

# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW



*Pasajero del Camino Real*  
By  
*J. CISTERNOS '89*

**Doña Ana County Historical Society**  
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## Editor's Note

I was delighted to be called again to edit the 2016-17 *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. This publication is enjoyable because it exposes the reader -- and editor -- to some of the history of our great area of the world.

In this edition, you will read about famed and respected Aggie Coach McCarty of the 1950s as well as the bloody history of Cooke's Canyon near Deming, NM. Just as fascinating is the bit of history put forth by writer Daniel Conrad Jones about the Angus V V Ranch in Lincoln County. Jim Eckles reminds us with his piece on Camp Cody just how instrumental Southern New Mexico was in preparing the nation for our biggest military conflicts. And Joseph P. Sanchez, in his well-documented article on the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, takes us into the little known pieces of history that should be close to every New Mexican's heart.

But as an editor, what I find gratifying and challenging in editing this journal are the different writers. Many of the works I have come into contact with over the past two years come from writers and researchers with varying degrees of skill. But what they share is a passion for knowing and passing on our regional history. That is the most important thing.

What professional and amateur historians know is that history is a living thing. What may be true today may not be true tomorrow because new facts surface or a new light is cast from different line of research. So when one reads this journal, I hope it does one of two things -- enlightens a casual reader to the spectacular history that makes up Southern New Mexico or spurs one to dig even deeper into a topic published here. With either event, the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* has done its job.

Enjoy and have a happy 2017.

Sincerely,  
Keith Whelpley

PS: I would like to thank August Bud Russo for helping in the editing of this journal.

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# Southern New Mexico Historical Review

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



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# Breaking the Drought in Santa Fe: Edwin L. Mechem And the 1951 Struggle for Bipartisanship And Reform in State Government

By Judith Messal

*In the following pages, aspects of Edwin L. Mechem's 1951-1953 administration are reviewed, beginning with his inauguration, the first his party had enjoyed in twenty years. Then the story moves to his first days in office when he began the struggle to form a bipartisan government and curb patronage in state employment. In the process, he would break with tradition and dismay powerful leaders in both parties.*

Jess Lydick was one of the first people to see Edwin Mechem after his election to the governorship of New Mexico in 1950<sup>1</sup>. Mechem had called his friend at 4 a.m. with urgent business. He needed a new car. During his long campaign across the state, he had worn out his old Ford and had to replace it. Lydick, who sold the vehicles, drove to his friend's home across from New Mexico A&M in Las Cruces. The governor-elect ". . . was sitting with his wife Dorothy at the kitchen table, dressed in a tee-shirt and khaki trousers. Barefooted," Lydick wrote in his memoir. The telephone, he recalled, "was ringing off the wall. It was so memorable to sit there with them and contemplate what a turning point that was in their lives."<sup>2</sup>

The Mechems' turning point was one for New Mexico as well. The election of the young Republican attorney from Las Cruces meant that two decades of one-party rule in state government were coming to an end. Almost no one had thought Mechem would win, certainly not the candidate himself, but on that post-election morning in 1950, he began to think about how he would form his administration.

The next day, John Knorr dropped by.<sup>3</sup> Knorr, chair of the state Republican Party, had helped organize Mechem's campaign. Now he had urgent business of his own: to advise the governor-elect on patronage, the kind of patronage that had marked state governance for years. Knorr asked Mechem not make any appointments to his administration until it could be determined how much the appointees' home counties had raised for the GOP effort. Mechem would not agree. "John," he said, "we've

got to operate a state government. . . . We've got to start right now."<sup>4</sup> During the next weeks, he worked on appointments, matching jobs to people he thought were highly qualified. Some happened to be Democrats who already worked for the state as appointees of the outgoing Governor Thomas Mabry.

Mechem would become governor at an exciting time of post-war growth in New Mexico. He had pledged that he would reform government. Beyond reforms, he would face a deadly drought, a large water debt owed to neighboring states, the search for new water sources, a long labor strike, a prison disturbance and a high-profile unsolved murder. He would work with a Democratic-majority legislature. And, in the divided executive branch, he would be the only Republican of nine elected officials. Even his lieutenant governor was of the opposite party. All the foregoing could have presented obstacles to his reform efforts, but his plans were firm. He was going to depoliticize the work of as much of the executive branch as was within his reach. And he was going to do it with people from both parties.

## The Inauguration

On New Year's Day in 1951, snow began to fall on Santa Fe. It was the first storm of winter and raised hopes the drought was ending.<sup>5</sup> At the statehouse downtown, Edwin Mechem's inauguration was about to start. An honor guard stood on the lawn ready to give a 21-gun salute, and inside, a crowd of well wishers from Las Cruces gathered near the chamber where the swearing in would take

place. Mechem, tall and trim in his dark suit, gave his hometown people “a solemn wink” as he passed by.<sup>6</sup> Minutes later, he faced Chief Justice Eugene D. Lujan of the New Mexico Supreme Court, to repeat the oath of office. The new governor looked the part. He was an imposing figure. “Majestic,” future colleague Judge James A. Parker would say to describe him, and at the same time “humble and unpretentious.”<sup>7</sup>

His posture straight, brow glistening from the heat of the crowded room, Mechem must have felt the enormity of the moment as he turned to his audience. Eight weeks earlier, he had assumed the election would mark his return to his law practice. Instead, he had become the fifteenth governor of the State of New Mexico and, at thirty-eight, the youngest.

As he began his speech, he focused, not on his campaign pledges of state reform, but on New Mexico’s role in a post-war world of rapidly shifting alliances. On the very day of his inauguration, the new Korean conflict dominated the news, along with reports of threats from the U.S.’s former ally the Soviet Union. Mechem himself had had some experience with the Soviets. As a wartime FBI agent, he had done counter espionage work on Soviet activity on the West Coast.

In 1945, when a conference convened in San Francisco to plan for the United Nations, Mechem was there providing protection to U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius and thereby crossing paths with the Secretary’s Soviet counterpart Vyacheslav Molotov.<sup>8</sup>

At the podium on that first day of 1951, Edwin Mechem may have been more deeply aware than many others of the changing world order and New Mexico’s place in it. The state was becoming a site of weapons research and development at: Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, north of Santa Fe; Sandia National Lab, in Albuquerque; White Sands Proving Ground and Holloman Air Force Base, both located in southern New Mexico’s Tularosa Basin. The work would draw scientists and engineers from across the U.S. The state would grow by forty percent during the 1950s.<sup>9</sup> In his

speech, Mechem talked of New Mexico’s national defense role, alluding to how the state’s oil and gas resources could help the country.<sup>10</sup> Finishing before his allotted time, a habit he was to cultivate, the new governor walked downstairs to greet the overflow crowd.<sup>11</sup>

The snow, which had stopped that morning, resumed in the afternoon. By 3 p.m., the outgoing and incoming governors and their wives had formed a receiving line in the State Art Museum to greet more than a thousand people from throughout the state, who had lined up in the snow<sup>12</sup>

That night, Santa Fe sparkled in the cold. The inaugural ball was about to begin. Its setting was the La Fonda hotel, with its 1920s Pueblo Revival flair. Simone de Beauvoir once called it “the most beautiful hotel in America.”<sup>13</sup> The public rooms were festive with winter greenery and colored lights, and the music of two orchestras floated from



*Governor Ed Mechem. Photo courtesy of Walter and Janet Mechem.*

the ballrooms. A thousand people had gathered for the grand march of the governor and first lady.<sup>14</sup> The *New Mexican* described the event in baroque terms, evoking the glitter, sheen, rustle and shapes of midcentury fashion.

At last, the Mechems appeared, he in a tuxedo and she in a column of pale silk. As they processed through a corridor of cheering celebrants, the couple embodied the change of leadership “from old to young,” the reporter said. Furthermore, the traditional receiving line had faded away because “the new governor and first lady were too busy dancing.”<sup>15</sup>

In the press reports of the 1951 inauguration, one can imagine a subtext. Against the electoral odds, a new young leader enters the capital. And on the day of his swearing in, a winter storm breaks a drought.

With Santa Fe transformed by snow and ice, the governor and his wife sidestep tradition to dance the night away. The reporter’s images offer a metaphor for the months that followed, when Edwin Mechem ended a political drought and broke with tradition in the statehouse. His bipartisanship and reforms would surprise both political parties and begin to transform the functioning of the executive branch.

### Tensions Over Patronage

When the new governor went to work on the icy morning of January 2, the capitol was not his first stop. Speculation was that he was conferring with GOP leaders at La Fonda.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the implications of the meeting were, Mechem had decided on a bipartisan administration and would not engage in large scale removal of Democrats from the governor’s offices.

As a college student, he himself had lost a job based on party affiliation. During the Great Depression, he and a fellow laborer in his sixties had been dismissed from state highway work because they were Republicans. The order had come down to southern New Mexico from the office of Democratic Governor Arthur Seligman, who had succeeded a Republican in 1931.<sup>17</sup> Twenty years

later, Mechem decided not to run his administration at the same level of partisanship. His resolve dismayed some in his party who viewed patronage very differently.

Even before Mechem took office, a party struggle emerged over how state jobs would be distributed to Republican supporters. On December 30, the *Albuquerque Journal* ran the following in a political column:

*Victory has done strange things to Republican Party leaders. As they approach the inauguration of their first successful gubernatorial candidate in 20 years, leaders are displaying deep suspicion of one another. . . . [which] can all be traced to Governor-elect Edwin L. Mechem. Mechem is not cut of the familiar political cloth. . . . Mechem has said his objective is to take politics out of state government as rapidly as possible. That means when making an appointment for a key job he will find the best man suited for the job. If the person is a Republican, that’s fine. If not, then the person’s politics is not a consideration. This has some of the Old Guard puzzled and annoyed. . . .*<sup>18</sup>

The *Journal* focused on another major figure said to be at the edge of the inner circle: John Knorr, party chair.<sup>19</sup> Knorr was frustrated by both Mechem and the state GOP. He acknowledged in a letter to the *Journal* that the party had recruited Mechem to run with the proviso that he could make his own appointments.

“. . . [T]here would be no political machine dictating to him,” Knorr said,<sup>20</sup> but then he suggested that the governor’s office could choose workers for lower-level state jobs by consulting with county party chairs. It was not unusual for a governor’s office to operate that way. Certainly, the Democratic Party used a similar setup, and people knew it. Knorr was trying, in part through patronage, to make Republicans competitive. Despite winning the governorship, the party had done poorly in the 1950 elections. Strong local organization with ample patronage could boost the GOP effort.

Knorr did not understand why Mechem was retaining so many Democrats.<sup>21</sup> The governor, on

the other hand, believed the voters had mandated him to curb wholesale patronage and end machine politics. He wanted a personnel system with people hired on merit and paid according to a standardized salary schedule. Employees with good performance would have job security, regardless of which party was in power.

Mechem knew of a 1935 law authorizing the governor to establish such a system.<sup>22</sup> His predecessors had not used it, probably to avoid an outcry. Political patronage worked better in a more fluid milieu. But Mechem dusted off the statute and set to work on a prototype personnel system.

A decade would pass before the Legislature authorized a formal civil service system,<sup>23</sup> but Mechem started the process using executive power. It revealed how he made reforms, through legislative action when he could get it and executive action when he could not. After meeting with his party's leaders on January 2, he settled into the governor's office. On his agenda was his upcoming speech before the Legislature.

Ed Mechem did not like to give speeches.<sup>24</sup> He had just finished his inaugural address, and now he had to speak to the Legislature. On January 9, he entered the House chamber and faced the legislators, over three-quarters of whom were Democrats.<sup>25</sup> He unveiled for them a twelve-point program, including reforms to curb patronage, depoliticize the state police force and liquor regulation and improve voting practices and judicial selection.<sup>26</sup>

House Democrats went on record with their reactions.<sup>27</sup> Speaker Calvin Horn of Albuquerque deemed Mechem's proposals sound, saying he thought the House would work with the governor. Henry Trujillo of Santa Fe called the speech excellent. I. M. Smalley of Deming praised Mechem's words for their "leadership and dignity." E. S. "Johnny" Walker of Silver City was supportive of some elements. McKinley County's Lillian Thompson said Mechem's program was what the people wanted. Morgan Nelson of Roswell called the speech "statesmanlike . . . with no political axe to grind." He predicted, however, that the actual content of Mechem's bills might provoke dissension.

## A Struggle Over the State Highway Commission and a New Coalition

Dissension came quickly and not over bill content. It was due to Mechem's nominees for appointments to the State Highway Commission. On January 11, as the Senate clerk read the names of the nominees, a senator declared: "The honeymoon is over."<sup>28</sup> He and other Democratic leaders deplored the number of GOP names on the list. On the surface, the matter of making commission appointments might have seemed routine, even mundane, but it did not play out that way. The episode of the Highway Commission was intense, offering a glimpse into a political dynamic in 1951 that had the following three elements:

- A one-party government had to share power with the opposition for the first time in years.
- Ruling-party factions were moving into a power vacuum created by the recent, unexpected defeat of their gubernatorial candidate John E. Miles. Some moves played out in the Senate.
- The new governor, from a party in the extreme minority in state government, was encountering an early test of his strength against the still-powerful majority.

A related way to view the struggle over Highway Commission nominees is to appreciate the enormous patronage implications. Tensions over control of the commission began to build in November, right after the election. Earlier, voters had passed a constitutional amendment, replacing a three-person Highway Commission with a five-member one. Members were to be nominated by the governor and confirmed by the Senate, and not more than three nominees could be of the same party. Once confirmed, the commission would hire the Highway Department director. Under the new director, many hundreds of highway jobs fanned out over the state.<sup>29</sup> Applicants for those jobs, regardless of the level, had to secure the approval of their county Democratic leaders.<sup>30</sup>

Democrats had a bundle of reasons to keep a majority on the commission, stated the *Albuquerque Journal*.<sup>31</sup> With the defeat of John Miles, their

party had lost many state jobs with which to reward loyalists. The eight elected officials that the Democrats still had in the executive branch controlled about three hundred jobs, but the Highway Department, under the governor's purview, had multiples of that number. If Democrats held the majority of seats on the new commission, they could continue to control patronage, even under a Republican governor, and they could award contracts to their preferred construction and supply companies.<sup>32</sup> The highways themselves could serve as rewards for counties that brought in votes for the party.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, they could prevent the Republicans from building their own party machine. The Journal predicted the Senate would try to force a Democratic majority on the commission, and, given the inexperience of the Republicans, they might succeed.<sup>34</sup>

Few people knew New Mexico's roads better than Edwin Mechem. He had worn his car out on them. During his campaign, in the days before the interstate freeway system, he had travelled across deserts, plains and mountains on state roads. He had a deep feeling for New Mexico. Helping to provide a good highway system, as part of a clean administration, would have appealed to him. Such a system, he would have realized, would be important in New Mexico's new role in defense research and development and for other economic expansion. He began to set his criteria for commission nominees.

Meanwhile rumors flew. One was that outgoing Governor Thomas Mabry would appoint the new commissioners before he left office. But he replied that the task should be Mechem's.<sup>35</sup> Speculation then turned to Mabry's Lt. Governor Joseph M. Montoya and the possibility that he would name the commissioners if the governor were to travel out of state and leave him in charge. It was December, and Montoya joked that Santa Claus was on his mind more than politics.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, talk persisted that Montoya would control the appointments through an arrangement with state senators. He had indicated, after all, that he wanted to be his party's legislative leader in the upcoming session.<sup>37</sup> Montoya was an ambitious young Democrat work-

ing to consolidate his power in the vacuum left by Miles' defeat. A third rumor spinning around the state was that Democrat Tibo Chavez would make the appointments. As lieutenant governor-elect, Chavez would be sworn in before Mechem on January 1. Some thought it was possible for Chavez to claim gubernatorial powers and nominate commissioners.<sup>38</sup>

Mechem was not worried. Law experts affirmed that the governor must present Highway Commission nominations to the Senate at a regular legislative session. Other appointments, if made, would be only temporary.<sup>39</sup> Then a more serious challenge came. It was from Burton Roach, a powerful Senate Democrat. In late December, Roach warned that a majority of the nominees should be Democrats.<sup>40</sup>

Quietly, the governor-elect worked on his nominations. Reporters inquired about them, but he was mum. He looked for people who, in his opinion, had meaningful connections to road use but no conflicts of interest. He would not choose a vendor who sold highway equipment to the state or a contractor who bid on state road construction work.

Mechem selected the following: C. D. Hatfield, a Deming farmer and New Mexico Credit Association board member; Tito Valdez of Tierra Amarilla, a rural school superintendent concerned with the transportation of students; Ralph Jones, an automobile dealer and once Albuquerque's Chamber of Commerce president; T. J. Heimann, a Roy rancher and ex-state legislator and Thomas T. Mann, a Roswell surveyor and engineer who had worked for the Highway Department. Mann and Heimann were Democrats. Valdez, Hatfield, and Jones were Republicans.<sup>41</sup>

Senate leaders were not impressed by Mechem's careful selections. In fact, the nominations incensed them, and they pledged to fight the governor. Mechem had lacked the courtesy to consult with Democratic leaders, Floor Leader Burton Roach stated, calling him dictatorial. It was unacceptable, he said, that the majority of nominees were Republicans.<sup>42</sup> The leaders vowed they would not confirm the governor's "political 'strangers,'"<sup>43</sup> and a news survey revealed that Mechem had only

twelve votes for Senate confirmation. He needed fourteen.<sup>44</sup>

State Democratic Party Chair Ray Rodgers supported Roach's opposition to Mechem. But speculation grew that senators from southern and eastern New Mexico would defy their leaders and support the governor. Indeed, earlier in the month, a southern New Mexico Democrat reported that he and others had pushed party leaders to accept a resolution not to marginalize the new governor and instead to cooperate with him on progressive legislation.<sup>45</sup>

Senate leaders tried another approach, seeking a legal opinion on the new amendment that might knock out Mechem's nominations. The Attorney General, held back, saying that various legal interpretations were possible and advised the Senate to review Mechem's nominees on their merits.<sup>46</sup>

Creating a bipartisan administration was becoming a delicate matter. The governor refused to withdraw his nominees. He had another play to make, he pointed out. He could dismiss Mabry's commissioners and replace them with new appointees to serve on an interim basis until the next legislative session.<sup>47</sup>

Off and on for over four weeks, the Highway Commission story appeared on the front pages and in the editorial columns of the state's newspapers. One journalist saw more than a simple Democratic vs. Republican battle. He thought Democrats themselves might be struggling for position within their party. Since their last gubernatorial candidate, the seasoned, never-before-defeated John E. Miles, had just lost to a young, relatively unknown Republican, it created space for new leadership within their own party. Factions may have been using the commission controversy to test their place in the power structure.<sup>48</sup>

The Senate Rules Committee began to call in the commission nominees to consider their qualifications. Chairman Embry Wall did not schedule the nominees together, preferring to bring them in one at a time, days apart. Observers surmised that the Senate planned to string out the hearings in the belief that Mabry's commission would stay if new

nominees were not approved before the session's end. Legal experts, however, supported Mechem's understanding that he could appoint an interim commission.<sup>49</sup>

The first hearing before seven Democrats and two Republicans was tough. Senators grilled T. J. Heimann, the rancher and former legislator, referred to in one news story as an outcast Democrat. He faced questions about road construction equipment and types of oils applied to road surfaces. He was queried about his engineering experience and whether he had ever made studies of highway costs. Finally, Republican Senator Reginaldo Espinosa expressed discomfort over the nature of the questioning, asking if the Senate was looking for technicians or administrators to serve on the commission.<sup>50</sup>

In mid-February, Leader Roach prepared for a showdown on the Senate floor. He started counting the votes to deny confirmation of Mechem's appointees, but those votes began to disappear. On Monday, February 19, when Albuquerque Senator Leonard Ginn asked Roach to postpone the vote, the floor leader replied, "There aren't enough votes. . . . It's impossible."<sup>51</sup> Roach knew his support had eroded over the weekend. Mechem's political power was a factor. As one Democrat explained, "I'm not going to go against that 8600 Bernalillo County vote for Mechem."<sup>52</sup> Then, through a bipartisan coalition, the Senate confirmed the governor's nominees. One Democrat dryly observed that a renegade in his own party, Senator James T. Brewster of Dona Ana County, would have made "a good candidate for minority floor leader."<sup>53</sup> If he heard the comment, Mechem, also a man of dry wit, must have laughed.

Governor Mechem had gotten his five-member Highway Commission with the nominees he proposed, and he had created an opportunity to curb one-party patronage in a large sector of state employment. His next step was to say publicly that personnel matters belonged to the commission, but he did want to comment on patronage. Highway maintenance division jobs could be given equitably to members of both parties, he suggested, or all positions that had been filled by patronage could

be vacated, with new hiring on a nonpolitical basis.<sup>54</sup> Ultimately, he wanted the jobs folded into a personnel system so that merit, not party affiliation, determined employment, but that would take time. His statement was another score for bipartisanship. He supported sharing with Democrats what could have been major patronage for Republicans alone. He felt similarly about appointing top officials in his administration.

### **A Bipartisan Administration**

The practice upon the change of administrations was that the previous governor's appointees resigned. It had long been a matter of "he who lives by the sword . . ." Mechem observed.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, he accepted the resignations of many of his predecessor's officials, but some wanted to stay. If Mechem did not have a place for them, he wrote them tactful letters recognizing their service but selected someone else. Several others Mechem appreciated. The officials he invited to stay included John Bliss, State Engineer; Dick Spurrier, Director of the New Mexico Oil Conservation Commission; John Garcia, Inspector of Mines; J. T. Reese, head of School Bus Transportation, and Chris Anderson, head of the Surplus Property Office.<sup>56</sup> "I caught hell," Mechem recalled, "because I kept too many Democrats."<sup>57</sup>

Even through Republican appointments, Mechem furthered bipartisanship. An example was his choice of CPA Edward Hartman as comptroller. Hartman and Mechem created a finance department that kept the Democratic-majority State Legislature informed. Mechem himself had been a legislator in the 1940s and knew the need for more financial information from the executive branch. As governor, he invited the Legislature to assign a person to work with the comptroller in budget tracking. He asserted that legislators were entitled to complete information.<sup>58</sup>

Later he documented his ideas on inter-branch financial collaboration, and after he left office, his memorandum was cited to support a proposal to provide budget staff for the Legislature.<sup>59</sup> Eventually, such a staffing came about. Hartman stayed

with Mechem through all his administrations. During one of them, Democratic House member and future governor Bruce King served on the State Board of Finance, commenting that he came to have ". . . great respect for Governor Mechem and his department of finance and administration."<sup>60</sup>

### **Mechem's Impact and Democratic Reflections on a Bipartisan Governor**

Edwin L. Mechem had broken a political drought in Santa Fe; one-party rule had given way to a new bipartisan government. His appointments to the Highway Commission and other offices symbolized his reforms to reduce patronage. It was not a perfect effort. One journalist wrote that Governor Mechem felt compelled, in some cases, to make appointments of a political nature but that ". . . he hated just about every minute of it."<sup>61</sup> Indeed, one or two of his administrative appointments proved problematic. Overall, however, he set a new tone in government and helped reenergize a two-party system.

Governor Mechem had ideas for many other state reforms. One was to appoint judges on merit bases rather than as partisan rewards, a system that has been cited in judicial publications.<sup>62</sup> Often legislators declined to pass his reform bills. They would turn them down, Mechem recalled, and then pass them later under a Democratic administration.<sup>63</sup> He was not daunted by legislative rejections. A man of equanimity and great good will, Mechem knew how politics worked, and he considered his relationship with the Legislature to be positive overall. When he could not get statutory changes, he used executive action to create reforms, which succeeding governors could maintain if they chose.

When Edwin Mechem was elected in 1950, the iconic Senator Dennis Chavez had remarked, "I have stated before that unless we Democrats clean house eventually the people will clean it up for us. They did."<sup>64</sup> In 1952, Mechem ran for re-election. During the race, newspaper editors spoke up, critiquing Mechem's administration for its shortcomings but also praising it. "When Governor Mechem took over as the chief executive of New Mexico in

January 1951, it was like a breath of fresh air sweeping through the state capital,” wrote the *Carlsbad Current-Argus* editor in a heavily Democratic region. “The state government, we think, can use that fresh air for another two years.”<sup>65</sup> New Mexico Newspapers, Inc. endorsed the two Democrats running for Congress that year but then supported Mechem, saying, “. . . the continuance of this clean, young man in office would be good for all New Mexico. Ed Mechem’s administration has been the most wholesome political experience New Mexico has enjoyed in many years.”<sup>66</sup> The people returned Mechem to office by a generous margin of votes.

Eminent Democrats would have the final word about the midcentury Republican governor who embraced bipartisanship. “In any one-party state, conditions become stagnant,” liberal University of New Mexico political scientist Frederick C. Irion wrote in 1963, stating that “Republican Edwin L. Mechem has been used by the voters as a clean-up man. . . .”<sup>67</sup> Irion’s colleague Howard J. McMurray touched on Mechem’s particular appeal to the electorate, pointing out that the Democrats, in their twenty years of one-party rule, “. . . had become suspect, to put it very mildly” and that voters had tired of machine politics. “In 1950 Republican Edwin Mechem won the governorship because he was new in politics, an indefatigable hand-shaker, and, above all, honest. And he was honest,” McMurray wrote.<sup>68</sup> More recent comments come from two individuals prominent in New Mexico political life. Raymond G. Sanchez, former speaker of the state’s House of Representatives, knew Mechem through much of his long public service career and remembered him as “a steady governor, a fine governor” in whom people had confidence.<sup>69</sup> “Stalwart, honest, impeccable”<sup>70</sup> are the words that former state legislator J. Paul Taylor attributed to Edwin L. Mechem in his role as governor.

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# La Ruta de Oñate: Early Parages of Northern Chihuahua and Southern New Mexico along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

By Joseph P. Sánchez

*Editor's note:* Throughout this article the author uses the term "league" to define land measurement. Once commonly used in Europe and Latin America, league represents 3 land miles.

It was early May 1598, at a *parage* (campsite) on the north bank of the Río Grande near the crossing they called "Los Puertos," when Spanish settlers were approached by several warriors who had come in peace to meet them. "They had Turkish bows, long hair cut to resemble little Milan caps, headgear made to hold down the hair and colored with blood or paint," wrote one Spaniard, who described the Mansos through Spanish colonial eyes. "Their first words were *manxo, manxo, micos, micos*, by which they meant 'peaceful ones' and 'friends.'"<sup>1</sup> They also made the sign of the cross, which impressed the Spaniards. That place would later be known as El Paso del Norte -- the pass of the north.

The settlers who met the Mansos were led by Governor Juan de Oñate, who had just blazed a portion of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro<sup>2</sup> (Royal Road of the Interior) due directly north from Santa Bárbara in Nueva Vizcaya (present day Chihuahua) to the Río Grande. Shortly, the Mansos helped Oñate's settlers cross the river.<sup>3</sup> Like most *parages*, or campsites, along the long Camino Real de Tierra Adentro that roughly measured 1,600 miles long, the exact place varied. Generally, the *parages* were a day's ride from one place to another. Depending on how far and/or how fast one could go in one day, *parages* were not always exact spots on the map. Their place names, based on topography and general distance between them, identified the sites. El Paso del Norte, for example was a place where one forded the Río Grande. Place names emerged along every stop of a given route. As every colonial traveler knew, behind every *parage*, there is a

story. There, at El Paso del Norte, the weary settlers stopped to celebrate a Holy Mass in thanksgiving to God in gratitude that they had reached that far without incident.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it was the first European thanksgiving in the far reaches of Spanish North America. Thus, *parages* are integral elements of all *caminos reales* and, as such, share in the heritage and historical significance of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro as a part of our national story that is shared with Mexico, Spain and regional Native America tribes.

Forged from Native American pathways, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro became an important transportation corridor during the Spanish Colonial period of New Mexico and the Republic of Mexico. By 1610, the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, which traversed nearly the entire length of the interior of present Mexico, ran from Mexico City to Santa Fe in New Mexico. Along the entire length of the trail were hundreds of *parages* where travelers set up campsites. Utilized as the main road to transport people and things, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, in the sixteenth century, took on significance as the first step in the northward expansion of Spanish settlements, forts, farms, ranches, and missions. Between 1540 and 1821, the Camino Real corridor formed a braided trail along the route of newly developed towns, missions, forts, mines, and land grants that marked each step of its expansion. The *parages*, themselves often overlooked, are an integral part of the Camino Real and its heritage.

The significance of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro to the history of New Mexico and our national story, was clearly acknowledged in 2000, when the United States Congress designated the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. That section of the *Camino Real* totaled 404

miles within the United States starting at the Mexican border through El Paso, Texas, and New Mexico. Later, in 2015, UNESCO designated 1,200 miles within the Republic of Mexico as World Heritage Site. Such honors pay tribute to the significance of early Hispanic settlers of New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico, who developed towns, ranches, fortifications, and missions along a corridor that supported such enterprise. In that way, they touched the future of New Mexico and our national story.

An operative definition of the word *parage* is paramount toward understanding the place names that attach to it. Historically and linguistically, the word *parage* defines a stopping place or a campsite along a given route. Distances between *parages* vary, depending on time traveled within a day. Usually a *jornada* was a day's travel measured in time whether on foot, on horse, or following a *carreta* caravan. *Parages* became predictable stopping places along a measured path of travel. Paradoxically, a given *parage* is, as defined above, not a fixed point but a place that overlaps a series of campsites that share a common place name in a particular area. In 1895, Elliott Coues, an ardent explorer and writer, characterized Fray Cristóbal as an area more than a specific point.<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes Spanish travelers selected a site for a *parage* simply because, barring an emergency stop to make repairs to *carretas*, it was as far as one could travel in one day and still have time to set up camp and tend to their herds and beasts of burden before dark. Pasturage, water, and wood were the basic amenities required for a *parage*. Over time, the area of a *parage* overlapped several repeated campsites used by different travelers. Correspondingly, a *parage* could cover a larger area than a mere designated point on a map. Thus, a *parage* could stretch a considerable distance in length or size, depending on the scattering of campsites in a given area.

A *parage* differs from a *lugar* in that a *lugar* is a settled place, usually isolated or remote from neighboring settlements. Indeed, a *lugar* may have more of a look of permanency than a *parage* because structures such as living quarters characterize it. In time, some *parages* became *lugares* from

which larger settlements grew. Thus, a *parage* is basically a rest stop with no attendant structures or services. Aside from time of travel between certain points, *parages* were chosen because of water, pasturage, woods, or other conveniences such as protection against the wind or because it was a defensive position in case of attack. In time some *parages* became settled places, and some took on the characteristics first of a *lugar*, then towns developed from them. The evolution from *parages* to towns occurred virtually before the eyes of weary travelers on the Camino Real. In some cases, land grants developed around *parages*, sometimes using them as boundary markers. In other cases, *parages* took their names from hacienda owners, events, or descriptive attributes surrounding their locations. As they evolved into towns, land grants, and places, the names of *parages* survived long after they had lost their value as stopping places.

Describing the Spanish *parages* from the Anglo-American point of view over two centuries later, Josiah Gregg, in 1833, presented a short commentary of the *Parage de Fray Cristóbal*. He wrote that it "like many others on the route, is neither town nor village, but a simple isolated point on the river-bank – a mere *parage*, or camping-ground."<sup>6</sup> In August 1846, Adolphus Wislizenus, heading south, pondered this word understanding it to refer to the last camping place before entering the *Jornada del Muerto* rather than to a particular site. His caravan camped two miles from the Río Grande but he noted that others stayed nearer or further from the river and that there were no buildings.<sup>7</sup> These observations were merely made by newly arrived Anglo-Americans who likely expected to see a developed site. To Hispanic frontiersmen, the definition was obvious, for even as one approached the more populated areas, the primitive character of the *parage*, as a campsite, did not change.

Our national story is filled with histories of trails and their corridors that explain European expansion in North America. The development of roads is, of necessity, a significant function of the historical process of nation states. The historic roads of New Spain (present Mexico), are as much prehis-

toric in character and purpose, and factors regarding their development prior to European intrusions influenced the location of many colonial roads that were established between 1521 and 1821. Too, from Native American footpaths to roads for horse and oxen-pulled carretas to modern automobile highways and railroad lines, a widened corridor shifted to accommodate its uses. Thus, the corridor of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro can sometimes be as wide as several miles from its original footpath to a route that would accommodate modern travel, or more importantly, the location of places to which the route went as new destinations changed the trajectory of the road and its *parages*.

The first phases of the march northward from Mexico City took place in the late 1540s as silver mines were discovered in Querétaro, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas. The first silver rush, the first wagon trains of settlers, and the first long cattle drives in North America took place along this trail. Indeed, the first “Forty-niners” in North American history were those who rushed to the silver mines before the decade of the 1540s was over. The establishment of Zacatecas, which emerged from a series of mining camps, in 1546 represented an important phase of the development of the trail as Spanish settlers pushed northward to other fields, thus expanding the settlement pattern beyond the Zacatecas-Durango frontier line to present Santa Bárbara-Parral. With expansion came demands for protection and pacification of the area. To that end, missionaries and soldiers moved forward to establish religious and military institutions along the route. By the mid-1570s, the presidio at Janos, stood as the northernmost stalwart point like its namesake the Roman god Janus, who looked both ways to the past and the future. In this case, Janos, on the edge of the Spanish frontier faced north toward the little known “*tierra adentro*” (interior lands) and south to the most recently settled town along the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.

Significantly, the silver strike at Zacatecas served as the cause for expansion northward. By 1549, the well-traveled Camino Real from Mexico City to Zacatecas attracted the attention of Viceroy Anto-

nio de Mendoza as new roads from the agricultural fields of Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Querétaro developed to supply workers in the mines. In 1952, Philip Wayne Powell defined the historical route from Querétaro to Zacatecas by examining the principal settlements and stopping places (*parajes*) for the evolving *camino real* as follows:

*Going north from Mexico City, the route of travel was already well defined as far as Querétaro by the time of the Zacatecas discovery. There was a regular traffic of merchants, officials, cattlemen, and livestock through this province of Jilotepec, a region that did not offer great travel difficulties. The principal settlements and stopping places for the traffic were Cuautitlán, Tepejí, Jilotepec, and San Juan del Río. Between Querétaro and the later foundation of San Felipe there were two main roads toward Zacatecas. One went northwest direct to San Miguel, then along the east bank of the San Miguel River toward San Felipe. The other went north from Querétaro passed just to the east of the Nieto Pass (where a road branched off to San Miguel, then turned northwest through Jofre Pass (near the later San Luis de la Paz), passing through the llanos called La Mohina, and joining with the other road at a point between the Río de los Sauces and San Felipe. The combined road then went north west through the portezuelo of San Felipe to Ojuelos. Just beyond Ojuelos it passed a point known as Encinillas, which was considered to be the dividing line on the Zacatecas highway between the audiencias of Nueva Galicia and Mexico. From Encinillas the road passed through Las Bocas and Ciénega Grande (both fortified by the viceregal government during the 1570s), then on to the paraje del Cuicillo, nine leagues from Zacatecas, where it joined another road going north from Michoacán.<sup>8</sup>*

By 1575, the frontier line had moved as far north as the Santa Bárbara-Parral in present Chihuahua. Presidios between Querétaro and Durango dotted the road and defined the importance of protecting the settlement pattern. For example, during the period 1570 to 1600, presidios between

Querétaro and Guanajuato at Maxcala, Jofre, and Atotonilco marked the beginning of the route. In that same period, the progression of the presidial line moved north of there to Jasó, Portezuelo, Ojuelos, Bocas, Ciénega Grande, Cuicillo, and Palmillas reaching Zacatecas. Beyond Zacatecas, just south of Durango, the presidial garrisons at San Martín and Llerena for a while marked the northernmost end of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. Beyond Santa Bárbara in present Chihuahua then known as Nueva Vizcaya, New Mexico beckoned.

