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YES, YOU CAN!

by A.C. "Bill" Hernandez, as recorded by Norma Lane

Revolution was brewing, particularly in the northern state of Chihuahua, when I was born Ambrocio Castaneda Hernandez in Janos, Chihuahua, Mexico, on 7 December 1908. My parents were Francisco and Piedad Hernandez. My father worked for the Corralitos Cattle Company and we lived at the Hacienda, the ruins of which still stand about 175 miles northwest of Chihuahua City. Our house was one of about twenty small adobe dwellings with common walls, like modern townhouses, that surrounded on three sides a small, dusty open space that might be referred to as a plaza. The north side of the plaza was bounded by an enclosure for horses.

The great Porfirio Diaz already had been president for 32 years. He had kept the peace, had sponsored the erection of magnificent monuments and public buildings in the capital, and had encouraged the investment of foreign capital to develop Mexico's resources. However, he was surrounded by well-to-do and loyal people, and he did not hear the unhappy voices of the vast majority of landless, poorly-housed, resentful people of the country.

Two years later, in 1910, Francisco Madero became a leader of the Anti-Reelectionist Party and proclaimed himself Provisional President of Mexico. A storekeeper named Pascual Orozco organized Los Insurrectos to harass the large landowners and the Federal troops. One of Orozco's allies was the outlaw Francisco (Pancho) Villa, a bandito who was to be quite instrumental in the direction my young life was to take.

One day, when I was about four years old, Los Insurrectos raided the Corralitos Hacienda and tried to recruit or otherwise capture all the young boys living in the compound. My mother, being quite determined and resourceful, sat herself in the doorway of our house, pulled me under her voluminous black skirt, and placed my head firmly between her knees. Being a normal, noisy child, I was sure I could not stay quiet as she instructed, but she told me, "Yes, you can!" I did and she convinced the rebel soldiers that no boy child was there.

Later, as one of the smallest and fastest runners of the children of the community, I was trusted with the important job of "lookout." It was a great game. I climbed on top of a huge rock-crushing machine and watched for the dust clouds raised by the many horses of approaching revolutionaries. When signs of the galloping horses appeared, I would dash home to alert the residents of the Hacienda.

The raids became more and more frequent. My father and many of the other men left Mexico for the Corralitos Cattle Company's holdings in the United States, in New Mexico's Mesilla Valley. After about three months, the Company sent for the families, and we set out for the train

station at AscenciOn. We were not allowed to go quietly. Pancho Villa and his gang pursued the departing families and caught our little group. The women and children were forced to watch while the six men who were protecting us were hanged. One of those men was my uncle. I will never forget his bright red hair gleaming in the desert sunlight as his lifeless body dangled from the noose.

The remainder of the grieving party was allowed to go on our way eastward by train to Ciudad Juarez, where we were met by my father and the other men who had been in the advance party. Across the mighty Rio Grande to El Paso, Texas, and north on another train to Mesilla Park, near Las Cruces, New Mexico. We were starting a new life in a new state which had been the Territory of New Mexico only two years before.

The Corralitos Cattle Company headquarters in Mesilla Park was in a large two-story gray house that still stands not far from the Sara Lee Company's "L'eggs" hosiery factory. We lived near there in a modest home where my sister Gregoria was born. I remember swatting flies and shooing them away from the baby, as the house had no window screens.

While coming to the new country was a great adventure, I was intimidated by my inability to speak English. Although I was reluctant to approach the Anglo children, my mother insisted that I go out and play with them; I would learn. When I protested with all the tearful determination of a six-year-old, she repeated that I could learn — "Yes, you can!"

I did learn. I sat on a rock with my elbows on my knees and my head cradled in my hands and watched the games: kick the can, run sheep run, hide and seek — the same games I had played in Mexico under their Spanish names. It was not long before I joined the games and began speaking English with my playmates. The English-speaking children had trouble pronouncing my first name, Ambrocio, so they gave me the nickname "Bill." Also, speaking English was mandatory when I began attending the Mesilla Valley School, where I fell in love with my first grade teacher, Miss Esther Stewart. She was not only beautiful, but whenever I felt discouraged, she would insist that I could grasp concepts that seemed beyond my reach, saying, "Yes, you can!"

Although Spanish was still spoken at home, because the finer points of Spanish grammar were not taught at school, the possibility existed that my first language might slip away. However, the clergy at the Roman Catholic Church in the nearby village of Tortugas undertook to provide the Mexican children with formal instruction in Spanish, as well as to attend to our spiritual lives by teaching us our catechism. Whenever I murmured that I could never



A.C. Hernandez, December 1995.
Photograph courtesy of
Mrs. Norma Lane.

learn "all that stuff," I was firmly reminded, "Yes, you can!"

When I was about 14 years old, my mother sent me to check on a pregnant friend of hers who lived about two miles from our house. When I arrived, the woman was having frequent and severe labor pains. I started to return home for my mother, but the lady insisted there was not time, that I would have to assist her. I wailed that I knew nothing about having babies and I could not help her. She insisted, "Yes, you can!" and I did. I did exactly as she directed and helped to deliver a beautiful baby girl.

Growing up in a dusty small community in New Mexico during the First World War and immediately afterward was probably not very different than growing up in most small rural towns anywhere else. There was never a lot of money and children learned to get along as they did everywhere else, by trading and bartering for what they needed or wanted.

For me, the trading and bartering was the beginning of "business" experience that I would be forced to pursue before I felt quite ready for the encounter. As I approached the final year of high school, my father had a devastating accident. He was struck by a hit-and-run driver. The

Model T Ford, having extremely high road clearance, might have passed over him had not one of his suspenders been caught in the undercarriage. The automobile dragged him for a considerable distance. Not only did he suffer broken bones and mangled limbs, he was scalped; his head was skinned from his forehead to the base of his skull! While he did not perish from his injuries, he was never able to work again.

There was of course, no insurance to compensate the family and it was not a litigious era, so there was no concept of suing the careless driver. It became my lot to provide for the family. The prospect seemed monumental and I had concerns about my ability to do an adequate job, but I recalled the encouraging words that had been said to me so often, "Yes, you can!" and I did.

I took whatever positions were open: janitor, farm hand, construction worker, carpenter, salesman. Later, I joined the Army, learned military communications, and served in New Guinea and Australia. Subsequently, I worked in U.S. Government communications at White Sands Missile Range until I retired. I learned from every job; constantly stretched my span of knowledge; continually increased my skills; repeatedly profited by my mistakes; steadfastly mastered successive levels of responsibility; and invariably accepted every challenge.

I faithfully gave, and still give, credit and thanks to every person who encouraged me to broaden my horizons and allowed me a chance to prove myself. And I still give "Gracias, a Dios" for the frequent reminders, "Yes, you can!"

A. C. "BILL" HERNANDEZ retired from White Sands Missile Range in 1972 after nearly 25 years of continuous government service, starting as a painter and finishing as a supervisor. Four years (1941-45) of service with the U.S. Army Signal Corps facilitated his becoming a naturalized United States citizen shortly thereafter. Regarding himself as a native Las Cruces and very proud of his citizenship, he insists on speaking English. He narrated this reminiscence for potential use in a program to help youth of today.

Norma Lane, who transcribed this story, relocated to Las Cruces from Mobile, Alabama, in the fall of 1994. Retired from the ownership of a ceramics business, she continues as a poet who has had a number of poems selected for publication in national anthologies.

NEW MEXICO IN THE BIG PICTURE; 1846

by Thomas E. Chavez

New Mexico stands as an antithesis to national arguments of cultural superiority or ethnic boasterism done at the cost of denigrating another culture. A person visiting many of New Mexico's towns for the first time might elicit an initial reaction of appreciation as well as confusion somewhat like the unverified story of Will Rogers' first visit to Santa Fe. The American critic and comic supposedly said, "Whoever designed this town, did so while riding a jackass backwards and drunk." Inherent in those words is a reaction to something different yet intriguing, if not appealing.

New Mexico's first inhabitants date to twelve thousand years ago. Many pre-European cultures flourished and progressed throughout the lands of today's state and the southwest. The Mogollon, Hohokam, and Anasazi cultures are direct ancestors of the Native American people that inhabit the area today. Other Indian cultures came to New Mexico more recently. The Athabascan speaking people, the Apaches, are relative new comers with the Navajos entering New Mexico within a century of the first Spanish appearance.

The first Spanish expeditions, ranging from 1536 through 1598 encountered a series of villages centered on the upper Rio Grande River. Therein was a major enticement for the first settlement at San Juan de los Cabaleros in 1598. The Franciscan missionaries argued that the "civilized" village dwellers were ripe for conversion. As a result, New Mexico, then called *la nueva Mexico*, or "Another Mexico" in reference to the great sedentary Indian civilizations in central Mexico, was established as a missionary field.¹

Not unlike the English colonies of the eastern seaboard, the early Spanish colony of New Mexico had to learn some hard lessons in survival. New Mexico was unique, for it was the only true landlocked colony established in North America during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. All other colonies — Spanish, French, English, Dutch, and, even, the Portuguese — had quick and easy access to water transportation.

Along with the conversion of Indians, there was another reason for the settlement of New Mexico. Spain, like every other European power, sought to fulfill Columbus' dream and cash in on the Oriental trade. Spain searched for the Straits of Anian, the Northwest Passage in U.S. history, a waterway through the continent. Juan de Oñate, New Mexico's first governor, had instructions dated 1595 in which he was to secure "any seaports" he found against "the harmful results that either by becoming infested with enemies and by opening the gate through which the profits might be lost . . ."²

For most of the rest of New Mexico's history as a colony, the Franciscans played a prominent role and the search for a waterway, a gateway to the East Indies, persisted. Ironically, New Mexico became a part of the United States as a result of the Mexican War which James K. Polk insisted on starting so the United States could secure the West Coast ports of California and thus have a geographical advantage over European competitors for the Oriental trade. Only then was Columbus' dream fulfilled.

New Mexico was never on a frontier as defined by Frederick Jackson Turner, but was an island in the wilderness connected to central Mexico by the long and dangerous Camino Real.³ As such, it was to the inland exploration of North America what the Canary Islands were to Columbus' westward voyages.⁴

Not surprisingly, the early settlers of this northern Spanish colony suffered similarly to those English colonists attempting to settle on the East Coast on the same continent. Any student of U.S. colonial history will recognize the familiarity of the words of Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco who wrote from New Mexico to his Viceroy in 1601:

Because we are zealous of our honor and sign complaint, we are labeled as traitors. The fact is that we are all depressed, cowed, and frightened, expecting death at any moment. We are not masters of ourselves or of our children. We find ourselves in the most harrowing position of servitude ever endured by Spanish subjects, and threatened with the loss of our rights . . . We had all come so eagerly to serve you in this conversion [New Mexico] at our own expense, but, after spending many thousands from our estates, we did not have the fortune to be governed by a person such as you . . . unless His Majesty sends relief, we shall doubtless all perish with our women and children.⁵

They did not perish but went on to establish a colony that would survive. Harsh conditions, recalcitrant officials, the most successful Indian rebellion in North American history, nomadic Indian raids and distance probably should have ended the colony. Indeed, Spain almost did abandon the idea of this northern settlement on more than one occasion. The first such consideration came after Oñate's administration. Instead, a new governor was dispatched to establish a new capital in a more central location to all the Indian villages. In 1610, the new capital was established at a villa called Santa Fe, which had been founded three years earlier.⁶ Like their Native American neighbors, descendants of those people who moved to New Mexico from Spain and Mexico still inhabit the area today.

From 1598 until 1821, when the Viceroyalty of New Spain became the new country of Mexico, the Spanish empire spread with the establishment of villages, missions, presidios (forts) and routes throughout what is today the southwest of the United States. This south to north expansion mirrored the United States expansion from east to west that transferred that country into a transcontinental world power. Spanish expansion, too, had mining and farming frontiers, immigrant trails, Indian wars and trading routes. The western cattle industry had its routes in the vaquero, or Hispanic cowboy.⁷ Spanish experience also underwent change as people became influenced by the “New World” experience. They learned of new food, language, customs, and ideas.⁸ They, too, became something different from their European antecedents. They became Americans.

This societal metamorphosis was a change planned by some Spanish leaders from the beginning of Spanish settlement in the Americas. Hernan Cortes wrote after the devastation of his conquest of Tenochtitlan that it was his duty “to make the best arrangements . . . for the colonization of this land, . . . so that the natives and the Spanish settlers may maintain themselves and prosper.” He then enacted a series of laws to protect the Indians and ensure that the devastation that he witnessed in the Caribbean would not be repeated in New Spain. He even decreed that the settlers must marry within eighteen months.⁹

With the addition of the legend of Guadalupe, when a dark complected Virgin appeared to an Indian, the Church also helped fulfill Cortes’ ideal of a new society that included all people, especially those with mixed lineage.¹⁰

Two centuries later two Mexican-born Jesuit priests who were unceremoniously shipped to Europe as part of the Jesuit expulsion in 1767, wrote respective histories in which they coined the concept of “neo-Aztecism” while describing the new society from which they had been exiled. Francisco Javier Clavijero, who studied and admired the 17th century Mexican scholar Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, in addressing Mexico’s pre-Columbian history noted that like Europe’s history of the Greeks and Romans, Mexico had its own equally valid “pre-history” with the Olmecs, Toltecs, Mayans, Aztecs and so on. In fact, Mexico could lay claim to both “ancient” histories and that claim made Mexico special. Clavijero’s friend, Francisco Javier Alegre continued the concept through his history of the Jesuit order in Mexico.¹¹

Today, the development of the idea of neo-Aztecism is gaining acceptance. Even Mexico has started to recognize some positive aspects of the “vice-regal” period. Brilliant thinkers and writers such as Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz and Sigüenza y Góngora are now receiving their just recognition. Sor Juana has even been the beneficiary of a very good recent movie based on a biography by Mexican writer

Octavio Paz¹² while Sigüenza’s reputation has overcome centuries-long attitudes as personified even in his own day by the condescending treatment he received from the European-born Jesuit Francisco Eusebio Kino.¹³

Far to the north, New Mexico has been the recipient of Mexico’s growing identity through the centuries. While New Mexico’s longevity makes it a special case, that fact of southern influence is reflected throughout the southwest of the United States. As subsequent generations of people moved north they brought with them their own cultural baggage. Consequently, those cities or regions that have had large influxes of Mexican population contain a culture different from those of less and/or older influxes. Those people who moved north over the previous centuries were culturally different than those moving north today although they both are parts of the same cultural patrimony. This is somewhat of a surprise to many people. But when they begin to realize that Juan de Oñate did not listen to Mariachis, which is a style of music developed in this century, they begin to understand. Another good example is to realize that people from Spain do not eat chili.

If the two societies have similarities as expressed in the respective expansions into the continent, there are differences. Obviously, the United States developed a different mentality. Without going into details, the east to west movement of the descendants, primarily, of England is the story of England’s colonial mentality of “white man’s burden” to the United States’ “manifest destiny”, including the evolution of the “Puritan ethic” replete with the Horatio Alger stories of rags to riches that were used in schools at the end of the last century.¹⁴

An important episode of the cultural patrimony of the United States is the meeting of these two ideals as they migrated into the North American continent. The hub of this meeting between Manifest Destiny and NeoAztecism is New Mexico and apex was in 1846 when the U.S. Army occupied the area after the outbreak of the Mexican War. Ironically, the origins of these societal attitudes were centuries old rivalries in Europe. England, the leader of the Reformation, and Spain, the leader of the counter-Reformation, disliked each other. These distastes persisted in the national consciousnesses of the colonies of the respective countries. They became national biases. In Tolkien terms Francis Parkman described Spain as “the incubus of Europe. Gloomy and portentous, she chilled the world with her baneful shadow.” Spain’s King Felipe II, who fought hardest against the Reformation, naturally received the same treatment. He is the mysterious King, in his den in the Escorial, dreary and silent, and bent like a scribe over his papers . . . More than the Pope himself, he was the head of Catholicity. In doctrine and in deed, the inexorable bigotry of Madrid was ever in advance of Rome.¹⁵

Perhaps, the most significant event in North American history is the meeting of these two cultures after centuries of “new world” experience. While culmination of this event remains for the future, the pivotal moment was the Mexican War wherein the United States acquired the northern half of Mexico for a bargain.

As the two countries moved toward war, New Mexico, then a part of Mexico, offered glimpses of some of the future misapprehensions. When Mexico achieved its independence in 1821, it opened its heretofore closed borders to international trade. New Mexico became a port of entry for trade with the United States, for it was located less than 900 miles over mild terrain from the western edge of the United States. The new trade was transported over the Santa Fe Trail to connect with the Chihuahua Trail for points further south. This commerce also opened up an influx of influence that moved into northern Mexico from the United States. The people who traveled down the Santa Fe Trail from the United States found Mexican society quaint if not rare. For example, the women smoked cigarettes in public. They wore suggestive clothing because it bared their shoulders and ankles. But most startling of all, they participated in business. One woman in Santa Fe even owned and operated a very successful gambling den.¹⁶

A more neutral observation came from a person who was a native of Spain, educated and multilingual. He somewhat dispassionately noted that the Mexicans “are a proud and sensitive people; yet some are more easily subdued by kindness . . .” He felt that the locals were gullible to the schemes of the newcomers:¹⁷ But his view was an exception in the written record.

More common, even to this date, was the opinion stated by a United States Army officer. He felt that Mexicans were incapable of understanding democratic institutions. He evaluated the New Mexican populace by writing that “. . . no great improvement in the moral condition of the present generation can be expected from the introduction of our institutions.”¹⁸

Colonel George McCall traveled to New Mexico in 1850 with secret instructions to impede an early New Mexican attempt to become a state. The statehood party was mostly made up of sophisticated Mexicans who fully understood that they would control local elections as mandated in their proposed state constitution. Recent arrivals from the United States opposed the movement. Both sides competed for the influential governmental positions. Statehood meant that locally elected former Mexicans would have the jobs and influence. Territorial status meant that the recent arrivals in New Mexico would be appointed to positions from Washington, D.C.

The eastern leaders, busy struggling over their country’s identity just a decade prior to the Civil War found in New Mexico’s statehood petition a new problem. For the first time in United States history, a land had been annexed with a population large enough to qualify it constitutionally

for statehood but with a population that was neither primarily English-speaking nor Protestant.¹⁹ As a result, Congress made New Mexico a U.S. Territory as part of the Compromise of 1850.²⁰ New Mexico would wait for sixty-two years before it became the forty-seventh state of the union in 1912.

The similar attitudes of McCall and Sherman are reflected in this century by young second lieutenant George C. Patton who, out of frustration, toyed with the idea of resigning his commission after spending some time on the Mexican border under General John J. Pershing, putting up with the wind and dust, and hoping to engage Pancho Villa, who “if we can induce him to fight will be all right but if he breaks up [his army and fights in small bands] it will be bad Patton never did see Villa but remained “very well and having a stupid time.”²¹

The same Mexican Revolution in which Pancho Villa participated coincided with the birth of popular movie films. Villa, himself fascinated with the new medium, allowed Hollywood filmmakers to travel with him. The images of the revolution, amplified through Hollywood, greatly enhanced popular U.S. stereotypes of Mexico that remain prevalent today.²²

A person truly interested in United States history will understand that once beyond the simplistic classifications of Hispanic/Mexican and Anglo-American, a place like New Mexico is a conduit for an improved view of that history. The researcher will not be surprised to find that radical claims to the contrary, Indian relations in New Mexico have been different from those European-Indian relations in the east. Today, in northern New Mexico there are more tribes of Indians living on land which they were living on at European contact than in the whole eastern half of the United States. In addition, the peoples of New Mexico demonstrate the obvious: that there is no Indian culture, Hispanic culture or Anglo-American culture but many cultures under those general headings. Contrary to the claims of genocide by ethnic chauvinists, all the people who moved to New Mexico have survived to the present. The descendants live in New Mexico today. Despite struggles and disputes no group was eliminated.²³

As we commemorate 1846, we should quickly begin to understand that further research, writing, and understanding need to expand the accepted horizons of our national identity. This is not an endorsement for a “new history” but for improved history, which is, after all, what the field of history has always done.

We will learn that the United States’ War for independence would not have been successful but for the aid of Spain. We will learn that a great amount of that aid originated in Mexico where even New Mexicans, Arizonians and Californians paid a tax while Hispanic Texas supplied cattle for the cause.²⁴ And, although American novelist Gore Vidal commemorated the centennial year of that independence through a semi-fictional exposé of how corrupt the politics of 1876 really were,

we would begin to realize that 1846 is a year of far more significance to United States history. Nor would a person be led into the misconception that Spain or Mexico paid any less attention to their northern colony than the United States does today. The History Library of the Palace of the Governors, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the seat of Spanish, Mexican, Indian, and U.S. Territorial governments, has two bound volumes of Royal decrees sent from Mexico City that instruct in all matters of governance, including gambling. These individually written letters date from 1680 until 1790.²⁵ The Mexican Archives of New Mexico in the State Records Center reveal the same kind of concern. Even to the point of an order expelling all people born in Spain who are residing within "upper and lower" California and New Mexico.²⁶ As every "borderlands" historian expected, the papers from the Archdiocese of Durango now being microfilmed and catalogued in the Rio Grande Historical Collections of New Mexico State University reemphasize the historical connections of New Mexico to Mexico in the three decades up to and including the Mexican War.

In the early part of this century, some members of United States society saw the Hispanic and Indian peoples of New Mexico as tolerant and exotic. By the 1920s, New Mexico became a poor man's Europe for artists, writers and free-thinkers. Even some Europeans saw an alternative in New Mexico. D.H. Lawrence, a famous English writer who grew to dislike his own country, wrote in 1923 that "New Mexico liberated me from the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development . . ."²⁷

Because of distance and a sparse population, the Federal government on the advice of Robert Oppenheimer placed the highly secret Manhattan Project to develop the atom bomb in the Jemez Mountains. And the bomb was tested at Trinity Site in central New Mexico.²⁸ The Manhattan Project hints of the influence of technology on culture and diversity. Over the last 150 years humankind has changed more than in the sum total of the rest of its existence. The technological revolution has more influence on us than any other culture or influx of people could possibly have.

Nor did New Mexicans lack in contributing to the preservation of the United States. Navajo code talkers proved invaluable in the conduct of the war in the South Pacific while many New Mexicans suffered and died because of their involvement with the death march and internment after the fall of Bataan in the Philippines in April 1942.²⁹

As knowledge of New Mexico reveals, the southwest of the United States has made major contributions to the national story. Indeed, as historian Bernard DeVoto argued over fifty years ago in his seminal book, (*The Year of Decision, 1846*),³⁰ the year of 1846 should be a major anniversary in our national psyche. The ideal of only a western moving frontier needs reconsideration, for there are many frontiers. Perhaps, the last frontier is our collective consciousness.

New Mexico, always distant from the seats of power, is a state in a region with an invaluable history and heritage, the telling and understanding of which enriches the patrimony of the United States. With apologies to Gore Vidal the value is not on the centennial, a year in which nothing of real importance occurred, but in the concept that we must recognize the many heritages that have become ours. Scholars must continue to investigate and share, especially share, with the public this constantly changing rich legacy in which 1846 constantly looms large.

Thomas E. Chavez, a Fulbright Research Fellow, is the Director of the Palace of Governors Museum in Santa Fe. He opened the Sesquicentennial Symposium, "1846: New Mexico's Historic Year," sponsored by the Doña Ana County Historical Society and The Academy for Learning in Retirement, Las Cruces, New Mexico, 30 March 1996, with an expanded version of the text of this article.

ENDNOTES

- 1 For a perfect example of the title see Gaspar Perez Villagrà, *La historia de Isrt creua Mexico* (Alcala: Luis Martinez Grande, 1610). Villagrà's book is the first publication about a part of what is today the United States that was written by a person who actually participated in the events of the book. Villagrà was a captain in the 1598 settlement led by Juan de ònate.
- 2 Viceroy Luis de Velasco to Governor don Juan de Onate, instructions, October 21, 1595, as translated in George P. Hammond and Agapitn Rey, editors and translators, *Don Juan de Onate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, vol. I (Albuquerque; The University of New Mexico Press, 1953), pp. 62-63. A good recent biography of Onate is Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador: Don Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).
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- 4 See T. Chavez, *Quest for Quivera* (Tucson AZ: Southwest Park Association, 1992).
- 5 Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco to the Viceroy. March 22, 1601, in Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, p. 613.
- 6 keno L. Chavez, translator, "Instructions to Peralta by Vice-Roy (Luis de Velasco), March 30, 1609, *New Mexico Historical Review* (NMHR) (April, 1929), pp. 178-187; and France V. Scholes, "Juan Martinez de Montoya, Settler and Conquistador of New Mexico," *HMHR* (October, 1944), pp. 337-38. Scholes cites the Juan Martinez de Montoya Collection now in the History Library of the Palace of the Governors, to establish the founding of Santa Fe in 1607.
- 7 See Howard W. Marshall and Richard E. Ahlborn, *Buckaroos in Paradise; Cowboy Life in Northern Nevada* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1980), pp. 12-15; Richard E. Ahlborn, editor, *Man Made Mobile: Early Saddles of Western North America* (Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980). Ahlborn's book includes three articles on the subject as well as a Spanish-English glossary of

- cowboy terms.
- 8 The story of Spain in the Southwest has received the benefit of many historians beginning with people like Herbert Eugene Bolton and Ralph Emerson Twitchell, and carried on by the likes of France Scholes, George P. Hammond, Agapito Rey, John Francis Bannon and, today, Fray Angelico Chavez, David Weber, John Kessel, Marc Simmons, Elizabeth A. H. John, Joseph Sanchez, Bernard Fontana, James Officer, Charles Polzer and Oakah Jones (to name a few). Many others are working on the influence of Spain in North America focusing on places and disciplines other than the immediate Southwest and history. Some of the most interesting new information is coming from archaeological excavations and museum exhibitions. For a critique of the state of the museum world during the quincentenary see Thomas E. Chavez, "A Question of Legacy," *Museum News* (September/October, 1991), pp. 48-50.
 - 9 Hernán Cortes to King Carlos I, October 15, 1524, as translated in Anthony Pagden, translator and editor, *Hernan Cortes: Letters from Mexico*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 333, 336-37 & footnote 69, p. 511.
 - 10 For an overview of the development of this ideal see Jacque Lafaye, From Quetzalcoatl to Guadalupe., *The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974); and John Leddy Phelan, "Neo-Aztecism in the Eighteenth Century and the Genesis of Mexican Nationalism," Stahley Diamond, editor, *Culture in History; Essays in Honor of Paul Radin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960). As this same type of concept, the development of an identity, pertains to New Mexico; see Fray Angelico Chavez, *My Penitente Land* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1993), PP. 162-67.
 - 11 Francisco Javier Clavijero, *La Historia Antigua de Mexico* (Mexico, D.F.; Editorial Porrúa, 1964 [originally 1780-811]); and Francisco Javier Alegre, *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España* (Roma: Instituto Historiográfico, S.J., 1956 [originally 17671]).
 - 12 "Yo, la peor de todas," (1992), directed by María Luisa Bemberg. The movie is based on the book by Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana de la Cruz o la trampa de la fe*, (Mexico: Fondo de cultura económica, 1988).
 - 13 Irving A. Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico; Seventeenth Century Persons, Places, and Practices* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1973), pp. 205-11. Sigienza even wrote a history about one of New Mexico's favorite sons, Diego de Vargas in *El Mercurio Volante con la noticia de la recuperación de las provincias del Nuevo Mexico* (Mexico: Los Herederos de la Viuda de Bernardo Calderon, 1693), and subsequently published in English, Irving A. Leonard, editor and translator, *The Mercurio Volante* (Los Angeles: Quivers Society Publications, 1932). The book is a history of Vargas' 1692 expedition into New Mexico after the 1680 Pueblo Indian Revolt. Sigienza also personally surveyed Pensacola Bay in 1693. His recommendation to occupy the inlet was subsequently followed. See Leonard, *Baroque Times*, pp. 211 -12. Clavijero studied Sigienza at the Jesuit Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo and described his intellectual precursor as one of the most comprehensive writers on the history of Mexico. Jimenez Julio Rueda, *Francisco Javier Clavijero; Capítulos de historia y disertaciones* (Mexico, D.F.; Ediciones de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 1944), p. xxi; and Clavijero, *History*, vol. I, Charles Cullen, translator, (Richmond: William Prichard, 1806), p. xxvi.
 - 14 For overviews of "manifest destiny" see Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Random House, 1966); and William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire; The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Random House, 1966).
 - 15 Frances Parkman, *Pioneers of France* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1907 [originally 18651]), pp. 20-21.
 - 16 Research on a biography of New Mexican merchant Manuel Alvarez uncovered the fact that the businesses that had offices at both ends of the Santa Fe Frail allowed women to do business with them in Mexico but not in the United States. Thomas E. Chavez, *Manuel Alvarez, 1794-1856; A Southwestern Biography* (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1992), pp. 58-62. For first hand examples of American reactions to Mexican women in New Mexico see Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, Max L. Moorhead, editor (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1954 [originally 1844]), pp. 153-54; and Lewis H. Garrard, *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail . . .* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1955 [originally 18501]). For general attitudes an example is in Horgan, Lamy, p. 120.
 - 17 Ledger Book, 1834, Manuel Alvarez Papers, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives. Santa Fe.
 - 18 Colonel George Archibald McCall, July 1850 in George Archibald McCall, *Now Mexico in 1850; A Military View*, Robert Frazer, editor (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 86.
 - 19 Robert W. Larson, *New Mexico's Quest for Statehood, 1846-1912* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1968), pp. 20-74.
 - 20 Three years later Jose Manuel Gallegos won election for Territorial delegate to Congress. The election was challenged without a change in the result but Congress disallowed the votes cast by Pueblo Indians. The Pueblo had voting rights under previous governments and assumed that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo maintained the rights. Congress disagreed so they lost their voting rights and did not regain them until this century. Larson, *Quest for Statehood*, p. 82.
 - 21 George F. Patton to Beatrice Patton, December 20, 1916, p. 367; Patton to his father (George S. Patton), March 12, 1916, pp. 317-18; Patton to his father, June 15, 1916, p. 341 in Martin Blumenson, editor, *The Patton Papers, 1885-1940*, Vol. I (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972).
 - 22 See Margarita de Orellana, *La mirada circular; El tinte norteamericano do la RevoluciOn mexicana, 1911-1917* (Mexico, D.F.; cuadernos de Joaquin Moritz, 1991). Orellana's work is an excellent study of the Mexican Revolution and movie making.
 - 23 "Genocide" is a term that became popular and misused in 1992 when discussing Spanish-Indian relations. In this context, Columbus was the scapegoat.
 - 24 There has been a great proliferation of work on this subject. All recent work must benefit from the first, Juan F. Vela Utrilla. *España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos* (Lerida, Spain: Graficos Academia Mariana, 1925 [facsimile in Madrid; Ediciones Istmo, S.A., 1992]). More recent publications include Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr., translator and editor, *Tribute to Don Bernardo de Galvez; Royal Patents and an Epic Ballad Honoring the Spanish Governor of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge and New Orleans: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1979; Light Townsend Cummins, Spanish Observers and the American Revolution, 1775-1783 (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1991); and Eric Beerman, *España y la independencia de Estados Unidos* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992). Also, this author has completed a large manuscript on the subject. Thomas E. Chavez. "The Ultimate Gift; Spain and the Independence of the United States." Copy in the History Library of the Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
 - 25 *Cedulas, Reales Ordenes y Nouissimas Disposiciones de Gobierno*, 2 vols., 1680-1790, compiled by Jose Antonio Lopez Frias, History Library, Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe.
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 - 27 D.H. Lawrence, as quoted in Joseph Foster, *D.H. Lawrence in Taos* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1972), p. 56. A standard overview of artists in New Mexico is Van Deren Coke, *Taos and Santa Fe* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1963). An interesting close up view of the beginning of the Taos art community is Robert R. White, *The Taos Society of Artists* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1983).
 - 28 See *Los Alamos; Beginning of an Era, 1943-1945* (Los Alamos, NM: Los Alamos National Laboratory, 1984); and Michael B. Stoff, Jonathan F. Fanton and Richard Hal Williams, *The Manhattan Project; A Documentary Introduction to the Atomic Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).
 - 29 For the code talkers, see Margaret T. Bixler, *Winds of Freedom; The Story of Navajo Code Talkers of World War II* (Darien, Conn.: Two Bytes Pub. Co., 1992). For Bataan, see Joseph A. Petek, *Never Plan Tomorrow; The Saga of the Bataan Death March and Battle of Corregidor Survivors, 1942-1945* (Fullerton, C.A.: Aguataur Press, 1991). Also see Dorothy Cave, *Beyond Courage; One Regiment Against Japan* (Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1992).
 - 30 Bernard DeVoto, *The Year of Decision, 1846* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943).

1950 – ALAMOGORDO'S YEAR OF DECISION

By Jeanne Culbertson

There is a species of mushroom known as the earth star which curls up into an inconspicuous disk about a quarter of an inch in diameter in dry weather. When it rains the outer petals unfold, making a pretty, inch-wide star while the center swells into a little brown ball. As soon as the moisture is gone, the center goes limp and the petals fold inward, contracting more and more as it dries. Blending into the background, it remains unnoticed until the next rain causes it to open again.

The economies of defense-oriented towns in the United States have been going through much the same process due to increases and decreases in military expenditures since World War II. The effects of these shifts are felt in all parts of community life. So it was in Alamogordo, NM, pulled by World War II from a bucolic existence to the very edge of the nuclear frontier and then, almost, back again. 1950 marks the one time when the power of decision rested with the town: would they work together to keep the military installation there and growing or would they bicker among themselves and leave the decision blowing in the winds of Washington, D.C.? This is the story of that choice.

In 1940, Alamogordo, the county seat of Otero County, New Mexico, served the county's 10,552 people,¹ who represented a variety of nationalities and cultures. The town, only forty-two years old, had been carefully planned by railroad builder Charles B. Eddy.²

On April 6, 1940, practically every one of the 3,950 residents drove the fifteen miles to White Sands National Monument for the annual Play Day. Something was planned for everyone — athletic competition, a grand parade in Southwestern costumes, Indian dances, and a speech by Governor John Miles.³ Between events, the happy picnickers gossiped with their friends from the rest of the county.

Some felt that the economic condition was improving because of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, but thought no man should be elected to three terms. Young, energetic Eber McKinley⁴ helped Clinton P. Anderson defeat nine others in a "very tough"⁵ primary for nomination to the United States House of Representatives in 1940. That victory launched him on his career and as Anderson's influence increased, he never failed to use it when he could to assist his friends in Alamogordo.

In January 1941, World War II seemed close to Alamogordo, as a front-page story began what has continued to be the most important news in Alamogordo: the size and status of the local military base. It reported that New Mexico had leased to the United States government 25,000 acres of state land lying east of

the Organ Mountains at three cents an acre for a high altitude bombing and anti-aircraft range, the White Sands Bombing Range and Gunnery.⁶

In October, the Army Air Corps notified the owners of the ranches they would have to evacuate their land. The government would appraise it and allocate funds for payment. The ranchers were to dispose of their 500 horses, 3,000 cattle, 15,000 goats, and 250 sheep.

The year 1942 was the first of many which called for rapid readjustments due to military contingencies. A banker remarked incredulously that the Army was going to spend \$10,000,000⁷ on this camp. In March 1942, a conference of base, town, and school officials was the first of many through the years to discuss the four main problems: water, housing, schools, and recreation, all inadequate to the realities of present and projected growth. The absence of water had been the bane of all promoters of the area from Charles Eddy in 1888 to the present; water was being sought, bought and brought to the town by every means known, but bare adequacy seemed the best that could be achieved.

On July 16, 1945, the first atom bomb was detonated at Trinity Test Site, 120 miles away. Yet still more growth was hoped for, in tourism. The possibilities inherent in people's desire to visit the site of that event were realized, at least sufficiently to deplete the once ample supply of trinitite (sand crystals fused by the heat of the blast). Statistics on the economic results of this curiosity for the town are not available.

Another result of the blast, however, does stand clear in the record. In Washington, the postwar military planners were uncertain what the fate of Alamogordo Air Field should be. On October 18, 1945, the base officials announced the air field would be retained as a testing area, but the following February the newspaper reported the base was to be inactivated at the end of the month. Sales of surplus equipment were conducted and the personnel of the base shrank to 400 military and only 123 civilians, as the few remaining B-29s prepared to leave. When Clinton Anderson accepted the appointment as Secretary of Agriculture in 1945, his main service to his ex-constituents was in assisting them with their agricultural problems. But then in 1946, the base was selected for embryonic guided missile activities, and the federal government purchased or condemned more land. In October 1947, Anderson arranged with the War Department for ranchers' co-use of the range.

The real value of the military installation to the town began in March 1947 when the U.S. Army Air Materiel Command moved more than 1,200 people from Wendover

Field, Utah, to the Alamogordo Air Field to carry on a series of three-year research projects.

The patriotic feelings of the townspeople which had caused close cooperation between the town and the base during the war years was replaced by economic interest as the possible benefits to the town were realized. The problems of water and housing continued. The government research projects used enormous quantities of good quality water.⁸ Wells were purchased in 1947 from rancher Luther Boles and in 1950, 1951, and 1952 from La Luz.

Because the future of the airfield was so insecure, housing became scarce. The few people with capital hesitated to make long-term real estate investments. Only forty-one building permits were issued in 1947. The years of 1948 and 1949 were a challenge to civic leaders. The postwar military and civilian science specialists' view of acceptable living conditions were far different from those of the young GIs of war time. Some civilians threatened to quit.

Mayor Eber McKinley, confident that economic prosperity was knocking at the door, worked determinedly month after month to assure the town's position as a military base. Secretary of the Air Force Stuart Symington replied to one of McKinley's letters that HoHoman⁹ was one of the permanent installations proposed to Congress because of the base's natural advantages and government investments being made on the base. Symington did not see any closing in the "foreseeable future" and thought military and civilian employees would average about 1500.¹⁰ The effects of this letter were immediate. The next week, voters overwhelmingly passed a bond issue to increase and improve the water supplies.

Problems with housing continued and only 21 houses were constructed in 1948. Cattlemen made strong protests because the military's proposed extensions of the ranges seemed to shut the door on their returning to their ranches. The Chamber of Commerce pleaded with the ranchers to give some consideration to the needs of national defense and the prosperity of the community.

