

# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW



J. CISTERNOS '89

*Pasajero del Camino Real*

**Doña Ana County Historical Society**  
Volume VI, No.1 Las Cruces, New Mexico January 1999

---

PUBLISHER  
**Doña Ana County Historical Society**

EDITOR  
Robert L. Hart

ASSOCIATE EDITORS  
Winifred Y. Jacobs, M.A. Walton

PUBLICATION COMMITTEE

Doris Gemoets, Martin Gemoets,  
Rhonda Jackson, Judith Putney, Julia Wilke

TYPOGRAPHY, DESIGN, PRINTING

Insta-Copy Printing/Office Supply  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

COVER DRAWING BY

Jose Cisneros

Property of the Doña Ana County Historical Society

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

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

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

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

---

# Southern New Mexico Historical Review

---

Volume VI, No. 1

Las Cruces, New Mexico

January 1999

## ARTICLES

<b>El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro</b> Gabrielle G. Palmer .....	1
<b>The Mesilla Valley's Pioneer Settlements</b> Gordon R. Owen .....	6
<b>The Founding of Otero County</b> David H. Townsend .....	12
<b>A Nostalgic Trip into Territorial History: The McDowell Farmhouse</b> Thomas A. Erhard .....	16
<b>Hatch, NM: The Story of a Village</b> Roger D. Walker .....	19
<b>Lincoln County Women and Frontier Cross-cultural Contact</b> Ann Buffington .....	24
<b>Blackboards and Ditches</b> Clara Bullard/Eloise S. Evans .....	30
<b>Storekeepers in the Public Sphere, 1870-1877</b> Scott E. Fritz .....	35
<b>What Became of Susan McSween Barber's Diamonds?</b> Roberta K. Haldane .....	39
<b>Herman Wertheim: A Very Personal Remembrance</b> Ellen Barncastle Ledesma .....	42
<b>The Fall Committee and Double Agent Jones</b> Michael Stone .....	45
<b>Killed in the Line of Duty</b> Elvis E. Fleming .....	50

## BOOK REVIEWS

<b>George Wythe Baylor, <i>Into the Far, Wild Country: True Tales of the Old Southwest</i></b> reviewed by John Porter Bloom .....	54
<b>John Taylor Hughes, <i>Doniphan's Expedition</i></b> reviewed by Dr. Donna Eichstaedt .....	54
<b>Linda G. Harris, <i>Houses in Time: A Tour Through New Mexico History</i></b> reviewed by Richard Magee .....	55
<b>Stephen Tatum, <i>Inventing Billy the Kid, Visions of the Outlaw in America, 1881-1981</i></b> reviewed by Herb Marsh, Jr. ....	56
<b>Linda G. Harris, <i>One Book at a Time: The History of the Library in New Mexico</i></b> reviewed by Christine B. Myers .....	56
<b>Maurice Garland Fulton, <i>History of the Lincoln County War: A Classic Account of Billy the Kid</i></b> reviewed by Anne Stewart .....	57
<b>John Miller Morris, <i>El Llano Estacado: Exploration and Imagination on the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico, 1536-1860</i></b> reviewed by M.A. Walton .....	57
<b>Marc Simmons, <i>Massacre on the Lordsburg Road: "Tragedy of the Apache Wars"</i></b> reviewed by Julia Wilke .....	58

## INQUIRY

<b>Borderland Rider and Dog: An Identifying Symbol?</b> by Madeleine Vessel .....	59
--	----

---

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

Alamogordo/Otero County Centennial Celebration, Inc.

Ray and Kathy Black

Ira G. Clark

Community First National Bank

Eloise S. Evans

Clarence H. Fielder

First Security Bank

James G. and Mary Ann Flynn

Tom and Mary Gale

Doris and Martin Gemoets

Robert L. Hart

Jacobs Associates

William L. Madden

Matrix Capital Bank

E.L. and Josephine D. Mechem

Carl Miner and Margie Walton

Morgan and Joyce Nelson

Norwest Bank

Dr. & Mrs. Gordon Owen

Robert O. and Pamela Pick

Paul E. and Beverley A. Pirtle

Lou and Pat Sisbarro

Col. Leonard R. Sugerman, USAF (Ret.)

Roger and Jo Ellyn Walker

Harvey R. and Julia K. Wilke

Yucca Tree Press

# El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

by Gabrielle G. Palmer

*Editor's Note: This article was originally prepared as a talk delivered in February 1997 to the Casa de American in Madrid, Spain.*

I'd like to speak to you about one of the great historic roads on the American continent, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Royal Road of the Interior).

In a paper presented in Santa Fe (October, 1996) Maria Luisa Pérez Gonzalez from the University of Sevilla spoke of the historic development of roads of Spain and Mexico during the colonial period. She noted that the Roman Empire had conceived of the network of roads which united the various parts of its vast empire as an organic whole. Following its collapse no equivalent system appeared to replace it, although in medieval Spain Alfonso X recognized that the road system was more than the simple sum of local roads, that certain main arteries transcended provincial interests.

With the consolidation of Spain in the hands of Ferdinand and Isabella, Spanish roads became part of the royal patrimony, and were recognized as fundamental to the country's economic interests. In this period attempts were made to bring order to the confusing body of existing legislation, as well as to draft new edicts. Old roads were improved, new ones built, forming a network of roads which articulated and organized the peninsula's physical territory. Writes Mrs. Perez, "Highways and roads were part of the Crown's responsibility and were the main catalysts for economic development of a region based at first upon nomadic grazing patterns and much later on mining . . . The Crown was interested in all roads, especially those that resulted in significant economic development of the regions in question. These roads were also supported by law, in that they were under the protection of the Crown. They were the routes that, in the language of the 18th century, were sometime called 'main' roads. However for much of that time they were known as royal highways and this, in a sense, re-enforced their public character and general utilitarian uses."<sup>1</sup>

## The New World

When the New World came under Spanish dominion the legal and conceptual basis for the Crown's interest and investment in a highway system was, along with many other institutions, transferred to these territories through a body of written laws and administered by the Crown's appointed officials. This included the right of the Viceroy to finance new roads and to build bridges. Over the time laws were promulgated to guarantee safe passage of commercial travel, to deal with the width and condition to the road surface, with signage, with the construction of bridges, local responsibility for maintenance

and repairs, the use of Indian labor (paid and free), regulations concerning beasts of burden and the like.

## Pre-History

Before dealing with the colonial road system we have to ask: Were there any existing roads within the Aztec Empire? In fact we know from information provided in codices, in official reports written by Spanish conquistadores, officials, and priests, that a very extensive network of roads existed in prehispanic times not only within the Aztec Empire, but throughout Mesoamerica. They were used to carry mail dispatches, commerce and tribute. Most of these "roads" were *veredas* (footpaths). They were well maintained and repaired; their amenities included *mesones de descanso* (houses of rest).

However, other roads were more highly developed. Most notable were the *calzadas*, or the four great causeways, that connected the island capital of Tenochtitlan, built at the center of Lake Texcoco, to the surrounding land. The most incredible roads were those constructed the by the Mayans. This elaborate system of roads was an engineering marvel. It covered a huge geographical area including the Yucatan peninsula, Chiapas, Tabasco, Honduras and Belize. Called *los caminos blancos*, they were constructed of rocks set with limestone mortar; completely paved and graded, they included overpasses, ramps, glorietas, platforms, and signs at cross roads. Fray Diego Lopez de Cogolludo in his *Historia de Yucatan* wrote "estas calzadas eran como caminos reales" (these causeways are like royal roads).

## Northern Mexico and the Southwest

In our own part of the world the trails that linked Mesoamerica to oasis America probably first connected the area around Zuni to the Sonoran statelets while other trails radiated from Casa Grandes/Paquime. Around Chaco Canyon a remarkable network of roads existed. Readily seen from the air, they are arrow-straight but not flat and may have served a ceremonial, rather than a utilitarian purpose.

However, in the main, the road system of New Spain was not developed by integrating local roads into a larger national system, as had been the case on the peninsula, but of continuing to use some pre-historic trails as the basis for roads and of forging new roads, all of which had to be adapted to the animals and wheeled vehicles introduced by the Spanish into the New World.

## The Changes

Early maps clearly reveal this transition from pre-his-



Map of Chalco, Mexico ca. 1716. Note routes converging at upper right to join Camino Real east of Mexico City.

Courtesy of author.

toric foot paths to the track trodden by the horse, *camino de herradura*, and the wider road which could accommodate wheeled vehicles, *camino de ruedas*, a differentiation which continued to be noted for many years.

### Beasts of Burden

The importance of the beast of burden, the horse with rider, the weight pulled by oxen, and the freight carried by mules cannot be underestimated. The number of animals who trod the Camino Real was enormous — Onate's 1598 caravan included 150 mares with their colts, 4000 sheep, 1000 goats, 1000 cattle, plus another 1500 belonging to members of the expedition; Vargas' caravan included 1,000 animals and many thousands more came along to resupply the distant colony. From the Native American Indian standpoint, the traffic in livestock along the Camino Real, which they consistently raided, represented a renewable resource!

Not only the beasts of burden, but the whole range of livestock and barnyard animals, and with them the technologies imported from Spain such as saddles, bridles, herding techniques (Spain was the first country to introduce herding cattle on horseback), were pivotal to the conquest and to the colonization. Were it not for these animals the conquest might not have had the same outcome, and because of these animals the face of America was changed.