In the early exploration of New Mexico, most expeditions jumped off from Santa Bárbara and followed rivers eastward to where they drained into the Río Grande at a place known as Junta de los Rios. East of there, the Rio Grande channeled its torrents that formed the Big Bend of the Rio Grande, a drainage known as the Río Bravo. With the establishment of New Mexico by Juan de Oñate in 1598, the trail took a major jump directly from Santa Bárbara northward toward today's El Paso/Cuidad Juarez to the far reaches of New Mexico at confluence of the Río Chama and the Río Grande.

The first *parages* along the *Ruta de Oñate*, or Oñate's Route, a portion of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro through northern Chihuahua leading into New Mexico were established between January and July of 1598. Oñate and his settlers pioneered a new section of the Camino Real when, upon reaching the Río Florido and the Río Concho, they crossed the rivers and headed north to the Río Grande. The traditional route had been to follow the two rivers eastward to its junction with the Río Grande and proceed northward along it to the Pueblos. North of Santa Bárbara, beyond the area of El Paso and into New Mexico, the straight line to the north became the portion of the Camino Real historically known as "La Ruta de Oñate." The new route saved weeks and many miles of travel.

In 1595, Viceroy Velasco and Juan de Oñate agreed on a formal contract for the settlement of New Mexico.<sup>9</sup> Finally, on January 26, 1598, after much delay and great expenditure to Oñate, the expedition was permitted to leave for New Mexico. In a great cloud of dust, the slow-moving, oxen-

pulled eighty-three *carreta* caravan creaked out of the Valle de San Bartolomé in Nueva Vizcaya (present Chihuahua). For months on end, the shouts and whistles of New Mexico's first *vaqueros* and the cracking sound of whips pushed their large herds of livestock northward. Looking for a direct route with water, they blazed a straight line northward. Sometimes, to avoid the choking dust, the three-mile long caravan, where it could, spread out evenly almost in width across a swath of land.<sup>10</sup>

Driving thousands of sheep, pigs, goats, cattle, mules, and horses, the soldiers and settlers continued their trek to their new homeland far to the north. In the wake of their march, they left behind their *parages*, which would become campsites for succeeding expeditions. Scouts, led by the Sargento Mayor Vicente de Zaldívar, Oñate's nephew, wandered far ahead of the wagon train to find an easier route and amenable campsites with water, wood, and pasturage.<sup>11</sup>

Weeks after leaving Santa Bárbara, Oñate and his settlers moved past Ojo Caliente in present northern Chihuahua before reaching the sand dunes near Samalayuca. In the succeeding centuries, other travelers followed variants of the Ruta de Oñate. In time, Ojo Caliente was considered to be the first settlement in Nuevo México. Later travelers would leave their descriptions of the route. In the eighteenth century, for example, Nicolas Lafora found this hacienda abandoned when, on July 14, 1766, he passed by it. Ojo Caliente lay five leagues (a mile equals 2.6 leagues) south of El Carrizal in present Chihuahua at the foot of a small hill. Both Ojo Caliente and El Carrizal are south of El Paso del Norte. Lafora noted that Ojo Caliente sat at the boundary of the jurisdiction of New Mexico at the time.

Its modern name is Ojo Caliente de Santa Rosa, in the *municipio* of Carrizal, present Chihuahua.<sup>12</sup> Carrizal and Ojo Caliente are located on the edges of the famous sand dunes known as the Médanos de Samalayuca, which were a principal obstacle to those traveling on the *Camino Real*. The first Spanish occupant of the area was probably Cristóbal de Chávez, a *vecino* from the town of Paso del Norte.

Around 1700, he was given a land grant by Antonio de Valverde y Cosío, captain for life of the presidio of Paso del Norte and *alcalde mayor* of the jurisdiction. This grant included Ojo Caliente, and although some descriptions noted that the lands there were bad and that it suffered from Indian invasions, the settlement of Ojo Caliente, nonetheless, prospered. Around the 1730s Manuel de San Juan de Santa Cruz acquired the lands of Ojo Caliente and founded an important hacienda.<sup>13</sup> From that point on, Ojo Caliente became an important stopping place on this section of the Camino Real. But by the end of the colonial period, the hacienda practically disappeared, and it became a simple watering hole on the *Camino Real*. In 1726, Ojo Caliente comprised four farms where wheat and corn were grown.<sup>14</sup> Nicolas Lafora found this hacienda abandoned when he passed by on July 14, 1766. It lay five leagues south of El Carrizal in present Chihuahua at the foot of a small hill. Lafora noted this as the boundary of the jurisdiction of New Mexico at the time.

About eight days later, on April 8, 1598 the Oñate expedition, having gone past Carrizal, Los Patos, and Ojo del Lucero, reached “La Ciénega de la Concepcion,” probably formed by the overflow from Ojo del Lucero.<sup>15</sup> Lafora passed this spring, eight leagues north-northeast of El Carrizal, on July 16, 1766. He described its water as salty and hard. The same name is found on both new and old maps.<sup>16</sup> Americans passing through the area in 1846 noted that it was a sizable spring of good water which poured out of a small depression in the plain within 100 yards to the east of the road. The water formed a creek, which crossed the road and emptied into a pond.<sup>17</sup>

On April 10, 1598, the Oñate expedition traveled a league and a half from the Ciénega de la Concepcion and reached the Fuente de San Leon, a small water hole a short distance “*del camino*.”<sup>18</sup> This or the spring mentioned below may have been the Charcos de Grado of later years.<sup>19</sup> The next day, the Oñate expedition spent April 11, 1598, traveling three leagues from the *Fuente de San Leon* and reached the manantial de San Emengildo, named

for a Spanish prince and martyr.<sup>20</sup> This or the Fuente de San Leon may have been the Charcos de Grado of later years.<sup>21</sup>

On April 12, 1598, Oñate and his settlers broke camp at the Parage of San Ermengildo and, later that day, reached the sand dunes at Bocas de Los Médanos. They remained there until April 19 because the watering places north of there did not have enough water for the livestock. Slowly, they moved their herds to the Río del Norte ahead of the caravan.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, the caravan traveled three leagues to the gap at Bocas de los Médanos. By that route, the *carretas* avoided the worst of the sand dunes and reached the Río del Norte about eight and a half leagues below present El Paso. Not far from there was the waterhole at El Ojo de Agua de Samalayuca

Oñate and his settlers had, indeed, blazed a new and lasting route beyond Santa Bárbara. As they pushed northward across the prairies of northern Chihuahua, they found needed water and pasturage for their animals. The weather of the late Little Ice Age, however, was not what they had expected. As they approached the Río Grande, light snow had fallen in the area as a cold wind swept the desert of present northern Chihuahua. On April 20, after crossing the difficult sand dunes to the south, Oñate’s scouts came to the Río del Norte in the area of modern El Paso. The Oñate expedition remained here until the 26th while Captain Pablo de Aguilar Ynosoja went ahead to explore the road, traveling some 16 leagues to the north of there.

Over the next three days they traveled two and a half leagues and found other salines, and on April 30, 1598, Oñate took possession of all the kingdoms and provinces of New Mexico in the name of King Felipe. On May 4, they continued on to the pass of the river and the ford, where they met 40 Indians. They also made the sign of the cross and helped the Oñate expedition cross the river.<sup>24</sup>

According to Joseph Brondate, who was captain of the cavalry, after going upriver about fifty leagues from the ford, the Oñate expedition reached the first pueblos. Brondate described the land as being good, except for about eight leagues where

there was no water.<sup>25</sup> He also stated that the Río del Norte was the main river in the province and that it rose in the month of May. Many kinds of fish could be found in it.<sup>26</sup>

In 1726, Pedro de Rivera, in his military inspection tour of New Mexico, noted that the *nacimiento* or source of the Río del Norte was 50 leagues northwest of the capital, Santa Fe. Poplars grew on its banks, and fish such as trout, among others, were abundant.<sup>27</sup> The Bishop of Durango, Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, wrote that all the way from El Paso to New Mexico one did not lose sight of this river, but also mentioned difficulties with regard to the dearth of water in the Jornada del Muerto.<sup>28</sup> Notably, the river ran through the heart of New Mexico, but the carreta caravans could not follow the river.

In the mid-1770s, Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez noted the reason for the name Río del Norte, agreeing with Oñate's chronicler that it stemmed from its northern origin. He added that it began many leagues beyond Taos, sometimes entering mesas, where it formed canyons, sometimes flowing through plains, broadening out more in some places than in others, winding in still others, but always tending toward the south. Although New Mexicans, who traded illegally with the Utes since the 1670s, knew the location of the nacimiento of the Río Grande, Domínguez was mistaken in his notion that even the settlers and the Indians had been unable to find the source of the river. Domínguez wrote that many large and small rivers joined the Río del Norte from the east and west, from above Taos to below El Paso. It was in flood from mid-April to the end of June.<sup>29</sup> Actually, the Río del Norte had three names based on its drainages. First, the Río del Norte, sometimes designated as the Río Arriba, ran the San Luis Valley in present Colorado down to about Cochiti Pueblo. The Río Grande, sometimes called the Río Abajo, ran south from Cochiti Pueblo to a point south of El Paso. The Río Bravo, as designated in Enrico Martínez's map of 1602, ran from the Junta de los Rios to the Gulf of Mexico. All colonials, however, noted that the common name was the Río del Norte.

The Río Grande, ran high and low depending

on the snow pack and rains. It was never the same year around. Wislizenus, for example, approached the Río del Norte from the east in the area of Albuquerque on July 12, 1846. He found it shallow, flat, and not very imposing. His caravan was delayed north of Albuquerque when rain damaged part of the road, which followed the river. Eventually they made it to a higher road to the east, which, itself, became impassable just south of Albuquerque. Wislizenus wrote that some caravans crossed to the west bank of the river at Albuquerque and recrossed at Socorro, but that his did not.<sup>30</sup>

In 1598, the Oñate Expedition approached the Río Grande from the south from the sand dunes at Samalayuca. It had taken the expedition, which left Santa Bárbara, nearly three months to reach the river. There, a *parage* was established that would serve as the gateway to New Mexico. Of the event, the author of the "*Itinerario*," the main diary of the expedition, wrote:

*On April 30, 1598, day of the Ascension of our Lord, at this Río del Norte Governor Don Juan de Oñate took possession of all the kingdoms and provinces of New Mexico, in the name of King Felipe [II], our lord, in the presence of Juan Pérez de Donis, royal notary and secretary of the jurisdiction and expedition. There was a sermon, a great ecclesiastical and secular celebration, a great salute and rejoicing, and in the afternoon, a comedy. The royal standard was blessed and placed in charge of Francisco de Sosa Peñalosa, the royal ensign.*<sup>31</sup>

From there, they followed the river to a point where the mountains came down to form "the pass of the river and the ford." The *parage* and the crossing was named "Los Puertos,"<sup>32</sup> or the gateway, although later it would be known as El Paso del Norte, today's Ciudad Juarez. In that desolate land, the warm spring sun of May 4 witnessed the activity as Oñate's army and forty Indians moved their cargo, carts, and livestock across the river. It was near there that they met the first Indians from New Mexico. There, as mentioned above, they stopped to give thanks to God, for bringing them safely to that point in their travel northward.

Looking northward into the *tierra adentro* beyond the river crossing of El Paso, Oñate realized, “There is no other road for carts for many leagues.”<sup>33</sup> The Spaniards would have to blaze their own road. He asked the Indians about Cíbola, and they responded “very clearly by signs that the Pueblo settlements were six days distant, or eight days along the route of travel” for the carts. But Oñate’s opinion about there being “no other road” was soon contradicted. Some of his men had also been with Morlete, six years earlier, in 1592. Before the day was over, wrote the author of the *Itinerario*, “we passed the ruts made by ten carts that Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, who had, six years earlier, illegally, without license from the king or viceroy, attempted to settle New Mexico from Saltillo, Coahuila, with 200 settlers in 1590. Captain Juan Morlete and his men were sent up to arrest him in 1592 and took him back to Mexico City by Juan de Morlete,<sup>34</sup> Once down the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Morlete released the settlers and bade them return to Saltillo. Castaño de Sosa was tried, convicted and sentenced to the Manila Galleons in the Philippines, where he died in a battle with Chinese rebels.

Ten days later, Oñate and his settlers moved up the desolate trail, now stopping to repair their carts; now stopping to observe a holy day of obligation or merely to rest from the hard work of moving their herds and carretas overland. The summer rains and heat alternated as often as the thirst and hunger that afflicted the slow-moving wagon train that passed below the Sierra del Olvido (Sierra of Forgetfulness) with its craggy spirals which rose a short distance to the east of the Río del Norte. The sierra received its name because some of Oñate’s men who had been with Morlete could not remember ever having seen them. Eight decades later, the Sierra del Olvido, named for the forgetfulness of Oñate’s men upon entering New Mexico, would be renamed “Los Organos” (today’s Organ Mountains) by Spaniards fleeing the province during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

By mid-May 1598, the Juan de Oñate expedition had traveled about four leagues beyond the Organ Mountains. The road was very primitive,

and the train had to be divided for the carretas could not navigate along the winding Río Grande and its canyons. On May 21, on the edge of what would later be called the Jornada del Muerto (Dead Man’s Journey), they buried Pedro Robledo but did not refer to the burial site as Robledillo.<sup>35</sup> The site, in 1598, was known as “La Cruz de Robledo” after the burial place of Robledo.<sup>36</sup> Neither did they know the place name “Jornada del Muerto,” which was not so-called until much later.<sup>37</sup> Following the burial, the carreta caravan began its trek into the desert lands of the Jornada del Muerto. That day, they camped at the first *parage* of the Jornada called *Parage de San Diego*.

The entire Jornada has a history of its own. Travelers, through the centuries, commented on the area in their diary entries. In November 1681, while marching north, Governor Otermín, for example, mentioned that he and his men marched 32 leagues from Robledo, finding small seasonal water holes along the way, to the next permanent water hole. On the return trip, he made stops at *parages*, which he called Robledo and Robledo el Chico, one league apart.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in the early eighteenth century, Pedro de Rivera traveled seven leagues northwest from La Ranchería on May 23, 1726, and described the land with some small hills and mesquite thickets. That night he camped at the *parage* called Robledillo.<sup>39</sup>

The area had begun to undergo changes in terms of place names and *parajes*. Decades later, in 1760 Bishop Tamarón reached Robledo. The river ran between the two sierras: Robledo on the west and Doña Ana to the east. He wrote that his caravan had camped at a place called Doña Ana near the river. They spent a guarded night because of possible attacks by Apaches.<sup>40</sup> A few years later, in August 1766, Nicolas de Lafora named his campsite on a bend of the Río Grande the “Ancón de Roblerito.” Travelers also knew the large *paraje* by other names such as “Robles” and “*Parage de Robledillo*.” Lafora estimated the *parage* was nine leagues from Bracitos and twenty-nine leagues upriver of his crossing near “Presidio del Paso.” The hilly country, filled with thick brush, largely mesquite, lay be-

tween the mountain ranges called Doña Ana, to the east, and Roblerito, across the river to the west.<sup>41</sup> Lafora and his superior, the Marqués de Rubí, noted that it would be a good site for a military post. Later, in 1865, Fort Selden and two other forts north of El Paso were established in the area by the United States, in part to protect the entrance of the Camino Real into the Jornada del Muerto. The fort operated intermittently until 1889. Its site was chosen, like the *paraje* before it, for it had the required pasturage, wood, and water.

Robledo and Doña Ana were well-known places of refuge for travelers well into the nineteenth century. In 1833, Josiah Gregg crossed the Jornada del Muerto and added that he was grateful to reach “Robledo” on the river, with its abundance of water and wood.<sup>42</sup> Expressing a similar sentiment thirty-three years later, Wislizenus gladly wrote, “at last” arrived at the river after their crossing of the Jornada del Muerto in a hot August day in 1846. Wislizenus wrote that the country was mountainous and described the mountains to the east, calling them the “Organon,” (Organ Mountains/Sierra de los Organos), known as such since the days of Governor Antonio Otermín who had named them in 1680. Wislizenus also noted that twelve miles south of the Jornada, lay the first town known as “Doñana.”<sup>43</sup> Upon reaching one of the last of the southern *parages* in the Jornada, San Diego, travelers could not wait to reach “Robledo,” for it was at the southern end of the Jornada not far from the river.

Travelers on that portion of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro knew that the *paraje* of Robledillo or Robledo was not an exact point on the Río Grande. It was the entire valley, blessed with water, wood and pasturage. Looking north toward the Jornada del Muerto, the land appeared forbidding, especially in the summer months.

Oñate and his settlers were the first major group of travelers to cross that area and head toward the vicinity of Robledo. Somewhere near the vicinity of present Las Cruces, Oñate, the Father Commissary Friar Cristóbal de Salazar, Juan de Zaldívar, Vicente de Zaldívar, and a complement of sixty horsemen

left the expedition following the river through its varying canyonlands. Their goal was to reach the Indian settlements far to the north. Riding ahead of the caravan, they hoped to prepare the pueblos for their coming.<sup>44</sup> Besides, the expedition was in need of foodstuffs, Oñate needed to replenish their supplies. One of Oñate’s famous *parages* on this leg of the expedition became known as Frá Cristobal, named after one of the priests that accompanied them. Apparently, the place name resulted when Oñates men saw what appeared to be a face on a rock or mountainside. One of the soldiers noted that he could discern the face of Fray Cristóbal. The soldiers laughingly called the *paraje* “Fray Cristóbal” noting non-complimentary-wise that the poor Franciscan was “feísimo!”--not good-looking.

Meanwhile, back near the place they would call Robledo, the leaders of the *carreta* caravan scouted the land ahead for a better land route than that offered their wagons by the meandering Río Grande and its canyons. Beyond the Sierra del Olvido to the east lay a plain that would be easier for the carts to travel despite its lack of water. The writer of Oñate’s “*Itinerario*” noted that: “We all fared badly on account of the river, toward the west. Deep into the desertscape, later known as the Jornada del Muerto, the settlers struggled to find water for themselves and their herds. Luckily, they found signs of water when a dog appeared with muddy paws and hind feet we searched for some water holes. At a *paraje*, where they had camped for the day, commemorated as *El Perrillo* [the little dog], Captain Gaspar de Villagrá found one and Cristóbal Sánchez another, not far from where we were, toward the river.”<sup>45</sup>

The trail away from the river was overcome after much hardship to man and beast. Moving northward, they established several campsites along the length of the eighty-plus mile route of “La Jornada del Muerto.” Reaching the far northern end of the Jornada, the writer of the *Itinerario* commented that: “We were exploring and feeling our way along the entire route for the first time, and we suffered a great deal because of not knowing it... . We went six leagues to the marsh of the *mesilla guinea*, so-called because [the rock on] it was black.”<sup>46</sup> The

date was May 27, 1598; they were near present San Marcial on a flat, marshy plain below a round top of black rock. They had crossed a plain of the Jornada del Muerto. Moving northward, they camped at a pueblo called Qualacú on the northern end of the Jornada and at the southern end of the Río Abajo,

The carretas moved out along the east bank of the Río Abajo and by mid-June the settlers camped near the pueblo of Teypana, which the Spaniards called Socorro because the people there aided them and “furnished us with much maiz.” One of the Teypana leaders, Letoc, spoke Piro and communicated to the Spaniards about the other pueblos they would pass on their trek northward. Most of them, however, were abandoned in fear of the Spaniards and their terrible weapons and horses. The caravan passed by the abandoned pueblos north of Socorro and left them undisturbed. Somewhere north of Socorro, the Spaniards recrossed the river and traveled along the east bank on slightly flatter terrain. Shortly they reached an abandoned pueblo they called Nueva Sevilla, which later maps would show as Sevilleta. There, in the abandoned pueblo, the settlers camped for a week.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, Oñate’s nephews, the Maese de Campo Juan de Zaldívar, and the Sargento Mayor Vicente de Zaldívar, explored the nearby pueblos northeast of the camp. Although some of the pueblos they visited were on the Río Grande, the Zaldívar brothers were attracted to those east of the large Sierra Morena, present Manzano Mountain Range. Where today’s Abó Pass--which the Spaniards later called *el portuelo* [the little gateway]-comes into view from the river, the small scouting party turned east. At the southern end of the Manzanos, they visited other pueblos, doubtless seen by Antonio de Espejo in 1583 and probably by Sánchez Chamuscado in 1581. Upon their return to Nueva Sevilla, the Zaldívars reported having seen many pueblos on the other side of the mountain. One of them they identified by the fascinating name of “Aboó.”<sup>48</sup> It was around June 22, 1598, when the Zaldívar brothers “discovered” the ancient pueblo. Soon after, they rejoined the expedition.

From their camp at Nueva Sevilla, Oñate led

a detachment of some sixty horsemen northward once again. Passing through the valley of Puaray, they saw many pueblos and cultivated fields on both sides of the Río Abajo within the area of present Albuquerque. Most of the pueblos of Puaray, located along the river, had been abandoned, for they lived in fear of a returning Spanish army. Their lore constantly reminded them of the war of “fire and sword” waged on them by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado almost six decades earlier. By 1598, their fear, caused by having killed Friar Agustín Rodríguez and his missionary companions in 1581, seemed to loom over Puaray like a curse. Almost every time a Spanish expedition passed by, the people fled to the Sierra de Puaray, later called the Sierra de Tiguex, and, much later, the Sierra de Sandia (present Sandia Mountains) after its nearest mission pueblo, San Francisco de Sandia, or to nearby pueblos. Although Oñate had no such intentions, the people of Puaray and those of other pueblos believed that the Spaniards would seek revenge for the deaths of the missionaries.

Oñate and his horsemen, nonetheless, rode past the abandoned Puaray to the Keres pueblo known as Santo Domingo.<sup>49</sup> They knew of the pueblo because of the eventful arrest of Gaspar Castaño de Sosa by Juan de Morlete in 1592. There the Spaniards sought out two of the Mexican Indians, Tomás and Cristóbal, who had been with Castaño de Sosa and had decided to remain at Santo Domingo. Oñate needed them as translators. Tomás and Cristóbal were quickly impressed into service as interpreters.<sup>50</sup>

Although the Santo Domingo Indians looked on with guarded displeasure at seeing Tomás and Cristóbal taken from them, they soon realized that Oñate intended them no harm. Oñate and his Mexican Indian interpreters communicated with the people of Santo Domingo through Tomás and Cristóbal. They called a general council at Santo Domingo and invited the seven nearby pueblos to send representatives.

Once the council was assembled, Governor Oñate, speaking through Tomás and Cristóbal, explained the purpose of the new Spanish presence

among them and asked each leader to pledge obedience to the Spanish Crown, an act he believed they comprehended.<sup>51</sup> Then he announced that Santo Domingo would be the site of a Franciscan convent dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Asunción and that the patron saints of the pueblo would be Peter and Paul.<sup>52</sup> Convinced that peace had been established among the pueblos of the Río Abajo and the Spaniards, Oñate departed Santo Domingo in a northward direction.

Seeking a place to settle, Oñate and his men pushed their horses along the Río Arriba, where Castaño de Sosa and his settlers had been eight years earlier. En route, Oñate passed the pueblo called Bove, which he named San Ildefonso in honor of the expedition's father commissary, Fray Alonso Martínez.<sup>53</sup> Having passed much of the land Castaño de Sosa had described, they reached the confluence of the Río Grande and the Río Chama. There, on July 4, 1598, at a small pueblo called Caypa, Oñate set up camp. He renamed the pueblo San Juan de los Caballeros, New Mexico's first capital, and ordered the Maese de Campo Juan de Zaldívar and a small contingent of soldiers to return to Nueva Sevilla and bring up the carreta caravan.<sup>54</sup> By mid-August the settlers and sixty-one carts had arrived at San Juan. Of the eighty-three wagons that had begun the expedition, twenty-two had been left along the trail between El Paso and Nueva Sevilla. Because of their value to the settlers, they would be retrieved at a later date.<sup>55</sup> The expedition to settle New Mexico had taken nearly eight months. The route they established, along with countless *parages*, would extend the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* nearly 650 miles beyond the last point at Santa Bárbara. It would become the major road connecting the New Mexican outpost with the rest of the Spanish empire for the rest of the colonial period.

Thus, the Expedition of Juan de Oñate in 1598 had blazed a new segment to the *camino real*. Similar to miners, traders, friars, and ranchers who pushed the frontier northward from Mexico City by establishing towns, haciendas, missions, and mining districts. Far to the north of Santa Bárbara, Oñate's

scouts had blazed a direct route almost due north to the Río Grande. Their descriptions were usually in the form of day-to-day reports of what they had seen. Virtually taking one step at a time, Juan de Oñate and his expedition of settlers had established the trail beyond the last line of Spanish settlements leaving in their wake a string of *parages* that would be used by later travelers along the northern end of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Some of the *parages*, as nearly everywhere along the length of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, became towns, mission sites, ranches, farms and *lugares*.

The Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is much more than a line drawn on a map or a trajectory marked by signposts. The *Camino Real* was more than an emigrant and trade route; it was at once a 1600 mile-long linear frontier of settlements, a mining frontier, a missionary frontier, a commercial frontier, a military frontier, and an indigenous frontier. On a broader cultural and historic basis, it was complemented by other *caminos reales* that traversed the viceroyalty of New Spain, for all roads led to Mexico City. On a cultural basis, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro served as a transmitter of Western Civilization that was transformed and adapted in the New World, not only by Spain, but by other European powers, inclusive of England, France, Portugal, Germany and the Netherlands, that settled in the Americas.

From the rich cultural heritage that shaped Western Civilization sprang a system of governance and a body of laws that formed the legal practice and jurisprudence of Spanish America, in particular. Indeed, the entire enterprise of establishing New Mexico was based on concepts of European sovereignty and legal precedents that originated within historical processes dating to Greco-Roman times. Thus, the Spanish colonial establishment of New Mexico is about the history of a people who touched the future by developing a given area, within the scope of the Laws of the Indies<sup>56</sup> and official policies that established cultural and political institutions along with an infrastructure comprised of roads, towns, forts, ports, missions, ranches and farms, and their appurtenances. Beyond that, it is

about a people who introduced governance, a new language, religion, folklore, institutions, the technological advances of the times, and a written history. The legal sources they followed, especially in regard to developing places, trade and immigration along the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* were based on compilations or codes known as the Laws of the Indies that followed centuries of Spanish tradition and practice.

The far-reaching heritage of Hispanic America, transported along *caminos reales*, were based on Spanish laws and practices related to governance. It included the establishment of *cabildos*, or town councils, presided over by an *alcalde mayor*, in towns, especially provincial capitals along royal roads. On a larger scale, the governor presided over the provincial *cabildo*, in which case the *alcaldes mayores* of towns reported to the governor. As in the English tradition, the *cabildos* comprised elected and appointed officials. Predating, by over a century, the House of Burgesses established in Virginia (1619) and the New England town meeting halls (1620), *cabildos* had been established in many places beginning at Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic, 1496) which is the oldest European town in the Americas. Other *cabildos* were established at Caparra (Puerto Rico, 1508), Mexico City (1525), San Agustín, Florida (1565), and San Juan de los Caballeros (1598) and Santa Fe (1610), both along New Mexico's *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. Similar to the aforementioned towns in Spanish North America, the provincial capitals, along with their *cabildos*, in California, Arizona, and Texas were established later along their respective *caminos reales* in the eighteenth century. Within the scope of establishing Royal Roads, the significance of the *parages* cannot be overlooked, for in time some of them became ranchos, haciendas, and small villages, which turned into towns and large cities. Spanish colonial cartographers pondered over the names of such places. The *parages* are a part of the infrastructure of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*, and thus, a part of the rich heritage that is a part of the national stories of the United States, Mexico, and Spain.

The historical pageantry that marched across the *Camino Real* during the historic period left its mark on the people, history, culture, and geographic place names of New Mexico. The pageantry that marched from one *parage* to another includes names that appear in reports, diaries and other accounts that add to the historical significance of the route. It should be noted that the *Camino Real* grew out of indigenous trails that connected a series of points leading from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Aside from the historical personages who walked the route, prehistoric travelers utilized modified portions of the route for trade and immigration purposes. Thus, the names of travelers on the *Camino Real* are not limited to those listed herein, which are familiar to students of the histories of New Mexico, Mexico, and the United States. Among them are: Juan de Oñate, Josiah Gregg, Bishop Pedro de Tamarón, Elliott Coues, Alexander Doniphan, the marqués de Rubí, Pedro de Rivera, Adolphus Wislizenus, Nicolas Lafora, Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, Antonio Otermín, George Rutledge Gibson, Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor Manuel Armijo, James William Abert, Philip Gooch Ferguson, and Hiram Read. A study of their accounts reveals descriptions and accounts about how *parages* were used, where they were located, and the time period in which they continued in use. Although each *parage* has its own history, together they form the long route of the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* that ran from Mexico City to Santa Fe.

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### End Notes

1. Itinerario in Joaquín Francisco, Pacheco, Francisco de Cárdenas y Espejo, and Luis Torres de Mendoza (eds.). *Colección de Documentos Ineditos, Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de América y Oceania, sacados de los archivos del reino, y muy especialmente del de Indias*. Competentemente autorizada. Madrid: Ministerio de Ultramar, 1864-84. Hereinafter cited as *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI:244. The date was May 8, 1598.

2. For a comprehensive history of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, See Joseph P. Sánchez and Bruce A. Erickson, *From Mexico City to Santa Fe: A Historical Guide to the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro*. (Albuquerque: LPD Press, Rio Grande Books. (2011).

3. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI:240-244)

4. Joseph P. Sánchez, "The First Thanksgiving in New Mexico," *New Mexico Magazine*, October 2004.

5. Elliot Coues, editor. *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, to Headwaters of the Mississippi River, through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, during the Years 1805-6-7*. New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895.

6. Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies: The Journal of a Santa Fé Trader*. Dallas: Southwest Press, 1933, p. 258

7. Frederick A. Wislizenus. *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition in 1846 and 1847*. (Washington: Tappin and Streeper Printers, 1848), p.38.

8. Phillip Wayne Powell, *Soldiers, Indians & Silver: The Northern Advance of New Spain, 1550-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952, pp. 17-18.

9. Herbert E. Bolton, ed., *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542-1706* (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1916). 201.

10. Miguel Encinias, Alfredo Rodríguez, and Joseph P. Sánchez, editors, *Gaspar Pérez de Villagrás Historia de la Nueva México, 1610: A Critical and Annotated Spanish English Edition* with Alfredo Rodríguez, Miguel Encinias, co-editors, University of New Mexico Press, December 1992. See, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrás, pp. 87-88, Canto X, lines 36-52. Villagrás discusses in great length how the expedition appeared during the long march from Santa Bárbara to the Río Conchos.

He mentions that the caravan and the herds, kicking up great clouds of dust, were spread out along a line of march three miles long and just as wide as it moved to the Río Conchos

11. Joseph P. Sánchez, *The Río Abajo Frontier, 1540-1692: A History of Early Colonial New Mexico* (Albuquerque: Albuquerque Museum History Monograph Series, 1987), 54.

12. Vito Alessio Robles, (ed.). *Nicolás de Lafora, relación del viaje que hizo a los presidios internos situados en la frontera de la América septentrional*. México D.F.: Editorial Pedro Robredo, 1939. p. 76.

13. See Salvador Álvarez, Manuel San Juan de Santa Cruz: Gobernador, Latifunista y Capitán de Guerra de la Frontera Norte, *Revista de Indias*, 2010, Vol. LXX, núm 248. pp. 101-126 *passim*.

14. Vito Alessio Robles, Vito (ed.). *Diario y derrotero de lo caminado, visto y observado en la visita que hizo a los presidios de la Nueva España septentrional el brigadier Pedro de Rivera*. México, D.F.: Taller Autográfico, 1946, p. 46.

15. Pacheco, Cárdenas, y Torres 1871:XVI.239;Max L. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958:16-17.

16. Alessio Robles, (ed.). Nicolás de Lafora, 1939:86.

17. Wislizenus. *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico*, 1848), p. 44.

18. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI.239)

19. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road*, p. 17.

20. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI.239.

21. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road*, p.17.

22. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI, 239-240,

23. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI.239-240.

24. *Itinerario*, CDI, XVI, 240-244.

25. George P. Hammond, and Agapito Rey (eds). *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953. II.624-625)

26. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 1953: II.626.

27. Alessio Robles, Vito (ed.). *Diario y derrotero de lo caminado, que hizo Pedro de Rivera*. 1946, p. 54

28. Adams, Eleanor B. (ed.). "Bishop Tamarón's

Visitation of New Mexico, 1760,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (April 1953), p. 198. Also see No. 3 (July 1953), pp. 192-221; No. 4 (October 1953), pp. 291-315; Vol. XXIX, No. 1 (January 1954), pp. 41-47.

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## Coach George McCarty: A Leader of Men

By Walter Hines

What does ex-Aggie basketball coach George McCarty have in common with the great Adolph Rupp, Phog Allen, Frank McGuire and John Wooden? Answer? They all brought teams to the 1952 NCAA Basketball Tournament.

It was New Mexico A&M's first NCAA tournament, though the university did have a strong tournament tradition, having played in the NIT in 1939 and several NAIB Tournaments in the 1930s and early 1950s, including the NAIB in February 1952 just prior to the NCAA Tournament. The NAIB, National Association of Intercollegiate Basketball, held a tournament for "small colleges" each year. It was not unusual for schools to play in both the NAIB and NCAA tournaments in those days.



*Coach George McCarty's faculty photo. This picture was used in the 1952 Swastika when McCarty was named the "Most Popular Faculty Member" instead of one in his coach's garb.*

George Courtney McCarty had an unlikely background for a basketball coach. He had played football at Amarillo Junior College in 1935. But when the school dropped the sport, McCarty transferred to a junior college in Oklahoma. McCarty was offered a scholarship offer from Oklahoma A&M the following year. Instead, he chose to accept one from NM A&M. McCarty was an undersized, but very tough guard on the fine Aggie football teams of the late 1930s. The 170-lb, 5'8" McCarty never played college basketball but was a student of the game and a fan of the great Aggie basketball teams of the late 1930s.