There had been times between 1946 and 1948 when some people wondered if the town could survive. Although there was some income from the older sources, Holloman was the "bonanza."

After five and a half years as Mayor, McKinley knew the problems confronting the town, which still operated like the small town it had been in 1940. In 1949 he worried that housing would be built on the base itself or the employees might live in El Paso, Texas, less than 90 miles away or Las Cruces, New Mexico, just 45 miles away. In September of that year, it was announced that 350 government housing units were to be built on the base by Las Cruces and El Paso companies.

The decade had brought many changes to the "sleepy little cow town." Alamogordo's population of 6,783¹¹ was an increase of seventy-two percent, which was three times the average for the state. The composition of the population also changed during this period,

becoming even more international as war-brides became residents. The number of those born in Mexico declined by about a third because of the reduction in agriculture and need for unskilled labor. The percentage of non-whites rose from one percent to 3.2 as they arrived as part of the military.

The median of education went up to 9.9 years from 8.1 years. This median was higher than that for the whole state because the research positions at Holloman required advanced training. The well-educated people employed for research brought more than economic benefits. Many of the local people who were fond of art, music and literature had organized small cultural groups years before and now looked forward to expanding their activities as their memberships and treasuries grew.

With war's end on August 14, 1945, everybody was elated. The cattlemen, better able to understand the land acquisitions of the past four years, thought they would soon be returning to their ranches. The town seemed to be returning to its normal sources of income helped by a bumper fruit crop.

The agricultural area around Alamogordo changed during this ten years. In the late forties when the supply of cheap labor was cut off, many of the commercial fruit and vegetable farms went out of business as their owners sold their water rights or took higher paying jobs at the base. Quite a few of the ranchers did the same thing. The number of ranches dropped from 217 in 1940 to 159 in 1950 because the land was taken over by the military or consolidated. Those that remained were better managed and raised more cattle.

Advertisements appeared in the paper for houses, but five percent remained vacant either because rent control was still in effect or they were substandard. The timidity of investors seemed justified by the events of early 1950.

Although it is customary to inform Congressmen of contemplated changes in plans for their states, neither Senator Clinton Anderson or Senator Dennis Chavez seemed to have known of the Air Force's decision to cease operating Holloman. The first public inkling was in January 1950 when everyone was surprised to learn that the Air Force had ordered the United Service Organization to stop its activities. A few days later, Colonel William Baynes privately told McKinley that the Air Force had instructed him to turn Holloman over to the White Sands Missile Range because the work being done at Holloman would be transferred to Banana River, Florida.

McKinley called Anderson, feeling that Anderson would come to Alamogordo's aid because of the support Otero County had given him in 1948 in his first bid for the Senate. Taking his seat in 1949, Anderson had run "head in to the men who governed the Senate" and was assigned to the Agricultural Committee instead of the more powerful Finance or Foreign Relations Committees which he had hoped for.

Now came Alamogordo's time to choose. The leaders had to decide whether they would work hard together

to keep Holloman Air Force Base open and as large as possible or whether they would fight among themselves and with the ranchers, while the use and size of the base were determined in Washington. They chose to cooperate with one another and set out to do three things: to make certain that the physical advantages of Alamogordo and the Tularosa Basin were made known to the various military planning committees; to keep their Congressmen in office, in order to build up their seniority and influences in the capital; and to bring the town up to the modern standards demanded by the people hired to carry out the special projects.

The Town Board of Trustees secretly sent McKinley to Washington in January 1950 with full authority to act in their name. He was accompanied by Verner Clayton of Tularosa whose expenses were paid by private citizens. Senator Anderson introduced the two men to the top military echelon in Washington so they could point out Holloman's ideal location for military research and missile testing. Pleading that Alamogordo had gone deeply in debt to provide improvements for what they had been led to believe was a permanent base, McKinley and Clayton returned home with "some, but not conclusive assurances that government utility of Holloman would be continued."

At the end of February, 1950, Anderson advised McKinley to return to Washington because he found Holloman was still being considered for abandonment. McKinley and seventeen of the county and city leaders met quietly in order to decide what they could do without creating a business panic. Fourteen of them gave money at the time, and twenty more contributed generously later, to send McKinley and the Attorney General of New Mexico, Joe Martinez, to the capital for eight days. Martinez was paid \$1,500, ostensibly, to write a brief but really to make use of his political connections. He had been an attorney for the Truman Investigating Committee and knew many of the most powerful people in Truman's inner circle.

With the aid of Anderson and Martinez, McKinley was able to meet and confer with Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Harold Stuart, and other key decision makers. In the end it was necessary for Martinez and Anderson to use their close personal ties with the Truman administration to reverse the order closing Holloman. When the good news came that the base was to have a three to five year program, McKinley suggested that a permanent fund be established in case future trips were necessary.

All candidates for city office in March 1950 stressed full cooperation with Holloman as part of their platforms and pledged the area to greater efforts to solve water, housing and school difficulties. The new, friendlier spirit which prevailed between the city and the base seemed exemplified by the free band concert which the 680th

Air Force gave in town. A letter from Holloman Sergeant Harold Ziesler appeared on the front page of the *Alamogordo News* on May 11, 1950 with suggestions for bringing the town up to date. First of all, he felt the town must somehow get more water. It needed to change to a city manager form of government, to draw up a traffic plan, and to cut the gasoline tax. Alamogordo should organize a fire department and hire regular firemen instead of using volunteers. Ziesler went on about schools, parks and business. Action was begun on almost every point. Nevertheless, try as it might, in June the town had to request water be conserved as the supplies were barely meeting current needs.

Alamogordo was growing up to its responsibilities. Commissioners climaxed the year by voluntarily requesting that rent control be extended until June 30, 1951, because the housing shortage might otherwise force rent up and create enmity between the base and town.

Like the earth star it had opened, nearly closed, and opened several times from 1942-1950 which it has continued to do ever since. McKinley's early wisdom in setting up a fund for trips to Washington had proven its worth over and over.

Jean Culbertson has travelled widely as the family followed her husband's work. She has taught in Florida and Saudi Arabia, been a college administrator in Alaska, and taught English to the Chinese. She holds two master's degrees and an Ed.D., and is currently the coordinator for the Elderhostel program at Doña Ana Branch Community College.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 William A. Keleher, *The Fabulous Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1962), p. 286.
- 3 *Alamogordo News*, March 28, 1940. *The Alamogordo News* proved to be the best source of information for the years 1940-1953 covered in this article. Specific dates can be furnished if necessary.
- 4 Information and insights from Eber McKinley drawn by the author from interviews January 19 and May 18, 1972.
- 5 Clinton Anderson, *Outsider in the Senate* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1970) p. 32.
- 6 It has been called variously, Las Cruces-Albuquerque Range, White Sands Bombing Range and Gunnery, Alamogordo Bombing and Gunnery Range, and then elevated to full status on June 1, 1942, as the Alamogordo Air Field.
- 7 Interview with Mrs. Herbert Callaway, April 10, 1972.
- 8 David Bushnell, *History of Water Use and Resources*, (Holloman Air Development Center: Office of Information Services, 1957), p. 20.
- 9 George Meeter, *The Holloman Story*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), p. 73. In January 1949, the base was renamed Holloman Air Force Base, after Colonel George V. Holloman, a pioneer in technical research, which seemed fitting because more and more military and civilian science specialists were moving in to carry on space-age experiments.
- 10 *Alamogordo News*, April 18, 1948.
- 11 *U.S. Bureau of Census*, 1950 Agriculture, I Part 30, p. 84 showed the value of all agricultural products for 1949 as \$2,080,009. The *Alamogordo News*, June 2, 1949 reported tourism was still important to the community because it contributed \$2,000 daily.

MY PERSONAL SPACE AGE

By Patricia Tombaugh

Actually, I entered the Space Age long before I came to Las Cruces.

Initially, that was due to the influence of my older brother James, who was always a far-out fellow with curious and creative ideas. From an early age, he saw a future in rockets in space travel and, in the 30s, he made a trip from our Kansas home to Roswell, New Mexico, to visit the renowned physicist and rocket scientist Dr. Robert Hutchings Goddard. Later, James made his career by using his gift for thinking into the future as a scientist and a leader in the U.S. Government. In 1930, when Clyde Tombaugh broke into headline news as the “young man off the farm” who discovered the ninth planet, Pluto, I was in high school. James pointed out Clyde’s photograph in the Kansas City Star, and said to me, “You are going to meet that fellow. He is going to be my classmate.” I did not pay much attention, but I thought the planet-discoverer to be a rather nice looking young man.

Yes, I certainly would meet him. My widowed mother, Irene Edson, was planning to move the family to Lawrence, Kansas, hoping to find a way for her three children to enter Kansas University. K.U. was my late father, James O. Edson’s alma mater, where he had received a degree in civil engineering in 1901. My brother James planned to study astronomy there, and Clyde, who had received a four-year scholarship to K.U. after his historic discovery, would, of course, also be in astronomy. In Lawrence, Mother rented a fine old two-story house on Mississippi Street, where she provided room and board to students. By 1933, my two brothers, James and Alden, and I were all students at K.U., working on campus, and residing at “Mrs. Edson’s Boarding House.” The other residents of the house were my cousin Bill, who was an electrical engineering student; another fellow, who was a physics major; and Clyde Tombaugh, who, after his freshman year among younger students in a dormitory, had decided he wanted to live off campus.

Our house became a regular meeting place for the eight or ten students who were members of the “Syzygy Club.” (When all planets are lined up on the same side of the sun, they are in syzygy; it does not happen often.) We talked of space travel and space platforms, of orbits and astronauts, etc. We did not speak to “outsiders” about those things, for they thought such ideas ridiculous and only fit for fools and weirdos. So it was, until the Germans used rockets in World War II to devastate London.

In June of 1934, Clyde and I were married in a simple ceremony at my home. Some of our relatives and a number of our college professors attended. It was the end

of Clyde’s sophomore year and my freshman year. I was majoring in art at that time, but later changed to philosophy. He was 28. I was 21. After a short honeymoon in Topeka, Kansas, we drove Clyde’s 1930 black Model A Ford to Flagstaff, Arizona. Clyde had worked there, at Lowell Observatory, at the time of his planet discovery, and he was still working summers there, searching for further planets.

It was Lawrence, Kansas, while K.U. was in session, and Flagstaff (we called it “Flag”) and Lowell Observatory during the summers, Then, two years working at the observatory to save enough money to return to K.U. for Clyde’s master’s degree in astronomy and my senior year in philosophy. Back in Flag, by 1941, we had a permanent home at the observatory. Our baby daughter Annette was just 16 months old on December seventh, when Pearl Harbor shocked the world.

During the war, Clyde was drafted to teach navigation to officers in the Navy-sponsored “V 12” program at the college (now Northern Arizona University) in Flag. He was also Civil Defense Commander for Coconino County, Arizona. The county was prepared to receive an evacuation from the west coast in case of enemy attack there. Additionally, fire watches were made necessary by fear of incendiary devices being transported by air and dropped in the forests. I participated in civil defense work, but my major contribution was morale. I was Director of the Community Concert Association, which helped to bring concerts to Flag. Also, at that time, I began a lifetime of active membership in the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and became president of the Flag chapter.

In 1945, World War II was ending, our son Alden was born, and we went to the University of California at Los Angeles for a year, where Clyde was an Astronomy Professor and I taught an astronomy discussion group. Then, once again, back to Lowell Observatory — but not for long.

Although both my brothers had been in the Reserve Officer Training Corps and had been commissioned as Army lieutenants, they were exempt from service because they were needed as scientists in the war effort. James was a physicist in barrage rocket development, and Alden was a metallurgist with Hamilton Standard Propellers. At the end of the war, James was at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, not far from Baltimore, Maryland, involved with the plans for a proving ground in New Mexico to assemble and fire V2 rockets captured from the Germans.

James was a member of a crew working on the design and affixing on a gun mount, of a long-range tracking telescope for use in photographing rockets as high as 100

miles from the earth. Being a poetic fellow, James suggested that they name the device "Little Bright Eyes." So it was that in 1946 Little Bright Eyes became the first tracking telescope at White Sands Proving Ground (WSPG, or "wispig" to devotees of acronyms; now White Sands Missile Range, or "wismer" to those same folks) near Las Cruces, New Mexico. James suggested Clyde as the right person to take charge of the photographing of rockets, as Clyde was an expert at the difficult process of photographing the planets, and he knew optics, the art of exposure, and the problems of atmospheric turbulence, as well as darkroom procedure. The facts that James' bright-eyed little sister happened to be married to that paragon and that Clyde had been his college classmate, were not part of the equation. What a day it was for us in Flag when James arrived in a staff car from WSPG to convey Clyde to an interview somewhere in the southcentral New Mexican desert!

I had never heard of Las Cruces, New Mexico, but that was to be our next stop, and since it had to do with rockets and their future use, it was exciting! I was eagerly anticipating new places and new adventures, and I discovered a prime source of information in my next door neighbor, a Mr. Durio, who was from, of all places, Las Cruces!

In August of 1946, Clyde went to WSPG by train and bus to assume the position of Chief, Optical Measurements, leaving me in Flag with six-year-old Annette, Alden, who was a little over a year old, and the family Ford; like most families at that time, we only had one car. Clyde lived in an Army-provided room in a barracks on base and had neither the time nor transportation to search for housing for the family. So, I decided to go to Las Cruces myself to do the house hunting, and Clyde was anxious for me to bring the children.

Unfortunately, our trip was delayed when Alden came down with chicken-pox, followed by Annette becoming ill with the same disease. As my father had died in the 1918 influenza epidemic, I was more than casually concerned about the children's health. Clyde came back to Arizona to get the car, and by late October, with four inches of snow on Flagstaff, the children and I set out by train for what we expected to be a pleasant, if not luxurious, excursion to the Land of Enchantment. It was hectic and exhausting! We started the trip with the little ones bundled in snow suits and boots. The further south we went, the more heavy clothing I had to remove from the children and carry myself. Alden, at 18 months, had to be carried most of the time. The three of us spent a cramped and mostly sleepless night in a berth on the train, then, in Belen, New Mexico, transferred to a bus for the remaining 190 miles to Las Cruces. Interstate Highway 25 did not yet exist, so the bus trip seemed a lot longer than it would today. After we had spent the better part of two days in travel, Clyde met us in a very warm, dusty, and Cruces and drove us to a motel where he had rented accommodations for us.

El Molino (the mill) Motel was built on the site of Sa vapor Cordova's 1849 grist mill which, by dint of water power from a ditch, had provided wheat flour for the area. The motel was located among large cottonwood (truly *alamos gordos*) trees on property where the First Nation Bank tower building now stands on South Main Street. Our place had a kitchenette and a very small bathroom with a shower, no tub. I tried bathing Alden in the shower. Impossible! So I set him on the edge of the wash basin with his feet in the bowl. There may have been something prophetic about his "getting his feet wet" there; Alden is now a senior vice-president of the First National Bank and works on the second floor of the tower that displaced that motel. The cement floor in our quarters was painted brick red. The all-purpose bedroom was quite large enough. That was a good thing, for that was to be our home for the next three months.

My first view of downtown Las Cruces was of a dusty street with trash of various origins blowing around doors of the business center. *Braceros* (laborers) from Mexico were everywhere. They came to work the cotton fields, an annual fall harvest event. Many of the side streets were unpaved, just plain dirt roads. The residences on South Main Street were long adobes with flat roofs. Solano Drive was a dirt road, except for about four blocks near the college, El Paseo Road was paved to the college, with irrigated fields on both sides all the way. Las Cruces Avenue and North Alameda Boulevard were the elite streets of town. A spur of the Santa Fe railroad had passenger services down from Albuquerque once a day, one car.

While we were living at El Molino, we enrolled Annette in the first grade at Southward School, about three blocks away, across Alameda Boulevard. She was graduated from there, went through Court Junior High School and was in the first graduating class from the new Las Cruces High School on El Paseo Road. She was graduated New Mexico State University (NMSU) with honors master's degree, and has taught in the Las Cruces elementary schools for 24 years.

Shortly after we moved into El Molino, I found myself alone, except for the children, on my birthday. Clyde on a trip "back East" and I did not know a soul Cruces to talk to. The chairs in our quarters were heavy wooden Mexican style never meant to comfort any human body. So, for my birthday, I bought myself padded "cricket" rocking chair to rock my baby boy. I still have the chair.

The first visitors I recall coming to our El Molino room were Anna and Dr. George Gardiner, both profs the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now NMSU). George, head of the college physics department, had started the Physical Science Lab (PSL) to do data reduction for research at W. Anna was in charge of data reduction there. They were to be instrumental in our lives. Four years later, was to be my boss at PSL. And still later, after Clyde had been at WSPG for nine years, he wanted to get back

to his beloved astronomy. He received a grant for his proposal to research small natural satellites of Earth, to see if it was safe for rockets to go into space. The project called for work at the equator. WSPG did not seem interested in facilitating that trip, so Clyde spoke to Dr. Gardiner about the possibility of PSL and the college setting up the trip for him. The project and Clyde moved to PSL in 1956.

Despite all my good intentions about house-hunting, I soon found there were no rentals in town with indoor plumbing. With the prospect of renting a house seeming to be such a challenge, Clyde inquired about the prospective life of the project, and was told that it was expected to continue for at least five years at WSPG. With that assurance, we decided to look into buying a home. A young Seaborn P. Collins seemed to be the most ever-present agent in town. He later became one of Las Cruces' most prominent citizens and National Commander of the American Legion. Among other places, Collins showed me a two-bedroom, one-bath stuccoed adobe at 636 South Alameda Boulevard, on an odd-shaped, one-third of an acre. Clyde and I both liked the location. It was on the south edge of town. Fields went for blocks to the south, and it seemed that nothing but the railroad tracks were between that place and Rio Grande to the west.

The small house was on a private-access, gravel lane, near the intersection of Alameda Boulevard and South Main Street. Along the lane were huge pecan trees. Beside the trees, facing an ample lawn, was a large two-story house. That house was the original main dwelling on a farm, which, I believe, was part of the Doña Ana Bend Colony Grant.

It was a very important decision for us, when we put down earnest money on the little adobe house and drove up to Flag for the Christmas holidays. We sold our house in Flag, and packed just about everything else for the big move.

January 1947 found us settling into our new home. It was all repainted inside and out and looked fine. As my mother had moved with us, we were now a family of five. Mother was a great help. Clyde was so busy I saw little of him.

Then came one of our rare and tumultuous winter rains! It drizzled for four days and four nights. Every room in the house leaked. First, I put out pans. It leaked more and more. The electrical wiring shorted out. I pulled the switch outside. Then we had no heat, because that was on a thermostat. I finally put newspapers everywhere and changed newspapers like diapers. I kept desperately moving our few pieces of furniture around. It leaked over our bed. We put our raincoats over the bed and tried to form a funnel to direct the drips to pans on the floor. I would have gone to a motel, but I had to take care of our belongings.

It turned out that we had a flat mud roof. I had never heard of a mud roof! The mud had to dry out before we

could reroof. The new roof definitely was not mud. After about three years, I designed a spacious living room, a third bedroom, and a second bath, which we built onto our house. We lived in that cool, quiet place for twenty years. It is now part of Lundeen's Bed and Breakfast establishment.

We enjoyed the coziness of Las Cruces at that time. Everyone met friends at Las Cruces Drugs (at the corner of Main Street and Griggs Avenue) for fountain refreshments and a good chat. The fire whistle blew to call out the volunteer firemen. The whistle blew a number of blasts to signal the district of the fire.

There were some who resented us newcomers. Mr. Orville Priestley, publisher of the Las Cruces Sun News, was one. His paper was very critical of the Proving Ground and those who worked there. He said the rockets were a threat to the area and the people working there did not earn their government pay. That went on for many months, until businessmen marched to his office and gave him a lesson in economics. At their request, he published a full-page apology.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Organ Mountains, exciting things were happening. The German scientists and engineers, headed by Werner von Braun, were helping us learn about rockets, how to assemble the V2 parts, and how to get the rockets to fly in a predicted trajectory. These men had surrendered to the Americans at the end of the war. They had some interesting stories to tell when they visited us in our cozy adobe, and I learned a lot about pre-war and wartime Germany.

I always had been interested in the traditions of other people. When we lived in Flag, I had learned to appreciate the Native Americans of the four corners area and had made myself a gathered, tiered "squaw" skirt, similar to ones some of the Indian women wore. My mother, who was employed in "yard goods" in Babbitt's Department Store in Flag, frequently sold cotton for skirts and velvet for jackets to the Navajos for their clothing. Once, I was among about 10 Anglos to witness an authentic Snake Dance in a village plaza on one of the three Hopi mesas. When we came here, I learned quite a bit about Mexican culture and learned to cook a few customary "border dishes." We even adopted a family tradition of having a tamale dinner on Christmas Eve. For one of La Mesilla's fiestas, Cruz Alvarez, who was a festival organizer, asked Clyde and me to be Padrino y Madrina (god-parents or patrons). It was a great experience. While a band played, we danced a quadrille on the plaza.

Except for a small art department at the college, the only art activity in town was an annual art show at the Women's Improvement Association (WIA), a branch of the Federated Women's Clubs. Never having lost my interest in drawing and painting, in which I had had some formal classes in my early college days, I joined a group of other women interested in developing their artistic skills;

I worked primarily in oils, but other members used pastels and water colors. The group met at the WIA building at 340 North Reymond Street, facing Pioneer Park. We called ourselves the WIA Artists Department. The group met once a week and our meeting days varied over the course of the 30 years we were active. Likewise, members came and went during that period. Some of the other members were Shirley Shuler, Elizabeth Murrell, Elizabeth Elder, Helen Waddell, Lee Carpenter, Myrt Manzenberger, and Margarite Brown.

In the late '50s, I became aware that an Arts and Crafts Association was being formed. One of the founders was Nicky Cunningham. We became great friends and later worked together with Alice Peters and the Las Cruces Arts and Crafts Association to raise funds, buy property and establish a Community Arts Center by 1972. The Sun News made our fund-raising front-page for months, and we listed donors as they came forward. AAUW members and others gave a series of silver coffees and teas in their homes. In three months we raised \$13,000, just \$2000 short of the necessary down payment.

The building chosen for the arts center had been the home of local architect Jerome (Jerry) Hartger. He also had designed, among other buildings, the power house at NMSU, Mayfield High School, and the Downtown Mall with the yellow brick road. The house was located on property at the corner of what is now Avenida de Mesilla and Barker Road, just west of the railroad tracks. The grounds were quite pleasant, with large trees, an attractive fountain on a brick patio near the entrance, and a walled courtyard which was great for outdoor art shows.

The adobe building had a tiled floor in the entrance room, which had wonderful large windows. The group worked many long hard hours preparing the interior walls with pegboard covered with burlap for hanging paintings, and installing proper lighting. A "Consulting Board" was formed, which included Nicky Cunningham, Julie Papen, and Rudy Apodaca, among others, and I became the unpaid director.

A Community Arts Center Foundation was established. The whole of Las Cruces was behind us and enjoyed our classes and shows. The mortgage payments were raised by funds from arts and crafts classes. We had classes in jewelry making, pottery, sculpting, weaving, fabric art, figure drawing, portrait painting, Spanish and French languages, and dance for children. We had wonderful shows of children's art from the schools, colorful quilt shows, an exhibit of work by talented inmates at the New Mexico State Prison, and professionally juried fine art shows. Although there were only a handful of them at that time, local professional artists were very helpful. We also brought in some very well-known art teachers and exhibits to serve the local artists and amateurs.

We arranged to bring down a show of work done by



Patricia Tombaugh, engrossed in painting a landscape 1976. Photo courtesy of the las Cruces Sun News.

the famous "Taos Artists" of the early colony there. The Las Cruces police furnished around the clock guards for the very valuable collection of paintings. We also received grants from the New Mexico Arts Commission. Southern New Mexico was getting some attention from Santa Fe, for a change!

Five years later, in 1977, problems were looming. NMSU started the "Continuing Education" program and art teachers who became involved in that program were paid more than we could afford to offer. The Las Cruces Arts and Crafts Association was having Internal Revenue Service problems. In-fighting became prevalent and very stressful to the fabric of the organization as well as to the people involved. After several attempts to find peaceful solutions, I laid down the keys and left. Three months later, the Arts and Crafts Association sold the building. For a number of years after that, the structure, which later burned and was rebuilt, housed the privately owned and operated Universal Community Center for the Arts, which recently closed.

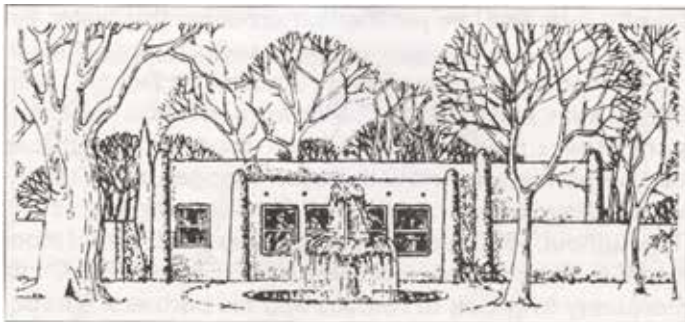
During those difficult days, I was approached about starting an Arts Council for the area. I felt I had to decline for lack of energy and time. Shortly thereafter, the Doña Ana Arts Council (DAAC) was established by a very talented local sculptress, my longtime dear friend Hivana Leyendecker. For many years, she worked very hard in executive positions and on the board of the council. Now she and I, both in retirement, do our bit for the DAAC each year by filling about 200 bags with pencils, information, tax tables, candy, etc., for the artists showing the Renaissance Craft Faire.

For several years, the Associated Women Students at NMSU honored an NMSU woman student and a local Las Cruces woman for contributions to the community. The awards were presented at a banquet on campus. The community women were nominated by various organizations in Las Cruces. One of my most treasured moments was receiving that award, an engraved silver bowl, in

1976, as “Community Woman of Achievement.

Other women who had received the award were: Mrs. George Grenger; Mrs. Henry Stoes; Mrs. C.E. Locke, Mrs. L. E. Freudenthal, Mrs. G.L. Guthrie, Mrs. Edwin Mechem, Mrs. Robert Lytle, Mrs. R.W. Goddard, Mrs. P.E. Neale, Mrs. Albert Curry, Mrs. William Erwin, Mrs. M.A. Thomass, Mrs. W.B. O’Donnell, Mrs. Homer E. Gruver, Mrs. Orville Priestly, Mrs. Carl Jacobs, Mrs. G.R. Hamiel, Mrs. W.A. Sutherland, Mrs. Bert Kennedy, Mrs. B. Crawford, Robert McComas, and Senator Gladys Hansen.

In the fall of 1977, the Unitarian Fellowship of Las Cruces was in the process of purchasing the property at its current location, 2000 South Solano Drive. The President of the Board of Directors had moved out of town rather suddenly, and former Las Cruces Mayor Robert Munson was heading the negotiations for the new location. One evening, he and his wife Diana were returning home from a business trip to Albuquerque in an NMSU plane when the aircraft was caught in a severe thunderstorm just north of Las Cruces. All four of the people aboard the plane were killed in the crash. The Munsons left four orphaned children, who were at that moment, home



Pen and ink rendering of the original Community Arts Center. Courtesy of Patricia Tombaugh

alone. Fortunately, our minister, Reverend George Whitney, hearing on the radio that the parents were missing, went to aid the children. Later, the memory of former Mayor Munson, who had worked several years for the establishment of a senior center, was honored by the dedication to him of the Munson Senior Center, at 975 South Mesquite Street.

Clyde and I are charter members of the Unitarian Church, founded in 1955, and now called the Unitarian Universalist Church of Las Cruces. During my membership, I have served as President of the Board seven times. After the tragic aircraft accident, I was asked to serve again, so Reverend Whitney and I finished the paperwork for the purchase, set up an office, and spent much of the next year there getting the church happily settled.

In the late ‘60s, one of the first movies out of Hollywood to be made in Las Cruces was bringing camera crews, directors, and actors to our town. This was to be a full-length production and everyone was very excited about the prospect of getting our citizens and scenery involved. It was not quite clear what

the movie was about, but Larry Hagman of “I Dream of Genie” was to have the lead role; among the characters were a college president, his wife and daughter, and a student who was having problems. The Downtown Mall was being constructed and a wrecking crew was about to bring down the Las Cruces Drug building. The movie planners would work that event into the script and portray the apartment of the student as being above the drug store in the two-story building.

The title of the movie was “Up in the Cellar,” whatever that meant, so a cellar was needed as the living quarters of the student after his apartment was demolished. Mrs. Lewis Emerick offered the cellar in her large Mesilla Park home. NMSU allowed filming on campus, including inside some of the college buildings. There was to be a scene of patriotic citizens celebrating in an auditorium with a college president and his family on stage. An announcement was made that for each citizen volunteer who showed up on a certain date to be part of the auditorium audience, a dollar would be paid to the club or organization of the volunteer’s choice. My neighbor Mable Burris and I thought it would be fun to go. The auditorium was filled, and when Mable and I entered, someone in charge insisted that we sit in the front row, which of course, we obediently did. When the film was finished, they had used several close-ups of us as members of the audience and the camera had lingered on the Navajo silver and turquoise bracelet that I had been wearing. As the patriots marched onto the stage, it was the Reverend Wurgler of the Methodist Church who carried the U.S. flag. Some of our most outstanding citizens were acting in “Up in the Cellar.”

When “Up in the Cellar” (later renamed “Three in the Cellar”) came to town in 1970, there was a rush to see it. The movie, made in “scenes” and “takes” turned out to be, for those days, a naughty comedy: several affairs and Larry Hagman’s attempt to cover up a young woman’s nudity with his white hat. Some of our leading citizens made public apology in the newspaper for their involvement.

Clyde and I celebrated our 62nd wedding anniversary this year (1996). Because of his work, we’ve had the opportunity to travel to a number of interesting places, and become acquainted with many interesting people, many of whom had concepts for scientific exploration of space that were at least as advanced as those of my brother James. Many of those concepts now have become reality. The dreams of the Syzygy Club were not so far-out after all.

PATRICIA TOMBAUGH is a devoted mother and a concerned citizen. Because she is married to a world-known scientist, her personal talents, humor, intelligence, and contributions to the community sometimes are overlooked. Patricia and Clyde Tombaugh were guests of honor at a combined Doña Ana County Historical Society — Branigan Cultural Center fund-raising banquet, April 8, 1995. David H. Levy’s book, Clyde Tombaugh - Discoverer of Pluto, was reviewed by Dr. Herbert Beebe in the initial issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review (Volume I, Number 1, January 1994).

LAND, CATTLE AND WATER

THE BUSINESS DEALINGS OF OLIVER LEE

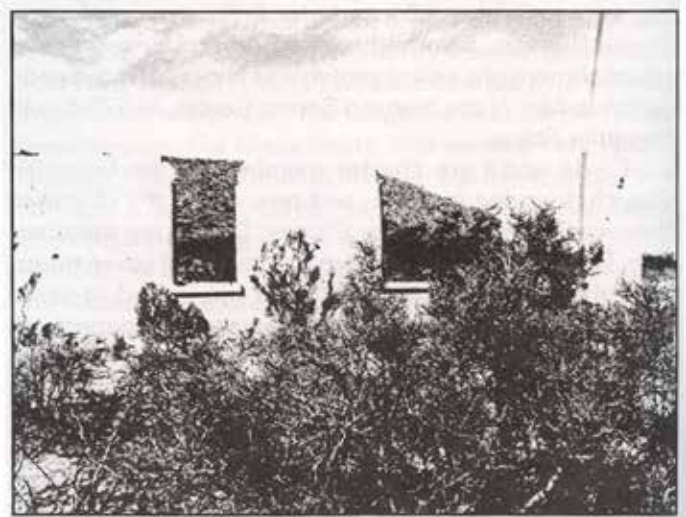
By Kenneth Faunce

Today the name of Oliver Lee carries more echoes of murder charges never proven than of money made and lost. Yet in his own time, Lee's prominence stemmed from his creation of several successful ranching enterprises and his unflagging attempts to develop a water-control system across Otero Mesa and the Tularosa Basin. Oliver Lee was born in Burnet County, Texas on November 8, 1865. His mother, Mary Altman Lee, was from Alabama, and his father Oliver Lee, was from New York. His 34-year-old mother and his 63-year-old father had each been married once before, and Mary Altman had four children from her first marriage: Amanda, Robert (Perry), Bertha, and Mary. Oliver Lee's father died in 1878, and the family moved to Taylor County, Texas in 1880.¹ Lee, even though he was only fifteen, and his half-brother Robert Perry Altman listed their occupations as stock raisers by this time.

Oliver Lee and Perry Altman first came to the Tularosa Basin in 1884 after a severe blizzard hit Taylor County in March of that year. Lee and Altman arrived in the area with three African-American men: Daniel Sauls (21 years old), Edward King (15 years old), and Ephraim King (17 years old), who had worked for the family in Taylor County; and a herd of livestock with Lee's Double S horse brand and the Circle Cross Brand.² They settled in a location 7 miles west of La Luz, New Mexico, in late April or early May of 1885, and by December 1885 the rest of the family had moved to the Tularosa Basin. In 1886, Lee established a ranch, which became known as Lee Well, at the base of the Sacramento Mountains, five miles west of Dog Canyon. He quickly became involved with several other ranchers in the area and formed the Sacramento Cattle Company. Lee quickly realized that water was an important commodity in this area, and the new cattle company started working on water systems immediately. In May, 1886, they built a large acequia in the Sacramento Mountains to irrigate land for alfalfa. Next, they gained control over the stock tanks at Grapevine Horse Camp, which was located in Grapevine Canyon in the Sacramento Mountains. Lee wanted the property because of the ditches running from the Sacramento River to the camp that had been established by H.L. Latty. In 1888, the Sacramento Cattle Company began to fail, and by the fall of 1889, they sold J.H.

Nations about 3,625 cattle, 170 horses, and some improvements for \$32,084.42.³ Nations operated a large ranch in the area and a meat-packing plant in El Paso, and had a variety of business dealings with Lee and his partners.

Even though the cattle company was dissolving, Lee continued to work on his ranching enterprise and expand his control of the water in the area. In 1890, Lee made an agreement with Francois "Frenchy" Jean Rochas, a semi-hermit who lived in Dog Canyon. Lee and Frenchy built several ditches from the Sacramento River to Frenchy's homestead, and Lee planned on diverting this water out of the canyon to use for livestock, and orchards. Also in 1890, Nations, Charles Hilton, Andrew McDonald, William A. Irvin, and Orlando C. Irvin formed Hilton and Company. These men were initially on good terms with Lee and his partners; however this soon changed as the ranchers became direct competitors for the same resources. Throughout 1890, Lee, and his partners, Fitzgerald Moor and E.C. Shackelford, continued to sell Sacramento Cattle Company livestock to Nations and his partners.⁴ Grapevine Horse Camp was controlled by Lee, however. Hilton and Company believed that the water rights had been sold to them, one more in a series of transactions between the two parties marked by conflicts and legal battles.



Ruins of Grapevine Horse Camp

Both Hilton and Company and the Sacramento Cattle Company used Grapevine Horse Camp and made improvements to the property. In 1891, William McNew filed a homestead application on the camp for Oliver Lee in order to keep the property in their possession.⁵ On February 18, 1892, the water at the site became exhausted and Hilton and Company moved from the site temporarily. Lee used this to his advantage and on July 3, 1892, took possession of the camp. He fenced the site and refused to let Nations and his associates use the water. In August, 1892, Hilton and Company sought an injunction against Lee to have him removed from the property. They believed that Moor had sold the rights to the property to Nations in 1890. A.B. Fall arranged to dissolve the injunction against Lee to have him removed from the property. They believed that Moor had sold the rights to the property to Nations in 1890. The loss of the site intensified the animosity between Lee and Hilton and Company. The early 1890s were dry years, and Grapevine Horse Camp became a valuable location due to the ditches running from the Sacramento River. Also, Lee began to consolidate and expand on his water control systems due to the lack of surface water. In 1893, Lee moved from Lee Well

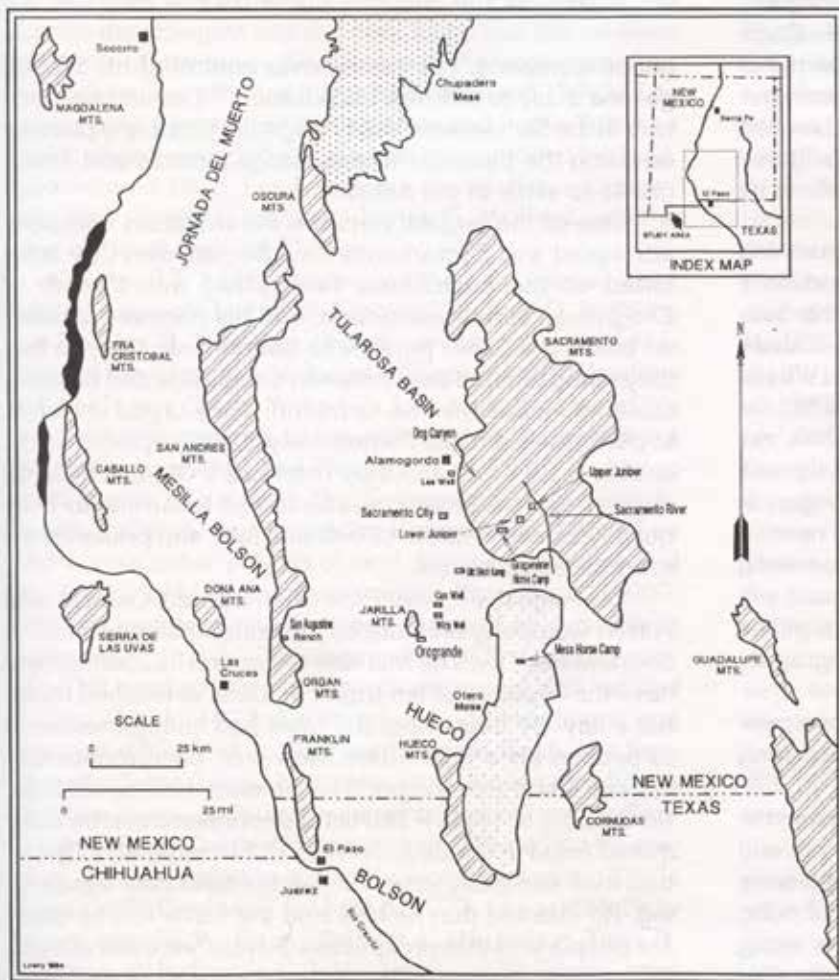
and established a ranch in Dog Canyon near Frenchy's homestead. He expanded the ditches in Dog Canyon to 20 feet deep and 20 feet wide, and he also built several dirt reservoirs.⁶ Lee would continue to expand his system across the basin, an action which allowed his operation to survive where others had failed.

