ensuing election of 1908 was not even close; Chaves bested his newcomer rival by more than 640 votes.<sup>25</sup>

Chaves's victory and triumphant trip to Santa Fe to take his place in the territorial legislature in February 1909 drew approval from the *Sierra County Advocate*. "Mr. Julian Chaves is an energetic citizen and will do all in his power to secure much needed legislation that the



Picture of Mountain Pride Stage, circa 1910. Driver portrayed is Neil Sullivan, future Sierra County Commissioner and Sheriff. This stagecoach is now on display at the museum in Lincoln, New Mexico.

people demand, and he goes to Santa Fe with the best wishes of the people of Sierra County.”<sup>26</sup> Reflective of Chaves’s economic success and new political status, he moved his family into a newly purchased home next to the Union Church and far from the Hispanic barrio of “Happy Flat.” It stood on one of the highest hills in town within a block of the center of county political life at the courthouse in Hillsboro.<sup>27</sup> Much of his political education would come there at the courthouse. Chaves soon sold his farm on the Animas for the handsome sum of four thousand dollars.<sup>28</sup> A photograph of the freshman legislator, appearing in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, showed him to be a well-dressed man, sporting a Stetson and Edwardian style beard, very similar to that of his defeated political rival, Edward Tittmann.<sup>29</sup>

Chaves’s dynamic leadership in the new legislative session in Santa Fe proved equally newsworthy in adjacent Dona Ana County. “Chaves of Sierra County leads in the number of bills introduced thus far in the House. He is an aggressive member of the lower body and is making a name for himself.”<sup>30</sup> Pronouncing the end of Hillsboro was clearly premature. Chaves, growing up in a region served by stage and railroad transport, could be expected to approve the same tandem in the eastern sector of the county. This would have been especially true if that new transport also brought with it the promise of a revival of the mining industry. Chaves’s subsequent career as a legislator showed that he, like many of his constituents in Sierra County, remained ambivalent toward the new technological option of the automobile, which was now intruding into the lives of Americans with increasing persistence. Still, few in Sierra County, including Chaves, could have dreamed of a healthy economy

devoid of either of the two proven modes of transportation.

Chaves proved to be an active legislator in Santa Fe, introducing a number of sorely needed reform bills for the new county. These included a measure providing for a hospital in the Rio Grande town of Palomas Hot Springs.<sup>31</sup> The Palomas part of the name would later be dropped, and it would be referred to thereafter as simply Hot Springs. Some of the laws Chaves introduced included a ban on saloons near schools and a tax on all bachelors over twenty-one years of age.<sup>32</sup> These particular laws had a Puritanical ring to them. In many ways, they mirrored the moral turn of national progressivism in pressing for prohibition and passage of the Mann Act banning interstate white slavery activities.

None of Chaves’s bills might have stirred much comment had the new Sierra County legislator not surprised everyone by introducing a measure calling for the removal of the county seat from Hillsboro to the new railhead at Cutter, located on the Jornada del Muerto.<sup>33</sup> Even if the measure had required prior voter approval, which it did not, it would have proved explosive. A chance visitor in Santa Fe alerted county officials of the impending removal bill, and a storm of protest greeted the proposal. Governor Curry, sensing the political fallout, adroitly changed directions and immediately vetoed the offending bill. Suddenly, Representative Chaves found himself all alone. Seeking a quick way out of this dilemma, the freshman lawmaker introduced a revised bill, allowing for Sierra County voters to decide on the question, and it passed. The governor signed the latter bill into law.<sup>34</sup> Only the U.S. congress could now intervene in its official capacity as the overseer of all territorial laws.

The local residents in Hillsboro were furious. A bipartisan group in Sierra County contacted Tittmann, who was visiting back East and asked him to proceed immediately to Washington, D.C. to call for a congressional veto of the hated removal bill in any form whatsoever. Testifying before both House and Senate Committees, Tittmann methodically built his argument for retaining the county seat in Hillsboro. First, relocating the county seat to Cutter would require construction of new public buildings and a fifty thousand dollar bridge across the Rio Grande for citizens to reach the newly proposed county capital. Even more damning was Tittmann’s contention that the population of Cutter was no more than twenty-four people!<sup>35</sup> This appears to be a bit of an exaggeration, but it certainly falls within the parameters

of a rough estimate. In fact, the U.S. census taker in 1910 did not even bother to separate the two communities of Engle and Cutter lumping them together as 158 people. Even this higher number does not compare well with Hillsboro's population of around four hundred.

Some of Tittman's testimony caricatured Chaves as an incompetent country bumpkin. Testifying before the House Committee on Territories, Tittmann mercilessly charged that Chaves had introduced a bill to tax jack rabbits. In actuality, Chaves's bill called for payment of a bounty on the pests.<sup>36</sup> Later, testifying before the Senate Committee on Territories, Tittmann corrected this oversight, but the political damage was already done.<sup>37</sup> The practice of paying bounties on predators or animal pests was common in Sierra County. The other tax, Chaves did propose, was one on dogs left unattended that might pose threats to the young and the elderly in particular. Smarting from his recent political defeat, Tittmann charged further that Chaves failed to carry his own county of Sierra and that it was the Hispanic vote alone in Socorro County, which lay in the same district, that allowed Chaves to eke out a victory at all. Despite his claim to the contrary, returns show that Tittmann lost in Sierra County as well, although by a bare ten votes.<sup>38</sup>

As an experienced newspaper man, testifying far from Territorial New Mexico, Tittmann overstated his case. He did admit to one congressional committee that there was no record of Chaves owning any real estate in Cutter whatsoever; however, Tittmann hastened to add that it was the "considered opinion in Sierra County that he (Chaves) owns some lots there."<sup>39</sup> Current county records still fail to disclose that Julian Chaves ever owned any property in Cutter, New Mexico. Tittmann knew from experience the power of the press, and he used it as a cudgel chastise his former rival. He was also quick to point out that Hopper and Bigelow's "valuable Victoria mining stock," formerly selling for \$2.50 a share, was now nearly worthless at its current value of three cents per share.

Undoubtedly, his own dismal experience with the so-called Ready Pay Company Mine also helps to explain Tittmann's zeal in thrashing out at the scoundrels who sought to reduce his adopted home to a political derelict. Chaves, like his rival Tittmann, found himself associated with a mining scam. Almost overnight, Chaves saw himself transformed from a legislative star into a county pariah. Newspaper accounts told that both he and "Colonel" Robert Hopper were being burned in effigy in the streets of Hillsboro.<sup>40</sup>

The ostensible choice between a tiny but budding mining and railroad center at Cutter and the declining but still politically potent Hillboro must have seemed a reasonable one for Tittmann and Chaves in 1909. Yet the fact that Chaves introduced a bill to initiate construction of a new hospital to be built in neither of the two rivals for the county seat is telling. The new medical

facility was to be located in a third community, at Palomas Hot Spring (in 1914 the Palomas portion was dropped and then in 1950, it became Truth or Consequences) located on the north-south traffic axis on the west bank of the Rio Grande. This choice underscores Chaves's ambivalence about the future direction of population growth in Sierra County when he made his fateful decision.

Shunned by his fellow citizens in Hillsboro, Chaves moved his wife, Selfa, and their two daughters to the more comfortable anonymity of Albuquerque, where he died in 1915 at the age of fifty-nine.<sup>41</sup> The following year the U.S. government completed construction of the Elephant Butte Dam Reclamation Project thus insuring the sustainable growth and prosperity of Hot Springs. As a recreation and vacation spot, Hot Springs, adjacent to the lake facilities and astride the north-south axis of traffic, had the potential for continued growth. The advent of the automobile now made that possibility more likely. With economic prosperity, there inevitably arose the question of future political leadership for the county. A vote of 908 to 809, favoring Hot Springs as the county seat, failed in 1920 to garner the necessary three-fifths vote, but it showed an unmistakable trend.<sup>42</sup> An attempt to snuff out the political life of Sierra County altogether surfaced in a 1933 county reorganization bill. The effort failed amid a storm of citizen protests. The fight for the very survival of Sierra County itself may have diverted attention away from exactly where the county seat should be located.

However, in 1936 a special county election settled the fate of Hillsboro as the county seat after fifty-two years.<sup>43</sup> The subsequent destruction of their magnificent Victorian courthouse for the paltry Depression Era sum of \$440 made the loss of the center of county government just that much more tragic for life-long Hillsborites.<sup>44</sup> Last ditch efforts by Mrs. C.C. Hiron, wife of a local businessman, and by the former madame of Hillsboro's bordello, Sadie Orchard, to sue the County Commissioners and thus block the removal of the headquarters of county government to Hot Spring, failed.<sup>45</sup> A final legal appeal to the New Mexico Supreme Court, by Tittmann, struck a similar stone wall.

A touch of irony emerged from the clash of the two politicos: Edward Tittmann, defender of Hillsboro and his political rival, Julian Chaves, who had favored Cutter as a replacement for the declining county seat. The efforts of both men, in behalf of their respective supporters, proved to be studies in futility in the not too distant future. The failures of each man, Chaves, a native son, farmer and politician and Tittmann, the newly arrived, college-educated lawyer and journalist, as victims of fraudulent mining schemes, added credence to the universality of Shakespeare's warning that all that glitters is not gold.

In 1909, not only the citizens of Sierra County and Territorial New Mexico, but also all Americans were caught between technological worlds, which were chang-

ing with incredible rapidity. Those changes exploded so quickly that neither Tittmann nor Chaves could have been expected to foresee the future brought by the technological revolution. Neither Hillsboro nor Cutter would keep or win the site of county government. Thanks to the new automobiles, people were no longer completely dependent upon animal drawn vehicles or the iron horse. They could choose more easily where they wished to live, work, and play. By 1936, a sufficient number of citizens chose Hot Springs on the Rio Grande as their new county seat. Some of the red bricks from its Hillsboro predecessor were sold for use in the construction of the new courthouse completed by 1939.

JAMES B. SULLIVAN is a professor in the department of Social Sciences at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 *The Black Range* (Chloride), 18 April 1884.
- 2 David Myrick, *New Mexico Railways: An Historical Survey*, (Golden: Colorado Railroad Museum, 1970), 159.
- 3 New Mexico State Records Center, Indian Depredation File, (Xerox copies), Samuel Stillman Robinson Papers, University of Michigan Historical Collections, Letter, Frank Robinson to Mrs. Frank Robinson, 16 October 1880.
- 4 Sierra County Commissioners Record Book A, Petition to Territorial Governor Lionel Sheldon, June 2, 1885, 52-53.
- 5 A.M. Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Fountain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 274.
- 6 Rio Grande History Collections, New Mexico State University, William G. Beals Papers, Letter, W.G. Beals to mother, 23 February 1893.
- 7 *Sierra County Advocate*, 14 November 1913.
- 8 Thomas Catron Papers, Center for Southwest Studies, University of New Mexico, Letterhead, Sierra County Stationery, Letter, Box 408, Folder 13, Max Kahler to A.M. Bergere, 20 September 1916.
- 9 E. Dana Johnson, "New Mexico's First State Automobile," *New Mexico Historical Review* 11 (January 1936), 5-6.
- 10 Allan Nevins, *Ford: The Man, the Company* (New York: Arno Press, 1076), 1:387-88.
- 11 Thomas Catron Papers, Center for Southwest Studies, University of New Mexico, Letter, Box 33, Folder 7, Charles C. Catron to F.C. Buell, 5 September 1909.
- 12 Mining Archives, New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, Socorro, New Mexico, Victoria Chief, Marion/Monument File, Sierra Caballo Sierra County, Letter, Hillsboro Mercantile Company to Mr. C.B. Ellis, 31 March 1890.
- 13 *Leslie's Weekly*, 21 February 1907, 183-84.
- 14 Ibid., 184.
- 15 Mining Archives, New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, Socorro, New Mexico, Victoria Chief, Marion/Monument File, Sierra Caballo Sierra County, Alfrord Roos, "Preliminary Report on Victoria Chief Mine," 8 July 1929, 3.
- 16 U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Territories, Sixty-First Congress, Second Session, 29 March 1910, 12.
- 17 *Rio Grande Republican*, 6 February 1908.
- 18 John P. Wilson, "Between the River and the Mountains: A History of Early Settlement in Sierra County, New Mexico" (Unpublished Report, 40, 1085), 6065; Thomas Harwood, *History of New Mexico's Spanish and English Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Albuquerque: First United Methodist Church Committee on Archives, 1983), 1:201-202; 2:242. Wilson provides the chronology for Rio Palomas and Harwood locates the Chaves family there.
- 19 Wilson "Between the River and the Mountains," 60; Darlis Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 52.
- 20 *The Black Range*, Fri. 2 January 1885.
- 21 Interview with Mrs. Emma Lett (her grandmother, Filomena, was member of the original Sierra County Chaves family in this study), 27 December 1993. Thomas Harwood described an 1873 prayer meeting with the Chaves family at Palomas in his work cited in note 18 above.
- 22 Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico's Populism: A Study of Radical Protest in a Western Territory* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press), 144.
- 23 *Historical Encyclopedia of New Mexico*, ed. Ellis Arthur Davis (Albuquerque: New Mexico Historical Association, 1945), 316.
- 24 "Edward d'Oench Tittmann" by Mrs. Margarethe H.T. Greene (Edward Tittmann's daughter) in *History of Sierra County* (Truth or Consequences, N. Mex.: Sierra County Historical Society, 1979), 269-70.
- 25 Territory of New Mexico, Report of the Secretary of the Territory, 19071908, Legislative Manual (Blue Book) 1907, 96.
- 26 *Sierra County Advocate*, 15 January 1909.
- 27 Warranty Deed, State of New Mexico, 29 January 1912, sold to Neal Sullivan and Jose E. Tafoya by Julian and Selfa (wife) Chaves, Private Sullivan Family Papers, Also see James B. Sullivan's, *A New Mexican Family: Tafoya-Sullivan and the Origins of Sierra County* (San Antonio, Tex.: Burke Publishing Co., 1994), 86.
- 28 *Sierra County Advocate*, 10 April 1908.
- 29 New Mexico State Record Center, name file, photo, Bradford Prince Papers, Contemporary New Mexican Personalities, Miscellaneous C, folder 16.
- 30 *Rio Grande Republican*, 6 February 1909
- 31 House Journal 1909, Proceedings of House of Representatives of Territory of New Mexico, Thirty-Ninth Legislative Assembly of New Mexico, House Bill 228, 232.
- 32 Ibid., 39, 130, 267.
- 33 Ibid., 252, 348.
- 34 Ibid., 279.
- 35 Sixty-First Congress, Second Session, (U.S.) Senate, Calendar 532, Report 572, Disapproving Certain Laws of the Legislative Assembly of New Mexico, 3.
- 36 House Journal 1909, Proceedings of House of Representatiavies of Territory of New Mexico, Thrity-Ninth Leglsataive Assembly of New Mexico, HB 11, 1617. Tittmann's version is contained in U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Territories, Sixty-First Congress, Second Session, 11.
- 37 Sixty-First Congress, Second Session, (U.S.) Senate, Calendar 532, Report 572, Disapproving Certain Laws of the Legislative Assembly of New Mexico, 2.
- 38 Territory of New Mexico, Report of the Secretary of the Territory, 19071908, Legislative Manual (Blue Book) 1907, 94.
- 39 U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Territories, Sixty-First Congress, Second Session, 29 March 1910, 12.
- 40 *Sierra County Advocate*, 12 March 1909.
- 41 Ibid., 3 September 1915.
- 42 *Sierra Free Press*, 16 December 1921.
- 43 *Sierra County Advocate*, 27 November 1936.
- 44 Sierra County Clerk's Records, Warranty Deed Book M, 20 September 1939, property and buildings sold by the Board of Sierra County Commissioners to A.J. Howe, 401-402.
- 45 *Hillsboro News*, 4 February 1938.

# Some Notes Regarding Aviation Activities of New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in the Early to Mid-1940s

by Joe Gold

Recently Cal Traylor of Las Cruces asked for information concerning the old hangar at Hangar Lake, northeast of Las Cruces, and the Air Mechanics building on the main campus of the New Mexico State University and the aviation activities related to these buildings. Since I was a student at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in the late 1940s, learned to fly while a student, and am interested in history, my curiosity was aroused. To help refresh our memory, a trip to the campus and Hangar Lake was organized. Cal Traylor, Morris Drexler, and I visited Hangar Lake on 11 March 2001 with a follow-up visit by Drexler and I on 14 March. Hangar Lake is located just north of US 70 highway about seven miles east of Las Cruces and about sixteen hundred feet north of the highway at Galaxy Drive. The hangar is still there and except for the large wooden roll-away doors on the east end, seems to be in fairly good, shape. On the west wall is a plaque with a date of 1941, identifying the

Mexico State University campus revealed that it was on Stewart Street, building number eighty-two on the University main campus map. A plaque on the building, very similar to the one on the Hangar Lake building, also has the date of 1941. The building was on Vaughn Street, which ran east and west then, but no longer exists today. Now Williams Street, a north-south street, is the present address of the building. The geographic location of the building is 32° 16.820' North Latitude and 106° 061' West Longitude. Using the collective memory and experiences of Jim Boykin, John Hursh, John Curry, and I (all students at NMSU who took pilot training there in the 1940s) some past events were noted.

The Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPT) began in the late 1930s when it appeared that the United States could become involved in the war in Europe. Jim Boykin remembers the program was to "produce fifty thousand pilots." The three of us all had Robert "Bob" W. Crawford as our flight instructor and remember



New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Hangar

building as belonging to New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Today a church, the Apostolic Hangar Lake Mission, owns the building. Mr. Boyd Garcia, assistant pastor, showed us the inside of the building. The church members are in the process of renovating the building. The trusses supporting the span and structure of the roof were remarkable in design and construction, and after sixty years are in excellent condition. The latitude and longitude of the building, as supplied by Morris Drexler using a Global Positional System (GPS) unit, is 32° 24.411' North latitude and 106° 43.213' west longitude. The building is sixty feet by eighty feet in size with the longer sides oriented East 43° North.

A visit to the Air Mechanics Building on the New

him telling of being an instructor in the CPT at Hangar Lake. Boykin remembers he visited Hangar Lake in the late 1930s for his first airplane ride and that it was Bob Crawford who piloted the plane, a Taylorcraft. He remembers that Bob Chamberlain, an aircraft and engine (A & E) mechanic, was also there. We don't know how many students were enrolled, who the other instructors were, and a few other details but the program was conducted at Hangar Lake and the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now New Mexico State University) was involved.

Cal Traylor reported that Hugh H. Milton, president of the college, told him that the building was originally built by students of the Engineering Department. A wind-



A picture made ca. 1943 on the ramp of the Air Mechanics building shows two aircraft parked on the ramp and six students of the Air Mechanics Helper class: Front row: John Curry, Ralph Emerson, Carlos Salas, Paul Roach, Wesley Walker. Back row: Leroy Johnson, Davis McCollough, Stanley Thomas, John Hursh, and Jim Boykin.

One of the two airplanes is the well known Taylorcraft ("T-craft") and the other one a Ryan Playboy. According to Hursh, T. Claude Ryan, flew this airplane into the college airport. The picture shows the Air Mechanics building in the background with the hangar style door partially open.

storm blew off the roof. Jim Boykin's memory supported this statement; he says the building was then rebuilt from the ground up. Therefore the present building is not the original.

There is no evidence of runways there today. However, I remember while a student pilot, I landed there in the spring of 1946. Jim Boykin remembers landing there in a J-3 Piper Cub, as late as 1948. He says by that time the usable portion of the runway was so short he couldn't have landed and taken off had there not been a stiff breeze blowing. Boykin says the hangar building was still being used at that time; he saw C. C. Chase there doing some wing rebuilding for Bob Chamberlain.