The Spanish Barb, bred in North America and introduced into Spain during the Muslim occupation, was often the conquistadors' horse of choice; it reached New Mexico and now, once again, is being bred there. Once

adopted by Native American tribes, the horse changed their culture; within the Hispanic culture it signified a way of life.

And then, of course, there was the patient little burro whose eyes Juan RamOn Jimenez described as *ojos de escabeche* (eyes of jet black) and whose miniscule hoofprints found their way to the most remote parts of the colonial empire!

But it was the mule, again a North African contribution, which carried most of the goods on his sturdy back. More easily adapted to changes in terrain and condition of roads, the mule was both intelligent and strong. Mules were already a decisive factor in Spain's transportation system, complete with its *Asociacion de Carreteros*. In Mexico, whole villages (San Juan del Rio may have been one of these), came to be dedicated to this enterprise, which included breeding as well as transportation. Its entrepreneurs included **Indians**, blacks and mestizos.

Long mule trains carried the river of silver ingots from the mines which lined the Camino Real south to Veracruz. Accompanied by armed escorts, their cargo was loaded into galleons waiting to set sail to Spain. It was this shining metal that had beckoned the

very first steps to be taken along the Camino Real and this rich ore that had made it into a principal highway in New Spain.

### Mining

Once the Spanish had established their capitol in central Mexico, Spaniards eager for new adventures, looking for new civilizations to conquer, prospecting for gold and silver, continued to probe northward. The first main road north from Mexico City led to Guadalajara. But with discovery of the mines of Cerro de la Bufa in Zacatecas, in 1546, barely forty years after the conquest, the road turned in that direction.

Here, in this mountainous wilderness, the Spanish met another reality. For, by contrast to the Indian tribes who inhabited the central *altiplano* and had been rapidly subdued and converted to Christianity, explorers entering the *Gran Chichimeca*, encountered fiercely independent warlike tribes who had never come under Aztec domination and who would continue to pose a threat to travelers and residents throughout the colonial period.

However, the lure of wealth drove the explorers onward and with each new discovery of silver ore — at Casco, at Inde — a new segment was forged until, at the end of the sixteenth century, Santa Barbara was established. From here, after months of agonizing delay, Juan de Onate, at the head of an official colonizing expedition financed by silver, led forth a large caravan in search of more silver.

Struggling northward, he finally reached a spot

near present-day El Paso, Texas, where he formally took possession of the lands that stretched before him, in the name of the Spanish King. On reaching the confluence of the Chama river and the Rio Grande, he established the first European settlement, San Juan de los Caballeros, thus extending the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro to its northernmost point. Oñate was replaced by Pedro de Peralta who, in 1609, moved the capital to Santa Fe; it then became the northern terminus of the Camino Real. A disappointed (Dilate returned down the Camino Real to Mexico and eventually traveled to Spain only to die there in 1626. Historian Marc Simmons, has called him the Father of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. Although, of course, it was not known by that name then.

### Los Caminos Reales

The discoveries of Columbus and the conquest of Mexico by Cortes are too well known to discuss here. When Cortes marched from what would become the town of Veracruz to Tenochtitlan, the heart of the Aztec Empire, he followed a route which would become and remain for three centuries the most important road in New Spain, its vital link with Spain. In time, this main artery, would be joined by others; the most significant would become known as Caminos Reales.

In his “Ensayo Politico” of 1803, Alexander von Humboldt singled out the four most important Caminos Reales in the colony. One led south through Oaxaca to Guatemala; the two routes leading from Veracruz to Mexico City and Mexico City to Acapulco, functioned primarily as trade routes connecting Mexico to Europe and Asia; El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, or Camino a Santa Fe, differed markedly in character and terrain from the others.

This, “our” Camino Real, was forged in a new land for new purposes. For one thing it had its start in private enterprise with the discovery and exploitation of mineral wealth by a group of predominantly Basque entrepreneurs. Only then, once the wealth of the mines began to be exploited, did the Crown recognize that it was in its own best economic interests to protect and maintain this vital artery, although throughout its history there were numerous complaints that not enough royal attention was paid to its care.

### Travel on the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

The route passed over fairly level terrain from Mexico City to Queretaro, but the landscape changed as it climbed to Zacatecas, a section which was eventually constructed with forced Indian labor. By the late 18th century, however, citizens from the haciendas and Indian villages which lined the road were supposed to help in its maintenance voluntarily.

The surface of the most heavily traveled roads came to be paved. There were some early bridges although passage was usually by means of a pulley which winched cargo across rivers. *Ventas* [inns] were to be situated 30

kilometers apart. It is safe to assume that the farther north the traveler ventured, the sparser such comforts became, and the role of the hacienda then became crucial in providing food, shelter and safety.

In the far north, the terrain leveled out as it crossed the Chihuahuan desert, an ecological zone that includes much of New Mexico. Here the ground is sometimes so sandy the *carros* bogged down for hours; at other time it was firm underfoot. The real challenge is the scarcity of water, forage, and fire wood — thus the importance of river systems and the tendency of trails to cling to them.

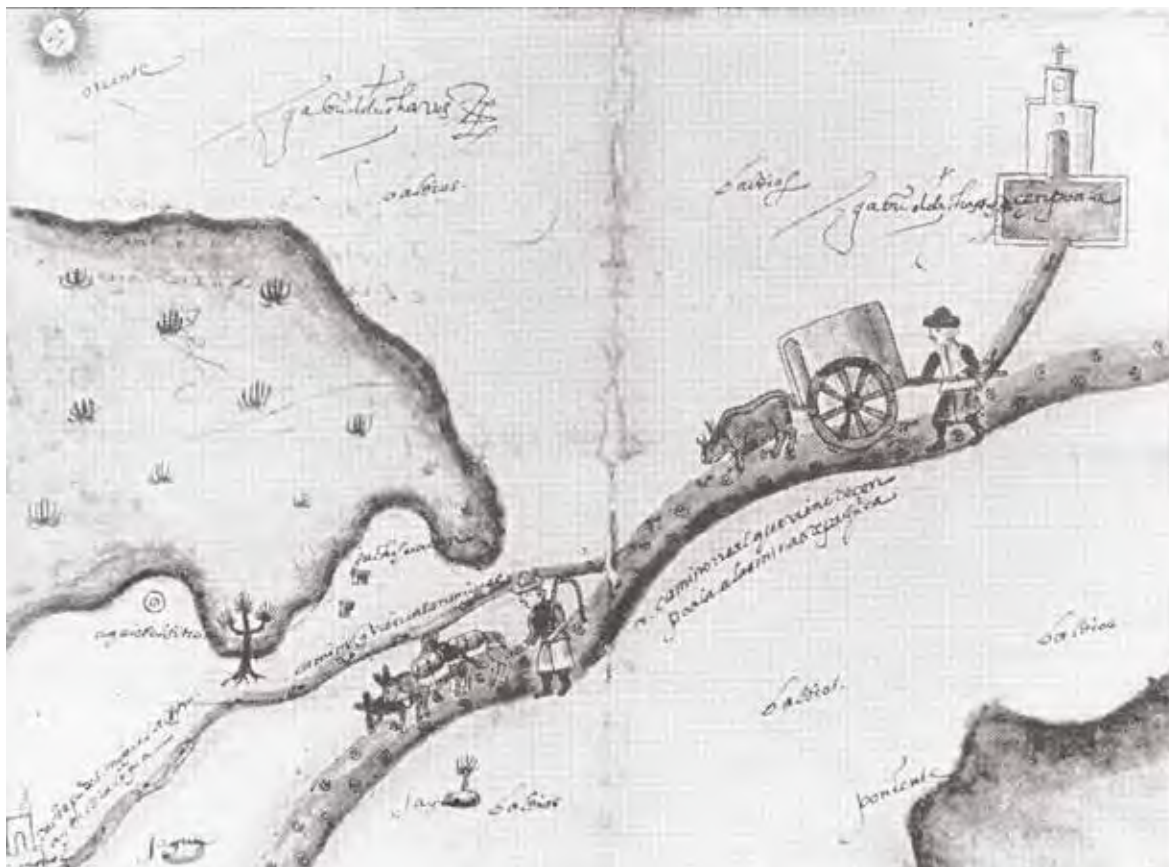
The distances were enormous. The trip of 1800 miles from Mexico City to Santa Fe, took 4½ to six months to complete. In the seventeenth century large caravans traveling 12-15 miles a day only undertook the arduous trip at three-year intervals. In the eighteenth century the traffic was more frequent and more regular. Once the “villas” of Chihuahua and Albuquerque were founded in the first years of the nineteenth century, the distances between populated centers were much shorter; this segment of the trail was commonly known as the Chihuahua Trail.

In early days the screeching wheels of the *carros* could be heard for miles. In crossing rivers such as the Rio Grande a vehicle often had to be dismantled, floated across the stream piece by piece, and then reassembled on the opposite shore. In New Mexico, the *bosques* that line the Rio Grande provided stands of cottonwood trees, whose wood was used to construct and repair these vehicles. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was the custom for the governor to issue a *bando*, and send a crier to proclaim the news that all who wanted to join the caravan should gather at La Joya de Sevilleta in the fall of the year to proceed southward on a given day under armed escort. It was a whole society on the move, says one historian. Children were born on the trail; others died on it.