Water could be a life and death issue in the West. In 1894 water rights were vacated as the direct result of two murders; Oliver Lee's operations benefitted directly. In 1894, Hilton was killed by James Smith, a small rancher in the area. Hilton was attempting to drive the small ranchers and homesteaders out of the area in order to control their range. Smith claimed that Hilton was trying to take his land, which is why he killed him; however, this defense was not successful and Smith was convicted of murder. Lee quickly acquired the water rights that Hilton had controlled on the Sacramento River, which allowed him to expand the water control system he was establishing. On November 3, 1894, Lee, William McNew, and W.W. Cox began an 11-mile ditch to bring water from the Sacramento River onto the basin floor.⁷ McNew and several other hired hands built Upper Juniper Reservoir and Lower Juniper Reservoir in Grapevine Canyon and incor-

porated them into the ditch system running to Grapevine Horse Camp. Lee then constructed a ditch from Grapevine Horse Camp to Old Ditch Camp on the basin floor. The water was used for livestock and irrigation of fields around Old Ditch Camp. Ed King, the African-American man who had come to the area with Lee and Altman, later settled at Old Ditch Camp with his wife Ella, and they ran this section of Lee's range for close to thirty years.

On December 28, 1894, Frenchy Rochas was murdered. Three years later in December 1897 Oliver Lee claimed all the ditches in Dog Canyon that had been constructed by Rochas.

Lee continued to expand his ranching operation during this period, and the fact that he was wanted for the Fountain murders did not stop him from conducting business. In 1897, he completed his ditch from the Sacramento River to the basin floor and filed a claim to the water. This provided his ranching operations with a more dependable water source. The tanks, and reservoirs that Lee had constructed were built using six-horse teams that pulled a large railroad style plow. However, a large amount of work was done with pick and shovel by Lee's hired hands Carmen Baca, Ed King, Sixto Garcia, and others. Lee used the water for his stock, for the irrigation of his fields, and to grow grapes at Grapevine Horse Camp for fruit and wine.⁸



Tularosa Basin and Vicinity

Another drought hit the area in 1898 and 1899, which Lee and his associates were able to withstand due to the water control system, although the dry conditions did affect their operations. The amount of rainfall slowly began to increase in 1900, but even though the amount of rainfall was increasing, Lee and Moor were still being affected by the lack of water. In 1902, Lee and Moor had to sell the Wildy Well Ranch, including all improvements, to William Fleck, another rancher in the area. Lee and Moor had acquired the ranch in 1895 after the original owner, Jonathan Wildy, left the area. Several portions of their holdings were mortgaged, and Moor was forced to leave the cattle business. He moved to El Paso and opened a livery stable.⁹ On April 22, 1903, Lee sold his interest in the ditches and reservoirs to his brother-in-law, W.W. Cox. Included were engines, tanks, pipelines, troughs, machinery, corrals, fences, buildings, and the improvements at Old Ditch Camp. It is obvious that Lee needed extra money in order to run his ranching operation. However, by 1904 the amount of rainfall rose, and Lee started to recover. In 1904, Lee purchased back the interest he had sold in his water control system from the new owners, W.E. Porter and his wife. The ditches had gone through several owners as Cox had sold the rights to Edwin Pennebaker, who sold them to the Turquoise Cattle Company, who sold them to Porter. Lee purchased the rights back for \$6,000.00, which was a substantial increase over his selling price. The amount of water in the ditches had increased, and between 1904 and 1918 Lee irrigated around 1,000 acres of land at Old Ditch Camp where he grew corn and wheat.¹⁰

On January 7, 1905, Lee purchased the remaining water rights in the ditch system from Joshua B. and Mary A. Wright. Wright and his wife, homesteaders in the Sacramento Mountains, had earlier purchased McNew's share of the water rights. On August 19, 1905, Oliver and Winnie Lee sold the rights in the ditch and reservoirs to the Southwest Smelting and Refining Company for \$25,000, except for 50,000 gallons a day, which he kept for the use of his ranching operation. A mining boom had begun in the Jarilla Mountains, and water was desperately needed for the mines. The smelting company built a pipeline along Lee's ditches, incorporating the two reservoirs, and extended the line to Orogrande, New Mexico. The pipeline provided water for the mines and the town of Orogrande, and it is still in use today.

Lee became involved in other aspects of the new mining industry. Also, he helped establish the Smelting and Merchants Bank on September 6, 1906.¹¹

Water continued to be the overwhelming concern in the Tularosa Basin, where surface water was lacking, and finding good well water was difficult. Many wells were over 800 feet in depth, and several wells produced poor, hot, or sulphur water. On January 25, 1907, Lee along with R.M. Nichols, Mott Gleason, O.A. Thompson, and B.O. Thayer Jr. incorporated the Sacramento Valley Irrigation Company. Lee turned over control of his 50,000



Oliver Lee (Courtesy of George McNew)

gallons a day to this new corporation.¹² Lee and his partners in the Sacramento Valley Irrigation Company planned on using the pipelines to encourage farmers and immigrants to settle in the basin.

One of the largest ventures the irrigation company attempted was Sacramento City. Sacramento City is located on the basin floor twenty-two miles north of Orogrande, New Mexico. Lee, and his partners planned on building another pipeline to Sacramento City, so that they could turn the land between Orogrande and the Sacramento Mountains into farmland. They urged investors to purchase town lots immediately, because prices would double in 90 days, and they used Lee's Old Ditch Camp as proof that the basin could be turned to farmland. They quickly established the streets and lots, and prepared the town for construction.

On August 27, 1907 the Alamogordo Cement and Plaster Company announced the construction of a mill in Sacramento City. The mill was to contain four kettles and have the capacity of ten train car loads of finished material a day. By September the town had enough residents to petition for a post office. However, Sacramento City did not last much longer. The pipeline was never built. (In October of 1929, R.M. Nichols confessed that he committed fraud in the development of Sacramento City and that their company never owned the land they were selling. He claimed that he had sold the same lots to different people and that prospective buyers were not allowed to speak to anyone in the area, in case they found out that there was no water in the Tularosa Basin.)

The Sacramento Valley Irrigation Company was not Oliver Lee's only concern during 1907. He sold his Dog Canyon Ranch and moved to a location on the Sacramento River. Also, Lee ran another pipeline from the Sacramento River through Rim Tank to Mesa Horse Camp on Otero Mesa. The pipeline was 9 1/2 miles in length, and Lee's partners in the venture were Joe Morgan and Albert Fa11.¹³ The pipeline was desperately needed as water was a severe problem on Otero Mesa, and well depths of 1000 to 1500 feet were common. On the heels of Sacramento City's failure, Oliver Lee attempted to irrigate the Tularosa Basin through a new corporation, Otero County Irrigation Company, established on March 24, 1908.¹⁴

By March 12, 1912, The Sacramento Valley Irrigation Company was out of business, and Lee acquired the property, along with the water rights the company had obtained, part of which he had turned over to the company earlier.¹⁵ Lee continued to expand his ranch holdings and became very involved in various other business activities. By 1916, Lee had an elaborate water system from the Sacramento Mountains to Orogrande, and out across Otero Mesa. Lee's use of stock tanks, wells, and the pipelines was extremely efficient; this allowed him to survive the droughts and dry conditions that forced other cattlemen off the range. The control of the water resources in the area gave him control over the land. While Lee owned only a portion of the land he used in the Tularosa Basin, since he controlled the water he controlled the land. Also, around 1916, Lee began his association with powerful and successful banker, James G. McNary, and the First National Bank of El Paso.

On May 13, 1916, Lee formed the Sacramento River Cattle Company. Lee, J.W. Stockard, James G. McNary, and Charles M. Newman were the incorporators, and officers of the company included William Ashton Hawkins and Lee's son Oliver M. Lee Jr. Lee sold portions of his livestock and property to the company in three different transactions in May and November of 1916, including his rights to Cox's Well, the Sacramento River Ranch, Old Ditch Camp, and Grapevine Horse Camp.¹⁶ Also, Lee sold several other parcels of land, his mesa pipeline and the water rights to the Sacramento River for \$70,000. This was an interesting business deal, as Lee was able to make money off his holdings, while still retaining control. The headquarters of the new company was located at Cox Well. In 1923 due to poor range conditions and financial difficulties at the First National Bank, the Sacramento Cattle Company collapsed; however, this did not stop Lee from continuing his operations. When the Sacramento River Cattle Company had difficulties, its creators were prepared and quickly incorporated the Circle Cross Cattle Company on June 5, 1923. Lee and McNary along with W.M. Cady, Robert L. Holliday, Tom B. Newman, W.L. Tooley, C.J. Maple, and W.W. Turney were the incorporators. The holdings of the Sacramento River Cattle Company were turned

over to the new corporation, and the headquarters was also located at Cox Well. The company operated for six years and expanded its holdings when Tooley sold Nations' Hot Well to the company on January 7, 1924.¹⁷ By February 14, 1929, the company also owned Gyp Tank and Gravel Tank.

In 1929, the Circle Cross Cattle Company began to have difficulties similar to those of its predecessor. The company was having severe financial difficulty, and on February 14, 1929, the First Mortgage Company of El Paso bought the Circle Cross Cattle Company for \$250,000. The mortgage company acquired approximately 180,000 acres, not including state leases or live-stock. In 1930 James McNary and Oliver Lee formed the Otero Investment Company for the express purpose of taking over the Circle Cross Cattle Company. The Otero Investment Company quickly acquired control of the Circle Cross from the mortgage company, and it was obvious that Lee and McNary did not want to lose control of their property. The Otero Investment Company put the Circle Cross Cattle Company into receivership with Lee as the receiver. Lee was receiver of the Circle Cross until 1939, and from 1930 to 1939 he began to sell approximately 75,000 acres of the Circle Cross Cattle Company's land holdings. Also, the Otero Investment Company patented or purchased several pieces of property that Lee had established improvements on, but never owned, including Road Tanks on December 29, 1934, and Culp Tank on May 22, 1936. This entire business deal allowed Lee and McNary to continue to operate their personal holdings without losses. McNary used money that belonged to First National Bank investors to finance the Otero Investment Company's dealings, a direct conflict of interest since he was the President of the bank. Mrs. Tillie Jardina Carmen filed a petition for fraud against the First National Bank and James McNary in February of 1932.¹⁸ Mrs. Carmen claimed that McNary invested her deceased husband's estate in the Otero Investment Company, which was insolvent from the beginning. The investment company purchased worthless notes on the Circle Cross Cattle Company with the estate's money. She claimed that the bank officials were fully aware of the situation and used her money to save themselves a major loss. Mrs. Carmen's suit failed, and all charges were dropped; however, this illegal use of bank funds did not save the Circle Cross. Because of the Depression and the poor range conditions most of the land holdings were sold and the Circle Cross ceased to exist. Lee and McNary did not lose on the deal, as most of the losses were suffered by the First National's investors.

Lee continued to expand his own holdings and to buy property under his own name while conducting these other business deals. In October 1937 he acquired Sand Tank, and on March 17, 1939, he acquired Pendejo Tank. After the Circle Cross went out of business, a large portion of the company's land holdings were sold to Lee's

sons Don, Vincent, and Oliver Jr.¹⁹ By the time Lee was 75, he had owned or controlled 300,000 acres of Otero County, been President of the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, a state senator for New Mexico, and Director of the Federal Land Bank of New Mexico. Oliver Lee died in 1941, leaving a significant mark on the Tularosa Basin and the entire region. Lee's sons continued to operate ranches in the area, Oliver Jr. (Hop) at Mesa Horse Camp, Don in West McAfee Canyon and Vincent at various locations in the Sacramento Mountains, until the military acquired the area for the formation of the Fort Bliss military reservation in the early 1950s.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 United States Bureau of the Census 1870 Burnet County, Texas: George McNew, *Last Frontier West* (Tularosa Basin Historical Society, New Mexico, 1984); p. 2; and Texas United States Bureau of the Census 1880 Taylor County, Texas.
- 2 New Mexico Territorial Census 1885 Doña Ana County. There is no information on what happened to Daniel Sauls and Ephraim King; however, Ed King worked for Lee for most of his life and a canyon in the Sacramento Mountains was named after him. William A. Keleher *The Fabulous Frontier: Twelve New Mexico Items* (Rydal Press: Santa Fe 1945); p. 212.
- 3 *Rio Grande Republican* May 29, 1886.; and *Last Frontier West*, pp. 2, 18.
- 4 *Last Frontier West*, p. 18; Otero County Deed Book 11 County Clerk Office, Alamogordo, New Mexico: 479-81; William and Orlando Irvin were investors and speculators in the El Paso region and they were connected with the Santa Fe Ring of northern New Mexico. Little is known about Hilton except that he had large ranch holdings in the area. Fitzgerald Moor was Lee's primary partner for a number of years, and his son Lee Moor became a very wealthy and powerful tycoon in later years.
- 5 William McNew worked for Lee several years before starting his own ranch in the Tularosa Basin. Also, McNew married Lee's niece Nettie Fry; *Last Frontier West*, p. 22.
- 6 *Lincoln County Hews* May 18, 1989; Dorsey Bonnell Oral Presentation, Tularosa Basin Historical Society, Alamogordo, New Mexico 1978. Abert Bacon Fall became an important business partner to Lee as well as his lawyer during the Fountain murders. Later in 1921, Fall would become Secretary of the Interior under President Harding, and in 1923 he was implicated in the Teapot Dome Scandal.
- 7 *Last Frontier West*. p. 24; Dorothy Neal Jensen, *Captive Mountain Waters: A Story of Pipelines and People* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1961) p. 89; W.W. Cox was from east Texas where he was involved in the famous Sutton- Taylor feud. He moved to this area in the early 1890s and purchased the San Augustin Ranch in the Organ Mountains. Also, he and Lee were brothers-in-law having married sisters Margaret Rhodes Cox and Winnie Rhodes Lee.
- 8 Otero County Deed Book 6: 179; Carmen Baca Oral Interview Centennial Museum, El Paso 1973; Mrs. W. McCracken Oral Interview Centennial Museum, El Paso 1973.
- 9 *Dona Ana County Republican* June 3 1899, p. 6. Hawley Richeson Lee Moor: *Shirt Pocket Tycoon* (El Paso: 1975 Guynes Publishing Company) p. 15; William Fleck was from Canada and created a large successful ranching enterprise in the Tularosa Basin before he died in 1927. Jonathan Wildy was an early rancher in the Tularosa Basin and the brother-in-law of Joseph Calloway Lea, who was a large successful rancher and businessman in Roswell, New Mexico.
- 10 Otero County Deed Book 6: 307-308; Don Lee Oral Interview University of Texas, Austin 1975.
- 11 Otero County Bill of Sale Book 1:141-143; Corporate Records Book 51:27 County Clerk Office, Alamogordo, New Mexico.
- 12 Otero County Corporate Records Book 27: 126-127; Southern Pacific Com-pany, Rio Grande Division Records, Box L-3 Archives, University of Texas, El Paso.
- 13 Otero County Miscellaneous Book 40: 166-167; Joe Morgan was Fall's brother-in-law and the Marshall in Las Cruces, New Mexico in the 1890s.
- 14 *The Orogrande Times* July 11, 1907: 1; September 26, 1907: 1; November 14, 1907: 1; December 5, 1907: 1; *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* August 27, 1907: 3; *Alamogordo News* October 24, 1929 Otero County Corporate Records Book 51:210.
- 15 Otero County Sheriff's Deed Book 44:173.
- 16 Otero County Corporate Records Book 51:111; Otero County Quitclaim Deed Book 37:271-272; Bill of Sale Book 1:473, 474, 556; William Ashton Hawkins was a business partner of Charles Eddy and was directly involved in the construction of the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad across the Tularosa Basin. He was a very successful lawyer and helped Eddy build Alamogordo and guided the construction of the Bonito Dam.
- 17 Otero County Deed Book 34:160- 164; Warranty Deed Book 49:160-162; Corporate Record Book 51:279; Quitclaim Deed Book 79:98-99.
- 18 *El Paso Times* February 14, 1929:1; February 18, 1932:1; Otero County Deed Book 102:485; Patent Book 58:602.
- 19 Otero County Quitclaim Deed Book 103:212, 358; Deed Book 102:599.

ORGAN AS IT WAS

By Vesta Siemers

The headline on September 4, 1882 said it all — GOLD! This special edition of the *Rio Grande Republican* announced the gold discovery as the grandest discovery yet! The account was greatly exaggerated.

What really kept miners digging in the Organs was silver. The Stephenson-Bennett Mine near the mining camp of Organ took out \$100,000 in the years between 1858 and 1863. During this period it was the only silver mine in New Mexico. In 1872 the mine was sold to an English company, but previous shareholders occupied the mine by force which raised some question as to ownership. Eventually in the 1880s the mine became the Stevenson-Bennett mine. Altogether, in three-quarters of a century, this hole in the ground produced over \$1,000,000 in silver, lead, and copper. Some of the other mines in the vicinity were the Torpedo, the Memphis, and the Modoc. By 1900 the little mining camp of Organ had become a thriving town of 400 people serving the mines of the Organs.

The main street was a narrow dirt road connecting Alamogordo to Las Cruces, a trip which took four or five hours. From Organ to Las Cruces one needed a mere two hours, if the weather was good. The principal store of the community was owned by Louis B. Bentley, a gentleman who had worked the Torpedo Mine but in 1902 came into the village of Organ. With his family, he opened a store on the main street. In addition to selling clothing, tools, carbide and dynamite as well as foodstuffs and meats, Bentley was also an assayer and had the post office. His emporium was, in addition, the home of the town's only telephone — a wall-hung hand-cranked device which got the operator in Las Cruces.

Josephine Aunon of Las Cruces is a treasury of Organ memories. For example, she still recalls with chuckles Mr. Bentley's pet crow. Named Jim Crow, the bird flew all over town, but its favorite perch was the bar in the store, when drinks were being served. The miners liked to feed him beer to watch him get staggering drunk, unable to walk or fly. Then he graduated to whiskey, had one too many, and keeled over dead on the bar.

Josephine herself was born in Spain, came to this country as a baby and then returned to Spain until she was six years old. Then she and her widowed mother and her grandparents came back to El Paso, Texas; when the mother and grandfather died within hours of each other, Josephine and her grandmother moved in with Uncle Joe Buergo in Organ.

Young Joe Buergo had come to Organ in the early 1900s from his home in Santander, a town in the northern

part of Spain, by way of San Francisco del Oro, Mexico. While in Mexico he had lived with relatives who owned and operated a mine there; from them he learned engineering and assaying. Arriving in Organ, he hired on at the Torpedo Mine and lived for a time with the Bentley family; from them he learned English.

By the time Josephine and her grandmother joined him in Organ, Joe had leased the Torpedo mine from Phelps Dodge, and, not long after, the Bennet-Stephenson Mine. He employed 100 workers, building ten or so one-room shacks for housing some and letting the rest live where they could.

He also had taken a bride and, moving out of the Bentley home, built a small bungalow (which still stands, south of Highway 70). It had a large kitchen, a living room, and one bedroom. A cistern provided the water for bathing and washing (the cistern too is still there); the water supply tended to rustiness as the water ran off the corrugated iron roof. Drinking water came from the Cox ranch, once a week, and was stored in three large barrels; the cost was 50 cents a barrel. Coal oil and alcohol lamps gave light, and heat came from an iron stove which burned coal and wood.

In front of the Buergo bungalow were three cement buildings Joe had constructed (where Ace's Place now stands). One building became a store for groceries and mining equipment with a separate section for patent medicines. The center building was a pool hall, the last was a bar. Across the street and to the west was the Bentley store.

Josephine attended the one-room school which then had twelve students and one teacher. In 1919 when students increased, two more teachers were hired. Mr. Urton came after discharge from World War I and always wore his khaki uniform and leggings to school. He taught arithmetic, agriculture and calisthenics. Miss Sessions was probably 65 years old though she claimed to be 55. She dyed her hair black and used henna also; alternating black, red and green were the tri-color results. Her long nose constantly dripped, so she kept dabbing it with a hanky.

Then there were the postmen. Mr. Everett Rose delivered the mail daily from Las Cruces when the road was passable. He was a large heavy-set man but didn't compare with his successor, Russell Walters. Mr. Walters had a Ford touring car that swayed with his 350 pounds at a 45-degree angle. His vehicle was called the Herald car, because he delivered the *El Paso Herald*, as well as the mail and passengers. He also chewed tobacco,

so rear occupants soon learned to duck.

Doc Johnson, who lived in Organ with his wife and son, was the only doctor in the community. He jammed his bag with medicines, which he dispensed at no charge, and made house calls at \$2 per visit. He left Organ for the city in 1921, continuing his practice in Las Cruces for years more.

Josephine's roll call of Organ in her girlhood includes many more names: Mr. and Mrs. Russell Walthers and their six boys, the Weir family, Mrs. MacCowan and her visiting daughter from New York, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Jones (the only farmers), the George Lurchen family, the Foys, the Bentleys, and Preacher Duncan. Bachelor Robeson, who injured a leg working in the mines and made himself a crutch from the limb of a tree, fascinated young Josephine — especially after his advertisement in a Kansas City newspaper brought him a willing bride.

Her final tale is of the wedding of Riley Walters and a Miss Salazar, in 1918. Father-in-law Salazar put on a big wedding feast with barbecued goats, chili, and all the trimmings. This celebration lasted for three days. The bride's wedding dress was made from white muslin sheets, and there was long a veil with an orange-blossom crown made with wax. She remained dressed in her finery throughout the fiesta, even sleeping in it. When they tried, at the end of the celebration, to remove the veil, the hot weather had caused the entire crown to melt, sticking in her hair. They had to cut out most of her hair to get the dried wax out.

Fiestas and other good times end. In 1921, banks failed and there was a recession. The mines closed. Josephine moved to Las Cruces with her aunt and uncle. She was 13 years old and attended Central High School. At 16 she married Grover Armijo, whose sister was married to a Stevenson of the Stevenson-Bennett mine.

Quite different from Josephine's are the Organ Mountain memories of Teresa Aguilar Ramirez. Her father was hired to work in the mine, but the family had no place to live. They moved into a cave on the west side of the Organ Mountains where they lived for several years. The family included her mother, father, grandmother and three brothers — a cave full.

They built a wall across the opening with stones, and made a door with hinges of leather stripped from old shoes. To keep food fresh they had only to wrap it in a damp cloth and store it in a hole dug in the side of the cave wall. Right by this cave was a cold spring as well as a hot spring. Her mother dried squash and tomatoes. She used a *metate* passed down from her grandmother to grind corn for their tortillas.

Teresa helped her mother pack lunch for her father and brothers to take to the mine, putting rice and beans and tortillas in a tin can so the men could warm them before eating. The men used a pan of small blue stones they called *carburo*, which gave off heat after a little water was dripped over the stones.

The memory of her introduction to the mine is sharp. Her father invited her mother and her to come see where

he worked. Teresa was so excited, but as she stepped into the tunnel she was frightened. First it was too hot, and then it was so cold. Water was coming in everywhere. It was dark. The tunnel kept turning sharply. Finally it all began to press in on her. She started to cry. Never again would she go into a mine.

After the years in the cave, her father and brothers built a *jacal*, a house of upright sapling poles chinked with mud and with a thatched roof. Teresa was about seven years old at this time.

They shopped at Organ, of course, but when they went south to El Paso, Texas, it took three days by horse and wagon in each direction, with an overnight stop in Vado.

Teresa never went to school. Her grandmother said it wasn't right, because boys and girls were in the same room. In Mexico, boys went to one school, girls to another.

About the end of 1919, the mines began to peter out. Buergo had to lay off his men and close the stores. Prohibition closed the bar. People departed as soon as they could, leaving Organ a ghost town. The Foys, the Walters and the Bentleys were the only families left. Teresa's family left also for the oil fields of Ranger, Texas. At seventeen she married Jose Ramirez. Her mother refused to give her permission for the marriage, saying Teresa was too young. Undaunted, Jose got the priest to come with him to see the mother. After a heated argument, mother knew she couldn't win; after all the priest was on Jose's side. They lived in Texas for some time but returned to Las Cruces because of health problems. They had 13 children and also took in a cousin. All fourteen went to school. Teresa saw to that. Recently a friend of Teresa's daughter hiked over the west side of the Organ Mountains to find the two springs — the one cold, the other hot. They are still there. Teresa died late in 1992, shortly after the original oral history story about her was published. The family made sure that she saw a copy at her hospital bed.

In the early 1970's, long after the silver, lead and copper that built Organ, New Mexico, had played out, the Stevenson-Bennett mine served as a source of fill for the Corps of Engineers constructing the flood control dam east of the city of Las Cruces. Thus, the heyday of Organ, New Mexico, is still a part of the story of Las Cruces.

Vesta Siemers has contributed regularly to area newspapers and magazines since moving to Las Cruces in 1983. She wrote "Campaigning, New Mexico Style" for SNMHR, Vol. II.

ENDNOTES

Interviews:

Josephine Aunon - for oral history article previously published in Today's Southwestern Woman, January 1993.

Teresa Aguilar Ramirez - for oral history article previously published in Today's Southwestern Woman, November 1992.

Robert Bennett. M.D. - (great-great-grandson of mine owner) furnished mine records.

LUCKY AL

By Gordon R. Owen

Surviving in the harsh, forbidding wastes of the southwestern United States in the last half of the nineteenth century was terribly demanding and some claimed only the lucky succeeded in doing so. The dictionary defines luck as “the random occurrence of good or adverse fortune, a hypothetical force that controls the events of life.” Shakespeare said of fortune, “All men call thee fickle.” A proverb from another culture, the Arab, commented on the fickleness of luck in different terms, “Throw a lucky man into the sea, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth.”

This article concerns a man whose identity the author chooses to conceal and who will be referred to simply as “Lucky Al.” This pioneer not only survived but prospered for well over three decades in the harsh, forbidding Southwest, repeatedly coming “up with a fish in his mouth.” Ultimately, it was because he became so accustomed to receiving a helping hand from Lady Luck that he grew careless and she deserted him.

Al was born in 1838 and spent his youthful years in New York City. In his late teens, he joined several fellow students on a tutor-chaperoned tour of Europe. The adventurous teens ultimately deserted their tutor and after touring South Africa, and then India, boarded a schooner for Hong Kong. Only when Chinese authorities seized the ship and arrested the boys did they realize they were aboard an opium smuggler’s craft. Fortunately for Al and his mates their imprisonment ended when the U.S. Consul in Canton gained their release and placed them on a ship bound for California.¹

Lucky Al worked at a variety of jobs in the gold mining areas of northern California until gaining employment as a reporter for the Sacramento *Union*. He quickly demonstrated such resourcefulness and talent with the written word that his editor assigned him as a foreign correspondent covering a civil war in Nicaragua. The young reporter soon learned and sent dispatches to his home office reporting that the American soldier of fortune leading the revolt, William Walker, was supported by American slave holders and had a secret agenda of establishing a slave republic in Nicaragua. As a consequence, Al was arrested and summarily sentenced to be shot. However, before the sentence could be carried out, Al managed to have women’s clothing smuggled into his cell, escaped in that disguise, and gained refuge on a ship about to sail back to California. Lucky Al.²

Young Al then became involved as a volunteer for the fledgling Republican party in California. Then, as now, the practice of law appeared the most attractive route to a career in the political arena, so Al began reading

the law in the office of a prominent Sacramento judge. Preparation to take the California bar exam in 1861 was interrupted, however, by the Union firing on Fort Sumter and the consequent outbreak of the Civil War. Confederate strategists coveted California’s ports and gold so troops from Texas soon captured Mesilla and Tucson and appeared poised to move not only north up the Rio Grande but west toward California.

Al volunteered to serve in what became known as the Union Army’s California Column. After a few months of rigorous desert training, during which Al earned the rank of sergeant, the Column soon was marching over sun-scorched, sand-blasted terrain eastward to Tucson, now deserted by the Confederacy. Preparatory to the Column’s pushing on toward New Mexico, Al’s company was part of an advance party sent to secure the next water source, Apache Springs, Arizona, near the New Mexico border. After a nineteen-hour march, the parched, hungry troop moved within sight of the precious spring, only to come under withering Apache fire. Al was ordered to select volunteers to charge and seize the Indian stronghold.

Struggling up the mountain, they were pinned down by Indian fire. Before ordering a final assault, Al tipped up his canteen, hoping for one more swallow of water. At that instant, a bullet passed through the canteen within an inch of Al’s nose and he was knocked to the ground. Hearing his commander shout that he feared they had lost Al — the angry sergeant leapt to his feet and led a ferocious charge which so surprised the Apaches that they fled, leaving cool, sweet water for the thirsty soldiers. Lucky Al.³

Following Al’s Civil War service, he recruited what he termed a “bastard company” to assist the army in its attempts to keep Apache and Navajo internees in an east central New Mexico, desolate, undeveloped, disease-ridden reservation called Bosque Redondo. Indian bands repeatedly escaped from the Bosque’s deplorable conditions and the army’s task was to capture and return them. Al, now a Captain, and his aide, a Corporal Sanchez, reconnoitered bluffs overlooking the Rio Grande in search of escapees. Shortly after they spotted a band of nearly five hundred fugitives, the Captain noticed the Indians were running to their horses and pointing toward the army men’s vantage point. Looking around, Al discovered that Sanchez, an incessant smoker, had ignited a spreading brush fire. The two soldiers leapt to their horses and fled, but found their escape route blocked. Al led them into a box canyon, at the head of which armed savages suddenly appeared. Sanchez escaped up a nearby canyon, but

Al's horse was shot and, as it fell, trapped the captain beneath his dead mount's body. Al later reported, "an arrow passed through my left shoulder, a bullet entered my left thigh and an arrow severed the artery in my right fore-arm ... the Indians rushed . . . [but] the pass was so narrow that but one could approach me at a time. . . . I fired shot after shot from my repeating rifle." When darkness fell " . . . I lay with my head against the wall of rock, waiting for the end." However, Corporal Sanchez succeeded in summoning aid before dawn and Al was transported by army ambulance wagon to Fort Bliss in El Paso. Recuperation took several months, but Lucky Al survived.⁴

Once recovered and separated from military duty, Al settled in El Paso. He soon won multiple appointments as Customs Inspector, Assessor, and Collector of Internal Revenue. One trip he made as customs inspector took him to San Saba, a remote frontier town northwest of Austin and some six hundred miles from El Paso. Al and an aide not only survived repeated skirmishes with Comanches but in one fight were even forced to abandon their water supplies and spend days struggling from one disappointing water source to another.

Al reported, "During the forenoon, while crossing a range of sand hills, I fell senseless from a sun stroke. When I recovered consciousness, I found my faithful companion had erected a rude shelter of sage brush over me and was exerting himself to restore me ... I directed him to push on with the horses. At my direction he wrote in my memoranda book a few lines intended for my family, and then left me to die. . . . The horrors of that day I dislike to think of . . . [However] . . . when the sun disappeared beneath the horizon, I found my strength revived; gaining my feet I staggered on and in a short time met Evans returning to me with his hat filled with water; it was the most delicious draught I ever tasted." Lucky Al lived to return to his El Paso duties.⁵

It also was during this period of his life that Al took a leave of absence from his El Paso duties to command an artillery battalion in General Benito Juarez's successful storming of French-supported forces of Emperor Maximilian at Chihuahua. He returned to El Paso from that adventure unscathed and with lavish praise from Juarez.

As Texas reorganized its civil government to work, as a former Confederate state, toward re-admission to the Union, Al became active in Republican party affairs. He ultimately was elected to the Texas provisional State Senate and, as Majority Leader, managed the Lone Star state's bid to be re-accepted into the Union. His leadership position carried with it the opportunity to fill a number of state patronage positions, which in turn led to Al's next reliance on good fortune.

One Frank Williams had been a long time supporter of Al's political pursuits and had assumed he would receive an appointment as either El Paso's district judge

or state police captain. When political and friendship pressures sent those appointments elsewhere, Williams became increasingly belligerent, publicly labelling Al a "forger and a thief." Upon returning from Austin to El Paso, Al met Williams one morning at Dowell's Saloon and quietly urged him to "put a curb on your tongue." Williams pulled a gun and, since his only weapon was his cane, Al suffered three bullet wounds — a grazing scalp wound, a puncture of the left arm and a potentially fatal shot to the heart. Still lucky, Al had in his breast pocket five letters and a watch, which deflected that bullet and resulted only in a broken rib. He recovered sufficiently to rush home for his gun and, upon learning that Williams had then proceeded to murder the district's judge, to aid the hastily called posse in killing the disgruntled office seeker.⁶ Al recovered from his bullet wounds although the deflected bullet left him with a nagging semi-paralysis of his right leg.

Partially as a result of that violent episode, but also because his opposition to privatizing access to salt flats east of El Paso had led to death threats, Al soon left Texas and began the practice of law in Mesilla, New Mexico. Both because of his political aspirations and his lifelong interest in journalistic pursuits, he also became the crusading editor of a Mesilla weekly newspaper. His editorial campaigns included defense of public education against what he perceived as Catholic threats, and attempts to arouse public outrage over the cattle rustling, thievery and gang violence which then swept Lincoln and Doña County.

Al reported being shot at and having shots fired at his newspaper office several times during this period. When he went so far as to name five men for whom "nooses were waiting," the five confronted the editor, slipping into his office under cover of darkness. They shouted, "We'd like to see those nooses." Unarmed, but prepared for such crisis, Al turned up his lamp into their faces, sprang back and grabbed his cane, and tapped it sharply on a chair so it sounded like a gun being cocked. Al's luck held and the five fled. However, when two of the editor's sons, working on the newspaper one night, barely escaped a "ride-by shooting" by passing horsemen, Al decided to forego his editorial crusading.⁷

In his El Paso days, Al had become well-acquainted with Ciudad Juarez and his Mesilla-Las Cruces law practice necessitated frequent trips south of the border. On one such occasion, after exchanging extradition papers with Mexican officials, he was crossing the crowded Juarez plaza. He had to shoulder his way through a group of young men who jostled him as he passed. Alarmed, he made a motion as if to draw a gun, causing one of the assailants to strike him with a long knife, piercing his coat. Uncertain of the extent of his injuries, Al sprang back and again reached for a weapon. The men fled and Al discovered the packet of legal papers in his breast pocket had deflected the knife thrust and he was

uninjured physically. Only then did he discover that in the melee the men had made off with a valuable gold watch and nearly five hundred dollars. However, since this was one of those fabled “money or your life” situations, the New Mexican was grateful to have once again survived.⁸

In the later years of his New Mexico law practice, Al concentrated on representing stock-grower associations, investigating, filing charges and seeking indictments against alleged cattle rustlers. In January, 1896, he was to travel to Lincoln to seek grand jury rustling-related indictments against twenty-three men, most of whom were small-scale ranchers who questioned whether their roundup activities were rustling or just an acceptable aspect of the cattle business. Consequently he had received several threats, including an anonymous note, that his life was in jeopardy. In fact, just before his departure for Lincoln, he had confided to a son, “I think an attempt is going to be made on my life this time.” He also had his son clean and oil his Winchester rifle and had fired a few practice shots.

Family members pleaded with Al to postpone the Lincoln trip, but he insisted that duty and the responsibility to finish what he had started demanded that he go. The family initially urged Al to take his seventeen-year-old son along as a precaution. When that son pleaded that he wanted desperately to attend a dance that weekend, they instead urged Al to take his eight-year-old son, who was begging for the opportunity to accompany his father on this adventure. The family’s reasoning apparently was that no one would attempt to harm a child and that Al never would endanger this son he loved so dearly. It was finally agreed that if the child returned from school in time on the departure day, he could accompany his father.

Although Al and his son were forced to spend an extra day at their first camp site because someone or something had released their tethered team, letting it return to Las Cruces, the journey to Lincoln was made safely. However, as they prepared for the buckboard return journey from Lincoln back to Las Cruces, Lady Luck probably would again have sheltered him, had he heeded the advice of friends who warned that his life was in danger and that he should accept various offers of assistance. However, a lifetime of narrow escapes had apparently convinced Al that he was indestructible.

Al could have adjusted his travel schedule and accepted Fred Pellman’s invitation to share lunch at Pellman’s Well. He could have accepted a fellow attorney’s advice that he wait for and travel with the U.S. Mail buckboard. He could have waited for the fabled lawman, Elfecho Baca, to accompany him on the journey but, when Baca was delayed to discuss horse business, Al departed without him. He could

have accepted the offer of Dr. John Blazer to send two Apache braves to accompany him and his son from Blazer’s Mill to Las Cruces. He could have postponed his departure from La Luz one day so Miss Fannie Stevenson could have traveled with them, but the weather was so wintry, she changed her mind. When Al met Humphrey Hill, La Luz justice of the peace, on the trail, he could have asked Hill to accompany him or send a guard with him. When a lone Apache met the father and son and told them about seeing a ghost on the trail, Al could at least have proceeded more cautiously. When the two met mailman Santos Alvarado near Luna’s Well and agreed both had seen mysterious riders who appeared to be following the father and son, Al could have but did not overnight at Luna’s Well with Alvarado.

Finally they met the other Tularosa Basin mail carrier, Saturnino Barela, accompanied by two women, an elderly man and a teen age boy, all of whom reported sighting unidentified riders in the distance and urged the attorney and son to accompany them back to Luna’s Well and complete the trip the next day. Al explained he had to leave Las Cruces the next day for a trip to Silver City and that his son was not feeling well and needed his mother’s care, so they continued on west. The last words Al was heard to speak were to Barela, “I’ll push along and take my chances.” Neither father nor son ever were seen again nor have their remains ever been discovered.⁹

The moral: be thankful for every stroke of good fortune which comes your way, but don’t become over-reliant on that fickle lady. She may desert you at the most inopportune and critical moment, just as was the fate of Lucky Al, Albert Jennings Fountain.