McCarty's academic progress at NM A&M was interrupted by WWII. He enlisted in the Army and became an Air Corps pilot, reaching the rank of Lt. Colonel by the age of 30. Recognizing his skills as a leader, teacher and motivator, the Army kept McCarty stateside during the war. He crisscrossed the country to train crews at a half dozen air bases. These young crews played a huge role with the 8th Air Force in Europe and the 5th and 13th Air Forces in the Pacific.

Following the WWII victory in 1945 and despite a promising career, McCarty resigned from the military in 1946. He then spent a year coaching high school football in his hometown of McLean, Texas, before returning to NM A&M in 1947 to complete his college education. Vaughn Corley, head football coach at the time and an assistant when McCarty played for the Aggies in the late 1930s, liked what he saw. McCarty was hired as an assistant to coach freshman football.

When a vacancy occurred as freshman basketball coach in 1948, McCarty was asked by head coach John Gunn to fill that position. Luckily, WWII Navy veteran Jimmy Viramontes, an all-state basketball player at Las Cruces High, was on that squad. He would leave to play for Texas by the

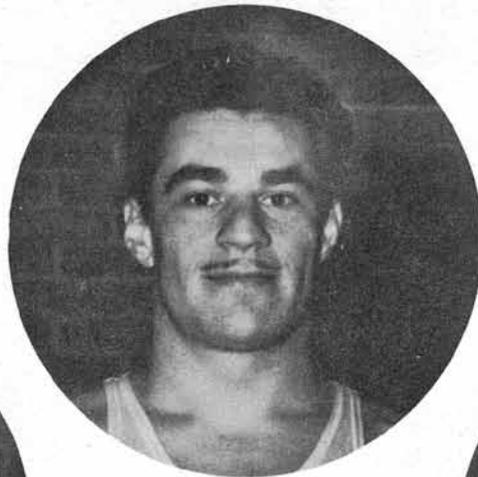
following season. The mature Viramontes was not just a fine player. He understood basketball strategy and fundamentals and was a great help to McCarty in learning and teaching the college game. McCarty, who was a notorious "quick study," buried himself in basketball books and coaching clinics. He particularly liked to read Hank Iba's philosophy.

During the 1948-49 season, the Aggie freshman team was a sensation, finishing the season at 21-3, with the three losses coming by a total of four points. Two of those losses were avenged with wins

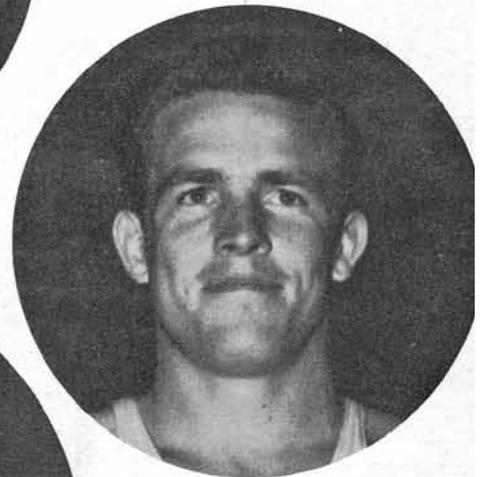
in return games. When Coach Gunn was fired as varsity coach after a 9-15 season that year, McCarty accepted the head job at NM A&M.

The Lobos and Miners were soon in trouble, as were other teams in the Border Conference. From 1949-52, McCarty's teams were 58-38, played in three NAIB Tournaments and the 1952 NCAA Tournament. Besides Texas Western (UTEP) and UNM, their Border Conference foes included Texas Tech, West Texas, Arizona, Arizona State, and Northern Arizona. The Aggies also had a tough

Mike "Hook Shot" Svilar, voted most valuable player in the Border Conference, nominated to Border Conference first team and elected captain of the Aggie squad.



Jim Tackett, forward, member of the Border Conference first team for 1951 and 1952.



Bob Priddy, rebounding forward for Aggiemen, named to Border Conference first string.



*A scan from the 1952 NMSU Swastika. Coach McCarty is bottom center.*

out of conference schedule that included Oklahoma A&M, Oklahoma City, Wichita State, Missouri, Bradley and Pepperdine.

Well known players from the early McCarty years included Bob Porter, long-time head of the NM Farm and Livestock Bureau in Las Cruces, and Tom Donnelly, ex-NM Court of Appeals Judge in Santa Fe. Porter recalled playing Western NM in the Sunshine Basketball Tournament in Portales on December 30, 1949, an exhausting 5-overtime game eventually won by the Aggies 37-32. The previous evening, the Aggies had prevailed over Eastern NM, 54-52, and the day before had won a close game from Howard Payne.

With his team near physical collapse, McCarty inserted the seldom-used 6-foot-7-inch Donnelly in the overtime periods against Western. There was no shot clock in college basketball then. McCarty told Donnelly to get the tap, receive an occasional return pass as the rest of the team played keep-away until the end of the overtime period. Eventually, it worked, much to the dislike of the Portales fans. Though delighted with the title, McCarty vowed it was the last time his team would come to Portales.

During McCarty's 1949-50 season, the Aggie team went 17-13, and won an NAIB playoff game from Eastern NM before losing to Tampa at the NAIB tournament in Kansas City. The next season, McCarty's team was 19-14 (11-6, second in the Border Conference) despite playing eleven of the first thirteen games on the road. Invited to the NAIB again, they beat W. Virginia St. and Central Michigan in Kansas City, before losing to Hamline.

The stars of the 1951-52 season were Mike Svilar, Bob Priddy and Jim Tackett. Each was named all Border Conference for at least one year (Tackett for two) during their stay at NM A&M. Svilar was an undersized, though very strong, 6'1" post man with a Boston Blackie moustache and a sweet hook shot. McCarty discovered Svilar playing intramural ball on campus, persuaded him to join the team and gave him a scholarship. Svilar graduated in mechanical engineering, later got a law degree, and became a prominent lawyer and Wyoming State Senator.

Priddy and Tackett were stout 6'3" forwards recruited out of junior college by McCarty and away from Oklahoma A&M's Hank Iba. Both later were drafted by NBA teams – Priddy by Baltimore and Tackett by the Milwaukee Hawks (later St. Louis and Atlanta). Both suffered career ending knee injuries soon thereafter, though Priddy played 16 games in the 1952 season with Baltimore before being forced to retire. Priddy graduated in physical education and became a high school coach. Tackett got a degree in agriculture, worked as a consultant in that field for many years. He passed away several years ago in Alabama.

The 1951-52 Aggie team finished 22-11 and 11-4 in the Border Conference – good for a first place tie. Victories included two over Texas Western and Arizona State, and one each over UNM, and Texas Tech. They had tough losses to Oklahoma A&M and Missouri. In the NAIB tournament, Jim Tackett's 31 points paced the Aggies to an 86-70 win over Southern Mississippi. The next night, Bob Priddy's 20 points were not enough against rugged SW Texas, who beat the Aggies 69-52.

But all was not lost. By virtue of their first place tie with the West Texas Bulls in the Border Conference and then a playoff game with the Bulls won by the Aggies, NM A&M was invited to the NCAA tournament. Like the NAIB, the NCAA Tournament in 1952 was played in Kansas City and was the first to have a true regional format. The winners at four regional sites advanced to the 'Final Four' in Seattle. It was also the first tournament to have extensive television coverage. The Aggies, who were one of only 16 teams invited, played Saint Louis University in the Kansas City Regional, losing 62-53 after a hard fought game.

The 1952-53 Aggie team finished with their worst record under McCarty, 7-17. In his defense, the Aggie team had many newcomers and played a murderous out of conference schedule that included Oklahoma A&M (twice), Tulsa, Bradley, Oklahoma City, Pepperdine, and Wichita State. But the season was still considered successful because they beat the Miners and Lobos each twice (some things never change).

During 1951 McCarty began also serving as Aggie Athletic Director and line coach in football. He was very popular in Las Cruces. Problem was, he was also popular in El Paso – at least with the Texas Western administration. McCarty was offered the position of head basketball coach at Texas Western at a nice increase in pay. Unexpectedly, the unthinkable had happened – McCarty accepted and left Las Cruces to coach the Aggies' archrival. It was sometimes ugly. There are fans around who have not forgiven him to this day. The 1953 Aggie yearbook, *The Swastika*, summed it up well...

*Fans and players alike are extremely sorry to see McCarty leave and want to wish him the best of luck. However, circumstances being what they are, there are many varied feelings and confused wishes about McCarty's future.*

McCarty started slowly at Texas Western. His 1953-54 team was 8-14, including a 1-1 record with the Aggies, now coached by Presley Askew. Askew came by way of the University of Arkansas. He would be a fine Aggie coach into the early 1960s.

McCarty's post-1954 Miner teams went on a roll. They were 13-8 in 1954-55 and a combined 54-36 through 1959. The Miners won a Border Conference championship in 1957 and a conference co-championship in 1959. In 1959, McCarty stepped down to become Dean of Men at Texas Western. Shortly thereafter in 1960, he was asked to take over as Miner Athletic Director, a job he held until 1970.

As AD, McCarty saw the Miners win some in football, and spectacularly in basketball. He was personally responsible for hiring Don Haskins as



*1951-52 NCAA Team: clockwise from left: D. Coats (16), A. Budenholzer, C. Clement, R. Vaughn, B. Hunt, A. Hutchinson, B. Dunn, B. Priddy, J. Tackett, M. Svilar, E. Scott, L. Cook, R. Apodaca. Center: J. Blevins, Coach George McCarty, J. Crouch. Scan from the 1952 NMSU Swastika.*

Miner basketball coach over the strenuous objections of more than a few others. Haskins, who played for Hank Iba at Oklahoma State, was an unproven high school girls' coach when McCarty offered him the Miner job in 1961. The rest is history.

"I was coaching New Mexico State when Don was a senior," said the 93-year-old McCarty. "They beat us in double overtime on a Saturday night. We stayed and worked out with them on Sunday. I kept up with Don after that."

Haskins recalled that "George really liked the way Mr. Iba coached. "I followed Don everywhere he went," McCarty recalled, "and that sucker had success everywhere he went."

When the UTEP head coaching opened up in 1961, McCarty contacted Haskins and asked him to drive to El Paso. McCarty was absolutely sold on Haskins and they made a deal.

In the 1950s under McCarty's leadership, Texas Western had recruited and played black players at a time when all-white college sports teams were common, particularly in the South. When Haskins arrived in El Paso, he inherited three black players, including El Paso's Nolan Richardson who would later go on to win a national championship as coach at Arkansas.

The Miners improved quickly under Haskins, reaching the NCAA Tournament in 1963 and 1964 and the NIT in 1965. The 1966 team was to be immortalized in the movie *Glory Road*. With five black players starting, Haskins' 1966 National Championship team represented the changing of the guard in college basketball.

The Miner football program during McCarty's administration, while not measuring up to the basketball program, had good success – rare for Texas Western in those days. The Miners, under head football Bobby Dobbs won 21 games over the 1965-67 period, including Sun Bowl victories in 1965 and 1967.

In 1973, McCarty was contacted by the University of Wyoming and accepted the job as athletics director. Wyoming had recently been a big winner in football under Coach Lloyd Eaton. Eaton's teams compiled a record of 57-33-2 over the 1962-69 time

period, with banner years in 1966, 1967 and 1968. In the first two years, the team posted back-to-back 10-1 seasons, including a 14-game winning streak from November 5, 1966, to January 1, 1968, then followed with an undefeated season in 1968. Wyoming won the 1966 Sun Bowl and played in the 1968 Sugar Bowl.

Lloyd Eaton was coach during the 1969 "Black 14" episode in which 14 black Wyoming players were kicked off the team for planning to wear black armbands during a game against BYU. The players were protesting the racial policies of the Mormon Church, which were soon changed to allow black athletes at BYU. The controversy raged, and by 1970, Eaton was gone.

The "Black 14" incident caused a major crisis at Wyoming. Black athletes soon stopped coming and Wyoming football took a downward spiral. But after McCarty arrived, the black student athletes gradually returned and new Coach Fred Akers made progress with the program. The extent to which McCarty's rapport with black athletes was a factor is unclear, but Wyoming was happy with the results, when in 1976 with black players in a prominent role, Wyoming won a WAC football championship. McCarty, Akers and the assistant coaches received bonuses.

McCarty completed his career as AD at Wyoming and retired in 1980. But that wasn't the end of his involvement in college athletics. Deciding to live in Albuquerque, McCarty was soon contacted by UNM to head up athletics fund raising for the Lobo Club. Like all his other endeavors, McCarty was successful – nobody had more contacts or savvy than George McCarty. He retired for good in 1985 and lived near Austin in Marble Falls, Texas, with wife Marietta. He passed away there in 2011, his wife preceding him in death.

Looking back on the life and many accomplishments of George McCarty over the years, I was struck with a touch of sadness for my alma mater, New Mexico State University. Why? Because George McCarty, NMSU alum, athlete, fine coach, innovative sports administrator and gentleman was not in the Aggie Sports Hall of Fame.

That would not last. In May 2008, NMSU Athletics Director McKinley Boston selected McCarty for the Hall of Fame – to be inducted during that year’s November homecoming celebration.

Great news! It was past time to welcome him home as an Aggie.

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**Walter Hines** was born in Las Cruces, is an NMSU graduate in Civil Engineering, '65, '67, and a frequent contributor to the Review. He has written a number of historical articles on NMSU and two books, *Aggies of the Pacific War: NM A&M and the War with Japan* and *Hugh Meglone Milton: A Life Beyond Duty* (co-authored by Martha S. Andrews). His dad, Jerry Hines, recruited George McCarty to NM A&M as a football player in 1937.

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# Oral Histories of Las Cruces Deposited At Rio Grande Historical Collection

By Kyle Mery

*In the spring of 2016, approximately 14 students enrolled in Dr. Jon Hunner's oral history class conducted and recorded oral history interviews. Many in the class were encouraged to conduct interviews of Las Cruces residents. The interviews were then deposited at the Rio Grande Historical Collection at New Mexico State University.*

*The interviews were conducted as part of the students' final project for the class. Each interview was to be one to two hours in length, recorded, and a transcription made of the material. The students spent the semester studying oral history techniques and guidelines and practiced giving interviews extensively before choosing whom to interview. While some students chose to interview people from outside the area, many decided to choose locals. The Las Cruces who were interviewed include Dolores Archuleta, Joan Jensen, Margaret Berrier and Mark Medoff. Some light editing has been done for readability.*

## **Dolores Archuleta**

Dolores Archuleta, is a native of Las Cruces and was born in 1933 in East May Las Cruces. Archuleta would go on to be an active citizen of the city, serving as city councilwoman from 2001 to 2009. She is now a part of Las Esperanzas, a historic preservation group active in Mesilla and Las Cruces. Las Esperanzas helps to preserve historic parts of Las Cruces/Mesilla, particularly the Mesquite Historic District.

Archuleta's interview focuses mainly on her life growing up in Las Cruces. It begins with her time working at McBride hospital during high school (McBride was located near modern-day Branigan Cultural Center) and takes one into her life working as a management analyst at White Sands Missile Range from 1957 to 1993.

Also included in the interview are her experiences growing up in Las Cruces during World War II and how it affected her and her family. She talks about her encounter during the war with German POWs:

*"During the War there was a labor shortage because we didn't have anybody to dig the trenches (latrines). As well, the outhouses were banned in the neighborhood and everybody had to build the bathrooms. My father added the bathroom to*

*our house with a tub. I never had a bath or a tub and I was anxious to get the lines and everything hooked up. I was probably about 8 and I went to school and I came back and I noticed that there were German POWs in the street next to us and they were guarded. And the reason I know they were German POWs is that they were young kids like you right now, blue eyed and blonde in a Mexican neighborhood, and they really stood out. They had two guards. And I came home and asked my father, I said: "Papa, why are they guarding them?" And he explained to me that those were German POWs and who they were and why they were there. And they're digging the trenches so we can have the bathrooms and he explained to me what they have to do."*

Archuleta also talks about her memory of the day news arrived that the war had finally ended:

*"Yes...let me go back to the ringing of the bells and the church. When the Father (Priest) rang the bells (Signifying the ending of the war). And that was, I'm thinking it started about 12 o'clock. And then at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon the priest had a prayer session there in the church for everybody. It was Catholics, non-Catholics, everyone. Everybody came in the church and prayed in thanksgiving that the war was over.*

*And the church was packed full of people. It's unfortunate that those who had lost their loved ones...their children were not coming home..."*

In all, Dolores's interview includes these clips and others about World War II, her experiences growing up and more recent experiences with her work with Las Esperanzas.

### **Joan Jensen**

Joan Jensen was born 1934 in Minnesota. Joan moved to Las Cruces in 1976 and accepted a position at New Mexico State University as an assistant professor. Over the years she would become a full professor and head of the History Department in 1982, a position she held for 5 years. One of Jensen's achievements in her time at NMSU was organizing and founding the Women Studies Program, which she directed until her retirement in 1994.

Jensen talks about her early life as well as her experiences in college and efforts in creating the Women's Studies Program. She explains how she became interested in Women's Studies and, specifically, western women's history. She mentions how and why she decided to focus on rural women's history. In this interview segment, she speaks about her time in San Diego during the 1960s, after teaching Civil War history at Point Loma College and losing interest:

*"I volunteered at the women's bookstore and was in some discussion groups. I realized that rural women had no history. No one ever had done research on them. Women's history was getting started, and all the writing being done was on urban women, and I said, "I want to write about rural women." (Joan's mother had been born on a farm and worked for some time on her mother's (Joan's Grandmother's) dairy farm). So, it was because of that background that I decided I would write about women who I'd met and who were really strong and had very accomplished lives. They were not mentioned in those early women's history books, you know, they were talking about women's rights advocates, which was fine, and they were talking about factory women as well. I mean, it was all fine, but that's not where most women were, and, so, by that time I*

*was thinking there's a bigger group I want to talk about. So, I said, "Okay, that's what I'm going to do," and nobody, literally no one, was doing that. And so I got a job teaching women's history."*

The interview delves into her time in graduate school and early years writing for the Dictionary of American Women:

*"Well, I've always been interested in women in the West because I started out here (Joan had been born in St. Paul, Minnesota before living out to California in her youth). Some of the first articles I wrote were...they were not necessarily on rural women, but I was asked to write some articles while I was a graduate student and I had also volunteered to write for the Dictionary of American Women. Well, I was just a graduate student, so I volunteered, and was asked to write these little biographical entries for some very obscure Western women, very obscure (people)... they weren't going to ask me to write something about the well-known woman, so I actually started that (writing about rural women) in graduate school and I would get contacted by people asking: "Would you like to write about so-and-so?" I hardly ever turned down an opportunity to learn something. So, one woman I wrote about was an opera singer, one was a doctor, and the other one, she was one of the first assistant district attorneys in California, which was very unusual out there at the time."*

Jensen concludes with a discussion of her life after retirement as well as reflections.

### **Margaret Berrier**

Margaret Berrier is an independent rock art researcher (petroglyphs and pictographs) and active in many rock art groups including the Archaeological Society of New Mexico and the American Rock Art Research Association. She has studied prehistoric rock art all over the Western United States including Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada.

In her interview, Berrier discusses her experiences growing up in the Midwest and, later, her international travel related to her field of expertise. She has traveled to such places as Egypt, Spain and Australia. Also included in the interview are her

plans for the future, which included a trip to Colorado for a survey project.

But Berrier opens up and shares notable personal memories. The following excerpt includes her reaction as a young girl to meeting her baby brother for the first time:

*“Actually, my first memory is when they brought my brother home. Which, I was very excited about and my parents were as well, because they wanted a boy. And they had gotten ME, you know? And they had brought him home and he was premature, so he was, you know... premature babies are, very often, not very pretty. And I was like, ‘It’s a monkey!’ You know? I remember that, distinctly.”*

Berrier recalls her first time coming to Las Cruces:

*“So I came to Las Cruces to visit a friend of mine, and of course because there’s great rock art around here. And she’d just bought a house. So I asked her for her realtor’s phone number and I said, ‘Do you think she’d mind taking me out?’ and she goes, ‘No, I don’t think so...’ So I called the realtor and I said, ‘I’m not going to buy a house today, blah blah blah...’ you know, and she asks me what I wanted. And I told her a bit about myself but emphasized again: ‘Well, I’m not going to buy a house today.’ And she said, ‘Well, we’ll just look. I have the perfect place for you, it fits all the things that you’ve told me about.’ And so she says, ‘It hasn’t gone on the multiple listings, you’re the first person that’s going to see it’ you know, and she brought me here. And that was at two-thirty. At five o’clock I had a signed contract.”*

### **Mark Medoff**

Mark Medoff was born in Illinois in 1940 and later moved to Florida. His artistic accomplishments span the areas of writing, film production, and theater direction and stagecraft. Medoff is known and respected nationally and has served as an NMSU professor since 1966. One of his most well known works is “Children of a Lesser God,” a Tony Award-winning play that was adapted for the screen and starred William Hurt and Marlee

Matlin. Matlin would win an Oscar for her performance.

In his interview Medoff’ talks about his upbringing in Florida, his career at NMSU and offers advice for those interested in the fields of filmmaking and theater production.

Medoff’s interview includes advice he was given by his mentor his school advisor Fred Shaw upon graduating from the University of Miami. Mark had been asked by Shaw about his plans after graduation, to which Medoff expressed an interest in spending a few years in Europe. Shaw told him:

*“No you’re not going to do that, it’s stupid.”* Mark then explained: *“He said the only way to fulfill your mandate which was one he laid on me when I was nineteen and he said I had to spend ten years apprenticing myself. That I had to spend years apprenticing to myself. That I had to write every day for at least an hour before anyone besides he and my mother would care.”*

Also included in the interview is Medoff’s advice for those who want to write literature:

*“If you want to write literature, you write about behavior. Watch what they (the characters) are doing in your head and write it down. They’re gonna walk, they’re gonna talk, they’re gonna eat, they’re gonna throw things, they’re gonna shoot things, but whatever they do, you write it down. Then bring it in; we’ll read it to you. That’s always the way I do it. That’s the way it was done for me. You didn’t read your own work, somebody would read it to you, and you’d listen to it.”*

These four interviews and others about Las Cruces can be found and accessed at the Rio Grande Historical Collection at NMSU. Included with the interviews are a tape log, a transcription and the interviews themselves.

**Kyle Mery** is a current third year graduate student of History at New Mexico State University. He is a dual track student (he is getting his degree in both Public History and Traditional History) and has been living in Las Cruces since August of 2014. Kyle is in his last two semesters of graduate school and is specializing in East Asian history with an emphasis on Chinese history (and writing his thesis on the subject).

He is originally from Washington State from the town of Bothell (near Seattle, Washington).

With his dual degree, Kyle hopes to combine aspects of Public History (museum work, public outreach, etc.) with traditional history and bring a greater understanding of China and its culture and history to the American public. His plans after graduation are uncertain at the moment, though Kyle is hoping to apply for several teaching jobs in China to gain further experience with Chinese culture (Kyle lived in China from August 2013 to February 2014 as a foreign English teacher) and also Mandarin language fluency before coming back to the U.S.

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# The Angus V V Ranch: The Early Years

By Daniel Conrad Jones

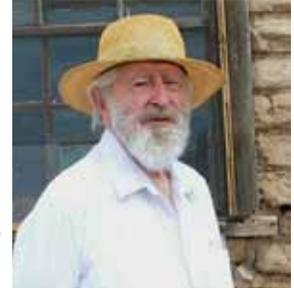
Dedicated to Cal Traylor 1924 - 2015

**Author's Note:** *Cal Traylor of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and I were both members of the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang. In July 2014 the group meeting was held in Silver City, New Mexico. While taking a tour of nearby Ft. Bayard, Cal came up to me and introduced himself. Somehow he knew that I was from Ruidoso. He passed me a "Friends-of-Pat-Garrett" card.*

*"I am trying to find where Pat Garrett lived in the Alto area," he said.*

*"Sure, I'll help with that," I told him, figuring it would just take a little re-search at the courthouse.*

*It wasn't nearly that simple. I eventually found out, but it took me a lot longer than expected. In the process of fulfilling my new friend's request, I discovered and became fascinated by, the Angus V V Ranch. Thanks, Cal. Our time together was much too short.*



Cal Traylor

## Introduction

Walk or drive around Ruidoso, New Mexico, and one can't help but notice the prominence of the name "Cree." There is Cree Meadow Drive, Cree Meadows Country Club. The name is associated with real estate and luxury living. Though the name did not originate in New Mexico, "Cree" is inextricably tangled in the history of this rough-and-tumble section of the state, and it began with the V V Ranch in Alto, New Mexico

## Beginnings: 1880-1884

The V V had its genesis in the friendship of two men who came to southeastern New Mexico for the same reason. Cattlemen in the Pecos Valley, most notably John Chisum, were looking for a sheriff who could stop the depredations of Billy the Kid and his like on their cattle. They found their man in Pat Garrett. With their help he was elected sheriff of Lincoln County in November 1880. Likewise, cattlemen in the Texas Panhandle, most notably Charles Goodknight, were looking for a man who could stop the depredations of the Kid and his like on *their* cattle. They hired John Poe. Poe and Garrett met in White Oaks, which was at the time

the biggest town in Lincoln County. The two immediately became friends. Unlike Garrett's credential, Poe then had no official status. He was merely a private cattle detective. So Garrett proposed to deputize him, and Poe accepted.

After the 1881 killing of Billy the Kid at Fort Sumner, Poe continued as deputy. But also in spring 1882, Poe formed a ranching partnership with Francis "Frank" M. Goodin. Under the arrangement, Poe would serve as manager. So he bought a couple of small parcels of land along Little Creek in present-day Alto -- one for himself and one for Goodin. They called it the "V" Ranch. It later was changed it to "V V."

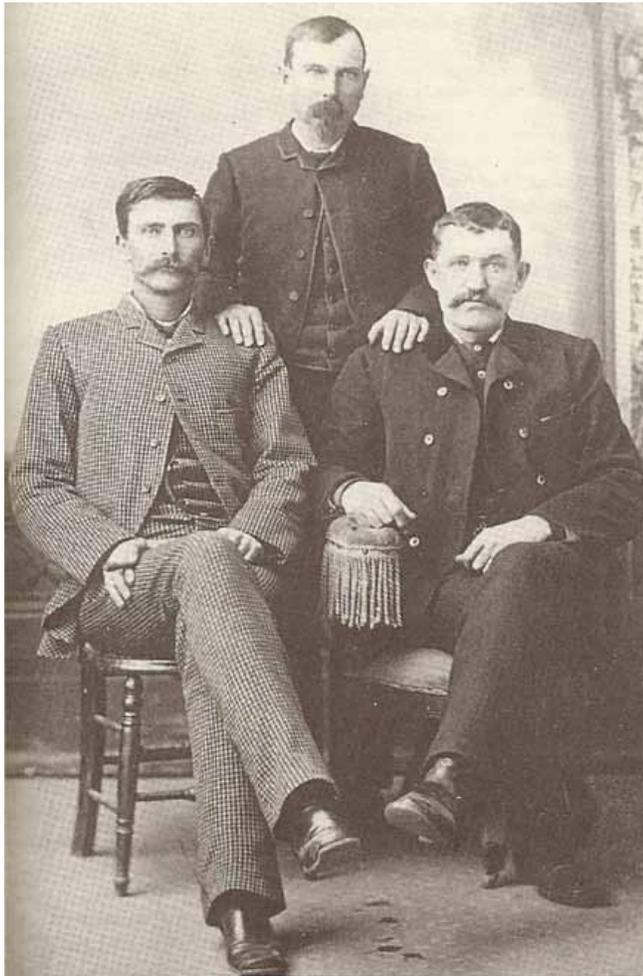
The cattle business wasn't entirely sufficient for Poe, so in fall 1882 he ran for and was elected to the seat of Lincoln County sheriff. Garrett had decided he didn't want another term, so Poe became his successor.

Another big change was soon to take place in Poe's life. On May 5, 1883, he married Sophie Alberding Sophie is important to our story because, after Poe's death, she wrote a book called *Buckboard Days*, a description of her life with Poe in the late 1800s and early 1900s in New Mexico. The book

contains details about the early days of the Ranch. For example, here she quotes Poe telling her why he called it the V V:

*"I chose the V V brand because, while it's simple, at the same time it's hard to alter. Those are the two requisites in a good brand. Every cowman prefers a brand, which can be made with a plain iron rod, for that saved carrying a heavy 'stamp' branding iron to make a special device. My cowboys can brand V V with four strokes of the running iron."*<sup>1</sup>

Garrett, too, started a small ranch. For his brand he chose simply the letters "PAT." According to Sophie, "Pat Garrett had a place up the [Little Creek] cañon, about the same distance [5 miles from the Poes' cabin]."<sup>2</sup> This ranch was exceedingly difficult



*Pat Garrett, seated left, and John Poe seated on the right. Standing is James Brent who succeeded Poe as Lincoln County sheriff.*

for the author to locate because Garrett never obtained a patent (equivalent to a deed from the government) for the land. Likely he filed a homestead claim for it but never "proved up" the claim since he was gone long before he lived there for the 5 years required to do so. Unproven claims are only accessible by hands-on search at the National Archives in Denver.

In early spring of 1883, Garrett went to visit his cousin Seaborn T. Gray in Grapevine, Texas, near Dallas. He persuaded Gray to move his family to New Mexico to become his partner in the ranching business. The Grays arrived there in September and moved in with Garrett's family.<sup>3</sup>

Poe, in his first term as sheriff, found that Lincoln County's lawlessness had not entirely abated with the death of the Kid.<sup>4</sup> But despite an "interesting" two years, he ran again and was re-elected as sheriff in 1884.

Meanwhile, the ranchers in the Texas Panhandle were still having trouble with rustlers, so they called on Garrett. According to historian and author Leon Metz, "[Garrett's] restless nature was not adjusted to raising cattle..."<sup>5</sup> so he eagerly accepted the job of captaining a group of men to catch the rustlers. This group went by several names -- the LS Rangers (after the LS Ranch), the Home Rangers or the LS Pat Garrett Rangers. Whether they were actually commissioned by the Texas governor, thus making them legitimate lawmen, is debatable.<sup>6</sup>

**THE ANGUS V V RANCH,**  
PAT. F. GARRETT, Manager.




Cattle branded V V on left side and hip and under-bit on both sides.  
Horses branded V on left shoulder.

OTHER BRANDS:—  
VV left side, Horse, V left shoulder  
WHS on left side, Horse brand same on left hip, on right side.  
tt on left side.  
2W on left side.  
M on left side.  
HY left side on either side. Crop and under bit right ear.  
A left side and thigh. Under-slope each ear.

Postal Address: Ft. Stanton, Lincoln County, N. M. Rangers: Salado, Rio Bonito, Little Creek, Eagle Creek and Rio Rancho.

*V V brand ad.*

On December 27, 1884, Garrett left Alto<sup>7</sup> to take his new job. He took with him his wife Apolynaria and newborn daughter Elizabeth (later to become known for writing the New Mexico state anthem *O Fair New Mexico*). He left his ranch in the custody of cousin Seaborn Gray. He left his family with relatives in Las Vegas, and continued on to the Panhandle.

### A Busy Year: 1885

Around May 25, 1885, an incident occurred which illustrates the problems with the government's "open range" policy – an early Western policy that allowed livestock to roam freely without regard to land ownership. Among Poe's neighbors along Little Creek was a family named Breece -- father Benjamin Lewis (known as B. L.), sons William Leander (known as Lee) and Adam as well as wives and children. Each of them had filed a homestead claim for land along the creek.

They decided to go into the sheep business and brought in 750 head. This was legal as long as they kept to their own or government land. However, it greatly upset the cattlemen, notably Poe, Gray and Goodin, because of their belief that sheep, when grazing, pull the grass out by the roots, thus killing it and ruining the pasture. Angry words ensued, and the situation escalated to the point that gunshots were fired at a Breece shepherd. He wasn't hurt, but nevertheless the Breesces went before a

Justice of the Peace and swore out warrants against Sheriff Poe, Goodin, Gray and their employees. They were duly arrested. The notion of Poe, the current Lincoln County sheriff, arresting himself seemed to amuse the *Lincoln County Leader*, which reported the story under the headline "Sheriff Poe Arrested – He Knows How it is Himself."<sup>8</sup>

They were arrested on a Thursday and tried over the following two days. None was convicted. It might be tempting to attribute this outcome to Poe's influence. The Breesces' descendants do. But in reading the facts of the case, it turns out that no witness knew who actually fired the shots. So the judge couldn't reasonably have found otherwise.

Meanwhile Garrett, while working in the Panhandle, was traveling back and forth to Las Vegas frequently to see his family. On one of those trips during the summer of that year, he encountered Captain Brandon Kirby – an encounter that would have profound effects on the V V.

Kirby was British, about 31 years old and single. He explained to Garrett that he was a member of a group of British investors who wished to buy land and establish a large ranch in North America. He had already been to Canada but hadn't seen anything of interest there. Garrett, sensing a business opportunity, brought him to Lincoln County to see Poe and ranches in the area.

Kirby must have liked what he saw because from then on things moved rapidly. By the end of August, Poe, Goodin and many others, had contracted to sell to Kirby. The Poes' cabin was torn down for the materials to help in the building of the new headquarters.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile after about eight months in the Panhandle, Garrett was upset about his job. He suspected that he had been hired to kill rustlers, not to bring them in for trial.<sup>10</sup> So when an excellent opportunity to escape his position presented itself, Garrett took it. Kirby offered him \$5,000<sup>11</sup> or \$6,000<sup>12</sup> per year to manage the V V -- a huge salary in those days.<sup>13</sup> Garrett took no time at all to disband the



*The Breece family. Lee is seated second from the left. Adam is standing second from the left. B.L. is standing on the right.*

Rangers and was back in Alto that September.

By September 10, Kirby's fellow investors had arrived in Lincoln County. James Cree, 68, was a "wine merchant" from Edinburgh, Scotland.<sup>14</sup> His wife, Agnes, who was in her early 50s, was accompanied by their son James Edward, 21. Two other children, Margaret, 29, and William, 28, stayed in Scotland.



James Cree, Mrs. James Cree, and

*From left, James, Agnes and James Edward Cree.*

The Crees were very wealthy. They had both a townhouse in Edinburgh and a country estate, "Tusculum." Their motivation to live in New Mexico at their ages and with their wealth was a fascinating topic of speculation. They retained their real estate, which still exists today, although it is no longer in the Cree family. William presumably remained in Scotland to manage the family businesses there.

