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HISTORICAL REVIEW**

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# Cadette:

## *A Mescalero Headman*

by Doug Wright

The Mescalero Apache are not as prominent in histories of the Southwest as their cousins to the west, the Chiricahua. Mescalero headmen rarely receive the acclaim accorded Chiricahua leaders such as Mangus Coloradas, Cochise, and Victorio. However, in their own time, Mescalero headmen were widely recognized for their status and influence, not only by their own people, but by Whites and Hispanics as well.

One such man was Gian-nah-tah (Always Ready), known to the Hispanics and later to the Whites as Cadette. Little is known of Cadette's formative years or his physical appearance, but he had impressive lineage, being the son of a chief named Barranquito, who headed the Sierra Blanca band of the Mescalero. When Barranquito died in 1856, his people recognized Cadette as their new leader.

Cadette's accession represented a break with the past. Whereas Barranquito had been something of a hothead, Cadette was sociable and popular with his people. He was not admired for his physical prowess or his valor, but he was renowned as a philosopher and diplomat. He also must have had considerable foresight, because, from the start, he was determined to improve relations with the Whites and the Hispanics.

The late 1850s were a pivotal time for the Mescalero. Dr. Michael Steck, an able and sincere U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs agent, had been appointed for the tribe, and he and Cadette worked well together. Steck conscientiously provided the Sierra Blanca people with all the supplies and assistance he could; and Cadette's warriors refrained from raiding. However, at least two other Mescalero bands, one living around Dog Canyon (about 10 miles south of Alamogordo) in the Sacramento Mountains, and the other in the Guadalupe Mountains (south and southeast of Sierra Blanca in New Mexico), were less cooperative and continued to wreak widespread havoc, particularly in Texas along the El Paso-San Antonio Road. Many Whites suspected that Cadette also had a hand in some of the attacks. His response was to routinely return stolen livestock to Steck for forwarding to the rightful owner. Eventually, the commander at Fort Stanton, east of Sierra Blanca, mounted an investigation which absolved Cadette and his band of Apaches of any blame for raiding activity during that period.

Cadette's hopes for a peaceful future were soon dashed. In 1861, the Civil



Sites of the wanderings of Cadette and his Mescalero followers in eastern New Mexico and west Texas.

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War came to the New Mexico Territory and the resulting upheaval ruined all past efforts for peaceful coexistence. The Mescalero observed the confusion among the Whites, concluded that the raiding opportunities had never been better, and proceeded to terrorize the countryside. It is doubtful that Cadette himself took part in those raids but it is equally doubtful that he was able to dissuade all of his warriors from doing so.

By the fall of 1862, the Federal Army had defeated the Confederates in New Mexico and was able to deal with the Apache marauders. Tragically, Brigadier General James Henry Carleton, commanding officer in New Mexico, viewed all Mescalero as culpable.<sup>1</sup> He launched a vicious campaign against them in which any male Apache was either to be captured or killed. No Indian of any age or of either sex was to be allowed to remain free. Under such conditions, the whole tribe was threatened with extinction and it is quite likely that even Cadette was forced to fight. Carleton's men crushed Mescalero resistance in a matter of weeks, and, in November, Cadette headed a delegation to Santa Fe to surrender and to plead for a reservation in the Apache homeland. Carleton, however, already had decided to remove them to Bosque Redondo on the Pecos River, southeast of Santa Fe and he did just that in early 1863.

While at the ill-fated Redondo reservation, Cadette did his best to provide for his people. He got along well with both civil and military authorities and, at least once, some Mescalero warriors rode with soldiers in pursuit of Navajo who had stolen Apache stock. Life at Bosque Redondo was appalling as disease, drought, insect swarms, and failed crops killed scores. Finally, the Mescalero could take no more and decided to leave. Cadette informed the military that his people would be leaving (but not when), and would return if they could have a suitable reservation. One night in November, 1865, every Mescalero man, woman and child who could move simply left.

Cadette reportedly took most of the tribe out on the Staked Plains east of the Pecos where they strove to avoid all contact with Whites. Other sizeable groups did go back to the Sacramento and Guadalupe Mountains, from where they occasionally mounted raids on nearby livestock herds. By the late 1860s, these raids had become so large and frequent that the Army was compelled to do something. Thus, in May 1869, over 300 men left Forts Selden (north of Las Cruces) and Stanton for a campaign into the Mescalero lands. Almost nothing resulted from this expedition, but the Army maintained the pressure until December, when troops from Forts Stanton and Davis (Texas, southeast of El Paso) routed the bands in the Guadalupe. The survivors staggered out of the mountains and onto the Staked Plains, looking for Cadette.

For the next 18 months, it was as if the earth had swallowed the Mescalero. In the spring of 1870, an Army expedition on the Staked Plains finally reported scattered sightings of small Apache groups and abandoned campsites, but no significant contact. Soon thereafter, a new agent for the Mescalero, Army Lieutenant Argalus G. Hennisee,<sup>2</sup> set up shop at Fort Stanton and sent runners to coax in Cadette's people. Then, in July 1871, the chief surfaced at a camp on the Pecos River with most of his people and sent word that he was coming to make peace. The agent immediately set out with food and presents to meet the refugees, but a treaty was not concluded until everyone returned to the fort. The Mescalero head-man and the agent agreed that the Apache would live at the post, be protected and fed by the government, and, in return, would remain at peace. Cadette was satisfied, and declared that the whole

tribe would come in by the following fall. He was right.

Both sides tried hard to live up to the agreement. The government, through bureaucratic inefficiency rather than dishonesty, failed more often than did the weary Mescalero. Most of the tribe's members, supported by Cadette's steady hand and wise counsel, were, in fact, willing to endure almost anything to live in peace in their beloved mountains. Cadette himself, however, did not live to see his hopes for his people fulfilled.

In November 1872, Cadette and an interpreter went to Mesilla, New Mexico, to testify before Attorney Albert J. Fountain against some citizens accused of illegally selling whiskey to the Apache. When they failed to return to Fort Stanton on time, foul play was suspected and the Mescalero at the fort became uneasy. After a few days, searchers found Cadette's body near the mouth of La Luz Canyon, about six miles southeast of Tularosa. The citizens of that town were so sure that an outbreak of hostilities would follow, they were thrown into a frenzy. A courier was sent to Fort Selden and, within 30 days, cavalrymen, under the command of Major D. R. Clendenin, were on the scene. The major took Cadette's back trail and, after 30 miles, came across the corpse of the interpreter partially eaten by coyotes. It was determined that the chief and his interpreter companion had had too much to drink, had quarreled and had slain each other. Cadette had somehow been able to continue to the spot where he expired. Clendenin sent his findings, along with the Mescalero leader's clothes, to the agent at Fort Stanton, who explained the circumstances to his subdued charges. They declared themselves satisfied with the determination and pledged to make no trouble. Cadette probably would have approved of their reaction, but it was certainly a sad end for a sensible and enlightened leader.<sup>3</sup>

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**DOUG WRIGHT** is a graduate of Texas A&M University. He has done volunteer historical research and interpretation for the National Park Service at Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia, at Fort Davis National Historic Site in Texas, and at Fort Bowie National Historic Site in Arizona. He currently works at Fort Selden State Monument in New Mexico and contributes articles of local historical interest to the Friends of Fort Selden Newsletter.

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## NOTES

- 1 See related article on Carleton by Allan Holmes in Volume I, No. 1 (January 1994), of this journal, 47-61.
- 2 By 1869, Army officers were officially being assigned as Indian agents.
- 3 The information for this essay was chiefly derived from the following sources: Sonnichsen, C.L. *The Mescalero Apaches*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958); Worcester, D.E. *The Apaches - Eagles of the Southwest*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979); US National Archives. Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, Fort Selden, New Mexico Territory, Record Group 94, Letters Sent, 1866-1883, and Post Returns, April & May, 1869, and November, 1872; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 24 & December 1, 1872.

# Campaigning, New Mexico Style: *The Mesilla Riot of 1871*

by Vesta Siemers

**I**t has been called the bloodiest tragedy in the history of the Territory of New Mexico. It happened on a Sunday, the 27th of August 1871, more than 120 years ago.

Both the Republican and the Democratic parties were well-organized in Doña Ana County Colonel

W. L. Rynerson and John Lemon led the Republicans while Pablo Melendrez and Mariano Barela not only headed the Democrats, but were candidates for probate judge and sheriff respectively. The Democrats planned a rally in La Mesilla. The Republicans also decided to hold a mass meeting there at the same time. Democrat Jose Gallegos was running against Republican Colonel J. Francisco Chavez for Congress. Feelings over this election were so intense that these planned events generated great fear and apprehension among the people of both Las Cruces and La Mesilla. Troops from Fort Selden were summoned to provide security. Businessmen of both towns got the leaders of both parties to hold a peace conference. It was

John Lemon shortly before his death In 1871. He was head of the Republican Party of Doña Ana County. (Photo Courtesy of John Lemon Jr., Doña Ana, New Mexico).





decided to defuse the situation by letting the Democrats hold their meeting in La Mesilla plaza since they had announced it first, and the Republicans agreed to meet in front of John Lemon's home about a block from the plaza.

Both mass meetings were held successfully, and many people had started home. Most thought that all danger was past. Even Horace Stephenson, from La Mesa, had begun the four-mile ride home with his 100 mounted men, all armed with rifles, before the trouble started. Much cheap campaign whiskey had been provided. No one knows now which agitators from which party first suggested it, but each group decided that they should make a ceremonial march around the plaza of La Mesilla. It must be remembered that, at that time, Las Cruces was only a dusty little village while neighboring La Mesilla was the largest town and trade center between San Antonio, Texas, and San Diego, California. La Mesilla's plaza was thus a prestigious place.

About 3:30 p.m., both parties started marching in opposite directions. They were about in front of the Barela-Reynolds building when they met. As they stopped, a printer named I. N. Kelly, a Democrat, started an angry political shouting match with John Lemon, Republican. When push came to shove, Apolonio Barela somehow fired a pistol, so Kelly, who was carrying a heavy ax handle, immediately struck Lemon a powerful blow to the head driving him to the ground. In an instant, Felicito Arroyas y Lueras shot Kelly, killing him, and was, in an immediate return of fire by an unknown, shot through the heart. For ten or fifteen minutes, everyone was fighting and shooting indiscriminately.

At the very moment of the tragic incident, people were coming out of San Albino Church on the plaza, and men, women and children were screaming and rushing for the streets leading out of the plaza. All this added to the panic, and several women and children were injured when they were crushed in the narrow street between Colonel Bennet's home and the building being used as the courthouse. It was sheer tenor.

Just a half hour before the melee started, Generals Gregg and Devin, thinking the event had concluded peacefully, had started back to Fort Selden where two companies of the Eighth Cavalry were stationed. A messenger was sent to the officers in transit. They galloped to the fort, though their orders were only to protect the citizens from Apache attacks, not from each other. Despite those orders, they finally decided to go back to the plaza with about 60 cavalrymen at about 10 o'clock that same Sunday night. Members of both political parties met them, urging them to camp in the plaza that night, which they did. The following day, 20 soldiers were left in place to keep the peace, and another 15 were stationed in Las Cruces. Colonel Chavez then came to address a meeting in La Mesilla. Thus, both congressional candidates had completed their campaigning in Doña Ana County.

John Lemon had been carried to his home. Realizing that he was dying, he had his will prepared since he had a wife and young children, the oldest boy being about 12 years old. He died that evening. John's great-grandson, Fred Lemon, Jr., has retained that will.

Nine men had been killed in the plaza, and 40 to 50 men had been seriously wounded. Given the chaos of the situation, it is a wonder that more did not die. Of course, many more had been taken home and treated without notifying anyone.



Daniel Freitze, who was running for probate clerk on the Democratic ticket, had four bullet holes in his clothing and there must have been many more such narrow escapes.

At that particular time, there was no judge for the court of what was then the Third Judicial District. The previous appointee, Judge Waters had held one session and quit; so a few men got together and wrote to Judge Hezekiah H. Johnson of the Second District, inviting him to hold an investigation. He came, stayed three days, and decided it would be too dangerous to do anything. He packed up and went home. No one was ever investigated, indicted or prosecuted. A few had been arrested the night of the incident, but they were released on their own recognition. Everything was placed on permanent hold and no one was ever charged.

How did the Mesilla riot affect the community? Many left the area, considering it unsafe. They established other colonies, the largest being one of 30 or 40 persons who petitioned the Mexican Government for land and settled on a land grant which is now the town of Ascension, Mexico. One of them was Apolonio Barela who later moved to Silver City, New Mexico, then back again to the Mexico grant. Perhaps that very restlessness caused the first pistol shot that started the whole thing. Many others settled along the Mimbres River, in Grant County. These included many prominent residents such as the U.S. Deputy Marshall, the La Mesilla postmaster and the Doña Ana County sheriff. John Lemon's widow married his good friend, Colonel Rynerson, and they built their home in Las Cruces. John Lemon is buried on the grounds of the San Albino Church in La Mesilla. When the parking area of the plaza was renovated, his tombstone had to be moved to the rear of the church.<sup>1</sup>

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*VESTA SIEMERS has contributed regularly to area newspapers and magazines since moving to Las Cruces 12 years ago. Her travel and local history articles have been or are scheduled to be published in The Southwestern Woman, Today's Southwestern Women, Good Times, Sun Country Senior Living, and Pacific Paradise International (a Spanish-English newspaper). She is the co-author of the 1990 publication Historic Walking Tour of Mesilla, New Mexico and provides guided tours of Old Mesilla, under the auspices of the Doña Ana Branch Community College.*

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#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup> The original version of this article was published in *Sun Country Senior Living* in October, 1992. It was based on one by S.M. Ashenfelter published at the time of the incident in the *Silver City independent* and on interviews with Fred Lemon, Jr. and his wife, Joan, Ernest Barela, descendant of Mariano Barela, the first sheriff of Doña Ana County, and Jose Guzman, Director of the Fort Selden State Monument.

# Swedish in New Mexico!

## *The Gustafsons of Las Cruces*

by J. Henry Gustafson

**M**y father, John August Gustafson, emigrated at the age of 12 with his family from the Vetland area of southeast Sweden via Ellis Island to Bersford, South Dakota, a state that friends who had preceded them had recommended as being much like Sweden with farming opportunities and cold weather with lots of snow. Unfortunately, the cold winters of South Dakota eventually took their toll and my grandfather and one of my uncles died of pneumonia. My father then became the oldest male of the family and he made the decision to move the family to Colorado Springs, Colorado. In due course, he built a house for his mother, his three sisters and a brother. His interests included ranching as well as farming and he was able to realize these ambitions in the Fountain area, south of Colorado Springs.

In time, it became apparent that John Gustafson had asthmatic problems and it would be necessary to move to a drier climate. In 1905, he and his friend Ed Johns, drove from Colorado Springs to Tucson, Arizona, in a two-cylinder Maxwell. Going “cross country” part of the time, it was necessary for one traveller to ride “shotgun” and cover the other one when approaching a house to ask for water or directions. The two “partners” spent some time in the Tucson area and decided there were better places that were not as hot in terms of weather though the land my father viewed is now probably part of downtown Tucson. The two adventurers set out for Las Cruces, New Mexico, and, when they arrived, instinctively drove to the center of activity near the train depot on the west end of Las Cruces Avenue.