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ENDNOTES

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- 2 *Ibid.* p. 657.
- 3 Albert Fountain, *Rio Grande Republican*, January 1, 1891; Richard Murray, “Apache Pass: Most Formidable of Gorges,” *Corral Dust*, Vol. 4, #3, September 1959, 20; Mark Gardner, *Fort Bowie* (Tucson AZ: Southwest Parks and Monuments Assn.), pp. 5-7.
- 4 *op. cit.*, January 6, 1891, 1.
- 5 *Mesilla Valley Independent*, March 30, 1878, 1ff.
- 6 *Austin State Journal*, December 22, 1870; Esther McCallum, *History of St. Clements Church, 1870-1925* (El Paso: McMath Co., 1925) pp. 42-44.
- 7 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, September 14, 1977; Katie Stoes File, Rio Grande Historical Collection, NMSU Library, Las Cruces, NM
- 8 *Mesilla News*, May 23, 1874, June 24, 1876.
- 9 George McNew, *Last Frontier West* (Privately published: NMSU, 1984) pp. 345-46; C.L. Sonnichsen, *Tularosa: Last of the Frontier West* (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1980) pp. 115, 119-121, 166; Arrel Gibson, *Life and Death of Albert Jennings Fountain* (Norman: U. of Oklahoma, 1965) pp. 227-230; *El Paso Herald Post*, June 2, 1899; *El Paso Daily Herald*, May 31, 1899.

EDUCATION, ENLIGHTENMENT AND IMPROVEMENT W.L.C. --W.I.A.

By Ilka Feather Minter

In the summer of 1892 Katherine Hadley and her two friends, Emma Dawson and Emma Davisson, decided that it would be appropriate to start a club for the “education and enlightenment of women.”

Katherine and her husband, Hiram, president of the recently established Land Grant College, had initiated several organizations involving art, music, science and the theater.

Mesdames Hadley, Dawson, and Davisson, joined by Carrie Bowman, Carrie Lyon, and Jettie Reymond, met at the home of Mrs. E.C. Wade in October 1892 to form the club. The first year was a bit bumpy. There were no name, no constitution, no by-laws and no program. There was only one officer elected — Emma Dawson reigned supreme.*

Slowly things began to fall into place. The second year there was a roster of 20

members: Anne Steel had joined at the end of the 1892- 93 year. (Her son, Sam, would have been the first graduate of the College had he not been killed by a gunman.) Mrs. Reymond resigned, and the Wades moved to El Paso.

A name was chosen — The Arcadian Club. (The first program was entitled *Arcadia*. Whether this was a cause or an effect is not known.) The word is variously defined as bucolic, simple, rustic, contented. The terms of the Constitution and By-laws were “subject to change,” and a loose program was set up for the year.

One of the major problems facing the hardy group was the



Front row from the left, Mrs. Kittie B. Curran, Mrs. Thomas Branigan, Miss Mordy, and Mrs. Anne Steel. Middle row: Mmes. Corie B. Lyon, Emma R. Davisson, Grace Day, Mrs. A.B. Fall, Thera Baker, Sue C. Young (not shown). Back row: Mmes. Margaret Smith, Emma Barker, Abbie Newcomb, Emma Dawson, Sophie Christy, Mary Niles, Nellie Holt. Photo courtesy of the Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

lack of availability of books. Each of these erudite ladies must have had some favorites of their own brought from wherever they had come. The only library was at the college, but it contained a paltry 1300 volumes, most of which were not too interesting to the layman. The Norton brothers had begun a stationery store in El Paso, but they didn't establish a book section for several years. Both the Popular and the White House stores in El Paso had established book departments in 1912 - 1914, but that city was more than forty miles away. The Book-of-the-Month Club was not started until 1926.

So the gallant members floundered around with the old standbys — The Bible, Shakespeare, Longfellow, Thackery and the Brontes — until someone found the *Bay View Course*. This was a series of study-group packets that contained reading material and suggestions for subsequent discussions issued by the University of Chicago and sold to literary clubs eager for new ideas. The subjects were generally geography, history and politics of various foreign cities and countries. The *Bay View Course* was a lifeline from 1897 to 1917. Sometimes it was religiously followed, sometimes it was augmented and occasionally it was ignored. There might have been one speaker or as many as four. When the roll was called, a reply was required. Replies ranged from the esoteric (my favorite dream) through literary (quotations from Shakespeare, Thackery and Poe) to the totally practical (“Last year I planted in my garden...”).

Nineteen of the 20 members in 1893-94 were married with families, so it was decided that the meetings should begin at 2:30 (after the lunch dishes were done) and be dismissed at 4:00 (in time to prepare dinner). Also set were the dates of the meetings — alternate Wednesdays (with the exception of national or religious holidays) beginning the first week of October and ending in mid-May to conform to the school year.

Dues were set at \$2.00 per year. Dues in the 1996-97 year are still \$2.00 though there was an eight-year hiatus during the depression when dues were only \$1.00.

Enrollment varied during the years 1893 to 1902 from 20 to 11. Because the meetings were held in private homes, it became set at 16 active members. Each member was to serve once as a hostess every year and at least once as a speaker.

Yearbooks, until World War I, were works of art in themselves. They were hand-printed, not typed, and had elaborate covers. Pithy and pertinent quotations from many sources were on page one, followed by a listing of active and honorary members and explicit directions for each program. The Constitution and By-laws were also included. It is interesting to watch small changes in the rules and regulations through the years.

In 1896 the name was changed to The Wednesday Club. Mrs. Erwin wryly points out in her report that this was an indication of the fact that life in the Mesilla Valley was no longer that simple or contented. In the bitter winter of 1894-95 only the hardiest of trees and plants survived. And in the summer of '95 a blight hit the vineyards forcing the growers to destroy all vines.

In 1895 another page was added to the yearbook. This was devoted to advice, ranging from gentle admonitions, “Look up your work early,” through stern warnings, “There is a ten cent fine for tardiness,” to downright commands, “This is *not* a frivolous club! *No refreshments!*”

The membership was about equally divided between Las Cruces and Mesilla Park. For a long time the only

means of transportation was the horse and carriage. So buggy pools were formed. This meant that one late vehicle could swell the coffers by 40 or 50 cents. As transportation became speedier the late fine was dropped.

In 1898 Thera Baker defied the *NO refreshment* dictum to entertain at the Alameda Ranch, serving a “repast” of strawberries and cream. The by-laws were dutifully changed to read “...refreshments may be served” and eventually “... the last meeting of the year shall be a banquet to which husbands are invited.” These festivities included various forms of entertainment provided by the ladies: playlets, tableaux and pantomimes. In 1918 the “banquet” was changed to a guest luncheon or tea.

Notice of the meetings and proceedings as well as synopses of the book reviews were published in the newspapers. For the golden anniversary celebration in 1942, Florence Erwin gathered articles from each of the 50 years concerning the club, the members and their families or significant events. These were presented in the form of a radio program at the elaborate party in October to which all former members were invited.

Published notices were discontinued in the 1970's.

At least four outstanding gentlemen have been guest speakers. In 1932 Col. Alex Chilton told of his experiences as a military attache to the U.S. Embassy in Chile. In October 1973, Adlai Feather gave the brief biographies of the earliest members of the club. In May 1977, Paul Taylor outlined the history of the Mesilla Valley at the Annual Guest Luncheon and in January 1983, Senator Harrison (Jack) Schmitt recounted the excitement of walking on the moon.

In 1926 the name was again changed to Wednesday Literary Club. The minutes of that year were destroyed in the fire so there is no handy explanation for that change. Possibly the ladies had become *too* frivolous!

The club has produced published authors as well as reviewers. Mrs. Katherine Stoes wrote a delightful series on people, places and things in New Mexico and West Texas. Ruth Day Johns wrote a humorous book about her childhood in Southern New Mexico. A small volume of the poetry of Stella Baker was privately printed. Elnora Wiley wrote an account of the Shalem Colony, part of which was on the Wiley farm. But the most prolific writer is Opal Lee Priestley whose eclectic subject matter ranges from children's stories through space, humor, geography and history.

The only “spinster” listed in 1893-94 was one Alice Montgomery. Raised in Wichita, Kansas, she came to the Valley for her health and found a position as a teacher. Reputedly inheriting a substantial estate from her brother, she abandoned teaching and became an ardent and enthusiastic booster of Las Cruces. In 1894 she and Mesdames McFie, Reymond and the energetic Emma Dawson started the Women's Improvement Association (WIA). Their sole purpose was to “improve” life in the area. Their big ambition was to set up a park complete with a

clubhouse.

Their first project, however, was to acquire a hearse, for there was no way to transport caskets to the cemetery. This conveyance, now thoroughly restored, is on display at the Buckhorn Saloon in Pinos Altos.

The next necessity was a sprinkler to keep down the dust on the unpaved streets. Alice Gruver, who is writing a history of the WIA, reports that a fee of 25 cents was charged for this service. For property owners who balked at paying, the driver had explicit instructions to turn off the water at the boundary and back on after the area was crossed.

On July 4, 1898 the Pioneer Women's Park was opened on Station Street (now Las Cruces Avenue).

Another "wish" for the members was a public library. In 1926 in the back of a millinery shop a small room was lined with filled bookcases and opened to the general public on Tuesday afternoons. It was staffed by volunteers from the WIA.

In 1927 the clubhouse was finished, and the formal opening was held on January 2, 1928. The library was moved to the clubhouse, and Mrs. Yeo was installed as librarian.

Alice Montgomery, meanwhile, had married the dashing soldier of fortune Thomas Branigan, in 1897. They built a house on Station Street and bought a farm on the west side of the depot.

In 1925 Thomas Branigan died, followed seven years later by Alice. In her will she had left \$35,000 to the city of Las Cruces to build a library to be named for her husband. The income from the property was to be used to purchase books. (She also willed \$2,800 to the WIA to close out the mortgage on the clubhouse.)

For the thesis for her master's degree Jennifer Ross took a survey of current women's organizations. She advances the theory that they are becoming things of the past. The older members because of age and/or infirmities are no longer able to participate actively and younger candidates are scarce. The economy demands that most younger

women work full or part time, and they prefer to spend their leisure time with their families, or to join groups whose meetings fit in more comfortably with their schedules or whose purpose has more in common with their interest. So for these two centenarians — the second and third oldest women's organizations and among the top ten of any still in existence in the state, time may be runing out. If so, it's too bad — they will be missed!

ILKA FEATHER MINTER, a native of Mesilla Park, has been a "Lady of the Club" since 1973. She has held various offices with the Doña Ana Historical Society and is a member of its Hall of Fame. Her "George Adlai Feather, Renaissance Man" appeared in SNMHR, Vol. 1.

ENDNOTES

* (Author's Note) — A disastrous fire in 1939 totally demolished the house and all its contents of Mr. and Mrs. E. McIntosh. Selma McIntosh was then secretary- treasurer of the club, and as such, kept all the records. The golden anniversary loomed in a mere three years and Miss Lottie Sweet had already been elected to write a 50-year history. There was a mad scramble to unearth any written matter or memorabilia. Fortunately, current and former members were born pack rats. Searches through attics, trunks, basements and boxes produced an awesome collection of yearbooks, banquet menus, place markers, cartoons, photographs and newspaper clippings. Incredibly, a handwritten copy of a report covering the years 1892 to 1907 by Mrs. S.A. Steel and a copy of the original *Constitution, By-Laws and Duties of Officers* were found. When the archives of the Rio Grande Historical Collections opened in 1974, this historical treasure (with a meticulous listing by Florence Erwin) was deposited in the collection. Regular additions have been made to keep it up to date.

Census 1890 Las Cruces-Mesilla Park

Articles from *Rio Grande Republican*
Independent Democrat
Las Cruces Citizen
Las Cruces Sun News

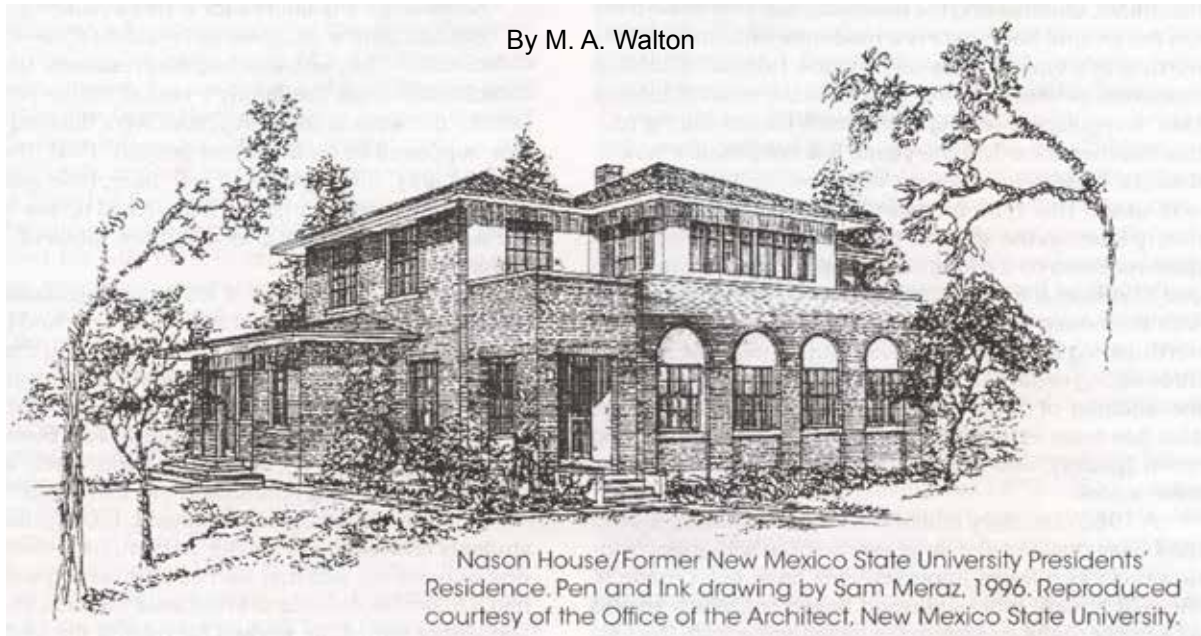
Notes of G.A. Feather
Alice Gruver

Reports of Mrs. Anne Steel (1892-1907)
Miss Lottie Sweet (1892-1942)
Mrs. Florence Erwin (1892-1967)
Mrs. Elnora Wiley (1892-1992)

Minutes, Scrapbooks and Yearbooks of the Wednesday Literary Club and the Women's Improvement Association (archives of the RGHC, Branson Library)

And my thanks to Austin, Linda, Patricia and Tim (at the archives), Opal Lee, Gloria, Doris and Elnora (Ladies of the Club), Pat G., and last, but not least, Sam, Joan, Bill and Robert.

THE NMSU PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE: NASON HOUSE



Editor's Note: There are two stories here. First is a fairly concise narrative of the house and some gossip information about the people who lived there. Following is "the rest of the story," told in explanatory footnotes that reveal a great deal about the historical context of the university and the early architecture of Las Cruces.

Even Las Cruces with little interest in New Mexico State University (NMSU) or early history of the city know that the two-story building at 2640 El Paseo Road cornering University Avenue, was once the home of Hiram H. Hadley, the first president of what was to become NMSU.¹ What many may not realize is that the house was not there when he was president; it has nothing to do with the presidency of the University; and the name of the architect is unknown. Hadley purchased the land near the campus in what was then Mesilla Park in 1906, and had that house built in 1907, 13 years after he relinquished the presidency and became the first President Emeritus.²

There was no consideration of providing a home for the president of the University until the second decade of the 20th century. During their terms as president, a variety of off-campus locations housed Hiram Hadley (1889-1894)³ and the next six succeeding presidents:⁴ Samuel P. McCrea (1894-1896), Cornelius T. Jordan (1896-1899), Frederick W. Sanders (1899-1901), Luther Foster (1901-1908), Winfred E. Garrison (1908-1913),⁵ and

George E. Ladd (1913-1917). However, on 21 December 1917, the eighth president, Austin D. Crile (1917-1920),⁶ recommended to the Board of Regents that a residence, in a style befitting a president of the increasingly prestigious institution, be constructed on the campus.⁷

As the United States had been committed to the war in Europe for seven months,⁸ and the institution's budget was very tight, the Regents' decision to expend an estimated \$8,000, one-sixth of the funds available, for a "mansion" was inevitably controversial. But the decision stood and the plan for the residence was designed by Henry C. Trost, noted southwestern architect of the El Paso, Texas, firm of Trost & Trost,⁹ who was personally responsible for the original campus master plan.¹⁰ Bids for the construction were opened on 26 April 1918, and a contract in the amount of \$9,560 was awarded to the Bascom French Company of Las Cruces, which was currently working on other campus buildings. The contract was drawn up by El Paso architect O.H. Thorman.¹¹

The new presidents' residence faced north, in what is now the 1000 block of East University Avenue, which was then called Mountain Avenue. It provided an expansive view of a pleasant wooded tract, called the "bosque," across the street.¹² In many ways, the house is a typical Trost Southwestern two story, detached, single-family, red brick, rectilinear structure, with a main block wider than it is deep. It has some Prairie School features,¹³ including broad

overhanging eaves, which provided protection from the sun. In addition, a small pavilion entrance on the northeast corner added shadows and protected the front door from direct sunlight. The low, asphalt-shingled, hipped roof and banding of the windows also are Prairie School hallmarks, emphasizing the horizontal design of the house. On the ground floor there is a moderate offset toward the north with a typical three-bay window front, and another moderate extension to the west from the main structure. Due to regular repointing of the brick facade during routine maintenance over the years, it is not possible now to detect if Trost's characteristic raked mortar type masonry was used. This type masonry features mortar flush or nearly flush on the short or vertical side of the brick, but quite recessed on the long side, resulting in shadows which add a horizontal accent. Comparison of early photographs with the house today indicates that modifications of the north-facing brick facade have been made. The original three strong rectangular windows have been softened with the addition of brick horseshoe arches. The north face also has been extended to the west, enlarging the living room (parlor), and a fourth window (without arch) has been added.

A 1966 one-story addition on the rear (south) side of the house resulted in a large sunny room with many windows. No significant improvements have been made to the 578 square foot unfinished basement which served as a utility room. Access to the basement is from the east side, outside the kitchen door.

The primary access to the interior of the house is via the small pavilioned porch and door on the northeast corner, which leads to a small vestibule. Immediately inside the front door, on the southeast side of the vestibule, in what may have been a cloakroom, there is now a receptionist's desk. On the south side of the vestibule is a combination open/closed stair with a double-entry. It has two straight flights of five steps each, terminating at a landing from which an enclosed single flight to the west, at a right angle to the first two flights, rises to the second floor. The initial short flights rise from the vestibule in the front of the house and from what was once a dining room toward the rear. Access to the rear of the house, without climbing up to the landing and descending again, in the manner of a stile, is also allowed via a door from the living room.

The living room is accessed by a door from the west side of the modest vestibule. The spacious living room features a fireplace fitted into the southeast corner. The fireplace has a shallow wall-type chimney breast extending only a few inches into the room. The fireplace opening is relatively small; the sides of the opening are faced with the ends of bricks, while the top of the opening is bordered with vertically placed bricks. Horizontal bricks surround the opening and extend above it to the quite narrow/shallow mantel shelf, which is supported by four small coved brackets. Above the mantel shelf, the upper

section, or over-mantel, is comprised of three receding rectangles, each outlined in narrow wooden molding, the inner-most rectangle having a slightly curved top. In the manner of early 20th century mantels, this space once may have housed a beveled edged, plate glass mirror; however, today it is utilized for a small painting.

According to a daughter of President Crile, Florence Crile Stubbs John, who watched the Presidents' Residence construction from the family's rented house across the street, "the walls of the living room were finished in what was supposed to be the latest fashion. First, they were painted gray, then splattered with blue, rose and lavender. The floor had a large rug that picked up the colors of the wall but was mostly gray and more subdued. It was a beautiful rug."¹⁴

Pleased with the result of his recommendation to the Board of Regents, President Austin D. Crile and his family moved into the residence in 1918. Among their original furnishings for the house was an elegant grand piano, a gift to Mrs. Crile from the parishioners of the Illinois church where Dr. Crile previously had been pastor, "because they were concerned about their beloved minister's wife being stranded in the wild West!"¹⁵

Dr. Crile, a theologically trained L.L.D., forbade both students and faculty to smoke on campus; however, that pronouncement was met with as little lasting success as had the similar decrees of Presidents Sanders and Garrison before him. Crile worked for ridding the community of saloons and railed against the radical doctrines of Anarcho-Syndicalism, Bolshevism, and Socialism. He was deeply concerned with the welfare of the agricultural sector of society and was instrumental in the proliferation of hogs, which came to be called "mortgage lifters" in the depressed Mesilla Valley.¹⁶ For "private reasons," Dr. Crile resigned in March of 1919, was persuaded to stay, and resigned again in December 1919, effective March 1920.

On April Fool's Day 1920, before the newly selected ninth president, Robert Waitman Clothier (1920-1921) had arrived on campus, students decorated Tortugas Mountain with the familiar white "A," the annual repainting of which since has become traditional. Shortly after becoming the second president to live in the house, President Clothier discovered and revealed that the college had incurred a debt in excess of \$50,000, which an audit revealed actually to total \$68,747.78! New Mexico's Republican Governor Octaviano A. Larrazolo replaced the Board of Regents; the Republican Party chose to drop Larrazolo in favor of Judge Meritt C. Mechem in the fall election; the newly elected Governor Mechem, in turn, again replaced the Board of Regents; and the new Board of Regents forced President Clothier to resign, although he had been in no way responsible for the deficit.¹⁷

The next president, Dr. Harry Llewellyn Kent (1921-1936) arrived with a socially active wife, a precocious daughter and three boisterous sons, and the family was

soon increased by another boy. The children had the run of the campus and their menagerie of pets was never far behind them. A particular pet goose would meet President Kent of an afternoon in front of the boys' dormitory, and accompany him back to the residence. There were many faculty and student parties at the residence, and fraternities and sororities displaced literary societies on campus. During the early years of his term, the gross deficit was cleared, but the college and community were wracked by the Great Depression and political turmoil. In 1935, Kent suffered a paralytic stroke while in Salt Lake City, Utah, and was unable to maintain a full schedule. The Board of Regents forced his resignation.¹⁸

Although the following residents, Dr. Ray Fife (1936-1938) and his wife had no children, a niece who was attending the college lived with them for a time. Despite the presence of that younger person, the furnishings and tone of the residence became much more formal, as befitted Mrs. Fife's large literary tea parties. Dr. Fife had been an Ohio State Director of Agricultural Education, and had participated in planning for the National Youth Administration and the education programs for the Civilian Conservation Corps camps. He had conflicts with the Board of Regents and resigned from the college to accept a position at Ohio State University.¹⁹

The next president, Hugh Meglone Milton, II (1938-1947), and his vivacious second wife Josephine moved into the house with one son, and their family was soon increased by another son. The residence rang with laughter and good-natured shouts as the Milton children, Hugh III and John Baldwin marched about playing soldiers. Mrs. Milton held gracious garden receptions on the lawn. When President Milton, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve, took a leave of absence from the college presidency upon being recalled to active duty from September 1941 until January 1946, Mrs. Milton shared the house with other military wives who visited from time to time. President Milton returned from World War II a Brigadier General and stayed at the college slightly more than a year before becoming Superintendent of New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell.²⁰

The 13th President, John R. Nichols (1947-1949) was the sixth to move into the residence. His wife Shirley eagerly learned to prepare Mexican and other regional food, which she served at small dinner parties for faculty groups and the Board of Regents. President Nichols, who was former President of Idaho State College and former educational advisor to General Douglas MacArthur's imperium over Japan, had hardly developed a taste for Southwestern cuisine when he was selected as United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs and departed for Washington, D.C.²¹

The next president was John W. Branson (1949-1955), who had been on the faculty since August 1927 and had been acting or interim president several times.²² He was a "gentleman of culture" from Purdue University,

a mathematician and textbook author whose primary interest was in building the finest library in the Rocky Mountain area. He was an avid bridge player, and card parties probably were the principal social events at the residence.

The widower Dr. Roger Bailey Corbett (1955-1970) was the next to last president to live in the residence. He rattled around alone in the house until marrying the widow Elizabeth (Betty) Burn Rutter in 1963, when he also opened the house to Betty's teenage daughter Susan and 11 year old son Matthew and the children's frequent overnight and weekend guests. It was during the Corbett residency that some modifications were made to the upstairs bedrooms, the downstairs library was turned into a master bedroom and bath, and the sunroom was enlarged. Mrs. Corbett enjoyed entertaining and was known for her "theme" dinner parties with meals catered by the university chef. The large, stately old trees in the yard provided excellent roosts for the beautiful, black, long-tailed, common grackle; after one of them "bombed" President Corbett in his tuxedo one evening, the good man obtained a "permit to shoot the pesky birds."²³

The final family to call the presidents' residence home was that of Dr. Gerald W. Thomas (1970-1984) and his wife Jean, who lived in the historic house from 1970 until 1980. The Thomases, who had a son and two daughters, found the house arrangement difficult for entertaining. Except having a number of radiators removed, they made only cosmetic changes to the house — paint, wallpaper, light fixtures. The lawn was the scene of several wedding ceremonies, including that of their son David and his bride Nancy. The grounds were well tended by the NMSU physical plant employees, one of whom turned out to have been tending to more than the shrubbery; he was found responsible for breaking into the house three times. After the third robbery, iron bars were installed on the windows, creating the difficulty of escape in case of fire, and causing the fire marshal to condemn the house. At approximately 3:45 a.m. on 14 April 1972, an angry student named Lloyd Harvey Cornett threw a firebomb onto the roof of the first floor sunroom. The device was found near the window of an upstairs southeastern bedroom formerly occupied by one of the President's daughters. Cornett was suspended from the University.²⁴

In the summer of 1980, a new president's residence was completed on Geothermal Road, near the University Golf Course. President and Mrs. Thomas moved to the new house for their final four years. They were followed by President James E. Halligan (1984-1994) and his wife Ann, and the eighteenth president, Dr. J. Michael Orenduff (1995-) and his wife Li.

Although no longer a home for NMSU presidents the old residence, one of only five remaining Trost buildings on campus,²⁵ gained a new purpose and a new university family complete with many young people. An outside fire escape was added, and other improvements, totaling about \$150,000, brought the building up to fire and safety

codes and made it suitable to become the Center for Latin American Studies.²⁶

Due to a tragic circumstance, the Center was to gain a generous benefactress, the widowed Marion (Mrs. Charles W.H.) Nason of Las Cruces and of Pebble Beach, California. In October 1979, her son Willoughby "Bill" L. Nason, a thirty-one year old Vietnam veteran, a graduate student working on his master's degree thesis in Mexican Revolutionary History, suffered an unexpected heart attack in his Las Cruces apartment, hours before he was to take a plane to California to visit his fiancée. Bill's interest in Mexico had been fostered by his late father Charles, an electronics engineer who began collecting books and artifacts relative to the history and archaeology of Latin America after he was sent to Guatemala to install a nationwide radio and telegraph communications system in the 1930s.²⁷

In 1980, Mrs. Nason donated to the University a collection of over 2000 items which had been assembled by her late husband over a period of nearly 50 years. Initially the items were housed in the "Charles and Willoughby Nason Latin American Reading Room" in Breland Hall on the campus. Later that same year, Mrs. Nason and her daughter Mrs. Alexandra Hall of Novato, California, established a memorial fund in honor of Willoughby Nason in the amount of \$24,000. The fund, which continues to be administered through the NMSU Foundation, is designed to support the Nason Fellowship for graduate studies in the Mexican Revolution.²⁸

Through a further gift from Mrs. Nason, the remodeling of the house was completed in 1983, and on 30 October 1987, the house was dedicated as the Nason House. A suitable plaque is outside, near the front door, and the Charles and Willoughby Nason reading room now is located in the house along with pleasant lounges and offices of the Center for Latin American Studies and some functions of the New Mexico Border Commission.²⁹

In the aftermath of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and with the growing influence of the Camino Real Economic Alliance (CREA), which not only has opened doors to Mexico, but also has opened a gateway to even more markets in Central and South America, the current limelight on the Center for Latin American Studies indicates that many more intriguing stories may yet issue from the historic old house.

M.A. Walton has contributed to the three previous issues of SNMHR, and serves as Associate Editor of this volume. She is a New Mexico State University Museum Volunteer, who researched this article as part of a project to create a new NMSU "Walking Tour," with an emphasis on the original campus designed by Henry C. Trost. She is also researching historic off-campus homes of former NMSU Presidents for a planned "NMSU Presidents' Residences Driving Tour."

ENDNOTES

1 Simon F. Kropp, *That All May Learn: New Mexico State University, 1888-1964* (Las Cruces, N.M.: New Mexico State University, 1972), pp. 6-17 and 122.

The seminal Las Cruces College was incorporated in April 1888, and the first academic year was scheduled for 17 September 1888-1 June 1889. On 28 February 1889, territorial Governor Edmund G. Ross signed the Rodey Act, which established the Agricultural College and Experimental Station in or near Las Cruces. During the academic year 1890-1891, the Agricultural College became known as the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. In 1912, the post office address of the college was changed from "Agricultural College" to "State College." In November, 1960, the school became New Mexico State University.

2 Anne E. Kapp and Guylyn M. Nusom (Eds.), *The Las Cruces Historic Survey* (Las Cruces, N.M.: Doña Ana County Historical Society, not dated [c. 1981]), p. 101; and "Building Worthy of Preservation Award: The Hiram Hadley House," *Doña Ana County Historical Society, Ninth Annual Banquet Program* (Las Cruces, N.M.: Doña Ana County Historical Society, 1975), pp. 5-7. The yellow brick modified Georgian/Colonial Revival residence, unusually large for its time, was completed in 1907. The house has a full basement and an attic with large dormer windows. There are high ceilings and the original golden oak woodwork is still in place. The interior was originally "alabastined" in pastel colors on the ground floor and in white for the second story. The current two-story verandah is a later addition; the original entry was by a flat-roofed porch with a balustrade providing a balconied area above it where Hadley often slept.

The building currently houses Glenn Cutter Jewelers. Modifications made by the Cutters, including necessary replacement of the original wooden window frames to accommodate a state of the art security system, and an addition to the west side of the structure were matters of great controversy in Las Cruces during 1992.

3 Kapp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 100. The Italianate style, faded green and somewhat sagging house at 325 West Ethel Street, slightly north of the Alameda Depot Historic District, was once owned by Hiram Hadley. Later it was part of Dr. Robert McBride's farm buildings, and still later was part of the Limbaugh Dairy.

4 As the Mesilla Park railway depot was a scant half-mile from the college, the pleasant, tree-shaded, unincorporated community surrounding the depot was the primary introduction to the area for most academicians and students. It followed that the majority of the college presidents and other faculty members built, bought, or rented homes there.

5 Kapp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 85; also, "Building Adhering to Regional Architecture Award: The Home of the Good Shepherd," *Doña Ana County Historical Society, Ninth Annual Banquet Program* (Las Cruces, N.M.: Doña Ana County Historical Society, 1975), pp. 9-10. In 1909, President Winfred E. Garrison erected the adobe hacienda at 3120 Good Shepherd Road on fifteen acres of land purchased from H.D. Bowman (for whom Bowman Avenue in Mesilla Park is named). The estate was sold when he left the valley in 1913 and, eventually, in 1928 the house passed to the Roman Catholic order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, and became a convent, an orphanage and a parochial school. The two story house has many spacious rooms surrounding a stone fountain in an inner courtyard. The interior has white plaster walls and dramatic dark stained woodwork. The original house is now the residence of the Lewis E. and Sara C. Emerick family and the office of the Emerick Construction Company, while the outbuildings have been developed into a condominium complex.

6 Kapp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 88. The pink house at what is now 1105 University Avenue (formerly Mountain Avenue), in what was described as the "College Home Plat," was erected in 1899 by John O. Miller, coach and assistant registrar of the college. The low house, set snug and close to the ground, with overhanging eaves, great surfaces of roof, and well-shaded deep porches, is an unusually fine example of the California Bungalow style. In 1917, the house was rented by President Austin Crile and his family until the new Presidents' Residence, diagonally across the street, was completed in the following year. In 1919, Omer C. Cunningham, a professor in the college dairy department purchased the house.

7 Gerald W. Thomas, "Notes on the Nason House," enclosure to G.W. Thomas, President Emeritus, letter to Marcia G. Muller, Vice President for University Advancement, NMSU, dated 20 November 1995, in NMSU Building Records, Rio Grande Historical Collections, NMSU Library/Branson Hall.

8 After vainly attempting to negotiate a peace settlement between Germany and the European Allies, the 28th President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, profoundly distressed by the continued sinking of American ships, asked Congress to declare a state of warfare with Germany on 2 April 1917. The resolution was passed by the Senate on 4 April and by the House on 6 April.

- 9 Lloyd C. Engelbrecht and June-Marie F. Engelbrecht, *Henry C. Trost, Architect of the Southwest* (El Paso: El Paso Public Library Association, 1981), pp. 3 and 33. Even though the "neutral" United States had been providing support to the Allies and harbored great animosity from suffering casualties inflicted by the German submarine force, there was no hostility in New Mexico toward the architectural firm of Trost & Trost, owned and operated by Henry Charles Trost, Gustavus Adolphus Trost and his twin brother Adolphus Gustavus Trost, along with their nephew George Ernst Trost. The Trost brothers' parents Ernst Trost (1819 or 1820-1908) and Wihelmina nee Frank Trost (died 1891) were natives of Germany who had arrived in the U.S. in the early 1850s. 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 32-34, and 93-95. Although Henry Trost, who designed a prodigious number of buildings in Arizona, New Mexico, and Trans-Pecos, Texas, was in the business with other architects prior to moving to El Paso; and although the other members of the Trost & Trost firm were architects, designers, and builders; and Trost & Trost had numerous other architects affiliated with the firm from time to time, "everyone always spoke of Henry Trost as the chief designer." In 1907, Henry C. Trost received a commission to devise a campus plan and several buildings for the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in Las Cruces.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 133; and Kapp, *Op. Cit.*, p. 104. O.H. Thorman is believed to have been employed by or otherwise affiliated with the Trost & Trost firm at the time. He was still active in El Paso in December 1928, when he and Henry Trost were among the architects featured in a "Photographic Exhibition of Brick Architecture" which was in El Paso for about a week during a U.S. tour; and about 1935 when he designed the Spanish Pueblo Revival service station (now New Mexico Bolt & Screw Company, Inc.) at 887 North Main Street, at Picacho Avenue.
- 12 Kropp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 90 and 91. The property across the street, directly to the north of the residence, belonged to Professor Archibald B. Sage. He preserved a mini-wilderness in the southern part of his tract, and on the more northwesterly portion he built an adobe home in 1903 and expanded it in 1905. Later, the property was sold to T.K. Campbell; the bosque was cleared, depriving its resident skunk population of homesites; and the Sage home is now a restaurant (The Hacienda. 2605 South Espina Street).
- 13 The Prairie School, centered in early 20th century Chicago, reflected the principle of designing houses in harmony with the flat, horizontal lines of the midwestern prairies. While Frank Lloyd Wright was the best known of the practitioners of such "organic architecture," the Prairie Style was reflected in the work of a group of mutually supportive architects who shared design ideas and companionship. Although Henry Trost was a few years older than Wright, both were working in Chicago in the late 1880s/early 1890s, both were at times employed by the inspirational architect Louis Henri Sullivan, and both were members of the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club, which evolved into the Chicago Architectural Club.
- Trost's use of certain features of the Prairie House, the Mission Revival style, and Pueblo Indian-derived motifs synthesized to produce unique Southwestern designs specifically suited to the environment that he termed "arid America." As the exterior architectural features of Trost's designs took advantage of site topography to become a natural part of the landscape, so were interior spatial arrangements planned to harmonize with the intended use of the space, so that main rooms flow together in uninterrupted simplicity. Frequently, windows were fairly large and deeply recessed for maximum illumination while providing minimum exposure to direct sunlight. Whenever possible, they were situated to frame interesting views of the outside environment.
- 14 Della Kilcrease, "Home of Many Past Presidents Reflects NMSU Growth, Change," *Aggie Panorama* (NMSU, Las Cruces, NM), October, 1988, p. 12.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Kropp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 149-156.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 161-169.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 170-295. Kent Hall, built in 1930 as a men's dormitory, is dedicated to former President Kent. It now houses the University Museum, featuring traveling exhibits and displays from the university's permanent collections.
- 19 Kilcrease, *I or. Cit.*, and Kropp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 239-247.
- 20 Kilcrease, *Loc. Cit.*, Kropp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 182-333, and Lee Gemoets, "Hugh M. Milton: Educator-Soldier-Distinguished American," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Las Cruces, NM: Doña Ana County Historical Society, 1994). pp. 62-70. In 1950, General Milton was again recalled to active duty as Chief of the Army Reserve. Later he became Under Secretary and then Assistant Secretary of the Army. On campus there is both a bronze statue of and a nearby building dedicated to the memory of President Milton. Milton Hall, the former student union, now contains classrooms and offices for various departments, including University Communications, the Journalism Department, the Center for Educational Development, and the radio and television studios for the public broadcasting affiliates KRWG-FM and KRWG-TV.
- 21 Kilcrease, *Loc. Cit.*, and Kropp, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 307-317.
- 22 NMSU Building Records, Rio Grande Historical Collection, NMSU Library/ Branson Hall. President Branson actually served as President for approximately 11 years. He had filled in from June until October 1938, after President Fife resigned and before President Milton was selected. He served again between 5 September 1941 and 1 January 1946, while President Milton was on active duty with the Army. He was called upon a third time to serve in an interim capacity after President Nichols' resignation 8 April 1949 until 16 October 1949. He reluctantly accepted the office of President in his own right on 17 October 1949 and served for almost six years, until 14 August 1955. Branson Hall, dedicated to President Branson, was constructed in 1951 and, until the new library was built in 1992, was the only library facility on campus. Recently renovated, it contains engineering, business and agricultural materials and the NMSU Archives.
- 23 *Ibid.* Corbett Center, the present student union building, recently underwent a major renovation, which was completed in the spring of 1996. It is named in honor of former President Corbett and houses the bookstore, conference facilities, a small art gallery, post office, student cafeteria and cafes.
- 24 *Ibid.* Gerald Thomas Hall was built for the College of Agriculture and Home Economics in 1962, and named for the former president in 1988. The building is devoted to research, instruction and service, a fitting tribute to the World War II carrier pilot, co-founder of the Rio Grande Historical Collections, international consultant in world food production and natural resource management, and author of a prodigious number of professional publications.
- 25 The other four are:
- The YMCA. The first Trost-designed building to be constructed on campus, it was started in 1907 and dedicated in 1909. It served as a residence hall and activity center until 1929, when it was converted into a music building. In 1964 it became headquarters for the Air Force ROTC program. It has been vacant since Air Science moved to Young Hall in 1982.
- The Music Center's older section, which was a gymnasium from 1911 until 1938, and still has a circular running track, now used for practice rooms 12 feet above the original gymnasium floor. It was later an armory; then in 1938, it was incorporated into the new music center.
- Goddard Hall, the engineering building built in 1913, with an annex added in 1936-37 under the auspices of the WPA. The building was named Goddard Hall in 1934 in honor of Ralph Willis Goddard, engineering professor from 1914 who became dean of engineering in 1920. He was a pioneer in radio engineering, who achieved a first for the southwest in 1922 by inaugurating a regular transmitting schedule, and another first in 1924 by broadcasting the national election returns at regular intervals. Dean Goddard was electrocuted New Year's Eve, 1929, as he attempted to correct a problem with the broadcasting equipment.
- Young Hall, built in 1928 as a library, was occupied by the English Department in 1958. In 1982 it was renovated for the Military Science and Aerospace Studies Department. The hall was named for a former President of the Board of Regents, Judge R.L. Young, who died in the summer of 1933.
- 26 Thomas, *Loc. Cit.*
- 27 New Mexico State University Press Releases dated 10 June 1980 and 18 December 1980.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Kilcrease, *Loc. Cit.*, states that the house was to be dedicated in 1988; however, that probably refers to an after-the-fact-ceremonial-dedication in the presence of the benefactress as the plaque on the building states that it already had been dedicated in 1987.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A COUNTY SCHOOL TEACHER

By Edith Berrier as recorded by Eloise Evans

Recorder's Note: In 1986, I began recording and transcribing oral histories of older retired teachers who had, over many years, participated in the changes and contributed to the growth of Las Cruces Public Schools. Edith Berrier was my first subject for this study, and an inspiration to continue.