As a student at the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, I began to take flying lessons in the fall of 1945. My instructor was Bob Crawford who had been an instructor in the CPT, which was conducted at Hangar Lake. But by 1945 the program had apparently been terminated, and he now taught flying at the college airstrip. There may have been some confusion on this subject about pilot training being offered by the college, but I know from my experience that this was not the situation. While college training was conducted at the college, it was not by the college. Both Bob Crawford and Gus Glass had airplanes there (Interstate Cadets), and I received flying lessons from Bob Crawford.

However, I found in 1945 that a course in Aviation

Mechanics was being offered by the college and had been for some time before. The Air Mechanics Building was where the courses were taught, the same place I went to take flying lessons from Bob Crawford. This is where I first met Bob Chamberlin; he was an instructor in the Air Mechanics Course, as was Bob Currie and Elvis Utz. Since he also had been involved in the CPT at Hangar Lake, his presence at the main campus at this time is further indication that the CPT probably had been terminated by 1945.

T. Claude Ryan, president of Ryan Aircraft at San Diego, had a home in the Three Rivers area and was on a flight from there to San Diego and stopped at the college to have some engine problem repaired. Boykin and Curry said the aircraft was also known as a Kinner Playboy, named for the engine, a Kinner five cylinder radial engine of 165 horsepower.

I do not know the termination date of the Air Mechanic Classes, but it must have been by the fall of 1946. In May 1946 I became a student employee of the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL). Our data reduction work was first accomplished in temporary quarters of Goddard Hall from May until September, when we moved into a room in the Air Mechanics Building as our second temporary quarters. This space was utilized until the summer of 1947 when we moved into still another temporary building nearby, located adjacent to the "new"



Plaque dedicated to Air Mechanics Laboratory, New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts.

PSL building (not to be confused with the present Clinton P. Anderson building).

In view of the above, it is likely that the Air Mechanics Courses were taught from before 1941 to about 1946. The students of Air Mechanics Course were rebuilding, repairing, and maintaining several aircraft, including Lockheed Vega, Aeronca Buhl Pup, Curtiss Robin, and Taylorcraft. Another project was to overhaul and recover a Luscombe airplane and in the late fall of 1945 or the early spring of 1947, I became aware of this project and saw the airplane. I asked the head of the Mechanical Engineering Department, Professor Arch M. Lukens, (Air Mechanics Courses were a part of the Mechanical Engineering Department) if I could fly this airplane. He said, no, the airplane was only a project for the Air Mechanics Course; the college wasn't interested in flight training because of liability concerns. The Air Mechanics students did, however, get to fly in some of the planes on which they had worked as an incentive.

Curry remembers the Air Mechanics Helper Class consisted of at least 480 hours of instruction. Jim Boykin

said that while most of the students were high school students, a couple of the more advanced students were in training for the rating of Airplane/Engine Mechanic. The course gave the students high school credit. In those days the Civil Aeronautics Administration was the licensing authority for mechanics and pilots. These courses were part of a Federal program entitled National Defense Training Program. The Director at the College was John M. Haberl. Of interest is that one of the local girls, Celestine (Tine) Favrot, who was the secretary in Haberl's office, later married Bob Crawford, the flight instructor mentioned above.

JOE GOLD is a 1949 graduate of the College of Engineering of New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now NMSU). In May 1945 he became an original employee of the Physical Science Laboratory (PSL). After three years with PSL and upon graduation he began to work at White Sands Proving Ground (now White Sands Missile Range) testing various missile systems until retirement. He took his first flying lessons as a college student in 1945 and continued to acquire pilot certificates over the years. Gold has been a flight instructor for more than forty years.

# Harvesting the Crops: Axis Prisoners of War and Their Impact on Doña Ana County During World War II

by Wolfgang T. Schlauch

**M**ore than half a century after the end of World War II, few Americans realize that a total of almost 430,353 prisoners of war (378,898 German, 52,455 Italian, 5,435 Japanese POWs) were imprisoned in the United States between 1942-1946. Nor is it common knowledge that Axis prisoners of war played a vital role in the United States war effort.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few months after the United States entered World War II, it became obvious that the U.S. would face an acute manpower shortage for two major reasons. First, the military draft contributed to a heavy drain on the labor force, particularly farm labor. Second, rapidly expanding war production necessitated a massive demand for labor in war industries. Jobs, formerly occupied by men who were drafted, could be replaced only to a limited extent by workers from Mexico and several Caribbean countries, or by women in industry and children in agriculture. One additional source that could alleviate manpower shortage in the United States was to utilize Italian and German POWs, who after their capture in the North African Theater in 1943, were being shipped to the United States by the thousands.

As it turned out, these POWs proved to be highly useful to the U.S. war effort. During 1944 and 1945, Italian and German prisoners of war produced more than 1.2 billion man-days of paid work in army installations, POW camps, and in contract employment. And from 1943 to the end of December 1945, POWs generated more than thirty-four million man-days of contract labor of which almost twenty-one million

man-days were executed on farms.<sup>2</sup>

Utilization of prisoners of war to relieve the farm worker shortage proved to be critical for the state of New Mexico, but particularly for Doña Ana County. As New Mexico's largest cotton producer, Doña Ana County required a large number of laborers for the purpose of chopping and picking cotton. From 1942 to 1946, at any given time, between approximately 350 and 11,400 POWs were located in the state of New Mexico. During the 1944 and 1945 cotton picking season, Doña Ana County housed about 1,050 POWs in prisoner of war camps in Las Cruces, Hatch, and Anthony.<sup>3</sup>

Already in 1942 and again in 1943, farmers in New Mexico and in the Mesilla Valley realized that the labor shortage would effect the cultivation and harvesting of cotton for the coming year. After much pressure by farmers and their representative farm organizations, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 45 in April 1943, which



Photograph of Civilian Conservation Corps camp BR-39-N on Melendres Street in Las Cruces, circa late 1930s. This became Camp II of the Las Cruces POW camp during World War II, with the only substantial change being the addition of barbed wire around the barracks buildings in the foreground. The white building in the background served as the POW camp headquarters and is the only structure that remains. Today it is home for the archaeology firm Human Systems Research. Photo courtesy of Pat Beckett



German prisoners of war being transported on Chester and Helen Walker's 1941 Chevrolet truck. The Walkers contracted with local farmers to transport POWs from Camp Roswell and later Camp Carlsbad. Photo courtesy of Chester and Helen Walker and Rio Grande Historical Collections.

permitted Mexican workers to work on American farms. In Doña Ana County, nine hundred Mexicans were brought in for the purpose of cotton chopping during the months of May and June 1943. Yet by July, U.S. Immigration Authorities in El Paso prohibited Mexicans from crossing into the United States, and by taking their work cards, U.S. officials blocked their return to the U.S. Desperate to secure labor for cotton picking, the County Extension Agent and the County Farm Labor Advisory Committee considered the possibility of obtaining Italian prisoners of war from the Lordsburg POW base camp to which the Army had transferred 2,083 Italian POWs at the end of July 1943.<sup>4</sup>

What was the mechanism for employing prisoners of war in industry and agriculture? Initially, the majority of POWs worked on military installations. In 1943 federal agencies, such as the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Agriculture, the War Department, the Office of the Provost Marshall General, and others discussed the possibility of permitting POWs to work outside prisoner of war camps and U.S. military establishments. After many difficult negotiations, a formal agreement between the War Department and the War Manpower Commission was reached in August 1943 on

the basis of which civilian employers, including farmers, could officially request POWs to work for them. This outside work known as "contract labor" proved to be of great help to many farmers as an increasing number of young Americans were drafted into the U.S. army.<sup>5</sup>

On the state level the Department of Agriculture's Extension Service was responsible for determining agricultural labor needs in the state and certifying the number of prisoners of war ("certification of need") the state required for the employment of POWs.

New Mexico's Agricultural Extension Office was headed by E.A. Fite and located at the then new Mexico College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts in Las Cruces. Within the Extension Office, A.E. Triviz was designated as State Supervisor, Emergency Farm Labor. In that capacity, Triviz assisted in supervising the state's Farm Labor program and also helped county extension agents and field workers in administering the county's Farm Labor Program. Moreover, Triviz was responsible for submitting annual reports to the Department of Agriculture pertaining to all agricultural labor developments, including the employment of POWs, within the state of New Mexico.<sup>6</sup>

On the county level, the County Extension Agent was

responsible for overseeing the Farm Labor Program in Doña Ana County and for determining the need for agricultural labor within the county. A County Farm Labor Advisory committee assisted the county agent to arrive at an accurate figure of farm labor needs for the county. Doña Ana County's Extension Agent, John L. Augustine, Jr., appointed a Farm Labor Assistant in 1943 who was responsible for placing POWs to individual farmers and maintaining the POW camps in the county.<sup>7</sup>

Initially POW contract employment proved to be an arduous process, but by 1944 the procedures to employ POW labor had been simplified. Farmers had to justify their need for POW labor, submit their request to the county agent's office, and guarantee that the wages and working conditions corresponded to those of "free labor." Upon approval by the local War Manpower Commission representative or the State Manpower Commission, the farmer's request was transferred to the local POW camp commander who in turn contacted the county extension agent to determine how many prisoners were needed for an individual project. Those POWs who were contracted out could receive up to eighty cents a day, that is, they were provided canteen coupons with which they could purchase goods in the camp canteen. In the spring of 1944, the government introduced an incentive pay plan on the basis of which a hard-working POW could earn a maximum of \$1.20 a day. The difference between the POW's daily rate of eighty cents or the maximum of \$1.20 and his actual labor cost was transferred to the U.S. Treasury and largely used for the upkeep of the POW camps. Upon repatriation the POWs would receive in hard currency the amount they had saved during their imprisonment.<sup>8</sup>

In the summer of 1943, county extension agent Augustine initially requested 150 POWs from the Lordsburg prisoner of war base camp where more than 2,000 Italian POWs were kept. On 7 August 1943, 125 Italian POWs arrived in Las Cruces from the Lordsburg base camp. They were placed in the former Civilian Conservation Camp (CCC) east of town, and a week later, twenty-five additional Italian POWs were added. However, already on 22 August 1943, the Eighth Service Command and the Southern Defense Command ordered the prisoners to be returned to Lordsburg, citing the proximity of the Mexican border and the problem of security as a reason for removing them.<sup>9</sup>

Four days later, at a mass meeting at New Mexico's



German POW Walter Schmid spent some of the money earned working outside Camp Las Cruces to purchase a sombrero from the prisoners' canteen (store). He wore the hat when a local photographer visited the camp to take pictures of the POWs, which they could also purchase with their earnings.  
Photo courtesy of Walter Schmid

A&M College, three hundred upset farmers met with U.S. Congressmen Clinton P. Anderson and A.M. Fernandez and demanded the return of the Italian POWs. The two U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senator Carl A. Hatch were able to convince the Southern Defense Command in Dallas to lift the ban on the use of POWs in counties bordering Mexico, citing the shortage of labor.<sup>10</sup> Fortunately for the cotton-growing farmers, two weeks later, on 7 September 1943, Italian POWs were returned to the former camp. At the same time, the commanding officer of the Las Cruces POW camp announced that in addition to filling up the camp east of town, which could hold approximately three hundred POWs, additional prisoners would be shipped to Las Cruces, once the second former CCC camp, BR-39-N, located downtown near the railroad tracks, was completed. Mesilla Valley farmers hoped to employ eventually between a thousand and twelve hundred POWs in Doña Ana County.<sup>11</sup>

After the surrender of Italy on 8 September 1943, the farm community was uncertain whether or not the Italian POWs were to be released soon. Although the Allies accepted Italy as a co-belligerent, Italian POWs remained officially prisoners of war and continued to work on Mesilla Valley farms until the end of July 1944.<sup>12</sup>

By the end of October 1943, approximately 625 Italian POWs were housed in the two Las Cruces camps, and by the beginning of November, a newly established camp in Hatch held 125 prisoners of war to which twenty-five were added later. By the end of 1943, the Army had placed 750 Italian POWs in Doña Ana County. The county agent reported that approximately 540 POWs were picking cotton in the Las Cruces area every day, and a total of 725 POWs were employed in harvesting cotton in the entire county.<sup>13</sup>

In his official 1943 report, the county agent emphasized the significance of POW labor for Doña Ana County. He mentioned that the Italian POWs picked about 15 percent of the cotton during the 1943 harvest season. He then cited army officials who estimated that the POWs in Doña Ana County averaged 125 pounds of short staple and around seventy-five pounds of long staple cotton per day. And he claimed that they picked more cotton than anywhere else in the United States. At the end of his report, Augustine warned that it would be difficult to solve the farm labor problem in the county in 1944 if the Italian POWs were removed.<sup>14</sup>



The first POWs to work in southern New Mexico fields were Italians, but to date no pictures of them have been located. Pictured here are Italian prisoners picking squash in a field near Hereford in the Texas panhandle.

Photo courtesy of Deaf Smith County Museum.

In March 1944, rumors spread that all POWs were to be withdrawn from farms and other civilian employment and transferred to army installations to free American soldiers for combat services. In addition, farmers feared that the reclassification of deferred farm workers by the Selective Service Board would increase labor shortages, and in turn seriously affect the 1944 crop production.<sup>15</sup>

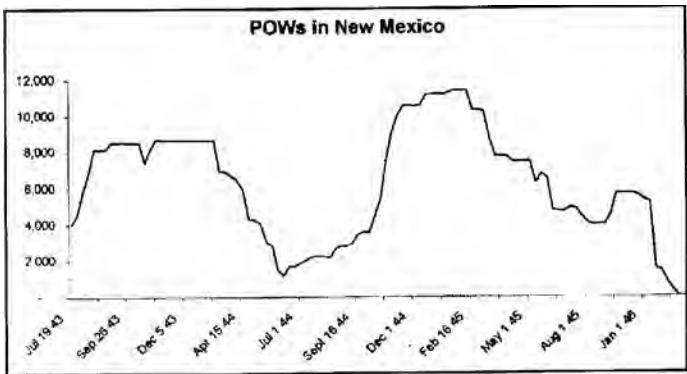
Simultaneously, an editorial in the *Las Cruces Sun-News* addressed the labor crisis in the United States and particularly in Doña Ana County. The editorial titled "Farmers Must have Workers if They Produce" was critical of the potential removal of POWs. This decision, the editorial claimed "threatens to deplete the nation's farm labor supply... at the very beginning of a season in which American farmers are expected to set a new high record of food production." It then suggested that due to the possible removal of Italian POWs, German prisoners of war could replace Americans needed at the battlefield.<sup>17</sup>

During this unstable period, farmers in Doña Ana County at meetings in Hatch, Anthony, and Las Cruces addressed the projected removal of Italian POWs and warned of its negative impact on the farm labor situation. Farm leaders emphasized that Italian POWs had "stabilized" the labor problem in the valley "more than any one force they've had in recent years." They insisted that

without adequate new supply to take their place, a serious blow to production would occur. On 7 March 1944, upon the request by Doña Ana County farmers, W.P. Thorpe, President of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau, urged Senator Hatch and Representative Anderson to induce the War Department to rescind the earlier plan of transferring POWs from farm labor to U.S. military facilities. The following day, Representative Anderson informed Thorpe that the War Department planned to replace the Italian with German POWs. This proved to be good news for the Doña Ana County farmers.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of July 1944, the Army removed 455 Italian POWs from the Doña Ana County prisoner of war camps and replaced them with 430 German POWs who were transferred from Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. By the middle of October the two Las Cruces camps and the one in Hatch housed close to 800 German POWs. At the end of November, the Army transferred 201 POWs from Clayton, New Mexico to a mobile camp in Anthony, located south of Las Cruces. Thus, by the middle of December 1944, Doña Ana County accommodated 1,046 German POWs most of whom worked on local farms.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1945, County Agent Augustine was pleased to relate to the public that the German POWs had picked seven million pounds of cotton during the

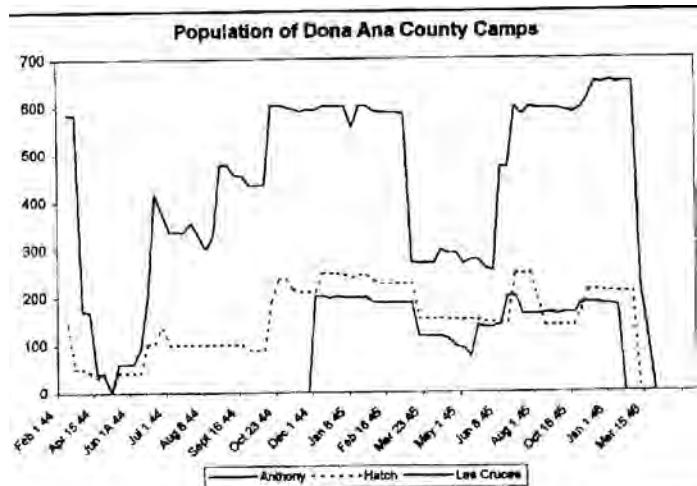


1944 season, which, as he stated was a record within the entire Eighth Service Command. He cited the following reasons for the positive result: "good working conditions in a pleasant climate," good treatment of the POWs in the camps, and "close cooperation of the officers with the county agent's office."<sup>20</sup>

In his official 1944 report, Augustine mentioned that in contrast to the Italian POWs the Germans were three times as efficient "under the methods they [the Army] use in handling these men." Whereas an Italian POW picked about 60 pounds of cotton, his German counterpart harvested approximately 160 pounds per day. The county agent then emphasized that, based on the Army's reports, those German POWs have "proved to be successful as cotton pickers and they picked "more cotton per day than anywhere else in the United States."<sup>21</sup> This statement seems to refer to POWs rather than civilians as an experienced farm laborer could average between 350-400 pounds or more per day. In concluding his annual report, Augustine stated that the farm labor problem for 1945 could best be solved by maintaining the four POW camps in the county, the two camps in Las Cruces, the one in Hatch and the more recently established camp in Anthony.<sup>22</sup>

Similar to the county extension agent's report, Triviz emphasized in his 1944 official report that the POWs were an invaluable addition to the labor force of the state," and were "practically the only outside source of farm labor in New Mexico in 1944."<sup>23</sup> Although inferior to free labor, Triviz stressed that POWs were of "great assistance to the broom [corn] and cotton areas of the state and it would have been impossible to have harvested the crop without them." He also reiterated Augustine's claim that the German POWs were three times as efficient as were the Italian POWs.<sup>24</sup>

Thorpe, as president of the New Mexico Farm Bureau and chairman of the Doña Ana County Agricultural Labor Committee, played a key role in lobbying for POW labor in Doña Ana County. In a letter to Congressman Anderson, dated 15 February 1945, Thorpe warned that farmers in the county found it "impossible to raise and harvest crops...without the use of prisoner of war labor." He argued that no other source of common labor existed at the present time as Mexican workers who had been