### New Mexico

If Oñate was disappointed with what he failed to find in New Mexico — the tales of wondrous civilizations to conquer all proved false; there was no gold, there was no silver — then so was the Spanish Crown. There were no revenues, but only a constant drain on the royal treasury! In the 17th century, Franciscan missionaries, concerned with the safety and souls of their Indian converts, pleaded with the authorities not to abandon New Mexico.

The situation got worse when, in 1680, the Pueblo Indians united in armed revolt, “killing four hundred Hispanic colonists, twenty-one Franciscan missionaries, and an unknown number of Indians.” The remaining 2,000 or so Spaniards, with Indian allies, were forced to flee southward along the Camino Real. Many settled around Paso del Norte. It was from here that the newly appointed governor, Diego de Vargas, launched his successful reconquest of New Mexico in 1692. After some years of turbulence, New Mexico began a slow climb toward peace and relative



1589 Gabriel de Chaves map depicting vehicular traffic on the Camino Real in Mexico.

Note carreta and ixen asd wekk as nules and driver. Courtesy of author.

expected to provide tribute and labor in return for protection and catechism. However, abuses led to the eventual demise of this institution, even as the swift decimation of the Indian population left many of their villages and tribal lands “vacant.” Petitioning the King for the right to these lands, a new class of landowners emerged, and with them the cattle ranch and the agricultural hacienda whose economic basis was no longer tribute labor but free trade. On the agricultural hacienda grains, vegetables, and fruits were grown; water was captured and distributed through a

prosperity in the 18th century.

### Mining Again

In the preceding century, the mining industry had suffered intermittent periods of decline. But by the last quarter of the eighteenth century a mining boom, in which the reforms of Carlos III played a pivotal role, was in full swing. The resultant accumulation of wealth gave rise to a brilliant sumptuous society which drew on elements from both the Old and New Worlds. It was reflected in the growth of towns and population, and the emergence of a triumvirate of the rich and politically powerful: the mine owner, the land owner, and the merchant.

New Mexico, at the very end of royal tether, was gradually drawn into the orbit of this economic resurgence, forming part of the system which supplied the mines to the south with agricultural and other products.

### Hacienda

The development of the cattle ranch and the agricultural hacienda paralleled that of the mining industry, forming a vital part of the elaborate infrastructure which supplied the mines with food, raw materials, beasts of burden and the like.

Land ownership in the 17th century was centered around the institution of the *encomienda*, with the *encomendero* being awarded lands and Indians, who were

system of *acequias*; and wheat was ground in water-driven mills.

The fertile Bajío, around Queretaro, was a center for cattle ranching and agricultural production. Haciendas were later developed around Durango, and with the emergence of the Santa Eulalia mines, which reached their apogee between the years 1703-1737, the hacienda system was extended along the Camino Real north from Chihuahua to Encinillas, finally reaching the rich Rio Grande flood plain in the area around Paso del Norte. In this region, in the first half of the eighteenth century, several large haciendas were in operation.

One of the largest landowners was General Antonio de Valverde Cosío, who traced his ancestry in northern Spain to Villapresente (Santander). A merchant in Sombrerete before joining forces with Vargas, he became a dominant figure in Paso del Norte both in the political arena and as owner of the largest agricultural complex in New Mexico. On his 20,000 hectare Hacienda de San Antonio de Padua, wheat was grown and ground in its own grist mill; 10-12,000 grape vines produced wine, brandy, raisins, and vinegar. In his Santa Rosa compound 19,000 head of sheep and goats grazed. On his ranch of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, cattle and horses were raised. He owned a three-story 27-room house surrounded by an orchard with 4,000 more grape vines



and numerous fruit trees — apple, apricot, peach, pear, and quince. Some of this produce — including dried fruits, wheat, maize, beans, flour — was shipped north to Santa Fe, but most of it went south to the population centers in Mexico.

Other New Mexico exports included salt, pirlon nut, roughly woven textiles, moccasins, and goods garnered from the annual trade fair at Taos. The role of the trade fair along the Camino Real has yet to be studied, although it is known that important fairs were held at San Juan de los Largos, in Chihuahua, and at other sites. Taos had been, even in pre-historic times, a point of contact with the Indians of the Central Plains. In colonial times the Taos trade fair became wildly colorful yearly event, presided over by the Spanish governor. It was a source of elk and deer hides, of buffalo skins and buffalo by-products, all of which formed a vital part of the Camino Real trade.

However, churro sheep comprised the single most important export from New Mexico. In the late colonial period, drives of thousands of sheep were not uncommon, reaching far into central Mexico. Mutton provided the basis for the New Mexico economy, and wool the basis for an emerging textile industry. As one historian has said, animals destined for dinner had the good grace to carry themselves along the trail. This is not true of much of the cargo along the Camino Real — it had to be carried.

### Cargo

Before the coming of the Spaniards, cargo was carried on the backs of human beings and this system of *tamemes* [porters] continued to be used well into colonial times. With the introduction of beasts of burden and the wheeled vehicle, much more cargo could be transported. The weight carried by *tamemes* has been estimated at 90 lbs.; mules could carry about 3-400 lbs.; two-wheel *carretas* could carry ½ ton; and a four-wheel *carro* could transport about 1½ tons. We have lots of images of *carretas*; we have descriptions of *carros*, but no picture of what they would have looked like. These cargoes brought the tenets of European civilization to the far northern outpost of New Mexico.

### Wealth/Spanishness

When Manuel Antonio San Juan de Santa Cruz Jaquez de Valverde, son of an influential Basque from Vizcaya, Spain, married Francisca Garcia de Noriega in Paso del Norte in the 18th century, it “was the social event of the year, perhaps of the century for it represented... [t]he merger of financial power and wealth on a scale seldom seen in colonial New Mexico.” It becomes clear from reading an inventory of their respective estates that, as historian Rick Hendricks has written, “The obvious wealth of the newlyweds challenges the commonly held notion that colonial New Mexico in general and El Paso in particular were nothing more than a remote backwater of the Spanish Empire.”

This hypothesis has been further strengthened in recent years by researchers who have uncovered considerable documentary evidence to show the surprising quantity and

quality of goods shipped up the Camino Real as far north as Santa Fe. From hoes to harps, these included both utilitarian as well as luxury objects. They give a picture of life on the frontier which sought to reinforce and sustain the values and attributes of Spanish life.

A brief perusal of these artifacts reveals poignant misconceptions — such as the fencing foils brought by one of thiate’s companions; brave hopes — such as the orange velvet suit worn by one of the Spanish governors on Santa Fe’s dusty little streets. They recall the splendor of the church — with its gilded retablos and silver ornaments — and the hierarchies of its stratified society which sipped chocolate in fine china cups.

If the Camino Real brought a new world view to the existing Native American population, such as new ways of measuring time — the bell, the clock, and of defining space — the *vara*, the league, then it also flooded their world with new sounds — the Spanish language, polyphonic music, accompanied by shawms and violins, new textures and new colors. Most importantly, for all its remoteness, the Camino Real and its link to the other great highways in New Spain, placed New Mexico within the broad orbit of international trade.

### What’s in a Name?

In New Mexico, memories of the designation “Camino Real” still survive among some of its older residents. There is still a Camino Real, although there is no King, Vargas mentions the name Camino Real in a letter, and decades later the American, Josiah Gregg, uses the same words. Prominently displayed in the New Mexico Highway Department is a map whose legend reads “The Camino Real and Highway \*1”;<sup>1</sup> it was drawn in 1914. The ruts on our desert landscape further attest to its survival as a treasured cultural artifact.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is one of the great roads of yesterday, binding together the histories of Spain, New Spain and our own American southwest. Its past enriches our present.

---

GABRIELLE G. PALMER, Ph.D., is a Spanish colonial scholar. She obtained \$450,000 funding for and oversaw the restoration of the 18th century Santuario de Guadalupe in Santa Fe, New Mexico: Curator of various museum exhibits on Spanish colonial art, she is the author of *Sculpture in the Kingdom of Quito* and *Cambios, the Spirit of Transformation in Spanish Colonial Art*. She founded and has directed the Camino Real Project since 1989, has produced a travelling exhibit, collaborated in publications and, most recently developed the first permanent exhibit for the Museum of New Mexico’s Camino Real Interpretive Center, a facility to be built in southern New Mexico.

---

### ENDNOTES

1 The original passage was given in Spanish and translated for this article. The passage follows:

Writes Mrs. Perez, “Los caminos forman parte definitivamente de las regalías de la Corona. Actúan a modo de catalizadores de toda la organizaciOn econOmica que se crea, basada en principio en el ganado trashumante y mas tarde en as minas... El interés de la Corona esta en todos los caminos pero especialmente en aquellos que resultan vitales para el desenvolvimiento económico del Estado. Y al legislar sobre ellos o sobre otros aspectos indirectos que les atañen igualmente, los el lenguaje de XVIII se llamaran a veces ‘caminos principales,’ pero que por mucho tiempo se conoceran por ‘caminos reales,’ en el sentido de reforzar su caracter palico y su utilidad general.”

# The Mesilla Valley's Pioneer Settlements

by Gordon R. Owen

*Editor's Note: The following is a modified chapter of a book which reviews the one hundred fifty years of Las Cruces' existence as a community. It is entitled History of Las Cruces 1849 to 1999. A Multi-Cultural Crossroads. Its preparation was requested and sponsored by the Mayor's Committee on Las Cruces' One Hundred Fiftieth Birthday Celebration, scheduled for July 3, 1999 to January 6, 2000.*

Geologists tell us that hundreds of millions of years ago what is now southern New Mexico was covered by a large shallow sea. Starting more than forty million years ago, once the seas had receded, volcanic activity produced our uniquely shaped and colored Organ Mountains. Shifting and sinking of the earth's crust also created a north-south rift which became the Rio Grande valley.