Curiously, one of the first things Cree did after arriving in New Mexico was to register the "V V" brand to his name. And soon afterward, a newspaper advertisement appeared bearing the name "Angus V V Ranch."<sup>15</sup> This was the first known use of "Angus" in conjunction with "VV Ranch." The brand advertisement showed a polled or de-horned Angus bull or steer, although there were none there at the time.

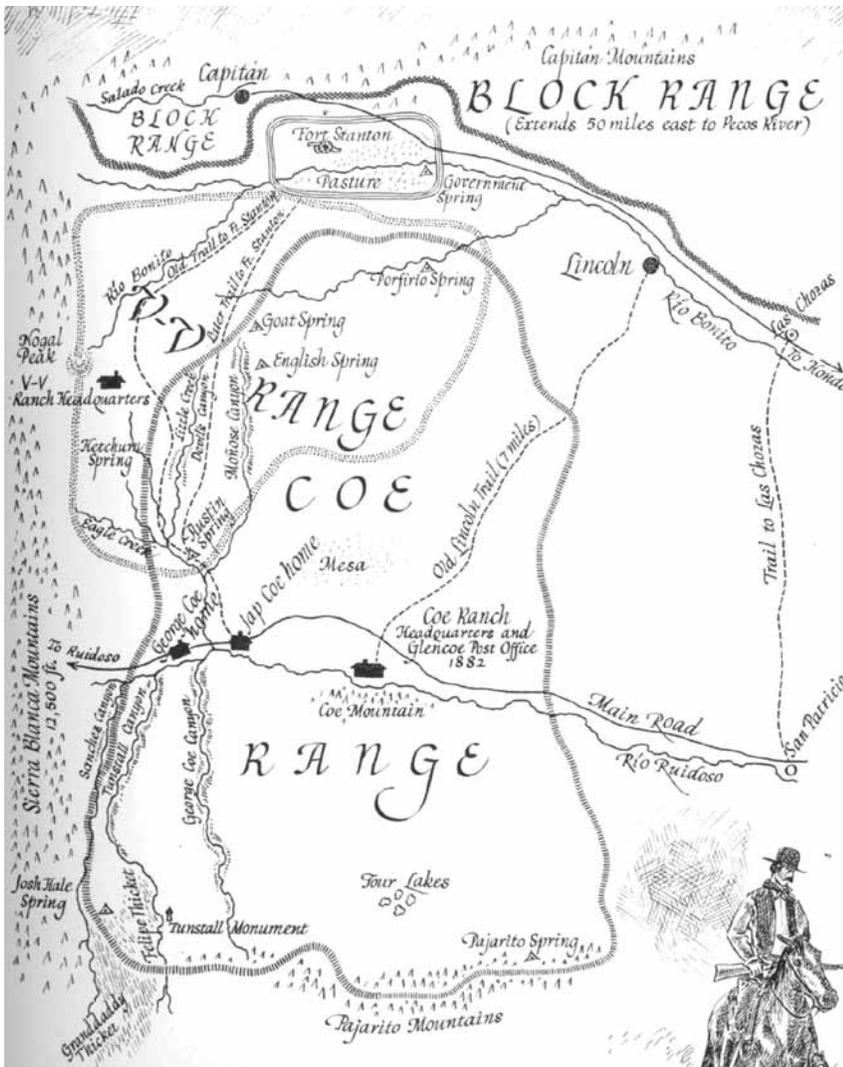
And then something strange happened – the land sold, or at least seemed to. The details of the sale aren't known fully, but on September 26, only weeks after purchasing the land himself, Kirby contracted to sell the 2,443.64 acres to Cree for \$50,000 or \$20 per acre. What made this peculiar on the surface was that he had purchased the land only months before from Poe and Goodin for as much as \$100 per acre.

Was it possible that he sold the land for only one-fifth of what he recently purchased it for? Was he just a poor businessman? What was the relationship between Kirby and Cree? Agent? Business partner? Adopted son? Prospective son-in-law? One theory goes that when Kirby originally bought the land from Poe and Goodin, he used money provided by Cree. And to complete the transaction required Cree to pay Kirby \$20 per acre as a commission. But if so, why did they do it that way – still an unanswered question.

Just how big was the V V? In an interview, noted historian Eve Ball estimated it to be ... "At least 200 sections..."<sup>16</sup> A section is, 200 square miles or 128,000 acres! Likewise, a map in the book *Ranch on the Ruidoso* shows it extending from the Sierra Blanca in the west to Glencoe in the east, and from Eagle Creek in the south to Fort Stanton in the north.<sup>17</sup> But a research of deeds shows a different acreage – roughly 2,600. Ball explained that a ranch might appear bigger than the deeded land because of federal grazing rules and the fact water was so scarce. Grazing back then didn't require federal permits, and if a rancher purchased a section with a watering hole, they also controlled - but didn't own -- the land around the hole. In theory, by purchasing 4 sections, they were able to control 200 or more for grazing purposes.

*"[The ranchers] just bought the waterhole and used the rest of the land...if you owned the waterhole, you could...station a guard at the waterhole and not let any cattle come in but yours to drink..."<sup>18</sup>Ball said.*

The Crees -- Agnes in particular -- were fond of the Angus breed, which originated in Scotland. They thought that by breeding them with native or Mexican cattle, an improved herd would result. The busy year of 1885 ended with Kirby setting sail for Scotland to purchase Angus bulls. Kirby expected to pay \$600 per head delivered which amounted to \$90,000 for 150 bulls. In 1898 a Texas estimate put cattle at roughly \$42.50 per head. Though the comparison isn't entirely fair because of the difference in time and place, it suggests the Crees paid dearly for these bulls.



Ranch map from Coe, Wilbur and Peter Hurd.

### The Cattle Drive: 1886

*“They brought 150 Aberdeen Angus bulls from Scotland...to Corpus Christi and shipped them to San Antonio, New Mexico by train. Then they drove them overland to the ranch. Well, these old Mexican cattle could travel 15 or 16 miles a day; they’re so long-legged and skinny. But these new cattle had probably never walked over a quarter of a mile in their lives; it was a job to get them to the ranch. They lost a lot of them on the way; it was dry and they just couldn’t walk.”<sup>19</sup>*

The above account is none too sympathetic to the bulls. A descendant of the Breeces is more

charitable:

*“[The bulls] had spent about 2 months in confinement on board ship and train, I’m sure they had tender hoof and atrophied muscles, no wonder they couldn’t walk if they didn’t put them on pasture to recover for a month before moving them.”<sup>20</sup>*

Details of the drive came from a 1958-59 interview of Wilbur Coe’s sister, Edith L. Coe-Boyce-Rigsby by Ball. Edith was born in 1896 so couldn’t have been on the drive, indicating her details came from a third party. But another description of the drive came from Sophie Poe, who lived in the area when the drive took place.

*“As the cattle could not be driven from the railroad out to the ranch, they had them transported in wagons from Socorro...”<sup>21</sup>*

Though Poe was in the right time and place to witness the drive, his account was written 50 years after the event and seems implausible. It seems incredible that the V V sent as many as 75 wagons for the cattle

given that each wagon would need a driver and at least two oxen, horses or mules.

Nevertheless, the problem of getting the bulls across the infamous Jornada del Muerto would have been difficult to solve. Four major obstacles would have faced any attempt to drive cattle from the Socorro/San Antonio, New Mexico, area to Alto. There were 2 mountain ranges to be crossed or avoided. The first, the Oscuras, is the less difficult of the two ranges, with an elevation gain/loss of only around 600 feet. The Sierra Blanca, however, would have required climbing to about 9,000 feet above sea level, a vertical gain of around 4,000 feet. There were no roads crossing the Sierra Blanca in 1886. And there are none to this day.<sup>22</sup> This mountain range had to be avoided.

The third obstacle was the Carrizozo lava flow, also known as the Valley of Fires or malpais. While the lava was fairly smooth when it initially flowed, cracks by this time had opened up, and some were wide enough to catch an unwary animal's hoof and break its leg. Lava tubes -- cave-like structures under the surface of the flow -- collapsed, leaving arroyos full of rock rubble. It was said that "...only Indians afoot dared go [across the malpais]..."<sup>23</sup>

The final, and perhaps most difficult obstacle to overcome, was the lack of water. A modern-day search of water sources found only one between the Rio Grande and the Oscuras Mountains, and that one was only convenient if traveling from Socorro.

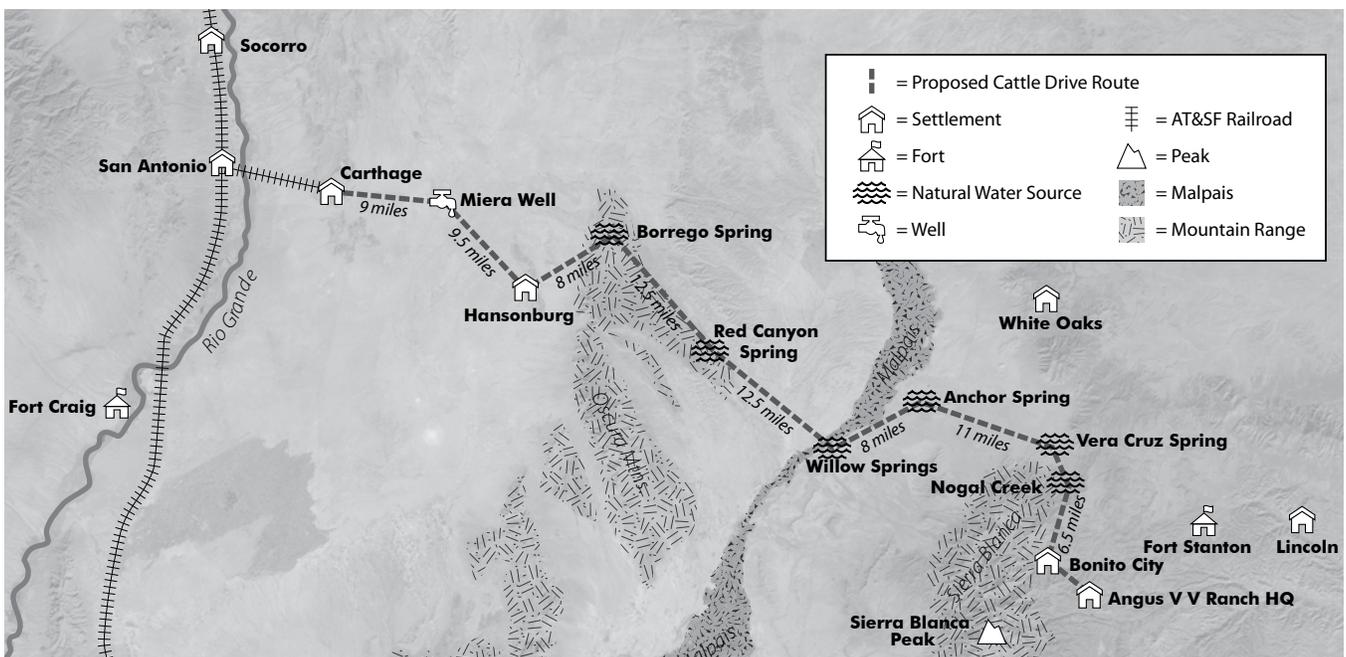
If one assumes that there were 12 cowboys on the drive, they would need a remuda of at least 96 horses.<sup>24</sup> A cowboy the author knows estimates that each animal would require around 5 gallons of water per day. Therefore, it would take around 1230 gallons of water per day just for the livestock: a nontrivial amount for a spring to provide.

Despite the obstacles, there was a possible route, which was followed by the Ozanne Stage Line. It started in Socorro or San Antonio -- farther south -- and ran to White Oaks, about 40 miles north of Alto, the final destination.<sup>25 26</sup> But it's un-

certain where the drive would have started. Some say it likely was San Antonio. Others say Socorro. But there may have been another starting point. At the time of the drive, the AT&SF railroad had a bridge across the Rio Grande and a spur line running about 13 miles east from San Antonio to the coal-mining town of Carthage. Taking the bulls on the train to Carthage would have avoided driving the cattle across the Rio Grande and saved about a day. Furthermore, the V V was well financed, so could have easily afforded the slightly higher railroad fare.

From Carthage, there is no natural water source for roughly 25 miles. But a well had been drilled -- the Miera Well ---,<sup>27</sup> and it was only nine miles away. From there, they could have headed directly for Borrego Spring, the first natural water source in the Oscuras. It was 14 miles away. A safer course of action would have been to do as the stage did. It went to Hansonburg, which was a silver, copper and lead mining camp 9.5 miles away and then to Borrego, 8 miles farther.

From Borrego, the cowboys would have encountered the two longest stretches between water-holes in the entire trip -- 12.5 miles to Red Canyon Spring and then another 12.5 miles to Willow



Original cattle drive map created for this article by Melba Jones.

Springs. Just before reaching Willow, they would have crossed the malpais. And that was possible because the merchants of White Oaks had built a road across one of the malpais' narrowest points – only about 0.5 miles wide. People called it Upper Crossing.<sup>28</sup>

From Willow, the route turned northeast to avoid the Sierra Blanca. Eight miles from Willow was Anchor Spring, near present-day Carrizozo. At that point they had detoured sufficiently north to avoid the Sierra Blanca so could turn east and travel 11 miles to Vera Cruz Spring -- near the present-day junction of US 380 and NM 37.

From Vera Cruz, it was 3.2 miles to the town of Nogal, and from there, 6.5 miles to Bonito City, a silver-mining town now submerged in Bonito Lake. From Bonito, it was 4.5 miles to V V headquarters in Alto. Probably the last stretch from Vera Cruz to Alto was accomplished in less than two days. The route detailed above would have been about 85 miles long and taken about 9 days. Since this route is hypothetical, it might be supposed that there are many other possible routes. However, when one takes into account the 4 obstacles mentioned, there are few other possibilities, particularly before reaching the eastern slopes of the Sierra Blanca.

This cattle drive took place in March, so water would not have been as much an issue as it would have been later in the summer. If the bulls walked 12.5 miles per day, they could have made it.

The cowboys were finished with their first major cattle drive, but more bulls were on their way. Fifty-four more bulls and 17 heifers destined for the V V were mentioned in an April 4 newspaper article as being quarantined in Boston.<sup>29</sup>

### **Trouble!: 1886-1891**

The first inkling of trouble on the V V to be reported publicly appeared on April 24, 1886 in the *Lincoln County Leader*:

*“We learn that P. F. Garrett has, of his volition, abandoned his contract as Superintendent of the Angus Cattle Co., and is going to confine his attention to his ranch at Roswell.”*<sup>30</sup>

A fuller public account of this event came two

years later in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic*:

*“[Kirby] sailed and was gone for months.<sup>31</sup> Shortly before his return, he cabled to [Pat] Garrett to discharge [a cowboy who had offended him], which wasn't done...Garrett was discharged. A \$6,000-a-year salary was paid, however”...<sup>32</sup>*

Garrett had been manager of the V V for about 8 months; coincidentally, about the same amount of time he captained the LS Rangers previously in the Texas Panhandle. After Garrett's firing, Kirby took the management reins himself.<sup>33</sup> Around three months later, he flexed his management muscle by firing everyone else.<sup>34</sup>

By 1890, the elder Cree had had enough of Kirby. He wrote 2 letters to his son James E., who was at that time on a business trip to the Osage Nation, a Native American tribe that ruled in the Great Plains -- Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma.

The first of these letters was written on June 9 and described the dire situation:<sup>35</sup> ... “more than half of the Capital of the Firm had been lost.”

With that, Cree began looking for a way out. He would later write that “The Firm” was created by a contract between Kirby and his son. And he referred to clauses in the contract. Clause 15 apparently specified when the value of the Firm was to be calculated. And Clause 23 evidently stated that disputes were to be settled by arbitration, not lawsuits.

Cree stated in one letter: “...I think you are justified in dissolving the Firm in terms of Clause 20.” Later, he stated: “I am the principal Creditor of the Firm,” and went on to say he wished to have his debt secured under clauses 10 and 21. He ordered his son to ... “get Col. [Albert Jennings] Fountain's<sup>36</sup> opinion on this and execute any deed he may recommend.”

By implication he wanted his son to return home by way of Las Cruces, which is where Fountain lived. It's clear that he wanted to oust Kirby in such a way that he could not get his hands on any of the Firm's assets. A follow-up letter written nine days later<sup>37</sup> mostly reiterated and expanded on the June 9 letter.

As the business relationship disintegrated, more light was shed on the exact nature of Kirby's involvement with Cree.

Poe's wife wrote in her book *Buckboard Days*: "...all [Kirby] was capable of doing was...signing checks on the Cree funds."<sup>38</sup>

And an article appearing in the Dec. 12, 1890, edition of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* stated: ... "[Kirby] never put a dollar of his own money into the ranch"...<sup>39</sup>

Also, the elder Cree in the June 9 letter made the point that his son, not himself, was Kirby's business partner, although by that time Cree wanted to take a strong hand in dissolving the business. It had been clear for years that *somebody* was excessively tolerant of Kirby's shenanigans. It has been assumed that Cree was that person, but the contract raises the possibility that it was his son. The younger Cree, 10 years Kirby's junior, could well have admired the military adventures of the older man<sup>40</sup> and wanted to be his friend and business partner. The elder Cree could have been humoring his son.

The Kirby-Cree relationship was filled with intrigue and raised curiosity among those who saw it play out. Was Kirby Cree's adopted son? The author has found no evidence supporting this allegation, and the way in which Cree got rid of Kirby argues against it.

Others wondered whether Kirby was at one time Cree's prospective son-in-law. In the Dec. 12, 1980, edition of *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, the article "Fateful Facts Furnished" speculated that the dissolution of the partnership was the senior Cree's attempt to complete his daughter's rejection of Kirby. Cree's only daughter, Margaret, was about 2 years younger than Kirby, so the ages fit. But she had married in 1876, nine years before Kirby came to New Mexico. For him to have still been pining for her seems unrealistic. And by going to New Mexico, he put himself much farther from her, as she remained in Scotland.

All things considered, the most plausible scenario is that Kirby met the Crees through his romance with Margaret before coming to New Mex-

ico. The romance ended, but the admiration the younger Cree developed for Kirby continued for years afterward.

Regardless, six months after the plan to get rid of him was put into motion, Kirby left. But he didn't go quietly. A short time later in Denver, he gave an interview to the *Rocky Mountain Daily News*.<sup>41</sup> He boasted that he had visited *all* the countries in the world in his early life and traveled with Stanley and Burton in Africa. He then stated that he intended to transport 40,000 head of cattle by rail from New Mexico to British Columbia. The paper quoted him as saying he had "*sunk \$300,000 in New Mexico and must get out or collapse at an early day.*" He said that coyotes, bad Mexicans and bad laws had assisted materially in "doing him up."

This interview quickly made its way to New Mexico, where it prompted a quick response.<sup>42</sup> An article in the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* sarcastically challenges Kirby ... "that he build a [rail]road for himself; for this would only be in keeping with the remainder of his remarkable exploits."

No cattle were ever transported to British Columbia. Most likely, Kirby owned none to transport. The only thing in the *Rocky Mountain Daily News* article that came to pass was that he did live in British Colombia (Vancouver) for a time.

If the Crees were happy to get rid of Kirby, their joy was to be short-lived. On May 18, 1891, the elder James Cree died at age 74 and was buried near Cedar Creek in present-day Ruidoso. That left the younger James Cree in charge.

### Epilogue: 1893-1939

Lack of space precludes detailing the remaining years of the V V, so they will merely be sketched out here:

1893 – James E. marries Eliza Mabel Fleming in Scotland.

1894 – James' first child Irene Mabel Napier is born in New Mexico.

1894-6 – James collaborates with Albert Jennings Fountain to stop cattle rustling, leading to Fountain's disappearance and presumed murder.

1897 – James' son Charles Mortimer is born in

Scotland.

1906 – James has 17 brands registered in New Mexico, more than most if not all of the other ranchers in the state.

1908 – Agnes moves back to Scotland bringing her husband's (the elder James) remains.

1915 – Agnes dies in Edinburgh, age 83.

1926-7 (ca.) – James' son Charles takes over the V V.

1929 – James dies in Scotland, age 64.

1939 – Charles sells the ranch to A. H. Kudner.

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*The author gratefully acknowledges the research help of Charles "Butch" Sanders, who provided much material on the Crees and Brandon Kirby.*

**Dan Jones** was born in Kentucky, but grew up in and around Espanola. He graduated from NMSU with a degree in electrical engineering, whence he worked for several institutions in that field, retiring from the University of Texas at Austin. While there, he met and married Melba Valdez, whose ancestor Milnor Rudolph was supposedly involved in the Billy the Kid story. Investigating that claim, he got interested in New Mexico history.

### Endnotes

1. Poe, Sophie A., and Eugene Cunningham. 1981. *Buckboard days*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, pp. 216-217.
2. Poe, *Buckboard days*, p. 221.
3. Crawford, Edith L. [I was born in Grapevine, Texas]. New Mexico, 1938. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh001162/>. (Accessed November 03, 2016.)
4. Poe, *Buckboard days*, pp. 233-255.
5. Metz, Leon Claire. 1973. *Pat Garrett: the story of a western lawman*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press. p. 136.
6. Metz, *Pat Garrett...*, pp. 136-148.
7. The author will refer to this area as Alto, even though the name didn't officially exist until a post

office was established there in 1901.

8. The Lincoln County leader. (White Oaks, Lincoln County, NM.), 06 June 1885 p. 4. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn87090072/1885-06-06/ed-1/seq-4/>> (Accessed November 3, 2016.)

9. Poe, *Buckboard days*, p. 231.

10. Metz, *Pat Garrett...*, p. 145.

11. "Fateful Facts Furnished", *Las Vegas Daily Optic*. (Las Vegas, NM.), 12 Dec 1890.

12. "Hawthorne" (prob. pseud.), [letter to editor], *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 15 Dec 1890.

13. His annual salary as Lincoln County sheriff in 1880-1882 was \$200!

14. UK Census 1881, Vol 685-2 Enum Dist 14, p. 20.

15. Golden era. (Lincoln, NM.), 15 Oct. 1885 p. 2. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn92070445/1885-10-15/ed-1/seq-2/>> (Accessed November 5, 2016.)

16. Ball, Eve, [Interview with Eve Ball by Leon C. Metz], 1969, "Interview no. 21," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso, p. 1.

17. Coe, Wilbur, and Peter Hurd. 1968. *Ranch on the Ruidoso: the story of a pioneer family in New Mexico, 1871-1968*. New York: Knopf. p. iii.

18. Ball, Eve, [Interview...], p. 1.

19. Ball, Eve, [Interview...], p. 3.

20. Clark, Donna, [personal communication], 9 March 2015.

21. Poe, *Buckboard days*, p. 231.

22. Roads would not have been necessary for the livestock, but they undoubtedly had at least one important wagon with them: the chuck wagon.

23. Wallace, Andrew, "Duty in the District of New Mexico: A Military Memoir," *New Mexico Historical Review* 50, no. 3 (1975), p. 249.

24. Estimates of the numbers of cowboys and horses come from Klasner, Lily, John Simpson Chisum, and Eve Ball. 1988. *My Girlhood Among Outlaws*. Tucson, Ariz: University of Arizona Press, p. 294.

25. Hart, Robert L., "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain: The Ozanne Stage to White Oaks

and Lincoln, 1886-1895,” *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* III, no. 1 (1996), pp. 28-40.

26. Eidenbach, Peter L., and Robert L. Hart, 1997, *A Number of Things: Baldy Russell, Estey City, & the Ozanne Stage: Historic Ranching and Mining on the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico*. Tularosa, NM.: Human Systems Research, Inc., pp. 135-162.

27. Sometimes called “Montoya’s Well” by Eidenbach and Hart

28. “Lower Crossing” had been built in 1870 by Colonel August V. Kautz, the commander of Fort Stanton, but it would have made their drive longer.

29. *Las Vegas Daily Gazette*. ([Las Vegas, NM.]), 04 April 1886 p. 2. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90051703/1886-04-04/ed-1/seq-2/>> (Accessed November 7, 2016.)

30. *Lincoln County Leader*, 24 April 1886, p. 4.

31. This was probably when he went to buy Angus cattle.

32. “Hawthorne”, [letter to editor], *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 15 Dec 1890.

33. “Fateful Facts Furnished”, *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 12 Dec 1890.

34. *The St. Johns Herald*. (St. Johns, Apache County, Arizona Territory [Ariz.]), 22 July 1886 p. 1. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn94051692/1886-07-22/ed-1/seq-1/>>

35. Cree, James, [Letter to James E. Cree, June 9, 1890], Charles M. and James E. Cree Papers, 1885-1950 and undated, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

36. Albert Jennings Fountain (1838-1896), of Las Cruces, was the attorney for the Southeastern New Mexico Stock Growers’ Association.

37. Cree, James, [Letter to James E. Cree, June 18, 1890], Charles M. and James E. Cree Papers, 1885-1950 and undated, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

38. Poe, *Buckboard days*, p. 231.

39. “Fateful Facts Furnished”, *Las Vegas Daily*

*Optic*, 12 Dec 1890.

40. Eve Ball said that he was “...a phony,” but he was not a total phony. Lack of space precludes detailing his adventures here.

41. “To Lead An Exodus”, *Rocky Mountain Daily News* (Denver, CO), 2 Dec 1890.

42. “A Bovine Baron”, *Las Vegas Daily Optic*. (Las Vegas, NM.), 6 Dec 1890.

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# Bloody Cooke's Canyon

By Daniel D. Aranda

Perhaps the bloodiest pass in the West is located on the Southern Overland Trail in southwestern New Mexico. The six-by-twenty-mile Cooke's Mountain Range is located just south of the Black Range northeast of Deming, N.M. Imposing at 8,404 feet, Cooke's Peak was a known landmark for prehistoric Indians of the area for thousands of years. Later, Apaches referred to it as *Dziltanatal*, "Mountain Holds Its Head Up Proudly" or "The Proud Mountain That Sits Alone." Others say that it was called "White Ringed Mountain."

At first glance, Cooke's Canyon (often spelled Cook's), which runs for approximately three miles through the southern foothills of the Cooke's Mountain Range, does not appear imposing in that it lacks a narrow passage with high, steep walls that Apaches could lob arrows and rocks onto unsuspecting emigrants. A second and closer look will assure the passerby that, indeed, this could be a very dangerous passage.

The Cooke's Mountain Range, Cooke's Canyon,



Young Philip St. George Cooke

Cooke's Peak and Cooke's Spring were named for Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke, who camped at what is today known as Cooke's Spring on November 16, 1846. The Colonel had been tasked with finding a wagon road westward during the war with Mexico and was put in charge

of what is known as the Mormon Battalion. They left Santa Fe in October, 1846, marched down the Rio Grande, eventually veered to the southwest, then headed westward, reaching San Diego, California, on January 29, 1847.

Spanish cartographer Bernardo Miera y Pacheco labeled it as *Cerro de los Remedios* in 1758<sup>1</sup>. While in 1780, the Spaniard Jose Antonio Vildosola called it "*Picacho de las Mimbres*" or just plain *Picacho*, referring to its pointed peak and the willows in the nearby mountains. The Americans first called it Mount Republic but, almost immediately, changed it in honor of their leader. Other names used over the years were Old Baldy and Matterhorn of the West. Some have claimed that Lt. William H. Emory called it "The Dome," but the lieutenant was actually referring to another point nearby.

Cooke's Spring was also referred to by several names over the years. The original spring, which



*Cooke's Spring - under the trees. The photo was taken from near the original spring. Fort Cummings is at right rear.*

was located about 50 to 100 yards south of the present site, had been used for thousands of years and there are grinding holes nearby that early Indians used. The spring was a marshy hole when Philip St. George Cooke camped there in 1846. A 49er described it as a swampy hole with many wells of

good water in the neighborhood while others called it a mud hole. On April 30, 1851, Boundary Commissioner, John Bartlett, described it as a brackish spring that formed a pool 50 feet across and surrounded by rushes.

Knowing that good water was essential for passing emigrants, the government contracted James Leach in 1859 to improve the road and wa-



*Massacre Peak*

ter sources on the Southern Overland Route. He constructed a 6- by 17-foot well at the spring along with two 9- by 70-foot watering troughs. No doubt other improvements were made later after Fort Cummings was established in October 1863.

It has been cited that approximately four hundred people have died in Cooke's Canyon and vicinity, which may seem high to most historians, but perhaps the number may not be inflated as much as they might suspect. This writer has found incidents that allude to about half of that amount, equally divided among Indians and emigrants, and suspects that, although some accounts were exaggerated or perhaps fabricated, many others probably went unreported. For lack of space, I cannot expand on most incidents but will list much of what I have found. Because of their interest value, I have chosen to include a few other items that help draw a clearer picture of the West's bloodiest pass.

### Chronologically Listed

**November 18, 1780** – Capt. Don Francisco Martinez, with his column from Chihuahua, camped at San Miguel (Cooke's Spring).<sup>2</sup> This was part of a three-pronged exploration and campaign against the Apaches that was to converge here. Another column under Jose Antonio Vildosola was coming from Sonora while the other, under Juan Bautista de Anza, was coming from Santa Fe. When a lone mounted Indian was seen nearby, Martinez sent a detachment after him. Corporal Felipe Lopez, from Carrizal, killed the hapless Apache and presented the ears to his commander for which he was awarded the victim's horse and lance.<sup>3</sup>

**Sometime in 1785** – Five years later, Don Francisco Martinez led another expedition against the Apaches in the Florida Mountains, Cooke's Peak and Mimbres Mountains, but the results are unknown. There were other expeditions mounted by the Spaniards and, after 1821, by the Mexicans. Though there is little record, they surely passed through here.

**Nov. 16, 1846** – On a cold and windy day, the Mormon Battalion, under Philip St. George Cooke, camped at Cooke's Spring. They spent the next day at nearby Frying Pan Spring.

**November 21, 1849** – On a cold, blustering night, 49er John Chaffin died of an unknown illness. He had been sick since his party left Socorro and died unexpectedly west of Cooke's Spring and was buried just off the trail, where his rock marker still lies. He left a wife and four children in Platte County, Missouri.

**January 1850** – John Cremony, who was scouting through Cooke's Canyon during John Bartlett's boundary reconnaissance, had a confrontation with Apache Chief, Cuchillo Negro. The chief rode ahead of his men to inquire what Cremony was up to and because he felt threatened, Cremony, in Spanish, ordered the chief to cease his advance.



*John Chaffin's grave.*

Noting that the Apaches were fanning out for advantage, Cremony assured the chief that if they tried anything their chief would be first to die. Cremony then explained that he was part of a group of soldiers passing through and that the others would be along shortly. The chief didn't believe him because no one had reported soldiers nearby. Cremony spent ten to fifteen of the tensest moments of his life sparring for an advantageous position while he awaited the survey crew. With a sigh of relief, Cremony watched as the Apaches left when the soldiers arrived.

**April 30, 1851** – Boundary Commission under Bartlett stopped at Cooke's Spring again.

**January 1852** – Constante's wagon train of eight wagons was abandoned after a night attack by the Apaches. Three horses and 35 head of cattle were captured at Cooke's Spring.

**July 4, 1853** – Mormons holding a dance at the spring invited passing soldiers to attend. The soldiers declined.

**August 7, 1854** – Michael Erskine's cattle drive (about 900 head) camped about a mile west of Cooke's Spring.

**Mid 1850s or early 1860s** – The date of this event

is unknown. There was a hotel in La Mesilla that would ring a loud bell to announce when a stage arrived. Another hotel owner purchased a Chinese gong to outdo his competitor. Perhaps stage guard C.W. Garner sympathized with the bell ringer, for he offered to purloin the gong and take it out of town. He was in Cooke's Canyon when Apaches threatened his stage. He quickly stripped down to his drawers, covered himself with flour and advanced toward the Indians yelling and ringing his gong like a madman. The confounded Indians left.

**November 1856** – Apaches raided a government train under Lt. L.S. Baker at Cooke's Spring.

**Early February 1859** – Henry M. Lazelle and a company of Mounted Riflemen from Ft. Bliss fought Apaches near Cooke's Spring. Three soldiers were killed and six wounded. Several Apaches were also killed.

The first several years in the 1860s proved to be very bloody. Much of the violence was due to the killing of several of Cochise's family at Apache Pass in Arizona and to complications spurred on by mining activity at nearby Pinos Altos.

**February 9, 1860** – An eastbound stagecoach was attacked in Cooke's Canyon. Don Carlos Buell, Eugene Van Patten and another man were wounded. Members of another eastbound wagon train who heard the shooting came to their rescue.

**May 23, 1860** – Apaches raided two wagons at Cooke's Spring. The cattle were captured, and one civilian was wounded.

**December 4, 1860** – Apaches raided sheep herds at Mule Springs and Cooke's Spring. Six Mexicans were killed, one wounded and four captured.

**February 1861** – A government train of 15 wagons, enroute from Ft. Craig to Ft. Buchanan under wagon master William D. Kirk, was attacked at Cooke's Spring; 40 head of cattle were captured.

**May 1861** – Animals were captured in a raid on Cooke's Spring Station.

**May 1861** – Twelve men were killed near Cooke's Station.

**June 3, 1861** – Gustave Elsberg's and Jacob Amberg's train was attacked in Cooke's Canyon. Pelajio Perea and Rufino Arozato were killed, and at least one other was wounded. Forty-one mules were captured. They were attacked again the next morning.

**June 3, 1861** – A westbound wagon train was attacked by Apaches that were repelled at Cooke's Spring. Two men were reported killed.

**July 21-23, 1861** – Probably the best-known incident that happened in Cooke's Canyon was the killing of seven men in July 1861. It has since been called the Freeman Thomas Massacre because Freeman Thomas, 29, (a conductor) along with Emmett Mills, 19, (younger brother of General Anson Mills), Joe Roescher, 26, Mathew Champion, Robert S. Avaline, Jack Wilson, 29, and John Portell were killed here after a couple of days of heavy fighting. The men, whose sympathies lay with the Union, left La Mesilla on either the early morning or evening of July 20 to avoid being captured by Confederates who were moving into the area. The stage, probably a celerity wagon, – box style with open sides -- belonged to the San Antonio - San Diego Line.

According to stagehands at Cooke's Spring Station, Roescher decided to replace his span

of mules because the ones pulling the wagon were in need of re-shoeing. They lost some valuable time doing this as night turned into day. Most Westerners were aware that Apaches did not attack at night and it was posited that they would have passed through the canyon safely were it not for this delay.

Unfortunately, the Apaches under the combined leadership of Mangas Coloradas and Cochise attacked them after they entered the canyon. With their path blocked, the men made a difficult run up a hill before they could go no further. They unloaded what they could from the stage, turned the horses loose to stall the Indians and ran up the side of the mountain. The men piled rocks for protection and fought the Indians off for two days before they were all killed.