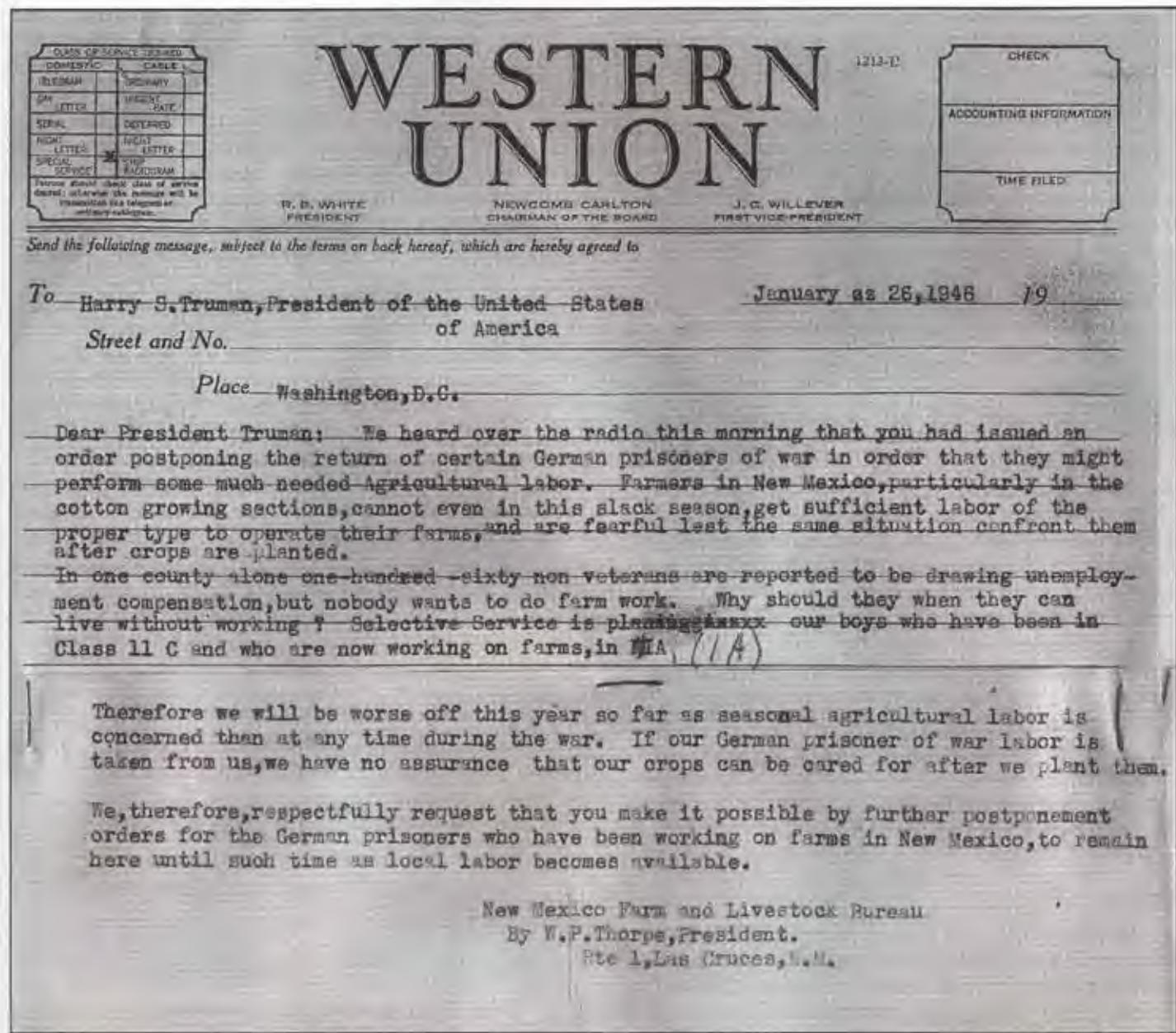


employed in agriculture had been ordered to return to Mexico by February 1945.<sup>25</sup>

After Nazi Germany's surrender on 8 May 1945, Mesilla Valley farmers were again concerned about losing POWs as a work force. However, two hundred more German POWs were transferred to Doña Ana County in June 1945. Thus a total of about 750 POWs worked on Doña Ana County farms in June 1945, chopping cotton, harvesting onions, and tending vegetable crops. From the end of June 1945 to the beginning of January 1946, close to 1,050 German POWs were housed in the four POW camps of Doña Ana County.<sup>26</sup>

During the 1945 season, the POWs increased their cotton production. In his annual 1945 Report, the county agent emphasized that the German POWs picked an average of 180 pounds of cotton daily, an increase of twenty pounds compared to the 1944 harvest. Also, nearly nine thousand more bales of cotton were ginned in 1945 than in 1944 during the same period. Again, Augustine mentioned that the success of the harvest could be attributed to the good work of the POWs, an increase of transient workers, and favorable fall weather. He also proudly reported that unlike in 1943 and 1944, no school children were involved in cotton picking in 1945. Their participation, he stated, had to stop "in order not to interfere with the children's education."<sup>27</sup>

In a news release in February 1946, nine months after the end of World War II in Europe, Augustine informed the public that 1,050 POWs in Doña Ana County picked an estimated total of fifteen million pounds of cotton or one-fifth of the entire cotton crop in 1945, and generated a total of almost half a million dollars for prison labor. In the Las Cruces area, 650 POWs picked almost ten million pounds of cotton alone and the farmers paid \$326,206.44 for prison labor. The county extension agent then pondered how the farms "could have operated successfully without the prisoners." And finally, although it was public knowledge that the POWs would be released soon and shipped back to Europe, Augustine felt that the POWs should be retained for another year in the val-



Local concerns about agricultural labor shortages continued into the post-war years. This January 1946 telegram on behalf of the New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau implores President Harry Truman to further postpone the repatriation of German POWs. Wendell Phillips Thorpe Papers, Rio Grand Historical Collections

let as they are of "prime importance to fallow growers."<sup>28</sup>

Thorpe, equally concerned about the removal of POW labor, sent a telegram directly to President Harry S. Truman several weeks before the German POWs were to be repatriated, imploring him to postpone the shipping of German POWs back to Europe. He argued that if "our German prisoner of war labor is taken from us, we have no assurance that our crops can be cared for after we plant them." In response, William D. Hassett, secretary of President Truman, referred to a presidential press release of 25 January 1946, which stated that the return of contract prisoners of war would be deferred for sixty days. Although the POWs would not be returned before 1 April

1946, which should solve the temporary labor problem in agriculture, the president warned that all POWs would have to be out of the country by April.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, by April 1946, all of the POWs had been removed from Doña Ana County POW camps, and the last POWs in the United States were released by the end of June 1946.

To what extent did POW labor prove to be essential for Doña Ana County farmers during the 1943-1946 period? Despite the fact that POW labor productivity was less in comparison to "free labor," county as well as state officials repeatedly stressed the significance of POW labor for Doña Ana County. Not only did (German) POWs

set a record within the Eighth Service Command during the cotton-picking season, but they also participated in the harvesting of onions, cantaloupes, lettuce, and helped in the cleaning of irrigation ditches.

In addition to the officials' glowing reports, a number of farmers have confirmed the POWs' substantial contribution to the cotton harvest. In that context, the diverging assessment by farmers of the POWs' work efficiency and the employers' conflicting opinions regarding the Italian and German prisoners of war are of interest.<sup>30</sup>

One farmer in Dexter remembered that the Italian POWs would not work. They, according to the farmer, lacked the work ethic, whereas the German POWs were methodical and worked hard.<sup>31</sup> Another farmer near La Mesa thought that the Italians were lazy, the Germans on the other hand were "very intelligent people, they knew how to work." The German POWs would pick their quota in two to three hours, whereas the Italians took "all day to pick their hundred pounds."<sup>32</sup> But one farmer claimed that the Germans did not want to work the cotton patch, because they wouldn't take orders from a woman. They would pick 100-120 pounds of cotton a day, and with a little liquor "some of them went up to 200." He also recalled that Italians from Sicily were "mean guys," but Italians from the northern part of Italy who worked for him were "better boys."<sup>33</sup> Typical was the portrayal by one lady who viewed the Italians as "just naturally a happy-go-lucky people." They were happy while working, they were singing as if they were enjoying what they were doing, whereas the Germans were more serious.<sup>34</sup> And two brothers, who were teenagers during the war, recalled that Italians would not work on their parents' dairy farm. Instead, they would sit down and sing, or refuse to work. German POWs on the other hand were healthy and enjoyed working.<sup>35</sup>

Based on the Army's Labor Reports, POWs from the two Las Cruces camps worked nearly 88,500 man-days on Mesilla Valley farms between 1 June 1944 and 31 March 1946. Taking into account the POW camps in Hatch and Anthony, Italian and German prisoners of war worked a total of 272,470 man-days in agriculture in the entire Doña Ana County during a twenty-month period. And whereas on the national level 61 percent of POW contract labor was carried out on U.S. farms, in Doña Ana County 83 percent of those POWs contracted worked in agriculture.<sup>36</sup>

As this study has demonstrated, the presence of prisoners of war in the Mesilla Valley in particular and in the state of New Mexico in general, measurably benefited the agricultural sector of the state. As an increasing number of men were drafted, and fewer Mexicans were available as a work force, POW labor became critical from 1943 to the beginning of 1946. Not only did they replace farm labor needed for the war, but by 1945 school children who in previous years had to disrupt their schooling in fall for 6-8 weeks to

help pick cotton, were able to continue their schooling in 1945.

An official United States Army report summarized the importance of POW labor for the American war effort in the following words:

the use of prisoners of war during World War II was essential to the welfare and economy of our nation. U.S. military personnel were released for combat duty, and civilians were transferred to essential work. Crops vital to the economy of our nation were harvested that otherwise would have spoiled, and war industries were able to continue operations in the face of the civilian manpower shortage. Both civil and military authorities have stated that they could not have performed their functions except for the use of prisoners of war labor.<sup>37</sup>

The Army's assessment could not more fittingly illustrate the POWs' role in Doña Ana County. Reports and statements by New Mexico's officials who repeatedly emphasized that POWs were of "prime importance to valley farmers" who could not "have operated successfully without the prisoners" during the war years, are evidence of the POWs' significance for the county's agriculture during a crucial period in its recent history.

WOLFGANG T. SCHLAUCH, emeritus professor of history, Eastern Illinois University, has taught in Europe, the U.S., and Australia, most recently at NMSU. His research and publications center on German-American relations and German foreign policy and political parties. Wolfgang and his wife, Barbara, moved from Illinois to Las Cruces in 1998 after their retirement.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1      *New York Times*, 8 August 1947.
- 2      For a discussion of the Axis POWs' significance as work force during world War II, see: George G. Lewis and John Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization by the United States Army: 1776-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1955), statistical data, 264; Arnold Kramer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (Lanham, Md: Scarborough House, 1996), 106 ff.; Louis Keefer, *Italian Prisoners of War in America, 1942-1946* (New York: Praeger, 1996), 71.
- 3      Jake W. Spidle, "Axis Invasion of the American West: POWs in New Mexico, 1942-1946," *New Mexico Historical Review* 49 (April 1974): 93-122; Susan Badger Doyle, "German and Italian Prisoners of War in Albuquerque, 1943-1946," *New Mexico Historical Review* 66 (July 1991): 327-40; exact figures of POWs located inside NM camps are available since February 1944, in: "Weekly and Semi-monthly Reports on Prisoners of War," June 1942-30 June 1946, Office of the Provost Marshal General, Prisoner of War Operations Division (Washington, D.C.: National Archives (hereinafter: "Weekly and Semi-monthly Reports on Prisoners of War").
- 4      J.L. Augustine Jr., "Annual Report of Extension Agents for Dona Ana County, New Mexico, 1943," in: Annual Narrative & Statistical Reports from State Offices and County Agents-New Mexico, National Archives Microform Publication T 876 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1951), 33-34. For details concerning Public Law 45, see Wayne D. Rasmussen, *A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program, 1943-1947* (United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington, D.C., September 1951), 41-46. In addition to the Lordsburg base camp, which housed about 3,900 Italian POWs, the Roswell base camp held about 4,760 German POWs by December 1943. After 1 March 1944, the Hatch and Las Cruces camps, and later

- the Anthony camp received their contingent of POWs from the Fort Bliss base camp, El Paso, Texas.
- 5 For a detailed account on POW contract labor, see Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, chapters 9-10; Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War*; chapter 3; see also United States Congress, House of Representatives. Committee on Military Affairs, House Report 728, "Investigations of the National War Effort," 79th congress 1st Sess, 12 June 1945, Washington, D.C., 7-8.
- 6 A.E. Triviz, et aliter, "State Narrative Report for Emergency Farm Labor; Records Concerning the Farm Labor Program;" Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports of Extension, etc., 1943-1947; Records of the Extension Service, Record Group 33, National Archives at College Park, Md., 1943, 2-9. See also Wayne D. Rasmussen, *A History of the Emergency Farm Labor Supply Program*, 67-71, 96-99.
- 7 Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943," 15-16, 34-36.
- 8 For the streamlining of the procedures to acquire POW labor, see Triviz, "Records of the Extension Service, 1944," 17; Rasmussen, *History of the Emergency Farm Labor*, 97-98; for the development of POW pay policies, see Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 120-121.
- 9 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, August 8, 15, 22, 1943, 1; Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943" 34-35.
- 10 For the appeal by Mesilla Valley farmers to return POWs to the camps, see *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 23, 24, 25, 29 August 1943, 1; Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943" 34-35.
- 11 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 7, 9, 21, 23, 26 September; 6, 8 October 1943. According to the County Agent's annual report, about three Italian POWs were returned on 15 September and an additional three were moved to the downtown camp on October 1, Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943" 35.
- 12 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 14, 29 October 1943. For a detailed account on the status of Italian POWs after Italy's surrender, see James Richard Keen, "The Captive Enemy? Italian Prisoners of War in Texas During World War II," M.A. Thesis, The University of Texas at Permian Basin, 1988, chpt. 5; see also Keefer, *Italian Prisoners of War*, 73-75.
- 13 Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943," 35; Triviz, "Records of the Extension Service, 1943," 2 and attached statistical report, 2-3.
- 14 Augustine, "Annual Report, 1943," 35-37.
- 15 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 5 March 1944, 1.
- 16 Ibid., 2.
- 17 Ibid., 4.
- 18 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 6, 7, 8 March 1945.
- 19 "Weekly and Semi-Monthly Reports on Prisoners of War," 3-4; J.L. Augustine reported that approximately four hundred Italian POWs were withdrawn, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 28 July 1944; transfer of German POWs from Clayton to Anthony, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 27 November 1944.
- 20 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 14 January 1945.
- 21 J. L. Augustine Jr., "Annual Report of the County Agent, 1944," 33-35; Augustine's statement that Italian POWs averaged only sixty pounds of cotton daily in 1943 contrasts with his 1943 report, according to which they supposedly picked 125 pounds of short staple and sixty
- pounds of long staple cotton.
- 22 Ibid., 60.
- 23 Triviz, "Records of the Extension Service, 1944," 3, 16.
- 24 Ibid., 18, 25.
- 25 Wendell Phillip Thorpe to Congressman Clinton P. Anderson, 26 March 1945, in Wendell Phillip Thorpe Papers, Manuscript Collection 50, Box 12, Folder 1, Rio Grande Historical Collection, University Archives, New Mexico State University (hereinafter: Thorpe Papers).
- 26 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 8 March 1945; 8 June 1945; "Weekly and Semi-Monthly Reports on Prisoners of War," 5-6.
- 27 J. L. Augustine Jr., "Annual Report of the County Agent of Dona Ana County for 1945," in "Annual Reports of Extension Agents" (New Mexico); Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports, 1945; Records of the Extension Service, Record Group 33, National Archives at College Park, Md., 38-39.
- 28 *Las Cruces Sun-News*, February 7, 1946, 2, 3; according to the State Supervisor of the Emergency Farm Laobr, POWs in the state of New Mexico picked 20 percent of the cotton during the 1945-46 season. However, POWs in Dona Ana County, the State's largest cotton producer, harvested seven thousand of the sixty-nine thousand bales ginned, which amounts to only 10 percent of the total cotton picked in the county, not 20 percent as reported by the county agent, *Las Cruces Sun-News*, 14 March 1946.
- 29 Telegram from Thorpe to President Harry S. Truman, 26 January 1946; letter William D. Hassett, Secretary of the President to Thorpe, 31 January 1946, Thorpe Papers.
- 30 For farmers' opinions on POW labor efficiency, consult interviews conducted by the staff of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum and located in the Museum's archive.
- 31 Clarence McKnight "Bill" Bogle, interview with Marcie Palmer, 20 June 2000. New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, RG 2000-71, 1-16.
- 32 Louis E. Archer, interview with Ron Nelson, 23 August 2000, New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, RG 2000-20, transcript, 1-14.
- 33 Alexander Alfred Franzoy, interview with Ron Nelson, 23 August 2000, New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, RG 2000-107, transcript, 1-16.
- 34 Evelyn Huber, interview with Ron Nelson, 14 June 2000, New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, RG 2000-021, transcript, 1-14.
- 35 Farell Lane Watson and Donald Wayne Watson, interview with Marcia Palmer, 4 November 2000, New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, RG 2000-069, transcript, 1-27.
- 36 POW labor statistics for Dona Ana County were compiled by the staff of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum; for national figures, see also Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 264.
- 37 Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 265. The significance of POW labor on the national level is also stressed in the Congressional Committee Report on Military Affairs, "Investigations of the National War Effort," 8.

# The History of Stahmann Farms, 1926-1990

by Theresa M. Hanley

In 1907 W.J. Stahmann, Sr. moved his family from Bruce, Wisconsin. In 1909, they reached Tornillo, near Fabens, Texas, and established a farming enterprise producing honey, tomatoes, and cotton. The family built a tomato canning plant, a cotton gin, and a cotton compress.<sup>1</sup> In 1926 W.J. Stahmann and his son Deane purchased twenty-nine hundred acres of the Santo Tomas de Yturbe Grant land in the Mesilla Valley. W.J. Stahmann died in 1929, but his son continued with the farm and, in 1936, purchased an additional eleven hundred acres, known now as the Snow Farm, of the Mesilla Civil Colony Grant.<sup>2</sup>

When purchased, only 150 acres were under cultivation. Most of the acreage by the Rio Grande remained sand dunes and forest.<sup>3</sup> A large labor force was required to perform the strenuous work of clearing the land. Deane Stahmann used a machine he called the "hootenanny" that pumped water to level the dunes. He had teams of mules to clear away the larger brush. Other brush was cleared by hand, and tons of sand were actually moved by bucket.

Mrs. Edelmira Armendariz was brought to the farm in the 1920s by her widowed mother who worked as cook and laundress for the labor force. She remembers how dramatically the landscape of the farm has changed and how difficult the work was.

At that time we were very young. We lived in La Esperanza at first in small huts...a lot of forest. There was hardly any land without some forest in it. It was not how it is today... There wasn't the machinery that exists today... There, they worked with shovels to level out the land.<sup>4</sup>

Mexican migrants, mostly men, made up the labor force. They received basic housing and services. Women provided meals in a rustic setting.

We had two huts made of wood, and on the outside there was a porch made out of branches from trees. There they had tables. They cooked food on a stove, which works like a chimney. You put wood in it and you can use it as any regular stove. There, they cooked the food and served from ten to twenty to thirty men at once.<sup>5</sup>

Transportation was at a basic level. The road to Las Cruces at that time was just a "winding path through mesquite bushes."<sup>6</sup> Deane Stahmann wanted a large stable labor force. To accomplish this, he had to provide housing and other services such as a school, church, and store. As the land was brought under cultivation, labor re-

quirements shifted from clearing brush and leveling sand dunes to producing crops. The Stahmann farming enterprise was unspecialized during its initial stages. Cotton, alfalfa, lettuce, onions, rye grass, cantaloupes, and sugar beets could all be found growing on Stahmann land, with cotton as the main crop. The most efficient way to operate the farm was to divide it in to four hundred-acre parcels. A majordomo managed each parcel, with his own labor force. Stahmann established eleven ranchos: Palmillo, Oeste, Sur, Norte, Rincon, Ojito, Plaza, Lomas, Esperanza, Cristo, and La Fe.

Deane Stahmann was publicly seen as quite an innovator as he established his empire. Scripps-Howard roving reporter Ernie Pyle described this "Miracle of Mass Production" farm in 1939.<sup>7</sup> Each farm had a foreman called a *majordomo*—Clarence Sutherlin for Santo Tomas and Harold Sowell for Snow. The entire farm was divided into units. "Each one has a little adobe settlement housing about 15 year-round families." Although Stahmann grew many crops, cotton was the main crop at that time. Pyle was impressed with the production and set-up of the farm.

It takes three bookkeepers to keep track of expenses and income. The farm uses 15 trucks, three large combines, 23 cotton wagons. They have two machine shops, two blacksmith shops. They have their own store, and their own electric-light plant. Some 25 miles of gravel road run through the farm, and there is one county oiled road. There is even a school. At cotton-picking time the employees run up to 400.

Deane Stahmann wanted to keep his permanent labor force of loyal workers. He began the profit sharing program as a strategy to reduce worker turnover.