When they asked for directions to Main Street, the answer was: “*Do you see that clump of trees several blocks to the east? That’s Main Street.*” I remember my father telling of staying at the Amador Hotel and going to the movies at the Fountain Theater in Mesilla. Ed Johns, within a few months, opened John’s Newstand on the corner of Griggs and Main and operated it for many years. He and my father became business partners when they invested in the commercial property on the corner of Las Cruces Avenue and Water Street. Father’s two-cylinder Maxwell became only the fourth car in Las Cruces. One of the fun things to do was, in fact, to take people joy-riding around the countryside in the Maxwell. In the event a tire went flat, which was very often, he wrapped coils of rope around the rim of the wheel so he could make it back to town for the necessary repairs.



John Gustafson with Jeanette, Evelyn and Henry at the Las Cruces Depot In 1923.

In 1908, my father purchased ten acres of land on south Main Street and started a farming operation. That site now includes the Best Western Mission Inn and other improved properties to the north and south. A short time later, he established the first commercial dairy in Las Cruces, known as the Castle Rock Dairy. He experimented with raising cabbage commercially in addition to corn and alfalfa to feed the dairy herd. The whole operation was eventually sold to the Summerford family and became the Summerford Dairy in 1925.

John Gustafson also experimented with the making of building

blocks using cement rather than adobe for the construction of houses. He went so far as to apply for a patent and submitted the necessary drawings for the process. In order to show that the system was valid, about 1910, he built the family home on his ten-acre property using the machine he invented. That house still stands at 1605 south Main Street. The original tin type ceiling is now covered with a suspended ceiling but the house is generally very much like it was when it was first constructed.

My mother, Sigrid Elizabeth Holmgren, emigrated at the age of eight with her family from Sooderham, Sweden, via Ellis Island to Kansas City, Kansas. Her sister, Ella, married a certain Henry Olson and moved to Lindsborg, Kansas. Olson operated a ladies' "ready-to-wear" store and persuaded my mother to work at the store in the millinery department. She did for some time and really enjoyed the living and working environment. She spoke many times of her opportunity to sing Handel's *Messiah* in the Lindsborg Choir. On one of her trips to Colorado Springs to visit friends and relatives, she met John August Gustafson, who was also visiting at the time. This chance meeting led to their marriage in 1910 and their move to Las Cruces.

Initially, mother told friends that she would not move to the New Mexico Territory because it was too dangerous. Nevertheless, love won out; she

did make the move and found Las Cruces to be a quiet and a safe place to live. There were very few Swedish people in that city at any time but I do remember that, when my parents did find those few, their friendships blossomed and the Swedish language was the language of choice. My parents subscribed to a Swedish newspaper and the two of them used Swedish for their private conversations. The Gustafson chil



The Gustafsons (Henry on the right) In the Model T at the adobe residence on the El Paseo and Farney Drive farm.

dren learned the basics of the language as well as numerous songs and prayers. Though Father and Mother Gustafson spoke no English when they arrived in the United States, they wanted us to learn primarily English with no specific intention of developing any significant expertise in Swedish.

In 1925, when the family moved to a 40-acre farm on El Paseo and Famey Drive in what is now Las Cruces proper, my father kept an old cow so the family could have milk for home use.

Eventually, we had 12 milk cows and sold all the extra milk to Price's Cream-ery. It became my chore, as the oldest son, to do the milking twice a day. The only way I got out of the job was when I was graduated from New Mexico State University in 1940 and left home. The tedious milking routine was certainly an incentive to pursue higher education and to search for an easier life style. At some point during the mid-20s, my father bought a family car, a 1923 Hupmobile. It was a fancy model with velvet upholstery and roller shades to cover the windows. Like my father's earlier Maxwell, that





Feeding the “dogie” lambs at Gustafsons’ Engle farm north of Las Cruces In 1928

Hupmobile would be priceless today.

In the late 1920s, my father decided that raising sheep was another challenging enterprise which could easily be combined with the farming operation on the 40-acre farm in Las Cruces. The sheep ranch he acquired was located about 50 miles north of Las Cruces, in the Engle area.

One of my jobs was

to drive the sheep across the countryside back to the farm for the winter and the spring lambing process. I distinctly remember taking my turn herding the sheep across Espina and Solano when those streets were only ruts in the sand. Feeding unclaimed “dogies” became another of my extra duties and, for many seasons, we bottle-fed up to 40 little ones. We found that each had its identifying features and unique personality. It was fun to name them and train them as pets. When the time for marketing came, we always had to “look the other way with a heavy heart. My father somehow got the formula backwards because he bought sheep when they were high in price and sold them when they were cheap. The final sale of the entire herd was arranged by Glen Bright, then manager of the J.C. Penney Co. in Las Cruces. The sheep, in fact, were sold to J.C. Penney himself and shipped to Montana.

As the oldest son in the family, I had more responsibilities on the farm than my siblings. My older sisters, Jeanette

Jeanette, Henry, Evelyn. Father John and Harold during trip to California In 1925



and Evelyn (four and two years older, respectively) and my brother Harold (four years younger) had their assignments, but I still had ample work to do. I learned to drive a car about the age of 10 and was driving a team of horses about the same age. Although some of my relatives worried about the amount of work I was doing at such an early age, I do not believe it was harmful at all.

Growing up on a farm provided the family with eggs, milk, butter, fruit and vegetables of all kinds, plus plenty of lamb and beef. Surpluses were traded in it stores for staples—flour, sugar, coffee, etc. We never did have much money in the form of cash, but there was never a shortage of farm products. In fact, we had so many extras that I operated a stand on El Paseo Road and peddled fruit and vegetables to the residents of the homes in the college area. My list included Dr. Kent, president of the college at the time, Dean Branson, and many other faculty members who lived in the area. A model T Ford pickup provided the main transportation though a bicycle was used for small deliveries. The basic crops were alfalfa, cotton, corn, grain, and always plenty of vegetables. We also raised cantalopes commercially. The making of the crates for shipping the cantalopes became a seasonal chore. Our close friends and neighbors, Dan and Charles Botkin always wanted to join in that operation and did so even though they were never paid. As sons of a college chemistry professor, they did not have all the “fun” things to do that farm folks did. For example, they, my brother Harold, and I often had extra fun playing football in the alfalfa fields, proving that farming was not all work and that there was, indeed, time for truly “fun” things.

My family took few trips out of the state of New Mexico. The roads were not the best and automobiles of the period were not built or equipped to conquer many road problems. During one trip to California in the Hupmobile, it was necessary to use “plank” roads to cross the desert in the Yuma, Arizona, area. The planks were placed on the sand for one lane of traffic with extensions laterally at intervals to allow cars to pass. We were young children at the time and it was a frightening experience.

I recall another trip to Kansas to visit relatives. One early evening around dusk, we went through a small town and, when crossing a series of railroad tracks, we missed the street and ended up on the tracks. It was a terrible shock to all of us and the car suffered three flat tires. The main concern, however, was to get it off the tracks so we wouldn’t get hit by the next train. We did manage to escape any harm but the tire repairs kept us busy for some time. Even trips to El Paso, Texas, were big events. It usually took the better part of a day to plan and accomplish the round trip. Incidentally, the only time we ever locked the doors to the house was when we went out of town and then we used a “skeleton” key. I do not believe that anyone locked their houses just to go to town.

When we moved from the south Main Street house to the farm on El Paseo Road in 1926, my father had to do extensive work to prepare the existing adobe farm house for occupancy. Stories circulated that the house,



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which had a walk around it, had been used as a bandit hideout. Rumors were that treasures had been buried in and around the property, and my father discovered that treasure hunters had dug up the floor and the yard around the house. His remodeling included a new ceiling throughout, covering the *vigas* and *latillas* which formed the roof structure. Above the *vigas* was a foot of mud topped by a galvanized roof. If a leak did occur, it took considerable time for the water to get through the mud. My mother used a cooking stove which burned wood, coal, or any other flammable material available. The living area was warmed by a large stove as the central source of heat. Harold and I slept on a "sleeping porch" which had no heat. Large canvas blinds on rollers did little to keep anything out but the light and the wind. Hot water bottles and lots of covers kept us warm during the winter months. The adobe walls were 24 to 32 inches thick and certainly made a difference maintaining an acceptable comfort level on the inside. Electric fans helped to circulate the air and also provided a cooling effect in the summer. Even the two-story barn was made of adobe with 24-inch thick walls. The adobe bricks were simply laid side by side and, even though the outside was never plastered, the walls showed little erosion except at the corners where cows and horses scratched their bodies.

During all the years of my farming experience, we used only horses to operate the farm equipment. I learned very early in life to drive a team of four horses

when using a deep plow. Only after I left home in 1940 did my father invest in a tractor and, to this day, I never have had the pleasure of driving one. Our farm had only the second irrigation well in the valley. (The first well was located on college land at a site referred to as the "seed house" on College Avenue.) Our well had a casing of at least eight inches in diameter and, for many years, was used as a domestic well with a windmill and a 500-gallon tank for storing water. After Elephant Butte Dam was built, the farm obviously always had adequate water for irrigating farm crops. Not until the 1950s, during a prolonged drought, was it necessary to invest in still another well for farm irrigation. I remember very vividly an experience I had with one of my father's friends who was an experienced dowser or "water witch." He had cut a forked willow twig as a divining rod and allowed me to try my hand. In the vicinity of existing wells on the property, I did not feel any movement of the twig. However, when I approached the house from any direction, I found that I could not control the action, feeling the twig twist in my hands though they were held firmly against my hips. The precise spot which caused the twig to move was just off the corner of the main house where there was no water well. When I approached that spot, the twig would bend strongly down, but would return to normal when I moved away from it. Remembering the old stories about buried treasure around the house, my brother and I proceeded to dig in that area but found nothing.

During the early 30s, it was somewhat common to skip elementary school grades. Having skipped two grades (the 2nd and the 8th), I was not

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yet old enough to attend college when I was graduated from high school in 1934 at the age of 15 so I worked for more than a year as a delivery boy for the Thrift Grocery Store where I continued to be employed during summers, week-ends and holidays until graduation from college in 1940. The business experience when I progressed to grocery checker and assistant manager was invaluable. Though I lived at home during those college years, earning money for tuition and other expenses was my obligation. Farm chores were still a part of the daily routine and I held other jobs as a lab assistant at the college and as a member of the New Mexico National Guard. Both my sisters are New Mexico State University alumnae and both be-came teachers: Jeanette began teaching English and Music in the Hatch schools in 1938 and Evelyn went to the high school in Lordsburg in 1940. Harold majored in Mechanical Engineering at the college, graduating in 1940.

I grew up in a musical family with a piano as the center of interest. Jeanette was the principal accompanist with Evelyn as a back-up. Buford Jaster, my clos-est boyhood friend, was an outstanding “boy” soprano so it was natural for me to join in the singing. As a college freshman, I was one of five madrigal singers in a group with Carl Jacobs, head of the music department, as tenor and director. Old English madrigals were a pleasure to sing and I really learned how to read music since I had to carry the bass part alone. When the sopranos and the contralto graduated at the end of the year, Professor Jacobs formed a male quartet which recruited for the college by performing in many New Mexico high schools. These activities were intense enough that many of my friends thought I was majoring in music rather than chemistry.

During the spring semester of my junior year in 1939, I met Caroline Kiser, a freshman from Clayton, New Mexico. We had a great time together and, since we both loved to dance, we never missed an opportunity to enjoy the many dances and social functions which were part of campus life. At the end of the semester, Caroline announced her intention to transfer to Kansas State University in order to major in dietetics. She thus spent the next three years at KSU, graduating in 1942 with a degree in that field. I completed my senior year at NMSU and was graduated in 1940 with a BS degree in chemistry. I never did find anyone who measured up to Caroline and I was fortunate enough to maintain contact with her. Though her academic pursuits kept us apart from 1940 to 1942, I was, so to speak, thor- oughly occupied during those two years. Following my designation as an honor graduate of the NMSU ROTC program, I was commissioned in the U.S. Marine Corps. Sea duty aboard the aircraft carrier USS Lexington in the Pacific followed. As fate would have it, our ship left Pearl Harbor only two days before the Japanese attack; however, we were forced to abandon our ship during the Battle of the Coral Sea six months later. I suffered no injuries and returned to the U.S. in June 1942. Caroline had returned home to Clayton and we were married there less than a month later though all my belongings had gone down with the ship. The blissful interlude was soon cut short as I reported

back to duty. During the next three years, I participated, as a battalion commander, in several Marine landings in the Pacific, including, Okinawa, where I was wounded. After evacuation, hospitalization and rehabilitation from the wound and malaria, I finally returned to Las Cruces in the spring of 1946. My sisters and brother had moved away. My parents, John and Sigrid Gustafson, needed my help, so I resigned from the regular service, left active duty and remained in the Marine Corps Reserve.

I learned the intricacies of operating a business by managing several facilities, including the bookstore and cafeteria, at NMSU for seven years. Jim Patton, whom I had hired to supervise the former, and I struck out on our own in 1953, founding an office supply business, The Paper Mill, in downtown Las Cruces at a new store built on the very property at Water Street and Las Cruces Avenue my father had purchased in 1915. The business prospered and grew to four stores (Albuquerque, Alamogordo and Silver City added). In 1973, I sold all my interest in the office supply business and turned to owning and managing commercial buildings and selling real estate.

It has been my privilege to serve the community and the University on countless councils, boards and commissions for more than 40 years, even sitting as a member of the Economic Development Commission of the State of New Mexico. Caroline has left her own mark as an educator for 17 years in the Las Cruces Public School system. She became proficient enough in Spanish to teach in two languages when the need arose and, to this day, many students remember her as their favorite teacher.

Caroline and I have broadened our horizons by traveling to more than 20 countries in Asia and Europe during the past 25 years, especially to those places where our children happened to be located. We celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in Turkey in 1992. We have raised three children. Stuart is a landscaping consultant for Home Depot in Berkeley, California, where he is doing postgraduate studies in integrated pest management. He and his wife, Eileen, a psychologist, have one daughter, Kelsey, who is 7. Our daughter, Sigrid, owns an Albuquerque computer company which sells Apple equipment and software to health care providers in New Mexico and El Paso County. Her daughter, Amber, who is 16, is currently a senior at Albuquerque Academy. Our son, John, works out of Aberdeen, Scotland, as branch manager for the Japanese firm ITOCHU, the world's largest conglomerate, for whom he markets oil-drilling pipe. Though he travels extensively, he lives there with his wife, Ann Marie, a native of Sweden, and their two daughters, Sigrid, 11, and Christine, 10.

The strong Christian faith of my mother was a great influence on the Gustafson children. To this day our lives are guided by this influence. I have served my church, St. Paul's Methodist, especially in the areas of building and finance, for many years. I consider myself most fortunate to have been born in Las Cruces of Swedish parentage and to be a first generation American Swede.

# Vado, New Mexico:

## *A Dream in the Desert*

by M. A. Walton

The origins of Vado, New Mexico, a small town about 15 miles southeast of New Mexico's second largest city, Las Cruces, are written in the desert sands.

East of Vado, in the southernmost alluvial fans of the Organ Mountains, are dark, burned sand rings and fire-cracked rock, the remnants of prehistoric brush huts and fire pits, built by a hunter-gather civilization which probably lived there (on and off during the annual migratory cycle) several thousand years before the dawn of Christianity, according to recent radio-carbon dating. Government contract archaeologists refer to the area on the Fort Bliss, Texas, military reservation as the *Arroyo de las Manchas* (Gulley of Stains). Also near, in the southern extension of the Organ Mountains, *Conklin Cave*, in the mountain known as *Bishop's Cap*, is estimated to have been occupied between 10 and 30 thousand years ago.