The complete transcription and tape of the interview excerpted in this article are available at the Rio Grande Historical Collections at the NMSU Library.

Edith was born Edith Berrier in 1906, was later Edith Place, and after the death of her first husband, married Rex Berrier to again become Edith Berrier. She came to Las Cruces from Iowa as a child, attended school at Mesilla Park and graduated from high school at the old Central School in Las Cruces.

She began her teaching career in Missouri, taught in Alamogordo, and returned to Las Cruces to teach in 1934. From that year until her retirement in 1972, she taught principally pre-first and first grades at Mesilla Park, Fairacres, and Mesilla, for a total of 38 years.

Edith has assumed a leadership role in professional organizations in the county. She served as president and as vice president of Doña Ana Teachers' Association, belonged to NEA, and is a life member of NMNEA. She was a member of Doña Ana Classroom Teachers, is a life member of Delta Kappa Gamma, and is a charter member of Kappa Kappa Iota, Alpha Conclave. She was one of the early members instrumental in starting Doña Ana County Federal Teachers Credit Union (now Fort Bliss Credit Union).

Edith earned a master's degree in Education from NMSU, and did additional graduate work at Columbia and University of Southern California.

Edith hopes children will remember that she always tried to be compassionate and to help them individually.



Edith Berrier as a young teacher at Fairacres School
Courtesy of Edith Berrier

Edith Berrier is a tiny, sprightly lady who, at ninety, loves to be with people. I think of her in her white suit with turquoise jewelry, coming into a room of friends, stopping to say "hello" and exchange hugs with all on her path as she finds her allotted place.

EDITH'S WORDS

ATTENDING SCHOOL IN LAS CRUCES — I came from Iowa in 1916 to live with my grandmother when I was a very small child, and I went to school at Mesilla Park, finished there and then finished high school in Las Cruces.

You would just be amazed at the change in the Mesilla Park school as it is now from what it was then when I started to school. There were four rooms, four teachers and the auditorium. There were no inside restrooms. They were outside — the traditional little red buildings at the back. Far to the right was the boys' and far to the left was the girls'. They had an old pump house, out to the left there. That would be close to Bell Street, I believe it would be now, and if the children wanted to have disputes, they would go around and hide from the teachers behind that old pump house and have regular fist fights or what not.

They didn't have the modern play equipment as we have now — slides and what not. A cousin and I were laughing about it the other day, about the big wheel like a whirley on a tall pole. An old-fashioned merry-go-round. And that was what we played on, hanging and swinging on those chains.

There were four classrooms. They would have double grades. They had the primary, first and second, third and fourth, and I was in the fifth and sixth grade, because I was in the fifth grade at that time. Then the seventh and eighth was the fourth level. The principal was a gentleman whose name was Mr. Vaden. We were *all* quite taken with Mr. Vaden.

I graduated from grade school in 1920, and high school in '23. I finished high school in three years, because I was anxious to get through so that I could get started on some kind of a job. Times were hard — and of course money was scarce.

The old Central School was the high school in Las Cruces at that time. When I finished high school in Las Cruces, there were 23 in our class, and the commencement exercises were held in the old Armory



Mesilla Park School as it appeared before the additions in 1934. Courtesy of Edith Barrier

Building on Griggs Street. The custom then was to present the graduates at the end of the evening with bouquets of garden flowers. I'll never forget a huge bouquet of salmon-colored sweet-peas I received. The girls' graduation dresses were all alike - white "middy blouses" and skirts and black ties.

TEACHING IN LAS CRUCES — 1934-1972

I came back to teach at Mesilla Park in '34 in the old building. They had added rooms, two to the South and two to the north, plus a large auditorium to the west.

It was very difficult to get a job at that time, because they said they were trying to just give the men jobs, and I tried and tried to get in. I had my daughter and my husband, Mr. Place, was very ill, and I was trying and needed to get back in my field of work. When I went originally to apply for a job, this lady (the County Superintendent of Schools) said to me, "Don't you have a husband? Can't he take care of you?" I had to explain that he was quite ill and I did need to get back in my field of work if possible. Well she didn't give me work, but I kept on till I finally got on the substitute list. This was a county school system at that time. It wasn't the Las Cruces system as now. The County School Superintendent was elected.

When I first taught, I had to teach in the basement in the old Home-Ec room. That was when I was doing my substitute work, and Mrs. Russell was the lady who was the principal. She called me in the spring of '34, I guess maybe March, and said, "I have this teacher who is resigning." She was a young teacher, new with no experience, and they were a hard group. They were in this classroom in the basement. There was an aisle right down the middle, and at noon the teachers brought all the classes down to let them wash their hands before they ate. Traipse all those children right through that classroom. Poor little girl, just beginning to teach! And I guess the children were just jumping around, hopping out of their seats, having an awfully good time; then the children would come down to wash their hands. She couldn't keep them in their seats. The principal said, "If you can control those children, Mrs. Place, and teach them, you may have the job the rest of the year." And I had to prove

myself that I could teach and control those children, and they wouldn't be in her office so much. Well, I needed the job, so I did.

The children were fourth-graders. They were not just, you know, slow children. They were mischievous, and maybe they needed some extra help and extra attention.

Then in the fall, I had my first regular job teaching pre-first at Mesilla Park. All of their children were Spanish-speaking. I speak very little Spanish. My job was mainly to teach them to speak English. That's what we mainly started with in pre-first, and then they would go into a regular first-grade class.

In the early times, you were to try to keep them from speaking Spanish at all, and sometimes, now and then some people believed in punishing children if they heard them speaking Spanish. I didn't do that, just encouraged them to try to speak English.

I had to teach in the furnace room, and I had probably close to thirty children. The furnace was in the corner of the room, and it was one of the old ones that banged and rattled and sounded like it was going to explode and would make us jump out of our seats every now and then. The room had half-windows with light, the other half underground, but we needed lights too.

We had a lovely year — a wonderful year. We studied various things, and we were studying foods at one time, so we made applesauce. We invited the Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Campbell to come visit us, which she did. I shall never forget. She said it was the best applesauce. We, the children and I, made applesauce, and I suppose I had made little cookies, probably. So we served applesauce and cookies to all the children and Mrs. Campbell. And she would laugh in later years when I would see her around in town. She would say, "That was the most wonderful room." It was a lovely big room, even though it was the furnace room, and sometimes the furnace would just pop and boil, and you know how the old pipes up to the radiators would bang and go on, but really it was so funny and the children were happy. It was a beautiful room. We decorated it, and we had the best time.

I went to Fairacres in 1944. Mrs. Horton was my principal, and I knew her well at Mesilla Park. She taught with me there, and had observed my work with the children and with my music. So she wanted me to go with her, and I went.

Basically, the children at Fairacres were not Hispanic. Many were transients. A lot of the people who were there would come in just for seasonal work, and then they would take the children out of school.

I taught my own children their music, but then Mrs. Horton was very eager for me to teach the others too. They often had a group, maybe two or three grades, go into the auditorium, and I would teach them songs. Mrs. Horton was a great person for putting on little operettas and programs. I could play the piano and, also teach them the songs, the little dances, etc. that fit the needs in the plays. I wasn't

a music teacher as such, but I really did do lots of the music program there.

Then, in time Mrs. Horton asked me to be the purchaser for the materials for the cafeteria. I did that, and so I really did carry a great load at Fairacres.

In 1954, my father was very ill, and I asked the Superintendent of Schools at the time if there came an opening at Mesilla, I would certainly appreciate being considered for that. Miss Reed was overloaded with pre-first children, and they finally did give me a job at Mesilla. We divided our children. Our rooms were — even then we thought — very full. Many many children — 30 to 40 in our rooms. My principal there was Mr. Sharp. He was a very good principal, very good to me! In fact, he went along with all my innovations — anything I wanted to try, he was most willing, and he seemed very, very happy when I came to Mesilla.

CHANGES IN THE LAS CRUCES SCHOOLS

(In the thirties) the classrooms were so overcrowded. Sometimes we would have close to 40 children apiece and no help. We did need extra help. It would have been very nice, and certainly given extra help to the children, especially ones with a problem. Of course it depended on the grades and school. Some were not overcrowded, and some of them were very overloaded, and you just couldn't possibly give the personal attention to the children sometimes that you felt needed more assistance.

There was no such thing as Special Education then. You handled every problem yourself. You took care of everything the very best you could.

When I first started, when I worked at Mesilla Park and also at Fairacres, they wanted us to visit every home, to meet the parents and see the conditions under which they lived. That was most interesting to me. We would have to drive, because they brought the children in on buses to Mesilla Park, some from Tortugas. I remember one time, I went way down toward the Stahmann Farms. And they had a new baby in this home. Do you know where they had that baby? They had a chest of drawers and they pulled out a drawer a bit more, and they had the baby in it. And they showed me the baby. Just darling, and very clean.

There was no rhyme or reason with salaries at that time when I came to teach. Your experience — the education. People who did not have degrees when they came, you see, were making more than many people who were far better qualified. I would say at that time when I first came, it was more politically controlled.

At the time I came to teach at Mesilla Park, I had four years' experience and I had my degree. And I happened to know a number of teachers — they were good teachers, I'm not saying they weren't; of course you know degrees alone do not make a teacher. But many of them were making a good deal more than I. They didn't consider that I had experience and a degree particularly, because I had to take less in

salary.

I'll tell you how that came to be changed. Through the Teachers Association, the work of the teachers, and I was very active in that. It was called Doña Ana County Teachers Association. And we'd have committees, and we'd work. We'd work toward those things, then we'd take it to the legislature. We worked for betterment, for teacher betterment, for salaries, tenure and sick leave. It got changed through the legislature. You know it had to go through local committees, etc., though. I'm sure that because of our influence on our administrators, they began to take it to the board, and they worked it out finally, and we did get our teacher salary schedule. Yes sir! It was the teachers' concerted work and efforts that contributed much for general betterment of conditions.

Before I retired, those later years, there were so many programs being promoted, so many programs being suggested and brought in, government programs and the like. Some principals wanted all of them. They would insist on incorporating them into our work, and that certainly did cut down on your time for actual teaching, if you understand what I mean, and all of that required so much extra work. You never knew when things were coming along, and that took away from the actual teaching time. So much was expected. And that was becoming very very prominent in our schools even before I retired in '72. You had to do so much extra, sometimes you wondered. Of course, it did a lot of good for children. I understand that. But it took away from a lot of the actual teaching time.

ELOISE S. (POLLY) EVANS, a native of Washington, D.C., holds an M.S. in organic chemistry from Purdue University. Mrs. Evans taught for 25 years in the Las Cruces Public Schools, and founded Las Cruces Alternative High School (later San Andres High School), and served as its administrator for 13 years. Since retirement in 1986, she has continued community involvement, serving on boards of local and state League of Women Voters, Las Cruces Educational Retirees/Retired Teachers Association, and Los Ninos.

NOTES

1 **Mesilla Park School** as described in this article was built in 1900. It was an adobe four-classroom structure, and is still part of the old school, parts of which are used today as a recreation center. In 1915 a small auditorium with a basement was added, in 1934 eight additional classrooms were built, four on each side of the original building, and in 1943 an auditorium was added at the rear of the building.

Fairacres (originally West Picacho) Elementary School was built in 1926.

Old Central School, since demolished, was built in 1914 and was used for grades seven through twelve. It served as the city's only public high school until 1925.

Mesilla School "Old Building" was built in 1906, with additions in 1939 and 1948. It is presently used as a recreation center for the town of Mesilla. *Las Cruces Public Schools Building History*, Revised 1970.

2 Prior to the formation of Las Cruces School District, Number 2 in 1954, the county schools were directed by an elected "Dona Ana County School Superintendent." Mesilla Park and Fairacres Elementary Schools were part of the County School District at the time Edith Berrier taught there.

3 Pre-first was created to teach English to Spanish-speaking children. It was not a kindergarten, as the children enrolled were of the proper age to enter first grade. At the end of the pre-first year, these children normally spent a second year in first grade, making them a year older than their English-speaking counterparts throughout their school years.

FIELDS AND DREAMS

By Jesse Gonzalez with Lee Geomets

My father, Pablo Gonzales de Casillas, was born in Spain. I do not know the date and place of his birth, but I do know he immigrated to Jalisco, Mexico, and then to Fabens, Texas, as a farm laborer. In Fabens he met Mr. Dean Stahmann, father of the Mesilla Valley dynasty that controls the largest pecan farm in the nation.

My mother, Soledad Luna, was born in Chihuahua City, Mexico. In those days, the first 20 years of our current century, most Chihuahuenses favored the politics of the famous Pancho Villa, and lent their support to him as Villistas. And so it went with my mother and my aunt and uncle, Amelia and Simon. The family moved to Juarez with the Villistas. It was there my father, Pablo, met my mother on the bank of the Rio Grande while washing clothes and persuaded her to elope with him to the United States. She never went back to Mexico. Sometime in the 1930s, my father had been promoted to foreman, a position of responsibility that brought with it a house in which to live. My mother gave birth to 11 children, two of whom died when very young. The remaining children grew up on Stahmann Farms.

I, Jesse Gonzales, was born in El Ojito, a ranchito on Stahmann Farms near the big black mesas of the lava flow. I was the seventh child born to my parents. Since my family lived on a hand-to-mouth basis, it was necessary for all family members to work in the fields.

Although education was important to my family, it was more important to spend one's time and energy working to support the family. Because we followed the harvest, I attended several elementary schools: La Mesa, San Miguel and Old Mesilla, New Mexico — all during the course of a single year. I don't remember ever starting the school year on time: the harvest schedules caused us to start late.

We were considered "different" from the other students. Teachers humiliated us in front of the class in order to check us for piojos (head lice), forced us to drink milk in front of the class because we were supposedly undernourished, then placed us in a corner in the back of the room because our clothes were not clean. We were also given hand-me-down clothing in view of the other children in class. This, of course, was very embarrassing. I do not recall learning to speak English in the early years of school. I picked up English from Rudy Camunez, a man named Barela, some of the Stahmann children, including Bill, and other English-speaking persons at Stahmann Farms.

In 1942, my father was killed during an argument at a poker game in San Miguel. Following his death, my brothers, sisters and I continued as field workers, while my eldest sister, Carmen, served as a domestic helper and caretaker of the Stahmann children. Tony, our el-

dest brother, worked in the fields all day.

Four years after my father's death, in 1946, my mother became too ill to take care of the family and we had to split up. My two younger brothers, Ralph and Gilbert, and I were sent to live at the Doña Chole Gutierrez home in Mesilla. The Gutierrezes were family friends. My sisters were sent to attend school and live at the Convent of the Good Shepherd, located in Mesilla Park. My oldest brothers moved to Hobbs, New Mexico and went to work in the oil fields.

My eldest brother, Tony, who had been a major support to my family after my father's death, died of tuberculosis in October of 1951. The entire family attended the funeral — the first time we had been together since 1947. Since my brother, Paul, had an established home and an oil-field job there, the whole family moved to Hobbs.

Attending high school in Hobbs was a new experience for me: more humiliation. I was called pepper belly, wetback, beaner, spic and other names — all new to me. I could only attend one theater in town. For many years I could not go to Jackson's Drug Store, the favorite student hangout. When I was allowed to go in, I had to sit in the back of the store. I could not openly date Anglo girls. When I went to neighboring towns in Texas, I was not served in some restaurants nor welcomed in motels. I was able to escape the pain of day-to-day living in the new world that reading opened up for me — thanks to the helpful people at Stahmann Farms who had taught me English.

I achieved some distinction in Hobbs, however, as the first Hispanic graduate of Hobbs High School in 1958. Patsy Andrews and I were married in 1960. I worked at odd jobs for awhile but decided to return to Las Cruces and attend New Mexico State University. I was graduated with a degree in pre-law in 1964. I planned to enroll in the University of Oklahoma to earn a law degree. Unfortunately, the need to support my wife and two children was overwhelming, so I moved my family to Portales, where I earned a teaching degree.



DR. JESSE GONZALES returned to the Mesilla Valley in 1989, as superintendent of Las Cruces Public Schools.

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TOMAS J. FOUNTAIN: REVOLUTIONARY OR PATRIOT

by Andrew D. Alexander Jr.

Several Fountain family members have been the subject of unsolved mysteries in New Mexico. Whether the Fountain family's political or historical links contributed to their premature deaths probably will never be known. However, there is little doubt that their political loyalties became convoluted as Mexican-Americans. Raised by a father to be aggressively pro-American and raised by a mother to be fervidly proud of their Mexican ancestry, the Fountain children were specially equipped to be bi-culturally animated. One of those unusual cases was that of Tomas J. Fountain.

Tomas J. Fountain was born in El Paso, Texas on February 2, 1873 and died April 9, 1912. His father, Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain was born in New York and was a descendant of French Huguenots. His mother, Mariana Perez Fountain, originally came from Durango, Mexico (Lopez; Alexander, 1996). The couple parented ten children, of which Tomas was the fifth born.

Colonel Fountain had modeled for his family a life of dedication and fearlessness. He was a man of strong character and a mover by any standard in a rapidly growing territory filled with the anarchy of the borders. Fountain was a lawyer, newspaper publisher, military officer, Indian fighter, Texas State Senator, and eventually a Territorial Judge, which ultimately led to his unsolved murder in 1896 with his youngest son, Henry (Gibson; Owen). During his thriving law practice in El Paso in 1867, Albert J. Fountain did legal work for the colorful Benito Pablo Juarez (Alexander, 1993; Owen). Fountain also took a leave of absence from his customs inspector position to accept a commission of Colonel from Juarez, to help in the defeat of Napoleon's puppet Emperor Maximilian at Queretaro on May 15, 1867. Fountain's political alignment probably served as one of many catalysts accounting for Tomas's involvement with General Francisco Pancho Villa and the Mexican Revolution some 45 years later.

As few people have realized, Mariana came from a family who was important in New Mexican Territorial history. Mariana de Jesus de Contreras de Ovante Perez Fountain was through marriage and correct interpretation of her name, a descendant of Don Albino Perez, who was the first governor of New Mexico in 1834, under Mexico's President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Perez was selected by President Santa Anna to be governor at Santa Fe, of what was then, the northern Mexican Territory. After three years Governor Perez was decapitated at the hands of a political rival by the name of Armijo on the Santa Fe plaza (Miller).

Mariana's father, Antonio Perez, had kept the

thriving, family-built, freighting business alive on the Chihuahua Trail, servicing Santa Fe until a mule team trampled him to death in a freighting accident in the early 1800s (Alexander, 1993). It is not known whether he had any associations with the Bermudez family of Chihuahua who later, through marriage, became part of the Fountain family lineage (Boyd).

Tomas was one of many men who became involved in the Mexican Revolution. The newspapers of the early 1900s published picturesque stories about swash-buckling heroes who had every young man chomping at the bit, wanting to make a name for himself on the frontier. The stability of steady employment in the mines probably appealed to Tomas. Untraditional, and an adventurer who was ambitious for success, Tomas ventured into Parral, the rich mining town 120 miles south-southeast of the state capital, Chihuahua city. His mother's family connections in Parral and newspaper reports of over 400 Americans employed by the La Palmilla Mining Company (El Paso Herald) meant a safe and secure means to financial independence for Tomas. Tomas became established quickly in Parral with a female companion by the name of Maria Nauoa who gave birth to a son who was named Edward. Edward was named after Tomas's older brother, a twenty-three year old miner, who was killed in a bar-room conflict in Pinos Altos, New Mexico, on July 6, 1890.

Albert J. Fountain Jr., Tomas's eldest brother, was also a significant figure in Tomas's life. He was born December 6, 1863, in Los Lunas, New Mexico, and died in Mesilla, March of 1936 (Alexander). Ten years older than Tomas, Albert was well aware of Mariana's roots in the early years of the Mexican territory. Albert's letter to the Rio Grande Republican in 1882 proudly and publicly asserted his pride in his blood-relationship to the late Governor Albino Perez. At the age of ten, Tomas looked up to his brother and was reinforced about the dignity of his mother's origins during a time when it was unpopular to have Mexican blood. Albert married Teresita de Garcia de Bermudez de Aragon of Mesilla, New Mexico, whose family also dated back to the early freighters on the Chihuahua trail. Teresita was the great-granddaughter of Jose Aragon, a famous New Mexican santero (a craftsman who creates wood carvings and paintings of the saints of the Catholic church). Teresita's father, Antonio Garcia, was a blacksmith in Mesilla and an occasional freighter.

The political riots in Mesilla in 1871 resulted in the politically prominent Garcia family moving to Ascension, Mexico, for a two year period (Gibson). It was during this time that Teresita's father, Antonio Garcia, was known to have

schooled the few inhabitants of the village of Ascencion in the blacksmithing of cannons, manufactured from wagon axles (Fountain). It is more than likely that Tomas picked up some of his knowledge of making artillery from Teresita's father.

Anything of value was traded for munitions along the border after U.S. President William H. Taft placed an embargo on the sale of guns and ammunition to Mexico in 1912. As a result of the ban, the sale of these items to Mexico went via the El Paso underground (Harris and Sadler). On one verified occasion, Tomas brought a cache of jewelry and other valuables to Mesilla. He gave them to Teresita, his sister-in-law, for safe-keeping, while he was away from home. Upon returning, he told Teresita that the next time he returned from Mexico, he would show her riches beyond her imagination (Alexander, 1993). He then took possession of the cache and left for parts unknown.

Whether an idealist or opportunist, it is probable Tomas saw an opportunity to make some money beyond miner's pay, made a connection with the Villistas, and then promised the delivery of a machine gun and ammunition in exchange for an undetermined amount of compensation. When Tomas accomplished the purchase and delivery of the weapon and, no doubt, illustrated his skill in the use of it, a crafty Pancho Villa insisted that Tomas remain with the revolutionary movement. To encourage this, Villa made Tomas a Captain in his army (Torres). Similarly, E.L. Charpentier, Tomas's close associate and a known spy during the French occupation in Mexico (Sadler), was given a commission of Colonel by Villa in exchange for his well-known expertise in the manufacture and use of artillery (Torres). By the time the battles of Parral occurred on March 24 and April 4, 1912, the 39-year-old Tomas was thoroughly entangled with the movement and with Charpentier. He found himself sitting behind a machine gun on a hillside, surrounded by General Jose Inez Salazar's army and waiting for his co-conspirator to return with help.

Torres states that Tomas crawled down the hill where he left his machine gun dismantled, made it to the corrals next to Orozco's Drug Store in Parral and took shelter. He hid for three days without food and water, hoping that it would allow Charpentier enough time to get to the American Consul, James Long. Hopefully, Charpentier could convince Consul Long to telegraph the U.S. War Department and secure Fountain's return to U.S. authorities. Seventy-two hours later, exhausted from lack of food and water, Fountain went to Orozco's Drug Store for help. One has to wonder why Tomas sought sanctuary at this location above others. There is some evidence to indicate that the Orozco families in Parral and Chihuahua had been sympathetic to the Maderista movement. However, in March of 1912 General Pascual Orozco, after being snubbed for a better position in the Madero government, rebelled against President Francisco I. Madero and led his army against the federal



Writing on the photo reads: J. Fountain. Fusilado en Parral, Chihuahua. Tomado la vispera de la ejecucion. (Shot at Parral, Chihuahua. Taken the eve of the execution). Photo Courtesy of the Gadsden Museum Collection.

government; later he fled the country to the United States. Yet, the Orozco family turned Fountain over to Salazar in order to save political face and their business. Meanwhile, Charpentier arrived at the La Palmilla Mine, where he borrowed a horse and made a quick getaway to El Paso (Sadler).

General Salazar was not known as a compassionate military man and undoubtedly believed that the American, Fountain, was guilty of participating in the revolutionary insurrections. In the translation of the Torres document, "Many men suffered from the blows that were inflicted by Charpentier and Fountain with their superior weaponry" (Torres). This was a violation committed on Mexican territory and would be dealt with as a capital offense, punishable by execution under Mexican military and war-time law. In Salazar's judgement (Meed), the death sentence was the only way to make an example of Fountain. By ignoring the pleas of a distant U.S. government and quickly executing Tomas, Salazar was sure that few would follow in Fountain's footsteps.

As speculation would have it, Tomas was probably working as an agent for the United States. Consul Long came to General Salazar, who was quartered at the Central Hotel in Hidalgo, Parral with an official telegram from the

U.S. War Department before Salazar had an opportunity to take action. Torres's account of the event states that Tomas was executed on Tuesday morning of the fourth day. He also asserts that Salazar shunned the contents of a telegram from the U.S. War Department on the morning of the military inquiry. Tomas's revolutionary activities earned him the guilty verdict for a violation of neutrality law which was punishable by death ... a judgement Charpentier cleverly avoided. In fact, Charpentier ended up acquitted of charges of the same violations in the same year (1912), in El Paso (Sadler).

It was customary for the Mexican government's military firing squads to give a man a chance to run from his abductors (*la ley fuga*), just as Villa had done many times to adversaries. Tomas would likely have opted for an opportunity for escape on these terms, rather than face a firing squad. However, both the El Paso Herald article and the Torres account say Fountain was shot through the head at the hands of a military firing squad.

Before the battle of Parral, Tomas's son, Edward had been sent to Mesilla to be raised by Tomas's sister and brother, Margaret J. and Albert J. Fountain Jr. What happened to Edward's mother is not known.

Shortly after Edward's father (Tomas) was killed, the remaining Fountain family decided to contact the U.S. Military Department and inquire about a financial pension for Edward. It was learned that, due to the fact that Edward was born out of wedlock, the government could not grant a pension for the boy (Fountain). Whether Tomas was acting in an official capacity at the time of his death was never confirmed nor denied by the U.S. military. Torres's manuscript implies that Tomas and Charpentier had previous agreements with the Maderista faction when they were approached by Pancho Villa (Torres). The point remains that Tomas's skills on an automatic weapon were not likely learned from a lack of training.

It is reasonably sure that Tomas Fountain was working both sides of the fence and was doing a juggling act with regard to his family's political loyalties, both in and out of Mexican territory. Whether it was intentional or not, Tomas got caught up in a Mexican revolutionary war- machine which had the propensity for changing political allegiances with the wind. One cannot overlook that Tomas was caught actively participating in the Mexican Revolution. He took jewelry home on occasion and was collaborating with a known spy. Finally, his family made inquiries with the U.S. Government which inadvertently suggested through remission or omission that Tomas could have been working for them in an official capacity at the time of his execution. Although all of the foregoing seems to substantiate Tomas's possible role as a U.S. agent

operating covertly within Mexico, no sound evidence has proven the allegations.

Often the Fountain family and their relatives through marriage were in the forefront of tragedy. Some of them were known for their visible positions within national and international politics and fell prey to the uncontrolled results of conflicts which were inherent to those positions. Other family members were apparently living usual lives and lost their lives in what appear to be common accidents. Perhaps if Tomas were alive today, he could tell us whether being reared in a politically-active Mexican- American family would make it possible to be a revolutionary and patriot at the same time. After all, the road through world history is paved by the actions of many a patriot whose revolutionary beliefs led him into the archives of unsung heroes.

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SWASTIKA: PEACE SYMBOL DESTROYED BY WAR

by Gerald W. Thomas

A 76-year-old tradition which has stirred controversy off and on for more than three decades was broken this spring when the NMSU Board of Regents voted to change the name and symbol of the yearbook, the Swastika.

Panorama, June 1983

After this action by the Board of Regents in May, 1983, my office continued to get calls and letters from alumni strenuously objecting to the loss of a traditional symbol. I had reluctantly recommended to the Board of Regents the action to change the name of the yearbook. For the past 13 years in the Presidency, I had repeatedly answered inquiries about the name "Swastika" and attempted to justify the tradition of NMSU students. In World War II, I fought the Nazis and detested the banner they waved. But, as a member of the NMSU team, I also understood why the Aggies would select and keep the Indian symbol, which meant "good fortune," for their yearbook.

The name of the NMSU yearbook dated back to 1907. Prior to this time there was no college annual. However, the *Monthly Collegian* devoted its final number each year to a summary of the past academic year. Dr. Simon Kropp reported that in 1907:

Meanwhile, the successful venture of Albuquerque's University in publishing an "annual" instigated a demand for a similar College publication, for which a variety of names — Yucca, The Pike, Coyote, Manana, Adios and El Gringo — was suggested. *Swastika*, supposedly meaning good fortune in Sanskrit and a verbalism for a Navajo symbol, was eventually chosen as the name for the forthcoming College yearbook.¹

Webster's International Dictionary points out that the swastika, a lucky symbol or omen, is of primitive origin. It has been found in various forms and in various parts of the Earth; on tombs in the vicinity of Troy; in ancient Persia and India; in China and Japan; on carved rocks in Sweden; and on Celtic stones in Britain. It was used extensively as a decorative design by the Indians in North, Central and South America.² A detailed paper on the origin of the swastika and the various historical adaptations appeared in an 1894 Report to the National Museum published in Washington, D.C.

The New Mexico Aggies' 1908 *Swastika* stated, "In attempting to discover the origin — or, we might say the nationality — of the Swastika we find it to be a 'citizen of the world.'³

Around 1918, anti-Semitic and extreme nationalistic

groups in several Teutonic countries adopted the swastika as a symbol. Among these groups, it was referred to as a "hackenkreuz" (hooked cross) and was displayed with the arms swept clockwise. The Nazis, headed by Adolf Hitler, actively displayed the symbol as far back as 1921.⁴

At the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, the symbol was incorporated in Kent and Foster Halls in 1930 and the band used the swastika on new uniforms in 1932. The *Round Up* reported that the War Department approved the swastika insignia for dress uniforms for members of the ROTC in 1938.⁴

One northern New Mexico coal mining town near Raton was named Swastika in the 1880s. The town citizens changed the name to Brilliant in 1940 after Hitler's invasion of Poland. Also, in Raton there is still a stately hotel built in 1929 decorated with a frieze of swastikas on the facade. The name of the hotel was changed from "The Swastika" to "The Yucca" during World War II.

Kropp remembers that as war clouds started to develop over Europe in the fall of 1938, "Henry Gustafson was appointed business manager of the *Swastika*, which came under attack for having an inappropriate name in the era of Adolf Hitler. However, the name was defended as an old Indian symbol that would be extant long after the Third Reich had been buried." And from the *Round Up*:

- In January 1940, "The *Swastika's* name once again had to be defended as quite native rather than something pro-Hitler."
- Again in December 1940, "StuNnts were polled on the *Swastika's* disturbing name . . . only 14 students cast their ballots with 12 in favor of retention."
- Another campus poll in the fall of 1941 . . . "confirmed the traditional title by a substantial majority."

During the war years the issue of the name of the student annual was seldom mentioned. As the war ended veterans returning to college under the GI Bill were also preoccupied with other matters.

Perhaps Don Roush, Executive Vice-president, stated the viewpoint of many returning veterans, "I remember when I first saw the yearbook. As a World War, 11 veteran, I thought it was a very strange name for a yearbook. I didn't know then the Indian derivative of the symbol (which means harmony and good fortune to Southwestern Indians) . . . We all agree that it is an issue best left to the student body."⁵ After World War II, the students were careful to make certain the swastika used in the year book



NMSU Yearbooks. 1908 - Swastika turned clockwise; 1937 - Swastika counter-clockwise; 1946 - No symbol with the name; and 1972-73 at the bottom with stylized Swastika.

was reversed to “disassociate” with the German Nazis.

In President Corbett’s unpublished manuscript covering the period 1955 to 1970, no mention is made of the name of the student yearbook.⁶ However, when I became CEO in 1970, Dr. Corbett advised that I would receive periodic complaints about the swastika symbol. He advised me to inform all those making inquiries of the Indian origin of the name and that would be the end of the matter.

As time went on, more and more information was reaching the general public about Nazi atrocities. We began receiving more correspondence and calls, some from out-of-state. In early 1983, an aggressive campaign to eliminate the name *Swastika* from all future yearbooks was instigated by Hillel, a newly-formed NMSU chapter of B’nai Brith, an international Jewish organization. The leader of the name-change movement and president and founder of the NMSU Hillel chapter, was graduate education student Paula Steinbach:

We feel the Swastika represents a period in history that caused a lot of suffering and pain,” Ms. Steinbach said. “Of all the memories of World War II, the swastika probably has the worst negative connotations.”

As well as being president of Hillel, Ms. Steinbach is also news editor of NMSU’s student newspaper, the Round Up, which over the past three weeks has published numerous articles and letters about the Swastika issue.’

A student-faculty task force was appointed by the student senate to study the matter and a “non-binding” student referendum was also held in the spring of 1983. Of the 12 percent of students who turned out to vote, 60 percent voted to retain the

name. The task force and the student senate then affirmed the student vote.

The pressure for change increased as the downtown community became involved. In April 1983, frequent contacts were being made directly to the Board of Regents. Irma Glover, newly appointed Regent, stated “I would vote to change the name if it were up to me . . . When I see that sign (swastika) I don’t think of the NMSU Yearbook. It reminds me of Hitler and Nazism.” At the same time many prominent alumni were continuing to insist on the old traditional name. About this time the faculty senate approved by voice vote an “emergency” memorial to the Regents urging them to abandon the symbol.

On May 2, 1983, I received a mailgram from Governor Toney Anaya with copies to each Regent. Anaya stated:

I have given a great deal of thought to the current controversy over the use of the *Swastika* name and symbol on the student annual at your institution. While I do have a historical perception of the symbol as currently being used at New Mexico State University, I agree with those who are concerned that its present connotation and usage is extremely offensive. This belief is shared by many of our citizens. Because of this, I am strongly recommending that each member of the Board of Regents vote to reject this symbol and set into motion a mechanism for developing a more appropriate one.⁸

Two days before the Regents meeting of May 6, I indicated to the university community and the press that I would recommend that the Regents take control of the situation and drop the swastika symbol.

At the official Regents meeting on May 6, 1983, the yearbook name was the major item on the agenda. The room was full, with many standing. I introduced the subject by asking Clay Calhoun, President of the Associated Students (ASNMSU) and Colin Cahoon, President of the Student Senate, to present the student response and poll. Both stated that the majority of students still favored the traditional Indian name and symbol:

Dr. Thomas complimented Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Cahoon on their excellent statements and the rationale, but, he said, the matter had reached the point where logic and rationale are no longer really the issue; it has gone beyond the simplistic explanation of the traditions behind the symbol . . .⁹

I went on to recommend that the name *Swastika* be dropped and the students be requested to find an appropriate substitute. Many people spoke from the audience. Students and alumni spoke to retain the name, and most others spoke for change. Nathan Weiselman, a citizen of Las Cruces and a survivor of the Holocaust, gave a very impassioned and emotional statement pleading for change because of the horrible implications of the Nazi

symbol. The Regents voted three to one for change (one member was absent and one wanted to return the matter to the students). In the following weeks, after much debate, the student body adopted a new name for the yearbook — *Phoenix* — meaning “rising out of the ashes.” Steve Pierce, editor of the new 1984 *Phoenix*, stated in the introduction to the new student annual:

The name is an appropriate one for this yearbook. The phoenix is often associated with the sun, which is of vital importance to research being conducted here on campus as well as throughout the Southwest. Colors of the phoenix included red, gold and crimson, which happens to be one of NMSU’s school colors. And perhaps most importantly, the death and subsequent re-birth of the phoenix signified the end of one way of life and the beginning of a new one.¹⁰

The name *Phoenix* for the NMSU Yearbook held for nine years and then a new name, *Echo*, was adopted by the student body. With these changes, and the complications brought about by increased enrollments, the students no longer have an “annual,” but a periodic publication containing miscellaneous articles.

When the class of 1996 returns for their 50th class reunion in the year 2046, they will no longer have a yearbook with class photos and names. For memories they will have to resort to microfilm of documents such as the *Round Up* or personal memorabilia. Time and circumstances have

changed both the meaning of an ancient symbol and the traditional historic value of a college yearbook.