Stahmann says he doesn't have a big turnover among his year-round population of 150 working families, but he has a plan to cut down on what turnover there is. At the end of each year, when the books are balanced, he'll put aside a certain part of the profits as a bonus. This he will give to the workmen who have been with him a year. But he won't give it all in one lump. He'll dole it out over the next seven months, in the form of increased wages. To get their bonus, they'll have to stay.

Although the route from Stahmann Farms to the surrounding communities had improved, few of the laborers had cars. Transportation within the farm and to surrounding communities was by foot or horse. Because of



D.F. Stahmann inspecting a field of Mesilla Valley cotton on Stahmann Farms, RG97-127-005, Stahmann Farms Photographs, courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library

this continuing isolation of the farm, self-sufficiency increased.

Stahmann began building houses in the 1930s. These first houses were two-room dwellings. "They had no bathroom or anything... There was the bedroom and living room in one room and the kitchen in the other."<sup>8</sup> Stahmann continued building houses, more modern than the previous ones. Mrs. Armendariz recalls her first home as a married woman and her subsequent home as a mayordomo's wife.

It had a wooden floor, large windows, electricity, water... At the time, my mother lived in two small rooms with electricity. She had no bathroom yet. I did have a bathroom already. Then in 1940 a large house was built in Rincon for the foreman. It had three bedrooms, a bathroom, a sink, and a gas stove. My house was more elegant. I lived there twenty-five years.

The farm handled its own construction, from plumbing to carpentry. The owner's home was located in the rancho Plaza. Community facilities were also established in this rancho.

Over there at Plaza there was a gin where they stored the cotton. Behind the gin there was a store. The hall where the dances would take place was there... They would give us mass and school in the same place.

Workers purchased almost every type of material good, from groceries to appliances and clothing, at the company store. It extended credit to the employees. The store had everything. It was where you bought your groceries and clothes, the majority. There was a truck where an employee would go and pick up a list from everyone who wanted groceries for the week, so that whoever didn't have a car still had groceries.<sup>9</sup>

According to Pyle, Deane Stahmann had searched for a perennial crop more stable than cotton. Pecans were the answer, but he continued the other enterprises as well. Stahmann maximized profit potential by using the innovative technique of inter-cropping.

These pecan trees are planted right out in the cotton fields, and the cotton keeps on growing except in the tiny shaded patch under each tree. So Stahmann keeps on getting his cot-

ton income while the trees are growing up.<sup>10</sup>

Even at that early stage, marketing was already a concern as Stahmann proposed to increase the pecan supply significantly. "He intends to do his own processing and marketing. He will advertise, propagandize, beat the drums, and turn us into a nation of pecan eaters whether we like it or not."<sup>11</sup>

According to Extension Service publications, settlers from states where pecan trees are native introduced them into New Mexico during the late 1800s and early 1900s. In 1915 and 1916 improved pecans were planted on four acres of land at the Fabian Garcia Agricultural Science Center of New Mexico State University. Despite this early interest in pecan growing, the first large scale planting of pecan orchards did not take place until 1934, when Deane Stahmann initiated what was to become the largest pecan orchard in the world.<sup>12</sup>

Stahmann planted his first trees in 1932, and established his own nursery. The primary pecan stock grown were Western Schley and Bradley. He planted trees at a spacing of thirty feet by thirty feet, later to be thinned to thirty by sixty feet.<sup>13</sup>

While the trees matured, Stahmann remained diversified. During the 1940s he raised Herefords and sheep. In 1948 he introduced geese into the system. The geese weeded the fields and provided fertilizer. They were also rented to other area farmers for the same purpose. They were then slaughtered and sold to Armour. The quills were sent to pen factories. The down was shipped for making pillows, and the "honk" was purportedly recorded by Walt Disney.<sup>14</sup> Stahmann ended his geese venture in the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> In 1955 Stahmann began raising chickens for eggs and fertilizer. This business was sold in 1977. Even as the Stahmanns established their highly specialized pecan enterprise, they maintained diversity through the 1970s.

Transportation was quite efficient by this time. In-



Santo Tomas Store, Stahmann Farms, RG2001-039-1 04, Louis Sanchez Photographs, courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

deed, one of Deane Stahmann's hobbies was buying cars, and he assisted many employees in such purchases. Increased access to Las Cruces, El Paso, and Juarez meant that a school, church, and a store with an extensive variety of goods were no longer necessary. The school and church were the first services to be abandoned. Many of the later employees state that they have no knowledge that a school or church ever existed on the farm.

The labor requirements changed quite substantially from the crop diversification era to the pecan era. As the Stahmanns reduced crop diversity, they developed vertical production control of their pecan enterprise. Workers were needed at each level of production: developing nursery stock, planting trees, pruning trees, irrigating, maintaining the orchards, controlling pests, harvesting the nuts, and sorting, packaging, transporting, and marketing the product.

During this era widespread mechanization of agricultural production occurred. At Stahmann Farms, this transformation did not result in the loss of jobs usually associated with mechanization. The crops which formerly required

intensive hand labor, such as cotton, had already been dropped by Stahmann Farms. Stahmann became more mechanized in the areas of improved tractors, tree shakers, and mechanical harvesters. This did not necessarily decrease the total number of essential laborers, but it increased the level of skill required.

The pecan processing plants also increased employment opportunities for women, as did the chicken and geese endeavors. A division of labor developed where men were involved with farm labor, and support services such as machine repair, plumbing, carpentry, and maintenance, while women worked in the plants. When the geese and chicken businesses were abandoned, the pecan plants where pecans were sorted and packaged still required workers. Women satisfied this labor requirement.

The labor source during this era remained Mexican migrant. During this time many of the migrants came to the United States as braceros. (The *bracero* program was an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico, from 1942 to 1964, whereby Mexican agricultural laborers were hired for fixed periods.) These were single men or married men traveling without their families, allowed to work in the United States temporarily and on a seasonal basis. Temporary quarters were provided for them.

There were about fifteen to twenty on each farm, but we would get there and they would give us rooms where we could sleep. About three, four, or five would sleep in each room. They would provide us with a stove, bed to sleep in, and blankets. Food was the only thing that was not provided. We could go to the store and then pay with our work afterwards.<sup>16</sup>

Many of the braceros wanted to stay in the United States. The Stahmanns helped these migrants to attain residence status and, when necessary, assisted in bringing their families to the United States.

The growth of Stahmann Farms as a community seems to have taken on a momentum of its own and surpassed Stahmann Farm's needs for personnel. The size of Stahmann Farms fluctuated over the years, generally increasing until the 1970s and decreasing thereafter. The maximum population was approximately 150 families. Interactions were frequent and close. People met through work, attending meetings, or simply through proximity as they shopped, retrieved their mail, or picked up their checks, all at a central location on the farm. Friends, relations, comadres, and compadres were dispersed throughout the farm. Graphically, a line could not be drawn from each person — or point — to every other point within the system. But the sum of connecting lines formed virtually a solid plane of interaction. The functions of community were played out within that plane of interaction and were strongly influenced by the company. Like other company town managers, the Stahmann family controlled the means of, and operations associated with, production. Individual workers achieved power within this structure when management ascribed that status to them. Status was based on performance and personal qualities. Individuals were singled out by a member of management, in a rather personal way, and promoted to a position of authority. This authority within the company translated into social power as well. The social relevance of the mayordomo, for example,



Stahmann Farms worker in a pecan tree, RG97-127-012, Stahmann Farms Photographs, courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

was as pervasive during off-work hours as during work. Management provided for the community's needs, and the company store became a convenience rather than a necessity.

If you wanted to you could just go and sign and get whatever you wanted... We knew that if one wanted something and didn't have any money, one could just go and sign.<sup>17</sup>

Items such as clothing and appliances were discontinued. Most people bought their groceries weekly and did only supplemental shopping at the store. Stahmann provided health facilities. There was a clinic on site which attended to minor ailments and delivered first aid. The health plan was quite comprehensive.

There was a clinic next to the office. A nurse was there. She was only there for first aid and whenever an accident occurred... She was there five days a week until five o'clock... Someone from the public health center would be sent for the vaccinations. There were campaigns to check for diabetes. Every year, someone would come to do a cancer test for women... Once, nurses from the public health center were sent to talk to us about how to check ourselves for breast cancer, for example. Good orientations about different medicines were also given.<sup>18</sup>

For more serious problems or child delivery a doctor was sent for, or the patient went outside the farm for treatment. Sometimes, the nurse would make the arrangements for these outside appointments. The farm also had



Stahmann Farms, RG97-127-008, Stahmann Farms Photographs, courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

its own ambulances.

Stahmann Farms as a community did not balance well with Stahmann Farms as a personnel force. Given the situation in the pecan industry, discussed below, this precipitated a gradual change in Stahmann Farm's labor strategy. The labor force was reduced. The system as established by Deane Stahmann became untenable, yet it is obvious from the manner in which his heirs instituted change that they recognized and respected the social obligations which had been mutually formed between company and workers. As workers retired, new workers were not hired to replace them. Therefore, through attrition, the working population steadily declined beginning in the early 1970s. When foremen retired, their positions were not filled. Their acreage allotments were simply consolidated with that of another foreman. First there were eleven mayordomos, and then eight, and finally three.

New housing construction ceased. A new manage-

ment style took away much of the independence of mayordomos in decision making. Rather than each being personally in charge of their work force and acreage, authority was centralized. Decisions of when to irrigate or apply pesticides, for example, were transferred to the central Quality Control department. The Stahmanns encouraged workers to use their pensions and money from their profit sharing plans to leave their company provided homes on the farm and establish residences off site. They settled in areas of low cost housing, which the Stahmanns were instrumental in establishing, in the surrounding Hispanic communities.

Comparing other local pecan growers with Stahmann Farms provides insights into the changes on the farm. Stahmann Farms is unique in many aspects. No other orchard in the valley matches the acreage or production of Stahmann Farms. By number, most growers are actually part-time growers, farmers who plant a few acres in pecans but obtain the majority of their subsistence from

other crops and wage employment. Stahmann Farms and other full-time growers provided a service to these part-time growers by accumulating and processing their pecans. Many part-time growers contract out all labor associated with their tree maintenance and harvest to larger producers.

The most common labor strategy is to hire temporary labor to help with the harvest, which begins in late November or early December. Minimal housing is provided to these workers, mostly Mexican migrants who will move on to work other crops as they come in season. Some migrants come to the valley to work the chile fields, then the pecans, and then will move on to Idaho to harvest potatoes. These people are primarily males with families in Mexico. They do not intend to remain in the United States. Their objective is to maximize their earnings for use in their own country.

One of the greatest problems is keeping skilled laborers who can operate the machinery associated with pecan production. Once a worker has returned to the United States for several consecutive seasons and learned a skill such as operating a tractor, he is in a position to seek a higher paying job and possibly to establish permanent residency.

The Stahmann labor strategy of providing permanent housing, good benefits, and year-round employment to workers was a way to assure a consistent and high quality labor force with minimal turnover. However, Stahmann Farms began to reduce the labor force and shift away from the responsibility of company town provisioning in the 1970s. The pecan industry climate was undoubtedly a factor in this decision. However, the other important factor was that the Stahmann Farm community had outgrown the actual labor needs of its employer.

Beginning in the 1960s, other valley farmers became aware of the large returns from the Stahmann orchards. Interest in pecans increased and pecan planting throughout the Mesilla Valley began in earnest. In 1969, New Mexico pecan production was 6,700,000 pounds. In 1974, that figure had increased to 13,200,000.<sup>19</sup> In 1977, the Stahmanns ceased nursery production, due to the saturation of the valley with pecan trees.<sup>20</sup>

The Western Irrigated Pecan Growers Association (WPGA) was established by Deane Stahmann and other area growers in 1966. Participants were to include growers from Arizona, California, West Texas, and New Mexico.<sup>21</sup> The primary concerns of this organization are lobbying, promoting research, planning an annual conference, maintaining quality controls, and developing new marketing strategies.

Product promotion is an important concern for growers. Due to the increased number of trees planted, a large number of trees coming to maturity, and irrigation and technological advances, the supply of pecans has rapidly surpassed the demand. This produces low prices. Two future scenarios are possible. Many growers may go

out of business, thus lowering the supply. The preferable scenario to most growers is that demand will increase. The question is how to accomplish this. It is not feasible for an individual to take on the financial burden of marketing for the entire industry. Other nut industries (almond and walnut) have been able to unite and promote their product. The pecan industry is attempting to follow suit.<sup>22</sup> The WPGA was a strong supporter of a National Market Order to expand the pecan market.

In addition to the marketing issue, a rift developed between pecan growers and pecan shellers.<sup>23</sup> In a strong letter to WPGA members, W.J. Stahmann, Jr. urged growers to act as a group, fight the shellers, and lobby politicians in favor of the Market order.

If we do not succeed, I'm afraid that within the next ten years we will be harvesting our trees for firewood instead of harvesting pecans to pay the winters heating expenses.<sup>24</sup>

During the early 1970s, there were mass plantings of pecans. As these trees matured, a virtual pecan glut developed. Prices have been consistently depressed. A market promotion strategy is necessary for the health of the pecan industry, but uniting in this cause is made difficult due to the division between part-time and full-time producers. The part-time producers — who are not primarily dependent on their pecan crops for subsistence — are willing to accept whatever price they can for their pecans and are unwilling to contribute funds to expand markets.

In a depressed market, Stahmann Farms did have some advantages. Researchers have suggested various alternatives to expand markets. One of these is vertical integration — the grower becomes his own sheller. It requires sufficient production to be feasible, the capital to establish the facility, and additional management.<sup>25</sup> From this perspective, Stahmann Farms was in a favorable position. It had already achieved vertical integration. It also had an advantage due to its size and long establishment. Despite these factors, Stahmann Farms chose not to maintain vertical integration.

The gradual consolidation and labor force reduction have been described above. The most abrupt changes occurred in 1989 when the company closed its two processing plants.<sup>26</sup> It attributed the plant closure to depressed prices for processed pecans and in general because "The pecan industry is in a slump, and prices are down because of increased production, lower prices and poor marketing."<sup>27</sup> Another reason given was "increasing competition with other processors opening plants. Other pecan growers say there is a shrinking market for shelled pecans."<sup>28</sup>

As an agribusiness Stahmann Farms is an example of the transition from self-sufficient and generalized to interdependent and specialized and is not an isolated case; rather this process had become the norm for modern U.S. agriculture.<sup>29</sup> Yet this trend has significantly impacted

traditional social institutions such as the community that was Stahmann Farms.

[Editor's note: This article is a condensed adaption of a NMSU Master's thesis in anthropology, "The Stahmann Farms Migrant Community," which was written in 1991. The topic of the thesis was the historic establishment, functioning, and ultimate decline of the settlements that comprised the Stahmann Farms community from 1926 through 1990. The thesis, which compared the Stahmann migrant communities to other migrant experiences, was based on numerous interviews with former residents of Stahmann Farms. The author has gratefully acknowledged their contribution to the understanding of this interesting part of southern New Mexico history.]

THERESA M. HANLEY was a student at New Mexico State University from 1984 through 1991. Her graduate work was completed with the assistance of numerous individuals including her thesis chair, Dr. Lois Stanford, interpreters who assisted with interviews, and the many individuals who shared their memories for oral history interviews. Theresa currently lives with her family in Idaho, where she works for the Bureau of Land Management.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Carleen Lazzell, "The Stahmann Farms: The Mesilla Valley Pecan Empire." Paper presented at the Historical Society of New Mexico Annual Conference, Albuquerque, 1983.
- 2 Ibid.; Marc Sani, "Las Cruces," *New Mexico Magazine* (November 1986): 69-74.
- 3 Sani, "Las Cruces."
- 4 Edelmira Armendariz. 1990. Interview by Rosalba Cortez and Theresa Hanley. Tape recording, 10 September.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Stahmann Farms, Inc. Advertisement, undated.
- 7 Ernie Pyle, "Dean Stahmann Farms Become Miracle of Mass Production," 1939.
- 8 Edelmira Armendariz. 1990. Interview.
- 9 Refugio Armendariz. 1990. Interview Rosalba Cortez and Theresa Hanley. Tape recording, 13 August.
- 10 Ernie Pyle, "Henry Ford of Upper Valley Quitting Cotton for Pecans," 1939.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Esteban Herrera and Roy M. Nakayama, *Historical Background of Pecan Plantings in the Southwest*. Cooperative Extension Service Guide H (August 1988).
- 13 Lazzell, "The Stahmann Farms."
- 14 Stahmann Farms, Inc. Advertisement.
- 15 Lazzell, "The Stahmann Farms."
- 16 Concepción Medina. 1991. Interview Interview Rosalba Cortez and Theresa Hanley. Tape recording, 20 January.
- 17 Ascención Acosta. 1990. Interview Rosalba Cortez and Theresa Hanley. Tape recording, 13 August.
- 18 Ana Perea. 1991. Interview by Rosalba Cortez and Theresa Hanley. Tape recording, 24 March.
- 19 Herrera and Nakayama, *Historical Background of Pecan Plantings in the Southwest*.
- 20 Lazzell, "The Stahmann Farms."
- 21 Western Pecan Growers association minutes. 1966.
- 22 Tom Clevenger and Martin Blake, *Some Marketing Alternatives for Pecans*. Cooperative. Extension Service Guide Z-303, November 1983.
- 23 WPGA,W.J. Stahmann, Jr. correspondence 1983.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Tom Clevenger and Martin Blake, *Situation in the Pecan Industry*. Cooperative. Extension Service Guide Z-102, November 1983.
- 26 Lee Gemoets, "Pecan Plant Shutdown May Slim Competition," *Sun News*, February 21, 1989; Lee Gemoets,"Chicago-based Firm Buys Pecan Processing Plant." *Sun News*, March 31, 1989.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Lee Gemoets, "Those Laid Off Worry About Housing: Stahmann Workers Begin Their Search for New Homes, Jobs." *Sun News*, February 28, 1989.
- 29 Everett Rogers, R.J. Burdge, P.E. Korschning, and J.F. Donnermeyer, eds., *Social Change in Rural Societies: An Introduction to Rural Sociology*. 3rd edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988.

# The Cabin on Aragon Draw

by Philip L. Duncan

From age eleven in 1954, to age twenty-three in 1966, much of my life was spent accompanying my parents on prospecting and mining trips to the mountains of southern New Mexico. My father acquired a curiosity about gold mining from listening to stories told by his mother. Her curiosity came from listening to similar stories she heard from her uncle. My parents have long since passed away, and I decided to write down the things that I can remember about our prospecting and mining trips before they fade completely from my memory. Fortunately, some of the photographs we took were still available and they are included.

North of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, there is a small, one-room cabin that the Duncan family built in 1961. It is situated on a dry creek bed named Aragon Draw in the San Mateo Mountains. Our experiences leading up to the building of that cabin make up most of the stories included here. All names, dates, locations, and events are from my memory. Given the passage of time, they are as accurate as possible.

## Stories of Gold Mines

Jacob Monroe Duncan was born in Tennessee on 29 March 1859. Nancy Green was also born in Tennessee that same year. The two married in 1880 and moved to Independence County, Arkansas. Jacob and Nancy Duncan had eight children in this order: John, Joe, Luther, Artie, Maud, Effie, Arthur, and Dewey. John was born in 1882 and Dewey in 1898. Nancy Green Duncan died two years after the birth of her last son.

Mary Rena Finley was born in Izard County, Arkansas in 1881. As a young girl in the 1890s, she worked in the gold fields of Colorado. By 1905, Mary Finley had moved to Independence County, Arkansas where she married Jacob Monroe Duncan. Mary was only one year older than Jacob's oldest son. Jacob and Mary Duncan had fourteen children in this order: Thelma, Mabel, Rushford, Roe, unnamed triplets who survived only one day, Finley, Charles, Marcus, James, Geraldine, Mary, and Betty. Thelma was born in 1907 and Betty in 1923. Jacob Monroe Duncan's twenty-two children were spread over a forty-one year period from 1882 to 1923. His first child, John, was born when Jacob was twenty-three and his last, Betty, when he was sixty-four.