The tangible history of modern Vado began in 1846 with William Henry Boyer. Henry, as he was known, was the illegitimate mulatto son of a Milledgeville, Georgia, white plantation owner, Colonel George Bowyer, produced by the rape of Hiram, the beautiful black slave girl Bowyer had bought as a companion for his wife. Henry was born in 1820, at Sparta, Georgia. While little is known of Henry's childhood, he was taken, possibly about the age of nine, west to Missouri by his owner Colonel Bowyer. Later, during the Mexican-American War, frontier efficiency simplified the spelling of his surname and he became, at the age of 26, either a teamster with the Missouri Rifles or an independent civilian wagoner delivering supplies to the U. S. Army. He was reportedly present when Colonel Doniphan's forces routed the Mexican troops at the Battle of Brazito in 1846. At any rate, as a young man, he traveled through the great southwestern lands that were to be designated U. S. Territories, and, eventually, States of the Union. Henry rejoiced in the wild, desert region, and the dream of a black settlement in southern New Mexico was born.

Returning to Georgia, Henry Boyer convinced his white half brothers to purchase the twelve year-old slave girl Hester from a neighboring plantation, and, when Hester came to womanhood, Henry and Hester were married and had eight children, a daughter, Mary, and seven sons: John Tyler, James Buchanan, William Henry Jr., George Washington, Rabin, Willie and Francis Marion. Only the last child, Francis Marion Boyer, born

July 11, 1871, in Macon, Georgia, was born free. That child was the key to the dream in the desert.

According to local historical records, the first battle of the American Army of the West, a U. S. victory in the Mexican-American War, the Battle of *Brazito* (Spanish for Little Arm, named for a bend in the Rio Grande) took place on Christmas Day, 1846, near the site which was to become Vado. Contemporary diarists located the battle near the hill called *Los Temascalitos* (resembling *temascales*, oven-shaped Indian sweat-bath houses), later known as *Three Buttes*, now called *Vado Hill*.

A score of years later, the scattered Hispanic farmers in the area were joined by a few of the black soldiers that had been mustered out of the Army in the New Mexico Territory following the Civil War. They wrenched a living from land that was devastated annually by a river that knew no boundaries. A settlement was formed about 1876, by Samuel Herron and his family, from Lake City, Minnesota. Herron opened a broom factory there, but soon moved it closer to Las Cruces, to La Mesa, New Mexico, where it became a more profitable enterprise. Despite the move, the town was, for a time, called Herron, after those first Anglo settlers.

In 1886, a few members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) came to Herron and laid out a new town site. They named it Earlham, after their home in Earlham, Indiana. One member of the new immigrant party, Hiram Hadley, had come west because of his son's debilitated and deteriorating physical condition. Hadley, a teacher, businessman, and organizer, made his home in Las Cruces, and founded the institution which eventually became New Mexico State University. For his services and achievements in education, Hiram Hadley was to become known as the "Father of Education in New Mexico." The Boyers, devout members of another religious group, who would settle in the Herron/Earlham site in the early 20th century, were also important locally in the field of education. The Earlham settlement did not prosper; and later the town came to be called Center Valley by one of the postmasters. The portion of Doña Ana County that includes that town site is referred to today as the South Valley.

Still later, the Santa Fe Railway Company determined it expedient to change the town's name yet again to Vado. The name *Vado* (Spanish for *ford*) was suggested by W. A. Sutherland, a prominent Las Cruces attorney, who spoke fluent Spanish, and had served as Private Secretary to William Howard Taft when Taft was Civil Governor of the Philippines in the early 1900s. The name was particularly appropriate, given the landforms near and in the Rio Grande which allowed a crossing or fording of the river near the town. The Vado Post Office was established in 1911.

The modern history of Vado actually began in 1920, due to the efforts of Francis (also known as Frank) Marion Boyer, his wife, the former Ella Louise McGruder, and their family. Both Francis and Ella were born educators with true pioneer spirit.

Francis Marion Boyer, the youngest child of Hester and Henry Boyer, was a particularly bright young man, whose educational expenses had been underwritten by Georgia Superior Court Judge F. J. Klechley. While he was in college in Atlanta, Francis also worked as a proof-reader on the



Francis Marlon Boyer and his wife, Ella Louise McGruder Boyer. Frank, as he was known, made his father Henry's dream come true, for a time. Exact date of photos is unknown, but they were probably taken in the 1940s. (Photos courtesy of Mrs. Emma Boyer Flourmoy, Vado, New Mexico)

old *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper, until he was graduated from Morehouse College for men. Having a quick mind and a great facility for oral expression, Francis was a noted debater. He taught school for several years, and, during a debating program at a teachers' summer school session, he met the accomplished and charming Miss Ella McGruder. Ella was born on November 23, 1873, in Louisville, Georgia. She was graduated from Atlanta's Haines Institute for Women, now known as Spelman College. She, also, became a teacher. The courtship of Ella McGruder and Francis Marion Boyer was based on mutual respect, and strong religious and educational backgrounds. They were married on February 16, 1894, by their good friend, the Reverend A. J. Gould, Pastor of the Vidalia, Georgia, Baptist Church. Ella and Francis were energetic, outgoing, young people, eager to enjoy the full benefits of citizenship and increasingly frustrated by the hostile discrimination of the rural southeastern United States. Francis spoke widely and well in meetings to influence other blacks to protest racial injustice. He was threatened by the Ku Klux Klan and other groups. On three separate occasions in the 1890s, he used his prodigious organizing skills to establish black southeastern townships: Afro, Florida; Camps, Alabama; and Ham City, Georgia. Those ventures failed for one reason or another and Francis' discontent with the condition and treatment of black citizens grew.

Finally, in 1899, Francis, leaving his family in Pelham, Georgia, started walk-ing west with two other young men, Dan Keys and a fellow named Ragsdale (both of whom may have been Francis' former students), to find the land where Francis' father, Henry, dreamed of returning. In the course of a year, they walked 2,000 miles to Roswell, New Mexico. During the

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better part of the following year, Francis held a variety of jobs, among which were that of a “cookie” on a chuck wagon with a round-up, and of a ranch hand on the Chisholm “spread.” Eventually, he found a suitable area dotted with vibrant flowers in the Roswell/Dexter/Greenfield vicinity, and he homesteaded 160 acres. The wildflower-rich area recently has been singled out for a unique attribute — it supports one group of the endangered *helianthus paradoxus*, the “puzzle sunflower,” one of the rarest sunflowers in the world.

In 1901, Ella traveled west to the new homestead with the first seven of the eleven children she and Francis Marion would have — four girls and seven boys: Francis Louis, Eustace Theodore, Edmonia Terecia, Hobart Delaney, Maceo Booker T., Marion Ella, Roosevelt Africanus, Sylvanus Claire (also called Charles), Gladys Charlette, Olin Nathaniel, and Lucy Laney (who died shortly after birth).

Francis Marion still sustained the dream his father, Henry, had dreamed, that of building a town where blacks could raise families, own land, and live in peace. Over a score of years, he attracted other hard-working black families from “back east.” His father, Henry, also came to the new settlement. Finally, Francis formally founded the town of Blackdom, New Mexico, his fourth attempt at establishing a self-sustaining, self-governing black community. The plat for Blackdom was dated May 26, 1920, and was signed by Frank M. and Ella Boyer. The legal description was as follows: “NE’4, SE’4, Section 26, Township 13S, Range 24E.” This places the east line exactly nine miles west of the west line of Greenfield, New Mexico, and the north line a quarter mile south of the south line of Greenfield. One of the black colonists, known as Mrs. Johnson, worked as a cook for D.R. Patrick in Dexter, New Mexico. Johnson was actually her maiden name, but the homestead claim was filed in that name since her husband was Chinese and, being an alien, could not file. He cooked in a Chinese restaurant in Roswell. Dan Keys and his family were still among the homesteaders toward the end of that period, when he and Francis Marion Boyer mortgaged their land to put in artesian wells. The venture was not profitable, and the bank foreclosed on the property. The black families in the Pecos Valley tutored their own children and were not trouble-makers. In fact, they were known as particularly hospitable to the white folks that were invited to Blackdom for Emancipation Day feasts and festivities. (Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on the first day of January, 1863, southern blacks did not learn of it until notified by a Union officer on 19 June, 1865; and, today, the celebration is referred to as Juneteenth.) Despite the good relations, racism reared its ugly head and some of the Dexter citizens strongly urged the Blackdom colony to move further west. It did.

In late 1920, Francis Marion Boyer led six wagon loads of colonists to the inexpensive land available at a new haven in the Rio Grande Valley, at Vado, New Mexico. Francis’ father, the aging Henry Boyer who had dreamed the dream, was delighted to return there, and, until he died in 1922 at the age of 102, he was stirred by the sight of the Organ Mountain peaks, and he entertained his family with stories of chasing the colorfully-uniformed Mexican soldiers back south on a long ago Christmas Day in 1846.

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In this new home, the Boyers worked long and hard to clear the highly alkali land. They dug drainage ditches to control the flow of water dammed east of the Rio Grande by the high grade of the Santa Fe Railway tracks. They established a thriving town supported by cotton farming. The river was used to irrigate the fields, but good wells for drinking water proved to be a problem. Not until the early 1970s was a modern system bringing water from the nearby town of Mesquite installed with the assistance of government funds from the Farmers' Home Administration. Today, three of the five members of the "Water Board," the Mutual Domestic Water Consumers' Association, are Boyers. Francis Marion rented and farmed about 250 acres until the Brazito Land and Development Company offered to sell him land on the installment plan. Buying 10-, 20-, and 40-acre tracts as money became available, he amassed close to 500 acres of the valley. In addition to farming, he was working as a "land agent," encouraging itinerant cotton-pickers and other people passing through to settle in the valley. When his efforts started bearing fruit, some local former southern white land owners initiated a policy of not selling more than 10-acre tracts of land to the blacks. However, the black settlement continued to grow. Cotton was still selling well in the 1930s and a number of black families had sizeable acreage they had acquired before the white-supremacist "land panic" limited real estate sales.

Not content with economic progress, Francis Marion Boyer pressed for spiritual and intellectual development for the community. In 1923, he contacted a Reverend Green at the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Albuquerque and arrangements were made for Vado's black community temporarily to share a white land-owners' church a few miles northwest in La Mesa. The tiny congregation of eight Vado families was served every Sunday by a preacher from El Paso. By 1928, the Valley Grove Baptist Church had been established on Holguin Road in Vado, and was served from that time until at least 1940 by the Reverend C. T. Hughes. Boyer was one of the first three deacons of the church. In the early 1940s, a breakaway faction established the New Hope Baptist Church on U.S. Highway 80 (now New Mexico 478). Both churches are still active. Records of 1940 also show that the Roman Catholic Diocese of El Paso supported the San Isidro Mission, which was served by the Reverend Father Leon L. Ilardia, who commuted to Vado from Anthony, New Mexico. Although nothing remains of that mission, older residents recall processions transporting the *bulito* (small, sacred statue) of San Isidro through the town and fields.

Also in 1923, construction was begun on a simple square one-room adobe schoolhouse for the black children to be taught by a black teacher. However, the Vado school was put on hold by the "School Proposition" which gave regional superintendents authority to segregate ethnic groups as they saw fit, so the black children attended classes in a separate makeshift schoolroom in the town of La Union, several miles to the southwest. In 1924, a branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in the Las Cruces area to fight for the children's educational rights, but the 1925 School Law perpetuated the segregation. In 1953, New Mexico acted affirmatively in anticipation



of the 1954 national law abolishing school segregation; however, New Mexico's School Law was not actually repealed until 1967. It is ironic that some of Francis Marion's grandchildren, not allowed to attend high school in Gadsden, New Mexico, near their home, were transported by Gadsden School District buses to Booker T. Washington School in Las Cruces; yet, his great-grandson, Mitchell M. Boyer, was the first black elected to the Gadsden School Board. During his three years on the Board, 1988-1991, Mitch served successively as Secretary, Vice-President and President.

Although the Ku Klux Klan was not officially established in the area until the formation of the 100th chapter in El Paso in 1929, the Boyers, in 1925, were the target of fledgling KKK activity when a cross was burned across the street from their Vado home. That confrontation seemingly stirred Francis Marion to further action since he petitioned the school system to build the Paul Lawrence Dunbar School. Construction by S.D. Morris of Chamberino, New Mexico, was completed on February 10, 1926. The four large rooms housed as many as 175 students from elementary through high school. At times, the student body outgrew the facility and, on several occasions, one of the churches was rented to hold for a term. The fall terms started in early August and a "cotton-picking recess" was observed during October and November. When the Vado children were integrated in the formerly segregated schools in 1953, the well-constructed red brick building became the Community Center. Today, a tall blue water tank designates the building as the home of the "Water Board" and the Department of Health and Social Services. The "Water Board" services fewer than 100 homes and the Social Services agency helps both the young and the elderly with Head Start and Senior Citizens' programs.

Adding to their efforts in education, Ella and Francis Boyer established, in 1925, a small college northeast of the township where they taught classes. It was sometimes referred to as "Reverend Hughes' School," for the Valley Grove Baptist Church pastor, who lived on the premises. Formally named the Mount Olive Industrial Academy, it was wholly supported by black Baptists. At the close of its second year, it appeared to be a thriving institution with a sound financial basis. However, by 1929, the project had been abandoned. The school was dedicated to excellence but the excellent children moved away and, by 1976, only a few walls of the well-intentioned institution survived. Today, the site on New Mexico Highway 227 is occupied by a Jehovah's Witnesses Church — *Salon de Reino de los Testigos de Jehova*.

Francis Marion Boyer was directly responsible for the settlement of between 40 and 60 black families in Vado between 1922 and 1935. He instigated the formation of a Town Council to ensure orderly government for the settlement. In addition to his educationally-motivated work with the NAACP and with the schools, he established the Auto Literary Society, which has vanished in the desert dust. He was instrumental in forming the Valley Grove Masonic Lodge, a short-lived fraternal organization which had problems with its charter, so the members dispersed to affiliate with lodges in Las Cruces or El Paso. He actively contributed to the community until his death at age 78 in 1949. After his death, his efforts on behalf of the

local NAACP were honored by the NAACP National Office, which, in 1969, designated the Las Cruces Branch as having had the strongest influence on desegregation throughout the nation. Ella Louise McGruder Boyer continued to be active in the community until her death at age 92 in 1965. She and Francis Marion are buried side by side in the small Vado Cemetery. Two of their sons, Francis Louis Boyer and Hobart Delaney Boyer, also rest there.

Vado is not a ghost town today, but it is not a growing community. The Vado Post Office closed in 1990. Long before he died, Francis Marion realized that the dream of a separate black community in Vado was not to be perpetuated. The young people of the community were moving away to other towns and other opportunities. The Vado Blacksnakes no longer formed the “winningest” baseball team from El Paso to Las Cruces. There were no babies crying during the church services. Vado is, in fact, no longer primarily a black community. Today, it is as well known for *Las Charreadas*, the “Mexican rodeos” at *Lienzo Charro el Pedregal*, hosted by the Hispanic Omar Castro family there.

The last surviving original town founder, Roosevelt Africanus Boyer, now 89 years old, came to Vado as a young man. He currently resides there in his home on a quiet side street named, as most Vado streets are, after one of the early black settlers. Other Boyer family members are now spread far and wide; more in the western states than in the east. However, they maintain a sense of identity and heritage. In 1975, some family members, reminiscing in Phoenix, decided the time was overdue for a full family reunion to honor Henry Boyer, who had the dream, and Ella and Francis Boyer, who worked so hard and long to make that dream a reality. The first official “Boyer Family Reunion” was held in Vado in 1976. Subsequent reunions have brought family members together in Vado and in various other places. No reunions have been scheduled in Georgia. <sup>1</sup>

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**M. A. WALTON** is a relative newcomer to southern New Mexico, having moved to Las Cruces in the summer of 1990. Since her arrival, she has edited newsletters for the *Doña Ana Archaeological Society*, the *Doña Ana County Historical Society*, the *Rio Grande Classic Guitar Society*, the *Las Cruces Nature Park*, and the *Volunteers of the New Mexico State University Museum*. As a member of the *Publication Committee*, she did “heavy editing” on one of the longer feature articles of the first issue of this publication. Beginning with this issue, she is serving as *Associate Editor*.