Dr. Gerald W. Thomas retired from the Presidency of New Mexico State University in July 1984, after serving 14 years in that capacity. In 1984 NMSU named a \$1 million Chair in Food Production and Natural Resources in his honor, and in 1988 designated the Agriculture and Home Economics building as the Gerald Thomas Hall. Having authored five books and over 200 articles in professional publications, and chapters in books including the *1987 Yearbook of Agriculture*, he is currently working on a book relative to the history of NMSU.

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COLONEL HATCH AND THE TERRITORIAL PRESS DURING THE VICTORIO WAR

by Robert L. Hart

The portion of the Victorio War of 1879-1880 waged north of the Mexican border was both prolonged and militarily inconclusive. Colonel Edward Hatch, for whom the town of Hatch, NM is named, commanded the 9th U.S. Cavalry Regiment during the campaign. As both regimental commander and commander of the District of New Mexico, he bore the brunt of citizen frustration with Victorio's apparent ability continually to elude the troops. The Colonel's war with both Victorio and the press is the subject of this article.

Hatch Takes the Field

During September 1879 Victorio and his Mimbres Apache people left the Mescalero Reservation without permission and for the last time. Within a week's time of their "breakout," trouble also erupted in Colorado at the Ute Agency. Thousands of troops were mobilized to put down the "Meeker Massacre" in the nation's newest state. Colonel Hatch was appointed to a board investigating the troubles. These administrative duties kept him far from the field of Victorio's raids and gave the Territorial New Mexico press a campaign issue from which he never recovered.

When Colonel Hatch took personal command of field operations in late February 1880, one of his first acts was to defend his field commander, Major Alfred P. Morrow, from press attacks:

Major Morrow's command shows that the work performed by the troops is most arduous, horses worn to mere shadows, men nearly without boots, shoes and clothing . . . the horses were without anything to eat five days . . . followed by forced marches over inexpressibly rough trails . . . The Indians are certainly as strong as any command Major Morrow had had in action ..¹

Subordinates like Major Morrow had enjoyed precious little campaign success during their commander's absence. For New Mexicans it was clear that Colonel Hatch had abandoned the important problem of Victorio to attend to the lesser problem of the Utes. Not surprisingly, the Territorial press was almost unanimous in their condemnation of Hatch's absence and alleged inattention, as well as Morrow's inability to bring Victorio to bay.

On January 9, 1880 Major General John Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri, recommended that the Mescalero Apaches be disarmed, as a way

of depriving Victorio of additional manpower, weapons, and moral support. By mid-March orders were issued to Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson, commander of the 10th Cavalry at Fort Davis, Texas, to cooperate with Hatch in a planned operation against the Mescaleros. Grierson marched to Hatch's assistance on March 18 with five companies of his regiment, approximately 280 men and scouts.² The rendezvous with Hatch was planned for April 12.³

The plan to disarm the Mescaleros was already in motion when Hatch ordered the convergence of his forces at Hembrillo Canyon (see Figure 1).⁴ Issued on April 5, Hatch's orders also make reference to an earlier letter of instructions for Captain Henry Carroll's Second Battalion. Hatch must have decided on the Hembrillo Canyon operation after Grierson's departure date (March 18) and before his orders to Carroll (March 31).

The Battle of Hembrillo Canyon

Before the planned Hatch-Grierson rendezvous at Mescalero Agency, Hatch's forces alone engaged Victorio at Hembrillo Canyon. Battles rarely are conducted quite as planned, and this one was to be no exception. Hatch's Special Order No. 18 established the battle order for his command. Hooker's 3rd Battalion (3 companies) would function as a covering force, hovering to the north of the engaged units. Carroll's 2nd Battalion (4 companies) would be the blocking force on the eastern side of the San Andres Mountains. Major Morrow's 1st Battalion (5 companies) would march from the west, driving Victorio into a trap.⁵

At the time Hatch was issuing his orders, Colonel Grierson and his 10th Cavalry command were concentrating on the Pecos River (over 100 miles a way.)⁶ Grierson's command was to play no active role in the Hembrillo battle, but might have been a consideration of Victorio's in choosing an escape route.

Hatch's direction of march on leaving Aleman Well supports the idea that Victorio was expected to flee. Morrow's command was the planned assault force (and the unit for whose gunfire Carroll was to wait). Hatch apparently modified his original plan when he dispatched McLellan and the scouts directly eastward and then detoured to the south, leaving them without immediate support. With Hatch's altered disposition of forces, McLellan's command became the main attack force and Morrow's a blocking force. Captain Carroll's role remained



Col. Edward Hatch. Photo courtesy of Thomas Halsell, Mayor of Hatch, NM.

unchanged, to attack “when hearing the principal attack, which I had decided to make from the west side of the mountains.”⁷

Captain Carroll marched from Ft. Stanton as ordered and overnighted on April 5 at Malpais Spring (see Figure 1). Carroll’s men and animals drank of the clear, cool water at the spring, unaware that it contained gypsum in sufficient quantity to make man and beast ill.⁸ By the next morning, Carroll’s command was partially incapacitated, but he pressed on toward an unnamed spring in the San Andres, known from a previous scout. However, this was a drought year,⁹ and the second spring was dry. According to scout officer Cruse, Carroll had arrived at the mouth of Hembrillo Canyon by about 6 p.m. on the 6th.¹⁰

Carroll entered Hembrillo Canyon that same day, one day early and without hearing the gunfire mentioned in his orders. Instead, he was desperately searching for water. Carroll had split his battalion, sending companies A and G, under Lieutenant Patrick Cusack, toward a sure water source at San Nicolas Spring, some 20 miles further south, undoubtedly with orders to return by the following day when the scheduled attack would open. Carroll himself led companies F and D toward another sure water source at the head of the canyon.¹¹ Presumably he was gambling that Victorio would be gone before he reached the springs.

The force Carroll brought in to Hembrillo Canyon numbered only 71 men. When first fired on about 4 p.m., the troops dismounted and every fourth man held horses and the pack animals. Effective strength on the firing line would have been fifty-plus troopers. The Apaches had the high ground and the only water. At this point Carroll’s men had been unable to refill their canteens

since stopping at Malpais Spring some 24 hours before.

On the morning of April 7th, Captain McLellan’s command appeared on the crest of the San Andres and looked into the Hembrillo Canyon basin. Mist still covered the valley and they heard gunfire. Lieutenant Charles B. Gatewood and his scouts were sent forward and soon reported that the Mimbres had others trapped in the valley.¹² As McLellan later reported:

I at once proceeded to put my pack train and animals into a secure position and ordered the Indian scouts to the attack and gallantly they went into action. In less than half an hour we discovered Captain Carroll with his company in a helpless condition, he being wounded twice and eight of his men also wounded . . . and was when discovered completely at the mercy of the Indians. The enemy was strongly posted and have full control of what little water was in the pass. At 7:30 every available man of command was engaged . . .¹³

Though McLellan does not mention it, Lieutenant Cusack with the two additional companies of Carroll’s command entered the fray from the east, having returned from their foray toward San Nicolas Spring. They presumably had canteens of good water. The editor of the Thirty-Four put their arrival time at about 9 a.m., simultaneously with McLellan’s appearance.¹⁴ Hatch added some additional detail:

The hostiles had thrown up rifle pits on the crest of this range, covering three-fourths of a circle around Carroll’s command . . . they [hostiles] had left their rifle pits and were moving down the ravines in strong bands with the intention undoubtedly of destroying Carroll.¹⁵

Hatch records that Cusack, having relieved Carroll and had battalion command thrust upon him due to Carroll’s injuries, led a charge which threw back the converging Mimbres groups. If ever there was a John Wayne-style, last minute rescue by the Indian-fighting army, Hembrillo Canyon was it!

Cruse relates that in order to clear the spring for Carroll’s men to get water safely, another concerted action was necessary. This one clearly involved cooperation, and not just the fortuitous appearance of loosely coordinated units. Hostile fire around the spring was principally coming from a single ridge. Gatewood and the scouts were ordered to flank the ridge, while the regular troops tried a frontal assault. The ridge was about 600 yards from the starting point, and was assaulted in a leapfrogging manner, with covering fire being laid down by one group while another group advanced. The assault progressed some 450 yards before a pronounced halt occurred. The final rush was to be made “on the run, the men firing at will.” However, the ridgeline so hotly contested just minutes before was now found to be deserted!

Cruse reports that couriers from McLellan were dis-

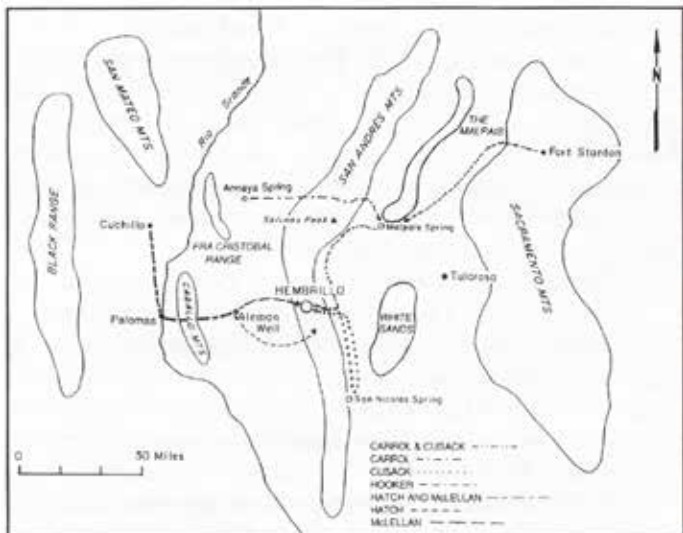


Fig. 1—Troop movements to Hembrillo Basin battlefield (adapted from Figure 9 in *Apache Archaeology of Hembrillo Canyon, White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico*, by Karl W. Laumbach and Robert Burton, paper presented at the 1990 Apache Conference, Truth or Consequences, NM).

patched to Hatch as the rescue began, reaching him while he was still on the Jornada del Muerto. Probably worried that his regiment's battalions were not within supporting distance, Hatch then proceeded back up the west flank of the San Andres in order to support McLellan. According to Cruse, Hatch arrived at noon.¹⁶ This would put Hatch on the battlefield while mop-up was still going on.

McLellan did not remember things the same way and reported that Morrow's command arrived at 5 p.m., with Hatch an hour later! Further, McLellan said that the battle was over at 3:30 p.m. and no Indians were to be found by 4:00 p.m.¹⁷ If so, then Hatch saw none of the action, nor did the Ninth Cavalry elements of Morrow's command.

Fortune may have smiled on Captain Carroll and his command on the morning of April 7, but it did not smile upon Colonel Hatch. When he reversed course, he narrowly missed an opportunity to bring the campaign to an abrupt end! Victorio and his band were headed south, short of ammunition, along the route Hatch would have followed coming north to Hembrillo. As Thrapp relates, "... Victorio and his people observed Hatch and his troopers, inexplicably to them, back out of the mountains and hurry north . . ."¹⁸

The results of the battle, unlike the battle's progress, seem to be generally agreed upon. Cruse reports four dead Apaches near Gatewood's position flanking the ridge overlooking the spring; three of the bodies were those of Mescalero Apaches.¹⁹ Hatch reported personal knowledge of only three.²⁰

According to the *Thirty-Four*, soldier casualties numbered eight. Captain Carroll was reported

wounded in the chest and leg and seven enlisted men had unspecified wounds.²¹ Ft. Stanton post reports list only seven wounded: all were from Captain Carroll's two companies trapped at the spring. One of the enlisted men was permanently disabled and discharged from the service.²² Carroll himself would not return to duty for ten months.²³ No trace was found of any deaths resulting from the engagement at Hembrillo Canyon, though the *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians* lists two.²⁴

In his after-action report dated April 8, 1880, Colonel Hatch estimated "upwards of two hundred" hostile Apaches opposed him at Hembrillo Canyon.²⁵ Cruse confirms the large number of hostile Apaches engaged. Victorio alone was normally only observed to muster about 75 braves.²⁶

Which Apaches were assisting Victorio became less controversial within the military than Hatch's victory claims. His after-action report related:

The Indians were found here in force. Victoria [sic] was undoubtedly present and from the number of Indians there is not a question that the Mescaleros were in the fight. The Indians broke last night thoroughly whipped . . . Think the punishment the Indians have received will have effect to bring them to terms.²⁷

This did not square well with the newspaper observation that:

It is universally admitted that but for the arrival of Lt. McLellan with Co. L of the 6th and the scouts on Thursday morning Carroll would have been badly whipped and most of his men killed.²⁸

Or the comment one week later:

Every one engaged in the battle is said to have acted well; even the white troops and scouts who arrived on the last day just in time to save Carroll from annihilation admitted that Carroll's men fought bravely ... Victorio seemed to feel sure of capturing the entire command. When he began to retreat, the troops had been so long without water that they could not follow him up.²⁹

Significantly, in the only published Apache reference to the battle at Hembrillo Canyon located, James Kaywaykla (a child at the time) related that this was simply the fight where the soldiers were sick.³⁰

General William T. Sherman, commanding general of the Army, cabled his congratulations for Hatch's "victory" over Victorio:

Convey to General Hatch my congratulations on his successful blow to the hostile Apaches and that I want him to go on patiently and persistently and make, if possible, an end to these annual outbreaks. In pursuing the hostiles he need pay no attention to the boundaries of the departments and must not allow his

enemy to find a safe refuge . . .³¹

Colonel Eugene Carr, Arizona commander of the 6th Cavalry units loaned to Hatch, had these scathing remarks to make concerning the role of his units (McLellan's command and the scout companies):

It appears from this report that the only fight during the last campaign in New Mexico, at least the only ones I have heard of, were principally carried on by Arizona Troops; and that the one on which Col. Hatch, according to the Newspapers, reported that Victorio was so badly punished that he must surrender, and for which he received the congratulations of the General of the Army was commanded by Capt. McLellan of my regiment, who, besides our troops, had only the one scout Company of Lt. Maney, and Capt. Carroll's Company; which he later found in a condition of "helplessness."³²

The battle at Hembrillo Canyon was not decisive, nor did it mark a significant ending or turning point in the campaign. It did, however, represent a major operation and not just a small unit skirmish. Most Indian Wars pe- riod battles were small unit actions; it was rare for an entire regiment to take the field. The battle's indecisive- ness also brought to a head the civilian frustrations over Colonel Hatch's leadership because of the commenda- tion from General Sherman. To make matters worse, the Mescaleros were disarmed as planned, but the numer- ous escapees probably joined Victorio's band, thus strengthening, and not weakening, Victorio!³³

Victorio Campaign Press Coverage

Regional newspapers pilloried Hatch unmercifully during the campaign. Perhaps the best example is the dripping sarcasm of the front page of the *Thirty-Four* of April 7, 1880, issued as the Battle of Hembrillo Canyon was being fought. It purported to be an issue of the *Apache Chronicle*, staffed by the Mimbres! Some samples follow:

San Andres Cañon, Third Moon

Editor Thirty-Four:

By direction of the Commander-in-Chief, I transmit you advance sheet of the *Apache Chronicle*, official journal of General Victorio, which find enclosed, with the request that you place same on your exchange list. Owing to the misrepresentations of the Big White Chief Hatch, the impression has been created that he has defeated our great and honorable Chief. In order to eradicate this false impression, by giving the truth to the world the publication of *The Chronicle* has been commenced.

Very Respectfully. Your Enemy.

Nane. Sec'y of War³⁴

In the very same issue, *The Thirty Four/Apache Chronicle* took another swipe at Hatch:

By Telegraph.—A small detachment of braves tapped the telegraph wire on the Jornada

yesterday and took off the following dispatches: "Fort Bayard, March 35. To the Secretary of War, Washington, D.C.: In response to your inquiry of this date I have the honor to report that the accounts received by you of Indian depredations on the Jornada are base fabrications concocted by interested parties. It is true that a state driver was brought in dead: but there are grave suspicions that he first robbed the mail and then committed suicide to cover his crime. All is quiet here. Signed, Old Scratch, District Commander.

Grant County frustration with the campaign to date, was manifested in a telegram to President Hayes signed by nine prominent citizens of Silver City:

That the hostile Apaches under Victoria [sic] have been and are now being reinforced from the Apache reservation and are becoming bolder and more aggressive and merciless in their raids on our settlements.

That during the past two weeks some fifteen of our people have been murdered by these savages. Large herds have been scattered . miners and farmers driven from their homes and their property destroyed . . . the troops now in the field . . . have entirely failed either to subdue or punish him [Victorio] or to pro- tect our people. . We do not believe that the true gravity and danger of the situation have been correctly reported through military or of- ficial channels and would therefore beg your excellency to heed our statement and peti- tion and cause to be sent to our aid a suffi- cient force to speedily conquer these Indians and restore peace to the afflicted portion or our territory.³⁵

The army was stung by the discrepancies between civilian reports of Apache attacks and their own evalua- tions and an investigating officer appointed to look into the problem.³⁶

Victorio Crosses the Border — Again

By mid-May Victorio had led Hatch's forces on a merry chase across the Rio Grande and into the Black Range and on to the Arizona border, and then back east again! Hatch's reports show that more than half of his force was now dismounted, their horses having become broken-down during the campaign. He asked for addi- tional troops.

A scout company under civilian Henry Parker man- aged to surprise Victorio's camp on May 24 in the Black Range Mountains. Humiliatingly for the army, this victory was won without any regular troops present.³⁷ It is presumed that the optimists at the Department of the Missouri and in Washington probably counted this engagement as Victorio's *coup de grace*, and so Colonel Hatch got no reinforcements. Actually five months of campaigning remained!

With Parker's civilian victory, public indignation reached new heights. The *Thirty-Four* reached new levels of sarcasm blast when reporter "Ubiquitous Botch" facetiously described hand-to-hand combat between Colonel Hatch and Victorio, with Hatch unaffected by a shot through the head! A lengthy and hilarious horseback pursuit ensued. As the pursuer, the Colonel, "relieved . . . of considerable dead weight [brains]," had the advantage and was gaining. With just one more official report, the observer surmised that he just might be able to force Victoria's surrender!³⁸ At a June 10, 1880 meeting in Silver City, resolutions bluntly condemning Hatch's management of the campaign were agreed to and published. Selections follow, sent to the President, General of the Army, and Governor:

Whereas a bloody and destructive war has been and is now being waged by the hostile Apaches against the people of Southern New Mexico . . .

First. That the outbreak of these Indians was caused by the drunkenness and mismanagement of an officer of the United States Army [Hooker, 9th Cavalry], stationed at the Ojo Caliente Indian Reservation in Southern New Mexico:

Second. That at the commencement of this outbreak, these Indians were few in number, poorly armed, and would have been speedily captured or killed by proper action on the part of the military:

Third. That the gross neglect and failure of the military to act as the situation then demanded enabled these Indians to raid with success, capture arms, ammunition and horses, and gather re-inforcements until they became in a few weeks formidable enemies.

Fourth. That the first campaign of the Ninth Cavalry against those Indians resulted in ignominious failure, and loss to the troops without known loss to the Indians, . . . and thereby made them bolder, more audacious and blood-thirsty [Morrow's initial pursuit]:

Fifth. That Colonel Edward Hatch, Commanding the District of New Mexico, when he took the field in person with largely increased force of the Ninth Cavalry, failed even more signally and completely than had his inferior officers [Hembrillo Canyon] . . .

Sixth. That Col. Hatch as Commander of the District is chiefly responsible for all of these failures on the part of the military and that we consider him wholly incompetent and unfit for the position which he holds, for the following reason: He has misrepresented the situation of affairs, and has falsely reported success for the troops

when the truth was they had met with reverses . . . And we therefore demand his removal from this command, and that an effective force and competent commander be sent to this district.³⁹

In June Victorio slipped below the Mexican border again, but Mexican forces were active, and by July Victorio recrossed, this time into West Texas. Colonel Grierson intercepted him by garrisoning the water holes and after several clashes, Victorio went back into Mexico.⁴⁰

Campaign's End

The final chapter of the military campaign began with coordinated action by both Mexico and the United States. In September 1880, U.S. forces crossed the Rio Grande into Chihuahua. After approximately one month of campaigning, Mexican authorities informed the U.S. commander that "the farther advance of American troops into the territory of Mexico would be objectionable" and the U.S. troops were withdrawn.⁴¹

Mexican forces fought the final engagement with Victorio. News of the *Tres Castillos* battle was received by courier at Fort Bliss on October 22 and forwarded by telegraph. Lieutenant Colonel Joaquin Terrazas announced:

On the fourteenth, in the p.m., I attacked Victorio's band in the *Castillo* Mountains. He fortified himself on that mountain, and I surrounded him on the next morning. By simultaneous attack, we took his position; leaving Victoria and sixty warriors and eighteen women and children dead; sixty-eight women and children and two captives [sic] prisoners recovered; also one hundred and eighty animals of different kinds . . .⁴²

Tres Castillos ended the Victorio War. Although Apache campaigns continued for six more years, the Ninth Cavalry commander's travail with the press ended with the Ninth's 1881 transfer to Indian Territory (Oklahoma).

Bumbler or Victim?

But the nagging question remains, who saw the Victorio Campaign more clearly, the Army or the Territorial press? Was Colonel Hatch militarily ineffective or merely harassed? And is there any way to know today?

A contemporary military evaluation of Colonel Hatch was made by General of the Army William T. Sherman on May 27, 1880. He said:

General [Brevet] Hatch is an officer of approved merit and of indomitable energy in whom I have absolute faith.⁴³

Colonel Edward Hatch continued to command the Ninth Cavalry until his death some nine years later.⁴⁴ So it seems the press criticism of him did no lasting damage.

Is there any way at this late date that some of the

contemporary press accusations levelled at Colonel Hatch might be resolved? Surprisingly, the answer to this question is probably yes. And the reason for such an answer has to do with historic archaeology and the Hembrillo Battlefield.

Human Systems Research, Inc. (HSR) is the archaeological contract firm for the White Sands Missile Range, where the former Hembrillo Battlefield now lies. And for the past three years archaeologists and historians have been studying and evaluating the battlefield. When HSR's study is concluded, it will likely reflect on the accuracy of the conflicting existing reports of the engagement. Did the commander of the 9th Cavalry put the best spin on what actually was a defeat? How accurate were the newspaper reports of the engagement? Nineteenth century military history at Hembrillo Canyon will probably be clarified by archaeological analysis.⁴⁵

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ENDNOTES

- 1 *Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920*, National Archives, Records Group 393, Microcopy 1072, Roll 6. *Letters Sent, 9th Military District* [Cited hereafter as NARG393/1072,LS1, Hatch to Assistant Adjutant General, February 25, 1880.
- 2 Dan L. Thrapp, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches* (Norman, 1980), pp. 268, 271.
- 3 *Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917*, Record Group 94, Microfilm Publication 666 *Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, 1871-1880*, Main Series, *Papers relating to Military Operations Against Chief Victorio's Band of Mescalero Apaches in Southern New Mexico, 1879-1881* [Cited hereafter as NARG94/MC666.] Roll 527, telegram, Grierson to AAG, May 9, 1880.
- 4 *Weekly New Mexican*, April 12 1880, Vol. 18, No. 15, p.2.
- 5 Loc. cit.
- 6 NARG94/666, Roll 527, telegram, Grierson to AAG, May 9, 1880.
- 7 Report, Hatch to AAG, August 5, 1880 in Report of Secretary of War, 1880-1881. House Executive Documents, 46th Congress, 3rd Session, Volume 2, Part 1 [Cited hereafter as RSW:HEDI, p. 95.
- 8 Thomas Cruse, *Apache Days and After* (Lincoln, 1941), p. 72.
- 9 RSW:HED, p. 89. Report, Pope to AAG, date unknown.
- 10 Cruse, p. 72
- 11 *Las Cruces Thirty-Four* [Cited hereafter at *Thirty-Four*] April 11, 1880, vol. 3, no. 16. p. 2. Note: The editor, S.H. Newman, reported the Hembrillo battle news from the field! The *Thirty-Four* was not long-lived, however. Newman experienced a stormy newspaper career. See *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 44:2, pp. 155-166.
- 12 Cruse, p. 73.
- 13 National Archives photocopies. Report, McLellan to Adjutant, May 16, 1880. With cover letter, Lind to Laumbach, Human Systems Research, August 3, 1989. [Cited hereafter as National Archives photocopies]. Report, McLellan to Adjutant, May 16, 1880.
- 14 *Thirty-Four*, April 11, 1880, vol. 3, no. 16. p. 2.
- 15 RSW:HED, p. 95, report, Hatch to AAG, August 8, 1880.
- 16 Cruse, pp. 75 & 76.
- 17 National Archives photocopies. Report, McLellan to Adjutant. May 16, 1880.
- 18 Thrapp, p. 270.
- 19 Cruse, p. 75.
- 20 RSW:HED, p. 107. Inclosure C., Report, Hatch to AAG, April 16, 1880.
- 21 *Thirty-Four*, April 14, 1880, vol. 3, no. 16, p. 2.
- 22 NARG393/617, Roll 1218, Fort Stanton Post Returns, April 1880, p. 2. January 1881, p. 2. Note: Private Lyle was discharged from the army at Ft. Stanton in January 1881.
- 23 Weisner Collection, Ms. 249, Box 2C, Folder 4, Rio Grande Historical Col - lections, NMSU. Surgeon's Certificate of Disability for Captain Henry Carroll, May 19, 1880; Absence on Account of Sickness Form, Captain Henry Carroll, December 2, 1880.
- 24 *Chronological List of Actions, &c., with Indians from January 15, 1837 to January, 1891*, Fort Collins: 1979, p. 72.
- 25 NARG94/666, Roll 526, telegram, Hatch to Pope (?), April 8, 1880, p. 4.
- 26 Cruse, p. 74.
- 27 NARG94/666, Roll 526, telegram, Hatch to Pope (?), April 8, 1880. p. 4. Note: Our modern spelling of Victorio was not widespread during the Victorio Campaign. "Victoria" was just as common as "Victorio."
- 28 *Thirty-Four*, April 14, 1880, vol. 3, no. 16, p. 2.
- 29 *Thirty-Four*, April 21, 1880, vol. 3, no. 17, p. 1.
- 30 Eve Ball, *In the Days of Victorio: Recollections of a Warm Springs Apache* (Tucson and London, 1992), p. 85.
- 31 Note: General Hatch refers to Civil War brevet rank, not the actual grade while serving in the postwar Army. NARG94/666, Roll 527, telegram, Sherman to Sheridan, April 13, 1880.
- 32 National Archives photocopy. First endorsement, Report, McLellan to Adjutant, May 16, 1880.
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- 34 *Thirty-Four*, April 7, 1880, vol. 3, no. 15, p. 1.
- 35 See endnote 32 on misspelling of Victorio. NARG94/666, Roll 267, Telegram, G.W. Bailey, et al, to Rutherford B. Hayes, May 10, 1880.
- 36 NARG94/MC666, Roll 527. Report, Pollock to AAAG, Santa Fe, May 9, 1880. Captain Pollack found allegations against Colonel Hatch groundless.
- 37 Thrapp, pp. 276-278.
- 38 *Thirty-Four*, June 2, 1880. vol. 3, no. 23, pp. 1-2.
- 39 Thrapp, pp. 285-289.
- 40 NARG94/666, Roll 528, telegram, Hatch to Assistant Adjutant General, October 16, 1880. The commander of the column was Colonel George P. Buell, also commander of the reactivated Ft. Cummings.
- 41 NARG94/666, Roll 528, telegram, Hatch to Assistant Adjutant General, October 22, 1880.
- 42 NARG94/666, Roll 527, Second endorsement, Report, General Pope to AAG, May 5, 1880, 2.
- 43 W.H. Leckie, *The Buffalo Soldiers: A Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West* (Norman, 1981), p. 251.
- 44 See Scott, D., et. al., *Archaeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn* (Norman, 1989); and Scott, D. and R. Fox, *Archaeological Insights into the Custer Battle: An Assessment of the 1984 Field Season* (Norman, 1987).

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO DURING THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION (1910-1920)

by John W. Sandlin, III

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 affected the lives of people on the United States' side of the border as well as on the Mexican. In some areas, Americans' lives, property and means of making a living were threatened. New Mexico stands out as the only border state where relations between these two groups remained good throughout the period of the Mexican Revolution.

Along the border in general, a great increase in the Hispanic population of the region, activities by Mexican governments and rebel factions at home in their several states, and Mexican-American involvement in military and other affairs of the Revolution on both sides of the border all contributed to Anglo fear. Distrust and fear of Anglos by Hispanics seems to have been caused by abuses of law by Anglo lawmen and by various U.S. state and local governments' support of a certain faction in Mexico during these revolutionary times.

Prior to 1908, the U.S. border had been relatively unrestricted to Mexican immigration. Between 1900 and 1910, about 24,000 Mexicans came across. Many who came were poor farmhands who had been forced off their lands in Mexico by the confiscation of common lands under the Diaz regime.

In 1908, the U.S. government began to monitor and maintain closer control over the border area; documentation shows that 84,000 Mexican nationals came during the years 1910-14, and the flow increased to 91,000 during 1915-19.¹ Unlike the earlier migrants, those who came in these years were from all classes of Mexican society. Dislocation caused by the Revolution, and increasing demand for labor in mines, railroads, and commercial farming in the United States were twin reasons for the migration.

Most stayed in the border region,² helping to reinforce the duality of the culture in these communities and tending, in turn, to slow integration with Anglo-American society. The recent immigrants' hope of returning to Mexico one day, when the troubles might be over or they had enough money, gave little incentive to adapt to Anglo culture and language.³

At the same time that the Hispanic population of the southwestern United States was increasing,

various Mexican revolutionary groups were becoming active on the United States' side of the border. The Magon brothers, operating in Texas, Missouri, and California, made the first attempt to overthrow the Diaz regime in the early years of the 20th century. Although the Magonistas did launch an abortive assault against Ciudad Juarez before the Revolution, their main thrust into Mexico was from California against Baja California during the early phase of the Revolution. The Magonistas attempted to gain support from the Mexican and Mexican-American communities along the border. However, these communities found the Magonistas too radical and so denied them any real success.⁴

Francisco Madero also sought support from stateside resident Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, primarily in Texas, for his revolt in 1910, depending on logistical support from people in the United States to launch the revolt that finally overthrew Diaz.⁵ Again in 1912, with the approval of President Madero, Mexican Consul Llorente recruited volunteers in El Paso for service against the Orozquista. Non-Hispanics recruited by Llorente included E.L. Charpentier (a Frenchman), D.J. Mahoney, R.H.G. McDonald and J.H. Noonan.

Most research focuses on the prevalence of racism and the Anglo domination of Hispanics throughout the border region, dating back at least to the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, under which the United States had received most of its present southwest territory from Mexico. Some historians take a grimmer view of the antagonism than do others. For example, Manuel A. Machado, Jr. wrote that by the time of the Mexican Revolution, Hispanics and Anglos had reached a peaceful co-existence based on mutual dependence; an amiable relationship ruptured during the Revolution, where only occasional violence and prejudice had occurred before.⁷

Other historians believe that events that occurred during the Revolution exacerbated already existing anti-Hispanic feelings of Anglos along the border. It appears that some Anglos feared Hispanics, whether or not the latter had been born in the United States, as foreigners whose primary loyalty was to Mexico and thus susceptible to Mexican efforts to

reclaim the land ceded to the U.S. 70 years earlier at the end of the Mexican-American War.⁸ David Weber writes of Anglo attempts to keep the two ethnic groups separate by placing property restrictions on Mexicans and encouraging segregation at all public facilities in many parts of the southwest. He continues by detailing Anglos' negative feelings, the paucity of their attempts to understand Mexicans historically or sociologically, and the transfer of these negatives to some among the Mexican-Americans which divided that community within itself.

Despite border tensions in general, southern New Mexico was conspicuously harmonious. Not that potential for conflict was lacking here: the common increase in Hispanic population, activities of the Mexican government and rebel factions, limited involvement of the state's Hispanic population in Mexican Revolutionary activities, the publication and knowledge of the Plan of San Diego,¹⁰ and the Columbus raid. Yet southern New Mexico maintained peaceful inter-ethnic relations. There can be little doubt that the New Mexican Mounted Police kept to their job of chasing criminals, mostly cattle rustlers,¹¹ and so gave no ethnic grounds for a feeling of persecution; nor did there appear to be any general fear of an Hispanic uprising.

Former New Mexican Governor Bradford J. Prince wrote in the *New Mexican* on February 28, 1912, that the state was "peculiarly free" of race prejudice and had been since the United States' occupation of the region.¹² New Mexico was unique among the four border states. It had an Hispanic majority of about fifty-five percent of the population; Hispanics still held much of the state's economic wealth, primarily through agriculture. Hispanics were very powerful politically, even being the majority of New Mexico's Republican Party members. Anglos who offended the state's majority population would find it hard to get elected to any political office. These strengths of New Mexico's Hispanic population were unique among the southwestern border states.

An examination of writings by prominent Anglos from New Mexico, correspondence from the Territorial Archives, southern New Mexican newspapers, and United States government investigations reveal Anglos had surprisingly little fear that Hispanics would rise in rebellion and attack them.

New Mexico's U.S. Senator Albert Bacon Fall, who began his political career in La Mesilla and Las Cruces, was an example of an Anglo trusted by New Mexico's Hispanic population. In a letter to the U.S. Secretary of War dated June 23, 1916, Fall proposed to raise one to three regiments of Anglo and Hispanic troops to fight in Mexico after Villa's Columbus raid. Fall offered to resign as Senator and command these men. It was an offer he would repeat several times. In testimony during the U.S. Senate's investigation of Mexican affairs on January 16, 1920, Fall said that any

prominence he had achieved politically he owed to the "Mexican people" of New Mexico and added "I have a very great and sincere, deep and abiding affection for the Mexican people in general." In later testimony, Fall stated that any ill-feeling between Anglos and Mexican-Americans was the result of trouble caused by Mexican nationals raiding livestock on the United States side of the border.¹³

New Mexico's other Anglo U.S. Senator, Thomas Benton Catron, also voiced great respect for Hispanic New Mexicans. Both senators began their political careers in southern New Mexico, spoke Spanish and owed their political success in large part to New Mexico's Hispanics.¹⁴

Other southern New Mexico Anglos also appeared to have little fear of their Hispanic neighbors. W.A. Fleming Jones of Las Cruces wrote to Governor Mills on January 26, 1911, in reply to the concerns that Dona Ana County was the "hot bed of insurgent movement," and full of revolutionaries: "I have to state that there are none." Apparently he feared neither Mexican-Americans nor Mexican nationals in his county. All through the first years of the Mexican Revolution, Anglos and Hispanics worked very closely together in southern New Mexico, nominating each other for sheriff, New Mexican Mounted Police positions, and other offices. It is doubtful this would have happened in an atmosphere of mutual fear and hate.¹⁵

Some New Mexican Hispanics were recruited for service during the Mexican Revolution. An example was Tomas Fountain. Fountain, whose mother was Hispanic and who was raised in the Hispanic culture of La Mesilla, was a machine gunner for Villa's forces. After hiding from rebel soldiers for several days during Orozco's rebellion against Madero, he was captured and executed in Parral, Chihuahua, on April 9, 1912.¹⁶

There was some distrust between Anglos and Hispanics in New Mexico during the period of the Mexican Revolution. An example was U.S. Marshal William Tonakin writing that Hispanic New Mexicans were taking advantage of the problems in the Mexico republic to steal horses near Hachita in the southern part of the state. However, documents like this are rare:¹⁷

The Villa raid on Columbus, New Mexico on March 9, 1916 was the event that had the greatest impact on New Mexicans during the period of the Mexican Revolution. Villa's forces made a pre-dawn attack on this small New Mexican border town, killing eighteen Americans, looting and burning many of the principal buildings in Columbus.

There was fear and suspicion among some Anglos in southern New Mexico that Hispanics were involved in some way with Villa's raid. L.L. Burkhead, Postmaster of Columbus, New Mexico, at the time of the raid, testified that 28 of the 30 "Mexican" children who attended the elementary school were absent the day before the raid. This implied Mexicans and Mexican-Americans knew of the impending attack. U.S. District Attorney Burkhart

reported that several Mexicans were arrested in Columbus and accused of being spies. One of these was Alfredo Aregon, who worked as a waiter in Columbus for several weeks before the raid. He was suspected of guiding the Villistas into Columbus. Anglo residents of Columbus also thought it more than coincidental that most stores and houses of Hispanics in town were almost untouched by the raiders. Columbus resident Mrs. Smyser claimed that many of the approximately 300 Mexicans in Columbus were spies. She said that maps found on dead Villistas with the names and locations of the homes of every officer and businessman in Columbus proved this. Her claim, along with the others, has never been substantiated. The home of W.R. Page was one of the most vandalized during the raid. It was set on fire three different times and riddled with bullet holes. Some Anglos believed that Page's punishment of several Mexican students during the school term was the reason for the savage attack on her house. Some Anglos also believed that Villa's raid was made in accordance with the Plan of San Diego.¹⁸

Mexican nationals not personally known by Americans were ordered to leave Columbus shortly after the raid. Any Mexican suspected of having cooperated with the Villistas was told they would be executed if they returned. Two who did return were shot by armed civilians who considered their actions suspicious.¹⁹

Villa's Columbus raid also revealed there were some racist feelings among some Anglos in southern New Mexico. Clyde Earl Ely wrote in *The Deming Graphic* that Mexicans were an inferior race and were unworthy to possess the lands of Mexico. He believed that country should become a "white mans's" land and ought to be conquered by the United States. An article in the *Las Cruces Citizen* said only the Mexicans of pure Spanish descent were intelligent. It claimed that Mexicans followed Villa because they were weak and stupid.²⁰

Some southern New Mexican Hispanics feared reprisals against them by Anglos after Villa's Columbus raid. They were afraid Anglos would associate them with Villa's Columbus raid. In order to calm their fears, Anglos in Deming asked New Mexican Secretary of State Antonio Lucero to meet with Spanish-Americans along the border. J.W. Phillips of Deming suggested that Governor McDonald send "cultured Spanish-Americans" to the border areas to explain to the Mexican refugees that they need not fear retaliation for Villa's raid or what happened in Mexico. Anglos in the Las Cruces area also tried to calm fears among the Hispanic community with reassurances that they would not be harmed because of the events in Mexico or the Columbus raid.²¹

A closer examination of the historical evidence reveals that, on the larger scale, the inter-ethnic hatreds which might have been sparked by Villa's raid not only failed to flame into war between the two countries but even failed to burn hotly or long between Anglo and Hispanic neighbors in southern New Mexico. New Mexico's Anglo

population generally believed that the state's Hispanics were loyal to the United States, not Mexico, during and after the Columbus raid. An example of this was an article in the *Las Cruces Citizen* written shortly after Villa's raid. It stated, "The loyalty of the Spanish-American element is no more subject to question than that of the Anglo-Saxon." It went on to say Spanish-Americans were among the best citizens of the United States. An article in *The Deming Graphic* pointed out the fact that three companies of the New Mexico National Guard were composed of Spanish-Americans who were as patriotic as Anglo-Americans and ready to make sacrifices for the protection of the United States. Another article for the *Las Cruces Citizen* said not only did Spanish-Americans serve in the state's national guard, but they were also known for their respect for the law and their peaceful nature. It went on to say Spanish-Americans were among the best citizens in the United States.²²

The Hispanic community of southern New Mexico proved its loyalty to the United States. Dona Ana Sheriff Felipe Lucero was ready to protect the Las Cruces area from attack after the Villa raid. He had the confidence of the area's citizens and Senator Fall. New Mexican Judge Felix Baca said the Spanish-Americans in the New Mexico National Guard would defend the state and make all its citizens proud. The Las Cruces Spanish language newspaper *La Estrella* called on New Mexico's Hispanics to defend their country — the United States — in case Carranza's forces attacked United States troops pursuing Villa.²³

Talk about race and loyalty issues died out within a few months of Villa's Columbus raid. Life returned to normal for the state's Anglo and Hispanic populations. Inter-ethnic relations remained good for the remainder of the Mexican Revolution.