My father was born in 1909 — the eleventh in the long line of Duncan children. The delivery was difficult and the doctor rushed to the family home in his Model T Ford. Hence the name Rushford was given to my father. Rushford Duncan's mother often told him stories of adventures and riches (for some) in the gold mines of Colorado. Her stories intrigued him and would influence his life as

well as mine.

Clara Reaves was born in Independence County, Arkansas in 1909. Hazel, Clara, Carl, Delbert, and Helen were the five children of Lucien and Eudola Reaves. Lucien's half-brother, Eric Reaves, was a Methodist minister who had served in Colorado. Clara heard tales of gold mining from her Uncle Eric.

Rushford Duncan and Clara Reaves married while they were both students at Arkansas College (now Lyon College) in Batesville, Arkansas. They had four children. Max and Stanley were born in Arkansas, Sue in Oklahoma. I was born in 1943, eight years after Sue and ten years after Stanley. The family lived in Phillips, Texas, when I was born. Phillips was a company town owned by the Phillips Petroleum Company. It was located near the Canadian River in the Texas panhandle. At the time of my birth, Rushford was a fuel blender at the refinery. In 1945, Rushford, Clara, Stanley, Sue, and Philip (Max, the oldest child, had died of a kidney disease at the age of three) moved to Odessa, Texas. Rushford worked as an oil field roughneck for various companies in the Permian Basin of Texas.

My father and mother both told me the stories that they had heard about the adventures of gold mining in Colorado. Fate would soon send them to adventures of their own — gold mining in New Mexico.

In 1953 my father suffered a severe neck injury while working in the oil fields of West Texas. Doctors in Odessa suggested that he go to El Paso where there were specialists in spinal cord injuries. While in El Paso, he found employment at Ft. Bliss with the United States Civil Service. My parents and I moved to El Paso in 1953. My sister Sue had married Johnny Putty and moved to College Station, Texas, where her husband attended veterinary school at Texas A & M. My brother Stanley chose to remain in Odessa where he married Doris Brunson. Stanley worked as a carpenter in Odessa.

## The Prospecting Bug

Our first experiences in prospecting came in 1954. My father and a friend, Ray Holguin, got caught up in the uranium fever of the early 1950s. My father bought a World War II surplus Willys Jeep and a Geiger counter. Ray Holguin and my father staked out claims in the Boot Heel of New Mexico, near Animas Peak in the Coronado National Forest. Individuals could claim mineral rights on National Forest or Bureau of Land Management lands. The area where Rushford Duncan and Ray Holguin had mining claims was removed from the Coronado National Forest in the 1960s. Private individuals then purchased much of that same area.

Exploring the mountains of the Boot Heel in a bouncy Jeep, camping in isolated areas in tents, and prospecting on foot with the Geiger counter occupied most of our weekends. I have long since forgotten the name of the ranch family who had grazing rights in the area of our claims. I remember that they had a boy about my age (eleven) who frequently visited our camps on foot or on horseback. He always carried a .22 caliber rifle with him and would tell us stories about the rattlesnakes and skunks he had shot. Attitudes about children with guns have changed! In the 1950s most boys in the Southwest were trained to handle guns at an early age, to treat them with respect, and to use them responsibly.

On our weekends in the Boot Heel country, my dog Spike (a small, friendly, brindle-colored Pit Bull) and I would often go out exploring on our own. One of those explorations was on a hot summer day. I had one canteen of water that Spike and I shared. By the time we finished the water, I realized that I was lost. Apparently Spike realized the same thing because he soon parted company with me. After about two hours of wandering (maybe less, but it seemed like more), I got my bearings and made my way back to camp. Spike did not return to camp until the next morning. He was dehydrated and footsore from walking on the sharp rocks. Spike recovered fully but the incident shook my faith in his sense of direction.

Another vivid memory of the Boot Heel country involves the "singing katydids." Mother and I got out of the Jeep to open a barbed-wire gap. Mother said, "Listen to all the singing katydids!" After Daddy had pulled the Jeep through the gate, he got out to listen. Near the gate was an old water well that had been shored up with logs. The "singing katydids" were actually myriad rattlesnakes intertwined in the rotten logs of the well.

A little uranium goes a long way, and the price dropped as quickly as it had skyrocketed. Our mining claims in the Boot Heel were abandoned. The prospecting bug would not be abandoned as easily.

Ray Holguin, Daddy's partner in the Boot Heel claims, was no longer interested in prospecting. My parents, however, were hooked. Mr. Holguin knew a man in Hillsboro, New Mexico, who had a gold mining claim in the San Mateo Mountains — Cibola National Forest — northwest of Truth or Consequences. In 1955 Daddy drove us to Hillsboro. The man was no longer healthy enough to mine but was interested in finding a partner to work his claim and to share in any profits. Mother and I sat in the car for hours while my father discussed terms with the man in Hillsboro. The deal was made and the papers were signed.

### We Meet Arch, Ed, Monk, and Shorty

I was twelve years old in the summer of 1955 and starting an adventure that would last until I joined the Air Force in 1966. The Red Rock mining claim would supply me, my family, and friends with adventures to last a lifetime.



Arch Hensley, left; Rushford Duncan, center; Ed Hensley, right; (dog) Monk; Hensley's Model A.

The first trip to the area that we called the Red Rock claim seemed like hundreds of miles of dirt roads, ruts, and dry creek beds. It was actually only about twenty-seven miles from Truth or Consequences and only about eleven of that was on dirt roads and dry creek beds. We turned west off the highway onto Forest Access Road 139. A National Forest road sign had arrows pointing west to the Pankey Ranch, Monticello, Luna Park Campground, and Springtime Campground. We went west on 139 for about eight or nine miles and then turned north on a primitive road that was little more than two ruts. Parts of the road followed a dry creek bed known as Aragon Draw. We were in a 1953 green and white Chevy, a six-cylinder sedan not meant for back-road travel. We had to get out occasionally to move rocks or do some shoveling. It made the two mile trip up Aragon Draw seem much longer.

We finally arrived at Aragon Springs, which was marked by stock tanks, large cottonwoods, and a primitive roller mill. On a hill above the cottonwoods stood an old sheep-herder's cabin. It was partly a dugout with rock walls and a rusty corrugated tin roof. Outside the cabin sat the Hensleys and their dogs. The Hensleys appeared to be in their sixties, but we never knew their exact ages. They were both small, wiry men and probably weighed no more than 145 pounds. They were burned dark brown from long hours in the sun. There was older brother Ed, younger brother Arch, Ed's dog, Shorty (a very short, black and tan mixed Spaniel-Shepherd), and Arch's dog, Monk (a large, dark brown and tan, wirehaired Airedale). Monk and Shorty sprinted down the hill to meet the strangers and their Pit Bull, Spike.

The Hensley brothers had set up camp in the old sheepherder's cabin and worked their mining claims in



Lower Place Camp, circa 1958. Clara Duncan, Rushford Duncan,  
Spike (dog).

the Aragon Hills, east of Aragon Draw. They had been in the area for several years. Arch and Ed were quiet and reserved but didn't seem to resent the new and only other people on the block. It would take a full twelve years to know the very little we ever knew about the Hensley brothers. They had a sister in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and that is all we ever knew about other family members. We never knew and never asked if either had ever been married. They did tell us that they had served in the United States Army. Arch always carried a World War I vintage Springfield rifle so we assumed that they had served in the Great War, but they never really said so. They talked of mining in Oregon, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Arch was more talkative than Ed. Ed, while quiet, was more friendly and helpful. He instructed Daddy in staking out mining claims and filing those claims at the Sierra County courthouse in Truth or Consequences. He would voluntarily point out places and rock formations that looked promising for gold.

#### We Set Up Camp on Aragon Draw

Just as he had in the Boot Heel, my father used every weekend, holiday, and vacation to go to the Red Rock mining claim. We set up camp on Aragon Draw south of the Hensley cabin. Our camp was a permanent lean-to, made of heavy canvas, with three cots, three chairs, and a large rock fireplace in the northwest corner. We stayed in that lean-to in all kinds of weather on weekends, holidays, and vacations for the next six years.

One particular night at camp stands out in my mind. It was on Christmas Eve. I think it was 1956, but I know it was Christmas Eve because Mother had refused to go. That is the only time that I can remember her staying home during a trip to Red Rock.

During the night it turned cold and windy and started to sleet and snow. The sleet and snow blowing into the lean-to woke me up, and the call of nature made me get up. While I was outside, I heard a high-pitched noise on the hill west of the lean-to. I thought it might be the wind but I was scared and came back quickly. I awakened my father, and said, "Daddy, I heard something up on the hill." He got up, reluctantly, from his cot and told me to get the flashlight. I scanned the hill above the lean-to and caught two eyes in the flashlight beam about forty yards up the side of the hill. I thought it was a large rat and said so to my father. His reply, "Rat my ass, that's a mountain lion." As I focused better in the poor visibility, I realized he was right. The lion sort of sauntered off into the night and the snow.

Sleep was difficult the rest of that night — for me but not for Daddy. He was soon snoring.

The next day Arch's dog, Monk, went straight to the spot on the hill and tried to strike a trail. Arch called him back and said that they had seen the mountain lion several times during the past week. Spike had stayed home with Mother that Christmas Eve. I still wonder what he would have done had he been with us.

Many nights were spent in that lean-to on Aragon Draw. In 1960 my father started plans to build a cabin. This was at my mother's insistence.

#### Recollections of Arch and Ed

Today, forty-six years later, I wish that I could recall all of the stories about Arch and Ed Hensley. Arch chain-smoked roll-your-own Bull Durham cigarettes. Ed always smoked his pipe with Prince Albert tobacco. When they visited our camp, only the smell of their smoking materials alerted us to their arrival. They always arrived quietly and never said, "Hello, the camp," or anything else. They would stand around quietly until we noticed they were there. From our first trip to our last, their first question to us was always, "What is the date today?" Arch would do most of the talking as they would tell us about their adventures since our last trip to Red Rock. They would tell us how the weather had been, whether they had repaired weather damage to the road up Aragon Draw, about animals they had seen, and describe how work on their claims was progressing.

I have no idea how long they had lived in the little cabin above Aragon Spring. The extensive tunnels and shafts on their claims made me think it had been several years at least. Their needs were few: gasoline for their Model A Ford and later a 1949 Ford; kerosene for their lanterns; tools, caps, and dynamite for mining; and their food and clothing.

They did what they called high-grade mining. They broke up samples in a small roller-mill, panned it over and over until it had a high content of gold, and put these high-grade samples in small bags. They packed the small bags in cardboard boxes and mailed them to a smelter in Colorado (Denver, I think). The smelter mailed money back to them. They picked up their money at a post office box in Monticello, New Mexico. I don't know why they mailed the samples all the way to Colorado (surely there were smelters in New Mexico that would have done the same thing), but they apparently had complete trust in that particular smelter and never thought they were cheated. I have no idea whether they were also on Social Security or some other pension. I don't know how much money they made from mining. As I said, their needs were few. Some of the stories I remember about Arch and Ed Hensley follow.

### The Body in the Well

Arch and Ed's cabin was on the slope of a hill above Aragon Spring. They said that it was built by a Basque sheepherder. I don't know when it was built. It was a partial dug-out and the floor level was a foot or two below ground level. The walls were made of large rocks held together with mud mortar. The east end was concrete and looked to have been done at a later date than the original construction. It had a small fireplace and a small wood-burning cookstove. The rusty tin roof had been patched many times with roofing tar. The door was made from heavy, well-worn, wooden planks. Its door knob was a rope loop. It had the overall appearance of being quite old.

A few yards south of their cabin was an old rock-walled water well that had caved in. Its construction was similar to that of the cabin and it was probably built at the same time by the same people (presumably Basque sheepherders). Arch and Ed told us that at one time they had decided to dig out and reconstruct the well in order to have water close to the cabin. They quit digging after only a few feet when they encountered human skeletal remains in the well. I don't think that they reported their find to any authorities but just refilled what they had dug out.

### Arch and the Hensley Automobiles

Arch and Ed would periodically drive to Truth or Consequences or to Monticello for supplies. Sometimes they took their 1949 Ford and sometimes they took their old Model A. When they did go to town, Arch obviously spent some of his money on strong beverages. He always came back from town in high spirits. He was never belligerent on those occasions, but he often did some interesting things.

Our Red Rock mining claim was about a quarter of the way up the west slope of Aragon Hill. Aragon Hill borders Aragon Draw on the east. By this time, my father had a Ford truck and a new 1958 Jeep. We would drive them up Aragon Hill to our diggings. The slope was

so steep that we had to load the tail-gate of the two-wheel drive truck with sand bags to get enough traction. The Jeep would go up easily.

One day when Arch and Ed returned from town, Arch was feeling no pain. He stopped the Model A at our camp and asked Daddy how we got to our diggings. He already knew of course, but when told that we drove the Jeep or truck up the hill, he said, "I could drive this Model A up there too." Daddy and Ed tried to dissuade him, but Arch was determined to conquer that hill in his Model A. About half-way to our diggings, the radiator of the Model A started steaming, then boiling over; Arch stopped, chocked the tires with large rocks, walked down the hill, and up Aragon Draw to the Hensley cabin.

Ed apparently didn't say anything to Arch about what had happened because the next morning Arch said to my father, "Duncan, I've lost that damn Model A somewhere!" Daddy pointed out where it was, still sitting on the side of the hill. Arch looked surprised, "How the hell did it get up there?" After Daddy and Ed told him that he drove it up there the day before, Arch said no more. He hiked up the hill, carefully backed the Model A down the hill into the draw, and drove up to his cabin. We didn't see Arch again that day. The adventure was never mentioned again.

The 1949 Ford belonging to Arch and Ed was a beautiful car. It was in mint condition and shiny black. As I remember, they bought it in 1958 and they were proud of that car. They wouldn't use it for rough jobs like hauling firewood. They reserved the dirty work for the Model A and kept the '49 Ford shiny and clean.

After another of their trips to town, Arch was feeling good. When they got back to their cabin that day, Arch decided the '49 Ford needed a new paint job. He proceeded to paint that shiny black Ford using a paint brush. He painted it a shocking pink.

### Arch, Monk, Rabbits, and the Springfield

Our days at the Red Rock diggings were spent drilling by hand with star bits, blasting, and mucking out the debris. Today it seems to me that I did most of the mucking while Daddy powdered ore samples using a large iron mortar and pestle. He would pan the powder looking for color while I mucked out the blast hole.

After a day of working our diggings, Daddy and I would often walk up Aragon Draw and sit outside Arch and Ed's cabin talking. As the evening cooled, jackrabbits and cottontails would appear on the surrounding hillsides. At those times Arch would often say to Monk, the big Airedale, "Are you hungry, Monk?" Monk would wag his long uncropped tail and get very animated. Arch would then get up, go in the little cabin, and come back out with his Springfield. He would sit down, scan the hillsides, and select an unlucky jackrabbit or cottontail. Monk would get more and more agitated, Arch would fire (and always hit the target on the first shot), and off would go Monk to enjoy his evening meal of fresh rabbit.



Duncan's cabin near T or C, NM circa 1973

### The Understanding Game Warden

When we first started our mining trips to Aragon Draw, Arch and Ed had a Model A sedan. A few years later, the Model A had been converted. Arch cut the back upper part of the body of the car off, creating a small pickup truck. It ruined the looks of the Model A, but it made it more useful to the Hensleys. They used it to haul tools, water, ore, and firewood. They told us about one of their wood-gathering expeditions in the Model A.

When the Hensleys went out for firewood, Arch always carried his bolt-action Springfield rifle. In the winter, they sometimes supplemented their food supplies with venison. On one such wood-gathering trip, Arch spotted a deer and harvested it with the Springfield. They put the deer in the back of the converted Model A pickup, put a tarp over the deer, and stacked their firewood on top of the tarp. Just as they had finished this process, along came a game warden. Thinking the deer was well concealed, Arch and Ed had a long chat with the game warden. They discussed the weather, mining, and other things. The game warden mentioned that he was encountering a lot of poachers out in those isolated areas. At the end of the conversation, the friendly officer said, "Well, I'd better let you boys get on home now. It looks like that load of firewood is about to bleed to death." I have since heard similar stories but still think that Arch and Ed were telling us a true experience.

### The Old Man in Monticello and Apaches

Vicks Peak is a beautiful, rugged, summit in the Apache Kid Wilderness area of the San Mateo Mountains. Its elevation is 10,270 feet and is forested with Ponderosa Pine, spruce, various kinds of oak, and other trees.

There are lots of deep canyons, and steep slopes with sheer cliffs topping the slopes.

Arch and Ed had known an elderly man in Monticello who told them stories of Apaches and Vicks Peak. They knew the man in the early 1950s and thought that his age at that time was around eighty-five. He told Arch and Ed that when he was a young boy, Apaches would come down from the high country around Vicks Peak with nuggets of gold. He said the Indians took gold nuggets into the general store in Monticello to trade for salt, sugar, coffee, beans, tobacco, bolts of cloth, and other supplies. According to the old man, he once followed the Apaches (at a safe distance) back into the mountains. He said that he saw where they were getting their gold - somewhere high up on Vicks Peak. The old man told Arch and Ed that he thought he could find the place again. He would love to guide Arch and Ed up there but he was just too old and feeble to make that climb.

According to Arch and Ed, they rented five mules, three to ride and two to pack supplies. They hired the old man in Monticello and set off for Vicks Peak. They went on this expedition in August, during the rainy season in the mountains of New Mexico. Arch and Ed told us about fierce thunderstorms along the ridge lines near Vicks Peak and about encountering lots of wild game including bears. For three weeks they searched. The old man kept saying they were close to the place he remembered, but they never found the gold.

### The Lower Place

Our original claim at Red Rock was in partnership with the man in Hillsboro. With his passing, the claim was ours outright. Most of Daddy's efforts were directed at making that claim pay off. Rushford and Clara Duncan worked the claim from 1955 to early 1967. Panning and assays always showed gold and silver but never enough to be profitable. I don't remember the number of ounces of gold and silver per ton that the assays showed, but the value of gold at that time was low. I think it was about thirty dollars an ounce.

Daddy's mother came to him in dreams and showed him where the gold was located. We staked out new claims in those places. The claim named Clara Number One ran east to west across a saddle above the Red Rock claim. Clara Number Two was in the flats on BLM lands south of forest road 139. We referred to Clara Number Two as the Lower Place or sometimes as the Lower Forty.

We camped at the Lower Place using the water-hauling wagon as a tent trailer. Daddy would rig pup tents over the trailer and rig awnings of canvas beside it. Two cots would fit in the trailer, and another cot was set up outside under the awning. Often we would see herds of antelope on the flats in the area. The dry washes on the flats were home to coyotes, badgers, skunks, and lots of rattlesnakes.

Near this claim was an old uranium mine with extensive tunnel work. It was apparently very actively mined

during the early 1950s. On hot summer days, the tunnels were infested with rattlesnakes. Also close by was an old wagon road with ruts worn deep into the rock. Arch and Ed told us that the wagon road once connected Monticello and Silver City. When I look at maps today, I am not sure that was correct. One day I walked along the old wagon road for about a mile. In that short distance, I found parts of old wagon wheels, metal parts from harnesses, an old lid from a can of wheel grease, lots of broken horseshoes, a cavalry-style spur, and the radius bone from a human forearm. The lid from the can of wheel grease was rusted paper-thin but you could still read in raised letters PIERCE PETROLEUM CORPORATION DIAMOND AXLE GREASE. I still have those artifacts today.

One hot summer afternoon at the Lower Place, I was taking a siesta after mucking out a hole that we had blasted. I was now a teenager, and Daddy claimed that resting was what I did best. I was sitting and leaning back against a large boulder. Spike, the Pit Bull, was sleeping at my left side. Spike was getting old now but still made most of our mining and prospecting trips. I was awakened suddenly by Spike jumping across my legs to my right side. He barked one time and assumed the pose of a pointer. I looked in that direction Spike was standing between me and an approaching rattlesnake!