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#### NOTE

- 1 The author gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of two native New Mexicans in the preparation of this essay: Mitch Boyer, great-great-grandson of the dreamer William Henry Boyer, and Mitch’s aunt, Emma Boyer Flourmoy, granddaughter of Ella and Francis Boyer, the courageous pioneer couple who made the dream a reality, at least for a while. Both Mitch and Aunt Emma graciously gave personal interviews and shared private family reunion materials about the Boyer family.

# Martin's Well at Aleman

## An "Oasis on the Jornada"

by Paxton Price

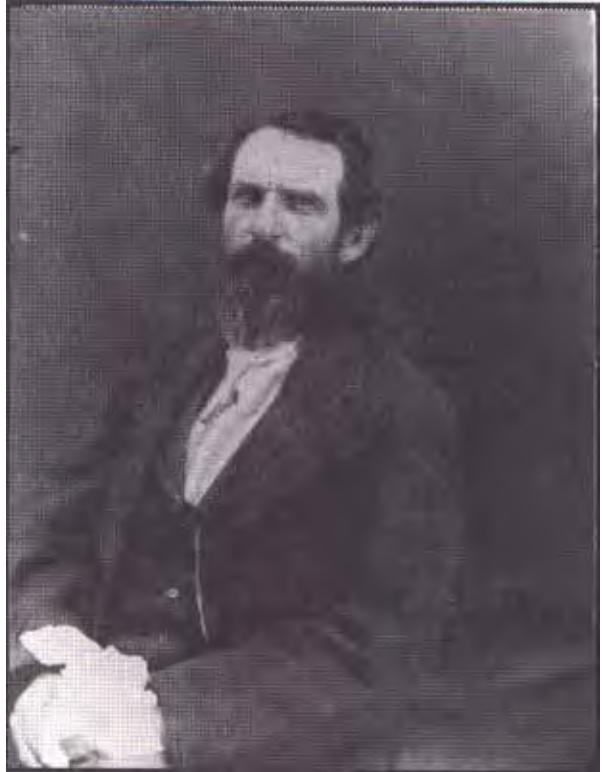
For more than three centuries, the most perilous section of the old *El Camino Real* (the Royal Road) connecting Mexico City and Santa Fe was, without a doubt, a barren, waterless, ninety-mile stretch of horse trail and wagon road, aptly named *Jornada del Muerto* (Journey of the Dead Man).<sup>1</sup> For most of its course in New Mexico, the *Camino Real* followed the *Rio Bravo Del Norte* (Rio Grande) so that travelers, for part of the way, had an ample and convenient source of water. The Jornada section, however, avoided the rugged terrain which marked the river's course from a point north of the present town of Doña Ana at the Robledo campground to Valverde or the Fra Cristobal campground and offered a more direct route. Unfortunately, the landscape was a parched desert devoid of natural surface water. Pools of rain water occasionally collected in natural land depressions but rainfall was scarce. Water was an obvious necessity for travelers enduring scorching heat or freezing cold for days as they negotiated the dreaded stretch. The unwary often perished.

Travelers to and from Santa Fe justly feared the dry Jornada. Though raiding Apache Indians often claimed victims, the lack of water was the critical threat to travelers. For years, many small groups crossed the dreaded road but there were also large groups of men, women and children who had to withstand the torture of traveling over this primitive and dangerous highway. Explorers, settlers, supply delegations, soldiers, government officials and traders plied the trail, their cara-vans sometimes stretching for miles. For instance, Governor Captain Antonio de Otermin was charged with shepherding 2,520 refugees across the Jornada after the Pueblo Revolt drove them from Santa Fe in 1680. His followers were plagued with bad weather, hunger, sickness and thirst during the entire passage.

Nearly two hundred years later, other large groups survived, but suffered in-humane, while crossing the uncompromising Jornada. In 1841, Mexican Cap-tain Dimasio Salazar marched more than 200 suffering Texans across a snow-covered area. In 1846, Colonel Alexander Doniphan marched his 856 Missouri Volunteers down the road as part of the United States effort to apply military pressure on Mexico.

The initial attempt to reduce the Jornada's thirst-provoking assault was

made by the American administration in Santa Fe, six years after Mexico ceded the Territory to the United States. Territorial officials decided the federal government should undertake improvements on the Territory's longest and most important road. Consequently, the Legislature of New Mexico, on February 3, 1854, sent a request, called a memorial, to Congress asking for an appropriation to establish three wells on the Jornada.<sup>2</sup> The memorialists cited the Jornada's length, its lack of water resources, its use by the military and mail services and its status as the only route to reach Texas and Mexico. Heavy losses of human lives and livestock were cited as intolerable consequences of leaving the barren road unimproved.



Captain John Martin who dug the first well at Aleman on the Jornada del Muerto. (Photo courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library).

Between 1851 and 1861, eleven similar requests for federal funds for road improvements were sent of the US Congress. Chances that the New Mexico Territory would actually receive funds for that purpose were, however, somewhat dim. The conventional New Mexico official opinion was that Easterners knew nothing about Western problems and were reluctant to grant such requests for aid. Previous Spanish and Mexican governments in Santa Fe knew better than to make such a request because the likely response would have noted the use of the *Camino Real* over centuries without the luxury of water wells.

The US Congress did, however, debate the 1854 memorial for which Jose Manuel Gallegos, the New Mexico delegate who actually traveled the Camino Real, wrote an endorsement though he spoke no English. To New Mexico's surprise, it appropriated \$12,000<sup>3</sup> for road improvements from Santa Fe to Doña Ana, a distance of 300 miles, and any portion of the funds could be used for digging wells.

Spending the appropriation was placed in the hands of the War Department. Hence, the responsibility was assigned to a military officer. The first officer was not able to expedite the project effectively and use the funds economically. He spent them elsewhere such as the Santa Fe to Taos military road and asked for more. He was dismissed from the project and his successor did no better. Re-maining funds were spent on the road from Santa Fe to Albuquerque and Fort Sumner. Nothing was left for a well on the Jornada and for another decade, al-though troops from both North and South suffered the rigors of travel over the wasteland during the Civil War, it remained without a permanent source of water.

The credit for finally providing necessary relief and lasting comfort for weary, long-suffering Jornada travelers goes to a discharged Army officer who had ac-companied Union troops to New Mexico during the war. In 1868, one Captain John Martin dug the first water well at about the half-way point at a former camp-ground named *La Cruz de Aleman* or simply *El Aleman* because of a cross erected when a certain German traveling merchant named Bernard Gruber died at that desert spot.<sup>4</sup> Uninvolved in the official Territorial effort to improve the Jornada water situation, Jack Martin decided to personally and independently solve the long-standing problem. In 1868, without official sanction or financial aid, he dug the deep well that immediately produced an abundance of pure water. It was reported to be 164 feet deep from a ground opening four by six feet in size, an almost inconceivable accomplishment by only one man.

Martin, the "old soldier" who had bested the United States government, had traveled extensively. He had run away from his New York home at the age of fifteen in 1846, and joined General Winfield Scott's army in Mexico as a drummer boy. He eventually found his way to California where he joined the Union Column charged with intercepting the Southerners who had invaded New Mexico. Unable to accomplish their mission, the California Column soldiers rode escort and fought the Indians. In time, Martin became a Captain and, following his re-lease from the Army, married, in 1865, the blue-eyed Esther Catherine Wadsworth. Following the wedding celebration in Mesilla, the newlyweds went to the new post at Fort Selden where Jack operated a rope ferry across the Rio Grande for almost two years, while Esther managed the Officers' Mess. In 1867, the Martins moved to the bare camping ground at Aleman where, in subsequent months, the famous well was dug.

Some of the procedure used to dig the well was revealed here and there. One report is contained in a *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* story dated January 2, 1869:

*... he reached a depth of eighty-seven feet when he struck a vein of clear, pure spring water which arose in the well to a distance of twenty feet, which will afford all the water that may be required at the Aleman for the travel on the Jornada, and establishes the fact that water may be found in the most unlooked for localities.*

An 1880 historical reporter,<sup>5</sup> said the Captain had engaged two would-be miners as diggers in return for a grub-stake when the job was done. One noontime, he relates, upon reaching a very hard crust, very likely rock, at a

significant depth, the miners set off some dynamite and, when they returned from lunch, found a 60- foot column of water.

Confusion about the year Captain Martin opened his famous well was clarified in the Territory's public record. It reports that, on February 3, 1869 (after the event), the Territorial Legislature recognized Martin's feat and rewarded him.<sup>6</sup> The act passed on that date and devoted exclusively to him relieved him *from payment of certain rents in the place known as "Aleman," in the county of Socorro, Nuevo Mexico*. Honoring Martin in this manner was justified in the wording of the statute which acknowledged his personal expense and labor (it was claimed to have cost \$12 per foot of depth), recognized the feat as of great benefit to the public, praised him for facing constant danger from hostile Indian attacks, and recognized his bravery and importance to New Mexico. For all these reasons, the Legislative Assembly of the Territory exempted Martin from taxes for 20 years. That exemption covered both Territorial and County taxes on his business in Aleman. In the next section of the complimentary law, it was declared that any one else who discovered pure and good water at least 20 miles distant from Aleman would also be tax-exempt. A proviso further stipulated that Jornada owners should not be taxed for using the new well's water every time they needed it.

If indeed Martin received the above award in early February, 1869, he must have completed the well some time in 1868. A news item in the January 2, 1869 issue of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, in fact refers to Martin's water victory of the previous year. The actual month of completion, however, is unknown.

Some time later, Jack Martin dug another well some 20 miles from Aleman. His unique achievement was so significant and such a public improvement that he earned praise throughout the Territory and was labeled in the press as the "King" or the "Chief" of the Jornada. A bill that would have given Martin ten sections of land (6,200 acres) was even introduced in Congress in 1869 by Delegate R. C. McCormick from the Arizona Territory, but it failed to pass as did a similar one in the next session.

Fame did not drive Jack Martin as much as did fortune. He immediately exploited his bonanza by expanding beyond his well and family residence and creating a desert rest stop. In 1869, a post office was opened at Martin's Well, as the place came to be called. At that early date, one wonders who, other than Martin, would have needed postal services. Martin's next venture included a ho-tel. One would again wonder who needed accommodations in the middle of a desert but an early Silver City banker, H. B. Ailman,<sup>7</sup> who passed through on a stagecoach accompanied by his wife and child, said:

*The name of this station was Martin's Well, and it was where we landed about 2 a.m. the second night out. ...but the driver was humane enough to offer me his bed for my wife and child....The driver rolled up in his blanket on the dirt floor of the room. We had ham and eggs, baking powder bread, and black coffee for breakfast.*

Martin proceeded to start a ranch. He erected a high stockade around his well, and made other improvements. With such an impressive establishment, Martin convinced the commander at Fort Selden that a picket of ten privates from the Third Cavalry<sup>8</sup> should be stationed at Aleman for traveler

escort service. A few years later, Martin's Well even boasted of a telegraph station, Martin having sold telegraph poles for the line. Late in 1869, Lydia Spencer Lane, a military wife traveling through Aleman said of Martin's establishment: "It was really an oasis in the desert."<sup>9</sup>

A letter from an impressed traveler at Martin's Well to the *Mesilla News* in the December 18, 1875 issue extolled the owner's virtues, adding that Martin had used Mexican labor to reach the underground river of water he sought. The writer also stated that, after his great deed, Martin was known by complimentary titles to the Mexican, Indian and white peoples.

Captain Jack Martin operated his ranch, and managed his well and contract business until 1875 when he moved to Santa Fe to own and operate the Exchange Hotel. He remained in that business until his death in 1877 at the age of 48. He was an enterprising and industrious settler whose ambition, courage and ingenuity allowed him to conquer single-handedly the fearsome Jornada section of the old *Camino Real*.

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*PAXTON P. PRICE* is a retired library executive and Army officer. He currently resides in Las Vegas, New Mexico, but he has roots in Doña Ana County where he attended public schools. He later was graduated from the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, George Peabody College in Tennessee and Columbia University. He has been a university, public, state and U.S. government librarian in Missouri and Washington, D.C. He is the author of two books and a contributor to the Library and Information Science Encyclopedia. He is also a former president of the Doña Ana County Historical Society who wrote a related article on the Jornada which appeared in the January 1994 issue of this journal.

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## NOTES

- 1 See "The Jornada Del Muerto," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, I (January 1994): 4-10.
- 2 Memorial (4th), February 3, 1854, of the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of New Mexico to the Congress of the United States. New Mexico Laws, 1851-1854. Secretary of State's Collection, Item H-2 in Records Center and Archives, State of New Mexico.
- 3 United States Statutes at Large. Chapter LXXIV, July 17, 1854.
- 4 The record of Gruber in the National Archives of Mexico explains the origin of the Jornada name. He was evading Inquisition imprisonment for witchcraft in 1672 when he perished at El Aleman.
- 5 J. M. Meade, "Meade's History of Santa Fe," unpublished manuscript, c. 1917.
- 6 *Leyes de Nuevo Mejico*. Pasada por La Asemblea Legislativa. Session de 1868-69. Capitulo LXII. 80.
- 7 Helen J. Lundwall, ed., *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City: H. B. Adman's Recollections of Silver City and the Southwest, 1871-1892*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993).
- 8 Timothy Cohrs and Thomas J. Caperton, *Fort Selden*. (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1993).
- 9 Lydia Spencer Lane. *I Married a Soldier*. Reprint. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).178.

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# Cooks:

## *A New Mexico Mining Community*

by Donald H. Couchman

A few miles north of Deming in southwestern New Mexico, a giant monolith thrusts 8,404 feet into the air. This peak, called *Standing Mountain* by the Apaches, rises fully two-thirds of a mile above the surrounding plains. It dominates the landscape for miles around. During the latter half of the 16th century, the Spanish named the mountain *Picacho de las Mimbres* (Peak of the Willows) after the lost river in the immediate vicinity. In 1846, Americans, forging westward in the opening phases of the war with Mexico, renamed it *Cooke's Peak* in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, the commander of the U.S. Army of the West's Mormon Battalion. The pinnacle stands as a lonely sentinel, guarding disappearing remains high on its shoulders where men, for several decades, scratched out modest fortunes, endured a sparse existence, and faced a slow death in its bosom. Cooke's Peak and much of the land surrounding it became United States possessions as a result of the negotiations which ended the confrontation with Mexico and the renegotiated terms of the Gadsden Purchase.