In retrospect, the record of Anglo-Hispanic relations along the U.S.-Mexico border during the period of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-20, was mixed. That New Mexico's part of that record is as harmonious as it is may be attributed to the strengths of the Hispanic population: numerical majority, hold on economic wealth, and political power. These strengths were met with Anglo recognition and respect. The population as a whole evidenced understanding of the interdependence of the two groups. Widespread mutual trust, cooperation, and support served the New Mexico-Mexico border area well during the revolution and continues to serve it well today.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Ruth S. Lamb, *Mexican Americans: Sons of the Southwest* (Claremont: Ocelot Press, 1970), p. 105. This common land was then enclosed and turned from subsistence farming to the production of cash crops by either wealthy Mexicans or foreign capitalists, mostly from the United States. This land enclosure caused a surplus population in the Mexican countryside and was a reason many Mexican peons came to the United States. Robert J. Rosenbaum, *Mexican^o Resistance in the Southwest* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 50, 148.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Meier and Rivera believed that Mexican immigrants from the Revolutionary war years gave the Mexican-American culture its form today. Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, *The Chicano: A History of Mexican-Americans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 135 Lamb, p. 106.
- 4 Charles C. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements from Texas, 1906-1912," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, No. 52, January 1949, p. 301. W. Dirk Raat, *Revolto: Mexico's Rebels in the United States, 1903-23* (Austin: Texas A&M University Press, 1981), pp. 18-19, 39, 264
- 5 William H. Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham Gonzalez and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), pp. 45-46.
- 6 Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, "The 'Underside' of the Mexican Revolution: El Paso 1912," *The Border and the Revolution* (Las Cruces: New Mexico State University Printing and Duplication Center, 1988), p. 65.
- 7 Martinez, p. 216; Manuel A. Machado, *Listen Chicano! An Informal History of the Mexican-American* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1978), p. 62.
- 8 Rosenbaum, p. 52. New Mexico also had a mounted state police force. Stan Steiner, *La Raza - The Mexican American* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 367. Raat, pp. 256-257, 265; Meier and Rivera, p. 132.
- 9 David J. Weber, Jr., *Foreigners in their Native Land: Historic Roots of the Mexican Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), pp. 223-224.
- 10 Harris and Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican-United States War Crisis of 1916: A Reexamination," pp. 91-98. The Plan of San Diego, speciously datelined San Diego, Texas, January 6, 1915, actual author unknown, was signed by Basilio Ramos, Jr., and eight other Mexican citizens, all political prisoners in the Monterrey, Mexico jail at the time. The three-phase manifesto called for revolution against Anglos; liberation of Mexican-Americans, Blacks, and Indians; and the establishment of a new republic incorporating Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and California. A subsequent version included Utah; while a later revision dropped Utah, but included Oklahoma and part of Mississippi.
- 11 Rosenbaum, p. 52. The author wrote that California's Hispanic population also avoided persecution by the absence of a Ranger-type organization. As previously noted, New Mexico had a mounted police also. Unlike the Texas Rangers, however, there is no evidence to show that they were used to harass the state's Hispanic population.
- 12 Bradford J. Prince, "The Race Issue: Opportunities for Native New Mexicans," *New Mexican*, 2/28/1912, Special Collections, Branson Library, New Mexico State University.
- 13 Albert Bacon Fall Papers, Box 5, Folder 3 "Politics, 1914-31" Rio Grande Historical Collection, Branigan Library, New Mexico State University. The offer was not accepted because the United States government wanted regular militia units raised. Fall feared some men would not meet the physical requirements for the national guard service. *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Senate Document 285, 66th Congress, 2nd session (Washington, D.C., 1920), p. 1019 and Part 8, Testimony of John I Kleiber, p. 1279. Hispanic New Mexicans expressed their support of Senator Fall in an article in the *Las Cruces Citizen*, 6/17/1916, p.1.
- 14 William A. Keleher, *The Fabulous Frontier: Twelve New Mexico Items* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1962 revised). Chapter 5 was about the life of Catron. Other New Mexicans were mentioned in this book. None expressed any racial hatred or fear of Hispanics at any time in this source.
- 15 *Territorial Archives of New Mexico* (New Mexico State Records and Archives), Roll 183, Frame Nos. 276, 451-452. An atmosphere of good Anglo-Hispanic relations and cooperation was presented throughout the rolls of the *New Mexico Territorial Archives*, especially roll 183.
- 16 *The Rio Grande Republican* (Las Cruces, NM), 4/12/12, p.1
- 17 *Territorial Archives of New Mexico*, Roll 183, Frame No. 222.
- 18 *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, Part 10, 2/7/20, pp. 1605-1606; *Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, NM), 3/9/16, p. 1; *Columbus Courier* (Columbus, NM), 3/24/16, p. 7; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 3/16/16, p. 2; *Columbus Courier*, 3/24/ 16, p. 3 and 4/14/16, p. 1.
- 19 *The Columbus Courier*, 3/24/16, p. 3; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 3/13/16, p. 6.
- 20 *The Deming Graphic* (Deming, NM), 6/2/16, p. 4; *Las Cruces Citizen* (Las Cruces, NM), 3/26/16, p. 2.
- 21 *The Columbus Courier*, 5/19/16, p.1; *The Deming Graphic*, 5/12/16, p. 4. This article and one that appeared in *The Las Cruces Citizen* on 6/24/16 both said that Mexican refugees had nothing to fear as long as they did not start any trouble. *Las Cruces Citizen*, 6/24/16, p.1. Evidence suggests that New Mexicans blamed the disaster at Columbus on U.S. Colonel Slocum rather than Hispanics. Several articles in New Mexican newspapers blamed Slocum for not heeding warnings that Villa was in the area and for not concentrating his forces on the town. Several articles, including one from *The Columbus Courier* on 3/31/16, p.1, stated Slocum should have been court-martialed.
- 22 *Las Cruces Citizen*, 3/18/16, p. 1 and 6/24/16, p. 2; *The Deming Graphic*. 5/19/16, p. 1.
- 23 *Las Cruces Citizen*, 3/18/16, p. 1 and 5/20/16, p. 2. *The Deming Graphic*, 5/19/16, p. 4; *La Estrella*, 5/27/16.

SILVER CITY, A FRONTIER MARKET

by Michael Rock

In nineteenth century frontier areas goods moved slowly. An ox-drawn freight wagon carrying Eastern merchandise took three months to get from Kit Carson, the railhead in southeastern Colorado, to southwestern New Mexico in 1870. Time, as well as bad roads, weather, and the Apache peoples' protracted defense of their homeland made travel difficult and uncertain. This presented a serious problem to miners who collected to exploit a new mineral deposit. They could not work their mines without a supply of food and tools. The history of a new mining camp, in part, describes the activities of the business people which addressed these transportation problems.

La Cienega de San Vicente is a well-watered valley about eight miles south of Pinos Altos and nine miles west of Fort Bayard. The cienega provided both a meeting place for Apaches and a summer pasture for the shepherds from La Mesilla when the Indians were absent. This pattern of customary use ended in January 1869, when William Milby and John Bullard claimed 320 acres in the cienega under the preemption laws. They hired A.J. Hurlburt to establish a farm there, but abandoned the enterprise after Apaches attacked, burned the farm cabin, and killed Hurlburt's wife and children.¹

On May 10, 1870, a party composed of miners from Pinos Altos and Fort Bayard, who had recently visited the silver mines in Ralston, found more silver ore on the hill bounding the west side of the cienega. At first the miners moved cautiously, taking ore samples to assayers for testing. When the ore proved to be worth about sixty dollars a ton, the group from Pinos Altos returned on May 29 and located several mining claims. The next day the men from Fort Bayard arrived and located several more claims. Both groups went to the county seat, at Pinos Altos, to record their location notices.²

Having recorded their notices, James and John Bullard returned to the cienega, built a two-room log cabin, and began to work their claims. After the miners from Fort Bayard returned, an argument arose about the ownership of the cienega. All agreed to set up a town which would let federal laws limit the amount of land each could claim. The miners held an open meeting in Bullard's cabin and, after considering several suggested names for the town, chose Silver City.³

On June 21, the Santa Fe *New Mexican* announced the discovery of the new silver mines.⁴ Over the next two years the Santa Fe newspapers and the Las Cruces *Borderer* reported developments in Silver City, publishing letters written from the town, and sending correspondents there

to investigate the local situation.

Before the reporters arrived, a census enumerator had the first close look at the nascent community. On August 17, 1870, he made a list of eighty people in thirty dwellings. Bullard's cabin housed four men; six other dwellings contained four to six occupants. The enumerator found only one or two persons living in each of the other dwellings, which suggests that most people called their tent or wagon home. He counted only four women and four children. Forty-two men described themselves as miners. The enumerator also listed a grocer and his clerk, two teamsters, a freighter, and a farmer in town.⁵

Six weeks after its founding, Silver City included people who brought food and supplies to the miners. This indicates that a difference existed between the people of mining camps and the agriculturalist homeseekers often thought of as frontier settlers. The miners relied on money. They were not self-sufficient subsistence farmers; they were money-spending consumers. Too busy to grow crops or make their own tools, they were digging the money that would pay for the goods and services they wanted. Silver City, like other mining camps, contained the first settlers in the area, followed later by the farmers who supplied the markets those camps furnished.⁶

Despite the silver strike, the early survival of Silver City was in doubt, because the miners from Pinos Altos and Fort Bayard had no experience mining silver. The only silver ore they had seen before was the silver oxide shown them during their Ralston visit. The miners discovered more silver oxide west of the cienega, but were uncertain how to process it. Some thought to ship their richest ore to New York for processing, others tried smelting, and still others tried amalgamation.⁷ In early September a group of Mexican miners led by brothers Lorenzo and Juan Nepomoceno Carrasco arrived with the needed knowledge. Possessing skills derived from a three hundred year tradition of silver mining in Mexico, the two brothers quickly got to work.⁸ Juan Nepomoceno found another larger deposit of silver chloride ore a short distance from the earlier discovery and located the Providencia Lode, destined to become the richest mine in the district. Meanwhile, on the southern edge of town, Lorenzo began building a walled compound that included patios and furnaces to process ore taken from his brother's mine and ores purchased from the other miners.⁹

The accomplishments of the Carrascos raised the level of excitement. In October, an anonymous veteran from the Elizabethtown, New Mexico camp, became the first reporter

to visit Silver City. Impressed, he counted twenty houses and described them as, “good buildings ...for a new town.” He attributed this to the liberal credit Martin Bremen’s lumber mill extended to those who wanted to build.¹⁰

Juan Nepomoceno Carrasco’s discovery apparently convinced the letter writers of Silver City that there was enough room for everyone who wanted to come. After that the correspondents began to tell people how to get to Silver City. They also wrote of their need for a telegraph line, a newspaper, a post office, and a regular mail route to town. The miners themselves undertook the task of building better roads, beginning with a more direct route to Rio Mimbres. In December, they repaired the road between Silver City and Pinos Altos. During January, they talked of plans to build a wagon road from Fort Bayard to Fort Craig, 100 miles shorter than the existing one that ran from Silver City to La Mesilla then north to Fort Craig. Cooler heads wondered what men and animals would drink on the proposed highway.¹¹

What the Anglo miners most wanted was eastern capital and machinery, with which they could boost the amount of ore processed from hundreds of pounds per week to tons per week. A steam-powered Blake crusher and stamp mill would eliminate the need to break the ore-bearing quartz into small pieces by hand, then down to sand-sized particles in an *arrastra*, an animal-powered mill built of timber and stone. In early November 1870, the process of establishing a mill in Silver City began with the visit of an eastern capitalist, William Coleman. Enthusiastic about the richness of the mines, Coleman returned East to raise money to buy milling equipment. In January of 1872, he and his ten wagons of machinery passed through Las Vegas on the way to Silver City. On March 29, the mill began operation:

About 200 persons were present when the enterprising and indefatigable owner steamed up, and when the “alligator” commenced “chewing up rock,” as one of the hardy miners expressed it, you should have witnessed the glow of satisfaction which beamed upon the countenance of everyone present.¹²

Coleman was the first, but next door the Cibola Smelting and Reduction Works was laying foundations for its mill and furnace en route from the Kit Carson railhead.

Mining proceeded while the mills were built. Throughout 1871, silver was shipped out of Silver City, 300 ounces in mid-February and 349 ounces at the end of February. In September, one shipment weighed 530 ounces. Before the mills began operation, some miners processed small amounts of ore, using the silver to make purchases. When N.V. Bennett, editor of *The Borderer*, visited Silver City, he dined with the miner know as Adobe Johnson. During the meal, Bennett sold a one-year subscription to his paper and described how he was paid:

The meal over, the boys pounded up some rock,

enough we should judge after being pounded to make three double handfuls — kindled a fire with cedar wood, using a small Chinese bellows for blast, and in less than an hour had taken out and paid us between seven and eight dollars in pure silver.¹³

In the first year of the town’s existence, there were shortages of tools, housing, and perhaps of food. However, as it grew the well-stocked merchants of La Mesilla and Las Cruces expanded their markets to include Silver City. Editor Bennett showed just how well-stocked those merchants were when he took his readers on a tour of Lesinsky’s, a Las Cruces mercantile company. After stumbling through two ox trains which were queued up to take on loads, he arrived at the front door. The first room was the retail section where several clerks attended to the needs of numerous customers. The counting house occupied the second room. Those who penetrated this far were entitled to a free cigar of Lesinsky’s manufacture. Just inside the next room, which was about seventy feet in length, and behind the door stood two barrels, one contained El Paso wine and the other whiskey, refreshments for thirsty freighters. A large sewing machine in one corner was used to sew flour sacks. Dry- goods filled the rest of the room. Beyond the next door were stored boots, shoes, hats, harnesses, tinware, and crockery. The fifth room, seventy-five feet in length, was filled with unopened bales and boxes. The sixth, forty feet in length, opened out into the street. In this the goods were received and weighed.

These rooms were all separate entirely from the grain-and-flour-ware rooms of the establishment.¹⁴ In July 1872, “Lesinsky, Bennett and Bros.” opened in Silver City.

More imports from the Rio Grande valley arrived in June of 1873, when Martin Amador sent six wagons of groceries to Silver City to open a store on the southwest corner of Texas and Yankee streets. The grocery store was called “Amador & Macias.” Jose Macias was the son-in-law of Lorenzo Carrasco with whom Amador also had business dealings. The ledger Amador kept shows that the lumber used to build the store cost twenty dollars, that the carpenter was paid fifteen dollars, and that freightage of the goods to stock the store cost eighty dollars. Two months later Amador himself visited, bringing another shipment to restock the store.¹⁵ Amador & Macias stayed in business until the end of 1877 when Jose Macias became ill. Macias died May 13, 1878.¹⁶

The first person to mention food in Silver City was the anonymous Elizabethtown miner. He reported on high prices for beans, flour, sugar, coffee, and bacon.¹⁷ Enos Slossen Culver, owner of the Keystone House, the town’s first hotel, also thought food prices high.

In 1872 I paid in cash twenty-eight dollars for 100 lbs. of sugar, \$27 per barrel for flour, \$4 per gallon for sorghum molasses, \$2.40 per gallon for kerosene oil, \$1.25 per lb. for butter... and

bought in sufficient quantities to supply a hotel with 35 boarders... showing that up to 1872 at least there was still a frontier in these United States where conditions were not in advance of those in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, when our parents first settled in that region.¹⁸

O.L. Scott, editor of *Mining Life*, kept Silver City residents well-informed about the arrivals of food after his paper began publication May 17, 1873. When silver was discovered in 1870, Scott was a clerk in the Quartermaster Department at Fort Selden, and his interest in knowing about supplies persisted after he moved to Silver City. James K. Hastings lived in Silver City during the same period Scott published *Mining Life*. Hastings' father managed Coleman's mill. When Hastings wrote of his experiences and impressions during his old age, he spoke more of the food that reached the dinner table.¹⁹

One recurring theme of *Mining Life* was the call for regional self-sufficiency. Scott lobbied for the establishment of a greenhouse:

The soil here produces every variety of vegetables and with hot-houses we could be supplied even earlier than from the river... Nothing is more delicious and healthful than an abundance of "garden stuff" in the early Spring.²⁰

The Anglo idea of vegetables included bush beans, wax beans, beets, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, lettuce, musk melon, watermelon, peas, radishes, and tomatoes.²¹ As Scott wrote, there were already gardens in town. In 1871, lawyer Isaac Stevens

laid out and planted a fine garden of six acres in the lower portion of the town. He has a fine selection of fruit trees... also currants, gooseberries and strawberries. It looks quite home-like to see such enterprise.²²

In the fall of 1873, Stevens sold fall cabbage and tomatoes to the townspeople. In 1874 he planted another garden. One more belonging to saloonkeeper, William McGary, also got organized in 1874. Steven's garden became known as the Chinese gardens a few years later. Hastings wrote that his father leased the land

to some Cantonese Chinese, who used it for a truck garden and raised vegetables for the camp. The first season they had it they carried their produce to market in baskets hung from yokes over their shoulders. They made a picturesque sight in their conical hats as they went along in single file, sing-songing to each other like a lot of grackle blackbirds. The next season, they got a decrepit horse and an old market wagon, so that one could sell the stuff and leave the rest at home to work.²³

Successful though they were, these two truck gardens could not supply the vegetable needs of a rapidly growing community. Therefore, Silver City relied heavily upon farmers along the Mimbres and Gila Rivers.

In 1873 most vegetables came from the Mimbres valley.

Charley Bottom opened a meat and vegetable store and supplied it with the produce from his Mimbres rancho. In mid-August Bottom and others brought green chile, watermelons, beets, turnips, and green corn into town. Another shipment of vegetables arrived three weeks later. By November, the last vegetables of the growing season appeared in markets.²⁴

The next year, Silver City also looked to the Gila valley for its vegetables. Editor Scott promoted the interest with a column-long history of the first two years of farming on Mangus Creek, a Gila tributary. By August production was underway:

Fruits and vegetables from the river ranches are now coming in, in abundance. Apples, pears and watermelons form as yet the staples though a week more will bring peaches and grapes in abundance.²⁵

The paper raved about the size of the vegetables grown in virgin soil; it described beets a yard long, a variety of watermelons that should be called Gila Monsters, and corn twelve to fourteen feet high. Through the fall and into early December the flood of vegetables continued.²⁶

From December to May was a long time, and occasionally Silver City residents faced food shortages. Hastings recalled, "Most of us lived on a cornbread diet at such times and had for dessert sack pudding."²⁷ When the hunger ended, the town rejoiced.

No lean and famished stamped faces in Silver City now... On Thursday morning several trains discharged their precious freight at the commercial houses... Flour, Bacon, Hams, Eggs, Butter, Lard, Salt, Fish, etc., etc. The supply brought broad grins of satisfaction to many cadaverous faces, and now our only imperative desires are that our butcher will sacrifice to Epicurus a few lusciously-fat bovines. Fresh meat is all we lack to make us supremely happy.²⁸

Some of the ox-drawn wagon trains that brought food into Silver City ran regular month-long routes between Silver City and the Chihuahuan towns of Janos and Casas Grandes. Others traveled the ten-day route between Silver City and La Mesilla.

James Hastings had no good memories of those wagon trains:

The "bull trains," as they were called, took plenty of time to make the round trip. They were owned and run by Mexicans of the border grade, and these were easily frightened by an Indian rumor. When they got to good grass and water, they would sometimes imagine danger. There they would park their wagons in a great circle, and all drivers would guard and graze the cattle by day and yard them in the circle of wagons at night.

No appeal from a hungry people had any effect to get that food started towards town.²⁹

The Apaches usually waited in narrow places to ambush

trains. More unnerving, they followed trains waiting for a careless moment by the “bullwhackers” that gave opportunity to attack.

Jesus Jaurequi owned one of the trains that served Silver City. He had twenty-eight yokes of oxen and seven freight wagons built by different manufacturers. Martin Amador used Jaurequi’s train to carry the groceries that stocked Amador & Macias. Amador also used Jaurequi as a courier, sending the wages for the carpenter who built the store with Jaurequi. Another train was that of Mateo Ponce, which had only two freight wagons and six yokes of oxen.³⁰

Many in the mining camps echoed Hastings’ dismal opinion of Jaurequi, Ponce, and their men. The freighters spent too much time on the road to become part of the fabric of the community. When they were in town, their wagons and oxen extended for blocks, presenting a formidable obstacle to pedestrians in the area. The obstacles became more irritating when townspeople thought of the rates the freighters charged — rates at once too high for the people who were going to buy the goods, and too low for the freighters. Only the coming of the railroad would solve this problem by replacing freighters with another carrier.³¹

Corn, wheat, and beans were the largest cargo on the trains coming from Mexico. In the winter of 1874- 1 875 oranges became a luxury item. However, the commerce with Mexico was not without its problems. In the winter of 1870, the Mexican government maintained a free trade zone, an area adjoining the international border in which goods could move duty-free. The duty-free privilege applied only to the Mexican merchants, so the Anglo merchants felt disadvantaged and ill-used. Later, disputes arose between the Silver City merchants and the Mexican suppliers. Although the nature of the problem was not discussed in *Mining Life*, the paper reported that “confidence in our merchants is becoming restored and this important traffic will contribute to the wealth and establishment of Silver City,” and “Silver City presents the best market on the frontier.”³²

Freighters did not use carretas. Those *carreteros* that did come into Silver City seem to have carried softer cargoes, such as potatoes, watermelons and vegetables. What else they carried may have been contraband. Even though Silver City and Janos both had custom houses, the 150 miles between the two towns left many opportunities to engage in smuggling. Hastings recalled,

There were a few of the monster ox-drawn, two-wheeled carts with wooden wheels that were used in smuggling. In ordinary use the spindles were never greased and made a wail to heard for miles, so when grease was applied to stop the noise it was almost prima facie evidence that smuggling was going on.³³

Fresh meat came from two sources. The standard vacation for the men of Silver City and the officers of Fort

Bayard was a hunting trip. Nearly every month a party went out and brought back large numbers of turkey, deer and trout. A second source was rancher R.S. Knight, who had a contract to supply beef to Fort Bayard’s Subsistence Department. Knight also supplied his meat market in Silver City from the same herd.³⁴

The chickens were brought in very irregularly. Hastings said, “Mexican horsemen who came past our house direct from their country with a bunch of skinny fowls dangling from their saddles, asked us two reals or twenty-five cents each for them.”³⁵

Water, milk, beer, and whiskey could be had in Silver City. Water was always available; the spring at the bottom of Spring Street made La Cienega de San Vicente an attractive place to settle. It was a place visited daily by young Hastings.

“I did keep the water pails full. To do that I had to go to the St. Vincent spring where most of the women of the nearby Mexican village were gossiping and filling their pails and helping hoist them to the other’s head. It was the stories that we had from the Bible and pictures of that time over again. I do not remember ever seeing a man come for water. It was beneath them... I used two discarded black powder cans with bails in them for my water pails. They held 3 or 4 gallons each and were pretty heavy when full.”³⁶

At first nearly every household had a milk cow. During the day, they were all collected into a herd and taken to places outside of town to graze. The herdsmen brought them back in the evening to be milked. As early as May of 1873, someone (the paper did not say who) began delivering milk in town, so the need for a personal cow lessened.³⁷

Beer was scarcer than water or milk. A brewer named Smith worked in Silver City in 1874. On May 1, he opened for business on Hudson Street. In September he was helped by his public.

Smith, the brewer, has a party of men on the Mimbres picking hops. The crop is excellent this season, very large and a splendid quality. Smith has ordered from the States a new malt mill, and a stock of implements of improved character for beer making, and will soon give us even a better quality of beer than he is now making — and it tempts us poor cusses too often now.³⁸

It was advantageous that Silver City had a brewer, because imported beer was very expensive. When saloonkeeper Richard Howlett ordered twenty cases of beer from Santa Fe, each case weighed one hundred twenty pounds, each cost sixteen dollars, and the freight charge was ninety dollars.³⁹

Whiskey was more common. Howlett had as many gallons of whiskey as he had bottles of beer. Editor Scott often reported the price of whiskey and kept an eye on the supply: “Whiskey buying at \$2.50 per gallon; selling at

25 cts per horn or snort. Some considerable activity was perceptible in that line yesterday - prices firm - supply good."⁴⁰

The mining camp changed as it grew. A first stage during which individual miners worked one or two claims ended. One group of merchants and mill owners and another of employees appeared following the introduction of steam-driven milling machines. Then the arrival of the railroad on the afternoon of May 12, 1883 marked the beginning of another stage.⁴¹ Two changes were noticeable in town after that. First a person could drink a cold beer at the Timmer House during the summer, because the first refrigerator had arrived. Second, at least eight women borrowed money to buy pianos for their homes.⁴²

The railroad, the state-of-the-art transportation network connecting Silver City to the rest of the nation, satisfied most of the town's supply needs. The freighters who had serviced Silver City began to use the town as a railhead, taking their freight from Silver City to the surrounding mining camps. Frontier conditions faded in town, and the frontier moved further into the nearby mountains.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 William M. Milby and John M. Bullard, Preemption, January 25, 1869, 18 Deed Book 40, Grant County Clerk's Records, Silver City, New Mexico (hereinafter referred to as Clerk's Records); E.S. Culver, "The Naming of Silver City," *Silver City Enterprise*, Jan. 15, 1904. Preemption laws were a group of federal statutes that allowed settlers to move beyond government surveys and claim land not yet officially open to settlement. Congress enacted homesteading laws later.
- 2 Culver, "The Naming of Silver City"; J.M. Bullard et al., Locations, May 29, 1870, 18 Deed Book 144-47; Wm Kelly et al., Locations, May 30, 1870, 18 Deed Book 176-86. Clerk's Records. Ralston has been renamed Shakespeare. It is a ghost town a few miles south of Lordsburg, New Mexico. Pinos Altos was the county seat of Grant County from January 8, 1869 to December 29, 1871.
- 3 Act of March 2, 1867, 14 *Statutes at Large* 541; Culver, "The Naming of Silver City."
- 4 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, June 21, 1870.
- 5 United States Ninth Census (1870), Grant County, New Mexico, Population Schedules, Silver City (microfilm; National Archives Roll 893, Frames 609-10).
- 6 Duane A. Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), 6.
- 7 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, June, 21, 1870
- 8 Clement G. Motten, *Mexican Silver and the Enlightenment* (1950; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 13-15.
- 9 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 4, Nov. 15, 1870. For a description

of Mexican

- processing procedures see Otis E. Young Jr., *Western Mining: an Informal Account of Precious-Metals Prospecting, Placering, Lode Mining, and Milling on the American Frontier from Spanish Times to 1893* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970) 66-98. Juan Nepomoceno did not stay in Silver City long. His brother, Lorenzo remained several years, during which he continued to process ore. In an early history of mining in Grant County written in May 1873, O.L. Scott credited Lorenzo with producing \$200,000 in silver. This compares with \$330,000 for the entire camp. *Mining Life* (Silver City), May 23, 1873.
- 10 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 25, 1870.
 - 11 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Nov. 1, Nov. 22, Dec. 6, 1870; Jan. 3, Jan. 21, 1871; *Santa Fe Weekly Post*, Nov. 26, 1870.
 - 12 *Weekly Post* (Santa Fe), Nov. 19, 1870; *The Borderer* (Las Cruces), Feb. 7, Apr. 3, 1872
 - 13 *The Borderer* (Las Cruces), Mar. 16, 1871; [George R. Anderson], *History of New Mexico, Its Resources and People* (2 vols., Los Angeles: Pacific States Publishing Co., 1907)1:473.
 - 14 *The Borderer* (Las Cruces), Mar. 18, Jun. 15, 1871; May 3, 1872.
 - 15 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Sep. 6, Nov. 29, 1873. Jose Macias and Melchora Carrasco de Macias to Martin Amador, Deed, January 7, 1878, 2 Deed Book 711, Clerk's Records; Ledger, June 18, 1873, Box 16 Amador Family Papers, MS4, (Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico); *Mining Life* (Silver City), Jun. 14, Aug. 30, 1873. Receipts from this store, owned and managed by Chihuahuan merchants, list the same commodities sold in Anglo stores of the same period. Missouri Pacific Railway Company to Brookmire and A. Ranken, consignee Arnador & Macias, Receipt, April 26, 1877, Box 15 Amador Family Papers.
 - 16 *Grant County Herald* (Silver City), May 18, 1878.
 - 17 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Oct. 25, 1870. He reported: "Beans 10 cents, flour \$12 per sack, sugar [illegible] 60 cents, and coffee the same; bacon 50 cents and everything else in proportion." Three years later most prices were lower: beans were five cents per pound; flour, seven dollars per sack; sugar, eighty cents per pound; coffee, forty-six cents per pound; and bacon, thirty cents per pound. *Mining Life* (Silver City), Sep. 13, 1873.
 - 18 Enos. S. Culver, "Culver Family History", (typescripted by Alice B. Kline)
 - 16, Culver Papers (Tioga County Historical Society, Wellsville, PA); Enos S. Culver to Thomas Bull, Mortgage, April 8, 1873. 1 Deed Book 333, Clerk's Records.
 - 19 James K. Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View of the Old Southwest," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 26 (July, 1951), 287-301. For a general description of how food was prepared and the circumstances in which it was served see Joseph R. Conlin, *Bacon, Beans, and Galatines: Food and Foodways on the Western Mining Frontier* (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 1986).
 - 20 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Aug. 16, 1873.
 - 21 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Feb. 28, 1871.
 - 22 *Weekly Post* (Santa Fe), May 15, 1871.
 - 23 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Aug. 16, 1873; May 2, Mar. 14, 1874; Hastings. "A Boy's Eye View," 294-95; The 1870 Census showed thirty dwellings in Silver City on August 17, 1870. On January 3, 1874, there were 284 houses. Robert M. Kidder, Affidavit, January 3, 1874, Old Townsite Files, No. 157, Records of the General Land Office, (National Archives).
 - 24 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Aug. 15, Sep. 6, Nov. 4, 1873.
 - 25 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Dec. 20, 1873. and Aug. 8, 1874.
 - 26 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Aug. 2, Aug. 15, Sep. 5, Dec. 12, 1874.
 - 27 Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View," 289-90. Sack pudding came from

SILVER CITY MARKET

Corrected Weekly for MINING LIFE

by J.B. Morrill, GROCER,

Main St.

Silver City, New Mexico



GROCERIES

Family Flour, per sack	\$ 7 00
Bacon, per lb	30
Corn Meal	3@6
Beans, Mexican per lb	5
Rice, per lb	35
Coffee, Rio per lb	46
Black Tea, per lb	2 00
Green, " "	2 60
Sugar, " "	80
Candies, " "	40
Soap, " "	40
Salt, " "	04
Pepper, " "	100
Ham, " "	40
Crackers " "	40
Butter " "	75
Raisins, " "	60
Prunes, " "	50
Dried Apples, per lb	34
Dried Currants, per lb	40
Onions, per lb	10
Oysters, per can	65
Lobsters, per can	60

MISCELLANEOUS

Whisky, per gallon	\$ 3 50@4 02
Fresh Beef, per lb	10@15
Fresh Pork,	25
Syrup, per gallon	3 00@4 00



From: *Mining Life*, 13 September 1873.

the colonial American kitchen. A cloth was wet, then floured. Molasses, water, soda, salt, flour and corn meal were mixed then poured into the cloth which was tied up then submersed in a kettle of boiling water for several hours until the pudding was firm. Carla Emery, *Old Fashioned Recipe Book* (Kendrick, Idaho: Living Room Mimeographic, 1974), 132-33.

28 *Mining Life* (Silver City), May 23, 1874.

29 Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View," 289. John C. Cremony, an experienced Indian fighter, blamed the isolation, poverty, and poor weapons of Mexicans living on Mexico's northern frontier for their caution when Apaches were around. Cremony did not think the Mexicans were cowards, but rather that they showed the common sense he wished his countrymen would adopt. John C. Cremony, *Life Among the Apaches*, (1868; reprint, New York: Indian Head Books, 1991), p. 38.

30 Oakah L Jones, Jr., *Nueva Vizcaya: Heartland of the Spanish Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 111; Jesus Jaurequi to Cor. E. Goldsmith, Chattel Mortgage, January 1, 1887, 1 Chattel Mortgage Book 2, Clerk's Records. Two of Jesus Jaurequi's wagons were mountain freights built by the Bain Company in Cheyenne, Wyoming; two more were built by the Schuttler Company in Jackson, Michigan. Richard Dunlop, *Wheels West, 1590-1900* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Company, 1977), pp. 103, 112-13; Ledger, June 18, 1873, Box 16, Amador Family Papers; Mateo Ponce to Bernard Weisl, Chattel Mortgage, April 18, 1877, 1 Chattel Mortgage Book 3, Clerk's Records.

31 Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camp*, pp. 69-71.

32 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Oct. 11, 1873; Jan. 10, Feb. 7, Mar. 14, Nov.

8, Dec. 19, 1874; Jan. 16, Jan. 30, 1875; *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), Jan. 3, 1871; *Mining Life* (Silver City), Jan. 23, Feb. 6, 1875.

33 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Sep. 6, Nov. 29, 1873; Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View," 293-94; *Mining Life* (Silver City), Jan. 16, 1874.

34 *Mining Life* (Silver City), May 31, Nov. 4, Dec. 27, 1873; Mar. 21, 1874.

35 Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View," 293.

36 Hastings, "A Boy's Eye View," 296.

37 *Mining Life* (Silver City), May 31, 1873.

38 *Mining Life* (Silver City), Apr. 24, Sep. 12, 1874.

39 In the matter of the Estate of Richard Howlett, Deceased, Claim, November 11, 1877, Grant County Probate Court Records, Clerk's Records

40 Howlett Estate, Inventory, May 18, 1878, Clerk's Records; *Mining Life* (Silver City), Oct. 4, 1873.

41 *Southwest Sentinel* (Silver City), May 16, 1883.

42 1 Chattel Mortgage Book, 25-49, Clerk's Records.

DOÑA ANA: FACT AND FICTION

by Nancy Jenkins

The northern Mesilla Valley has borne the name “Doña Ana” for over 300 years, named, according to legend, for a Mexican woman of great charm and beauty who maintained a large and highly productive ranch in the Valley. The verifiable details of her life are lost, but there are as many colorful stories about her as there are story-tellers. Both the county, which was formed out of the southern portion of Valencia County in 1851, and the town are named after this elusive woman.

Today’s village of Doña Ana lies in the desert a few miles north of Las Cruces. Barely west of Interstate 25’s Exit Nine is the small, dusty, history-rich town. It has, of course, absorbed Anglo influence over the years, but much of the Hispanic culture remains, probably, according to historian Jeffrey P. Brown, because of a continuous influx of Mexican immigrants over the years. It is surrounded now by new housing, but the town itself is well worth a careful, thoughtful visit. Still to be seen are the red brick Mission Revival school (now used for light manufacturing), the Church of Our Lady of Purification (*Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria*), as well as old adobe homes and commercial buildings.

Doña Ana was established as the Doña Ana Bend Colony in 1840, when the governor of Chihuahua issued a grant of 35,399 acres on the east bank of the Rio Grande to Jose Maria Costales and 115 would-be colonists. By February, 1843, the time of the first settlement, only 33 settlers arrived in Doña Ana, and by April of that year, only 14 colonists remained. Lack of food and clothing, fear of Apache raids, and the overwhelming difficulty of life in the wilderness were too much for most of the settlers. But with those few people, Doña Ana began to prosper.