### **Building the Cabin**

Living in a lean-to finally became too much for Mother. The construction of our cabin on Aragon Draw began in the fall of 1961. I was attending Texas A&M that fall and missed out on most of the construction. Most of the work was done by Daddy, Mother, my brother Stanley, his wife Doris, and their young daughter Angie. Stanley had moved from Odessa to El Paso. During the week, he was a carpenter for C.R. Bagwell Construction Company — on weekends, he supervised the building of the cabin on Aragon Draw.

They originally built the one-room cabin with a dirt floor. The north end was a wall and chimney made of rocks and mud mortar. There were two windows on the north end, one on each side of the chimney. The other walls were studs with odds and ends used as siding. They put entrances at the south end and on the east side — complete with wood and screen doors. There were windows on all sides. The inside was exposed framing with no sheet rock. Doors were attached, horizontally, to the inside studs using hinges so as to fold down into beds. The cabin was further equipped with chairs, a table, a wood-burning cookstove, an old wooden ice box, Coleman lanterns, and a kitchen sink with faucet. The stainless steel water barrel was placed up on the hill west of the cabin. It supplied water to the kitchen faucet via a gravity system. The rock chimney was topped off with a fifty-five gallon oil drum that was painted red and black. The north end of the cabin was beautiful — the rest was “rustic.” The cabin was a castle compared to the lean-to.

I transferred from Texas A&M to Texas Western

College (now The University of Texas at El Paso) in the spring of 1962. By that time, Mother was asking for a concrete floor. I got in on that part of the construction. The mixing was done by hand in a wheel barrow using sand and gravel from Aragon Draw to mix with the cement. We wheelbarrowed the mix through the doors to pour the floor. From then on, we often laughed about how the cabin had been built backwards walls and roof first, foundation last.

### **The End of the Mining Days**

I joined the United States Air Force in the month of February in 1966. My trips to the mine had continued intermittently through the winter of 1965. Those were the last trips to the cabin on Aragon Draw that would be made with my family.

Marianne Burleson and I married in January of 1967. I was stationed at Walker Air Force Base in Roswell, New Mexico. I convinced my parents to visit us in Roswell in March of 1967. It was a hard sell — Mother and Daddy preferred to spend their weekends at their cabin on Aragon Draw.

Daddy loved to fish, and I was able to convince him that the trout were biting at Bottomless Lakes just outside Roswell. Daddy and I went fishing early one March morning. We went in the Ford truck that he used at the mine. While we were fishing, Rushford Duncan — age fifty-seven — suffered a heart attack. He died two days later at the hospital in Roswell.

I was sorry that he never found El Dorado. Today, though, I think that the gold was secondary to him. His mining and prospecting adventures took him away from the pressures of work. He used mining and prospecting the way others use golfing, skiing, boating, and so forth.

Stanley and I thought that we might someday want to mine or at least use the cabin as a get-away spot. We would need to keep the mining claim in our name. Mother wrote to Arch and Ed informing them of Rushford's passing. Ed volunteered to do the annual assessment work at the Red Rock claim. Ed put a lock on the cabin, kept an eye on it, and did the annual assessment, which kept the claim in the Duncan name.

### **Epilog**

The Red Rock claim was never worked again by the Duncan family. I am the only family member who has ever returned to the cabin. In early 1973, Ed Hensley wrote a letter to my mother saying that the brothers had left their claims and moved to Truth or Consequences. Their age and health would no longer tolerate the rigors of outdoor life and hard work. I decided to go back to the cabin to get our old wooden ice box before it fell into someone else's hands. Accompanied by Gabriel Bouche and Pete Neria, two fellow teachers at Henderson Junior High in El Paso, I located Arch and Ed in Truth or Consequences. We discussed old times on Aragon Draw, and Ed gave me the key to the cabin. That was the last I ever saw or heard from Arch and Ed Hensley. I made two more

trips to the cabin. In the summer of 1980, I went with Danny Jasso, another teacher at Henderson, and my son, Corby. In March 2001, I returned with Carlton Bell, a golfing partner and fellow retired teacher. Amazingly, the cabin is still standing. Arch and Ed's cabin is also still there, although in great disrepair. The Duncan cabin has apparently been used by other miners and deer hunters over the years. The door and window on the south end

are boarded over, and some of the rocks on the north end have fallen out. Yet the cabin on Aragon Draw still stands and occasionally it calls me back.

---

PHILIP L. DUNCAN is a retired history teacher and coach with the El Paso public schools. He enjoys painting, golf, fishing, camping, and various hobbies.

# A Glimpse of the Past with Jerry Holquin

by Stephanie Elisabeth Cuellar

Jerry Holguin, now fifty-seven, has lived in this area for fifty-four years. In 1965 he married a woman named Gita and they had three daughters. Gita passed away, and in 1993 he married my grandmother Lydia, who had three sons. I chose to write about Jerry because he has lived here so long and he has seen many of the changes that have taken place in Doña Ana and Las Cruces.

Jerry was born in Richmond, California in 1943. His parents wanted him to be born in Doña Ana but could not because of the war. When he was three, in 1946, his family moved back to this area. Because of his knowledge and memories of Doña Ana, I think Jerry has had an interesting life. When they first moved back his family lived near the corner of Alameda and Three Crosses Avenue. At that time the Peppermint Barn was a popular grocery store called Scutters. In 1947, Jerry's family moved near to what is now the corner of Lohman and Solano, which were all dirt roads then. Some of his memories include riding in horse-pulled wagons and using kerosene lamps. A transition occurred when Jerry's mother remarried, and they moved to Doña Ana. His stepfather was Henry De La O, whose grandfather was Maestro Buenaventura De La O, the first teacher in Doña Ana at a time before there were public schools. The two-hundred-year-old house that Jerry lived in still stands next to what is now a factory called Kit Pac. In 1948 this building was the elementary school where Jerry attended and learned Spanish. Many of the locations we now know in Las Cruces and Doña Ana have changed from what they were in the 1940s and the 1950s. Meerscheidt Recreation Center for example, was once an airport for small planes. Jerry attended Las Cruces High School, and at that time the area surrounding it was farmland. Some of the commonly grown crops were cotton and onions, which are still grown here. Jerry noted that he did not really notice or experience racism until he was in high school. The Las Cruces High School track team went to Deming and stopped at a hamburger shop. As the team was waiting to be served, a waitress told the Black students that they had to leave because her boss would not serve them.

When Jerry was young, some of his favorite things to do were hanging out at Day's Hamburgers, playing with friends, and drinking chocolate soda. As a teenager

Jerry enjoyed track at the high school and playing practical jokes with his friends on Halloween! He remembers going "outhouse tipping" and throwing heads of lettuce and rotten eggs at his friends. Jerry also said that drag racing was very popular on the dirt roads and hills. In 1963 Jerry moved to San Diego, California and he moved back to Las Cruces in 1966.

Jerry is unique in many ways, but I also think he shares a common heritage with others from this area. He represents much of the Hispanic culture in our area, particularly the second and third generations of people who came from Mexico in the 1900s. Like many of the people who lived in Doña Ana County during that time frame, Jerry grew up around hard-working farmers and people who cared for and helped one another. Jerry's generation was unique because the Mexican and Anglo cultures were combined, using traditions from both. What makes Jerry unique and fascinating to me is the fact that he cares so much about his heritage and his past. He has researched and studied so much about this area and always has a story to tell. It seems like he knows people everywhere he goes and always stops to talk and catch up with them.

Jerry's ability to remember things also impresses me. He remembers all the details that most people might have overlooked or forgotten. Jerry is also a devout Christian, and I very much admire that he is never ashamed or inconvenienced to share his faith with others.

I think Jerry's life experiences could be insightful to people wanting to learn more about the history of Doña Ana County. I do not know if Jerry would feel comfortable giving a speech for a large group, but he would do great in an interview. I believe his experiences should be shared with the community.

---

STEPHANIE ELISABETH CUELLAR, who is home schooled, was an eighth grader when she wrote this essay, which was the winner in the middle school division. Her parents are Lynn and Augustine Cuellar.

---

#### SOURCES

All information in this essay comes from a videotaped personal interview with the subject of the paper, Jerry Holquin.

# Our Historic Home

by Natasha Elliot

In Las Cruces we have had numerous homes and public buildings that have been here for so long that they have become part of our history as a city. The Rio Grande Theater, which is now being restored, the Hadley Home, also known as Glenn Cutter Jewelers, and many other buildings have been restored and now add significance to our city's history. Instead of being torn down, these and other buildings are being saved and are adding charm to our city. I know that when our family visits places out of state or just out of town, we love to see the old homes and stores of the area and to learn the history of who lived there and what it was used for. In some places where unique architecture or construction was used, the place is turned into a museum to educate young and even the old about how people lived when the home was built.

If I could choose a site that I believed should be restored, I would select my home of the past six-plus years, a private residence over one hundred years old. I live in a house on property that has been owned by two of the many people who have contributed much to our city. The property was originally bought by Elizabeth W. Livingston from the Rio Grande Land Company on 16 April 1894. The land then passed through a myriad of owners, including Hiram Hadley and Doctor Robert E. McBride. In fact this house is called the Hadley-McBride home by many. Hadley had ownership of the land when he purchased sixty-three acres while starting a real agent company called H. Hadley and Company. Doctor Robert E. McBride and his wife Genevieve bought the land and home when they were advised to move here from Louisiana. because "of a respiratory illness in the family." (Information taken from a website on the genealogy of the McBride family.) They then later sold it to a Mary Redd on 26 February 1912. Robert died in January 1947. Genevieve could not bear to be separated from her beloved husband and willed herself to join him four months later. It was written on her death certificate that she died of a broken heart. Both men held the position of superintendent of schools of Doña Ana County and president of New Mexico State University. Both were active in the civic affairs of Las Cruces. Robert McBride even met two of our presidents when they stopped here.

Quite often, our family has visitors who once lived here or in the neighborhood and recall when it was the only house in the area surrounded by open fields. The building has been added to a few times, making the oldest section of the house approximately a hundred years old. The adobe was the original house, although we are not sure exactly when it was built. The Italianate addition was

added in 1908; it was built next to the adobe, with the roof extending over both sections. While renovating we have found pieces of this place's history, or at least of the families who have lived here: a Roy Rogers horseshoe, toy pistols, and old chemistry set, and even some fragments of glass milk bottles from the time when the home was the site of the Limbaugh Dairy Farms. Sabra Limbaugh, owner of the Limbaugh Dairy Farms, bought the land from David L. Savage in 1927 (the land area was then about 3.84 acres; now it is only about 2/3 of an acre). I have been told that it was Mrs. Limbaugh who added on to the house, but seeing that it was added in 1908, and she had not bought the home and land until 1927, I am not sure how that is possible. There are quite a few stories that do not tie in with documents, but I suppose there are always a few mysteries that come with an old house! We were thrilled when we discovered on the pocket doors authentic hardware with ornate Eastlake designs. The corner blocks above most of the doors and windows have carved flowers instead of the traditional *pateras* (small round or oval disks or medallions). Many of the transoms have been closed up or blocked, helping us to figure out which rooms were first here and which ones were just patios blocked in to make more rooms. On the inside of a closet door we found an old doorbell made of brass (the one you would twist to ring and not push or pull), leading us to believe that particular closet was once open and served as the front door. In one adobe room we have found the original vigas of the home.

At one time this part sat on about twelve acres. In the process of restoring, we are replacing the first adobe blocks, which were sixteen inches by ten inches by four inches, with adobe ordered and delivered from Mexico. These blocks are sixteen inches by ten inches by three inches. Instead of rocks and dry ground for footings, we have poured cement to produce a more stable foundation. In the section we are currently restoring, we purchased antique stained glass windows from Albuquerque and stained glass doors from a local estate. We saved bricks from the homes that were torn down near the St. Andrews Episcopal Church for our future projects. We ordered authentic grates to use as vents for the rooms once we install the cooling system. In fact, most of the furniture and items used for rebuilding this beautiful old home are pieces from various estate sales and shipped from people around the country who saved them from old homes that were being torn down. In the Italianate section are double-hung windows, windows that allow the bottom glass to slide up and the top glass to slide down. In the interior wall of what currently serves as my room,



The Elliot Home, 325 West Ethyl

there was once a double-hung window, but it now serves as a shelf. This also happened to another window across from it, which currently serves as shelves for the bathroom. In the main rooms of this area, the ceilings reach up to about twelve to thirteen feet. During the winter, we use the wood stove for our main source of heat. By itself, it would not do us much good, but we use the fan in the ceiling to circulate the warm air. People are surprised by this, considering most others cannot imagine not having a heating system in the house.

When we first moved here, we learned many of the neighborhood children believed and to this day still believe that the house is haunted. And no wonder! The house was an ugly green color and falling apart, and the windows had broken glass. The front yard had hundreds of weeds, while the back looked like a dry, sun-baked desert with a falling-down, unsightly barn. Since then, we have pulled down the barn and are planning to use the cement foundations as a dance floor for our house warming party (hopefully soon!) and then maybe as a sport court. I have helped plant countless gardens with heirloom flowers, such as antique roses, tansy, yarrow, hollyhock, Queen Anne's lace, lavender, silver-lace vine, and heirloom lilac, and replaced old, abandoned fruit trees with new ones. With the flowers from the gardens, my sisters and I have made May Day baskets for the elderly neighbors around us and given fruit from our trees to those less fortunate than we are. Rather than a haunted house, I like to think of our home as a house that has given and continues to give back to the community of Las Cruces.

When homes like the one I reside in last as long as a hundred years or more (even a little less), we can look at them and ask questions, such as: How did people live through this heat without air conditioning? How did they

build it? Who lived here, and what treasures have they left for us to remember them by?

It's amazing how adobe was used and designed to keep cool air in during the hot days of the summer and warm air in during the winter. In the newer section, the small transoms were opened early in the morning to allow in the cool morning air and then closed once the air begins to grow warm. We can learn things like this by asking questions. All of this our family learned from just one house. When we let homes like this fall apart, we lose something that someday our descendants could have used to learn about us. Sure, we could write about it, or take pictures, but people receive so much more information when we save and preserve old places like this one.

Our home has been here for almost a hundred years now and is still standing because one family took the time to try and save it for the future. Why should it be saved for the future? Why should it not be saved? Why should any old historic home be destroyed just to make room for one more modern building with no history, no story behind it whatsoever? Homes like these should be saved because of their uniqueness and character surrounding it, because of the history inside and around the walls that were built so long ago. Robert McBride and his wife actually lived here; our home was actually lived in by a man who contributed so much to our town, civically and medically. While he was the Doña Ana County commissioner of immigration, he published booklets to attract people here. Any home that has seen so many years and seen our city grow should be saved and restored as a piece of our history as a rising and growing, loving community and city. If the school children are correct in their assumptions that the house is indeed haunted, then I am convinced that these are benevolent spirits who look with approval on the current residents and their efforts.

NATASHA ELLIOT, the daughter of Robert and Rebecca Elliot, was in the eleventh grade at Mesilla Valley Christian Schools when she wrote this essay. Natasha tied for first place in the high school division of the DACHS annual historical essay contest.

Works Consulted  
*Gordon Owen, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1849-1999: Multicultural Crossroads* (Red Sky Publishing , 1999).  
[Http://memberstriopod.com/txbob/McBride/mcbride.htm](http://memberstriopod.com/txbob/McBride/mcbride.htm)

# A Son of Doña Ana County

by Katherine Emerick

One of Doña Ana County's illustrious sons is Lewis Edgar Emerick, Jr. A Son of The American Revolution through his ancestor, Joseph Adair, Ed won the Centennial Distinguished Alumnus Award from New Mexico State University (NMSU). He is an honored member of the Who's Who in American Business, and he and Joanne, his wife, won the New Mexico parents of the year award in 1997. Lewis Jr., also called Ed, and his father, Lewis Senior, developed the Mesilla Park Manor area. He is also one of the developers of The Ridge at Northrise and now has on the drawing board the Mesilla Park Mosaic.

Ed is the youngest of three children born to Lewis and Sara Emerick: Camilla, Debbie, and Ed. He was born on 21 July 1954 at the old Memorial General Hospital, now an office building on Alameda Boulevard. Ed remembers all his childhood adventures in Doña Ana County and has passed them down to me, his third-born child. Ed's childhood experiences, living on the boundary of the desert and city, are particularly fascinating to me because they are so different from my experiences growing up in the same town. Also, Ed's life story is such a big part of my heritage and is therefore very important to me. Every human beings' story is unique, and my father is no exception. Living in an old convent and driving a new red Mustang as a teenager are pretty unique! Being able to add to the beauty and longevity of Las Cruces through awesome home construction is a special gift my dad offers to the community.

Ed's first home was located at the corner of Solano Avenue and Branson. Branson was a dirt road, Ed recalls. When it would rain in Las Cruces, the road would flood and turn into a rushing river. On one of the occasions when the river was carving its course through the south end of Las Cruces, Ed, at the age when his imagination ran wild, sat near the edge of the Branson river in a cardboard box. He sat there dreaming of sailing his cardboard boat to the other side of the muddy river. A tall boy on a bicycle interrupted Ed's dreaming by asking if he could see the box. Ed willingly loaned his boat to the youth. The hoodlum then took the box and threw it into the river, and rode off laughing, leaving Ed behind boat-less. He remembers watching his boat swiftly sail away without him.

Ed has many fond little boy memories, but sometimes the not-so-fond memories stick out more clearly in the mind of a small child. While living in the house on Solano, Lewis Jr. was bitten by NMSU basketball coach Presley Askew's dog and given ten rabies shots in his stomach. Ed's mother, Sara, says, "We died a thousand deaths for

every shot." Another painful memory was of falling off his swing set and seeing stars. He also remembers trying to keep up with his sister Debbie and her friends. Sara got Ed new Keds tennis shoes because his high top leather shoes would squeak on the pews at church. Ed hoped his new shoes would be magic, and would help him keep up with his sister better. His new shoes, of course, let him down, but they did keep him quieter in church.

When Ed was three, he and his family moved to a house located on Locust and Monte Vista, then the only house on fourteen acres. At that time these streets were at the very edge of the desert. If you were to go there today, you would not find the house, but instead you would see a shopping center. The Monte Vista home was wonderful, with hardwood floors, a swimming pool, and Kentucky blue grass in the yard. Ed remembers that this certain type of grass was rare for the area. Along with the beautiful grass, Mrs. Emerick planted a strawberry patch, currant bushes, and a fig bush. After about ten years of living there, they had a very nice orchard, consisting of pear, apple, pecan, and apricot trees. In the front yard was a tall wisteria tree, which the children called Jack's bean stalk. It was at house that Ed spent most of his childhood years. He lived there until he was a junior in high school.

Ed spent hours exploring the desert. He would pull up weeds and dig holes; he would find bones of cattle, bones of deer, and bones of snakes. He would also find all kinds of interesting bugs. One of his favorite activities was hiking up to A Mountain and back. Around A Mountain engineers had designed flood control dams with big culverts that went under them. Ed would crawl through the culverts and on up to A Mountain. At that time there were old mines within the mountain; Ed remembers occasionally hearing about a child who would fall into a mine. In recent years, the mines have been closed to prevent any more accidents from happening.

There were not many neighbors close to play with, but when Ed was about eleven, two boys named Jerry and Ronny moved near to him. Jerry, Ronny, and Ed would play all kinds of games. Living by Doña Ana's beautiful desert they had an endless amount of space to play in. One of their favorite games was BB gun fighting. Ed remembers that his BB gun's stock had fallen off, and he would have to arch the barrel in order for the BB to reach its destination. One destination Ed's BB gun accidentally hit was Ronny's behind. It did not seriously injure Ronny, and Ed knew that because Ronny could

still chase him. He chased Ed all the way into an old cement mixer. While Ed was hiding inside the cement mixer, he could hear BB's pinging off the sides. Ronny and Ed made up soon after and even worked together on digging the big fort.