Despite the thousands of miners, emigrants, freighters, stagecoach workers, and soldiers who, out of necessity, stopped at Cooke's Spring near the southern foot of the mountain, no record of any mineral discovery in the immediate vicinity before 1876 has been found. This is especially interesting because, in 1863, Fort Cummings was already established near the spring to protect travelers from the depredations of the then hostile Apaches. The fort was manned exclusively by California Column Volunteers during the first three years and this group is known to have included many who had already been, or were destined to be, significantly involved in mining interests.<sup>1</sup> It was not until 1876 that the "seed" that would germinate into the Cooke's Peak Mining District and flower into the most valuable lead-producing area in New Mexico was planted. Edward Orr has been credited by most historians with being the person responsible for the first discovery of recoverable minerals on Cooke's Peak.<sup>2</sup> Some sources indicate that the initial discovery was a result of joint ventures by Orr and Lon Irington in 1877, when they located the silver-rich Blackhawk Mine, and in 1880, when they opened the Montezuma Mine. Orr, who had a ranch about nine miles from Cooke's Peak, had been successfully prospecting with Irington in Cooke's Range. The ore from their Blackhawk silver mine was of high grade, assaying 32 ounces of silver per ton and running 60 percent lead. They had excavated only 15 feet from the surface and the vein was 10 feet wide and increasing. The two were able to dig out five to six tons per day, so they had the potential for making considerable profit if there was an efficient way to convey the





Map showing location of Cooke's Peak north of Deming. (Reduced from USGS Deming East and Deming West topographical maps).

ore to market or reduce it near the source.<sup>3</sup>

The miners were frequently harassed by the Apaches, further hindering any meaningful development of the Cooke's mineral resources. Apparently, one of the Apaches' main camps was located at the mouth of the defile that would later be named Hadley Draw, about half-way between Fort Cummings and the future site of the settlement of Cooks.<sup>4</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that, on one occasion, Orr and a helper encountered seven Apaches who prevented them from reaching Orr's works. The two judiciously returned to Orr's ranch. These Indian depredations, culminating in the short vicious war between the Army and the Apaches, were, at one time or another, led by Victorio, Nana, Loco, and others. This created the necessity for stationing troops at by then abandoned Fort Cummings in November 1879 and led to the formal reopening of the facility in early 1880. From the time of Victorio's breakout in August 1879, until well after his death in Mexico in October 1880, the entire Southwest was in constant and justifiable fear of the Apaches.<sup>5</sup>

Most sources credit A. P. Taylor and a man named Wheeler with locating the most productive mines about 1880, when they staked out the Montezuma, Graphic, Desdemona, and Othello.<sup>6</sup> Although the Southern Pacific Railroad had reached the site of present-day Deming on December 15, 1880, it was not until the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad completed its line through Florida Station to a junction with the Southern Pacific Line at Deming on March 8, 1881, that it became economically feasible to ship the heavy ore to El Paso for smelting.<sup>7</sup> Only a road up Hadley Draw to the mining camp was required to facilitate production.<sup>8</sup> George L. Brooks, who arrived at the Cooke's Peak mining camp in December 1881, is generally credited with grading the wagon road up Hadley Draw in the summer of 1882. Because a persistent and still considerable Apache threat remained, the work was carried out under the watchful eye of soldiers from Fort Cummings who had been specifically detailed to protect the workers. Brooks reportedly hauled out the first load of ore over the narrow twisting road and, within a short period of time, he had shipped 2,700 tons.<sup>9</sup> The honeycombed, iron-stained ore, which was 30 percent lead, bore 80 ounces of silver per ton. In later years, concentrators would be used to nearly double the recoverable lead for each ton of raw material shipped. The Apache threat to the miners continued from time to time. On these occasions, the Fort Cummings commander would send a detail of soldiers up the mountain to escort residents to the fort. When the threat abated, the men and their families would return to their activities at the mines.<sup>10</sup> The situation became so desperate that Peter Strey was apparently the only person to remain at any of the Cooke's Peak camps during the entire period from 1881 to 1882.

With the establishment of a means to market the mining products, reasonable containment of the Apaches, and an influx of manpower to remove the ore, the camp became a town at last near the turn of the century. In fact, it became three towns. The clusters of mines and buildings that were established on the peak's east slope became *Cooks*, and those on the west side became *Jose*. For a time, both were reached by Brooks' road, although, in time, another road on the west side led to Jose. The third town, *Hadley*, near the old Graphic Mine, was located on the east side, part way up the hill to Cooks.<sup>11</sup> Before long, Albert Wallis built a massive rock house in Hadley Draw at the foot of the road to Cooks. It contained several large rooms to store equipment and shelter drivers who hauled freight to Hadley, Cooks, and Jose and brought ore down on the return trip.<sup>12</sup>

At first, primary ores were not exploited because of the easy access to the oxidized ores, mostly lead carbonate, on or near the surface. The ores ran very high in recoverable lead content, some as high as 60 or 70 percent after concentration, and included traces of silver. When tunneling was established later, the richest deposits, were frequently found in vugs (pockets) or caves such as the Kieft cave in the Jackson Tunnel mine. This particular crystal-lined cavity was about 100 feet long and varied from 35 to 50 feet wide.<sup>13</sup>

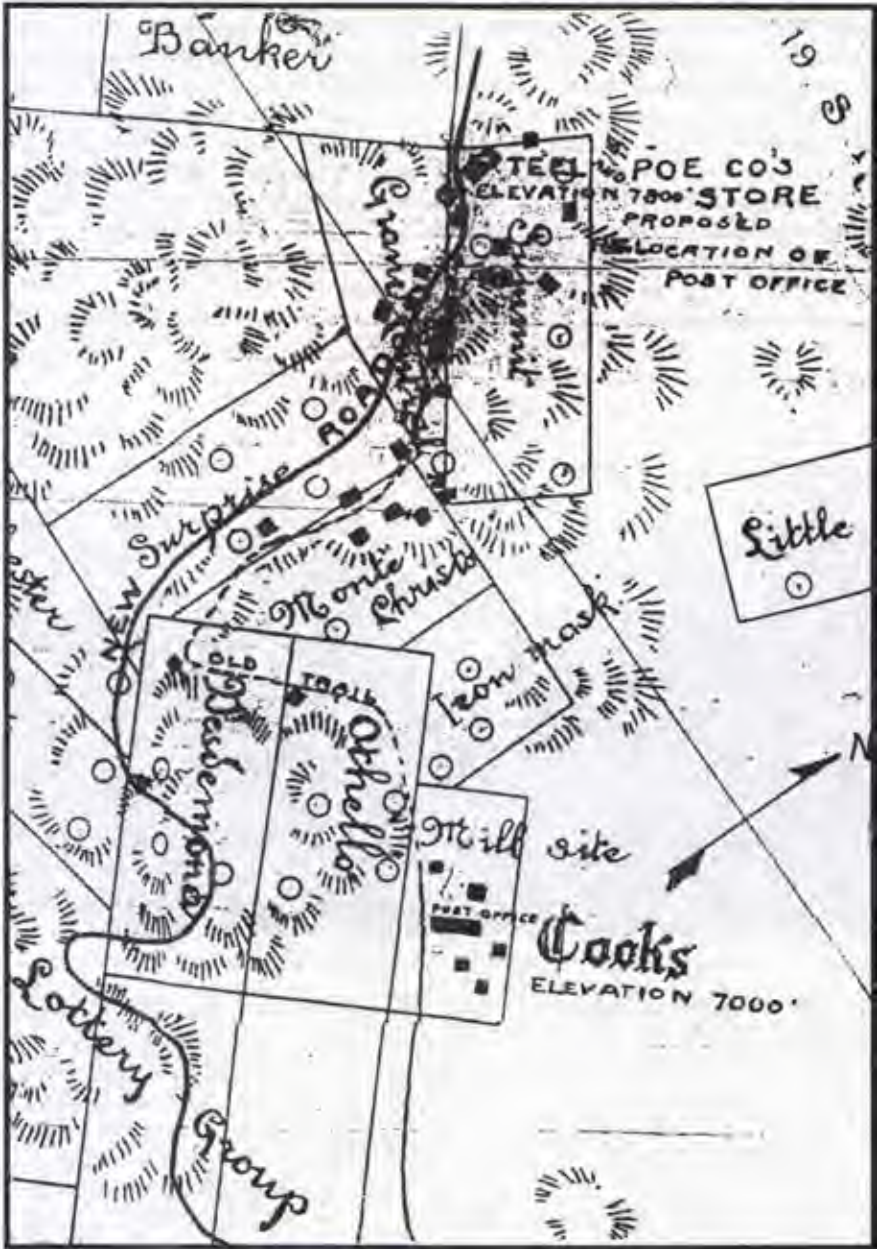
By late spring, 1890, the Cooke's Peak Mining District was one of the most prolific lead-producing regions in the southwest. The proposal to subject Mexican lead ores to an import duty was making progress in Congress, and the demand for the American product had increased. As a result, about 150 men labored at the mines. Their efforts produced average shipments of from two to three railroad cars per day. The total value of the production for the year, in lead and silver, was \$216,000. Then, in January 1891, a large body of carbonate ore was discovered at the Surprise mine at Cooks and, from that mine alone, a railroad-car load was being shipped every day. Throughout the remainder of the year, the mines totaled an average of 800 tons per month.

With the growth of Cooks, two other developments occurred. First, a post office was established August 29, 1888, although neither the first acting postmaster, John Corbett, nor his successor (three months later), A. L. Whiteside, were commissioned. Upton Elwood McDaniel, the first of five commissioned postmasters, was appointed January 10, 1889.<sup>14</sup> In the early 1880s, McDaniel had handled the mail at Fort Cummings. After November, 1891, the post office was probably moved as shown on the map illustration of Cooks. Its proximity to the Summit mine at the new location may partially explain why Charles Poe succeeded McDaniel on June 28, 1893.

Poe was another early resident who filed claims in 1879 or 1880. He later settled with his family at Cooks and remained involved in the mining industry until September, 1912. Poe and Ida Mae Birchfield proceeded with their planned nuptials on September 24, 1896, even though her parents were unable to travel to Deming from their ranch because of Indian threats. Poe built a large frame house at Cooks, where their seven children were born.<sup>15</sup>

The second development in Cooks in the late 1880s was an escalation of violence. Cooks' reputation for violence (substantiated or not) may have been due to more than the usual activity in a rough western mining town filled with males, who had little or no chance for entertainment to relieve the boredom.<sup>16</sup>

The ores they handled were capable of causing some disturbing health problems. Lead, especially in the form being extracted from the ground at that time, is particularly insidious. The damage to humans can occur in two ways: The lead-laden dust can be swallowed and thus not enter the bloodstream quickly, but cause a colic that can be devastating or it can enter the bloodstream more quickly through the lungs when it is inhaled, causing lead poisoning. The many psychological and physiological symptoms associated with less than a lethal dose include irritability and emotional instability. It is likely that lead poisoning, to which all the miners were subjected to some degree, was responsible for at least intensifying the conflicts prevalent in the camp. Indeed, the 10-year half-life for normal body rejection of accumulated lead may have had a far-reaching influence on the physical and mental health of many of the Cooks miners long after they left the camp. The first schoolteacher, Carl Simmons, was reportedly shot twice in the



Partial map of Cooks in 1891. (Courtesy of the Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum)

back one night as he entered the building which was both his home and the Cooks schoolhouse.<sup>17</sup> Another story told of an altercation between Thomas Dennis and Joseph Eswell. Eswell advised Dennis that the lard he was applying to his boots would not make them waterproof. Dennis' distinctively uncivil reply led to an increasingly heated exchange, during which Eswell threatened to beat Dennis to death with a shovel. A third party broke up the argument, but, as Eswell walked away, Dennis drew a gun and killed him.<sup>18</sup> This was clearly a case of severe lead poisoning.

Whatever other problems were associated with Cooks in the 1880s, failure of the mines was not yet one of them. In 1888, Charles Poe reported



Miners at Summit Mine at Cooks circa 1900

that, at the Summit mine, close to the Montezuma, he and his partner Hugh Teel had uncovered the most extensive body of ore yet found in the district. It was 80 feet long, 20 feet wide, and increasingly wider as it descended. Poe believed that the ore would average about eight dollars per ton in silver and include about 40 to 50 percent lead. Poe's predecessor at the post office, McDaniel, also was said to have discovered "an immense body of fine ore..." at the Surprise mine. By 1889, McDaniel had established a grocery store and a saloon while operating the post office. On November 28, 1889, he had married 30-year-old Winnie Ann Lee George, reportedly a distant cousin of Robert E. Lee. She previously had been married to a certain William George in Missouri and had three children, Riley, James, and Lula, before divorcing him in 1886. Using two oxen and a covered wagon, she moved herself and her three children from Llano (or Brownwood), Texas, to Deming in 1887 and thence to Cooks. Her first daughter by McDaniel, Myrtle, nicknamed Mertie, was born at Cooks on September 26, 1890. Mertie was born with a crippled foot, and Newton Bolich of Deming fashioned special shoes for her.<sup>19</sup> Although a small woman physically, Winnie was apparently tough as

nails. After establishing her home, boarding house, and restaurant at Cooks about 1890, she reportedly won wagers with the men that she could load ore buckets just as fast as they could. Winnie and her eldest son, Riley, provided a certain social aura and brought some economic stability to the community.<sup>20</sup>

Riley George was no less a character and entrepreneur than his mother. George had a small cabin next to the only sweet-water spring high on the mountain, just below Cooks, and a string of 10 or 12 burros. He sold the spring water to the miners, packed in 10-gallon casks that he strapped to his animals.<sup>21</sup> In addition, he collected and sold wood. He acquired several minor claims with the proceeds of his business but apparently never worked them, raising goats and cattle instead as he peddled his spring water. It is said that George did not get along well with some people and, in a shootout with the brothers Sam and Dink Tennel (Tinnell), killed Sam and his horse. In later years, it is told that he regretted killing the horse. He was reputed to be a good shot, but Elizabeth Hyatt noted that she once saw him shoot three times at a coyote without hitting it. George's quick resort to gunplay to solve his problems would later cause his family a great deal of anguish and land him, at least temporarily, in serious trouble. By 1910, the McDaniel family had moved to Deming and, on February 9, 1912, McDaniel apparently came home late, drunk, and began abusing Winnie. The "lively affray" ended suddenly when Riley George shot his stepfather. McDaniel died the following day, and the temperance-oriented local newspaper laid the blame more on the ready availability of strong drink than on George. The jurors obviously agreed since George was acquitted of the murder charge on November 23. It is quite probable that George moved back to Cooks following the family tragedy, because he was apparently the last person to leave Cooks when he moved to Deming in 1959 where he died in 1961 at the age of 84.

During the early and mid-1890s, Cooks continued to grow with only a tempo-rary setback in 1893 resulting at least partially from the silver depression. The area was so active that Hadley had its own post office from April 22, 1890, until May 13, 1895, with James Martin serving as the first of four postmasters. In 1897, Cooks apparently hit its peak of production with 12 active mines shipping 20 tons of concentrated ore having an estimated value of 600 dollars each day from Florida station. Anglo miners earned three dollars a day, but Mexican laborers received only half that amount. There was also a daily stage with mail to Florida station, a distance of 14 miles.<sup>22</sup> By the turn of the century, even though Cooks was past its heyday, the community stabilized somewhat until about 1905. There was a mill (actually a dry concentrator), a post office, a grocery store, a saloon, and a boarding house (including a restaurant) which, with private homes, made up a total of at least 30 semi-permanent structures on the eastern slope of the mountain. In addition to the Poes, McDaniels, Grovers, Orrs, and other long-time residents of Cooks, there also were, or soon would be, the Gassaways, Onstotts, and Ragsdales.