As much as 20 thousand years ago, an abundance of game, fish and grasses attracted nomadic hunters and gatherers to that valley. Mogollon and Anasazi Native Americans, now commonly referred to as Puebloans, settled in villages throughout what now is New Mexico and eastern Arizona. By 1450 or so, drought conditions and raids by nomadic Athabascans led the Pueblo Indians to desert their historic homes, many of them rock and mud multi-story apartment complexes. They tended to settle in or near the steadily narrowing, verdant portion of the Rio Grande Valley. The seventy miles north of what is now the westernmost Texas-New Mexico boundary has come to be called the Mesilla Valley.

By the 1530s the first Spanish explorers, priests and gold seekers began to venture into what now is New Mexico. As many as a half dozen expeditions ventured north up the Rio Grande or Pecos Rivers but it was Don Juan de (Mate who first succeeded in planting a colony near what now is Santa Fe.

For nearly a century, the Spanish and Indians coexisted in relative peace, but drought, disease and repression by the Spanish led in 1680 to an armed Pueblo Indian revolt, which for the first time in history drove the occupying Spanish completely out of one of their western hemisphere colonies. For twelve years, the nineteen pueblos lived independently. By 1692-93, however, Don Diego de Vargas led two expeditions which restored Spanish control of the colony.

By 1700, with Pueblo-Revolt related hostilities relatively settled, profitable *Camino Real* trade resumed, but a new threat soon intensified. Spanish traders and colonizers had unwittingly exacerbated their own problem by introducing fine horses to the desert country. By the 1600s bands of nomadic Athabascans were raiding Pueblo and Spanish villages with horses as their prized target. Stolen horses then became "engines of war" for the Apaches and Navajos. Raiding parties were an especially

serious threat to traders traversing the *Camino Real* and trade at times ground to a nearly complete halt.

The Spanish crown and its viceroys had established two *presidios* (garrisons) of regular troops, at *El Paso del Norte* (Juarez) and at Santa Fe. But the king was so preoccupied with troubles in Europe and the incursions of the French and English into Spanish territory elsewhere in America that he neglected New Mexico. In the 1720s, the Santa Fe *presidio* had a complement of only eighty men and maintenance of some semblance of order would have been impossible without the assistance of citizen militia and Pueblo Indian auxiliaries.

Even cities fell prey to raiding parties. Comanche warriors attacked Albuquerque in 1774, driving off the town's entire herd of horses and a huge flock of sheep. In 1775 forty-one settlers of New Mexico were killed in raids by Apaches, Navajos and Comanches. The entire colony felt itself under a state of siege. However, the tide began to turn when the crown and its viceroys agreed to send additional troops into New Mexico and appointed Don Juan Bautista de Anza as governor. Leading a force of six hundred men, he defeated the Comanches in southern Colorado in 1779 and then negotiated a treaty with them which restored peace to eastern New Mexico for the next hundred years. Comanches even joined New Mexico forces in their attempts to combat Apache and Navajo raiders.

The Spanish were increasingly apprehensive over the fact that the Atlantic seaboard colonies had not only won their independence from the English but had successfully organized a new national government. Westward expansion of the U.S. already had begun. The Spanish strategy of returning Louisiana to France on condition that Napoleon would never let that territory be handed over to a third power backfired in 1803 when Napoleon sold the entire Louisiana Territory to the United States.

Equally worrisome was the 1806-07 arrival of a United States expedition led by young Lt. Zebulon Pike. Mounted Spanish troops arrested Pike and his men, seized his notes and maps and eventually transported the entire expedition to Chihuahua and thence back to Louisiana. However, the young explorer prepared a report from memory, and its publication in 1810 publicized the trade potential

if routes to New Mexico could be developed.

The year 1810 proved a watershed year for Spain in the Rio Grande Valley. After nearly a century of warfare, the Spanish government agreed to a treaty which granted the Mescalero Apaches land in the Sacramento Mountains. The promise of rations to the Apaches lessened the need for their raiding wagon trains traversing the Rio Grande Valley. Relative peace then prevailed for twenty-five years and vigorous *Camino Real* trade soon resumed.

However, 1810 also saw the desire of all humans for independence, which had sparked the American Revolution in 1776 and the bloody French revolution in 1789, spread to Spain's Mexican colony. Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla convinced his parishioners the time had come to declare independence from Spain and on September 16, 1810, Mexico's war for independence began. After more than ten years of sporadic violence, Spain granted Mexico its independence in 1821.

One of the fledgling Mexican nation's first acts was to lift centuries-old trade barriers against "foreigners." Within a year, traders from Independence, Missouri, were arriving in Santa Fe with finished goods which they traded for gold, silver and furs. William Becknell, a famed Indian fighter, had journeyed from Missouri to Santa Fe in 1821 with a pack train loaded with goods which sold at a sizable profit. He returned the next year with twenty-one men and three wagon loads of goods. Returning to Missouri, Becknell publicized the profit potential of Santa Fe Trail trade and the flood gates to western trade soon were opened. His pioneering feat led historians to call Becknell the "Father of the Santa Fe Trail."

New Mexicans and traders such as Josiah Gregg in turn soon were buying goods in Santa Fe and taking or shipping them south on the *Camino Real* to Chihuahua, Durango and Mexico City. Settlements such as El Paso del Norte and what soon would become its twin city to the north, El Paso, soon were booming, with an 1840 population of nearly 4,000 people.

Not only did the newly independent Mexican government open the borders of its New Mexico province to American traders but it also began to offer generous grants of Rio Grande Valley land to land-hungry Mexicans. Overcrowding in the Juarez area resulted in adjacent Rio Grande valley land becoming scarce. However, land a few miles north was rich and available, and the Mexican government wanted it settled. Any group of at least 100 individuals who committed to establishing a community on the *cedula* (grant) could apply.

The consequent trend toward northward settlement proved cumulative over the next four decades. To understand the founding of Las Cruces, one must be aware of the early interactions among Doña Ana, Mesilla and Las Cruces. The Mexican interest in the Mesilla Valley actually had led to settlement attempts even before the 1810-1821 revolution. Juan Garcia de Noriega not only had established holdings near Brazito in 1805 but

managed for a time to maintain peaceful relations with the Apaches. However, his heirs were run out by the Indians.

In 1822, John G. Heath, a friend of early Texas settlement leader Stephen Austin, applied for and was granted land in the same general area near present-day Brazito, thirty miles north of El Paso. Settlement by thirty Catholic families began in 1823 but when the government of Mexican President Augustin de Iturbide was overthrown, no protection was available, and the Apaches also forced those pioneers back to El Paso.

In 1839 Don Jose Maria Costales and 116 settlers from Juarez petitioned for a grant fifteen miles or so north of the aborted Brazito site. The site selected had been known as the Doña Ana *paraje* (campground) to travelers for more than two centuries.<sup>1</sup> In 1840, a tract of more than 35,000 acres was certified as the Doña Ana Bend Colony grant, on condition that a church, priest's house and public buildings be constructed. It developed, however, that the original petitioners were too impoverished to undertake the move north until January of 1843. Because of fear of Apache attacks, only thirty-three of the original 116 petitioners remained.

By February, 1843, Bernabe Montoya led the thirty-three to the area and undertook digging the first *acequia* (irrigation ditch). However, only eighteen actually worked on the *acequia* and because of fear of Apaches and the lack of provisions, some of the original thirty-three soon abandoned the project, leaving only fourteen hardy souls to battle the tangled growth of yucca, mesquite, tornillo, cactus and cottonwood. When they requested military protection and additional laborers from the Mexican government, the viceroy, eager to see the settlement succeed, sent Gen. Mauricio Ugarte, military commander of the Juarez presidio, to investigate.

As General Ugarte and his troops approached, only four settlers, Pablo Melendres, original grant applicant Jose Costales, Ger&limo Lujan and Jose Bernal met him. The others were hiding in the brush because they had no clothing. The general left uniforms for the naked settlers, gave them their first livestock, arranged a tenuous truce with the Mescalero Apaches, and carried their appeals for protection, exemption from taxes and help with ditch-digging to the governor.

The governor responded that he could not exempt them from taxes (could he have been a forefather of an IRS agent?) or provide ditch-diggers, but he did send a seven-man detachment to protect them. By April, 1843, the settlers, employing the crudest of tools, completed the *acequia* in time for spring planting. The *acequia madre* (primary canal) was considered community property, usable by all settlers who obeyed the rules and helped maintain the ditch.

By January of the next year, 1844, the village had forty-seven families and twenty-two single men, for a total population of 261. Construction had begun on the required church and parish house and, for defensive

purposes, the village was built around the traditional plaza. The village of Doña Ana had been successfully founded. The Mexican government appointed Pablo Melendres *alcalde* (mayor/justice of the peace) and Jose Maria Costales as his alternate. In January, 1846, Mexican land officials authorized *Alcalde Melendres* to issue documents of title to Doña Ana land, so long as the original fourteen settlers got first choice. Legend has it that Doña Ana was so blessed it even had a “watch rooster,” which crowed only when danger lurked in the village plaza.