Two books — one non-fiction and one fiction — describe in very different ways this one small village in the late 19th century. The work of non-fiction is by Mary Jane Garcia, a native of Doña Ana, a descendant of original settlers and heir to both Catholic and Methodist traditions. The second is a fictional presentation of the village of Doña Ana — changed both historically and geographically for literary purposes, but quite recognizable. The author, Harvey Fergusson,

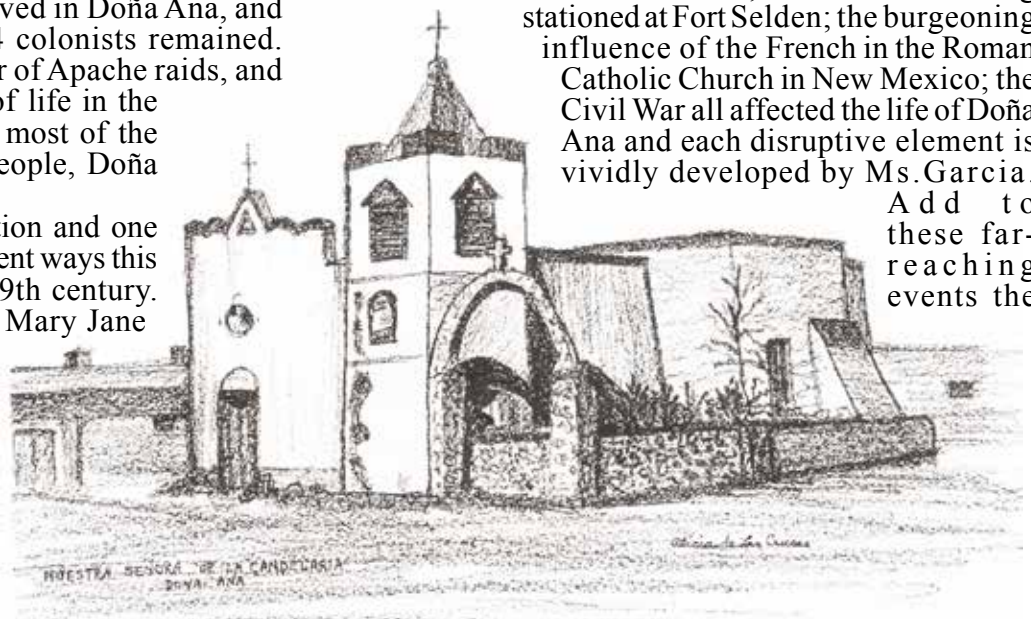
is a member of an old Albuquerque family with rich and deep southwestern traditions.

Mary Jane Garcia, in her master’s degree thesis, *An Ethnohistory of Doña Ana*, elaborates on the background details of the history of the village, but her main theme is the division of the village into two religious groups, Roman Catholic and Methodist. On the surface this would appear a highly unlikely event. Roman Catholicism was the only recognized religion in Mexico in the 1840s, so it can be safely assumed that the original settlers were at least nominally members of that church. Although there is some disagreement as to dates, Ms. Garcia believes that the building of Our Lady of Purification Church was begun in 1844 and completed in the late 1860s; as expected, it became the vibrant center of the community. So, what forces could possibly have been at work in southern New Mexico in the late 1890s to bring about such an unlikely intrusion as a Methodist church into the traditional culture?

Ms. Garcia elucidates in vivid detail exactly what those forces were and brings to life the interplay between them. Doña Ana, on the surface, was a quiet, remote desert village, but in fact it was just as subject to the upheavals of the 19th century as were the much larger communities of the Southwest. The collapse of the Spanish missions; the Mexican struggle for independence from

Spain; the conquest of New Mexico by the United States, with soldiers being stationed at Fort Selden; the burgeoning influence of the French in the Roman Catholic Church in New Mexico; the Civil War all affected the life of Doña Ana and each disruptive element is vividly developed by Ms. Garcia.

Add to these far-reaching events the



Pencil drawing of Our Lady of Purification Church (*Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria*), Doña Ana, New Mexico, by Alicia de Las Cruces (Alice Ames), 1996. Reproduction of artwork courtesy of the artist.

local influence of the nearby non-Catholic but religious Shalem Colony and the competence and good-will of the Methodist minister sent to Doña Ana, and it is clear why the village was open to conversion.

And there was another local non-Catholic element, which brings us to our second book, *The Conquest of Don Pedro*. Herman Wertheim, a German Jewish immigrant, operated a general store in Doña Ana for 57 successful years. Before coming to Doña Ana, he did a short stint as an itinerant peddler in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, and El Paso; but primarily, he had been associated with mercantile companies in Las Cruces and Las Vegas, New Mexico. In 1887, he opened his own establishment in Doña Ana, and stayed there as a fully assimilated community leader until his death at the age of 98 in 1956. He married an Hispanic woman, and their daughter married into another prominent local family, the Barncastles.

Herman Wertheim initially won the acceptance of the townspeople by selling *santos* (inexpensive paintings and statues of Roman Catholic saints), but he also was one of the forces that brought the world to Doña Ana. He read newspaper articles on world events to the people in his store. He was responsible for the construction of the previously mentioned school. He enriched his Jewish faith by journeying to the Jewish congregation in El Paso and by discussing Biblical interpretation with local pastors and priests; and, in later years, he was active in helping Jews flee the terrors of Nazi Germany.

In *The Conquest of Don Pedro*, Harvey Fergusson developed a fictional character, Leo Mendes, who is thought to be based on Herman Wertheim. But Leo was a true wanderer, a peddler who felt the urge to settle down after the Civil War and chose the village of Don Pedro, Fergusson's name for Doña Ana. The book tells of his ten years there as a successful merchant, his gradual acceptance by the townspeople at all levels of society, his marriage to a local girl, and his fatalistic view of life as a wandering soul. There are certainly many elements in the story that shadow the life of Herman Wertheim, but Leo Mendes is not, nor should he be in a work of fiction, just a reflection of the real-life person.

Leo's unusual view of life, his understanding and compassion, his realism tinged with romanticism, his interaction with the hunter, Aurelio Beltran, and the Texas loner and agent of Leo's misfortune, Robert Coppinger - all these characteristics are what make the book interesting. Without Leo, there is not much there. The simplistic presentation of the life

of the village is in dramatic contrast to the layers of social complexity examined by Ms. Garcia. She not only discusses the culture, but frequently mentions individuals, all of whom are distinctive people. This is not so in *The Conquest of Don Pedro*. The impression is given that the village consists of the patron and his family and a few Anglos on the periphery. The customs of the patron class are well described, but the Mexican worker and his family - the backbone of village life - are virtually ignored. The characters are poorly developed, and much worse, occasionally reflect stereotypes that, apparently, were acceptable 40 years ago when the book was written, but are offensive in the extreme today. The village of Don Pedro itself is a backwater in decline for 100 years; nothing much ever happens there. Contrast this to the dynamic, vital Doña Ana, subjected to religious, political, social and economic pressures from Spain, Mexico, and the United States, as presented by Mary Jane Garcia. Doña Ana may have been geographically isolated, but it was very much a part of the 19th century.

A work of historical fiction frequently adds life and color to an admirable, but perhaps somewhat dry work of research. Not so in the case of these two books. Nineteenth-century Doña Ana lives in *An Ethnohistory of Doña Ana*. Only Leo Mendes lives in *The Conquest of Don Pedro*. Both books may be borrowed from the Helen P. Caffey Collection in the New Mexico Room of the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library in Las Cruces.

Nancy Jenkins has lived in Las Cruces for nine years, coming originally from New Jersey. She has been a school librarian for a small private school and an employee benefits specialist for a large insurance company. The New Mexico State University Museum at Kent Hall, the Doña Ana Archaeological Society, and the State College Story League are among her local interests.

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FOUR GENERATIONS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE: AN HISPANIC FAMILY NAMED SMITH

by Josephine and C.B. Smith

HER STORY

Las Cruces, New Mexico, has been my home for more than three-quarters of a century. I was born here, and it was my ancestors' home for over 100 years. Our family's roots were and still are two blocks west of City Hall.

Around the year 1886, my maternal grandparents, Don Jose Maria Soto and his wife Dona Francisca Delgado Soto emigrated from Mexico. They raised a family of 10 children on the original Las Cruces townsite in the 300 block of North San Pedro Street. Despite speaking very little English, Don Jose Maria was appointed Justice of the Peace of Dona Ana County in 1894. His appointment reflected the esteem in which he was held in the community.

Although Dona Francisca never learned English, she was a talented weaver and an excellent business woman. She used her weaving as an exchange for wheat, corn, and other necessities. She also encouraged her children, particularly her daughters, to get as much education as possible. Responding to the encouragement, the daughters later were sought out for their bilingualism and well-respected family upbringing to hold significant positions in the growing community. Three of them, Zenaida, Leonor, and Leva became some of the first telephone operators in the city.

All 10 children were educated at the Presbyterian Mission School, which was on the corner of Organ Avenue and Alameda Boulevard, the current site of Central Elementary School, 150 North Alameda Boulevard. Upon finishing school, Carlos, the oldest son, became involved in politics and, like his father, also served as Justice of the Peace. Another son, Santiago, enlisted in the Army during World War I, served overseas, and received injuries as a result of the gas used in warfare. It was then that daughter Zenaida became politically active and, through her efforts, Santiago received a pension, which was the subject of Congressional action sponsored by New Mexico's U.S. Senator Dennis Chavez. Zenaida continued her political activism and later her husband Ricardo Triviz became the first Democrat to break the dynasty of the Lucero brothers as Sheriff of Dona Ana County.

My mother, Leva, graduated from high school in 1915. In her class of 16, she was the only Hispanic. Pat Garrett, Jr., son of the famous sheriff, also was in the class. I was an only child, but history would repeat itself, as I and two

of my children, Ruben and Gerald, attended Central School, located on the site where my mother graduated.

In 1916, Leva married Alberto Gutierrez, who, with his brother Jesus, had come from Mexico along with their parents Don Patrocinio Gutierrez and Dona Rosenda Borunda Gutierrez around 1898. The boys helped their father tend sheep in the Organ Mountains; later they worked in a grocery store, and then in a drug store on Main Street in Las Cruces. After a few years, the brothers went their separate ways. Jesus went into the drug store business, while Alberto went into the construction business and also owned a liquor store. Alberto built his family's residence and apartments, which still stand in the 200 block of North San Pedro Street.

HIS STORY

Unlike my wife's family, my family came more recently from Mexico. We were forced to come to this country, but we are thankful that we are here. We love Las Cruces, although we spent most of our lives in the nearby village of Tortugas.

My father, Catarino Smith, for whom I was named, was the engineer who ran the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), located in Magistral del Oro, Durango, which is located close to Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico. Our family tragedy occurred in 1917 when Pancho Villa, still fresh from his invasion of Columbus, New Mexico, was back in Mexico, dynamiting all the mines that he could find. Magistral, which had one of the richest gold mines in Northern Mexico, was close to Chihuahua (Villa's home base), so it was one of the first to go. ASARCO was well aware of the danger and provided my father with 30 or 40 Mexican mercenaries, who were paid by the company to protect the mine. However, the mercenaries learned about Villa's intentions and didn't bother to relay the information to my father until it was too late; they escaped while my father was at the bottom of the mine fixing some equipment. He was dragged from the mine to the only tree in Magistral, from which whatever was left of him was hanged.

My mother's father ran the ASARCO commissary — all the mines had a commissary, or company store, for employees to buy or charge their necessary food and supplies. He was an old man. I don't know how old, but probably younger than I am now. He was dragged through



Josephine and C.B. Smith, photographed for the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary celebration, October 8, 1995. Photograph courtesy of Josephine Smith.

the rocky street until he was dead.

That forced my mother, Luisa Saucedo Smith, to decide what to do. "What to do!" She put a few of her belongings and her family — five children (two girls and three boys), three sisters and her mother — in a box car. There were no passenger trains. She had no experience in business, but knew that my father had an interest in a house in El Paso, Texas, so we moved there for a while. Then, the husband of another of my mother's sisters, who was married to another Smith (no relation to my father), suggested that my mother come to New Mexico, where he worked on the Stewart Ranch, in Mesilla Park. He assured her that she could make a living there, which she did by opening a small grocery store in Tortugas. My mother was able to provide for her mother and sisters and to give her children an education. Four of the five children, Mary Lou, Alejandro (Alex), Tomas (Tommy), and I graduated from Las Cruces High School and New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, now New Mexico State University (NMSU).

The only child who did not complete her education was my older sister Eva. She was the object of a romantically macabre event, another great tragedy in our lives, which happened in Tortugas, right in front of our eyes. Eva was a senior in high school when she was shot and killed by a rejected suitor with a shotgun.

Normally, Tortugas was a quiet, comfortable place to live, except at Halloween, which was made for fun. All the kids could think about and all they could do were tricks. They didn't know the meaning of treats. If they had known that treats had a better meaning

than tricks, they wouldn't have dumped all those privies in Tortugas. They would start with the little ones and finish with the big ones. Every privy in Tortugas would be turned over.

Las Cruces didn't have anything on us when it came to restaurants. Cruces had three restaurants — the Main Cafe, the Truck-House, and the Tortugas Trading Post. But Tortugas had Maria's Cafe! Maria didn't put up a neon sign, because there wasn't any electricity. Any time you saw a farolito hung by the walk, it meant "food to eat." But most people would say she wasn't selling as much food as she was selling "home brew," and that's what the lighted candle in the bag of sand was advertising. At any rate, she had plenty of customers from the nearby college.

After college, I got myself a teaching certificate and started teaching school in La Mesilla. As I was the only male teacher, I also became the basketball coach. I had a little experience in basketball. When I was attending Mesilla Park Elementary, the way the principal picked his basketball players was to line up all the boys and pick the tallest ones for the team; being fairly tall, I made the team. I knew I would like coaching, even though I had not been very good at basketball. I felt sorry for the team; thought, "They aren't going to learn much from C.B.!" But "Lo and Behold!" The boys had a natural knack for the sport! I only coached one year and the boys, without any help from me, were the county champions.

Teaching didn't pay much in those days, not even as much as bar tending; so I left teaching to tend bar. This allowed me finally to save a few dollars. The only way you could build a house was to have cash, and the banks would not look at you unless you had a dollar on which they would loan you another dollar. At first we had only one bank, the First National Bank, and later the Farmers and Merchants Bank opened. Between the two, they wanted to hold on to their dollars.

I had an idea to start building and selling houses in 1946. There were mostly small contractors here who did small jobs. They would add on a room or do whatever repairs people needed. People who built new houses were not here. That's why I loved the business; there was no competition.

I was building a house in the '50s, when we still didn't have much competition; we did, however, have a lot of "sidewalk contractors." A little old man who lived across the street would come over and supervise me all the time. He would say, "C.B., I don't know what you are building, but you could run a train over that! Are you building a railroad bridge?" The building was made of adobe, which was very popular at the time. The house is now almost 50 years old and is still in good condition — no structural cracks or anything else. I loved that house and decided to keep on building more.

The only thing I could do at that time was to buy single lots and build more adobe houses. And did they sell! One guy from back east was so happy,

he told his wife, "Honey, I bought you the best little hacienda in New Mexico." They liked adobe construction! It is good construction. I would still be using it, if it weren't so expensive and slow.

When I came to Las Cruces in 1920 the town had a population of around 3,800. By 1930 it had grown only by 100. I don't know where the "children makers" were, but they weren't around. In the late '40s and '50s, we were building five or six houses a year. Finally, in the '60s, it took a big jump, from a town of 10,000 people to 50,000 people. That's when I was building 50 to 55 houses a year.

Somewhere around then, the competition began. There were several other builders. Seaborn Collins was one, and Rupert Chisholm and Atlas Lumber Company. There was also Bellamah, who claimed that he was the seventh largest builder in the world. I don't know where he got his figures, but I suspect he was right. He was doing real well; he was building all over New Mexico, in every city of any size.

At that time, we started building subdivisions. Subdivisions were the only thing available. People owning lots wouldn't sell, because they were saving them to build their own homes. However, when they found they could buy from us for five or ten percent less than the \$10,000 cost of building a new home on their lots, they had no trouble becoming our customers. It gave me a great deal of pride to see all of this done, to have those homeowners hold on to the houses for 25 years and come back to thank me for talking them into buying a house. This went on until I ran out of subdivisions or money, or both; I don't remember which.

We bought our last tract of land from a man named F.A. Bunch. We had purchased a "bunch" of land from him in the foothills, which we called "Montecito Addition," "Montecito Annex," "Montecito" about 10 different ways. After he sold me about all the land that he thought he could, he told me, "C.B., I don't think I can get much for my last 20 acres, because it's in the arroyo. I can't use it for anything, and the city is taking all my sand and gravel and not reporting what they are taking out!" I told him, "In that case, that's all it's worth!" and I offered him \$350.00 for the 20 acres. Not for one acre, but for the whole 20! That is where Arroyo Plaza, 2001 East Lohman Avenue is today.

HER STORY

Isn't that just like a man? Skipping all the really important stuff!

C.B. and I were married in 1935, at El Calvario United Methodist Church, at 30 North Campo Street. We have five wonderful children: Albert, Grace,

Ruben, Gerald, and Martha. All graduated from Las Cruces High School; two received degrees from New Mexico State University, and one from the University of New Mexico. All have been involved actively in the community and in musical circles. Four of the five children still play musical instruments. Albert, now living in our neighbor city of El Paso, Texas, is active in the Sertoma Clubs of Mexico. Grace served as president of the Junior Women's Club and is the church organist for El Calvario United Methodist Church. Ruben is involved in politics; he served as a State Representative for nine years and was the first elected Mayor of the City of Las Cruces. Gerald (Jerry) is active in the Community Band and with the Big Band on the Rio Grande. Martha resides in Las Cruces.

We celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary at 11:00 a.m., on Sunday, October 8, 1995, in El Calvario Church. We have always been very active in that church; C.B. designed and built the current structure. That Sunday afternoon, more people than I realized I had ever known in my life wished us well at a reception at the Fellowship Hall of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, on the corner of Alameda Boulevard at Griggs Avenue.

C.B. also, typically, neglected to mention that he was the first president of the Las Cruces Home Builders Association, or that I was the first Hispanic woman to be elected to the Las Cruces Board of Education.

C.B. died Wednesday, May 29, 1996, after a, thankfully, fairly short illness. Many people attended the funeral service at El Calvario on Monday, June 3. Reverend Jaime de Leon officiated, with Reverend Judy Chavez assisting. C.B. was buried at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens Cemetery. At the memorial service held for C.B., a tribute was paid to him by Mr. Sam Bone, State Director of the NAACP, who mentioned that Mr. Smith was the first builder who had built homes for black families in the late '50s.

Now about the name, Smith. This was a question always posed to C.B., and his answer would be that his maternal grandfather, Don Presciliano Saucedo, had a flair for marrying his daughters to promising "Gringos," and his paternal grandfather, Alejandro Smith, was a "Gringo" from Ohio who worked for ASARCO in Mexico and married a Spanish Senorita.

So — the Smith name is legitimate, and we put it to rest, believe it or not!

Josephine Smith is a homemaker who has been very active in community affairs. The section attributed to C.B. Smith was taken from the transcript of a reminiscence that he shared at the ninth meeting of the Las Cruces Oral History Club, January 11, 1996. The first draft of this article was received too late for inclusion in Volume I of SNMHR; it is an especial pleasure to present it here.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan by Frank S. Edwards. Foreword by Mark L. Gardner. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996 (Original pub. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1847). Map, illus., pp. xxvi, 138. \$18.95, paper.

Frank S. Edwards's account of his service as a volunteer soldier in the Doniphan Expedition of 1846-47 is one of the best of its genre. Edwards was young, vigorous, talented, and well enough educated to write comprehensibly. His active intellect is reflected in his text, but he was naive in keeping with the generality of Missourians with whom he has associated. It may be that, not being a Missourian himself, he was better situated than anyone else among Doniphan's men to record fairly and interestingly a full story of this quintessentially Missourian exploit.

A New Yorker, Edwards by his own account "happened" to be in St. Louis and free of any job or other obligation at the time in 1846 when Colonel Alexander Doniphan's regiment of volunteers was being recruited for service in New Mexico. Signing up, Edwards soon marched west on the Santa Fe Trail, participated in the occupation of New Mexico and various activities there that autumn but, unfortunately for us, not in any of the marches into Navajo country. After serving in the battles of Brazito and Sacramento and in the occupations of El Paso (present Ciudad Juarez) and Chihuahua City, he marched on through Monterrey to the lower Rio Grande, whence the troops returned on steamers via New Orleans to St. Louis.

It was an expedition of epic dimensions, and this reprint of Edwards's 1847 book is welcome. The reprint is rendered more valuable by the addition of a carefully annotated Foreword of fifteen pages by Mark L. Gardner, in which one learns what is possible to know about the life of Edwards himself, which is not much. Seven illustrations are also added, none of special note.

The text is presented here as a verbatim transcription from the original but, since it is not a photographic reproduction, it perpetuates errors by Edwards without comment and introduces new ones. General Stephen Watt Kearny's name is misspelled throughout the book, for instance, except in the Foreword. A note in Chapter 4 regarding the Battle of Brazito refers readers to "the official report" in Appendix I — but in the original and in this book on page 119 one finds it to be a semi-official document. More regrettably, the detailed, fold-out map as originally published has been replaced by one from a 1940 issue of *Harper's Magazine* which is not only tiny but also flawed in at least three respects.

The publisher might have placated us and made the book more useful by the addition of an index, but not so. Instead, the "Chapter Abstracts," of little value in

the original, are here moved to the back of the book, printed all together and, again, with less than perfect transcription. In sum, this publication is welcome for its new availability and is of some value for the Foreword. For serious purposes, however, one would be well advised to obtain, if possible, any earlier printing, including the 1966 Readex edition.

John Porter Bloom
Las Cruces, NM

El Rancho Kid by Bill Adams. Las Cruces, NM: Desk Top Publishing, 4300 Northgate Rd., n.d. Maps, photos, 476 pp. \$17.50, paper.

This substantial, unpretentious memoir was a surprise and a delight to me when I found it by chance. I know of nothing comparable in its genre, and it deserves to be recognized widely among historians of southwestern New Mexico and northern Mexico.

Bill Adams dedicates the book "to posterity," but that is about as high-flown an idea as one can find in it. Mark one up for modern technology — he first tried writing on a typewriter but gave it up. Then his son Floyd (sic) got him a word-processing computer and in 1989-90 he went to town! By this means we can read of his boyhood and careers in ranching, fur trapping, truck-driving, mining, United States Navy, and business. Born in 1919 at York, Arizona, Adams demonstrates remarkable powers of memory, reaching back even before his fourth birthday, when a younger brother arrived, seemingly in the visiting Mrs. Coan's satchel. A touch of typical humor: he learned the truth about his brother's arrival "about the time I learned about Santa Claus."

Adams's earliest years were spent on what would seem today to be a really primitive ranch-homestead in southeastern Arizona. There followed a brief but interesting residence in Columbus, December 1927 to early 1929. Through all these growing-up years his active, inquisitive nature was such as to produce charming, even poignant tales of large and small incidents, and such as to leave a reader wondering how the lad survived. His inheritance was Mormon, but there was some, perhaps considerable, backsliding by individuals in his immediate and extended family. Starting during fourth grade in school at Colonia Dublan, Mexico, Adams knew nothing of Mormonism, though his great-grandfather had been among the earliest Mormon settlers of the area. He learned quickly. School-related remembrances figure little in Adams's stories, however, compared to recollections of ranch life and especially horses.

In 1938 Adams moved to El Paso to live with a relative

and go to school. More interesting, in recollection, were his growing relationship with Martha Taylor, his truck-driving experiences and, soon enough, his introduction to the world of mining at Bisbee and Morenci, Arizona. My recital of chronology may be faulty for this book is not a scholarly tome with footnotes, index, etc. One date is clear and beautiful, however: the marriage beginning on October 29, 1939, and lasting for life. The young couple soon found themselves in San Luis, Potosi, Mexico, helping run a large mine owned by ASARCO, American Smelting and Refining Company. This lasted from 1940 to 1943 when it was time, indeed, for military service. Adams does not ignore his U.S. Navy experience (see his passage on Calcutta, pp. 312- 13), but it was very happily over by the end of 1945 with his return to his home and family in Colonia Dublan.

How many remember the *aftosa* (hoof and mouth disease) problems in post-World War II Mexico? Adams was deeply involved in 1947-48, but then it was back to Dublan again, and in 1950 to El Paso and ultimately to Las Cruces, where Adams's flair for mechanics and business led to the flourishing establishment at 2001 South Valley Drive, Las Cruces, where I happened upon this enthralling memoir: Adams American Car Care Center. I am glad that I did. I recommend it to others, with the apologetic note that these few paragraphs do not do it justice. You should ask my wife, how many times did I interrupt her, whilst I was reading this book, with chuckles and exclamations and an urgent need to read some passages aloud for her entertainment!

John Porter Bloom
Las Cruces, NM

The Two Alberts: Fountain and Fall by Gordon R. Owen (with Foreword by Leon Metz). Yucca Tree Press, 2130 Nixon Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88005, 1996. \$28.95.

The two Alberts were very much alike — yet different somehow. Dr. Gordon R. Owen has put together a meticulously-researched and very readable account of the lives and careers of these two “titans of their time,” as they were characterized by Leon Metz. Although Owen has written a separate biography of each man — giving them essentially equal time — he has skilfully shown the interplay of their personalities and political activities during a critical decade (1887-1896) when their careers overlapped most significantly.

Both Alberts were self-taught lawyers; both pursued political careers; both met with tragic ends to their lives; and both have left historians with important but unanswered questions.

The first question: what actually happened on Feb. 1, 1896, when Col. Albert Jennings Fountain and his 8-year-old son, Henry, were accosted and apparently murdered as they returned from court proceedings in

Lincoln toward their home in Las Cruces? If, as appears likely, they were murdered, who did it? And where are the bodies?

The second question: was Judge Albert Bacon Fall a scoundrel or a scapegoat? Was he guilty of bribery in the Teapot Dome scandal? Or was he a convenient scapegoat for political and economic forces beyond his control? Certainly he was guilty of some errors of judgment. But if he was guilty of accepting a \$100,000 “bribe”, the only charge of which he was convicted, why was his Three Rivers Ranch foreclosed on for non-payment of the same \$100,000 “loan”?

The two Alberts, in spite of the similarities, also demonstrated some differences. Col. Fountain was a Republican of Yankee origins. Judge Fall, a native Southerner, started his political career as a Democrat, but by 1904 he had changed his party affiliation to Republican. “In Fall’s own words,” writes the author, “. . . ‘I know when to change horses.’”

Col. Fountain (born 1838) was about one generation ahead of Judge Fall (who was born in 1861 or 1862). Fountain married a young woman of Mexican ancestry, learned to speak Spanish fluently, and “developed an empathy with and concern for the welfare of the largely Mexican-born populace of southern New Mexico . . . While Fountain’s early practice in both Texas and New Mexico focused on defense and protection of the rights of the ‘little man,’ including Mescalero Apaches and poor Mexican immigrants, he ultimately concentrated on legal representation for the regional cattle associations, composed primarily of wealthy large scale ranchers.”

Judge Fall married a young Texas woman . . . and over the years maintained a personal and professional interest in the welfare of the small scale farm and ranch homesteaders, most of them with Texas roots, who settled in southern New Mexico’s Sacramento Mountains and Tularosa Basin . . . but he, too, ultimately represented large scale mining and railroad interests.” He also became somewhat fluent in Spanish while living and working as a miner in Mexico at the age of twenty.

The author concludes that “Both of the Alberts should be at the head of the list when a New Mexico Hall of Fame is created. For a few years, they may have been rivals and mutually critical of each other, but in historical retrospect, each made significant, lasting contributions to their beloved territory and its people. For a half century these two, concurrently or individually, provided significant leadership for New Mexico.”

This book, *The Two Alberts*, is a significant contribution to the literature about this period of New Mexico history for much more than the comparison of the two political figures. In detailing their actions and influence in the Territorial Legislature during the various efforts to achieve statehood, the author has provided valuable insights into the political operations of the time.

Dr. Owen is Professor Emeritus, Department of Communication Studies, at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces. He and his wife, Ardis, have lived in Las

Cruces for more than thirty years. His research into the lives and times of the two Alberts extended over a period of some ten years.

Julia K. Wilke
Las Cruces, NM

C*onfederate General of the West* by Jerry Thompson. College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 1996. 399 pp., maps, index, bibliography. Softcover: \$

Originally published nine years ago as *Henry Hopkins Sibley* by Northwestern State University Press (Louisiana), this paperback edition is deserving of a wide Southwestern audience. Civil War buffs will be familiar with both the book's subject and its author. A more general audience will find Confederate Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley of interest because of his overly ambitious and disastrous Civil War campaign in New Mexico. Like General George Armstrong Custer, Sibley is best remembered for a military defeat.

Author Thompson ably fleshes out the life of Henry Sibley. Graduating from West Point in 1838, Sibley's long career in the dragoons included service in the Second Seminole War, a brevet in the Mexican War, service on the Texas and New Mexico frontiers, "Bleeding Kansas", and in the Mormon War. He was issued a patent for the large conical army tent that bears his name. Quarrelsome with superiors and always seeking preferential treatment, the domestic Henry Sibley was married for forty-six years and raised a family. Although his Civil War military career was lackluster, he served the Khedive of Egypt as an artillery officer after the war, and ended his days as a writer, lecturer, inventor, and alcoholic.

Sadly, like many an old Army officer before him, John Barleycorn had embraced Sibley. Thompson notes that by the time of the New Mexico campaign, "For several years his custom had been to resort to alcohol during illness." (p. 252) During the Battle of Valverde, the General was only able to stay in the saddle for its first three hours, and then became incapacitated. Thompson reports, "Probably the biggest casualty of the Battle of Valverde was the reputation of General Sibley." (p. 269) One of Sibley's men bitterly labelled General Sibley's part in the Confederate retreat from the Territory, "the famous whiskey retreat." (p. 305)

As with most texts small typographical errors have crept in (siege is misspelled, p. 324). "Salvos" is a poor choice of words for shots fired from a single gun (p. 289). The following statement is made in discussing Sibley's grandiose scheme to conquer the Southwest, "One factor which was working against recognition of the Confederacy by England and France was the inability of the South to launch a successful military offensive." (p. 217) This is an entirely appropriate observation a year later, but has nothing to do with a discussion with President Davis in June 1861! Thompson has written a fine and readable narrative of

Sibley's life. As noted in a 1987 *Civil War Times Illustrated* review, author Thompson has not succumbed to the disease of many biographers, oversympathy with his subject. But the author has been mildly seduced by the vision of a Confederate Southwest. Admiration of Confederate bravery in battle and toughness in the face of extraordinary adversity should not color an objective evaluation of Sibley's ultimate goal. Given the disparity between the human and material resources allotted to accomplish the task and its actual magnitude, the campaign must be objectively viewed, as *Civil War Times Illustrated* suggested, a quixotic attempt at glory, and doomed from the start. A single brigade was simply not enough to conquer the Southwest (or even adequately garrison it!).

Thompson gives an overall evaluation of the reasons for the Sibley Brigade's defeat. He suggests that Federal forces had less to do with the debacle than "the vastness and the sterility of the land and ... inadequate and incompetent leadership" (p. 301). This is letting Sibley off too lightly. After all, Sibley was familiar with New Mexico Territory. The Territory was merely the seat of war. How he handled his forces in it, e.g. "the inadequate and incompetent leadership" is the only matter of import here.

In a more detailed analysis, Thompson properly apportions most of the blame for the campaign's failure to Sibley. "His biggest mistake was to have underestimated his enemy." (p. 306) Another strategic error was his "inability to prepare adequate logistical support for his army." (p. 306) These two observations are the heart of the matter.

The Chinese sage Sun Tzu said, "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril." Sibley, apparently, could not predict that the Federals would burn the supply depots that he counted on capturing! As one of his officers later observed, "General Sibley is not a good administrative officer. He did not husband his resources and was prone to let the morrow take care of itself." (p. 307) It is also curious that an officer so attuned to Native American concerns would be so ignorant of the true feelings of New Mexico natives!

Instead of quailing at Confederate threats, Colorado and California sent units of volunteers to New Mexico almost equal to Sibley's numbers when the campaign began! New Mexicans not only did not flock to the Confederate colors, but contributed two regiments of Federal volunteers! General Sibley was, therefore, confronted by superior Federal numbers throughout his campaign and departed New Mexico as even more Federal reinforcements (the California Column) approached on his flank. His overconfidence undoubtedly relied on Mexican War experiences, where U.S. troops faced overwhelming odds and won. The "Confederate General of the West" is not the first, nor likely the last general officer, who will enter a new conflict prepared to fight only the last one.

Robert L. Hart
Las Cruces, NM

INQUIRY

The Hill Home Place: A House in Search of its History

by

Sylvia and Jack Spray

The land, approximately nine miles north of the town of Las Cruces, New Mexico, was first specifically identified by 1 warranty deed records in January, 1896, when Elizabeth Steelman, believed to have been a Civil War widow, sold it to George T. Preston. In 1907, the Preston family sold the property to Dr. Charles Lee Hill, a retired dentist, who with his wife Anna and daughters Mary and Hannah, had arrived in the area in 1904. Also in 1907, Dr. Hill bought an adjoining parcel of land, thus increasing his holding to something over 330 acres.

The Hills built a large comfortable brick house with a shake shingle roof, hardwood floors, many bookcases, a telephone closet, several generous porches, a central heating system, an electricity generator, and a well. The approach to the house was beautifully landscaped and the hospitable Hills opened their home and lawn to a number of wedding parties. In the early 1920s, the Hill home place was quite a showplace in the community. As the most identifiable structure in the area, the house and its owners inadvertently bequeathed the name Hill to the small settlement, which eventually boasted a grocery store, train depot, post office, and even a country club.



The Hill Home Place

Photograph courtesy of current owners, Sylvia and Jack Spray

As there was no church in the area, in the fall of 1920 a community effort was launched for an interdenominational church, and the cornerstone was laid. On February 12, 1923, Charles and Anna Hill's daughter Mary was married to Harvey Wilcox of El Paso, Texas; the first couple to be wed in the new church, which the "first bride" was allowed to name St. Mary's at Hill. Today, the much diminished Hill, New Mexico, is better known for its romantic little rock church than for the family who gave the community its name, or for the still charming Hill home place.

The original Hill property and home have been sold and resold. The property has been divided and subdivided. The old home place, which now sits on a much reduced five acres of land, has housed a number of families and has

countless stories lurking in its plentiful closets. The current owners of the residence purchased the home and remaining property in 1971, and are very interested in bringing those stories to light, beginning exactly when and by whom the house was designed and built.

If you have information concerning the Hill home place, please share it by writing:

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Spray
8125 North Dona Ana Road
Las Cruces, NM 88005

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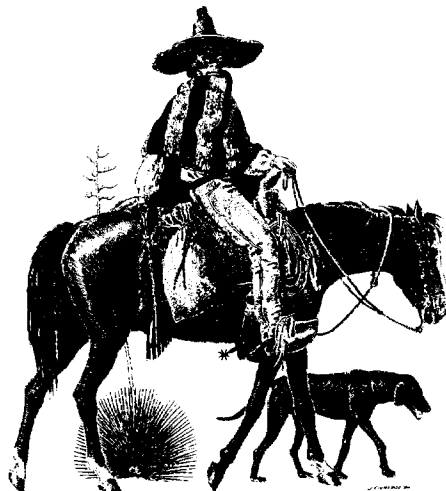
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There is no stipend for articles published, but each author will receive a copy of the *Review* in which the article appears. Articles which have been previously published will not normally be considered unless there is a compelling reason to do so.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

Length and Format: Manuscripts should be double-spaced on 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper, one side only, standard margins. All text, block quotations, captions, tables, notes and references must be double-spaced. The maximum length should be 20 pages, including all illustrative materials and documentation.

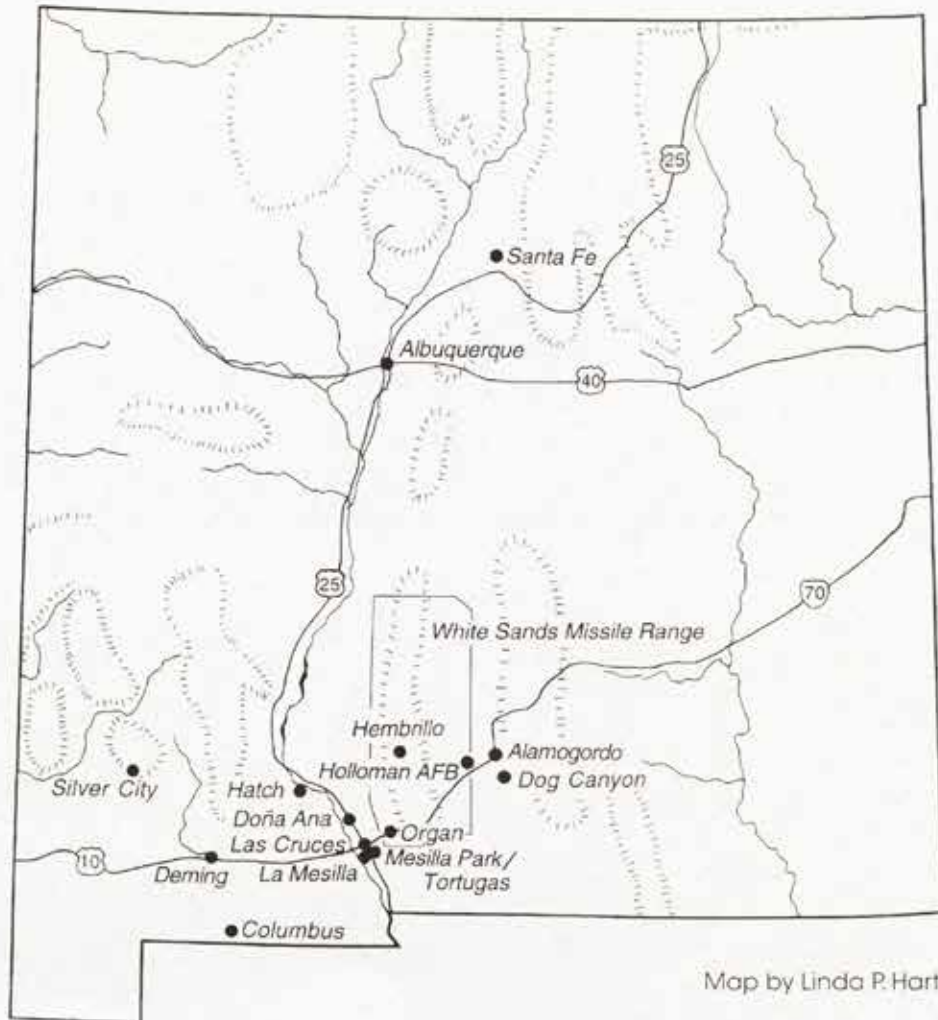
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Deadline for Submissions: June 15 for consideration in issue scheduled for publication the following January. **Address all submissions to:**

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Map by Linda P. Hart

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