The activities at the mines, which had been tapering off for two or three years, revived and flourished through, about 1905. A certain Mr. McDermott was shipping good ore from his lease of the Kansas City Company's property and had 16 men employed in removing ore from his lease on the El Paso Company's claims. Captain G. W. Magee (locally known as "Silver Peg") and his partner T. A. Nagle had secured financial backing in the east and were planning to sink a 300-foot shaft in their Bullsnake mine.<sup>23</sup> Other miners and



lessees were recovering high quality surface ore and digging tunnels that encountered stringers, vugs, and caves of extremely rich ore. D. Bauman was having such success at the old Graphic at Hadley that he arranged to lease McDaniel's ore concentrator and move it to the site. Jasper (also known as Jap) Onstott, C. H. Tuckwood, and Charles H. Gearhart, were among those extracting and shipping significant amounts of ore, some grad-ing as high as 65 percent or better. Even 58-year-old Ed Orr was again active doing assessment work and getting some good indications. Not all was good news, however. The exploratory crosscut in the Cleveland mine, owned by the Nagle brothers, was being contaminated by more water than the pump could handle, forcing a temporary shutdown. It took several months for the pumps to clear the mine so that work could finally proceed. In 1902 and 1903, mining news contin-ued to be mixed. The old Graphic mine was soon reported to be played out, and a great deal of effort would be required to open it. However, production at the Faywood Lead Company, which bought its Jose property from Onstott, had in-creased; the horsepower of its Hooper pneumatic process concentrator was doubled so that it would have a capacity of 100 tons per day, yielding a product averaging an extremely high 72 percent.

There was a sufficient number of school-age children at Cooks to warrant the continued operation of an educational facility there. In 1910, 72 students (23 percent of Cooks' population) included some that were the second generation to attend Cooks' school. There seemed to be a rapid turnover of schoolteachers at Cooks, probably because of the shortage of marriageable women. Miss Janie Robertsen, who had been the teacher in 1901, had been replaced in 1903 by Miss Emma Wilson. She only served one term having married W. C. McDermott of Cooks whom she met in Las Cruces, and married in El Paso before both returned to live in Cooks. A Miss Norcop replaced Wilson in 1904 and at least one other young woman, Bessie G. Quantrell, held the job before 1910. Many of the com-munity social functions were conducted at the schoolhouse. Mary Daisy Baker (who would later add Grover, Cain, and Gregg to her name) recalled that her mother, Nancy Ellen Baker, used to take her and her sister Malinda along to dances at the schoolhouse. People would come from as far away as Deming, Lake Valley, Las Cruces, Hatch, Hachita, and the settlements along the branches of the Mimbres River. The revelers would push the school furniture against the wall for room to dance and use the seats as temporary beds for the children when the youngsters could no longer stay awake. Mary recalled that her mother would dance until sunrise, then go home and take care of her chores before collapsing in sleep. Sometimes, after dancing all night, the participants would climb the remaining distance to the Cooke's Peak summit and contemplate the dawn of a new day. Newton Bolich and a Miss Williams were one of the couples who made the climb.

Not all of the social events were held at the schoolhouse. About a dozen couples from Deming traveled to Cooks on a Saturday afternoon to attend a chris-tening ball held in the new concentrator building at the Silver Cave mine.

Despite an obvious need for medical care at the mines, little information is available on the subject. In 1901, it was reported that Dr. W. W. Jones was seri-ously ill. Although the prognosis of his ailment was not reported, it was ostensibly not good since, a year later a Dr. Resford of Deming was spending Friday and part of a Saturday at Cooks on professional business. Later, there were very likely no physicians at Cooks because Mary Grover,

who was born at Cooks in 1906, stated that her Grandma Grover (wife of T. J. Grover) was the only doctor at the camp. If anyone had a problem with which Grandma could not cope, that person had to go to Deming for further treatment. George and Fred Grover inherited their mother's medicine chest and remained at Hadley for a number of years where they dispensed medical advice and potions to people in the area. Sometimes, even a "real" doctor's expertise was not sufficient for the task at hand. Before Dr. Jones disappeared from the scene, he was called on to minister to George L. Lofton.

The 37-year-old bachelor had been driving his team from Florida station to his hay ranch when he was struck by lightning. He was found several hours later, prostrate in the wagon bed, and taken to Hadley. The bolt had struck Lofton on the head and traveled down his right arm and leg, magnetizing his pocket knife in the process. The eight-year resident of Cooks expired the following evening without regaining consciousness.

Freighting by Albert Wallis remained integral to the mining at Cooks. In 1901, prior to another buildup of production, he had reported that business was slow at Cooks and netted only about 20 dollars a day. An interim contract with the Bisbee and Deming Railroad helped save his business. There was also a mail and express line



Newton Bolich and a Miss Williams climb Cooke's Peak after the dance. (Copy of an artifact courtesy of Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum.)

to Cooks during certain periods of the town's existence. During its prosperous times, a stage operated by Brockou Mitchell carried passengers between Cooks and Florida station, 14 miles away, for a fare of \$1.50. In 1905, the daily mail delivery to Cooks from Florida, including rural delivery to people along the route, was changed to emanate from Nutt station. Apparently, at that same time, a Mr. Allsop lost the contract, and Wallis acquired it. This contract probably fixes the time that a little six-stanza ditty titled "The Road to Cook's [sic] Peak" was penned by an unknown author. The last stanza mentions the "Wallis stage route" and specifies only a two-mule team, so it could not have been more than a mail hack or express wagon.<sup>24</sup>

Several residents in, and around, Cooks raised cattle and goats. Soon after Charles Gassaway and Mary Matilda Ragsdale Baker married, in the mid-1890s, they bought 3,000 Mohair (Angora) goats. Other Cooke's Peak area residents also raised goats and cattle and the animals thrived on the grass of the mountain hillsides. The presence of these animals in the rugged



hills lured predators. Charles

Pace shot two large bobcats that were raiding his goat pen, located near the post office, and 15-year-old Charles Grover trapped a full-grown lynx in O.K. Canyon. Lacking a gun, Grover stoned the animal to death. The wild animals around the Cooke's Peak foothills were not the only enemies of the goats and their owners. In late March or early April, 1905, flock owners had already sheared their goats when a sudden vicious storm dumped two feet of snow on the range. The Gassaways lost 600 animals and the Ragsdales, 400.

Various stores were operated at the mining camps during periods of significant activity. Unfortunately, little information regarding these establishments or their owners has been found. The elder Mrs. Grover opened a grocery store at the Graphic mine after moving there in 1891 and was still running the store in the summer of 1903 with the help of her daughter Ruth. Later, about 1914, she started a similar business at Cooks. In the spring of 1903, Joseph Hitchens started a mercantile business in Cooks, but by 1910, the only retail establishment apparently was a grocery store run by Poe's wife, Ida.

As occurred with many mining camps, the fortunes of Cooks rose and fell several times due to fluctuations in the market price rather than the availability of the ore. In its later period, Cooks was less productive and appears to have been less violent than in the previous two decades. As one contemporary observed, it was more a poor man's camp than a thriving company town dominated by a few rich men or corporations.

The miners of Cooks gradually drifted away from the ancient mountain, honeycombed with their efforts, after feeding off its riches in a fateful journey toward self-destruction by removing the available ores and by ingesting the toxic minerals in the process. There was little production after about 1911 until H. E. McCray of Deming reopened the area in 1951, for two years and added zinc to the previously mined elements. By 1953, the brief, feverish efforts of men and machines were once again stilled, and the solitude of the mountain and the graveyard were henceforth disturbed only by ranchers and their cattle. The structures that had sheltered the people of Cooks, Jose, and Hadley continued to deteriorate and melt back into the mountainside. Today, little except rock foundations, collapsing tunnels, and dangerous vertical vent shafts remain to mark the place where men and women struggled against great odds to eke out a living and to raise and educate their children, occasionally dancing the night away before ascending the peak to witness together a glorious sunrise.<sup>25</sup>

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**DONALD H. COUCHMAN** has resided in La Mesa, NM, for 25 years. He earned a BS in Electrical Engineering at Iowa State University in 1959, and worked in the aerospace industry for 15 years. After operating a business called *The Knife Shop* for 12 years, he received an MA in History at New Mexico State University. He has specialized in the history of southwestern New Mexico, working with the Bureau of Land Management and producing historical articles and a book entitled *Cooke's Peak: Pasaron Por Aqui: A Focus on United States History in Southwestern New Mexico*.

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## NOTES

1 For a summary of the Californians' involvement in the Southwest, see Darlis A. Miller. *The*

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*California Column in New Mexico.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980).

- 2 Fayette Alexander Jones. *New Mexico Mines and Minerals.* (Santa Fe: The New Mexico Printing Company, 1904). 181. (hereafter cited as Jones, Mines and Minerals).
- 3 The lack of a railroad nearby would continue to hamper the development of the highly concentrated lead ores until 1881 because of the overwhelming logistical problem of shipping.
- 4 Throughout this essay, the name used for the community will be *Cooks*. Contemporaneous documents referring to Cook's Peak and Cook's Peak Mining District universally call the community Cooks, as did the United States Post Office. In more recent years, historians, notably Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins, restored the "e" to Cooke's Peak and Cooke's Spring. The community, however mistakenly, was initially named Cooks and the name, so spelled, remains.
- 5 Dan L. Thrapp. *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974). 218, 301.
- 6 Patricia F. Meleski. *Echoes of the Past.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972). 172. According to Henry Louis Jicha, Jr., *Geology and Mineral Deposits of Lake Valley Quadrangle, Grant, Luna and Sierra Counties, New Mexico.* (Socorro: State Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Campus Station, 1954). 66 (hereafter cited as Jicha, Jr., *Geology*), other interesting mine names included the Busted Banker, Silver Cave, Old Commodore, and the Hope, Faith and Constant (Charity was apparently absent from the miner's vocabulary).
- 7 Lynn Irwin Perrigo. *The American Southwest, Its People and Cultures.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) 293. The railroad station was first called Fort Cummings Station and then Porter Station prior to the name it currently bears.
- 8 Hadley Draw was named for Walter Hadley, one of the early Cooke's Peak miners, and father of Hiram Hadley, first president of present-day New Mexico State University.
- 9 Jones. *Mines and Minerals.* 181-182; Ralph Emerson Twitchell. *The Leading Facts of New Mexico History.* Vol. 3 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1917). 315. The Fort Cummings microfilm records, *Letters Sent, Fort Cummings, Post Record Group 393, National Archives* (Microfilm copy at Rio Grande Historical Collection), Roll 2, fail to support this oft stated statistic.
- 10 Jean LaPorta, ed. *History of Luna County,* (Deming: Luna County Historical Society, Inc., 1978). 97, 104 (hereafter cited as LaPorta, *Luna County*).
- 11 Jicha, Jr. *Geology.* 66; George B. Griswold. *Mineral Deposits of Luna County, New Mexico* (Socorro: State Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Campus Station, 1961). 94. Jose was only active until about 1905 according to John Philip Wilson. "*Jose,*" *Antiquities Site Inventory.* (Las Cruces: Bureau of Land Management, August 27, 1975). 1. In fact, it did not merit its own post office, according to Thomas K. Todsén, Letter to the Author (October 1, 1984) (hereafter cited as Todsén, Letter to the Author), until Samuel E. Wood was appointed postmaster June 11, 1902. The facility lasted only until December 30, 1905 when the office was closed and the mail forwarded to Cooks.
- 12 Elizabeth Hyatt, Note to Deming-Luna Mimbres Museum, (February, 1985). 2 (hereafter cited as Hyatt, Note to Museum).
- 13 Jicha, Jr. *Geology.* 62. The cave's height was not recorded.

- 14 Todsén, Letter to the Author. The only postmistress, Janie Hitchins, was not appointed until September 26, 1908, and the post office functioned until 1916, after which the mail was forwarded to Nutt.
- 15 LaPorta. *Luna County*. 97. Charles Poe died May 17, 1914, in Deming.
- 16 One source, however, claims that Harry Whitehill and other young men around Cooke's Peak used to go to Cooks for dances in the early 1890s. Another indicates that a bawdy house was run by a certain Miny Lucy. Although the presence of an establishment of that nature was highly probable, it remains unsubstantiated.
- 17 Michael Jenkinson, "Cook's Peak and the Bones of Sing Lee," *Frontier Times*, 44 (June-July, 1970): 15 (hereafter cited as Jenkinson, "Bones").
- 18 James E. Sherman and Barbara H. Sherman. *Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of New Mexico*. (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975). 56.
- 19 *Deming Herald*, December 2, 1902, p. 1; LaPorta. *Luna County*. 93; *Census, 1900. Other daughters were Millie (1893) and Anna (1898). Two sons, bom in 1895 and 1897, died as infants.*
- 20 Hyatt, *Note to Museum*. 3; Elizabeth Hyatt, *Riley George, (October, 1897)*. 1 ; *Deming Graphic*, October 28, 1968, p. 5.
- 21 It is not known whether George's spring (denoted on present-day maps as Riley Spring) was contaminated with the lead oxides prevalent in the area.
- 22 C. A. Carrath. *Business Directory of Arizona and New Mexico for 1897*. (Las Vegas, New Mexico, 1897). 110. This source also claims that, at this peak, there were 100 people living at Cooks. This can hardly be accurate because the Bureau of the Census, Federal Census Population Schedules, Twelfth Census (1900): New Mexico, Luna County, Micro-copy No. T623, Roll No. 1000 (hereafter cited as Census, 1900), lists at least 230, not counting the ranchers and freighters and their families. However, the statement by the McDaniel sisters in the *Deming Graphic*, October 31, 1968, p. 1B, that there were 1,000 men working at the mines would seem excessive.
- 23 This is the first hard evidence of major shaft work.
- 24 John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax (Comp.). *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938). 384-385.
- 25 Much of the information in this essay was obtained from personal interviews, Federal Census records, the *Grant County Herald*, and Deming newspapers such as the *Graphic*, the *Headlight*, and the *Herald*.

# Early Owners of the Nestor Armijo Home

*Part II: Benjamin Harrover and John D. Barncastle*

by **John B. Colligan**

**M**ariano Samaniego, the first known owner of what was to become the Artnijo-Gallagher home, sold the property for \$160 to John D. Barncastle on February 9, 1867, when both parties to the transaction were of Las Cruces. The property was described as:

*That certain Lot with an adobe House containing four rooms, situated thereon; bounded on the North by a cross street running nearly East and West through said Town; On the South by land belonging to George P. Davis; On the East by Lot owned by Trinidad Lucero, and on the West by Lot formerly the prop erty of Lt. John and now owned by John D. Barncastle: - Said property hereby conveyed being Eighty five (85) varas long and Forty (40) varas wide, (more or less); together with all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging, or in any wise or manner appertaining, and the reversion and reversions, remained and remainders, rents, issues and the profits thereof ...<sup>1</sup>*

This purchase was to augment one that John D. Barncastle had already made on August 17, 1866, from Benjamin Hanover for the sum of \$50 and a stipulation that it was free of encumbrances which was duly noted in the Doña Ana County records:

*The North-West corner bounded by the street and running to the North-East corner, contains Sixty three varas; from the North-East corner running to the South-East corner, bounded by the land of Isabel Luna, containing Ninety seven varas; from the South-East corner, running to the South-West corner, bounded by the land of George Davis containing Sixty three varas, and from the South-West corner running to the North-West corner bounded by the land of George Davis, containing Ninety seven varas ...<sup>2</sup>*

Benjamin Hanover was a carpenter by trade, but also very active in filing mining claims in the Organ Mountains. For example, on February 25, 1867, Ha-

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nover filed a Certificate of Mining Location for a 200-foot vein called the “*Dolores Lead*” in a ravine on the western slope of Loma Alta in the Organ Mountains between *Cerro de la Aguja* (Needle Mount) and the San Nicolas; specifically, two miles north of San Augustin Pass and two miles northeast of the town of Las Cruces. On April 10, 1867, Harrover filed a similar Certificate of Mining Location for a claim measuring 200 horizontal feet at the permanent water spring called the *Ojito del Alamo*, and situated 1,000 feet from the northeast corner of the claim of the Carrasco Mining Company. It was near the location and on the same ledge as his earlier claim.<sup>3</sup>

By the time of the 1870 Census, Harrover had settled in Grant County where he was enumerated in the same household as Reece R. Bulger (a fellow member of the California Column) and John E. Sanders. Noted as the housekeeper was 20 year-old Susana Chavez. In 1871, Benjamin Harrover became a member and the foreman of the newly-organized fire company in Silver City. In the 1870s, he owned property at Ralston, a mining center south of modern Carlsbad. In 1877, Harrover served on the jury at the trial of Rachael Can for the murder of her husband.<sup>4</sup>

John D. Barncastle, purchaser of the property from Samaniego and Harrover, was a well-known merchant of Doña Ana, born on September 26, 1832, at Philadelphia, to John Barncastle and Emily Duncan.<sup>5</sup> John Jr. first came to New Mexico as a member of the California Column during the Civil War, when he was a sergeant in Company E of the Fifth California Infantry.<sup>6</sup> Following his military service, he married Josefa Melendres, daughter of the prominent hispanic merchant Pablo Melendres, on October 5, 1867, though Pablo may have been deceased by that date.<sup>7</sup> Pablo Melendres had accumulated extensive land holdings as one of the original settlers of Doña Ana, had become its first mayor in 1844, and had been Probate Judge several times. The contacts implied in the inevitable relationships were undoubtedly important to Barncastle in his future endeavors.