Several factors led to the United States Congress’ declaration of war on Mexico in 1846. The primary motivations were land hunger and President Polk’s “manifest destiny” policy of satisfying that hunger by extending United States territory from coast to coast. Another bone of contention was Mexico’s failure to pay monetary claims owed U.S. citizens. For its part, Mexican ire was aroused by the fact that Republic of Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar had sent armed Texas soldiers and merchants marching toward Santa Fe, allegedly to reopen trade routes. Mexican and New Mexican leaders considered this an armed invasion. Mexican officials also were still smarting over the U.S. annexation of Texas and that country’s non-recognition of Mexican claims to part of that territory.

President Polk consequently seemed to look for a pretext to seize the coveted territory. When a band of Mexican troops allegedly crossed the border, ventured into what Texas considered its territory and engaged in an armed skirmish with U.S. troops, the president went before Congress and announced that a state of war existed.

Col. Stephen Watts Kearny was named to lead the military expedition to the Southwest. In addition to three hundred army regulars, he recruited thirteen hundred volunteers, who soon were marching down the Santa Fe Trail. Kearny’s troops captured New Mexico’s capital city, Santa Fe, without firing a shot.

Kearny, by then promoted to the rank of General, was ordered to proceed on to California. However, he devoted six weeks to reassuring New Mexicans of his country’s desire to make the transition from Mexican to United States rule as peaceable as possible. Lawyers from the ranks of his army helped create a set of basic laws, later called the Kearny Code. Civil officials were appointed to administer the territory and, to protect Santa Fe, construction began on Fort Marcy.

As General Kearny moved on west with the bulk of his army, military command in New Mexico was left in the hands of Col. Alexander Doniphan. Leaving a garrison to protect Santa Fe, Doniphan headed south down the Rio Grande Valley with 300 mounted troopers and 550 infantry, most of them untrained and relatively undisciplined Missouri farm boys. Responding to news of Navajo raids on area ranches, Doniphan sent his foot soldiers south toward Doña Ana while he led the mounted

men to seek peace with the Navajos. When Doniphan’s troop rejoined the main body of Missourians, he brought with him a Navajo promise of peace, then started his 850-man force on southward toward Doña Ana.

These Missourians were described as “free style” soldiers. The line of march often stretched for miles, at one time nearly one hundred miles. Parties of traders, traveling with the column for protection, were interspersed with troopers and, since most of the troopers had discarded all or part of their uniforms, traders and troopers were indistinguishable. As to military discipline, one observer stated “the greatest irregularities constantly took place.” Yet they proved themselves great fighters.

Upon arriving at Doña Ana, the colonel decided the village was an ideal spot to rest his troops in preparation for a push on into Mexico. The Doña Ana pioneer settlers were beginning to harvest their first bumper crops and for several weeks provided, as best they could, food and lodging for the Missourians.

Refreshed and somewhat re-supplied, the Doniphan army headed on south and by Christmas Day, 1846, they were setting up camp at Brazito, a few miles south of present-day Las Cruces. When a cloud of dust to the south signalled the approach of what proved to be a thousand- man Mexican army force, the Missourians quickly prepared to do battle. Approach of the enemy caught Doniphan and his officers engaged in a card game to decide ownership of a recently captured horse. The colonel is said to have shouted: “Boys, I hold an invincible hand, but I’ll be damned if I don’t have to play it out in steel.”

The Missourians’ sharpshooting quickly repelled the invasion, with the Mexicans suffering a number of casualties. This proved to be the only battle of the Mexican war fought on New Mexican soil. Doniphan’s troops marched triumphantly on to win other victories and capture Chihuahua City. After moving eastward back to the Rio Grande, they traveled by boat either across the river or down the river to the Gulf of Mexico, back to Texas and on to the Midwest. They thus completed one of the most remarkable campaigns in military history, traveling nearly 5,000 miles with limited support or direction from Washington, foraging for subsistence as they went.

In the last months of 1847, peace negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico took place sporadically, interspersed with outbreaks of renewed fighting. In December of 1847, the commanding officer of U.S. troops in New Mexico, Cot. Sterling Price, called a citizens convention to organize a territorial government. Once accomplished, this seemed to constitute *de facto* annexation of New Mexico to the United States as a territory, even before formal treaty negotiations could be completed.

It also meant that for nearly the next sixty-five years, the federal government would appoint top territorial officers such as governor, secretary, supreme court

justices, surveyor general, revenue collector, U.S. attorneys and marshals and land office personnel. These appointments often were considered rewards for political favors or a convenient method of removing a rival politician to the desert Southwest. Territories were authorized to elect a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, but that delegate had no vote and could speak in open session only with consent of the Speaker of the House.

Territorial status also called for each county to elect a probate judge, sometimes called prefect, who functioned as legislative, executive and judicial officer. Each county was divided into precincts and each precinct elected an *alcalde*. In February, 1848, however, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, formally ending the Mexican War. The U.S. negotiator agreed to pay fifteen million dollars for annexation of all of New Mexico and all of California above a line just north of the 32nd parallel. He also agreed to pay the claims of U.S. citizens against Mexico. The treaty was ratified by the United States in March and by Mexico in May, 1848.

The end of the war had a significant impact on the now-growing village of Doña Ana. The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty ceded all land east of the Rio Grande, including the Doña Ana Bend Colony Grant, to the United States. The village was, in 1849 terms, becoming overcrowded. Not only were troops still garrisoned there but Texas veterans swarmed in to claim the "head right" to undeeded land promised them. This resulted from a secret provision of the 1836 Texas-Mexico treaty. That treaty, ending Texas' war to gain independence from Mexico, had been signed by the Republic of Texas and Mexican President Santa Anna. Occasional gold seekers who chose the Mesilla Valley rather than continuing the trek to the gold fields of California, and even Missourians who returned to the Valley after discharge from the Doniphan campaign, made the village seem bursting at the seams.

At this time, land west of the Rio Grande and south of the Gila River was still Mexican territory. Led by Father Ramon Ortiz and El Pasoan Don Rafael Ruelas, and assisted by the Mexican government, more than sixty Doña Ana families decided they preferred Mexican to United States' rule. In 1850 they settled on a *mesita* (a small hill) on the Mexican (west) side of the river, and thus the town of Mesilla was born. Initial growth was slow, but there soon was a cluster of adobe houses and, of course, a church, the forerunner of San Albino. The first place of worship was a *jacal* (small hut-like structure) with vertical poles in a ground trench, laced together, covered with a mud plaster and a roof of dirt, supported by *vigas* and *latillas* (large and small beams).

However, even in the new town, growth soon accelerated. After a revolution in Mexico, a new land commissioner divided the Mesilla grant, designating the southern portion the Santo Tomas de Yturvide Colony. The northern or Mesilla grant of 21,628 acres was to be democratically administered, with an elected council, mayor

and justice of the peace. Ruelas was elected *alcalde*. By 1852 the Mesilla Civil Colony Land Grant was officially awarded and Mesilla counted at least 700 settlers.

By 1852, the territorial legislature had designated the entire stretch of what now is the southern third of New Mexico and Arizona, extending 800 miles from Texas to the Colorado River, as Doña Ana County, and named Mesilla the county seat. It soon became the mercantile and trade center of the Valley. Additional growth also had resulted from the opening of Fort Fillmore in 1851.

Even prior to the move to Mesilla, Doña Ana Alcalde Don Pablo Melendres was seeking another solution to the over-crowding of his village. At the urging of his constituents, in the spring of 1849 he petitioned the United States troops stationed in his village to assist in surveying and laying out a new town site a few miles south of Doña Ana. The man to whom he was referred was 2nd Lieutenant Delos Bennett Sackett and the town to be surveyed became Las Cruces.

Lt. Sackett was an 1840 graduate of West Point who had been decorated for meritorious service in the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma in the Mexican War. In fact, one biography suggested that during the Resaca battle Sackett had three horses shot from under him in rapid succession. Sackett had, however, escaped injury and continued fighting. His career was ultimately to win him promotions to the position of Inspector General of the United States Army.

In the summer of 1848, Company H, 1st Dragoons, eighty-seven strong, were ordered from Ft. Gibson, Indian Territory (Oklahoma) to border duty at Doña Ana, the only real settlement between El Paso and Socorro. Their primary assignment was to protect the small valley communities from Apache raids.

Alcalde Melendres requested that Lieutenant Sackett lay out a town "in American fashion," so the lieutenant selected a detail of five men to assist him, employing the most rudimentary surveying equipment. Legend has it that the primary instrument was a rawhide rope or lariat, the length of which varied depending upon how dry or wet it was.

Upon arriving at the designated site, the army detail found about one hundred twenty hardy souls already living in brush huts on the ground where the plaza was to be. In retrospect, it is clear Sackett and his men did a remarkable job of implementing Don Melendres' request. In addition to a block designated for the plaza and church, eighty-four blocks were laid out, each consisting of four lots. Provision was made for wide north-south streets, now named Water (nearest the acequia which initially bound the site on the west), Main and Church. The other north-south streets were to be Campo, St. Peter (later San Pedro), Mesquite and Tornillo.

In what was to be the anticipated center of town, between Water and Church Street, fifteen blocks were laid out north to south from a block north of present-day

Picacho south to two blocks south of present day Lohman. Between blocks #22 and #23 was the plaza/church block upon which a simple church structure, the forerunner of St. Genevieve's, had been erected by 1850. (It should be noted, however, that later maps of the platting show the plaza/church block as actually being block #23.) One block, #53, between Campo and San Pedro, was designated for the *camposanto* (burial ground), which explains the street name, Campo. Proceeding eastward, fifteen blocks also were laid out between Church and Campo, and thirteen blocks each between Campo, San Pedro, Mesquite and Tornillo.