Four of the men died behind their little breastworks - a low temporary defense position - while two ran about fifty yards before they were killed. John Wilson made it 150 yards before he was killed. He was found mutilated and with a dozen arrows in him. The other men were also found badly mutilated. Mangas Coloradas later said that the seven men fought valiantly and that if his Apaches were as brave as them, he could whip the world. Indian casualties vary from 20 to 40.

**August 6, 1861** – After soldiers from Ft. Buchanan learned about Major Lynde's defeat at San Augustine Springs, they decided to abandon their trek to Mesilla and fled toward the north after damaging their cannons, burning a stage and approximately three dozen wagons and their supplies at Cooke's Spring.



*Grave marker in Fort Cummings cemetery for four soldiers killed near Oak Grove.*

**August 24, 1861** – Eugene Zimmer (Some accounts say his name was Anton Brewer.) and his helpers were driving some cattle through Cooke's Canyon, when they were attacked. Eight or nine Mexican herders were killed and their cattle stolen. Zimmer fled and tried to warn another party that was traveling east.<sup>4</sup>

**August 25, 1861** -- Awagon train of nearly 50 people, under Felix Grundy Ake and William Wardsworth, was attacked near the western entrance of Cooke's Canyon. Ake and company, including Moses Carson, an older half-brother of Kit Carson, had fled their homes in Arizona when the military posts were abandoned because of the Civil War.



*West end of Cooke's Canyon.*

Their cattle were herded through the canyon first and then the mounted men followed with the wagons after them. Just as the mounted men got to a point in the canyon that narrowed, a man spotted the nude bodies of two of the Mexican herders killed from Zimmer's party. As soon as the news was relayed to those behind, about a half a dozen men, including a nephew of Sam Houston, decided to retreat out of the canyon.

Since indians hadn't been spotted, most of the party, nevertheless, continued. Then suddenly, the Apaches opened up killing James May and John St. Clair and several horses, thus blocking the trail. During this chaos, William Redding and several men tried to divert the Apaches' attention while Jack Pennington tried to withdraw the wag-

ons. Redding was soon wounded in the leg, but he continued toward the Indians and was eventually killed. This enabled the Apaches to capture the cattle and allowed the emigrants to corral the wagons for the fight that ensued.

It was a hard fought contest that added more casualties on both sides. Jim Cotton accidentally shot himself when loading his rifle. His ramrod lodged itself in his leg. Nathaniel Sharp was shot in the neck and ear but pulled the shaft through and continued to fight. Four others were wounded and William Wardsworth died of his wounds. Several Apaches were reported killed.<sup>5</sup>

**Late August 1861** – Five adults and two children were killed and mutilated in Cooke's Canyon.

**September 26, 1861** – Apaches set an ambush in Cooke's Canyon for the Charles Hayden wagon train. But since it was heavily guarded by Mastin's Arizona Guards, the Indians called it off.

**Early Oct. 1861** – It was reported that 32 men from the Mesilla Valley, who were going to the aid of Pinos Altos, were bottled up in Cooke's Canyon.

**December 17, 1862** – Sgt. George Hand and a detachment of soldiers rode through Cooke's Canyon and reported many bones, skulls and graves of men, women and children in the canyon.

**February 16, 1863** – Express of Co. "G," 1st Cavalry, California Volunteers was attacked in the western entrance of Cooke's Canyon. Three mules or horses were taken and three Indians killed.

**March 1863** – Apaches attacked a wagon train in Cooke's Canyon. Eight Mexicans were tortured to death and their families taken.

**July 10, 1863** – Apaches attacked an eastbound wagon train under Sergeant E.V. Hoyt and a six-man detail in Cooke's canyon. Four soldiers were wounded and 19 mules were captured. Three of the four wagons were abandoned. Indian casualties

were reported as four dead and several wounded.

**July 24, 1863** – Very early in the morning, a military wagon outfit under Lt. John Lambert and detachments of Co. “F” and “H” of the 5th Infantry, California Volunteers, were attacked at Cooke’s Pass. Pvt. Jonathan C. Queen was killed, and Sergeant Hance or Hantz was wounded twice -- once in the shoulder and once in the hand. Two wagons and a dozen mules were taken. Three Indians were reported killed.

**October 2, 1863** – As a result of the many indian attacks, Fort Cummings was established. It was a walled fort and it was dangerous for soldiers to wander beyond the walls unarmed.



*Grave at west end of Cooke’s Canyon.*

**September 1866** – Indians stole horses, mules and other livestock at Fort Cummings.

**November 1867** – Military courier, Charles Young, was killed in Cooke’s canyon.

**January 1868** – Apaches attacked a stagecoach in Cooke’s Canyon and made off with the horses.

**January 22, 1868** – Apaches broke into the stage company corral, killed 1 mule and shot another with an arrow.

**February 20, 1868** – Apaches attacked an emigrant train near the east entrance of Cooke’s Canyon. Lt. Leggett and 20 men went to the rescue.

**November 13, 1868** – Apaches killed a Mexican in Cooke’s Canyon.

**February 2, 1869** – A civilian mail rider was wounded in Cooke’s Canyon.

**February 20, 1869** – Apaches wounded a civilian mail rider in Cooke’s Canyon.

**February 1873** – Four head of cattle were captured one evening from an encamped wagon at the western entrance of Cooke’s Canyon.

**January 12, 1876** - At 2 am, John Chisum and his attorney were returning from Tucson when their stage was robbed by Joseph “Dutch Joe” Hubert and his gang. The outlaws took six silver ingots, but overlooked a thousand dollars Chisum had hidden in his boot.

**May 9, 1876** – “Dutch Joe” and another accomplice again robbed another eastbound stage in Cooke’s Canyon. The take was not very lucrative.

**1877 Autumn** – Nine young and heavily armed Anglo “owl-hoots” stopped a stage near Ft. Cummings but, finding nothing of value, let it continue on its way.

**1878 Spring** – Bandits struck Warner’s sheep herd in Cooke’s Canyon. Warner and outlaw Tom Hill were killed and outlaw Jesse Evans was wounded.

**May 19, 1878** – Bill Brazelton held up a stagecoach near Cooke’s Canyon.

**1880 early in the year** – Lt. Thomas Cruse passed through Cooke’s Canyon and was appalled at all of the animal bones, wagon wheels and other debris.

**May 4, 1880** – Francisco Montoya’s and possibly

Evangelisto Chavez's train were attacked in Cooke's Canyon. Montoya was wounded, and one of his freighters was killed. More than 100 oxen and mules were taken by Apaches.

**1880 Late in the year** - Major Morrow struck one of Apache Chief Victorio's bands near Cooke's Canyon, killing two, wounding three and capturing their stock.

**May 28, 1880** - Five horses belonging to Post Suttler and Samuel J. Lyons were captured near Fort Cummings.

**May 29, 1880** - One Mexican was killed when Apaches attacked a wagon train near Cooke's Spring, within view of Ft. Cummings.

**May 29, 1880** - Apaches killed E. Hildebrand, Samuel J. Lyons, Mr. Carson (first name not known), George Campbell and Mr. Vigil (first name not known) at the west entrance to Cooke's Canyon. Two wagons, one buggy and seven horses were taken, and one Apache was killed.

**June 5, 1880** - Apache scouts under Henry K. Parker attacked five Apaches on the west end of Cooke's Canyon. Washington (son of Warm Springs Chief Victorio) and another Apache were killed, and seven horses were captured.



*Author hidden in the rocks of Cooke's Canyon.*

**Sometime after December 15, 1880** - H.B. Ailman wrote that Indians captured a young stagecoach driver and two unlucky men in a passing wagon in Cooke's Canyon. They were apparently tortured to death. Ailman also reported that the odor of decaying flesh of the dead, unburied Indians permeated the air.

**August 19, 1881** - Apache Chief Nana attacked S.P. Carpenter's wood camp. Wood choppers Desiderio Hereida and Petronilo Chacon were killed, and Manuel Chacon, 12, and Juan Chacon, 14, were captured near Cooke's Canyon. Two others were reported missing.<sup>6</sup>

**1885** - Louie Taren's father and 10 Mexicans were killed and three were wounded near Cooke's Spring, according to Louie Taren. (This is probably an error as the incident he described likely took place in October 1879 near Magdalena Gap, east of Cooke's Canyon.)

**1990's** - A man turned his Jeep over in the canyon. He was pinned in the wreckage and died. Caretakers at Fort Cummings found him.

There are other garbled entries, which may be added to the list after some verification. The author of this article would appreciate information on any other events that have been over-looked.

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**Daniel Aranda** is a well-known local historian and many-times published author. Dan published his first article in the 1970s with the support of such mentors as Eve Ball, Dan Thrapp, Ed Sweeney, Adlai Feather, Lee Myers, Keith Humphries and his old friend Jim Brito. His history is augmented by membership in many history-oriented groups including the Order of Indian Wars. He specializes in Apache history.

### **Endnotes**

1. It is possible that Miera y Pacheco may have made a map that labeled the site during a 1747 expedition. For an excellent account of Miera y Pacheco's life see Kessell, Miera Y Pacheco
2. It is possible that he may have camped approximately two miles away at what is today known as Frying Pan Spring.
3. Couchman, page 20, implies that the incident happened at or near Cooke's Canyon while Barnaby, page 221, states Antonio Bonilla as reporting that it happened on the skirt of Las Mimbres which does not rule out either.
4. This incident happened in Frying Pan Canyon, adjacent to Cooke's Canyon, but since the Southern Overland Trail traverses both it is often reported as Cooke's Canyon.
5. I used the spelling Wardsworth, although various spellings are recorded. Also, the accounts of this event vary on dates, details, etc. This writer is in the process of gathering information for a more complete picture.
6. This incident is also reported as happening on August 19 at Mule Springs, northeast of Cooke's Canyon.

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# Camp Cody: Gateway to Hades Or WWI Army Health Spa?

By Jim Eckles

Driving through Deming, N.M. on Interstate 10, most travelers would be surprised to learn a World War I Army training camp, built to house almost 30,000 troops, once stood just northwest of the town center. The facility was like many Western boomtowns. It was launched in mid-1917, furiously built to accommodate and train men to go to war in Europe. Then, poof, it was gone less than two years later.

In 1917, Deming was a town of about 2,500 souls. It is hard to imagine the impact on the community from the influx of so many troops. At times the streets must have been packed shoulder to shoulder with men looking for something to do in their free time. One event many took advantage of was the day the National League Chicago Cubs stopped to play an exhibition baseball game against a team of soldiers in the spring of 1918.

For the soldiers, Deming was a bit of an experience as well. Most of them came from five Midwest farm states – Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, North and South Dakota. For them the yuccas, mesquite and blowing sand of southern New Mexico were quite a change from the corn and wheat fields back home.



*Mexican President Porfirio Diaz wearing some the bric-a-brac of his office. Library of Congress*

Camp Cody, the training facility did not suddenly appear on the Deming landscape. Like many other historical tales, Camp Cody has a backstory that, for our purposes, dates back to 1910.

The Mexican revolt began in 1910 when Mexico's citizens rose up to overthrow President Porfirio Diaz, an iron-fisted ruler who led the country for more than 25 years. Many say he took advantage of the country by encouraging lucrative business deals with American companies while building a huge fortune for himself. Apparently the riches did not trickle down to very many ordinary citizens in Mexico.

The revolt turned into 10 long years of violence, not really ending until 1920. After Diaz was ousted in 1911, the various factions then fought each other in a continuous civil war. One group would win out for a short time only to be replaced by another band. The violence bumped up against the border



*Mexican rebel leader Pancho Villa wearing more practical of-fice gear . Library of Congress*

with the United States. Mexican government and rebel soldiers shooting at each other sometimes turned into shooting at military and civilian targets in the United States.

For instance, in March 1911, rebels bombed the Mexican Army bar-

C a l l e d

racks in Ciudad Juárez as El Pasoans watched from across the Rio Grande. Later, in April, the American garrison in El Paso shot at rebels in Juárez after taking fire from across the border. Casualties were reported on both sides. In June 1911, federal Mexican troops attacked rebels holding Tijuana. Fleeing rebels crossed the border to escape by surrendering to U.S. Army troops at San Ysidro, California.

Other incidents along the border were much more serious as rebels actually entered the United States and killed Americans. In response, the United States deployed Army troops to the border to protect the small communities there. Living along the border was perceived as a risky venture - no one was talking about an all-out war with Mexico.

In 1912, one of these Army camps was established at Columbus, N.M. Initially it appears to have been simply called the "Army Camp at Columbus." Then, the *El Paso Herald* reported on March 28, 1916, "The army camp at Columbus, N.M. is now called Camp Furlong." It was named after Major John W. Furlong who was stationed at the camp in early 1915 with the 13<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and died in April 1915.

These small, remote camps had a lot of border to cover, almost 2,000 miles, and were greatly hampered by the lack of personnel. They were stretched thin and, with very few roads, it was a job for men on horseback. In Texas, it is striking how many of the camps were simply on local ranches. There were not a lot of incidents, but by the time these regular Army units responded, they were usually too late to do much about it.

In 1914, to provide relevant training for troops who might be called upon to support

border security, the New Mexico National Guard and regular U.S. Army from Fort Bliss held a joint "summer camp" outside Deming. National Guard units from each state usually held and still do hold summer camp training for a couple of weeks somewhere in their states. In New Mexico, National Guard summer camp was always held near Las Vegas, N.M. Of course, Vegas is a long way from the border, and the landscape doesn't look much like southern New Mexico. They decided Deming would be much more realistic, especially when it was actually near the danger zone.

According to C.A. Gustafson in his *Desert Winds Magazine* article from January 1990, the joint training session ran from July 11 to July 21. There were about 750 New Mexico guardsman or "citizen soldiers" as they are sometimes called and about 250 regular Army soldiers from Fort Bliss. Deming contributed a company of about 60 men to the New Mexico contingent.

Called Camp Brookes, a patch of desert just northwest of Deming, across the railroad tracks and west of the road to Silver City, was set aside for the troops. According to Gustafson, they staked out 20 streets to provide the order one expects in an Army camp with perfect rows of tents and other camp necessities. The Deming Chamber of Commerce ran a two-inch pipeline to the camp for water.



*Camp Brookes, New Mexico's 1914 summer camp at Deming. The New Mexico Guard troops were joined by 250 soldiers from Ft. Bliss for two weeks of training. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

The New Mexico troops arrived by train while the Fort Bliss personnel marched from El Paso covering about 12 miles a day.

The training consisted of scouting, patrolling, parading and target shooting. One half day was wasted when New Mexico's first state governor William McDonald visited to review the troops. Actually, it may have been a full day as the morning was probably used to practice marching for the governor's visit.

On July 21, the troops cleaned up the site and headed home. Although the camp was there less than two weeks, it started Deming on the roller coaster ride of gains and losses associated with the comings and goings of military camps in the town's backyard. Suddenly there would be a flood of dollars and then, just as suddenly, the flow of money would dry up.

Things along the border escalated to full-blown national consciousness on March 9, 1916 when Mexican rebel leader Pancho Villa and 500 men attacked Columbus, N.M. The attack was a complete surprise and American soldiers and civilians both had to scramble to defend themselves. Since the town itself was attacked and not the military camp, most of the damage and deaths were suffered by the civilian population.

About as many reasons for the Villa raid have been proposed as there are books on the subject. In the end, 16 Americans were killed and dozens of Villa's men died, many of their bodies burned in retaliation. Some people started talking about war with Mexico.

At this point we probably need to discuss the term "casualty." It appears many people think it means people killed. Actually, in the military sense, it means personnel put out of action and unable to continue fighting. Therefore, it is an encompassing term that includes wounded and killed. For that reason, the casualty number is much higher than the number of dead but is sometimes used mistakenly as if it were the number of people killed. For example, Wikipedia states there were 38 million military and civilian casualties in World War I. Breaking that down, there were over 17 million

deaths and 20 million wounded.

The United States was outraged at the Mexican raid and President Woodrow Wilson responded immediately by ordering Brigadier General John J. Pershing to capture or destroy Villa. Pershing was already at Fort Bliss and quickly mobilized his men and equipment. He headed for the Army border camp at Columbus where he made his final preparations. He had the President's authority to enter Mexico in hot pursuit.

On May 5, 1916, Villa supporters attacked Glenn Springs, Texas, which was a small military camp in what is now Big Bend National Park. From these raids, it seemed clear the regular Army did not have enough personnel to adequately man the small posts scattered along the border, especially with Pershing taking thousands of men with him into Mexico. For the Wilson administration, the solution was to federalize the country's National Guard units. They were ordered to "mobilize" and report to spots all along the Mexican border.

The National Defense Act of 1916 was passed just a few weeks earlier and gave Wilson the authority for his action. One interesting sidelight was the implementation of a standard pay scale for the military personnel. Under the scale's guidelines, generals received \$16.67 a day while second lieutenants received \$4.72. Enlisted men were much lower with privates receiving 60 cents a day while sergeants earned a full dollar a day. In a sense, personnel marching through Mexico were forced to save those dollars since they had no place to spend them - a boon to family back home.

Of the states that later ended up at Camp Cody, Minnesota and Nebraska National Guard units reported to Llano Grande, Texas, which is near the southern tip of the state. North Dakota was nearby in Mercedes and South Dakota was just down the road at San Benito, near Brownsville. Iowa was stationed at Brownsville.

Some states never made it to the border. The Wisconsin National Guard ended up in San Antonio, Texas. Others were actually right on the border and fairly close to the possible action. Utah was well organized and had its men in Nogales, Arizona, just

11 days after mobilization. They soon were joined by Guardsmen from Idaho, Connecticut and California. Something like 150,000 men were called to active duty and sent south.

Some states took a long time to simply get out of their own backyards. It was October before the governor of Alabama even knew how many officers and enlisted men he had to send.

New Mexico's Guard unit didn't go far. They reported to Columbus to guard the camp and the community as Pershing chased Villa. They were joined by an infantry unit from Massachusetts. It was New England clam chowder and Cape Cod beaches meets green chile stew and spring sandstorms.

Only a handful of these National Guard troops ever fired their rifles during the call-up. Although the guard units didn't spend their time repelling Mexican raiders, they did something probably much more important – they trained. Mary Murphy Gillette, in her *South Dakota History Quarterly* article "A Small War in a Beer-Drinking Country: The South Dakota Guard on the Mexican Border," hints this call-up may have saved the National Guard. She wrote, "A 1915 War Department study had condemned the guard, proclaiming it weak, inefficient, insufficiently trained, wastefully costly." She goes on to say, "It was the Mexican border service, however, that finally gave the guard the opportunity and materiel to become an adequately trained national militia."

Alexander F. Barnes echoed this thought when, in his article in the March-April 2016 issue of *Army Sustainment* magazine, stated, "The 150,000 Guardsmen that served on the border received more valuable training during their time there than would have been possible in the years of normal home-armory training."

So the call-up and subsequent training turned out to be incredibly beneficial in light of the country's pending entrance into the big war in Europe. But it turns out there was a second big benefit from this mobilization. According to Barnes, it highlighted the lack of organization and the ineptitude of many states trying to get their men processed,

equipped and shipped out. It was a very serious problem that bubbled to the surface and it gave national and state leaders a chance to fix as much as possible before doing it all over again in 1917.

To support this expanded effort along the border, the Army opened Camp Deming on the old site of the Camp Brookes summer camp. The *Deming Graphic* newspaper reported in July 1916 the camp was under construction. It was going to have a semi-permanent hospital, a mammoth warehouse, other structures and several thousand men.

The Deming newspaper reported they were expecting six regiments of infantry, four troops of cavalry, two batteries of artillery, the ambulance corps and hospital staff.

The front-page headline in the August 4, 1916 issue of the *Deming Graphic* read "Greetings to Delaware," and under it was a graphic of two hands shaking. The paper announced the first National Guard troops to arrive at Camp Deming were 600 men from Delaware.

There is a long article about the Delaware National Guard on the Delaware Military Heritage and Education Foundation website by Brig. Gen. Kennard Wiggins (Ret.) entitled "Delaware National Guard during the Punitive Expedition to Mexico 1916-1917." According to Wiggins, the Delaware men arrived at Deming on July 31, 1916. It took them about a week to get there by train.

As the first to arrive, the men found the camp a bit rough yet. Wiggins says the men helped lay-out streets and construct bathhouses and latrines. They slept in tents but were short of blankets. He said, "The basic staples of life in garrison were well provided for, but one correspondent commented on the difficulty and red tape required to fill in the gaps. There was bread, but no butter, coffee without sugar, potatoes without salt."

Wiggins states sanitation was a "huge problem" in Deming. The men were in constant battle against flies and other vermin. Incinerators were built all around the camp to quickly destroy any waste. The incinerators were "periodically dismantled and crude oil poured on the surrounding ground to destroy fly larvae."

We also know the camp had a YMCA facility as Wiggins writes, “It had magazines, a phonograph, tables and stationery for the boys with which to write home. It was a home away from home for the soldiers in their off-hours.”

The men spent their days training, some of it based on the real-world experiences by others in Europe. There was an emphasis on bayonet drill, rifle fire discipline, how to solve real problems, how to signal and how to use a map.

An emphasis at all the camps was physical fitness. Others have commented on the benefits of all this physical activity for these men, but Wiggins summarizes it nicely:

*“The men started the day with calisthenics immediately after roll call. There were endless daily hikes which hardened the men and inured them to hardship. The soldiers usually carried packs, rifles, bayonets, pistols and other equipment. The hikes would sometimes be up to 25 miles over two days, in Southwestern summer sunshine. Initially, the green civilians fell like flies, some requiring an ambulance, but over time they conditioned to the rigors of climate and terrain. They learned to hoard their water and conserve their strength. They lost flab and gained muscle, adding years to their lives. They developed into the best physical shape most of them had ever experienced. Their issue uniforms no longer fit their lean and hard frames. The Delaware soldiers had made a true transition from citizen to soldier during this demanding deployment.”*

This kind of training was not unique to Deming but was the order of business for all the National Guard camps. At the height of the call-up, Fort Bliss had over 40,000 troops scattered in four additional camps around El Paso – Camps Pershing, Stewart, Owen Bierne and a Camp Cotton extension.

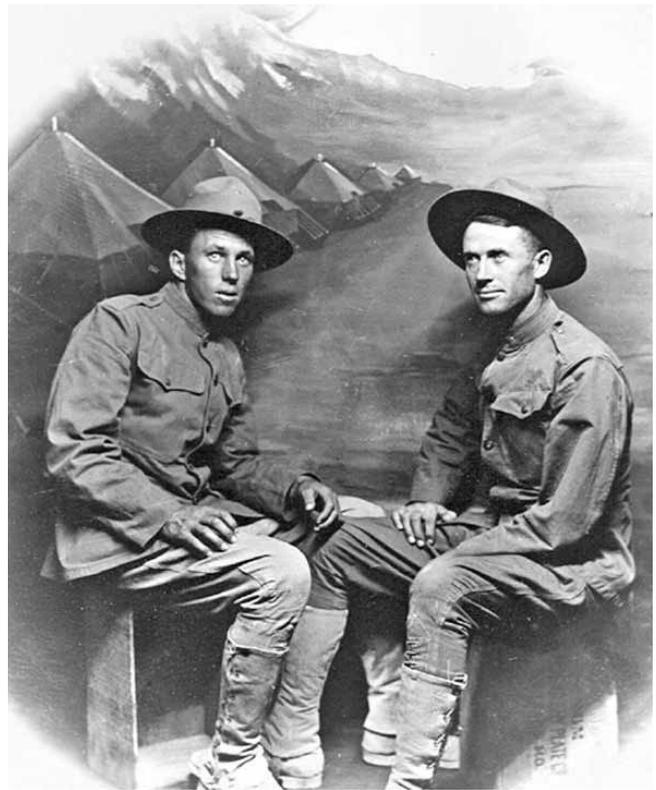
In *Bastion on the Border: Fort Bliss, 1854-1943*, Charles Harris and Louis Sadler detail some of the hikes taken by trainees at Bliss, sometimes at division strength. The exercises started small. When the Ohio contingent was new to the area, they hiked to the base of Mt. Franklin and back. The more experienced Massachusetts brigade hiked down the

Ysleta road for 10 miles.

By September the groups got larger and the trips longer. The entire 7<sup>th</sup> Division marched up the Mesilla Valley – there were so many troops, the column was 10 miles long. The largest outing involved the 10<sup>th</sup> Division on a 58-mile march up the Mesilla Valley to Fort Selden. The 18,000 troops “advanced as though they were pursuing an imaginary enemy division.” The group only made it to Las Cruces, where they camped and went through several days of maneuvers and then marched back.

Wyoming also sent its sons to Camp Deming. In an article by Carl V. Hallberg on the Wyoming Historical Society’s website called “The Wyoming Guard on the Mexican Border, 1916,” Hallberg gives a very detailed description of the Wyoming organization and preparations underway to protect the Mexican border.

Originally the men were headed to San Antonio, Texas but, while en route, orders were amended. They were turned to Deming. “They arrived on



*These unknown trainees from Camp Deming took the time to have their portrait made in a studio. Don Williamson collection*

Sept. 30, 1916. They were billeted in a camp outside of town with regiments from Colorado, Arkansas and Delaware.”

Hallberg says the troops expected to be sent to the border at any moment, but that never happened. Instead they spent most of their time training, being hardened along with the Delaware men. On March 1, 1917, they were ordered home.

Along with the four states mentioned, a field hospital company from New Hampshire was sent to Deming. New Hampshire's other Guard units ended up being split up and sent to a number of locations, all in Texas - Brownsville, San Antonio and Laredo.

As things settled along the border, President Wilson had Pershing withdraw from Mexico and, by the end of January 1917, most everyone was back in the United States.

For Deming, closing the camp meant another downward turn on the economic roller coaster. The National Guard units were quickly sent home. Wiggins reports the Delaware men reached home on February 7, 1917, after being dismissed from Deming. Since the Wyoming men were sent home a few weeks later, it appears the shutdown was spread out over a period of several weeks.

Just a few months later, on April 6, 1917, the United States joined France and Britain by declaring war on Germany. The big problem immediately facing the War Department was an utterly undersized military. By European standards, U.S. resources were minuscule. According to the *Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1918, Vol. 1*, in January 1917 the regular Army had a strength of 217,272 men. The National Guard only numbered 181,000 men. Initial War Department projections were for at least a million-man army to be sent to Europe.

The government wasted no time in building that army. According to the Secretary of War's report, the Army was up to 1,538,203 in December 1917. Most of that growth was in the second half of the year. By Armistice on November 11, 1918, the American Army was at 3,665,000 men with 2,000,000 of them in France.

As would be expected, the cost of the military complex skyrocketed as well. For the first year of the war, the War Department reported appropriations of \$8 billion. For the next fiscal year, ending on June 30, 1919, the military appropriation was \$15.3 billion.

To jumpstart a bigger Army, President Wilson turned around and reactivated the National Guard units, ordering them to various training camps. Given the Guard's strength, this didn't put much of a dent in the need. There was talk of only asking Americans to volunteer to go overseas and fight. However, the number of volunteers in the first few months after declaring war was disappointing. The word in America during the first years of the war was "neutrality" and shifting attitudes to "war" would take some time.

The only way to get men into the Army swiftly was with a draft. Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1917 which went into effect in May. The draft was not popular with many Americans as isolationism was the popular opinion of the day. The act was challenged in the courts but the Supreme Court upheld it in 1918.

The draft was a bit different from prior ones because folks with money could no longer hire a substitute to take their place. The practice was accepted during the Civil War but was expressly forbidden by the new act. It changed the process so those not wanting to be drafted had to convince their area draft boards to find some reason to exempt them.

Also, government officials realized they needed to convince the American public the war was absolutely necessary, and it was their patriotic duty to support it any way they could. A government committee on public information was formed to push the cause. At a time, when most Americans got their information from each other through verbal exchanges and from newspapers, reaching everyone was a challenge.

The committee realized it needed representatives in the communities and quickly organized 75,000 speakers. These speakers gave 750,000 four-minute speeches in 5,000 cities and towns preaching the gospel of war to Americans. Newspapers

were enlisted to carry the message that the “Hun” was nothing more than an animal and had to be stopped. The various syndicates cooperated and the papers were flooded with cartoons and stories depicting Germans as a people not quite human. Newspapers that failed to support the effort were shutdown.

Citizens of the new state of New Mexico were strong supporters of the war in Europe but had a very small population to draw on. One source says 15,000 New Mexicans served, of which 8,000 were drafted, the others volunteered or were with the National Guard. It is estimated 70% of the University of New Mexico men left school to join the military. This included the entire football team. There was a similar impact at the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts in Las Cruces where only seven men were left to graduate in 1918.

To train all the men flooding into the system, the Army established 32 training camps. Sixteen were for the regular army and 16 were for the National Guard units. Most were located in more southern locations to take advantage of fairly moderate winter temperatures. However, Camp Dodge was at Des Moines, Iowa; Camp Devens at Ayer, Massachusetts; and Camp Custer at Battle Creek, Michigan. Michigan in January must have been brutal.

According to Laura Krol’s short article, “Camp Cody, Deming’s Forgotten Legacy,” posted on Michael Kromeke’s website dedicated to the history of Camp Cody, an Army examining board visited the old Camp Brookes/ Camp Deming site in May 1917. The next month, Deming was riding high again when the village received word the Army would build one of its 32 camps there.

In the Center of Military History’s publication, called

*Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War, Volume 3, Part 2*, the new camp was described as occupying 1,837 acres just north of town. In addition, there were unconnected areas for a rifle range and an artillery range that added almost 12,000 acres to the camp. The camp’s stated mission was to form and train the 34<sup>th</sup> Division made up of National Guard personnel from Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas.

Initially, the 34<sup>th</sup> was dubbed the “Sunshine Division” because it was being formed in sunny New Mexico. However, the 40<sup>th</sup> Division, training at Camp Kearny near San Diego, had already grabbed that nickname. After experiencing a few days of blowing sand, the 34<sup>th</sup> took the name “Sandstorm Division.”

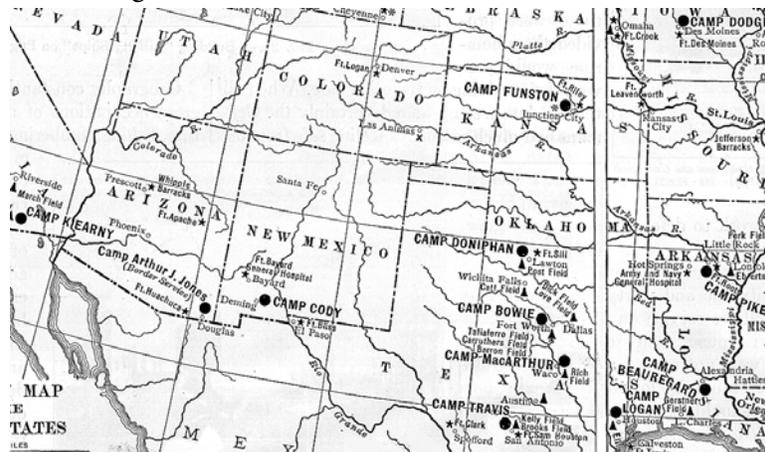
The insignia for the division was a blood-red bovine skull superimposed on a black *olla* or Mexican water jug. One report states it was designed by Marvin Cone of Cedar Rapids, Iowa for a contest held at the camp in 1917.

The Iowa National Guard has a brief history on their website detailing which units went where from Iowa. For instance, the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry joined the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division that trained on Long Island, N.Y. The history then states the rest of the Guard members “went to Mexico to train in the desert.” Iowans can probably be forgiven this mistake since their Guard units went to southern Texas in 1916 and were nowhere near the desert state of New Mexico.

No one should make the mistake of thinking the 34<sup>th</sup> Division was made up of just personnel

from these five Midwest states. There were not enough men reporting from them to fill out General Pershing’s new vision of what a “division” should be.

At the time, a division was a fairly self-contained unit of about 15,000 to 20,000 men. It was



*World War I training camps in the Southwest.*

made up of brigades, battalions and regiments of artillery, machine guns, infantry and communications. Also there were cooks, engineers, doctors, nurses, sanitation personnel, horse handlers and musicians.

Yes, musicians. There are accounts of Guard units getting off their trains at long stops and parading behind their bands through a town's streets. The *El Paso Herald* reported on September 17, 1917, Nebraska's 5th Infantry stopped in El Paso. Troops got off the train with their unit band and proceeded to march "up San Francisco Street from the Union Station, circled San Jacinto plaza and returned to the special which left shortly after noon."

Pershing and other American military leaders studied French, British and German tactics for the first part of the war. They determined the allies didn't have enough resources to keep going once they gained a slight advantage. They basically ran out of gas and had to give up what they had gained.

For instance, the Battle of Verdun went on for 300 days with neither side really advancing. During the stalemate, men died in huge numbers in the fruitless attacks and counter-attacks. The actual casualty figures are as varied as there are historians, but it is safe to say the casualty number, counting both sides, was close to a million. The number killed was probably around 150,000.

To overcome their inability to sustain a drive, Pershing called for divisions of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 men. The idea was that a larger force would provide more staying power at the

front when on the offensive. He wanted to avoid another Verdun.

According to the Center of Military History's publication, the five Midwest states contributed "about 12,000 National Guard troops" to the formation of the 34<sup>th</sup> at Camp Cody. Many more men were needed to grow into a "Pershing division." The document lists these other sources of men which includes draftees from some of those same Midwest states: "Colo., 3,579; Kans., 1,000; Minn., 963; Nebr., 243; N. Mex., 1,820; Okla., 4,422; Tex., 2,226; other camps, 14,256."

When they arrived, the various state National Guard units tended to stay together. When the draftees arrived, they were held in the "casual camp" at Cody until they could be farmed out to an appropriate unit.

The same document charts the average strength of Camp Cody month-by-month from September 1917 until December 1918. The peak was June 1918 with 27,733 personnel. On the other hand, the *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* states Camp Cody's maximum strength in 1917 was in December with 29,945 men.

Oops. That is a big difference in the two reports. The problem probably lies in the fact the 34<sup>th</sup> was not kept together as a single entity. Men were constantly coming and going. Individual units were sent off to join other divisions or organizations and new personnel brought in to replace them. It was a place constantly in flux, and any count was just a quick snapshot in time.

*The photo below of Nebraska National Guard troops at Camp Cody was taken on Oct. 25, 1917 by Hale and Hindmarsh of Lincoln, Nebr. The caption states the unit was originally "CO. L, Sixth Nebr. Inf." but had been repurposed as Companies 5 & 6 of the 109th Supply Team. Nebraska Historical Society*



In June 1918, the *Deming Graphic* reported, after men were sent elsewhere, one infantry company was left with only one buck private but a full complement of officers and non-commissioned officers. The paper joked the private had more bosses than any soldier in the Army.