The union of John and Josefa produced six children: Emily Duncan, born July 16, 1868, who died as an infant; John M., born April 13, 1870; Frank T., born August 24, 1872; Antonio F., born July 29, 1874; Ana Maria, born July 21, 1876; and Mary Morgan, born in 1881. Though industrious and resourceful, John D. Barncastle was strict with his children. After Ana married Henry Fitch and Mary married Ensevio Barela, both men of old Doña Ana County families, John did not speak to his daughters because he did not approve of their choices. Besides their own progeny, he and Josefa raised the orphaned children, Elinore and Trinidad, of Mexican War veteran Philetis Morgan Thompson.

John D. Barncastle, therefore, had purchased what was to become the Armijo property prior to his marriage. It is not clear whether he and Josefa actually lived in the house. If they did, they may have moved from it following the death of their first child, Emily. In any event, on July 24, 1868, John sold his household lot and the adjoining property in Las Cruces to Marriosa Daily, wife of Bradford Daily, apparently as her separate estate, for \$2,000. The deed describing the property for that transaction reads:

*That certain Lot of land with a store and dwelling House erected thereon by the said parties of the first part [Mr. and Mrs. Barncastle]*

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*bounded on the North by the Street of said Town running East and West; On the South by lands now owned by Doctor Clemente Remes; On the East by Lot owned by Trinidad Lucero; and on the West by House and Lands of Doctor Clemente Remes.*

Reference is made in the deed to the fact that the property described is the same as that acquired from B. Harrover on August 17, 1866, and from Mariano Samaniego on February 9, 1867.

During the speculative mining boom of the mid-1860s, John Barncastle played only a minor role in the feverish prospecting and claim-filing activities. Major New Mexico political and military figures participated, usually along with local Doña Ana County residents. General James M. Carleton even gave his power-of-attorney to another Army officer to manage his mining investments while he was out of the territory in 1867. Political figures such as Thomas Catron also were active investors, but hardly prospectors. Barncastle filed a Certificate of Mining Location on August 8, 1866, to cover 300 horizontal feet of a silver vein called "*Mammoth Ledge*," an extension of that discovered by Peter B. Greaves, John W. Baker, Luciano C. Navarro and Charles McIntosh on the eastern slope of the San Andres Mountains about 35 miles northeast of the town of Doña Ana.<sup>8</sup> Groups of investors often joined in such speculative ventures, frequently holding their claims for just a few months for a quick profit; but Bamcastle did not participate in those games.

During his lifetime, John Barncastle farmed successfully so that, in 1870, his property was valued at \$1,000 and he had accumulated assets of \$7,000, a vine-yard and a prosperous winery, while he kept his store in Doña Ana. He was also active in the community. In 1871, he was a member of a committee which sought contributions to support a full-time scout to warn of Apache depredations.

In December 1873, John D. Bamcastle and his wife Josefa loaned Pilar Miranda and Ydubijen Miranda \$185.95 secured by a mortgage and a promissory note. When the Mirandas defaulted in February 1875, Barncastle had the property put up at public auction to the highest bidder, and apparently had Josefa purchase it. The Barncastles thus acquired land in Precinct 2 of Doña Ana County which measured 780 varas in length and 390 varas in width, bounded on the east and south by the Public Road.<sup>9</sup>

John was a member of the Masonic Lodge, and enjoyed partisan politics as a Democrat opposing the dominant Republican machine. In November 1877, he formed a partnership with David B. Rea to operate a mercantile business. Rea became the second husband of Marriocita Carrion Daily who had purchased the future Armijo property from Bamcastle. John was also Vice-President of the Demo-cratic Club of Doña Ana County. He expanded his agricultural holdings so that, in 1879, his crops were valued at \$6,500, and, in 1880, he owned 700 acres worth \$5,000. He became an active member of the Doña Ana County Stock Association after it was founded in March 1883.

On New Year's eve, 1883, Barncastle's store in Doña Ana was robbed. John was tending the store at dusk when two men who appeared to be miners dismounted and entered the store. They asked if he had any sardines

and crackers for sale. He recognized the two as members of a group of six men who had been loitering in the area for several days, and had been in the store for a similar purchase the previous day. John got the sardines; then went around the counter to the cracker barrel. When he leaned over to get the crackers, each man pulled two revolvers and told him to put his hands up. They took a silver watch of little value, but missed a gold one lying in the showcase; then they emptied the contents of the cash drawer. After forcing John to open his safe and securing another \$500, the thieves tied the merchant's hands behind him, ordered him outside warning him not to move, and rode off. Fortunately, a stack of merchandise hid another safe from sight and the robbers missed about \$5,000, mostly in gold coin, which John promptly deposited in the Doña Ana County Bank.<sup>10</sup> Barncastle did not take his loss lightly. He offered a \$100 reward for either of the men, dead or alive, and that sum was augmented by a subscription among Las Cruces citizens which raised another \$1,000 to be paid upon the arrest and conviction of the thieves. When the criminals were tracked to Seven Rivers, in Lincoln County, Barncastle sent his former California Column sergeant, Henry C. Haring, with funds to conduct an investigation. He later learned that Haring had stopped in El Paso, gambled away some of the investigation money, and pawned his overcoat and revolver. John then hired W. L. Jerrell to investigate but he was killed in a stagecoach hold-up. The following year, Haring was caught, indicted, convicted of embezzlement, and sentenced to three months in the county jail and loss of his commission as a first lieutenant in the New Mexico militia.

Despite his party loyalty, Democrat Barncastle backed Independent Republican William L. Rynerson in 1884 when Rynerson opposed the Republican Santa Fe Ring.<sup>11</sup> In July 1884, John showed a reporter from the *Rio Grande Republican* around his homestead in Doña Ana, discussing in detail his successful viniculture activities. He said that he had 10,000 vines, all of the native variety because they seemed to be the safest to raise and the most free of disease. He added that he farmed about 1,000 acres, and that all the grapes harvested were for wine, not for sale as fruit nor for brandy which he had stopped making two years earlier due to government regulations and red tape. He claimed that, in 1883, he had produced 1,800 gallons of wine at a cost of \$282.25, including the expense of covering the vines in the winter. He also showed the reporter a tract of land next to his home that he rented to soldiers of Company K, 13th Infantry at Fort Selden to use as a vegetable garden. Finally, he displayed with pride his steam flouring mill driven by a 15 horsepower engine.<sup>12</sup> John D. Barncastle died on October 3, 1909.<sup>13</sup>

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**JOHN B. COLLIGAN**, though a California native, is a descendant of first settlers of New Mexico and currently resides in Las Cruces. He is retired from a business management career and now devotes all his time to historical research (which he terms investigative reporting) of certain aspects of New Mexico history. His interest in the Nestor Armijo home stems from his marriage to Dolores Gallagher, Don Nestor's great granddaughter and Colligan's third cousin, once removed.

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**NOTES**

- 1 Doña Ana County Deeds, Book E, February 9, 1867, 217-218.
- 2 Doña Ana County Deeds, Book E, August 17, 1866, 63-65. The Isabel Luna who owned the adjacent property is the mother of Mariano G. Samaniego, whose ownership of the home was related in Part I of this essay appearing in Volume I, No. 1 of this publication. It connects him to the sale of the property to Barncastle and clearly identifies him as the seller in question rather than Mariano J. Samaniego, doctor and nephew of Cura Ramon Ortiz of El Paso.
- 3 Doña Ana County, Mining Claims, Book 2, folios 302-303, 389-391.4 Darlis A. Miller. *The California Column in New Mexico*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). 55, 103, 199, 204, 215.
- 5 Barncastle Family Bible data, and dates of the marriage of John D. Barncastle and the birth dates of his children mentioned later in this essay, courtesy of Betty L. Stevenson.
- 6 See Miller. *California Column*. 6, 70, 109-111, 153, 172, 180, 185, 193, 197, 201, 205, 209, 210-215 for additional background on Barncastle and his activities.
- 7 Book I, Mixed Records, at St. Genevieve's Church in Las Cruces records the marriage on the date of October 5, 1867, and shows Josefa as the daughter of deceased Pablo and Maria Melendres, yet another record for June 16, 1868, notes the burial of Don Pablo Melendres on that date.
- 8 Doña Ana County Records, Book E, 235 and 369.
- 9 Doña Ana County, Records, Book E, 388-389.
- 10 *Rio Grande Republican*, January 4, 1884, 3.
- 11 See article *Campaigning: The Mesilla Riot of 1871* by Vesta Siemers in this issue for more on Rynerson.
- 12 *Rio Grande Republican*, July 12, 1884, 1.
- 13 Part I of this article appeared in the January 1994 issue of this journal. A fine study of the Barncastle family is found in an unpublished Master's thesis entitled "*The Barncastles of Dona Ana, New Mexico: Continuity and Change in a Single Family Network, 1840-1990*," by Ben Passmore. It is available at the New Mexico State University Library.



# Our Lady of Guadalupe:

## *The Annual Celebration at Tortugas*

by **Tricia Romero and Kelly Kirby**

*Editor's Note: During the 1993-1994 school year: the Doña Ana County Historical Society sponsored an essay contest which was open to all high school juniors and seniors in the county. The objectives of the contest were to promote an awareness of the importance and the impact of local history among the region's high school students, and to provide them with the opportunity to develop their research and writing skills for a specific, focused purpose while using primary historical sources. Contest winners were to receive monetary awards and the opportunity for their work to be considered for publication.*

*The winners were: Tricia Romero, a junior at San Andres High School, who received \$250.00, and Kelly Kirby, a senior at Oñate High School, who received \$150.00. Both wrote essays on the above topic.*

*Most of the world's Catholics and many Christians of other faiths are quite familiar with the essential details of the Marian visions at Lourdes, France, and at Fatima, Portugal, as well as that which occurred several centuries earlier in Mexico City. Catholics of Mexican ancestry are particularly devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe who appeared to an Indian named Juan Diego on Tepeyac Hill near Mexico City on December 9, 1531. They know well the oft-related story of Juan's problems convincing the Bishop, of his uncle's miraculous cure, of the mysterious winter roses, of the glorious image of the Blessed Virgin, to be known as "Our Lady of Guadalupe," etched on Juan's tilma (cloak), of the construction of the commemorative church, and of subsequent cures confirming the authenticity of the vision.*

*Given the identical topic and problems of length, what follows is an edited account, derived from the two essays, of the celebration which is typically held each year in the village of Tortugas, just south of Las Cruces.*

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**F**or many years around the turn of the century, a celebration was held at the entrance to St. Genevieve's Church in downtown Las Cruces. When opposition to the essentially Indian event developed, it was moved to the small village on the city's southern perimeter. How the town got its name is unclear. It is known, however, that Eugene Van Patten, a Butterfield stagecoach conductor, became

involved in an endeavor to help the Indians find another site and he and the Commissioners of the town of Guadalupe, as it was then known, acquired land late in 1908. A church was built and, when the *Corporation of Los Indigenes de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe* was founded in 1914, the commissioners transferred the deed to the building and land to its members stipulating that they could retain their traditional religious customs. The title to the church was transferred to the Diocese of Tucson that same year and, when houses were built, the settlement was officially called the *Santuario de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe*. Present day Tortugas is not a Tiwa Indian pueblo as some believe, but two historically distinct settlements, *San Juan* (the older of the two), and *Guadalupe*. In the late 1500s, Franciscan missionaries had founded a mission called *Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe del Paso del Rio del Norte* near what is now Juarez for the Indians living there which they called *Mansos* (gentle). By the middle of the last century, some of those Indians had migrated up the river to the Mesilla/Las Cruces area to start new lives and they brought their ancient traditions with them.

The annual late fall celebration at Tortugas to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe begins on December 10, though the official feast day is on December 12. The three-day fiesta or three-day religious observance (called a triduum) has been celebrated for years in the Catholic communities of this part of the world. In fact, 1993 marked the 80th anniversary of the Tortugas celebration. It has become a community affair which has attracted the help and cooperation of businesses in the form of goods and money and even the participation of people of other faiths and from other parts of the country. The entire event is steeped in tradition. The actions to be taken during the ceremonies, especially involving the processions and dances, as well as the preparation of the meals, are accomplished according to certain unwritten rules.

Specific events are scheduled for each of the three days of the Tortugas Fiesta. The celebration officially begins about 6:30 p.m. on December 10. The members of the Corporation of Los Indigenes de Nuestra Senora de



Our Lady of Guadalupe, also called La Guadalupana, is the patroness of Mexico and the most popular religious figure among Catholics of Mexican ancestry.

Guadalupe meet at the little chapel (*La capillita*) which is the permanent home of the revered image of Our Lady. They form an escort which includes dancers, fiddlers, singers, and priest for the *mayordomos* who carry the image and deposit it inside the *Casa del Pueblo*, the largest of four corporation-owned buildings which is used as a dance house. Several hundred people kneel on the dusty cement floor before the temporary shrine while the priest leads the recitation of a rosary to open the all-night vigil for a saint (*velorio del santo*) to give thanks for favors received or anticipated. The shrine, surrounded by candles, consists of the image of Our Lady with a figurine of Juan Diego kneeling before it. The faithful wait in line to venerate the shrine and to make requests. As a background, certain hymns are sung and 14 masked *Danzantes* perform a *Matachine* dance with its step-step-step-slide movements to violin music, while a *Monarcha*, wearing an arched crown, weaves among the dancers and a *Malinche* or 10-year old girl in communion white mimics the dance pattern.

At dawn, on December 11, the image of Our Lady is transferred in a formal candlelight procession, involving *Danzantes* repeatedly dancing back and forth, to the church. The main event of that second day is a pilgrimage consisting mainly of a climb up Tortugas Mountain (known in the area simply as “A” Mountain as it was named by NMSU’s Aggies), a small peak southeast of Las Cruces, which was called, at one time, Sentinel Peak. After registration, individuals and families start negotiating on foot (some bare-footed, some on their knees), the four-mile trail which ascends 1,000 feet. Since 1959, a Holy Mass service, now usually with the local Bishop as presider, is held at the top of the mountain in front of the Shrine. Many pilgrims, some fashioning *quiotes* (walking sticks) remain the entire day. During the descent, small bonfires, which can be seen for miles, are lit along the trail. At the end of the day, the Shrine is returned to the *Casa del Pueblo* and dance groups practice on either side of the church.