Once Lieutenant Sackett's task was completed, heads of families of the 120 pre-survey residents gathered near the plaza/church site and drew *suertes* (lots) from a hat for their home sites. Names appearing on the original plat include Trujillo, Bull, Barrio, Campbell, Cuniffe, Lujan, Alderete, Woodhouse, Apodaca, Lucero, Jones, Lara, Armijo, Ochoa, Patton, Miller, Bean, Samaniego, Bernal, Córdoba, Barela Sedillo, Medina, Avalos, Marshall, Calderón, Montoya, Sedillo and Alvarez. Initially, only 37 blocks plus the church/plaza and cemetery blocks were allocated. Most of the blocks east of Campo and those north of present day Lucero were at this time unclaimed.

Despite Sackett's efforts, or because of the fluctuating lengths of rawhide ropes, some streets were crooked, houses often crowded the street and left what in some cases resembled a maze rather than a planned community. Mud for the largely adobe houses often came from digging holes in the streets. At one point, Judge Richard Campbell ordered people not only to stop making adobes on Main Street but also to fill in the holes already there. Wood was used only for door and window frames plus roof *vigas* (supports) and the pioneers often had to travel to the mountains for timber.

There are multiple theories as to the source of the name of the new town, Las Cruces. One claimed that in the 18th century a group including a bishop, a priest, a Mexican army colonel and captain, four trappers and four choir boys were attacked near the Rio Grande, and only one boy survived. Crosses were erected and the area came to be known as *El Pueblo del Jardín de Las Cruces* (City of the Garden of Crosses). Another theory claimed that brush along the river provided such cover for the Apaches that there were small clusters of crosses, marking each massacre, scattered around the river bank. Another story was that in 1830 a group of forty or more travelers from Taos were slaughtered, resulting in a "forest of crosses."

Still another claim was that a party of troops of New Mexico Governor Manuel Armijo were attacked at a ford in the river, resulting in fourteen fatalities, marked by a single cross. That theory may be most defensible because Susan Magoffin, probably the first Anglo woman to travel the Santa Fe Trail and Camino Real with her trader family, reported seeing in February, 1847, a hill-



General Delos Bennett Sackett. Photo courtesy of the National Archives.

ock of stone and a solitary white cross.

Still another perspective suggested by some is a linguistic one. The Spanish word for "cross" is *cruz*, while the Spanish word *cruce* means "crossing" or "crossroads." This suggests to some that none of the white cross explanations is valid and that Las Cruces is, in fact, a Spanish name for "crossings" or "crossroads." Whether one or all of these theories should be accepted as the most accurate "name explanation," it seems reasonable to conclude that the proximity of a Rio Grande ford to Apache raiding areas produced numerous casualties and crosses and thus the "Garden of the Crosses." It also is clear, however, that the crosses served as a landmark for travelers, to mark a major crossroad and safe "crossing places" to ford the Rio Grande.

New Mexico's official motto, adopted long ago and seldom repeated, is *Crescit Eundo*, "It Grows As It Goes." That motto certainly has applied to Las Cruces as it has gone, in its 150 years, from village to New Mexico's second largest city. Through those fifteen decades, Las Cruces has become a multi-cultural microcosm of

a multi-cultural state, meriting the support and pride of its citizenry.

---

GORDON R. OWEN, Ph. D., is an emeritus professor of Communication Studies at New Mexico State University, where he served as faculty member for twenty-seven years. He is author of the historical twin biography, *The Two Alberts*. His most recent contribution to *SNMHR* was "Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury" in Vol. V, No. 1, January 1998.

---

#### ENDNOTES

1 Various folk tales explain the place name Doña Ana. A legendary woman, widely known but remembered simply as Doña Ana, was reported to have operated a large ranch in the area in the seventeenth century and to have been outstanding for her charity and good deeds. She supposedly had extensive orchards, vineyards, fields of corn, and flocks of sheep.

Another legend reported that Ana, the daughter of a Spanish army officer, had been carried off by Apaches and never seen again, and the site was named in her memory. A 1693 letter to the Mexican viceroy referred to a sheep ranch in the Rio Grande Valley of Doña Ana María Nina de Cordoba. Still another explanation reports that a child named Doña Ana was buried at a site marked by a wooden cross near present day Doña Ana in 1798. Possibly the most documented legend reported that Ana Robledo, grand-daughter of the Pedro Robledo who had been the first New Mexico fatality of Oñate's 1598 expedition, was a member of the band of refugees who fled south from Santa Fe during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. When she viewed the site of her grandfather's death and the mountain which consequently bore his name, she was so anguished that she died and was buried near the present day village. There even was a tale that while the original group of land seekers had tarried in El Paso, one of them had promised a lady friend with whom he had an informal professional relationship to name the new settlement for her.

---

#### SOURCES

Beckett, Patrick and Corbett, Terry. *The Manso Indians*. Monograph #9, Las Cruces, NM: Coas, 1992.

Braden, Jean J. *Mesilla Valley: A Short History*. Las Cruces, NM: Roseta Press, 1982.

Buchanan, Rosemary. *The First Hundred Years*. Las Cruces, NM: Bronson Printing Co., 1961.

Fritz, Scott. *Mesilla Valley Merchants, 1870-1881*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, New Mexico State University, 1997.

Garcia, Mary Jane. *An Ethno History of Doña Village*. M.A. Thesis, New Mexico State University, 1986.

Harris, Linda G. *Las Cruces: An Illustrated History*. Las Cruces, NM: Arroyo Press, 1993.

Horgan, Paul. *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History*. Austin, TX: Texas Monthly Press, 1984.

Magoffin, Susan Shelby. *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847*, Edited by Stella M. Drumm, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1926.

Metz, Leon. *Southern New Mexico Empire: The First National Bank of Doña Ana County*. El Paso: Mangan Books, 1991.

Neilson, John C. *Comunidad: Community Life in a Southwest Town, Las Cruces, NM 1880-1890*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, New Mexico State University, 1988.

Owen, Gordon R. *The Two Alberts: Fountain and Fall*. Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1996.

Pearce, T.M. *New Mexico Place Names: A Geographic Dictionary*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965.

Price, Paxton P. *Mesilla Valley Pioneers, 1823-1912*. Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1995.

Steeb, Mary; Taylor, Michael T.; and Pennock, Anthony. *Las Cruces Historic Building Survey*. Las Cruces, NM: Doña Ana County Historical Society, n.d.

Trumbo, Theron M. *The History of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley*. Las Cruces, NM: Historical Data Committee of the Centennial, 1949.

# The Founding of Otero County

by David H. Townsend

*Editor's Note: This article is part of a new book written to commemorate Otero County's centennial celebration, Things Remembered, Otero County, 1899-1999.*

Otero County came into being by an act of the Territorial Legislature. The act creating the new county passed the Territorial Council on January 26, 1899, by a vote of 11 to 1. Two days later it passed the lower house by a vote of 31 to 1 and was immediately signed into law by Governor Miguel A. Otero, for whom the new county was named.

The historical record can show a set of simple facts like those stated above without giving much hint about the motivations of the players involved in the events. However, the story of the founding of Otero County is one fraught with a good deal of political maneuvering, and the reasons for its creation will never be clearly known. Two schools of thought have developed to try to explain why the county was formed out of what was then the eastern end of Doña Ana County. The adherents of the two views often treat their version as the only true faith, although simple analysis indicates that the two are certainly not mutually exclusive. In fact, this telling of the story will work with the assumption that both versions have to be in place and working in tandem to accomplish the desired end. Either, working singly, might not have been powerful enough to achieve success.

## **Oliver Lee, the Fountain Case, and the Creation of the County**

Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain and his nine-year-old son Henry did not return to their home in Mesilla on Sunday, February 2, 1896. Thus began the greatest unexplained murder mystery in the history of New Mexico. The Colonel had been in Lincoln, New Mexico, where he had been successful in securing grand jury indictments for cattle rustling against thirty-two individuals, among them Oliver Lee, Billy McNew, and Jim Gililand. The Colonel was legal counsel for the Southeastern New Mexico Stock Grower's Association. He had enjoyed one of the most successful legal and political careers in territorial New Mexico. This career had won him many enemies, among whom Oliver Lee and A.B. Fall held first rank.

Why the doting father had taken his youngest son with him on this long, cold, arduous journey will never be fully known. That the Colonel's life was in danger was not in doubt, but that was one of the constants of the life of the activist frontier lawyer and politician. Perhaps the mumbled threats simply rolled off the Colonel as he and Henry left Lincoln on Thursday afternoon, January 30.

As the Colonel and his son ride on into the myth and mystery of New Mexico, ample evidence builds up, from those they spoke with along the way, that they were being followed by men on horseback. They were encouraged at various stops along the way to wait for those who could provide escort to better guarantee their safety. But the Colonel, who was a fighting man of some repute, refused the proffered help and drove on.

When they did not reach their home, a posse of family and friends rode toward the White Sands where the father and son had been seen last. At a location known as Chalk Hill, the possemen found the Colonel's abandoned buckboard, and they found evidence of foul play. There was blood on the scene, and a handkerchief that Henry was known to carry was found with more bloodstains. Further tracking brought the posse near to the ranch holdings of Oliver Lee. Although they lost the track, the men from Mesilla and Las Cruces were convinced that the famous cattleman was involved in whatever dirty deed had been done. The bodies of the Colonel and his son have never been found.