In writing about Minnesota's experience at Camp Cody, Douglas Bekke, Curator of the Minnesota Military Museum, bemoaned the breakup of the 34<sup>th</sup> as "5,600 men were transferred" out of Cody in May 1918 and "another 6,000" were shipped in June. He said, "The division was losing its mid-western core."

Governor Keith Neville of Nebraska was also upset concerning plans to break up the 34<sup>th</sup>. It meant Nebraska units would be separated and sent willy-nilly, thus losing contact with each other. The *El Paso Herald* reported after Neville's visit to Camp Cody in September 1917, he was going to contact officials in Washington to try and keep Nebraska troops with "their comrades."

The number of soldiers processed at Camp Cody was quite small compared to many of the other camps. More than a dozen camps each received and trained over 100,000 men during the war.

These 32 training camps scattered across America were named after important military leaders. In addition to the obvious famous ones already mentioned (Custer and Cody), there were camps named after Lee, Sheridan, Beauregard, Fremont, Bowie, Pike and Grant.

Camp Cody was named after Buffalo Bill Cody, most famous for Buffalo Bill's Wild West that toured across the United States and Europe. Before his life as a showman, Cody bounced from job to

job, usually on horseback. In fact he served briefly as a Pony Express rider. Later he was made civilian chief of scouts for the Army's Third Cavalry where he had two jobs. He scouted for Indians, participating in more than a dozen battles with Native Americans, and he hunted bison to feed soldiers



*Buffalo Bill portrait. Library of Congress*

and railroad workers. This is where he earned his nickname.

For his work as an Indian scout he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

It seems only fitting Cody's grandson trained at the Deming camp. On November 5, 1917, the *El Paso Herald* reported, "Military men are remark-



ing on the appropriateness of a season of training here of sergeant Cody Boal, company E, 134<sup>th</sup> infantry (Fifth Nebraska), from North Platte, who is a grandson of the late, William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) whose widow makes her home in that city. Sergeant Boal, as a boy, often traveled with the old scout's wild west show, and at home sometimes masqueraded as his grandfather." Not mentioned in the article is that Cody Boal, as a boy, was a stunt rider in his grandfather's show. Buffalo Bill had died in Denver a few months earlier on January 10, 1917.

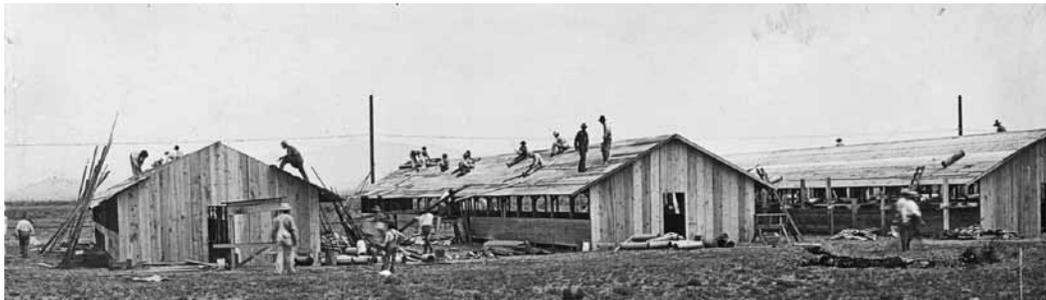
Boal eventually worked his way up the military ladder to become an officer. After the war, he and his wife operated a Buffalo Bill museum and souvenir shop in North Platte, Nebraska.

Building a large-scale training camp for a division at Deming had to be done quickly – America was needed to end the stalemate in Europe and prevent the complete decimation of an entire generation of men. Because of the time requirements, shortcuts were taken and some projects were de-

*Paso Herald*. The paper quotes extensively from a talk given to a convention of the Southwestern Society of Engineers at El Paso on October 19. The presenters were C.A. Tilton, auditor for the Camp Cody construction company, and Major C.H. Miller, engineer in charge of the construction.

With the June 1917 announcement that Deming was to have a camp, it took some time to assign personnel to oversee the project and get a construction contract in place. Miller said, when he arrived in Deming in early July, "scarcely anyone knew that a camp was to be constructed until his arrival, particularly the railroad officials." By the end of the month, they were throwing up buildings.

Black and Veatch, Kansas City engineers, had surveyed the site and called for a plan with three main streets and 18 cross streets. That was all well and good but Miller had no lumber to begin building. He said Washington officials expected the first soldiers to start arriving August 1, and the wood for buildings wouldn't get there until after that. It was



*Three of the estimated 1,500 buildings erected at Camp Cody. The photo has no caption but they appear to be some of the 300 mess halls scattered through camp. Once they finished installing the planks for each roof, they simply rolled tar paper over it to keep the rain out. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

a typical operation where top leaders were making decisions in the Washington, D.C. vacuum with no idea how details would actually be accomplished out on the ground.

Deming pulled through in the form of A.H. Bush, manager of the Deming

Lumber Company, who had one million feet of lumber already on its way. He had anticipated a run on wood in town and had ordered a large quantity to sell to residents and businesses. Instead he sold it to the Army and construction began before the troops arrived. Also, the camp at Columbus provided 16 train cars of wood while Ft. Bliss contributed 84 cars – that's more than 2,000,000 feet of lumber for construction of all kinds of structures.

Another problem was getting enough workers for such a rush job. Miller said they quickly hired

laid. In turn, the camp was always being added to and the sound of hammers must have been heard almost daily. In fact, when it closed, it still wasn't complete.

This is evident when looking at the numbers for the size and cost of the physical plant. Since it was always being improved, the dollar amounts kept climbing and the number of facilities kept increasing.

Hopefully, we can get some accurate initial numbers from an October 20, 1917 article in the *El*

the 55 carpenters and 70 laborers available in Deming and then had to look farther afield. He said, "On the fourth of August the force of men at work on the camp numbered 450 and three days later 900 were on the job and 53 buildings were under construction." Also, as military personnel started to arrive the next week, many of them were put to work. It sounds like anyone who could hold a hammer was put to pounding nails.

Generally, the contractor followed plans forwarded from Washington. However, Miller had to use some judgment in using them. For instance, he showed the camp's post office plans to the Deming postmaster who pointed out numerous flaws and said it would be very inefficient. Miller wired Washington for better plans. Then, he decided they couldn't wait so he, the contractor and the postmaster came up with a plan they thought would work. Miller decided to just go ahead and build their version. Their post office was completed before the new blueprints arrived.

It was a good thing they built a practical post office. According to the December 28, 1917, *El Paso Herald*, the post office was averaging 35,000 letters a day leaving Camp Cody for the holidays. Just before Christmas, thousands of sacks of packages were flooding into camp every day. During that high-volume season, the office employed five people just to handle the sale of stamps and money orders. By the way, postage for a one-ounce letter was three cents.

Here is what the *El Paso Herald* said about the camp on August 4, 1917:

*"It will have 300 camp kitchens and mess halls, one for each company in the regiments, including the officers messes. Supt. Owen Hughes of the construction company, is paying some carpenters \$8.25 per day and has an army of them at work. There will be nine warehouses for the*

*quartermaster's department, each 68 x 160 feet in dimensions. E.L. Dalton of the J.M. Thompson Company has arrived with machinery to dig 50,000 feet of ditches for water mains. The first Y.M.C.A. hall is nearly completed. There are 500 men working on mess halls and kitchens alone."*

When Miller and Tilton gave their talk, which was after initial construction, they reported the camp had consumed about 13,000,000 feet of wood, of which almost 3,000,000 feet was used for the 16 x 16-foot tent floors. They had erected 1,500 buildings, buried 15 miles of water mains and 15 miles of laterals, installed over 2,000 shower heads in the bathhouses and equipped 283 mess halls. They estimated the cost at just over \$2,000,000. Later, the Center of Military History estimated the total cost for Camp Cody, beginning to end, at \$4,210,000.

All of this sounds well and good but the buildings were a bit rough at best. Mostly the structures were simple wood frames with boards nailed to the supports. Roofs were covered with a layer of tarpaper. They were never intended to be permanent. They were not painted and nothing was sealed so the wind blew in sand and dust, and they were cold in winter and hot in summer. At least they were well ventilated.

The troops didn't even have the luxury of a building for their sleeping accommodations. The men were under canvas at night. There were over 3,000 of those tent floors nailed together. Each tent



*Men laying the water mains in Camp Cody using a steam-driven trenching machine. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

could house nine men and was equipped with a single electric light bulb and a coal burning stove for winter.

With a floor space of 256 square feet, each man got about 28 square feet for his cot and possessions. Actually that footprint would have been smaller because of the stove and standoff distance for it. Basically each man occupied a plot about six to seven feet by four feet.

Now imagine having that be your bedroom for months on end. The National Guard units arriving at the beginning were there for an eternity in terms of military training. Some spent the good part of a year at Cody before being shipped out.

Keeping sand and dust out of the wooden buildings was hard enough. Keeping it out of the tents was impossible. Many of the men complained about blowing sand getting into everything.

Then, when influenza struck in 1918, the men were forced to “furl” their tents during the day. This means the corners were unanchored and the roof and sides of the tent were wrapped around the center pole. This provided unlimited fresh air and sunshine into the tent and onto the furnishings. It was believed such a move would help control the spread of the flu.

Another necessary facility not mentioned much in the newspapers nor talked about today is the stockade or military prison for housing men accused of crimes. It must have been fairly sizable because, in passing, the American Red Cross said in a January 1918 bulletin, “every enlisted man in the camp had received a Christmas packet with the exception of the prisoners.” Denial of Christmas goodies to the “78 prisoners” was a direct order from the division’s adjutant. The stockade must have been more than a single building with a few cells inside.

Before the camp was complete, soldiers started arriving. According to the Center of Military’s *History Order of Battle, Vol. 3, Part 1*, the Guard units for Camp Cody were brought into Federal service on July 15, 1917. The August 23, 1917 issue of the *El Paso Herald* announced, “The first detachment of the Minnesota National Guard arrived at Camp

Cody Wednesday and were allotted to the extreme northwest part of the camp. It consisted of 123 enlisted men and three officers of company H, Third Minnesota infantry, headquarters in Olivia, county seat of Renville county, a rich farming country 100 miles west of Minneapolis.”

Some of the National Guard units were not



*Minnesota Congressman Harold Knutson in 1917.*

impressed with Camp Cody and they let their home-state officials know it. Some officials made the trip to Deming to see conditions for themselves.

The governor of Iowa criticized the bathing facilities while the Nebraska governor didn’t approve of the dust. It was Minnesota, however, that really

put the hammer down. Newly minted Minnesota Congressman Harold Knutson took it to the floor of Congress with a speech condemning the camp. According to the *New-York Tribune*, Knutson said, “Camp Cody beggars description. It is situated in the middle of nothing, surrounded by a desert of alkali dust ankle deep. Were I in fear of the hereafter I would first go to Camp Cody for a preparatory course. It is an annex of Hades of which his Satanic majesty is evidently ashamed.”

He also accused Deming officials of bribing the Army with \$15,000 (nearly \$260,000 in today’s currency) to get the camp in the first place. Where a small community like Deming would find that kind of cash beggars common sense.

Minnesota’s Governor J.A. Burnquist supported the congressman. The *Deming Graphic* reported the governor saying, “Minnesotans here (Camp Cody)

are faring worse than at most of the six other camps where soldiers from that state are quartered.” Also the governor claimed there was more pneumonia, rheumatism, acute otitis (ear infection) and erysipelas (bacterial skin rash) at Camp Cody because of altitude and temperature swings.

Immediately there was a firestorm of counter-claims. Deming and New Mexico supporters as well as the local newspapers jumped into the fray swinging with both fists. New Mexico Congressman William Walton took to the House floor to refute Knutson. He said he was at the meeting when Deming supporters met with the Army about picking Deming for a camp. No one offered anyone any money. Also, he read a short note from Colonel Reynolds of the Army’s medical department that said, “The camp is excellently located. Its general sanitary conditions and sanitary administration has been reported as excellent by all inspectors, including an inspector from this office.”

From then on, for a couple of months, the *Deming Graphic* and *El Paso Herald* posted all kinds of comments about the wonderful conditions at Camp Cody. For instance, Major S.B. Philpot went home to Ft. Dodge, Iowa for Christmas. When he came back, he said Cody detractors should see Camp Dodge in Iowa. He said there was below-zero weather, cold and snow followed by mud and slush. It was much, much better in Deming.

An English captain serving as an instructor at Camp Cody had some experience with actual trench warfare in Europe. He said, “Those of you who are so willing to get away from Deming will be willing, after a long period of service in France, to return here and soldier the balance of your lives without pay.” Of course, the direness of that statement seems to have zipped right over most heads.

Peggy Hull, an *El Paso Times* correspondent, offered up an opinion. She had spent time in France covering the war. She basically said, if men were grouching about Camp Cody conditions, what were they going to make of France where it is always wet and muddy? It is never dry, and you can never get warm. It is endless sleet and snow.

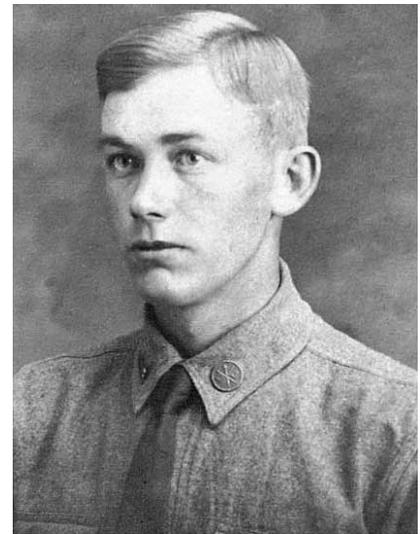
One of the better counterpoints offered up

for Camp Deming came when Professor William Welch spent a day at the camp with representatives of the medical corps to look into epidemic diseases in the camp. After their inspection, they agreed conditions were “very satisfactory” at the camp.

This inspection had great credibility because Welch was a star in the medical field. At the time he was the chairman of pathology at Johns Hopkins and was past president of the American Medical Society. He was held in very high esteem. In fact, he went on to found the School of Hygiene and Public Health at Johns Hopkins. He was the first dean of the School of Medicine there, and the medical school library is named after him. He was later called the “Dean of American Medicine.”

Of course the reason for these camps was to prepare men to fight and win in France. Sergeant Henry Beaver from Fremont, Nebraska included some excellent comments on training in the letters he sent home to Helen Olson, the girl he would eventually marry. Henry’s son Lawrence has posted excerpts on Michael Kromeke’s Camp Cody website.

In October 1917, the camp clamped down on soldiers speaking too freely by declaring “all soldiers writing letters home for publication must hereafter submit them for censorship by division headquarters.” At the time it was very popular for newspapers to publish the letters to mom and dad from their hometown boys in service. Beaver’s let-



*Henry Beaver’s Army portrait. The Signal Corps insignia is visible on his left collar. Michael Kromeke’s website at: <http://demingnewmexico.genealogyvillage.com>*

ters are intact because they were “private correspondence.”

Beaver was with the Nebraska Signal Battalion. His group laid or strung telegraph wire so signals could be sent instantaneously between units. They also did the sending and receiving. Because of this he reassured Helen he wouldn't see combat; he would be manning the communication lines between artillery units and the command group.

There were other ways to communicate in the Army. Eventually Beaver also received training in “wireless” communications. In other words, they were working on sending messages via radio instead of through wires. Beaver also mentioned another form of wireless communication - the use of carrier pigeons. Beaver told Helen he was very glad not to be taking care of the pigeons every day.

Beaver arrived at Camp Cody on September 12, 1917, and compared the place in terms of acreage to the size of his hometown. He told Helen they started intensive training on October 15. He said, “I was out today practicing jumping on and off my horse, on a walk and trot.”



*Unknown soldier posing with a horse at Camp Cody. Many National Guard units brought horses and some individuals brought their own personal horses. The saddle blanket on this horse has “Iowa” stenciled on it. The horse could originate from Iowa or the soldier is from Iowa and provided his own blanket for a government horse. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

Training to jump on and off a horse? This was an interesting time of transition for the Army as it was still a horse-based organization for moving men, equipment and supplies. It was just starting to use mechanized transportation. Beaver speaks with great affection for his horse in several letters. Later he writes, “I look for the 7<sup>th</sup> to be turned into cavalry. It is the best branch of the service for a fighting man. A horse is a good partner.” He tells Helen, “My horse kisses me good morning and good night.”

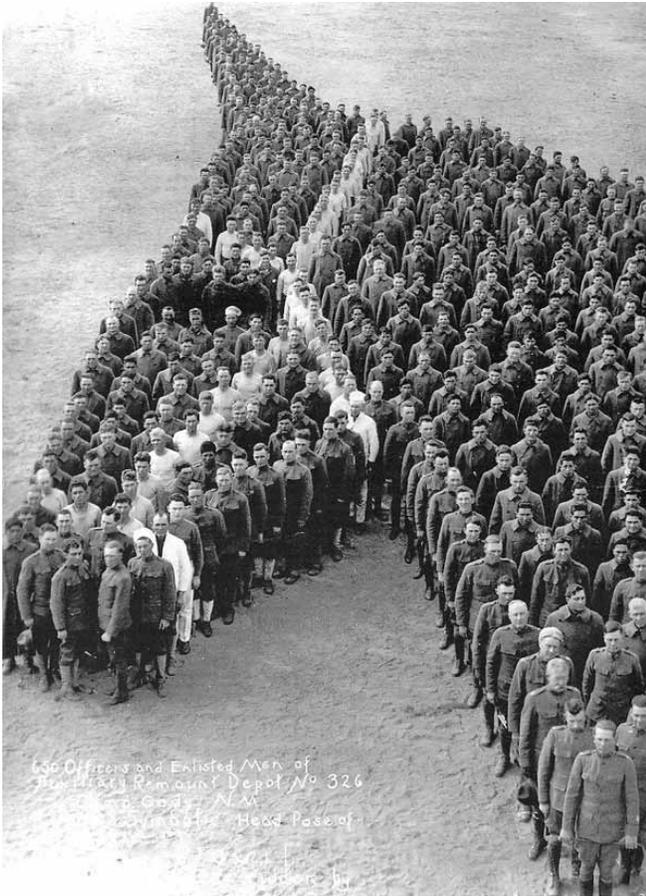
Beaver obviously had no idea what the war was really like in France with whole armies stymied in their trenches. There were many attempts to use horses in traditional cavalry units in World War I but it usually didn't end well for the men or horses. Machine guns and artillery cut them to pieces.

Beaver might have realized this because he witnessed artillery training at Camp Cody's range out near Cooke's Peak. In letters to Helen, he wrote about running telegraph lines from the guns to the targets some five miles away. He said it was at “Camp Cook” about 16 miles north of Deming.

He also mentioned the three-inch guns were “shooting shrapnel and they explode before hitting the ground.” In other words, the shells were designed to explode over a trench or group of men and rain down jagged chunks of steel at explosive speeds. It was a way of attacking a trench with what might be thought of as a shotgun blast. Such a weapon forced both sides to add tunnels to their trenches so they could escape the rain of death from above.

Although the cavalry wasn't a factor in actual battle in Europe, the horses and mules played an essential role. Because of all the mud and muck, the new trucks and cars were often bogged down and couldn't move. It usually took horses and mules to pull them out. More importantly, horses and mules came to the rescue for moving ammunition, food, messages, medical supplies, the injured, and guns.

Because of their use up and down the front lines, like the men they supported, horses died by the thousands. One day in March, during the Battle of Verdun, 7,000 horses from both sides were killed by artillery fire. Britain lost 480,000 horses dur-



ing the war. The Animals in War Memorial Fund estimates as many as eight million horses, mules and donkeys died on all fronts in World War I. For the United States, Major A. A. Cederwald, in the November-December 1928 edition of *The Quartermaster Review*, stated we lost 63,339 animals in France, while 30,184 died in the U.S. during that period. If Beaver really liked his horse, he would have asked that the animal remain in New Mexico.

Camp Cody had a “remount station.” Basically it was a large area (100 acres according to Gustafson)

with corrals and stables for keeping and caring for up to 10,000 horses and mules. The Center of Military History stated, on average, the Camp Cody remount housed “4,782 horses” and “3,328 mules.”

Hay was stacked in small mountains to feed the animals. Many of the photos from the camp are of these beasts of burden pulling wagons and guns, being packed with materiel, and carrying men. This is where Beaver’s horse would have been housed.

Using common sense, the remount station was located quite a ways downwind from the rest of the camp – to the northeast.

Also, there is a famous photo floating around the internet of a horse’s head formed by lining up “650 officers and enlisted men” from Remount Depot No 326 at Camp Cody. The photographer placed the men, some wearing their dark uniform coats and some with light colored coats, so looking down on them you clearly see a horse’s head.

Beaver also told Helen about physical training they were doing to build strength. He pointed out they had practiced jumping trenches, a skill he said they would need to move ahead.

Like the call-up in 1916, Camp Cody’s units went on extended marches. For instance, in 1918, the 109<sup>th</sup> Engineers marched 60 miles up the Mimbres River to McKnight Canyon in the Gila Forest. This was an extended trip so the YMCA went along to sell film and other items soldiers might need. They also took 200 books and assorted magazines from the library plus a phonograph and records.

The engineers trained in surveying and making detailed topographical maps of the area. They also physically worked hard repairing established roads and bridges and constructing new roads and



*Gila Forest camp of the 109th Engineers from the 34th Division at Camp Cody. Library of Congress*

bridges. According to a YMCA booklet about the trip, the men carved out two miles of new road up Three Circle Canyon and four miles up McKnight Canyon. Also, they built seven bridges – the longest was 126 feet and was 10 feet high. The tallest was 20 feet high and 70 feet long.

For entertainment, the men also built themselves an amphitheater so the 109<sup>th</sup> Band could entertain them and where they could hold sings. It included a stage set up for a troupe out of Silver City, called “The Strollers,” that presented a show called “Over the Top.” It was described as “a musical gas attack in two acts.”

In addition, they carved out an area for a baseball diamond, held boxing matches and attended a huge barbecue given by a nearby rancher. Sounds more like summer camp than preparation for trench warfare.

Meanwhile, back at Camp Cody, the men worked extensively on their marksmanship at the rifle range on the west side of the camp. They learned to use a bayonet affixed to the end of their rifle for hand-to-hand combat.

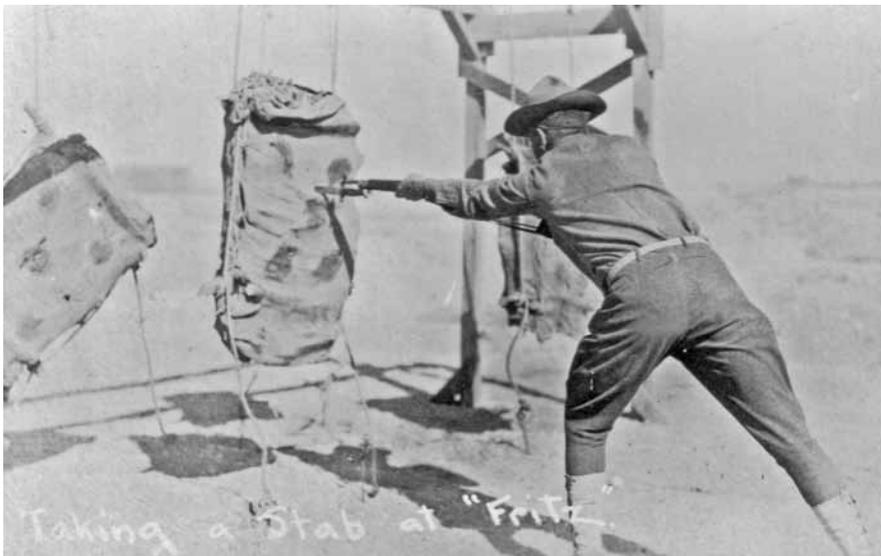
The engineers, partially for physical training and partly to build stuff, marched up the Mimbres River valley into the Gila. There they camped for days and cleared roads, lashed together bridges and made themselves useful.

Another skill the men practiced was the art of throwing a hand grenade. Not everyone is blessed with a good throwing arm and some had to be coached on lobbing the things. It didn’t always go well. According to the *Des Moines Register*, Lieutenant Olaf Dann of Austin, Minnesota, was killed when a poorly thrown grenade exploded in the observation trench he manned. Apparently, he had nowhere to go.

His brother George, also a lieutenant, was the first to reach Olaf but he was already dead. The accident occurred just hours after the two brothers said goodbye to their parents who had been in Deming to visit them.

Camp Cody hand grenades continued to kill people after the war. On July 2, 1919 Carolina Gonzales, aged 3, was killed when a French grenade she picked up in the old trench training area of Camp Cody exploded. Two children with her were injured but not fatally.

One officer at Camp Cody got tired of the seemingly endless training. He was Lieutenant Jean Cobbey, 5<sup>th</sup> Nebraska Infantry and son of prominent Nebraska judge, J.E. Cobbey. The younger Cobbey was familiar with the Southwest because after New Mexico became a state in 1912, the senior Cobbey was hired by the New Mexico legislature to codify the new state’s laws.



*Bayonet training at Camp Cody. The photographer’s caption says: Taking a Stab at “Fritz” Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

Lieutenant Jean Cobbey was educated as a lawyer but served as a chaplain with his unit. In March 1918, he resigned his position in the National Guard and reenlisted to attend flight school. He graduated in class #44 from the School of Military Aeronautics at Kelly Field in Austin, Texas, on May 18, 1918.

In addition to training enlisted men, there was some officer training as well. In fact, the Army was short of officers. On November 23, 1917, the *El Paso Herald* announced, “Soldiers of the 34<sup>th</sup> division who desire to enter the



*South Dakota officers with the 127th Machine Gun Battalion train in Camp Cody's trenches. Originally the South Dakota unit was cavalry and was re-designated when they arrived at Cody. Digital Library of South Dakota*

officers' training school which will be opened here January 5 and will continue to April 5, 1918, must submit their applications....before December 1."

So, how do you know if you would qualify to become an officer? According to the article, "Commanding presence, strong voice, loyalty, capacity for leadership, high intelligence, and other general military qualifications necessary for an officer, will be considered in making the selections."

One might question why the *El Paso Herald* would run such an article. More than likely, it is because the *Herald* sponsored the Camp Cody paper called the *Trench and Camp*. Each camp across the U.S. published a weekly issue of the *Trench and Camp* with half of the material being local and half coming from an editorial office in New York. A regular humor column by popular writer Ring Lardner was included. The YMCA National War Work Council was the ultimate publisher.

It meant the *Herald* had access to all the articles appearing in the *Trench and Camp* and freely used ones the editorial staff thought would be interesting to residents of El Paso and Ft. Bliss. Some camps were tied to big city papers with national reputations. For instance, the newspaper partnering with Camp Kearny in California was the *Los Angeles Times*, Camp Devens in Massachusetts was aligned with the *Boston Globe*, and Camp Grant in Illinois with the *Chicago Tribune*.

Finally, there was one kind of training that most folks today might not have thought of as necessary in 1917. The November 17, 1917, issue of the *El Paso Herald* reported, "Because 500 soldiers have been found at camp who are unable to understand the English language sufficiently well to go through their training on the drill ground or camp schools, it will be necessary to start English classes in the Y.M.C.A. buildings."

This topic wasn't mentioned much in the local papers but it was a serious national issue all through the training camps. In her book, *Americans All: Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I*, Nancy Gentile Ford points out t the Army was shocked to learn "the extent of illiteracy among its new troops, including those with long American ancestries." They estimated that 25 percent of drafted men could not read the Constitution or an American newspaper or write a letter home in English.

There were over 75,000 immigrants in the first draft for the military. It was a huge melting pot as 46 different nationalities were represented and many



*Captain Harry Branson, one of South Dakota's cavalry officers relaxes in the shade. Note Branson's riding boots and spurs. He would soon find himself in charge of machine gun operators. Digital Library of South Dakota*

could not speak, read, or write English. According to Ford, at the time, the principal languages spoken in the camps were Italian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Scandinavian, Armenian, Yugoslav and Syrian. Turning these men into useful soldiers was a challenge when both recruits and trainers stood around wondering what was being

said.

Initially the Army planned to use translators spread throughout the divisions to integrate the immigrants into the various companies. That didn't work. Men trained for weeks and didn't understand what was going on and couldn't talk to their leaders and vice versa. They were plunged into



*Men with the 127th Field Artillery, under the command of Colonel W.E. Baehr, pose on Oct. 17, 1917. This is the central panel of a multi-image panoramic shot of the unit. In the foreground are tents for officers. Beyond them are mess halls and then tents for enlisted men. At the far edge are the latrines and shower huts. This unit started out as the Nebraska 5th Infantry and was “re-designated” as artillery.. The same thing happened to infantrymen from Iowa who formed the 126th F.A. They were joined by the 125th from Minnesota which actually was an artillery unit. Together they formed the 59th Field Artillery Brigade. Because most started as infantrymen, their training was much longer than usual and was finished off with a stint at Fort Sill. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

a sea of English and were drowning in it. It was a waste of time for everyone involved.

Ford makes Lieutenant Stanislaw Gutowski, a naturalized American from Poland, the hero as he saw a way to fix the problem. At first he demonstrated that keeping Slavic soldiers together in their own companies and training the bright, English-speaking ones to be officers and noncommissioned officers did wonders. Training could be conducted effectively in the men's native tongue and communication flowed up and down the chain of command. Also, gathering so many men in one place made it easier to conduct English classes. He showed the Army it worked and the "Camp Gordon Plan" was born.

The plan eventually got to Camp Cody a bit too late. In November 1918, the Foreign-Speaking Soldier Subsection detailed Captain J. Mott Dahlgren to Camp Cody to reorganize Spanish-speaking soldiers into training companies. Ford wrote five Spanish speaking officers were transferred "to work with the over six hundred Mexican soldiers."

It took a small army itself to feed the thousands of men at Camp Cody. Major William Elliott, depot quartermaster in El Paso, was quoted in the *El Paso Herald* on August 17, 1917, saying a soldier is "better fed in the army than he is at home." He went on to explain, "For one thing, the man who is married is often wedded to a woman who does not know

food values, how to cook really well or how to select the very best kind of food, consequently, although he may have a large amount of food he is not well nourished. My men have expert cooks, they have rations which are balanced, they have the best of food. No impurities are allowed."

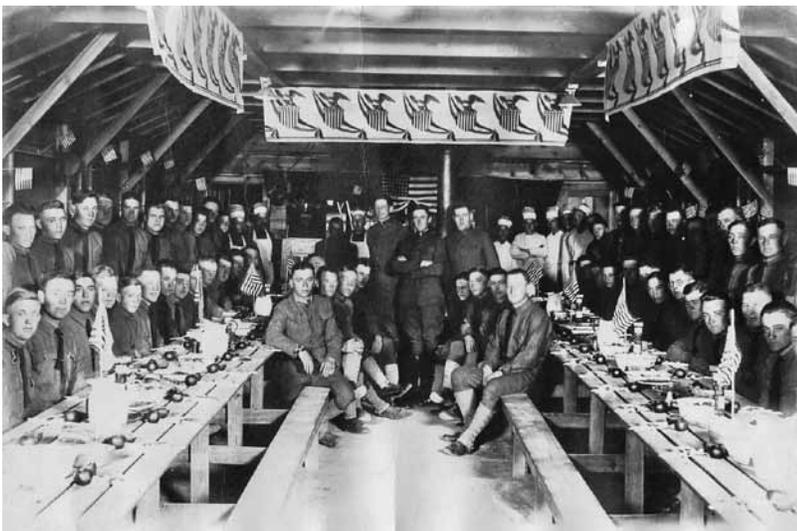
Mainly the men ate in their own company-level mess halls where most foods were prepared. However, some of it was easier to mass produce elsewhere. For instance, the *El Paso Herald* reported on October 9, 1917, the camp's central bakery was producing 10,500 two-pound loaves of bread each day. That required 21,000 pounds of flour daily. Lieutenant Eugene Hanum commanded just over 100 men who worked in two shifts cranking out loaves. Delivery trucks took the fresh bread to the mess halls.

Apparently there was plenty of food. Sergeant Beaver, in a letter home, commented on the "big dinner" he enjoyed on Thanksgiving. He said, "I ate more today than I ever ate before in one day." The food he listed included: soup, turkey, potatoes, peas, gravy, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, tomato slices, celery, pickles, cake, pie, ice cream, figs, dates and lemonade. Dinner was followed by cigars.

Officials at Camp Cody worked with the local community to try and get more fresh produce. They encouraged residents to plant truck gardens and the Army would buy the fresh vegetables for the mess halls.

Another witness to the plenty at Camp Cody was one of the English instructors. He was quoted in the *El Paso Herald* as having eaten with the men in a mess hall and receiving a beefsteak so large it would have constituted a week's ration of meat for a family of four back in England.

With so much food, there was bound to be waste. The November 17, 1917, issue of the *El Paso Herald* reported Brigadier General Frank Mauldin, the 34<sup>th</sup> commander, was calling for economy. The paper said the general was making sure the process was "Hooverized."



Special holiday dinner at one of Camp Cody's mess halls.  
Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive

The reference was to Herbert Hoover who had just accepted his first job with the Federal Government as the head of the United States Food Administration in 1917. In this position, he encouraged Americans to conserve food. There is a backstory here, too.

When WWI began, Germany attacked France via Belgium. Because of the German occupation and then a blockade by the Allies, millions of Belgians began starving in 1914. Food wasn't coming in from the outside, and the Germans weren't much for sharing. Hoover, who was a rich mining engineer at the time, took up the cause to save these people. He organized the Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), a private organization funded by contributions and run by volunteers.

With Hoover's energy and personal intervention with the Germans and the British, the CRB eventually served about 10 million Belgian and French civilians trapped by the war. Ships delivered million of tons of food over the years, and hundreds of Belgian volunteers distributed it to 2,500 villages, towns and cities.

Most historians think Hoover saved Belgium from a near-extinction event. In *Prologue Magazine*, Spring 1989, Vol. 21, No.1, George Nash recounts how beloved Hoover was and may still be by the Belgian people. Just before the war ended, when Hoover visited the tiny bit of Belgium still unoccupied, he met with the country's King Albert. At the behest of the government, the king presented Hoover with a unique title. In French it is, "Ami de la nation Belge which means "Friend of the Belgian Nation." The king then declared only Herbert Hoover could ever hold the title.

After the war, Belgium presented a statue of Isis, the Egyptian goddess of life, to Hoover at the Stanford Art Gallery. In 1939, the statue was relocated to Hoover's hometown of West Branch, Iowa. In Belgium today, streets and plazas still bear his name.

Most of each day, the Camp Cody trainees were

busy with their tasks. But you can't train all the time so they did have time off in the evenings and some weekends. Passing that free time in the 28 square feet allotted in your tent wasn't very palatable for most men.

The YMCA helped give the men some options for their time off. The December 5, 1917, *El Paso Times* reported work on the eighth YMCA facility at Camp Cody was nearly complete.