Elbow grease for digging, two-by-fours, and plywood made the fort. Ed describes the fort as being six feet deep with a plywood roof and floor. The children covered the roof with dirt to conceal it. Jerry, Ronny, and Ed wrapped the fort with polyethylene for water proofing. Even the air stack coming out of the fort was camouflaged; it had been painted the same colors as the sage and greasewood bushes. To cover up the hatch door they mixed flour and water making a sticky paste. They then put the paste on the plywood door, and buried it with dirt. The children used the fort for hiding from people, especially when it would occasionally snow. They loved to make snowballs to throw at people walking or driving by. It was the college students who were the most fun to throw snowballs at because the students would get out and chase the boys. But Ronny, Jerry, and Ed had a great hiding place, their fort. One snowy day Ronny and Ed threw a snowball at a college student, then ran into their fort. Moments later, they could hear footsteps walking on the roof of the underground fort. Ronny started to laugh; the college student heard the laugh coming out of the ground, and said, "Get out of there." Ed thought "Why should I get in trouble for Ronny laughing?" Ed then pushed Ronny up out of the fort; Ed was sure Ronny was going to die, but Ronny just got a scolding.

The rest of Ed's days at the house on Locust were spent swimming, having friends over, going to school, using a magnet to pull iron out of dirt, playing marbles, playing football, taking piano lessons, and hiking.

Ed went to Zia Junior High when it was brand new. He says they had a good basketball team, but the football team he played on stunk just like the pig farm next door. From there he went to Las Cruces High School, and during his high school years Ed and his parents moved to a former convent, the Home of the Good Shepherd. He played basketball on the Las Cruces High basketball team and was in the starting five. Ed enjoyed going to Camp Rose Collins in the Black Range Mountains. The camp was named after Ed's maternal grandmother, Rose Collins, who donated the funds for the camp. At Camp Rose Collins Ed met his future wife, Joanne Lepley, and learned many spiritual truths. After high school he went to NMSU and got a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering Technology.

The Home of the Good Shepherd, where Ed lived, had more than one building on the grounds; the buildings had been used for dormitories, classrooms, and a chapel during the time that the Catholic orphanage and girls school were operational. One Halloween when



Lewis E. Emerick, Jr. (Ed).

Ed was in college, he and his friends used one of these buildings for a spook house. It was quite a production; many college students were entertained that Halloween night. Also, when Ed was in college, he was involved with a Christian organization called the Navigators, who for fun would have large rallies, for college students, at the Home of the Good Shepherd. In Ed's recollections he always got a laugh when he said he lived in a convent. Ed's mother still lives in the Good Shepherd home.

Ed and his fiancée, Joanne, graduated from college in 1976 and were married one week later. The Emericks will be celebrating their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in May 2001. They have four children: Anna, Daniel, Katherine, and Nathanael. Ed remembers Doña Ana County as being a wonderful and beautiful place to grow up and is very grateful to be able to rear his children here! In 1985, the same year their third child was born, Ed was head of the home schooling lobby in New Mexico to legalize home schooling in our state. After Ed took many trips to Santa Fe and organized home educators all over New Mexico, an effective home schooling bill was passed. Ed and Joanne have continued to educate their children at home. Two have graduated from home school high school and have gone on to NMSU.

Since his college days, Ed has been very committed and involved with the affairs of University Presbyterian Church. He has enjoyed teaching, counseling, and leading small groups. His leadership and input have been invaluable to the different aspects of a growing church, which in turn, has had many strong and positive effects on our community.

How much can one life affect the place it is surrounded by? What would Doña Ana County be like without Lewis Edgar Emerick, Jr.? I know I would not be here, and the beauty Ed brings by building attractive houses would not be here either. Ed has influenced so many lives for the better, even in ways he does not know about. Those people he has influenced are forever changed because Ed is here. Shall I suggest to him that he write a book sharing his beliefs, his memories, and the history of his life, which has been so wonderfully paralleled with Doña Ana County since his birth?

KATHERINE EMERICK, who is home schooled, was a ninth grader when she wrote this essay, which tied for first in the high school division. Katherine is the daughter of Ed and Joanne Emerick.

#### SOURCES

Personal data remembered by Sara Emerick, broker, realtor, English

and Spanish instructor, mother of Lewis E. Emerick, Jr., personal interviews,  
Las Cruces, NM February and March 2001.

Memoirs from Lewis E. Emerick, Jr., broker, general contractor, personal  
Interviews, Las Cruces, NM February and March, 2001.

Personal data remembered by Joanne Emerick, RN, decorator, instructor, wife  
of Lewis E. Emerick, Jr., personal interviews, Las Cruces, NM February and  
March 2001.

## Book Reviews

**B**orderlander: *The Life of James Kirker, 1793-1852* by Ralph Adam Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. 326 pp., maps, index, biblio., notes. \$32.95, hardcover.

Born in the north of Ireland and descended from Scotch-Irish stock, James Kirker traveled to New York in 1810. After fighting for the United States in the War of 1812, he made his way west, eventually settling in the Southwest border region. Today his fame does not equal that of his one-time protégé, Christopher "Kit" Carson, but from the time he strode onto the landscape of the Southwest in the 1820s until his death in 1852, James Kirker was a larger-than-life figure who strongly influenced the relations between the native peoples of the regions and the non-Indian people of United States and Mexico.

Kirker left almost no personal papers, so the author had to rely on other sources, making notable use of such material as the official journals of the State of Chihuahua, numerous archival collections — U. S. and Mexican — and a wealth of secondary material. One of the results of piecing together published sources is a different view of the early mining history in New Mexico and the role Kirker played in defending Santa Rita del Cobre and his relationship with Esteban Curcier (whom the author incorrectly refers to as "Cuicier") and the McKnights. The author strikes no bonanza, however, overstating Kirker's limited role by stating that "Kirker helped [Santa Rita] grow into the leading copper-producing center of Mexico" (32). Helped he may have, but this is a curious observation given the preponderance of evidence that Curcier and Robert McKnight were largely responsible for Santa Rita's success and that Kirker was their employee rather than their partner. Also regarding the Santa Rita district, Adams states that "Chino" the name for one of the mines in the Santa Rita district, meant "The Chinaman" (31). As mining historians know, chino is the Spanish for iron or — significantly in this case — copper pyrites.

Kirker is best known as a scalp hunter because he executed of a series of contracts with the Mexican government in its attempt to end the Indian problem by exterminating the Apache and others if need be. Here the author is on firmer footing. Adams is doubtless the leading authority on scalping and brings this expertise to bear on Kirker's actions. Although it seems gruesome today, scalping, or "lifting crowns" is a practice that has been used in many cultures as a method of keeping records and establishing proof of victims in killing for hire systems, as the author points out. During the 1830s and 1840s Kirker headed up bands of mercenaries that included particularly fearsome Shawnee Indians employed by Mexican authorities to kill Indians and bring

in their scalps in exchange for payment.

Smith clearly set himself two tasks: to place Kirker in the context of Indian relations in the greater southwest and to rehabilitate his largely negative image. On the first point, the author succeeds in demonstrating that Kirker played a vital role in implementing a policy of destruction of the Apache that ultimately made it impossible to conclude a lasting peace with them. On the second point, the author is much less persuasive. Smith demands that Kirker be judged by the laws and standards of his time and concludes rather remarkably that "It is true he killed many Indians. But he also added a little to making the continent safe for settlers and citizens" (248). While it is true, as the author points out, that popular and official support for Kirker ebbed and flowed over time, it is no less clear that important people in authority clearly deplored his tactics and understood that they were detrimental to the goal of peace with the Indians. No less a figure than the Commandant General of Chihuahua, Francisco Garcia Conde, considered "the inadequate and shameful campaign of D. Santiago Kirker" to be "highly offensive to the military class" (114).

More than a biography, *Borderlander* is a painstaking recreation of an entire career. In many cases, the detail provided is, incredibly, on an hour by hour basis. Rather than synthesize differing versions of a given event, Adams patiently relates the details of each telling of Don Santiago Kirker stories. Although this methodology is commendably thorough, it results in a narrative that is repetitive and lacks flow, which is exacerbated by the use of section titles throughout the text, not infrequently several to a page. Despite the minor quibbles mentioned here, this book will doubtless take its place alongside the works of William B. Griffen and Edwin R. Sweeney and make an important contribution to the literature of Indian relations on the Southwestern frontier. Whether it makes a hero out of James Kirker is another matter altogether.

Rick Hendricks  
Las Cruces

**I**Never Rode Alone: *My Boyhood on a New Mexico Cattle Ranch* by Lindley J. Stiles. Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 1998. 113 pp., \$9.99

Author Lindley J. Stiles pursued the career of a professional educator, but his formative years were spent on New Mexico ranches in the period just after the granting of Statehood. As he observes in the preface to *I Never Rode Alone*, "My father . . . taught me respect for people and for animals and for myself." That statement will not

only ring true, but it will also sound familiar to many of those readers who also grew up on farms and ranches of the Great West.

Stiles's engaging little book of memoirs highlights unforgettable episodes of family history, marked by humor, tragedy, and courage. We learn about encounters with local Indians, wild horses, and rattlesnakes. Then, there are the author's recollections of his first horse and of the faithful dog, Old Shep.

A number of ranch-raised New Mexicans have written personal accounts of their youth that were either self-published or brought out by small presses in limited runs. Such books provide valuable historical glimpses of a way of life now largely gone, and they ought to be collected and read. Lindley Stiles's *1 Never Rode Alone* is a worthwhile contribution to this important body of range literature.

Marc Simmons  
Cerrillos, NM

**B**uffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry, 1867-1898: Black and White Together by Charles L. Kenner. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. 384 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio., notes. \$26.95, hardcover.

William H. Leckie's *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of Negro Cavalry in the West* (1967) is the pioneering scholarly treatment of the post-Civil War use of Black army regiments on the frontier. John M. Carroll's anthology, *The Black Military Experience in the American West* (1973) mixes official reports with narrative and adds two Black infantry regiments to the buffalo soldier mix. Monroe L. Billington's *New Mexico's Buffalo Soldiers, 1866-1900* (1991) brought a welcome focus on the New Mexico Territory and non-Indian fighting duties. Charles Kenner's work is a fitting addition to this body of research.

Kenner has written a truly valuable volume. He has, first of all, focused on the Ninth Cavalry Regiment. The Ninth has suffered in comparison with its sister unit, the Tenth Cavalry and its better-known commander, Colonel Benjamin Grierson. Colonel Edward Hatch, first commander of the Ninth Cavalry, left his mark in New Mexico with the name of a town now known for its chiles. Grierson's biographers were William and Elizabeth Leckie, while Hatch still awaits a full-length biography. His regiment served first in Texas, and in New Mexico Territory between 1875 and 1881. During this time the Ninth had the dubious honor of confronting perhaps the finest Apache war chief, Victorio. But they got none of the attention commanded by Geronimo in neighboring Arizona.

The second distinguishing characteristic of Kenner's book is his treatment of both men and officers, medal-of-honor winners as well as those court-martialed. The author succeeds in painting much more of an in-depth portrait of the unit than formerly available, and

he has presented the Ninth's personnel with both their honors and warts.

The Ninth's white officers were sometimes abusive to their men. Captain E. M. Heyl was remembered as abusive and an alcoholic, not a good combination! Captain Francis Dodge, hero of Milk Springs, was such an unpopular taskmaster that even his troop's sergeants would not reenlist! Other officers were merely incompetent. Captain Ambrose Hooker was embarrassed when the Victorio campaign began; his command lost all its horses when the guard detail was killed to a man. Given an opportunity to redeem himself during the subsequent campaign, he performed badly and was placed under arrest.

In the tradition of ignoring the Ninth, the Tenth Cavalry's Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper is a name familiar to Western military historians. Flipper was the first Black graduate of West Point. Less familiar to the same historians will be the names of John Alexander, Charles Young, and Chaplain Henry Plummer — all Black officers assigned to the Ninth. The author gives the story of their less well-known ordeals, while serving in segregated units.

Most other published materials have mentioned the outstanding noncommissioned officers of the Ninth, normally the Medal of Honor winners. This author, however, goes into far more detail than his predecessors as to successes and failures among the noncoms and the common soldiers. Two examples might be Sergeants Emanuel Stance and Brent Woods, whose moments of glory did not outweigh their up and down patterns of promotion and demotion. Stance was murdered, and Woods served until retirement. Kenner has told us "the rest of the story."

The book is well researched and well written. The author has not made politically correct the attitudes of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century whites concerning colored men. He describes the ultimate failure of the quest for official army recognition of the value of Black regiments. Sadly, the honors gained on the battlefield became the casualties of racial prejudice. Kenner has written a fine unit history which deserves to be read.

Robert L. Hart  
Las Cruces, NM

**A** Short Story of War, 1944-45 in France and Germany by Martin Gemoets. Las Cruces: Institute for Historical Survey, 2001. 94 pp., illus., maps, index, \$14.95, paper.

Doña Ana County Historical Society member Martin Gemoets, Colonel, Army of the United States (retired), has written a delightful vignette of his experiences during World War II. Martin, then a first lieutenant, started to chronicle his experience of the war at that time. The story begins when he was shipped out in September 1944 on board the Cunard Liner *Queen Elizabeth* — along with fifteen thousand other infantrymen.

Martin's story continues as he moved toward the front as an infantry replacement and entered the replacement depot system. Historian Stephen Ambrose called them "Repple Depples" and was quite harsh in his assessment of their role. Lieutenant Gemoets spent several weeks at Neufchateau, France, undergoing "training of sorts" before being moved closer to the front; since Martin had been an infantry instructor earlier at Camp Roberts, California, his label seems to confirm some doubt as to how valuable the prescribed replacement training was. By November he was in another replacement depot at Conflans, France, before being assigned to the Fifth Infantry Division, Third Army.

The author's reaction to serving under General George S. Patton should be noted. He is critical of Patton's profanity and reports his stunt of urinating in the Rhine River. Although soft-pedaled, he twice mentions the requirement to wear neckties in Patton's command. When first told that he was likely to be assigned to Third Army, he was told combat troops were also expected to wear ties! In *Citizen Soldiers* Ambrose labels Patton a martinet, confirms the necktie requirement, and refers to a famous Bill Mauldin cartoon where Willie and Joe decide to detour around a Third Army area because of the threat of fines for numerous offenses concerning sloppy appearance.

*A Short Story of War* contains not only strictly military history, but also fascinating observations on wartime life in England, France, and Germany, concerning both civilians and military personnel. The public can only wish that Lieutenant Gemoets's consistent literary efforts had carried beyond his wounding in December 1944. Sadly, the author broke off his narrative at that time; the reading public is definitely the loser. His "million dollar wound" only kept him out of combat for a period of weeks before he was back at the front. The book concludes with thoughts from contemporary times, reflecting on the last months of the war, based on wartime notes.

Several pertinent photographs and documents are distributed throughout the book. An appendix contains correspondence with his wife and family. For those who know the author for the gentleman he is, the book contains no surprises and confirms both his character and patriotism.

The book is a quick read and provides invaluable insight into a young man's first experience of war. The brief story about the nurses at his convalescent hospital taking his pants away to keep him from going AWOL to see the town and countryside is such a gemstone. Revisionist historians who revile the U.S. use of the atomic bomb at war's end will find no support from the author. He was slated to be transferred to the Pacific theater for the invasion of Japan, and his book ends with his thanks to President Truman for his decision to use the bomb.

Bob Hart  
Las Cruces

**T***he Battle of Glorieta: Union Victory in the West* by Don E. Alberts. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1998. 226 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio., notes. \$16.95, paper.

The Civil War battle of Glorieta (or Glorieta Pass) has had an uneven history. During the 1880s *Century Magazine* published a series of articles that became *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Volume two devoted nine pages to General H. H. Sibley's Southwestern campaign, of which only one paragraph was on the Battle of Glorieta Pass! In 1906 a posthumous volume on the battle by Reverend W.C. Whitford was published, emphasizing the role of the Colorado Volunteers. It contained photographs, but no maps. *American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War* (1960) does not even include New Mexico, Sibley, or Glorieta in its index! Both the *West Point Atlas of American Wars* (1972) and Jay Monaghan's *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (1984) also ignore the entire New Mexico campaign.

Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.'s *The Civil War in the American West* (1991) represents a sea change in the evaluation of the battle's significance. Josephy presents a fair account of the action (three pages) but includes no detailed maps of troop dispositions. Jerry Thompson's *Confederate General of the West: Henry Hopkins Sibley* (1996) also briefly explains the battle but contains no detailed maps of unit dispositions. In contrast, Don Alberts's volume contains a detailed analysis of each of the three phases of the baffle (Apache Canyon, Pigeon's Ranch, and Johnson's Ranch), as well as detailed maps of the progress of each battle, noting unit positions and movement.

The book's strongest point is the author's expertise. Alberts writes with a familiarity for the terrain. He has been there; he has walked the fields and climbed the slopes. He also was the consulting historian for the archaeological project that exhumed the Confederate mass grave at Pigeon's Ranch. He knows his subject.

The book is replete with the anecdotes that historians, amateur and professional, dearly love. He notes, for example, that the battle was brought on by disobedience of orders. And before the battle be fought, a squabble over seniority had to be resolved between the regular army commander of Fort Union, Colonel G.P. Paul, and the newly arrived volunteer commander, Colonel J.P. Slough. Paul, of course, writing for posterity, disavowed any blame for the disaster that might have attended Slough's impetuous advance.

One of the work's major contributions is a narrative of the flanking movement by Major J.M. Chivington. Marc Simmons has recounted the participation of Lieutenant Colonel Manuel A. Chaves in *Little Lion of the Southwest* (1973), but this reader has never before encountered the role of Reverend Alexander Grzelachowski. Alberts also corrects other authors concerning the destruction of the Confederate supply train's animals. He points out that

the troops were only amid the supply train for perhaps thirty minutes, hardly enough time to bayonet five hundred or more animals.

The author's claim that Glorieta was "the Gettysburg of the West" is not based on the numbers of troops engaged, the casualties sustained, or the participation of famous commanders. Glorieta was the furthest northern penetration of the Confederate campaign in the Southwest. The Confederacy's immediate goal in New Mexico was Fort Union, but beyond lay the Colorado gold fields and silver lodes. As Confederate Major T.T. Teel wrote for *Battles and Leaders*, General Sibley's ultimate goal was California, via Salt Lake City, where he expected Mormon allies. He had designs on the states of northern Mexico and desired foreign recognition for the Confederacy. These lofty goals proved illusory with the outcome at Glorieta. But had the outcome had been different, would that have changed its significance? Would a victory at Glorieta have guaranteed a successful campaign? This reader believes that assumption is a stretch, but an arguable one.

Alberts' prose is lively and his knowledge encyclopedic. Nothing with the depth of this volume has been produced previously concerning this battle. If you are interested in military history and the Civil War in the West, it is a must-read book.

Robert L. Hart  
Las Cruces

**H**alf A Man on A New Mexico Cattle Drive by Lindley J. Stiles and Simmie G. Plummer. Las Cruces, NM: New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 2000. 238 pp, illus. by Lori Musil, gloss., \$14.95.

During World War I a government agency called the War Finance Corporation (WFC) made loans to cattle raisers in an effort to increase beef production and thus meet the needs of the Army. But in the post-war era, cattle prices collapsed, leaving many ranchers unable to continue debt payments. In 1924 the WFC was phased out and its remaining assets liquidated. Outstanding loans were called, and many cattlemen faced foreclosure of their herds.

Out of this situation came New Mexico's Federal Cattle Drive, a dramatic and virtually unremembered chapter in our state history. In the northwest corner of New Mexico, a herd of fifteen hundred debt steers was assembled and branded US, as government property. The animals needed to be moved 120 miles over rough country to Grants, the rail shipping point. For that difficult job, the agent from Washington D.C. hired local rancher David Stiles, a Texan born in 1872, who had participated in some of the last long drives.

Stiles was a natural leader, wise in the ways of cattle and men. When word got out that he was hiring for a

long drive, cowboys from afar beat a pathway to his door. One of his crew came from Montana and another from the King Ranch in Texas. The youngest member, shown on the government payroll as "half a man," was Stiles' twelve-year-old son, Lindley, who served as helper at the chuckwagon and rode drag.