For the next three years, the presumption of Lee's guilt became the major shaper of events in the area that would become Otero County. The Fountain family, which had strong political connections in Doña Ana County, was able to have a bench warrant sworn for the arrest of Lee, McNew, and Gililand. McNew was arrested the day it was sworn and languished in jail for some two years, awaiting the arrest of the others named. But Lee and Gililand were not so easily caught. They took to the reaches of the eastern part of the county they knew so well, and made clear their intent not to be taken without a fight. The reputation of the two men, and especially of Oliver Lee, as being quite able to handle firearms was a major deterrent. Certainly, the duly appointed legal officials of Doña Ana County were reluctant to head into a hostile region of the county with intent to arrest Lee where just about every man was the rancher's friend. A special lawman was needed.

The most famous lawman in the United States at the time was Patrick Floyd Garrett, who, in 1881, had shot Billy the Kid to death. Garrett, due to a long string of mostly unhappy circumstances, was available. He was politically muscled in to replace Doña Ana County's reluctant sheriff and immediately went to work. The search for Lee and Gililand by Garrett is an exciting



one fraught with hot-and-cold-pursuits, a gunfight with one dead deputy sheriff, narrow escapes, and other bits derring-do. It was however, a frustration for the sheriff. He, like those whom he replaced, found it virtually impossible to capture Lee in his home territory.

But the chase was wearing on the fox as well as the hound. Lee had to neglect his large and demanding ranch holding. He was never totally safe and had to be constantly wary. Life on the run was no picnic for anyone involved. Lee was certainly of the mind that he could never receive justice in Las Cruces and Mesilla, and he had no reason to trust Pat Garrett, whose blood was up in the matter. Garrett had been embarrassed by his inability to bring the culprits to justice. Lee turned for help to his trusted friend and legal counsel, Albert Bacon Fall.

The brilliantly subtle mind of A.B. Fall set about designing a stratagem to solve Lee's dilemma. Perhaps a way to remove Lee from Doña Ana County's (and Pat Garrett's) jurisdiction could be devised. That would take the creation of a new county, carefully drawn so as to include the scene of the Fountains' disappearance. It would also call for the full cooperation of the Governor who would need to move swiftly to appoint county officials — most notably, sheriff — for the new political entity. That would do the trick: a new county hacked out of the eastern end of Doña Ana County.

#### **W.A. Hawkins, the Railroad, and the Founding of Otero County**

The other school of thought on how and why Otero County came into being is, perhaps, more prosaic but, in many ways, just as dramatic. It has to do with the coming of the railroad to the eastern end of Doña Ana County. Its heroes are two brothers, Charles Bishop Eddy and John Arthur Eddy, and their lawyer and general adviser, William Ashton Hawkins. These were the principals in the development of the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad.

The story of the building of the Northeastern —



William Ashton Hawkins, June 17, 1883. Photo courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

as it was commonly called — is part of the larger story of the development of transcontinental railway systems in the United States. The Eddy brothers hoped to complete a railway that would reach either Las Vegas or Tatum to make connections with already developed transcontinental lines. Along the way they wanted to develop towns, water supply points, coal deposits, other mining interests (particularly around Orogrande), timber resources for tie lumber, and tourist venues.

They had dreams far beyond Doña Ana County and far beyond even New Mexico.

The process of building the Northeastern had begun as early as 1888. In that year a rail line was actually started northward out of El Paso by a group that built only ten miles before it went

bankrupt. The franchise to build such a line was held by El Paso. Various groups and individuals — including the infamous Jay Gould — tried to revive the building effort over the next

few years with no success. The competition to build the line became heated in 1896-97 when the city called for bids on the project. Emerging from the competition was a group put together by the Eddy brothers and Hawkins. They started the building process in December 1897, and by June 1898, they had reached the site of the new town of Alamogordo. A year later the railway reached Three Rivers and by August 1899, the line was at Carrizozo.

Although the drama of railroad building is of tremendous importance to history, it is a political offshoot of that drama which is central to the creation of Otero County. The Eddys and Hawkins, who were constantly involved in land acquisition and developing water rights, found it difficult, if not impossible, to deal with a county government located some sixty miles away. And they were tortuous miles, not easily traversed, and dangerous for many reasons. Geography made Doña Ana County a difficult political entity.

The Eddys and Hawkins were interested in establishing a law-abiding area. Railroad building and the service industries that grew up around the railroad needed a

stable work force working in a peaceful atmosphere. Their new city of Alamogordo reflected this desire for a stable atmosphere for their working men. It was a planned community and a model community — to borrow two phrases used today to lure buyers with the ideal of the American dream: a comfortable home in a stable environment. Further, in this new community of Alamogordo, they had placed in each deed for a house lot a restrictive covenant that caused the lot to revert to the Alamogordo Improvement Company if alcohol appeared on the premises. It is not certain whether the Eddys hated alcohol or just hated its effect on the work force. In either instance, a stable town with a stable work force was what the town's founders desired. All of their plans could come to fruition only with a solid grounding in the law and its procedures. Put very succinctly, the builders of the Northeastern and the new town of Alamogordo needed a strong and responsive county government in place.

The legal and political brain of the Eddy management structure was William Ashton Hawkins. With a mind as legally supple and subtle as that of Albert Bacon Fall, Hawkins was quick to grasp the possibilities and advantages of having a new county. And he was quick to see the advantages of working with Fall to help solve Oliver Lee's dilemma. Lee had been the major rancher with whom the Eddys had worked in acquiring land and water for their railroad and their town. Lee's popularity made him an indispensable ally in further dealings in the area of Alamogordo and the Sacramento Mountains. Most agreeably, the Lee-Fall needs and the Eddy-Hawkins needs became one large need with one large solution, a new county.

The Eddys had a very good public relations mechanism in place. After all, according to Eugene Manlove Rhodes, part of their success in building their empire had been based on "ozone and printer's ink." They simply planted stories in the friendly press to the effect that the development of Alamogordo and the surrounding area was hampered by the unresponsiveness of Doña Ana County, with not too subtle a hint about the corrupt politics of that county. Thus in the *El Paso Daily Times* for January 5, 1898, appeared an item to this effect: "That Doña Ana County should be divided is an apparent necessity. It is recognized by a large majority of the people in the western half of the county that it is needed, and it is wanted by all those who reside in the eastern half." Shortly after Otero County was established, the earliest newspaper in the area, the *Sacramento Chief* for April 15, 1899, summed up the reason for "breaking" with Doña Ana County as needing to get away from "corrupt politics, rings, and corraling voters." The *Chief* pledged to guard against such practices in the new county. The Eddy machinery had done its work well.

### On the Founding of the County and a Myth or Two



Charles Bishop Eddy. Photo Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

As noted in the start of this article, the county was founded through a set of normal and legal processes. A bill was introduced in the territorial legislature and was passed with no more than the usual amount of wrangling. The governor had indicated to the sponsors of the bill that he would sign the bill and would hasten to put it into effect by appointing the first county officers. A set of rather prosaic events and yet they have become surrounded by myth.

One myth is not a myth at all, but simple hard-nosed politics. The county was named for the sitting Territorial Governor Miguel A. Otero. The myth seems to have grown around the idea that the governor would have opposed the bill, if not for the new county being named Otero County. There seems no particular evidence of this, other than the story as passed on by George Curry, W.A. Hawkins and others in later memories. The county, which was to have been named Sacramento, no doubt became a "pet project" with its naming and this seems to have speeded the governor's prompt action in naming its first officers and most particularly its sheriff. This would have given immediate relief to Oliver Lee if that sheriff were

a friendly one. Not myth but the simple *quid pro quo* of politics led to the county's naming, if not its founding.

Another myth that has grown to become truth in the minds of many is that Thomas Benton Catron, leader of the Santa Fe Ring and a power in New Mexico's Republican Party, was bought off to support the new county. The currency supposedly used to buy Catron was support of his idea of creating a new county to be named for President McKinley. McKinley County was also established in 1899, but if Catron was "bought", he did not, in political parlance, "stay bought." He loudly voiced his opposition to the new county and he voted against its establishment. The simple truth is that Catron and Otero were feuding within the Republican Party and Catron generally did not have strength enough to stymie the forces that were for creation of Otero County. Hawkins was too well ensconced with the old hard-line GOP and the corporate interests it represented for Catron to win against them. And Fall, who had not yet switched to the GOP, could line up the Democrats. Victory was assured. An off-shoot of this myth is that Catron did not bring his full strength into opposition but mounted only token opposition in return for getting a promise of the creation of McKinley County — and possibly even a guarantee that in the future a Catron County would be established. Perhaps the part about McKinley County could be true. Catron County was established, but in 1921, after most of these participants had left the active political scene.