These facilities usually housed canteens selling cigarettes, writing paper, envelopes, shaving gear and other items. There were places where soldiers could sit and write home and even get assistance in that task. Lectures and other performances were held in the buildings.

Also, the YMCA provided an outlet for library books offered by the camp library. The books were usually from donations, along with magazines and newspapers. States with National Guard units at



*One of the many YMCA welcome buildings at Camp Cody. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

Cody often held drives to gather books to support their men. For instance, during the late summer of 1917, Minnesota donated over 5,600 books to the Cody library.

Ironically, given that the YMCA is a "Christian" organization, it tended to be very segregated. Throughout the South, the Y set up "separate but equal" facilities. A black soldier wasn't allowed in a "whites only" facility for Bible study or to even buy a postage stamp.

In addition to the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board had facilities and personnel to support the soldiers living at Camp Cody. For all intents and purposes, the

YMCA was the government-sanctioned religious outlet at the camps. The Catholic and Jewish organizations had to overcome religious bigotry in some locations.

The Army itself also tried to keep the troops entertained. Camp Cody got a “Liberty Theater” like most of the other camps. These large structures could seat hundreds of soldiers at a time and were home to live vaudeville, musical comedy and dramatic shows. In addition, movies could be shown.

Admission for soldiers was usually free, only requiring a “smileage” coupon. American citizens donated to the cause by buying books of smileage coupons which were given to soldiers to use to pay their way into shows.

The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities provided most of the shows that toured the camps. They were in direct competition with the shows in the downtown theaters but had the advantage of drawing writers, producers, actors and musicians from the national level. For instance, at Camp Upton in New York, Irving Berlin was producing shows for the Army. Of course, Berlin is famous for penning “God Bless America” and “White Christmas.”

With all the traveling shows and homegrown camp shows, creative material was used up quickly. Sometimes a good joke was hard to come by. The *Virginia Chronicle* reported on July 23, 1918, that the Army was looking for jokes. Anyone could contribute material and the best was to be sent out weekly to the training camps for them to use.

Camp Cody was blessed with its own version of Irving Berlin in the form of Jack Yellen, who was the local field representative for the Jewish Welfare Board. Yellen went to school to become a journalist but had a talent for music, especially writing songs. At Camp Cody, he produced a very popular minstrel show using the enlisted men from the 34<sup>th</sup>.

You don’t see minstrel shows anymore but they were widely popular in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They began to fade in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Probably the main reason for their demise was the fact the performers were white wearing blackface and acting like Southern blacks. Yellen’s version also had other acts spaced between the minstrel acts. He made a show out of what talent he found at Cody.

According to the *El Paso Herald*, 1,400 soldiers tried out for the show. In the tryouts, Yellen found a few former stage professionals to help out. Yellen then wrote many of the songs and ditties the men performed.

The show was a huge hit at the camp and as well as in Deming at a commercial theater. They then took the show on the road and played to sellout crowds in Silver City, Santa Rita and Fort Bayard. Also, they hit El Paso for four shows at the Texas Grand Theater. The *El Paso Times* reported in early May 1918 the minstrels had given a total of 14 performances before an estimated 10,000 people.

Yellen soon left Camp Cody but not before he and Private Harry Wessel wrote “We’re Coming From Cody” which was touted as the “official song of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division.” The sheet music is available as



Jack Yellen, left, and his Cody Minstrels on April 24, 1918. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive

a PDF on the Library of Congress website. Harry Baisden, who was deployed to Camp Cody with the Iowa National Guard as member of their band, wrote “Camp Cody Blues.”

When Yellen left, he ended up at Camp Upton where Irving Berlin was. There he met Harry Akst who was working for Berlin. In 1929, Yellen and Akst released “This is Heaven,” the theme song for a movie by that name. The movie was part silent and part “talkie.”

Yellen went on to a great career writing music and some of his songs are still remembered today. He wrote “Down by the O-Hi-O” which was covered by the Andrews Sisters, Al Jolson and Glenn Miller. His song “Ain’t She Sweet” has been covered by many artists, including the Beatles with John Lennon on vocals. His Tin Pan Alley hit “Happy Days are Here Again” was featured in the 1930 film “Chasing Rainbows.” In 1932, the Democratic Party made a quick decision to play the song during the presidential nominating convention. It became as-



*Camp Cody March sheet music cover - by Yellen and Wessel. Library of Congress*

sociated with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and had a life of its own during his presidency as a counterpoint to the Depression.

And those state bands got a workout giving free concerts regularly for Cody soldiers. There is no evidence the soldier musicians all got to go to Europe as musicians. Some may have been repurposed as infantry or some other specialty.

If the shows at the camp didn't please a soldier, he could always go into Deming and seek a live show or movie at one of the many theaters. It is hard to get much information about the minor theaters but the best known were the Princess, the Isis, the Cody, the Majestic, the Crystal and the Teal.

One of the biggest operations was the Teal – you could even call by telephone to get a reservation at this 1,800-seat theater. In the March 21, 1918 *El Paso Times* there a quasi-story, quasi-advertisement for the Teal. The article mentioned Teal's Big Song Show that had been running for seven months. Supposedly the theater had enough performers to present “two complete productions each week for so long a period without repeating a play.” The theater boasted its company was composed of 40 people which included a chorus of 17 people.

Teal needed to compete with the patriotic songs of Yellen and Baisden, so Teal's people came up with “The Sandstorm Division is Coming.” The words were by Frank Jaquet and music by Bert Beyerstedt. Beyerstedt must have felt at home with the 34<sup>th</sup> since so many men were from his home state of Minnesota. He was from Winona where, as a youngster, he was considered a child prodigy playing the violin at the age of eight before audiences.

If a young man didn't want to go to a show, he could always go over to the Enlisted Man's Club that occupied the Deming Armory. The building was constructed in 1916 and turned over to Camp Cody's enlisted men for their use. Smaller rooms were used for playing cards, pool and other games.

The auditorium, upstairs, was used a lot for dances sponsored by various organizations. For instance, on July 18, 1918, the Quartermaster Corps held a dance at the armory. It is hard to imagine

what these affairs were like. There were obviously many wives and girl friends who followed their men to Camp Cody but there were still thousands who had no one to take to a dance. Any unattached woman at one of these events probably never left the dance floor.

Today the old armory houses the Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum which has a varied collection of displays covering life in Deming plus a huge collection of Mimbres pottery and a display covering Camp Cody.

The military personnel were not allowed to have or consume alcohol. It was forbidden in the camp and it was illegal to even give a soldier alcohol in town. One case reported in the newspapers was of a boarding house owner who was charged with allowing soldiers staying with him to pour themselves drinks from his sideboard.

To Americans today, this must seem very restrictive considering the men weren't boys drafted right out of school. The National Guard units had men in their 30s and 40s, even older, who were called away from their trades and professions. But put in perspective with the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Prohibition) being ratified on January 29, 1919, it makes perfect sense.

The temperance movement to prohibit the manufacture, transportation and sale of intoxicating liquors had been building for decades. In 1917, President Wilson imposed a wartime prohibition to save grain for food usage only. Congress submitted the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the states for their approval or rejection, with a seven-year time limit on the process. In just 11 months, three quarters of the states had ratified it. It became part of the Constitution in 1920.

It took just about the same time for the states to ratify the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment in 1933 to kill Prohibition.

Sometimes there was a bit of entertainment found in special patriotic events. For instance, in May 1918, General Ernest Dunlap Swinton, the only official correspondent allowed on the Western Front by the British War Cabinet, came to speak in Deming. He was sent to drum up sales for Liberty

Bonds used to finance the war effort.

For the community, there were two reasons for going to listen to him. The first was he was a British officer. Americans loved the French and British officers. The second was he was given partial credit for developing the tank. In fact, he supposedly was the first to use that term for a tracked fighting vehicle. He had a story to tell.

*Notice of General Swinton's visit to Camp Cody from the Deming Graphic newspaper.*

When the United States introduced Liberty Bonds, the response was lackluster. Officials resorted to using celebrities to promote their sale by appealing to a citizen's patriotic duty and fascination with "famous" people. Americans loved celebrities even back then. While Deming didn't get to see movie stars like Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks or Charlie Chaplin, every boy and man in the Deming area probably wanted to hear about the tank and its use in the war.

Coming from a completely different angle was British poet and novelist John Masefield, who spoke at Camp Cody's Liberty Theater on the afternoon of July 4, 1918. Masefield went on to become Britain's poet laureate in 1930, a position he held until his death 1967.

Masefield was on a national tour to speak to soldiers heading for France. Masefield had written about the early days of WWI, and the American Library Association, in July 1918, said his writing "is literature so magnificent, so heroic, so heartbreaking, that it sends us back to the Greek epics for comparison."

Apparently Masefield learned to communicate the realities of war and touch the emotions of the audiences he spoke to. Theodore Bonnet went to hear Masefield and wrote in the March 30, 1918 issue of San Francisco's *Town Talk*, "He painted a picture of desolation with a palpitant background in smoke of many colors, a picture that quickened the imagination just as poignantly as though it had been realized on canvas. Masefield lectures very much as he writes whether in prose or verse, in sentences that go straight to the heart..."

The *Daily Iowan*, on February 15, 1918, came to the same conclusion after attending a Masefield lecture. The reporter ended, "From a soldier's viewpoint, he has written of war in all its glories and atrocities."

Periodically, special shows came to town because of the large potential audience from the camp. Ironically, the Sells-Floto Circus appeared in Deming on Thursday, April 11, 1918 with military personnel from Camp Cody participating in the traditional street parade in the morning. It is ironic because just a few years before, Sells-Floto acquired Buffalo Bill's Wild West while Bill Cody protested the takeover but was powerless to prevent it.

On the *TrueWest* website, there is an article by Julia Bricklin from February 23, 2016 called, "How to Steal a Wild West Show." Basically, Bricklin makes a case that two Denver businessmen, the ones behind Sells-Floto, conspired to grab Cody's show after he starting having financial difficulties in 1912. By 1914, they had partnered with Cody, and he was appearing in the "Sells-Floto & Buffalo Bill's Combined Shows."

Ad in the *Deming Graphic* for the Sells-Floto Circus and Buffalo Bill Show appearing on April 11, 1918

According to Bricklin, the arrangement galled Cody no end, but he was stuck in a difficult, if not impossible, financial bind. At the end of 1916, the Denver businessmen had taken complete control. Cody died on January 10, 1917.

One can only imagine Cody looking down from above, probably irritated the circus would have the audacity to play for a camp of soldiers bearing his name.

Another way to keep soldiers busy was through the time-honored participation in sports. There were all kinds of races, boxing matches, football and basketball games with the soldiers as contestants. Then there was baseball. At the time, the national pastime was hugely popular. Men were anxious to play themselves and to follow the professional teams. Scores from major league games were usually posted on bulletin boards for everyone to see. Big-game scores were updated inning by inning with results coming in by telegraph.

Baseball fans at Camp Cody and in Deming were delighted when the Chicago Cubs announced they would play exhibition games at the camp on Saturday, April 6 and Sunday, April 7, 1918. The game on Saturday, was against the Santa Rita team and the game on Sunday was against a team made up of soldiers from the 34<sup>th</sup>. The games were possible because the Cubs were heading back to the Midwest after spring training out in California.

Bill Burns, a former major league player work-

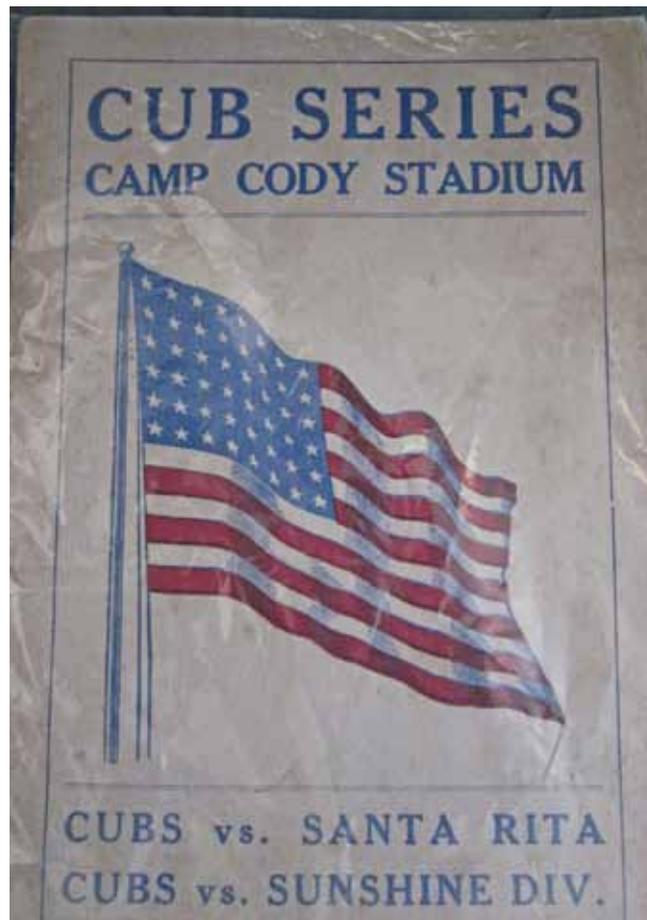
ing in Santa Rita, was involved in making the arrangements. Because of his connections and the pretty good team he had in Santa Rita with several former major league players, the Cubs travelled to Santa Rita to play there first on April 5.

One cannot exaggerate what a big deal this was for baseball fans in general. But to have your own soldier buddies play against a big league team made it really special. For Nebraskans at camp it got even better because the Cubs had acquired pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander, along with his friend and catcher Bill Killefer, from the Philadelphia Phillies in the off season for the princely sum of \$60,000. Alexander had just led the Phillies to their first pennant and World Series appearance. However, baseball is a business, and the Phillies owner need-

ed cash so he sold two of his best.

Alexander was born in Elba, Nebraska, and grew up there. For the Nebraska soldiers, he was one of their own. He broke into the major leagues in 1911 with Philadelphia and promptly won 28 games as a rookie, a modern-day record. He could "bring it."

With the Phillies, Alexander averaged 27 wins per season. At one point in his career, he had a three-year streak of 31, 33 and 30 wins. He played for the Phillies, the Cubs, the Cardinals and back with the Phillies in his final year of baseball in 1930. He had a total of 373 wins in his career and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1938 as the only inductee that



*Program for the two exhibition games played by the Chicago Cubs at Camp Cody in April 1918.*

*Photo by the author of display at Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum.*

year. He won his only World Series championship with the St. Louis Cardinals. Alexander is usually on those lists of top 100 baseball players of all time.

The Cody game was scheduled to be played in the old 15-acre reservoir at the camp. This large shallow depression with its banked walls made a great amphitheater that was already being used for sporting events, band concerts and other occasions. The camp leadership freed up \$2,000 from the division athletic fund to fix the field and provide new uniforms for the Cody team. For a couple of weeks before the game, the engineers leveled the field and watered it to transform it from soft sand to a firmer surface for running and fielding.

Over 100 soldiers tried out for the Cody team. A squad of 35 was selected and then dismissed from further soldierly duties so they could practice.

For preparation, the Cody team played other teams like the semi-pro groups at Santa Rita and Hurley. The team never won any of these games but they seemed to be competitive.

The Cubs went to Santa Rita and lost that game. For the return game against Santa Rita, the Cubs shut the miners out 6-0. Then, against the 34<sup>th</sup> Division, the Cubs won 8-0. Alexander pitched the first five innings against the Cody nine and gave up one hit.

One sportswriter said, "They (Cody's team) couldn't field, throw, run or hit, and never were within sharpshooting range of home plate." The *El Paso Herald* said, "At no time during the game did it appear that the Cubs were forced to let themselves out."

Still it was a great opportunity for the Cody players and fans. Unfortunately the day was spoiled by a typical spring windstorm. The blowing sand was so bad, most spectators left before the end of the game.

By the way, the Cubs went on to win the National League pennant in 1918 and then lost the World Series to the Boston Red Sox four games to two. It wasn't until 2016 they'd finally win a World Series.

The Cubs visit was a great distraction for the men of the 34<sup>th</sup>. Some men were already being sent

out as replacements and faced imminent injury or death. The rest of the division was soon to follow. Baseball afforded a welcome peek back at normal life.

But there were ways for the men of the 34<sup>th</sup> to die at Camp Cody long before facing machine guns in Europe. With the state of medicine in 1917-18, it was easy to get an infection that could go unchecked and rapidly kill. Lieutenant Colonel Mortimer Sanderson died on July 30, 1918, when an abscess on his ear led to blood poisoning. There were cases where men were operated on for appendicitis. The surgeries usually went well but an infection took them down soon after.

We know lightning killed at least two soldiers. On October 2, 1917, Private Burt Charles Knutson, a barber from Merrill, Iowa, was shaving Private Lester Stinson when lightning struck the tent killing Knutson and burning Stinson. Knutson's brother Peter, with the Minnesota National Guard, had just arrived at Camp Cody and had called on his brother just a few hours before the strike.

On July 27, 1918, Private Clarence Baily, Company A, 109<sup>th</sup> Engineers, was struck by lightning and killed as he returned from the rifle range.

Then there were accidents. Sergeant Beaver, in one of his letters home, told Helen about a terrible accident at the artillery range. The firing of



*The medical staff at Camp Cody's hospital was always kept busy with injury and illness. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

guns spooked the horses pulling supplies for the artillery practice. Horses and wagons went crashing through the area. Beaver reported 30 men were injured and two died. In addition, one man lost an arm and one lost an eye. He said the men were all from Nebraska.

On August 2, 1918, an incredibly stupid vehicle accident killed three soldiers and the driver. The distance from the camp to Deming was a bit of a trek, and men often took “service cars,” basically taxis, back and forth. Walter McClure picked up five soldiers at Cody to take them into town. The gate guard warned him about the approaching train and urged him to wait for it to pass. The train was blowing its whistle when McClure decided he could beat it and gunned the vehicle onto the tracks.

The train, going an estimated 20 miles per hour, hit the car broadside. McClure was found mangled under the wheels of the engine and apparently died instantly. Also killed was Leo McGrath from St. Paul, Minnesota. He had a broken neck.

Tragically, the other two killed were Roy and Vern Kinnaman, 135<sup>th</sup> Ambulance Corps, from Walthill, Nebraska. Roy and Vern were on their way into town to telegraph their parents for more information about their brother who was just reported killed in France. The Kinnamans lost three sons in a matter of days.

Making stupid decisions is not reserved for any particular class of people, it just seems to be part of being human. Another fine example was the choice made by three men to drive into the floodwaters of an arroyo on July 26, 1918. All three were killed when the water swept the car downstream and over a 50-foot waterfall.

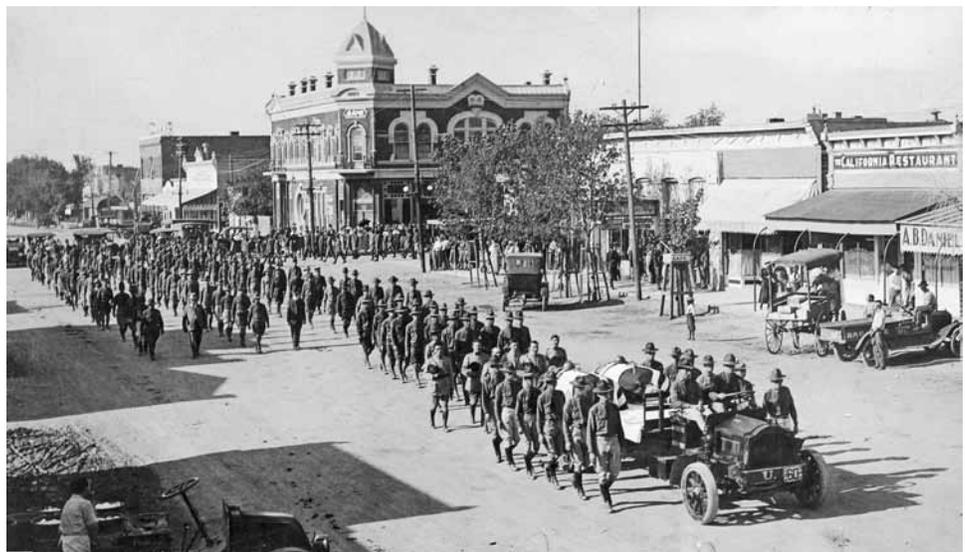
Two of the men were French officers assigned as instructors at Cody – Lieutenant Fernand Herbert,

light artillery, and Lieutenant Jean Jegou, hand grenades. Their driver, an American soldier of French Canadian descent and fluent in English and French, was Sergeant Ernest Picard.

The men had driven to Tyrone, near Silver City, to visit friends. On their return it had rained in the higher elevations. About 12 miles south of Silver City they encountered the flooding arroyo. A Mexican woodcutter waiting for the water to recede advised them to wait as well. They declined and, according to the woodcutter, entered the arroyo about 3 p.m. The water carried the car about 30 yards down stream and over a normally dry fall.

When military police were finally able to get to the area, they found Picard’s body near the car – as the driver he probably had been hanging onto the steering wheel. Herbert’s body was found five miles down stream and Jegou’s was found at Spalding siding, about 19 miles away.

According to Chuck Pederson in *SOB: Southwestern Outlaw Baseball*, the mentioned siding is named after A.G. Spalding, the founder of the Spalding sports equipment company. Spalding was a major league pitcher in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and then president of the Chicago Nationals (now the Cubs). Between Deming and Silver City he at-



*Military procession for the two French officers killed in the July 26, 1918 flood north of Deming. The procession took the coffins from camp, through downtown Deming to the depot for shipment back East. Both were buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

tempted to build a utopian community based on his interest in Theosophy. So the Cubs visiting Camp Cody already had some local connections.

Ironically, the two French officers killed in the flood had survived combat in their home country against the Germans. Both men are buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

These French and British officers who came to Camp Cody to provide insight into trench warfare and training for it were viewed as celebrities. In October 1917, the *El Paso Herald* reported how French Lieutenant Henri Negre, artillery, was wined and dined in El Paso. He hobnobbed with generals and community leaders while spending a few days there. The article states, "At the El Paso County Club dance Saturday night, where he was entertained by A.P. Coles, he was the center of attraction." Not bad for a lieutenant.

Sometimes death was the plan all along. On July 12, 1918, Charles Scoggin kept his rifle after practice at the range. He snuck it into the tent he shared with five other men. According to the July 19, 1918 issue of the *Deming Graphic*, Scoggin put the rifle against his head just before reveille on July 13, and pulled the trigger. The paper reported the bullet took off part of Scoggin's head but he survived for an hour afterward. The exiting bullet almost struck one of his tent mates.

Ironically, Scoggin was from Hope, New Mexico.

Then there was Challis Donald who was drafted into the Army at Artesia, N.M. on July 9, 1918, and sent to Camp Cody to begin training. He didn't die at Cody but he came awfully close. His actions put him in the "remarkable" category.

Just a few days after arriving at Cody, on July 13, he took a small, dull axe and "hacked off his left hand" according to the *Deming Graphic* of July 19, 1918. The newspaper assumed he was a conscientious objector and was disabling himself for army service.

The article reported, "Although it required nearly a dozen blows with the axe to sever the hand from the arm, Donald stuck to the job methodically till it was done. As he worked he repeated Biblical

phrases, one that was heard by several being, "If thy left hand offend thee, cut it off." He kept repeating such phrases all the way to the hospital."

The newspaper said he survived and had succeeded in making himself unacceptable to the army – probably in more ways than one.

For a young soldier, the odds of dying from any of these causes were fairly low. Even the probability of a soldier being gassed or cut to pieces in Europe's blood-filled trenches was low in comparison to the tiny, inconsequential germ. For example, there was no vaccination for measles and mumps at the time. It was quite common for a soldier to contract measles, get over it, and then, in a weakened state, contract pneumonia and die.

Of course, this was nothing compared to the influenza pandemic that swept the world toward the end of the war. For instance, an estimated 200 New Mexicans died in combat during all of World War I. On the other hand, in just the few months that the Spanish flu moved through the state in 1918 and again in 1919, it is estimated between 4,000 and 5,000 New Mexicans died. For the entire country about 675,000 died from flu. The death toll in Britain was 228,000 and 400,000 in Germany.

Planet-wide the numbers are astounding. Conservative estimates show about 20,000,000 killed worldwide from flu. Others say it should be closer to 50 million and was under reported because of the primitive medical care and reporting systems in so many countries. Even in the United States many hospitals stopped counting as the bodies piled up everywhere. The system was overwhelmed.

Most of those deaths occurred in a four to five-month period – the fall and winter of 1918 into 1919. There was a second outbreak of flu in late 1919, but it wasn't as bad as the previous year. Mother Nature proved to be a much more efficient killer than contemporary warfare.

The greatest problem in dealing with the contagion was the glaring fact no one knew what caused it, and they had no drugs or vaccines to counter it. The only hope was to deal with symptoms and, in the cases where a patient's lungs filled with fluid, there was no treatment at all. Many victims died

within hours of showing symptoms.

In September 1918, the *Deming Graphic* started reporting on influenza, saying it was not a worry at Camp Cody. At the beginning of October, the paper reported maybe this flu business was getting serious. At Camp Devens in Massachusetts, the Army was reporting 10,000 cases of flu with 500 deaths.

For flu preventatives, the newspaper advised readers to use snuff and gargle with a four-percent solution of boracic acid or Dobells solution. Boric acid has some antiseptic properties that work on bacteria and fungus but would be useless against a virus. Dobells is based on sodium borate and is similar to the boric acid wash. Dobells is still available today.



*At the time, it was generally believed sunlight would be helpful in stopping flu. Troops were ordered to unhook their tents each day and furl them around the center pole. This exposed bedding and personal belongings to the sun. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

On October 4, 1918, the *Deming Graphic* confidently stated, "It is generally accepted that the epidemic has been spread by German agents, as it could hardly have traveled so swiftly by natural channels." It turns out the military in America were probably the main culprit for the quick spread of flu here. Gathering men from all over the country in the draft, concentrating them in some 32 training camps/breeding pools and then letting them reach out and touch people all over the country was a grand formula for making an epidemic.

Early on, the number of sick in the Army was hard to come by. Just like today, the status of soldiers was considered confidential if not a full-out military secret. There is a snapshot of Camp Cody's condition in early November 1918 because of the rumor mill at the camp and in Deming.

On October 3, 1918, Camp Cody went into quarantine, sealing itself off from the outside. Deming followed suit, closing schools, theaters, the skating rink and cancelling church services. Of course, the 34<sup>th</sup> had already left, and many of those men were enduring quarantine conditions elsewhere. Sergeant Beaver told Helen he was at Fort Dix, and quarantine began there on September 22. On September 30, he told her, "nearly 400 have died already and more on the way." He added, "five of our men went down to help carry the dead last night."

On October 25 the *Deming Graphic* reported that the epidemic was dying down in "white" Deming and the city was thinking of lifting the quarantine. There were still quite a few "Mexican deaths." The Camp Cody quarantine was still firmly in place.

On November 8, 1918, the *Graphic* ran a long statement by Brigadier General James Lindsay, commander of the 97<sup>th</sup> division then forming at Cody. The general was responding to the many "false reports" as to conditions at the camp and, in particular, to rumors about influenza. Generally, the general blamed civilians and enlisted men for the falsities.

The general said the rumors, "Are absolute lies, without the slightest foundation in fact, and are calculated to cause much mental distress among relatives and friends of soldiers, among the soldiers themselves and among all loyal Americans who are desirous of aiding their government in its war work." He blamed "German propagandists" for spreading the lies which only comfort and encourage the enemy.

Then he said, "The military police and all federal, state and municipal law officers have been instructed to arrest and imprison all persons making statements calculated to harmfully affect military operations of our government or those of our allies, and the offenders will be punished under military regulations and the terms of the Espionage Act." Putting two and two together, it looks like you could be arrested in Deming for wondering how many soldiers were sick and dying at Camp Cody. Since the Army refused to release that information, one has to wonder how the Luna County

sheriff would know if someone was spreading a lie or telling the truth. Or maybe the truth could get you arrested as well.

This may have been pointed out to the general because the *Deming Graphic* soon received an invitation to inspect the camp and hospitals. This is what they reported: "Prior to first arrivals of drafted men on October 28, there were about 4,000 men in camp; of these, 500 had contracted influenza, 125 developed pneumonia, and 21 died; admissions of influenza cases to all hospitals had decreased to a daily average of 12."

The article then updates the numbers as of November 7. "There are now 8,200 men at Cody: up to midnight Wednesday there had been total admissions to all hospitals of 2,737 influenza cases, including the first 500. Of the cases among recruits, 558 developed pneumonia and 128 died."

One of the most interesting aspects of this military revelation is they were still gathering personnel, some infected with flu, from all over the country during the epidemic period and jamming them together on trains and in training camps. No wonder the infection rate in this report was around 33 percent.

Curiously, the flu ended on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. Everyone in Deming took to the streets of Deming to celebrate. The *Deming Graphic* said, "Sane and ordinarily sedate men and women rushed about the streets, shouting, laughing, crying, beating each other on the back, waving flags." By the end of the day, the quarantine was lifted, and the Cody soldiers flooded into town to join the revelry.

The idea German agents were behind the spread of the flu and the spread of rumors is pretty common stuff. It was and still is typical for a nation's enemy to be made out to be the source of all the country's ills. The Germans portrayed the French and English as enslavers bent on crippling the good German people. The Allies portrayed Germany as a nation of brutal killers ready to step on anyone's neck if they got in the way.

This is a time-honored technique dating back centuries and is now leaking out from the art of

war to the art of politics. The idea is to turn the enemy into something less than human, some sort of monster, who is then easy to kill on the battlefield. According to David Eagleman, a Stanford neuroscientist and expert on the brain, this kind of everyday, government-sponsored propaganda allows human beings to tamp down their natural feelings of empathy toward others. It works no matter which side you are on and allows ordinary folks to kill other ordinary folks without those pangs of guilt they would normally feel.

A rather mild example of this propaganda was found in a proclamation from Morris Nordhaus, mayor of Deming. The proclamation appeared in the *Deming Graphic* on April 26, 1918 and said:

*"The United States is now engaged in a struggle for its very life and for the life of civilization against the brutal autocracy of Germany, that would seek to enslave the world and to impose its will on the free peoples of the earth. The Hun must be checked in his mad attempt at conquest, and the last word in the present world conflict lies with the people of the United States."*

In the United States this basic psychological ploy led to a huge backlash against German Americans and German immigrants. They were all suspect. All kinds of state and local laws were passed to root out the traitors hidden in the cities and cornfields. In Nebraska it became illegal to speak German on the telephone or in any public place. This meant ministers of German-speaking congregations had to preach the gospel in English. In Lincoln, eight University of Nebraska professors were charged with "lack of aggressive loyalty." The super-patriots went so far as to ban the playing of music by Bach and Beethoven by orchestras since they were German composers.

Minnesota had its share of "Hun" paranoia with its Commission of Public Safety looking over shoulders to make sure everyone was an active patriot. The *Deming Graphic* reported on June 7, 1918, the commission sent two officers, Captains Peterson and Johnson, down to meet with members of the Minnesota Guard stationed at Camp Cody.

According to the article, unless soldiers took advantage of the absent-voters law and cast their ballots by mail, the Germans and pacifists would take over Minnesota. The article claimed Minnesota's population was "largely German" and the danger was high. In reality, the population was probably less than 20 percent German at that time.

To avoid the consequences of running afoul of the super-patriots, many Germans took action to protect themselves, their families and their businesses. The people of Germantown, Nebraska, changed the name of their community to Garland. Ditto for Berlin which selected Otoe as its new name even though one writer thinks the town was named after Ed Berlin, a local farmer, and not the German capital. The German-American Bank in Lincoln, Nebraska, changed its name to the Continental National Bank to avoid losing customers.

In the business world, this ability to accuse someone of being a traitor and have authorities act on the claim, usually without evidence, had some great advantages. Apparently it was fairly common across the country for a non-German business owner to accuse a German competitor of being disloyal. In many cases it was like waving a magic wand, business suddenly got better for the accuser after the German was arrested.

John M. Birkner, a major and doctor with the Nebraska National Guard at Camp Cody, got caught up in the frenzy. Birkner was born in Germany in 1856 and was there long enough to serve in the German army as a young man. He immigrated to America and attended medical school in St. Louis. From there he moved to Nebraska, eventually ending up in Lincoln.

Birkner practiced medicine for decades in Nebraska and was quite prominent in Lincoln. He was a member of all kinds of civic organizations and was even called on to testify at a trial concerning gunshot wounds. He was a naturalized citizen and joined the Nebraska National Guard in 1888.

In 1917, he traveled with his Nebraska unit to Camp Cody. In April 1918, Birkner's life took a wrong turn when he was arrested and charged with making "disloyal comments." Two officers, who

were his subordinates, accused him of saying things like, "we should have peace," "the people are not behind this war," and "the Germans could sink every American transport if they wanted to." In the U.S. Attorney's documents, Birkner was charged with trying "to interfere with the operational success of the military and naval forces of the United States, and to promote the success of its enemy."

On his arrest, Birkner was discharged from the Army and then taken to Santa Fe to be held in the New Mexico penitentiary as a federal prisoner. Some law enforcement officials must have gotten word to the inmates about Birkner because they were waiting for the 52 year-old doctor. The prisoners immediately tarred and feathered Birkner and paraded him around the prison yard with a noose around his neck. The deputy warden had to rescue him.

Birkner appeared in federal court on May 13, 1918. His lawyers, which included former U.S. Senator Elmer Burkett from Nebraska, immediately convinced Judge Colin Neblett to throw out three of the four charges. The lawyers pointed out the charges didn't actually list any criminal offense, the reported statements do not constitute a crime and the statements were "only expressions of opinion and are of common use and comment."

At that point the U.S. attorney declined to go to trial on just one charge and postponed the show until the fall session.

There is no evidence that Birkner actually stood trial. The whole case simply disappeared from the news media. Greg Townsend, a librarian with the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Library in Albuquerque, found no record of a trial in the New Mexico records or those stored in the National Archives.

It may be Birkner's impressive list of character witnesses, most having to travel great distances, was going to be too much for the prosecution to overcome. The lineup include 11 officers from Camp Cody, three of whom were higher ranking than Birkner; Chief Justice A.M. Morrissey of the Nebraska Supreme Court; Editor Will Jones of the *Nebraska State Journal* newspaper; George Beecher, the Episcopal bishop of Nebraska; President S.H.

Barnham of the First National Bank; President W.A. Sellerek of the Nebraska State Bank; Mayor J.E. Miller of Lincoln; and President R.M. Joyce of the Nebraska Council of Defense. It looks very likely the U.S. Attorney simply dropped the case, and Birkner returned home to try and pick up his old life.

Birkner died in Lincoln in 1935 at the age of 78.