Most of the morning of the last day, December 12, the actual feast day, is taken up by the celebration of a solemn Mass in the church with the Bishop again presiding. After the ceremony, *Danzantes* and *Malinches* perform ritual *Matachine* dances which are actually a sacred prayer form whose tradition goes back to Spain. At noon, the bishops, other members of the clergy and dancers are officially invited to the *Casa de Comida* for a festive banquet meal prepared by the Corporation members, an event which dates from the 1960s. Many different foods are served, but the main dish always includes *albondigas* (small, spiced meatballs). The general public is usually invited. Late in the afternoon, when everyone has eaten, the image of Our Lady is borne in procession, accompanied by more dances, hymns, and the sound of church bells, to the *Casa del Pueblo* where the ritual installation of *mayordomos* takes place. They are two couples who are charged with continuing the Guadalupe traditions and planning the Fiesta for the following year. Another procession then returns the image of Our Lady to the church for closing ceremonies consisting of a service honoring the Holy Eucharist and another rosary recitation. Finally, the public is invited to a reception in honor of the new *mayordomos* at the *Casa de Comida*.

During the holiday season, the esteemed image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is enshrined in the Tortugas church for the faithful to venerate and honor with prayers. It is returned in solemn procession to its permanent home in the small chapel on New Year’s Day.

# Is There a Southwestern Character?

*The Environment and its*

*“Victims”* by Lee Priestley

The Southwest is usually thought of as a geographical area but one also can think of it as an experience. Visitors to its deserts, its mountains, its lively, flourishing present and the fascinating records of its past either love it or hate it but are rarely indifferent to it. At one extreme are the newcomers who insist that they wouldn't be caught dead in such a Godforsaken place, and at the other are the many who can be content in no other place.

A large percentage of the Southwest population is not native born and has settled there by choice, thus the region simply may gather its own to itself rather than mold people to the place. Certain types of personalities find, in the South-west, their *querencia*, their spiritual home.

What is this Southwest that so obviously exerts such an attraction? An agrar-ian region pushing toward industrialization filled with exuberant, expansive, specu-lative individuals, bursting with cheerful optimism. In a traditionally slow and sleepy land, the heady awareness and anticipation of imminent change is perva-sive. In no place does one find an acceptance of “the mixture as before”: any new set of elements is unpredictable, even explosive. Naturally, the economy produces bankrupt speculators and millionaire entrepreneurs; periods of boom or bust, of sudden expansion or slow growth. In short, Southwesterners behave in a peculiarly Western fashion but remain profoundly American.

Traditionally, the Southwest has taken pride in its classless condition. Race or ethnicity, social rank and geographical origin tend to disappear in the wide vistas of the Southwest; social and class distinctions, when not totally deemphasized, are at least less apparent than in most other parts of the country. Sudden ascents from poverty and relative obscurity to positions of wealth, power and distinction are not only possible but almost commonplace.

Humble birth and meager childhood have been accepted as natural elements in the genesis of great men in the Southwest and have become a kind of prerequi-site for seeking and holding public office. Along with this often goes diminished respect for tradition, established institutions

or even law and order. A brand of lawlessness that does not directly challenge the individual interest of others is often tolerated. The confidence and self-sufficiency that is the bedrock of the American character does not even seem to need the establishment in the South-west.

History and literature record instances when men, influenced by the environment, were changed completely.<sup>1</sup> Dwellers in this land of broad panoramas and great distances, who depend on the elementals of earth and sky, are often marked by their stem homeland. We know only a little about the 16th-Century Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca before he embarked on his cross-continental odyssey from Florida to California but it seems reasonable to assume that he was then much like his fellows: a rough soldier concerned primarily with his own survival and gratifications. His years in the wilderness clearly changed him. The rough soldier became a gentle brother to the red men so generous and indifferent to his own needs that he gave his scanty rags and meager food supply to others who had even less. Spiritual strength grew within him, as his words and actions drew the Indians to him for comfort and healing.

Early religious history shows a similar change in the first missionary fathers and those who came after them as they realized that the worship forms of the red man were not necessarily antagonistic to those the missionaries brought. More tolerant attitudes enriched the pueblos and the priesthood. Today, living in the land they share with the Indians has led Southwesterners to respect the rich Native American culture and to seek to accommodate to the needs and rights of those who came first on this continent.

In modern times, the Southwesterner has become a recognizable type. Law-man and bandit, such as Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid, and rancher and writer, such as Captain King of Texas and Eugene Manlove Rhodes, share common traits. Disparate examples as they are, their characteristics match up to a surprising degree. They shared fearlessness, bravery and amazing physical and mental toughness. Stern they often were, but a quality that might be called “happy-go-luckiness” gave them loyal friends to whom they, in turn, were totally committed. They often combined a stubborn practicality with little regard for money or security enough that they could spend their lives pursuing the most impossible dreams.

To know Southwesterners in fact or fiction, from history or personal contact, is to be convinced that mountain and desert, that the fruitful valleys and the great rivers, do mold and shape their characters as well as their lives. Like their fathers before them, modern Southwesterners are no super race. One finds a variety: men as broad in vision as the limitless land and others as limited in perception as the trickles of water that make life possible and unpredictable. An abundance of clay does not make perfect pottery but the moulding process seems to be continual.<sup>2</sup>

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*LEE PRIESTLEY* has published 24 books and more than 1,000 short stories and articles on a wide range of topics — regional history, mysteries, romance, science fiction, and children's stories. Her most recent book is *Journeys of Faith: The Story of Preacher and Edith Lewis*. She has taught creative writing at

*the University of Oklahoma and at New Mexico State University. A former owner of the Las Cruces Sun News, she owned and published newspapers in three states with her late husband Orville Priestley. She has lived in Las Cruces since the mid-1940s.*

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## NOTES

- 1 The French 18th Century philosopher, Montesquieu, in his *L' esprit des lois*. (The Spirit of Laws), invented the theory of the influence of climate and environment on the temperament of individuals.
- 2 The original version of this article appeared in the June 1958 issue of *Southwestern Lore* , the journal of the Colorado Archeological Society.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**C***ONTEMPORARY NEW MEXICO, 1940-1990* Edited by Richard Etulain.  
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. \$19.95.

This book is a collection of six provocative essays about New Mexico, covering government, the economy, the family, ethnicity, and culture. All but one of the authors teaches at the University of New Mexico. In an overview section, Professor Gerald Nash asserts that the major influences on the state during the last half-century have been the Second World War and the Cold War, increased government spending, the enormous growth in technology, the exploitation of geographic and cultural resources, and the relative affluence that also characterized the rest of the country.

If the overview inventories the major influences producing significant change in the state, the next chapter criticizes the official response to change. In the most clearly focused essay in the book, F. Chris Garcia deals with government and politics. His thesis is that, because of the presence of various potentially conflicting cultures, New Mexico politicians engage in an elaborate game of cultural accommodation, expending virtually all their efforts on deemphasizing the “tensions and political conflicts inherent in a fragmented political culture,” rather than governing. This has caused a prolonged postponement of the kinds of government reform needed to adapt to the vast changes that have affected the state during the past half-century. The essay also criticizes New Mexico politics as being too locally oriented, defensive, and incremental in its approach to problems: other indicators that state institutions are resistant to change. As a result, leadership lacks vision and special interests are empowered to block reform.

Michael Welsh’s review of the New Mexico economy stresses the extreme dependence on the federal government for employment during the past few decades, the enormous growth in per capita income during the 1950s, and the overall impoverishment of the state, in which per capita income is only 76 percent of the national average. He is less than optimistic about prospects for economic growth, and suggests that a more serious effort be given to examining alternative sources of future growth.

The essay on culture, written by Ferenc Szaz, is the most original in the volume, and the only postmodern one. The author argues that the groups that have been empowered in New Mexico to oversee the management of

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wildlife and hu-man populations, the growth of the scientific and tourist communities, and the successful commercialization of both high culture and pop culture, should in fact be conceptualized as “cultures” in their own right, with their own artifacts and values. These cultures, in turn, use and transform the traditional cultures—Indian, Hispanic and Anglo-Pioneer—of the state that we more normally refer to in dis-cussing the state. Thus, the growth of the scientific community near Los Alamos provided relatively high-paying jobs for nearby Pueblo Indians; the wealth gener-ated thereby was used in part to help preserve Pueblo heritage. The growing popu-lation of the well-heeled scientific community, in turn, created a market for Indian and Hispanic arts and crafts. As this market expanded, the combined effect of the crafts, film, sculpture and painting, and book industries, as they explored New Mexico’s Hispanic, and Anglo-Pioneer cultures, also changed them, blending in these newer cultures with the old, as traditional peoples see themselves through the sympathetic eyes of others. This suggests a kind of cultural Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle: the act of observing a culture and enlisting the participation of members of that culture in that observation will change the behavior of individuals of the culture under examination and, ultimately, the culture itself.

Essays by Virginia Scharff and Rosalie Otero on the family and ethnicity round out the volume. Otero relies heavily on literature for samples of the differing views different cultures have about each other, and Scharff discusses some of the major influences — mainly destructive — on family life during the past few decades. In this sense, Scharff’s essay provides perhaps unwitting support to the Szaz thesis discussed above: if New Mexico’s family life for all cultures is beset by the same problems observed elsewhere, is this not a sign that we are leaving “traditional culture” behind?

This book is not as ambitious as the title suggests (a more accurate title would have been *Essays on Contemporary New Mexico*), and is intended to begin a discussion rather than to be definitive. As stated in the overview, the authors hope to “suggest how dozens of important subjects...remain to be studied.” Taken in this spirit, the book is well worth reading, and is a useful starting point for serious discussion of contemporary New Mexico society. An extremely valuable feature in this volume is a bibliographic essay appended to each chapter.

Jose Z. Garcia

Director, Center for Latin American Studies  
New Mexico State University

***LAS CRUCES: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY*** by Linda G. Harris.  
Las Cruces: Arroyo Press, 1993. \$29.95.

During most of the twentieth century, historians of New Mexico have primarily studied the pre-statehood development of the communities of northern New Mexico. While that region certainly merits attention, the overwhelming focus upon the north means that historians have neglected the complex history of southern New Mexico. Fortunately, an increasing



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number of books, articles, and theses indicates that researchers are beginning to explore the development of southern New Mexico, placing its evolution within the larger historical patterns of west Texas and northern Chihuahua. As a result, both scholars and the general public can now acquire a better understanding of such southern New Mexico communities as Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.

Linda G. Harris has played an important role in this process, both as a leader of the Doña Ana County Historical Society and as author of this book about Las Cruces. Her illustrated history is aimed at the general public. It includes a number of photographs, indicates the importance of geological factors in shaping the Las Cruces region, and discusses the Spanish trade caravans that passed through the Mesilla Valley. The book follows the development of Las Cruces from its agricultural roots through most of the twentieth century. It includes poems, a bibliography and a timeline. The photographs should help many readers, particularly those unfamiliar with Las Cruces, to gain a better understanding of its architecture, surroundings, and history.

This book, the first historical manuscript discussing the general development of Las Cruces, contains only as much text as a short monograph, and therefore covers somewhat thinly the topics that a longer scholarly volume would assess in detail. There are some errors. For example, the United States assumed \$10,000,000 of Texas' debts, rather than \$10,000, when Texas relinquished its claims to the portion of New Mexico east of the Rio Grande. Samuel Freudenthal was more active in El Paso than Las Cruces, where Julius and Phoebus Freudenthal established businesses. Despite these matters, the volume will heighten the historical awareness of many Las Cruces residents, and will stimulate more research into the complex interactions of social, religious, ethnic, and economic communities that have shaped the development of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County.

Jeffrey P. Brown  
Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
New Mexico State University

***FORGOTTEN FRONTIER The Story of Southeastern New Mexico***  
by Carole Larson. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993.  
\$35.00 cl, \$16.95 pbk.

An empty niche in the written story of New Mexico has been filled admirably by this book. Southeastern New Mexico, defined as about 41% of the state's square mileage, is bordered on the south and east by Texas; it extends northward to the Canadian Escarpment (almost to Fort Union) and westward to the central mountain chains (Sacramentos, Jicarillas, etc.).

The author writes that "No element of the great morality play of the Westward Movement is missing from the saga of southeastern New Mexico." (279) She surveys the physical characteristics of the land, the immigration of peoples in pre-historic times, the various Indian cultures, the impact of the Spanish conquest, and the coming of cattlemen, outlaws, railroad

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and canal builders, dreamers and visionaries, and especially politicians. She quotes Lew Wallace, governor from 1878 to 1881, as saying: “Every calculation based on experience elsewhere fails in New Mexico.” (133).

The New Mexico experience is vividly brought to life in the middle section of the book where she details New Mexico history through the lives of assorted characters who lived it and made it: John Chisum, Billy the Kid, members of the various factions involved in the Lincoln County Wars, members of the Santa Fe Ring, Pat Garrett, Joseph C. Lea, Martin Corn, John Poe, J. P. White, J. J. Hagerman, and many others.

Within the state, the southeastern region is presented as distinctive and different because of four major features: the economic and cultural links with Texas, the critically important role of water both in the location of communities and in agricultural development, the social and economic segregation along ethnic lines, and the role of a small number of powerful men who successfully engineered change and helped to set New Mexico on the road from territorial status to statehood (232).

Central to the book’s theme is the reality of the frontier and its significance in shaping the emergence of southeastern New Mexico as a vibrant and viable part of the American West. This area may indeed be the “forgotten frontier”; it was certainly among the last of the western frontiers to be settled. In the author’s view, “...because this is a place still in the process of being discovered...it may be the destiny of southeastern New Mexico to be forever frontier.” (287).

Carole Larson is a journalist who lives in Roswell, New Mexico, and who has been, for many years, a staff writer for the *Roswell Daily Record*. Through the years, she has been an enthusiastic supporter and member of the Historical Society for Southeastern New Mexico.

Julia K. Wilke  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

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

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## Guidelines for Submissions

The Doña Ana County Historical Society accepts manuscripts for refereed publication in its annual journal, the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. Manuscripts must be fact, not fiction, and must relate to individuals, events, buildings, natural formations, etc., of historical significance in the southern part of the state of New Mexico. Articles which have been previously published will not normally be considered unless there is a compelling reason to do so. They must be accompanied by clear information relating to prior publication.

**Length:** 20 or fewer pages, including photographs, figures, maps, tables, drawings, etc.

**Format:** Type and double space everything. All text, block quotes, figure captions, tables, reference list—everything—on 8½" X 11" white paper, one side only. Keep a copy of manuscript. Original submission may not be returned, or may be returned with editorial marks or comments. The Doña Ana Historical Society assumes no responsibility for lost or misdirected manuscripts.

**Illustrations, etc:** Do not affix photographs to mountings; do identify photographs on back, to include date. Include a brief descriptive caption for all illustrations. Include scale, north arrow on maps; scale in drawings, if significant. Number and briefly title all tables; cite by number in text.

**References, Footnotes, and Bibliography:** for examples see:

Past Issues of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*

(copies available by mail for \$5.00 plus \$1.50 postage and handling).

Any reputable style manual, especially the MLA Style Manual published by the Modern Language Association.

**Personal Vita** (100-150 words): Ensure that the name, full address, and telephone number of author are also included in cover letter.

**Address:** Editor, *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*  
Doña Ana County Historical Society  
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**Deadline For Submissions:** 15 June for consideration in issue scheduled to be published the following January.

## Book Reviews

Reviews of recent books relating to Southern New Mexico history may be submitted. Format: as above.

Length: One to two, typed, double-spaced pages.

To avoid possible duplication of effort, please query Editor prior to submitting

## **Doña Ana County Historical Society**

*Our mission is to encourage a greater appreciation  
and knowledge of Doña Ana County's historical  
and cultural heritage.*

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