In this stirring account, Lindley draws from his own recollections of the drive a picture with all its color, perils and pleasures. One can only marvel at the skill shown by trail boss Dave Stiles as he deals with the challenges met along the way. Here was a man of character, an example of the best the ranching frontier ever produced. We can be grateful that Lindley Stiles, at eighty-six, working in collaboration with his niece, Simmie G. Plummer, was able to get this story into print. Lori Musil's splendid line drawings add much to the narrative. This book is a little gem that should not be missed.

Marc Simmons  
Cerrillos, NM

**T**he Great Southwest of the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway edited by Marta Weigel and Barbara A. Babcock. Phoenix: Heard Museum, 1996. 217 pp, illus., appendix, bib., notes on contributors, index. \$24.95, paper.

Frederick Jackson Turner said that the frontier ended in 1890 when the census of that year revealed that there were no great expanses of vacant land left to be conquered. In a great sense this was true, although Patricia Limerick, the doyen of the New West Historians takes another view. In a narrower sense, the frontier lived beyond 1890 with the accompanying discomfort and even dangers long familiar to western travelers. Their writings often spoke of terrible and inadequate food and dirty condition not only of the serving establishments but also of those who served what passed for food. The quality of available lodging often equaled that of the food. Travel itself was an experience in misery. Arguably, along the route of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, the frontier west ended not when Turner said it did but, beginning in the 1870s, but when Fred Harvey teamed up with ATSF to provide excellent dining car service. At selected stops, Harvey offered good food served by clean young women in clean attractive restaurants, modern and comfortable hotels, plus goods (mostly Indian goods), and adventures (almost always concerned with Indians), to entice the ever-increasing numbers of tourists and business travelers from Kansas to California. Those who returned to their homes back east could still claim they had "seen the elephant and heard the owl" and prove it in the form of pottery and rugs bought from the Harvey Company. To an extent never before possible, they did not have to suffer much discomfort to do that — thanks to Fred Harvey and the Santa Fe Railway.

This book contains introductions and a series of essays by a variety of writers including the editors,

staff members of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Bryon Harvey III, great-grandson of Fred Harvey and others — especially curators. As the editors note, the book generally covers the first three decades of the twentieth century and is divided into three major parts: “The Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railway,” “Traders and Collectors,” and “The Fred Harvey Company and the Native Southwest.” The first two of these three sections are excellent.

After an introduction, the first section begins with an essay on the promotion of the Grand Canyon as a destination resort where tourists could be fed and housed in Santa Fe-Harvey establishments like the soon-to-be-famous (and still operating) El Tovar, which was “more than a hotel; it is a village devoted to the entertainment of travelers.” The El Tovar was but one of a number of Santa Fe-Harvey establishments at or near the Canyon edge and could be reached directly by Santa Fe rail. This essay mentions problems involved in the development of other tourist attractions such as Hopi House, Phantom Ranch eight miles down the trail into the Canyon, and other such enterprises. It makes appropriate use of quotations from writers and publicists of the time, and we are left with the intended profits for the Santa Fe/Harvey companies.

There is an essay on Mary Colter, Harvey’s great architectural designer about whom has already been written. Mary Colter in a way created the West for Fred Harvey, and this essay covers both her work before she became associated with Harvey and after. It notes how she was able to successfully work for two employers, the Railway (which owned the exterior of all Fred Harvey establishments), and the Fred Harvey Company (which owned the interiors). Various of her projects are described, especially those where she was “synthesizing architecture and ethnology.” Her work included the renovation with John Gaw Meem of the La Fonda in Santa Fe.

The third essay: “Constructing the Native Southwest at the San Diego Panama-California Exposition of 1915” covers exactly that, an effort spearheaded by a design team that included both Colter and Edgar Lee Hewett. The latter seeming to have his finger in everything even distantly related to Santa Fe and New Mexico. The last part of this section covers the famous “Indian Detours” which as many readers already know were motorcar tours, mostly leaving from Santa Fe to visit the pueblos and nearby points of interest though the article points out that the first left from the — Castañeda Hotel in Las Vegas. Other Harvey tours were developed and described.

The last essay covers the Harvey Company bookstores, located in railroad stations and hotels, and the distribution of merchandise through on-board and train platform agents. David Farmer in this well-written section covers an aspect of the Santa Fe/Harvey operation rarely mentioned, and one that only the oldest of us can now dimly remember from childhood travels. The second

major part of this book, “Traders and Collectors,” begins with an essay by Byron Harvey III on the development of the great Harvey Collection and touches other aspects of the collection of “Indian Art” by the Harvey Company and others. It notes the part played by the company in building the great collections of wealthy men (for example, William Randolph Hearst) and museums. There is a great deal here about Herman Schweizer, the Harvey Company’s knowledgeable and enthusiast buyer and seller of Indian goods. Almost 80 percent of the Harvey Fine Arts Collection is currently located at the Heard Museum.

This second section continues with more about Schweizer, a sort of mini-bibliography of the man by Kathy Howard and even more by her Heard Museum colleague, Diana Pardue. She writes about the association of Schweizer and the Harvey Company with George Dorsey who was, it seems, able to combine science with an interest in writing and marketing. The following essay is about a collection of Arapahoe items sold by the Harvey Company, and its inclusion in this book is a mystery. Beyond the fact that the company owned the collection and sold it, the essay has to do with the ATSF or the Harvey Company. Following is a piece called “Hidden at the Heard,” about the Harvey Porno Collection, donated to the museum in 1978. This is interesting in part because the Pomos are not usually thought of in connection with Harvey and the ATSF. The essay following is concerned with William Randolph Hearst, a collector *extraordinaire*. After all, it was not just anyone who in 1911 could throw away \$75 or \$150 for a piece of ethnographic material, and the essay tells in fascinating detail how the Harvey Company went out of its way to accommodate Mr. Hearst.

The section ends with an essay on Katherine Harvey’s collecting “career.” This is a somewhat disconnected *article* that wanders off into a discussion of “when women collect” and “when men collect,” with further comments about the Harvey Company collections (which were not the same as Katherine’s). It discusses her interest in supporting Indian arts and in Indian “self-determination,” an interest she shared with others. Part of the “disconnection” is the essayist’s choice to go, albeit briefly, into the sociological and artistic interests of a number of (usually wealthy) women of the time, for example, Mary Cabot Wheelwright and Mabel Dodge Luhan.

The third major section of this book causes serious problems for a reviewer who dislikes allegedly academic, pompous discourses such as

What that title (*Mudwomen and Whitemen*) implies is that Native American others, both male and female, are presented as passive, available to the Euro-American viewer — that a colonialist gaze entails domination and mastery, representation and hierarchy, and requires such representations to reiterate its

control. More specifically, the reproduction of Pueblo culture in the bodies of women and clay vessels has been transformed and commodified in the past century from historical realities to aesthetic objects to mythic shapes of desire.

Since this third section of the book is full of political correctness for which this reviewer has a very low tolerance, it was impossible to take it seriously. It is condescending and at the same time derogates the whole idea of the Santa Fe-Harvey enterprises. The section is New West History mixed in with the almost sneering, elitist writings of some modern, educated Indians. The reader will find included in this last major section of the book, an interesting description of pottery making and some more Santa Fe-Harvey history, but it is presented in a way that is the antithesis of the first two sections of the book. Indeed, it appears that the editors put in the third section of the book to negate the goals of the first two sections, or at least to counter the impression that they approved of the “crass commercialism” (my phrase) that of course was the purpose of the whole ATSF-Harvey Company operation, the description of which, one supposes, was the purpose of this book.

All in all, the first two sections of this book constitute a good piece of work, and will appeal to people interested in Indian art, the collecting thereof, and to people who are interested in the Santa Fe Railway, and by extension, railroads in the Southwest. It will appeal to those interested in southwestern history in general and to those interested in a microcosm of merchandising history. The book is chock-full of interesting characters. Those who applaud “Red Power,” and those who think that Limerick and her army of New West Historians have hit the nail on the head, will love the last section of the book. Buy it, or check it out from your local library. You won’t be sorry.

E. Donald Kaye  
Santa Fe

**Cochise Remembers Our Great-Grandfather, Charles Henry Coleman: A Primary Document in Southwest History** by Rita Sanchez. San Diego: R and R Publishers, 1991. \$10.00. Contact [rsanchez@sdccd.net](mailto:rsanchez@sdccd.net)

[Editor's note: Rita Sanchez's article, "Charles H. Coleman and Macedonia Cruz: A Southern New Mexico Legacy," appeared in volume viii of this review.]

In 1871 there were rumors that the great Apache chief, Cochise, was willing to make peace with the US Army. For decades the white and Mexican settlers of southern Arizona and New Mexico had lived with the fear of warfare with the Apache people, and this was a hopeful rumor. To confirm the stories of a possible peace, the editors of a bilingual newspaper, *The Borderer*, published in Las Cruces, sent a group of reporters to visit Cochise in his stronghold located in the Dragoon Mountains of Arizona.

The problem was to find someone who knew the famous chief and who could assure their friendly reception. They chose Charles Henry Colman, a respected local rancher to accompany them on their journey. Coleman was a friend of Cochise, having hunted with him at Apache Pass in the 1860s. *Cochise Remembers* is an personal voyage of discovery by Colman's great-granddaughter. Rita Sanchez teaches Literature, English, and Chicano Studies at Mesa College, California and has devoted herself to researching her family's history. In this book she presents the original *Borderer* article, in English and Spanish, that describes the expedition to visit Cochise. More than that, however, she sets this event within a much larger context of ethnic relations in the Southwest. Coleman was a German immigrant, a soldier in the U.S. Army, who married Macedonia Cruz, a Piro Indian and Mexican girl, in 1850 after he saw her dancing Los Matachines in Doña Ana plaza. The U.S.-Mexican War had just ended. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had just been signed, and the Gadsden Purchase was yet to permanently settle the international boundary line between the U.S. and Mexico. As Sanchez points out, they should have been enemies but they fell in love. The story of Coleman is more than just his trip to visit Cochise. It is also a tale of two cultures coming together.

*Cochise Remembers* introduces and surveys the saga of U.S.-Apache relations, as well as U.S.-Mexican relations. It is unlikely that Coleman would have been as important as he was for the history of this region without his marriage to Macedonia, a woman who gave him unique insight into both cultures. This book presents a bilingual, Spanish and English, account dramatically portraying an eight-day journey into the Chiricahua Mountains. *The Borderer* interview with Cochise is widely regarded as the best interview ever given by the Apache leader. This book is a significant contributions to our knowledge of Mexican, Indian, and Southwestern history. It is one of many attempts to recover and publish a lost history. The book should be an inspiration for many to take seriously our family histories and continue publishing them.

Richard Griswold del Castillo  
San Diego State University

**New Mexico's Historic Places: The Guide to National and State Register Sites: New Mexico's Historic Places** by Marci L. Riskin, General Editor; New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. Santa Fe: Ocean Tree Books, \$15.95, paper.

This book is a useful one to put in the glove compartment of your car if you are traveling and get off the Interstate once in a while, and it is small enough for your purse or for a (big) pocket if you're walking.

Following a brief introduction, the book lists registered places divided into six regions, each covering sev-

---

eral counties. Within a region, historic sites are listed by city or town and under each such, individual properties are listed, with a street address if appropriate. National and State Register numbers are also listed, although these are probably only of interest to specialists. It highlights certain sites, and Thomas Merlan and Frances Levine have written brief and as far as this reviewer can tell, accurate mini-histories of the highlighted properties. (I was particularly pleased to see that these two writers did not fall for the story that the Barrio Analco, south of the river in Santa Fe, was populated by Tlaxcalan Indians and that it was they who built San Miguel Chapel.) These mini-histories add “soul” to this publication, and make a real book out of what otherwise would be just a long list of places. The highlighted sites are illustrated with small black-and-white (o.k., gray scale) photographs—some of which would have benefitted by captions. In many instances, color photographs would have been vastly more valuable, but no doubt the use of color was precluded by budgetary constraints.

A large number of prehistoric sites are on these registers of historic places. This presents a problem for the reader who is probably going to look for Chaco Canyon under “C,” not under “N.” But, presumably for consistency’s sake, the listing is for Chaco CanyonNageezi, listed as though it were Nageezi (after the “Ms” and before the “Os”). There is no other mention of Nageezi, since the trading post isn’t a registered site, nor for that matter is the bed-and-breakfast. Chaco Canyon, properly, is one of the highlighted sites. Similarly, under the “Ps” is a listing for

Pueblo Pintado, which is both a Chacoan outlier and a town (of sorts). Since there is no Register listing for or in the town, like Nageezi, nothing is written about it. All that is shown is a list of archeological sites identified by their LA (Laboratory of Anthropology) numbers and Register numbers. There are no descriptions and no names, but the listing is there to ensure that all of the registered sites are in the book — and they probably don’t want you going to those sites anyway. Fortunately, this way of handling the archeological sites is only a distraction.

At the back of the book is a list of registered “roads, trails and routes,” and a map that gives a very general idea of where they are (or were) and an index of the highlighted sites in alphabetical order, convenient if you wanted to see only what the authors thought was most important, and your time, but not your gasoline, was limited.

The editors, the writers, and the Historic Preservation Division have put out a publication that not only is useful to anyone interested in seeing the remaining tangible aspects of New Mexico’s history, but also shows that New Mexico has been able to “save” a lot of that history despite the weather, time, disinterest, and developers. It is hoped that this book will help to make more people understand the work of preservationists and historians and will lend strength to the preservation movement. I also hope that HPD sent a copy of this worthwhile publication to every state legislator and to every mayor in New Mexico.

E. Donald Kaye  
Santa Fe

*Come join us in preserving  
Doña Ana County's  
unique history!*

Memberships are calendar year.

Please make your inquiry to:

**Doña Ana County Historical Society**  
500 N. Water Street  
Las Cruces, NM 88001-1224



Pasajero del Camino Real  
*Property of DACHS*

[Click for Table of Contents](#)

## Doña Ana County Historical Society Officers and Directors

2001-2002

### OFFICERS

President: Beverley A. Pirtle

Secretary: John P. Bloom

Treasurer: David G. Giron

Historian: Robert O. Pick

### DIRECTORS

Bill Peden

George Helfrich

---

### Guidelines for Submissions

The Dona Ana County Historical Society will consider for publication original articles concerning events, people, organizations, Institutions, structures, and natural formations of historical significance to the southern part of the state of New Mexico, i.e. south of Interstate 40. All submissions should deal with either documented fact or authentic personal memory.

There is no stipend for articles published, but each author will receive a copy of the *Review* in which the article appears. Articles which have been previously published will not normally be considered unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Clear information concerning prior publication should accompany submissions. A copy of the manuscript should be kept by the author. The original submission may not be returned or may be returned with editorial marks or comments. The Dona Ana County Historical Society assumes no responsibility for lost or misdirected manuscripts.

**Length and Format:** Manuscripts should be double-spaced on 8½ x 11 inch paper, one side only, standard margins. All text, block quotations, captions, tables, notes and references must be double-spaced. The maximum length should be 17 pages, including all illustrative materials and documentation.

**Illustrations, Documentation and Style:** All photographs and other illustrations should be unmounted and identified on the back with date, source, and a brief descriptive caption. Maps should include scale and a north directional arrow. All tables should be numbered, briefly titled, and cited by number in the text. See past issues of the *Review* for style of citation in references and notes.

**Vita:** A brief (100 to 150 words) biographical sketch of the author together with name, address and telephone number, should accompany submissions.

**Book Reviews:** Reviews of books relating to southern New Mexico may be submitted. These should be one to two pages long in regular manuscript format.

**Deadline for Submissions:** June 15 for consideration in issue scheduled for publication the following January.

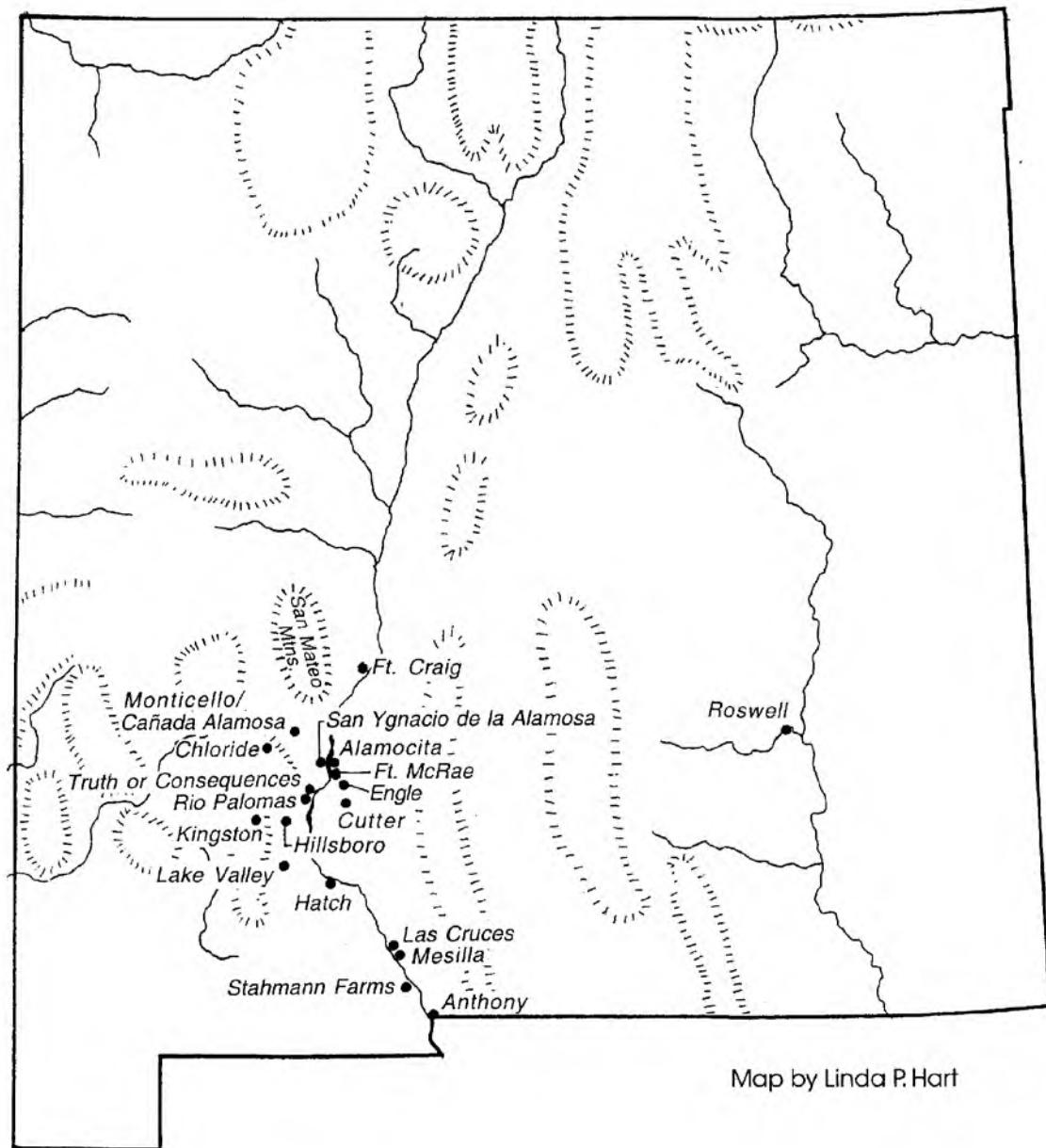
**Address all submissions to:**

*Southern New Mexico Historical Review*

Dona Ana County Historical Society

500 North Water Street • Las Cruces, NM 88001-1224

[Click for Table of Contents](#)



Map by Linda P Hart

## Doña Ana County Historical Society

*Our mission is to encourage a greater appreciation  
and knowledge of Southern New Mexico's  
historical and cultural heritage.*