While Camp Cody was a huge economic wind-fall for Deming, the prosperity came with a price. There were strings attached. When a young man entered military service, almost everything about his life was controlled by the Army. Because the men were allowed to go into Deming, some to live, the Army sought control of the town as well.

In fact, local control began before the soldiers ever arrived. During construction, the Army would not allow hiring agencies to send construction workers. Officials required the contractor to hire everyone directly, thus eliminating fees that workers might have been charged by the agencies.



*Men line up outside the offices of the Camp Cody contractor. The Army required the contractor to hire its workers directly and not use agencies which would take a portion of the men's salaries. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

There are no complaints of this control in the papers because the media pretty much mirrored the “boosterism” of business and city leaders. The people making money were willing to put up with some inconvenience to make sure the golden goose kept producing. At the same time, this Army control was meant to protect soldiers from being preyed upon by some greedy business owners and

to keep them from straying from the task at hand – becoming good soldiers.

For instance, the Army censored all the shows and movies in town before soldiers were allowed in. There is a newspaper account of soldiers standing in line outside one theater, waiting for the censor to finish watching a movie. Of course, technically, theater owners were free to show anything they wanted, but if they wanted to sell tickets to soldiers, the product had to pass muster with Cody officials.

The *El Paso Herald* reported on September 28, 1917 on a meeting of the local censorship committee. It said lewd plays were taboo and the members “pointed out that the problem of controlling such a large number of men was difficult under even the best conditions, and would be much more difficult if any improper suggestions were visualized.”

In October 1917, Major S.J. Sutherland, acting chief of staff for the 34<sup>th</sup>, asked the city council to help rid the community of “undesirable women.” Sutherland said military success depended on high “moral standards” and disease was increasing among the soldiers.

The city council and mayor responded by creating a network of informants and imposing jail time or heavy fines for violators. Either it worked or the threat was much exaggerated. In a January 1918 letter, the surgeon general’s office in Washington commended camp officials for keeping down the cases of venereal disease.

Nancy Bristow, in her book *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War*, singles out Deming for its immediate reaction to meeting the War Department’s standards by shutting down their red-light district. She wrote, Deming showed “a willingness to do anything and everything for the good of the soldiers.”

Interestingly, Sutherland’s request of the city

came almost two months after an article in the August 23, 1917, *El Paso Herald* ballyhooed the city's "purity campaign" and how quiet and peaceful the community was. The report said, "Women with too artistic complexions are politely and firmly reasoned with at the railroad station. It is right about face for these and other disturbing elements as soon as they alight at the depot platform."

Also, there was an army camp commission that made demands upon Deming. For instance, the Army wanted public begging on the streets stopped; pool rooms closed at midnight; girls under 16 not be allowed to work in public amusement places; and suppression of street vendors selling patented medicines. The medicines were often in the form of "elixirs" and were sold as cures for just about anything. Many were fortified with morphine, opium or cocaine so at least patients felt good even if their problems persisted.

Other demands from the Army hit some people hard in the pocketbook. For instance, from the beginning of the camp, drivers of service cars or "jitneys" charged 25 cents for a ride between Cody and Deming. In April 1918, camp officials demanded the price be rolled back to 15 cents a ride. When the order went into effect, the drivers refused to roll. The drivers insisted that they could not make a profit at 15 cents a ride with all of their costs for maintenance, tires, fuel etc.

No one seems to know how this conflict turned out. There is no mention of the dispute in later papers. The taxis began running again so it is safe to assume one side or the other caved in or they came to some compromise.

At the same time, the Army demanded all theaters only charge 15 cents for movies. The theater owners responded by saying they would not be able to provide the top-end movies anymore because the distributors charged more for them.

Next, the Army stepped in to regulate property rentals in town. In August 1918, the *Deming Graphic* reported on mandatory rental rates for rooms, apartments and houses in town housing soldiers. The article stated the maximum price for an unfurnished house would be \$5 per room per month

with the tenant paying for light and water. There was no indication what constituted a "room." Furnished houses were set at \$7 per room per month. The maximum rate for a single furnished room was to be \$25 per month, and the most someone could charge for a single sleeping room was \$5 per week.

Of course, the Army couldn't actually make these prices law. Instead, any owner who did not comply would be blacklisted, and all soldiers ordered to leave. The article describes two instances where this occurred.

Along the same lines, the *Deming Headlight* reported the camp's command issued orders about soldiers moving out of the camp to live with their families. The new rules said a soldier had to get written permission to move off post. Then his rental agreement had to be at an approved reasonable cost; the place had to meet Army sanitary standards; the lease had to be for six months and be approved by the Army; and finally, the leases had to be written so, with orders, the family could break the lease and leave within a week.

According to the Army, this was done to limit a soldier's liability and control costs in the rental market. The longer lease guaranteed the price and the clause that the lease could be broken without penalty on short notice freed families from huge demands on their meager savings.

The Army had a strikingly modern public-relations statement to explain their action. They said, "Its primary objective is to promote the efficiency of military service by avoiding the many embarrassments and anxieties that inevitably attend a sudden and unregulated demand upon a small community for living accommodations far beyond its normal capacity."

Long before these controls were put in place, family members had been moving into Deming to be near their loved ones. On Mike Kroemke's website there is a wonderful piece reprinted from the February 1939 issue of *The American Legion Magazine* written by a soldier's wife who moved to Deming from Iowa. Her name was Elsie French-Wolcott and her recollections of living next to Camp Cody for about 10 months are insightful.

First of all, she married Sylvester Wolcott in June 1917. He was a member of Iowa's 136<sup>th</sup> Ambulance Company and was shipped to Camp Cody in September with the other Iowa National Guard units. She said he was a "top sergeant" so was ranked well above the privates and corporals. Already a couple of months pregnant, she followed him in November 1917.

Finding a place to live was difficult. She said:

*"A hotel was out of the question on an enlisted man's salary. The soldiers' wives were living in tents, shacks, or any sort of room which could be found. We found a frame house.... Ours was a four-room house, each room occupied by some soldier's wife. I wonder what has become of the lieutenant's wife who lived back of me. She was also homesick and lonely; we spent many long sunny mornings (provided there were no sand storms) sitting on the steps conversing about Iowa and the never-ending, 'When will the troops be moved out?'"*

It is amazing how often sand and sandstorms come up in people's descriptions of the place. She wrote, "The sand blew nearly every morning. The road past our door, which was one of the main roads into camp, was ankle deep in sand. I often watched from my window the long brown columns of marching men, their feet making a peculiar crunch, crunch in the loose sand. Often they wore handkerchiefs over their mouths and noses to protect them from the whirling sand. I have seen them returning from one of their long hikes, their faces burned with sun, lips cut and bleeding from the sand, their eyes red rimmed and swollen, a sorry, tired lot just beginning to learn of what war was like."

Elsie was a registered nurse, so she paid attention to the suffering of other people. In February 1918, during one of the fiercest sandstorms she and the old-timers had ever seen, the husband of a woman who was about to give birth banged on her door. He was worried the shack they were living in would simply collapse in the wind. Elsie offered up her room.

When they got the woman settled in Elsie's bed,

the husband headed to get a doctor. When the doctor arrived, they settled in to wait – the expecting couple, the doctor and Elsie in a small bedroom. When Elsie offered her help, she said the doctor seemed to resent her being there. She said, "I think he was ashamed of his medieval obstetrical methods."

A baby boy was born the next morning. Instead of moving the couple and their newborn back to the shack, Elsie gave up her room to them for over a week and lived in their hovel.

In April 1918, Elsie gave birth to her own baby, a little girl they named Gloria. Elsie wrote, "Little Gloria first saw the light of day through the murky half-light of a typical Camp Cody sandstorm."

Eventually, Sylvester was deployed to Europe and survived the war. By the way, Elsie did experience New Mexico's famous chile when she wasn't feeling well and a Mexican friend fixed a meal with the peppers. She wrote, "I took one spoonful and, gasping, ran for a drink of water, the tears streaming down my cheeks. Fire itself could not have been any hotter."

Control of other aspects of life in the Deming area came down from the national level where all kinds of restrictions, such as rationing gasoline and sugar, were mandated. Local "county food administrators" were allowed to set food prices for their locales. These prices were advertised so everyone knew exactly what a loaf of bread would cost.

For instance, in Deming during September 1918, a one-pound loaf of "victory" bread couldn't cost more than 9 cents wholesale or more than 11 cents retail. A one-pound block of American cheese had a maximum retail price of 40 cents and a pound of sliced breakfast bacon was capped at 60 cents.

It might appear all of this government control in Deming was a negative thing. On the contrary, the community's economic boom wasn't the only benefit. There were other positives from having the modern Army right next door.

Don Williamson, archivist with the Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum, in a conversation with the author, said the medical personnel from those Mid-

western National Guard units considered Deming a “dirty town.” These leaders of the camp’s “sanitation units” insisted the town be cleaned up if their men were to be spending time there.

For instance, the Army instigated an anti-fly campaign and called on Deming residents, through the city and Chamber of Commerce, to clean up the garbage. They even published instructions on how to build and bait flytraps for homes and businesses.

In 1918, the city’s Sanitary Committee asked Lieutenant Colonel J.M. Coffin, Camp Cody division surgeon, and Captain Stolz, camp sanitary officer, to draft ordinances to promote better health. Their ordinances covered the proper handling and sale of milk, milk products, meat, poultry and fish. On the other end of the process, there were rules

on the construction and maintenance of cesspools and vaults and how to keep stables clean. Finally, there were food-handling rules for public establishments like hotels, restaurants and soft drink places that served food.

Don said the influence of these National Guard leaders made Deming more Midwestern than its neighboring towns.

Having the camp next door proved useful on July 11, 1918, when a fire swept through part of downtown Deming. The fire started in the Deming Garage and quickly spread from one business to the next. The Deming fire department sent out a call for help and Camp Cody responded.

Not only did the camp’s fire department come but also a lot of soldiers lent their support. Together the Cody men moved hoses, threw dirt and formed



*The Cody Theater, at Pine and Gold in downtown Deming, was the major business destroyed in the huge fire on July 11, 1918. The fire department from Camp Cody and many of its soldiers responded to the call for help. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

bucket brigades to assist. The town was very grateful. Foxworth Galbraith Lumber Yard was so appreciative of being spared, the company donated \$100 to the camp's athletic fund.

One benefit Deming received from the Army went on giving for decades - until the late 1990s. In July 1918, the *Deming Graphic* announced that a natatorium or swimming pool was going to be built for Camp Cody soldiers. Instead of being dug at the camp, the \$20,000 pool was to be constructed in town. Since civilians were going to be allowed to use it in certain situations, it made sense to put it in town.

The pool was located on 8<sup>th</sup> Street between West Pine and Spruce. It wasn't completed until late February 1919 so the war was long over. The finished product was 60 by 120 feet and 8 feet deep. The reported final cost was \$26,000.

The War Camp Committee Service initially ran the pool but soon turned it over to the city of Deming. It officially opened to the public on May 7, which proved a little early. Few people came the first few weeks as the water was chilly.

By July, people were coming from all over to enjoy the "largest swimming pool in New Mexico." The manager reported an average of 3,000 users each week. The cost was 25 cents for civilians and free for soldiers. The pool also rented swimwear. Probably not very many folks living in rural New Mexico in 1919 found it necessary to own swimming gear.



*Deming's Army swimming pool. Funded by the Army and not completed until after the war, the pool provided faithful service from 1919 until the late 1990s. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

According to the city, the old pool was closed in the late 90s when the new one opened. The community got almost 80 years of use out of it. The facility is still there and visible on Google Earth.

At the same time, most of the community didn't see the soldiers as walking ATMs. Instead, they embraced the soldiers. In early November 1917, the Chino Copper Company at Hurley invited 50 to 60 men to take part in a Thanksgiving dinner in the mining town. The company specified they would like to host privates and non-commissioned officers.

The *Deming Graphic* ran a nice opinion piece on November 1, 1918, about the soldier's lot in life. It pointed out why it was important for Deming residents to support the coming influx of new soldiers to form the 97<sup>th</sup> Division. Part of it read: *"All of the men in our army expect to be in the thick of the fighting, and are prepared to give their lives if necessary. Practically every one of them is receiving a smaller income than he was as a civilian. Hundreds of thousands of them have families of their own, and most them have close kin. The majority have contributed to war relief societies and war service organizations. Few of them have ever been away from home before, and not one has ever before been called upon to abandon everything to which he has been accustomed, divest himself of all former responsibilities, sever all ties of a life-time in the full knowledge that he may never be able to return to them, and assume the heavy burden that is his share in the war.*

*The wrench is so great, the change so complete, that they should be given every help in becoming insured to the right discipline of the new life and reconciled to the loss of the old."*

In August 1918, as the bulk of the 34<sup>th</sup> prepared to ship out, an El Paso photographer took two photos using most of the division's men. The now famous photos show the men posed so they form the 34<sup>th</sup> crest of a bull and olla. Included are men wearing white caps and arranged to spell out, "Duty," "Honor" and "Country."

In one photo, the crest is almost completely filled in with men in their khaki brown uniforms. It is the one supposedly using 16,000 men. The second photo is described as an “outline effect.” It has fewer men so there is quite a bit of empty space inside the crest outer edges.

According to the August 23 *Deming Graphic*, it took the photographer about four hours to get the men arranged and snap the photos. He shot the images from the top of a 50-foot tower.

While up on the tower, the photographer also took a wide, wide, wide panorama of the camp that

included Deming. Of course, the finished 10-foot print was pieced together from many individual negatives, but it is a grand image and can be seen on the internet. There are a few other examples of these panorama images, and they can be found on Michael Kromeke’s Camp Cody website.

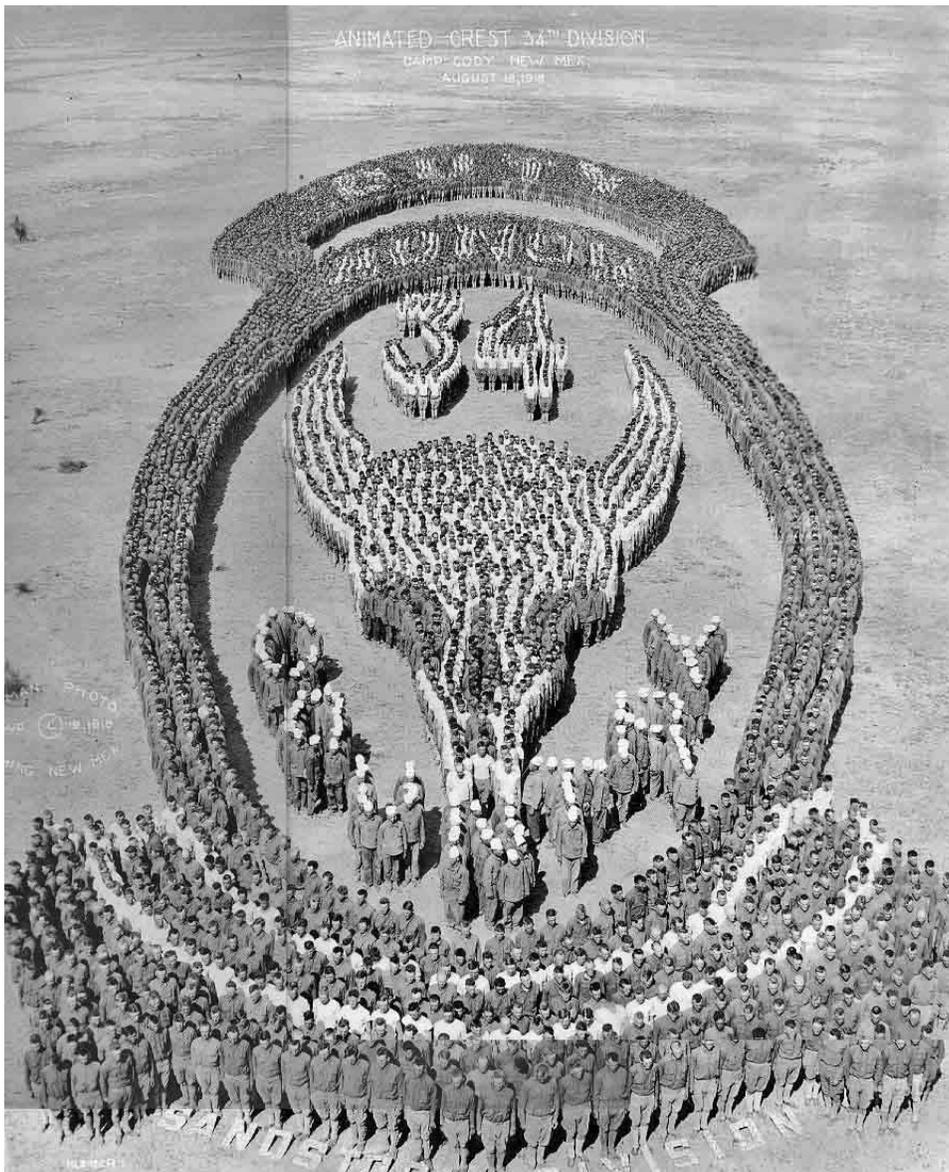
The *Graphic* reported the crest photos were for sale in Deming at Mahoney’s, and five thousand copies had already been ordered.

Officially, the 34<sup>th</sup> arrived in Europe on October 4, 1918. This was according to the *Organization of the American Expeditionary Forces, Volume 1* by the

Center of Military History / U.S. Army. The document states the 34<sup>th</sup> “was skeletonized,” the troops used as replacements all across the theater.

By September 1918, Deming was looking forward to the formation of a new division at Camp Cody, the 97<sup>th</sup>. Deming businessmen had good reason to fret over replacements as the *Graphic* reported only about 3,000 men were quartered at the camp since the departure of the 34<sup>th</sup>. The men manning the camp were principally quartermaster corps, the development battalion and the remount. No line troops were left.

By the end of the month, officers and non-coms were trickling in for the new division. According to the *Graphic*, the paper was hearing unofficial reports the 97<sup>th</sup> would be trained differently than the 34<sup>th</sup>. The new division would be broken up so specialties could train at sites suited to their func-



*The hollow crest image shot August 18, 1918 at Camp Cody before the 34th shipped to Europe. Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum Archive*

tion. For instance, artillery would train at Fort Sill and machine gunners would train at a camp dedicated to that specialty. Camp Cody was supposed to become an infantry camp for the 97<sup>th</sup>. After their training, the units would be married together.

Meanwhile, Deming continued to be nervous about the camp's future. When the camp was attacked as being unsanitary and unfit for the boys from the Midwest, Deming fought back. When San Antonio, Texas officials visited and talked about luring the Army camp to their city instead, Deming raised a ruckus.

Deming officials and supporters saw positive signs of Camp Cody's longevity everywhere and took hope in them. In January 1918, the *Deming Graphic* reported President Wilson had signed a document putting public lands off limits where military camps were located. It basically reserved the land temporarily for Army use and barred outsiders. The *Graphic* saw this ordinary act as a sign that Camp Cody could possibly be made into a "permanent military reservation."

Deming boosters read more signs in March when contractor Owen Hughes arrived from Washington and announced \$1,500,000 in improvements at Camp Cody – mostly for medical and dental support. For months, any improvements at Camp Cody elicited this kind of logic from Deming leaders, "If they are spending all that money, surely they are planning to make it a permanent camp."

In June 1918, another sign from Washington came rolling in with the announcement that Camp Cody was going to get a half-million dollar sewer system. According to the *Deming Graphic*, the sewer system would take months to construct using a large trenching machine and hundreds of workers.

The basic plan was for 200 lavatories to be constructed and hooked up to the drainage system which would take advantage of the natural slope from west to east to the Mimbres riverbed. The lavatories were to be equipped with the "best appliances and conveniences."

At the end of the sewer lines, they constructed a huge septic tank that was 80 feet by 100 feet. Various volumes have been assigned to the capacity of

the septic tank with 2.5 million gallons being most quoted – probably because bigger is better. The more accurate number is 1.5 million gallons as reported by the *El Paso Herald*.

The smaller number was proven using simple math. For a box 80 by 100 feet to hold 2.5 million gallons of water, it would have to be more than 40 feet deep. A later photo of the tank shows it isn't nearly that deep. In fact, the photo might bring into question the smaller volume. To hold 1.5 million gallons, the tank has to be 25 feet deep. Without something for scale, it is difficult to see, from the photo, if the tank is that deep or not.

In the end, the sewer system was never used. The septic tank is still there without its cover but sits on private property in someone's backyard at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> St., just northeast of Ruben Torres Elementary School. The tank is divided into three rows that are subdivided into linked chambers. It is visible on Google Maps and looks like much of it is filled in with dirt and trash.

There are many reports the septic system had a large "spillway" for water to drain into the Mimbres and is still visible. There is no spillway.

In reporting the start of the new sewage system, the *Deming Graphic* said, "Uncle Sam would hardly spend such sums on a camp he didn't intend to use after the war."



*The only major artifact left from Camp Cody - the septic tank that was never used. Michael Kromeke Collection*

More tea leaves were read in August when it was announced there was a proposal being floated

to pave the Camp Cody streets. The newspapers reported more than 40 miles of streets were involved, and it would cost half a million dollars. The *Deming Graphic* said, "The pavement will be of concrete, a pretty good indication of how long the government intends to use the camp at this place."

In September, the papers were on top of a report coming out of Omaha, Nebraska, that said Camp Cody would close after the departure of the 97<sup>th</sup>. A big headline on the front page of the September 13, 1918, *Deming Graphic* said, "Sen. Fall Nails A Nebraska Lie." New Mexico Senator Albert Fall investigated the report and received assurances from the same general who said Cody would close that it would *not* close. The article assured readers the government could never close Camp Cody because it "is now the most healthful camp in the United States." As Francis Bacon once said, "Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true."

The test for all that positive thinking started on November 11, 1918, when the armistice went into effect. An armistice is a temporary cessation of hostilities, so it was a truce and not the official end. In fact, many men on the front lines figured the armistice was just a short reprieve, and the slaughter would soon start again. It took some time for them to realize they were going to live. The Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919, formally ended World War I.

With the armistice, things immediately relaxed at Camp Cody. The *Deming Graphic* on November 22 reported Brigadier General James Lindsey, commander of the 97<sup>th</sup>, had been out hunting with mining bigwigs recently and had shot a buck. In the same issue, Clark Clothing Co. ran an advertisement for a sale, citing the "uncertainty" of Camp Cody as the reason.

In early December, local Deming boosters were already proposing plans for something to take the place of Camp Cody. Their idea called for the federal government to give small parcels of desert land to returning veterans as farmland. Of course, being desert it would require quite a bit of water to grow something more than yuccas and creosote.

The promoters said there was plenty of water —

the only hiccup was the high cost of pumping it out of the ground. To solve the energy-cost problem, the idea called for the federal government to route cheap power from the new Elephant Butte dam over to Deming. One difficulty with this idea was power generation at the dam didn't start until 1940.

Right after armistice, the local newspaper suggested Camp Cody would make a swell facility for demobilization. In fact, there was one story about troops from Arizona and New Mexico boarding a ship on the East Coast on November 11. Twelve hours into their voyage they were ordered to turn back. The men were shipped to Camp Cody by train in early December and sent home from there.

Of course, it is pretty obvious Camp Cody was a long, long way from most of the populated states where the Army's personnel came from. It made no sense to ship a National Guard unit from Minnesota to New Mexico when there were closer places to the "Land of 10,000 Lakes."

According to the December 6, 1918, *Deming Graphic*, Brigadier General Lindsay received orders on December 1 to demolish Camp Cody. Mercifully those orders came just 20 days after the armistice. Boosters didn't have to spend months sitting on pins and needles waiting for word about the camp. The order called for the general to "demobilize all units of your camp including the 97<sup>th</sup> division and permanent camp organizations, with the exception of the base hospital."

The hospital "exception" did give Deming new possibilities and there was talk of turning Camp Cody's large hospital into a convalescent care unit for those injured in Europe. According to the wishful thinking, emphasis was to be on personnel who were gassed. The local logic was that New Mexico had long been a haven for those suffering from tuberculosis, and gas victims, with their lung injuries, probably needed the same kind of dry air to recover. One newspaper article proposed the wonderful possibility that many of these injured men would chose to permanently live in Deming to take advantage of the climate.

During the war, both sides used quite an array of irritating and poisonous gases. Tear gas was used

at first to cause temporary blindness but a gas mask offered good protection.

Chlorine and phosgene, which attack the eyes and lungs, were both used. According to one website, phosgene caused the most gas-related deaths during the war.

Mustard gas was the other extensively used weapon. It caused edema in the lungs, which in turn drowned the victim in his own fluids. There



*Lieutenant Howard E. Manchester, South Dakota National Guard, poses after donning his gas mask as part of training at Camp Cody. In fact, Manchester was certified to be a gas mask instructor. By the time he was shipped to France he had been promoted to captain. Digital Library of South Dakota*

were also all kinds of nasty external effects to mustard gas exposure.

Because of damage to their lungs, many victims of these gases were incapacitated for life. Many died soon after the war or years later, being felled by pneumonia or some other respiratory infection. WorldWar1Vet.com reports the United States suffered 72,807 gas-related casualties with 1,462 deaths.

In January 1919, the *El Paso Herald* reported most of the personnel left at Camp Cody were there to demolish the camp. However, some personnel were there to tend to the “convalescents” at the hospital.

In the *War Department Annual Report 1919, Vol. 1, Part 4*, there is a listing of projects ordered abandoned at Camp Cody. Actions to be ditched included: a 30-foot addition onto the Liberty Theater, an ice-making plant, the sewer system, three barracks and one latrine, a delousing plant, a coffee roasting and grinding plant, permanent bakeries, two fire stations and roads at the target range. Instead of building anything, the Army was set to tear it all down.

When the camp was taken apart, it was done somewhat carefully so the materials could be salvaged for reuse or sale. Wood was taken to Fort Bliss, Camp Furlong, other sites in New Mexico and over to Arizona. Advertisements in the Deming newspapers started popping up for materials from the camp. One specifically stated the pipe came from Cody.

The work was done mostly by soldiers since there were lots of them around and not much soldiering to do anymore. Some political leaders complained the work should have been contracted out instead, but most Americans were tired of paying for the war effort and it gave the men something useful to do.

By April 1919, the newspapers were reporting demolition was pretty much done and the base hospital was still safe. Military operations at the hospital ceased in March and the facility was turned over to the Public Health Service.

The Public Health Service reopened the hos-

pital to care for veterans with long-term health issues, mostly respiratory in nature. There was a lot of tuberculosis still around and many soldiers were sent to sanatoriums like this. By January 1920, the hospital had around 70 patients and a small staff of doctors, nurses and laborers. In another excellent example of Bacon's seeing what you want to see, the *Deming Graphic*, on January 13, 1920, took this information and said, "The hospital will, probably, ultimately shelter 15,000 patients with corresponding personnel."

Obviously the newspaper staff did not have access to decisions being made in Washington. The *Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States for Fiscal Year 1920* says this about the old hospital:

*"Public Health Hospital No. 46. This property was occupied by the Army and was known as Camp Cody, being transferred to the Public Health Service under date of July 1, 1919. The buildings are owned by the United States Government, and the land, leased from the Deming Chamber of Commerce, consists of approximately 100 acres. Practically no repairs or alterations have been made since it is not the intention to retain this property for any great length of time. It is expected that the buildings will be salvaged during the fall of 1920."*

One Army colonel, in visiting the hospital, must have met with community leaders. He echoed what local boosters had been saying for the duration of the war when he stated the climate certainly was very good in Deming. However, he then said the buildings at the hospital were in deplorable condition and were pretty much unacceptable without major renovation work.

And, just as the decision makers in Washington planned, the Public Health Service abandoned the hospital by the end of 1920. It did not get knocked down, however. Deming leaders convinced the government to transfer the hospital to the city.

In 1922, Deming was able to entice the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Notre Dame, Indiana into taking over the hospital as a sanatorium for nuns with tuberculosis. According to Laura Krol's article, the

incentive for the sisters was more than the climate and clean water. Krol reports that Deming spent almost a half million dollars renovating the place for their use.

According to Krol, by the time the nuns and the city were done, the complex included a small farm, a poultry yard, a herd of cattle, a U.S. Post Office, an ice plant, a vegetable garden, a grain silo, an incinerator, a cement swimming pool, a cemetery, a dipping vat, a small fire department and a blacksmith's shop.

Dwindling numbers of patients led to the sanatorium's closure in 1938. Then, on March 12, 1939, the place burned to the ground. With it went most of the evidence that Camp Cody ever existed.

The walls of a concrete structure at the hospital survived the fire – like some ancient ruin. Over the years it attracted a lot of curious visitors and graffiti artists. According to the *Albuquerque Journal*, July 7, 2010, the owner of the property had the shell demolished. The *Deming Headlight* reported the ruin was in violation of county codes and needed to be fenced or boarded up. The owner elected to simply remove it.

The action created a bit of a stir in Deming with some in the community protesting the ruin was the last reminder, a bit indirectly, of old Camp Cody, "one of the most important historical, economic, and social events in this county's history." There are photos of the building on the web as well as a short video on YouTube.

Looking at Google Earth satellite images reveals very little of the old camp. The most obvious hints are the outlines of the old hospital structures. They show up as the straight lines of old foundations. The main camp's buildings to the east were just sitting on the sand and it is mostly a blank slate now overgrown with creosote and mesquite.

World War I was an incredibly costly war in terms of human life. It was a modern war using the latest technologies and weapons of mass destruction to win by attrition. It was dubbed "the war to end all wars" because most thought humans would wise up and not repeat the same mistakes. It was Camp Cody's commander on November 11, 1918,

who saw the real future. In his story for *Desert Winds* magazine in Fall of 1999, C.A. Gustafson quotes Brigadier General James Lindsay when he addressed the large celebratory crowd in Deming. The general said,

***“This is not the last war, nor will nations cease to make war as long as human passions endure. Until the end of time when diplomacy fails, resort must be had to arms.”***

So far, history has proven the general right.

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**Jim Eckles** moved to Las Cruces in 1977 to take a job in Public Affairs at White Sands Missile Range. During his 30 years there he became interested in the history of the area which led to publication of *Pocketful of Rockets: History and Stories Behing White Sands Missile Range* and *Trinity: The History of an Atomic Bomb National Historic Landmark*. In 2013 he was inducted into the missile range’s hall of fame. Currently Eckles is secretary, webmaster and newsletter editor for the Dona Ana County Historical Society.

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Texas Digital Newspaper Program @ [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu)  
TrueWest magazine  
Wyoming Historical Society

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## Book Review

*Wicked Women of New Mexico* by Donna Blake Birchell. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014. ISBN 978.1.62619.128.0. 122 pages, \$16.99, paper.

This little book tells the tales of many women from the Wild West who lived on the wrong side of the law. Birchell basically divides them into murderers, gamblers and prostitutes. There are always exceptions and Bronco Sue was one. She embodied all three and added cattle rustling for good measure.

Many of the stories are just what you might expect – after all, human motivations and passions are pretty much the same now as they were more than a century ago. For instance, in Las Vegas in 1861, Paula Angel fell in love with Juan Miguel who was married and had several children. When he broke off the affair (we don't know if it was just a flirtation or sexual in nature as Birchell only throws out hints about “their deep lust”), Paula didn't take it well. She vowed revenge.

She insisted on seeing her lover one last time in a hidden alley. She hugged him to show her capitulation and forcefully inserted a kitchen knife between his ribs from behind, killing him.

There was no question about her guilt and the trial went badly for her since Miguel came from a wealthy and influential family. They wanted to see the law carried out to the maximum. She was convicted and sentenced to hang which was unexpected.

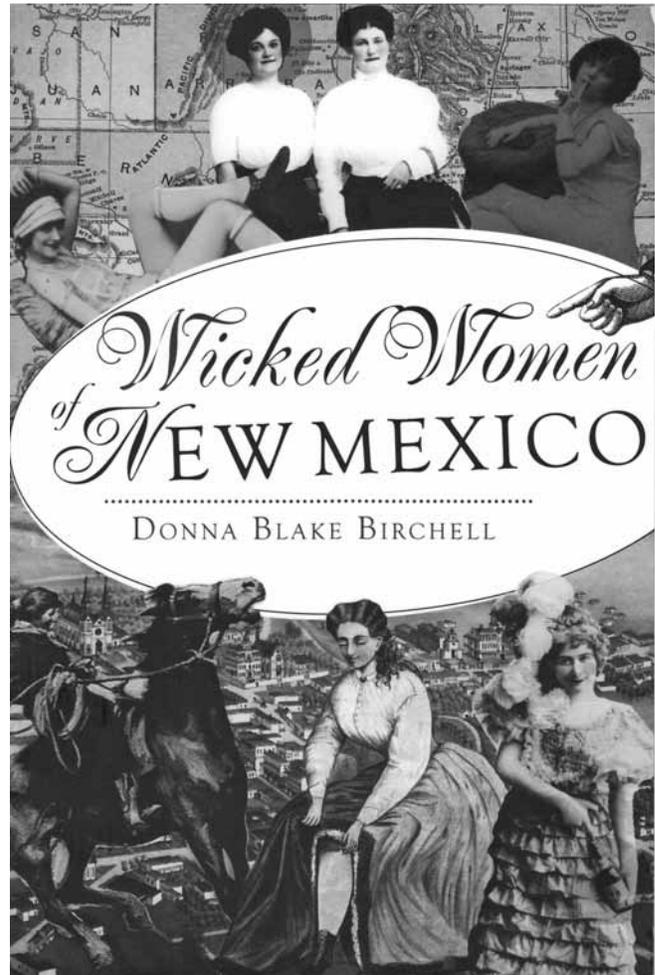
So far, this could easily be a 21<sup>st</sup> century story, but Birchell picked well when she led her book with this angel.

On the day of the execution, the sheriff botched the job. He failed to tie Angel's hands and when they drove the wagon out from under her feet, Angel struggled with the rope. The sheriff ran in and grabbed Angel's leg and pulled down trying to asphyxiate her. A deputy joined in by grabbing another leg.

The huge crowd was aghast and turned to sympathize with the young woman. Someone cut the rope. The sheriff had to threaten the crowd with armed deputies. He then went about properly trussing up Angel and hung her again.

Other Birchell women were as hard as nails. They were women often finding themselves alone in a very dangerous environment and they had to find ways to survive.

Others became gamblers or prostitutes who fought



to fit in. A few became somewhat respected in their communities as they were very civic minded. They often contributed money to education and the arts in their towns. In times of epidemic illness, some volunteered to nurse patients when no one else would tend them.

The book is written as if it was the 1950s. It is very prim and proper so it is unlikely to offend any reader.

One thing I found disappointing was the lack of information about these groups of women. For instance, Birchell tells us the stories of a few brothel madams – the owners of these establishments who had influence and money. But what happened to all the employees? Did these women end up married? Did they escape to some other life? Or did they simply die very young? That might be a more interesting book.

By Jim Eckles  
Las Cruces, NM

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