And so, to much hoopla, Otero County was established out of the eastern end of Doña Ana County

and bits and pieces of Lincoln and Socorro counties. Governor Otero, in his *My Nine Years as Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, 1897-1906*, tells of coming to the new county. He traveled by train to El Paso, thence north to the new town of Alamogordo. He was met with the wildest enthusiasm and returned the feelings of the crowds *con mucho gusto!* Above all, the governor got the new county well launched with the appointment of its first officials on March 11, 1899. They were County Commissioners: Allen Blacker, Frank B. Stuart, and Serapio Marques; County Treasurer, D.M. Sutherland; Probate Clerk, W.S. Shepperd; County Assessor, C.C. Candelario; County School Superintendent, Luis Vigil; County Surveyor, A.C. Hunt; and, County Sheriff, George Curry. The key is Curry's appointment as sheriff. He was a man who was a rising star within the politics of New Mexico, friend of Teddy Roosevelt, friend of Governor Otero, and very close confidant of A.B. Fall. Lee felt he could safely surrender to a man of Curry's cut, and so the deal was done. Otero County was now officially on the territorial map.

---

DAVID H. TOWNSEND is a former Campus Directory of New Mexico State University at Alamogordo and a former member of the New Mexico House of Representatives. He and his wife, Linnie Jones Townsend, are both retired college professors. Dr. Townsend is a well known local historian and the author of two books and many articles. He is considered to be a leading scholar on the life of Eugene Manlove Rhodes and on the New Mexico Constitution. Dr. Townsend has been a resident of Alamogordo since 1956 and has received many honors including Citizen of the Year and the Service to Mankind Award. He is President of the Board of Directors of the Alamogordo/Otero County Centennial Celebration, Inc.

# A Nostalgic Step Into Territorial History: the McDowell Farmhouse

by Thomas A. Erhard

*Editor's Note: The 1998 DACHS Award for a Historic Building Worthy of Preservation was presented to Thomas & Evelyn Erhard at the January banquet.*

From the moment Evelyn Erhard and I bought the historic McDowell Farmhouse in the summer of 1991, cars would slow, and strangers would call out, "We're so *glad* somebody's loving that great old house!"

One September weekend in 1992, when I was crossing the street to pick up our mail, the middle-aged man and elderly woman in the slowing car seemed extra curious. And well they might; after a year of assuming we'd never discover the origins of the property, a woman who was *born* in the house sat in her nephew's car in teary-eyed excitement!

The woman was Mildred McDowell Field, born in 1913 in what is the eastern portion of the current kitchen. Her nephew was John Hay, of Plano, Texas, son of one of Millie's deceased sisters. John excitedly recalled that he had spent boyhood summers sleeping on the original back porch.

Dreams of making a living in the Territory of New Mexico began in 1907 when Hiram Ulysses McDowell, of Ottumwa, Iowa, and his wife, Ethel Dell Hammersley McDowell, of Marshalltown, Iowa, climbed into a railroad box car with their four oldest children, eventually arrived in Mesilla Park (the railroad had arrived in southern New Mexico only 25 years earlier) and took temporary shelter in an adobe barn just west of the old silo (still standing and easily visible) on Union Avenue. On October 5, 1908, they purchased eleven acres from Andres and Guadalupe Apodaca, whose property was part of the Mesilla Civil Colony Grant, as certified by President William Howard Taft in that year. The McDowell tract was described in the legal document as "half a mile west of Mesilla Park along the road leading to the ranch of Oscar Snow, and adjacent to the Laguna Acequia." There, still before statehood, the McDowells would build their American Foursquare House, plant and work a large fruit orchard, add an adobe garage in the early 1920s to shelter their first Model A Ford, and raise a dozen children. Descendants eventually sold the property out of family in 1951, and thereafter it apparently changed hands often.

The McDowell Farmhouse traces its architectural ancestry back to the young Frank Lloyd Wright, who designed early forerunners of the American Foursquare for use in Chicago. The style was quickly adopted for

widespread use on the American prairies in the early years of this century, in order to lessen the need for already-precious lumber. The McDowell Farmhouse was, typically, made from poured concrete bricks, molded on site to look like rough-cut stone, each weighing between 50-100 pounds. These molds appear in Sears-Roebuck catalogs dating back into the 1890s. Bricks for the original front porch columns are even more massive; they lie today behind the garage by the apricot tree. The house should be here for awhile!

The house originally had no indoor plumbing or upstairs heat. "In the coldest part of winter," Millie recalled, "we would take hot irons and place them in each bed. Our mattresses were filled with straw, and once a year came the exciting moment when we got to fill them with fresh straw!"

The large room downstairs was divided into living room and dining room. Beneath our rebuilt triple floor plus insulation is the concrete foundation hinting at that now long gone wall. "We had a big wooden table in the dining room, and during the Depression sometimes as many as 22 people would gather for Sunday dinner. There were a lot of beans cooked in this house!" Millie said. A wooden table, now a Mexican Mennonite antique, still sits where the old one was.

Of the old days, Millie recalled, "Momma let us do anything." But Momma apparently drew the line at cats indoors. "On the coldest nights of winter," said Ruby McDowell Welch, another of the original daughters, now living in El Cajon, California, "I would ease up the window in the bedroom we called 'the bathroom.'" (The room upstairs in the northeast corner.) "Poppa always intended to make a bathroom out of the northernmost part, but he never got around to it. Anyway, I'd slide open the window and my kitty would jump in off the back porch roof, and sleep in the bed with me 'til morning, when I'd let her out seconds before Momma came in to wake us. Somehow, I think Poppa knew, and just didn't say anything."

Even when a subsequent owner added a bathroom upstairs, people had to cross through the bedroom to get to it. So it seemed appropriate to turn the whole area into a giant showpiece of an old-fashioned bathroom



McDowell Farmhouse, 1915; Hiram Ulysses McDowell to left of porch. Photo courtesy of the author.

complete with ancient tub from one of the friendly antique shops on West Picacho.

The new downstairs bathroom is at the spot of the original kitchen sink; the old kitchen was narrow and dark. What is now the kitchen cabinet area was “Momma’s sitting room,” as Millie remembered. “She would go there to get away from everyone, but we girls would love to be invited in; she had so many fascinating things. She even had a giant featherbed [that] she had brought all the way from Iowa. Several of us were born in that room. And Poppa died, right here.”

Millie visited the house often during the renovation years (1991-1993) and one time exclaimed, “My, look at those original beams! They look as new as when Poppa nailed them up!”

And “Poppa,” with the help of builders from “town,” finished the house in June, 1910. When the window frames were being moved, to allow for insulation on the interior walls in 1993, we discovered a piece of window frame on which was penciled, “Medinger and Shaw, Las Cruces, Contractors, May 8, 1910.” We photographed the historic piece of wood, and carefully replaced it inside the window framing, to remain another 80 or more years.

Again and again Millie McDowell Field said, “We’re so *happy* that caring people are loving our old home. I used to drive by, and I’d just cry. I never wanted to step inside. But now it feels like home again, because it’s loved so much, and you’ve given it that wonderful old look again.”

John Hay recalls, “There was nothing between Grandpa’s house and the town of Mesilla. You could see the church from our upstairs windows.” John also says, “The outhouse was just behind the pumphouse.” This

structure was directly behind the garage, and now long gone, though the foundation currently outlines a rose garden.

When Ev and I bought the house, she had hoped to find “treasure,” not literally, but in fascinating objects. And she did. When the new septic tank was installed in the summer of 1992, Johnny’s Septic Tank System workers found, and handed to us, a number of old, ornate, embossed, purple-with-age bottles scooped up from the area of the original outhouse. And inside, as we took off the cheaply-made 1960s walls and went down to the original studs (larger than today’s

2x4s), we found valentines, postcards, children’s sketches, a 1939 letter to Millie (who allowed we should keep it because she had enough mementoes) and several forlorn love letters from a later owner. Treasures, indeed, to keep the rich human memories alive in this grand old home.

The house saw its share of courting. Jimmy Field, a young engineering grad at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, now New Mexico State University, wooed, and later married Millie’s older sister. Later Jimmy and Millie married after their respective spouses had died. Jimmy laughs, “When I was courting Millie’s sister, we’d come home too late in a buggy on the little dirt lane (now McDowell Road), and I’d try to sneak her in, but Colonel Chilton, who lived across the road and just north, had a bunch of damned peacocks. And those peacocks would set up a racket whooping and hollering, and they’d wake up Mr. McDowell, and then there’d be hell to pay!” (The old Chilton house, now remodeled, sets back in “The Compound” catty-corner across the street. Col. Chilton was a revered A&M English professor who served in both world wars and single-handedly prevented the A&M administration from expelling young freshman Roy Nakayama the week after Pearl Harbor. Roy, of course, became known as “Mr. Chile” during his long illustrious tenure in agricultural research here.)

Although Millie died in 1996, several other McDowell descendants, from as far away as Virginia, have come to visit and recall their happy times at the old farmhouse. We have always insisted that they consider it “their house,” which we are keeping, and loving, for them.

Once, when a large group of family members were visiting, they reminisced about Sunday, December 7, 1941. Nancy Goodman recalls, “A whole bunch of the

family was running off the big Sunday dinner by playing touch football over by the silo, when someone came screaming from the house that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. That sure ended the fun football game!”

The goal of our renovation was to buttress the turn of the century look with a renewed structure that could last another 80 years. Consequently, we peeled the interior down to the original framing, discovering in the process an entirely different set of “treasures!”

For example, someone had added several gas furnaces, one where the stairs now enter the living room. (An interim owner had twisted the stairway to an impossible angle, opening into the old front parlor.) Around the gas pipe was a mass of charred wood, from a fire that, if enough oxygen had been available, would have burned down the house 40 years ago! We also discovered, to our horror, that whoever in later years had “wired” the upstairs had done so by splicing dozens upon dozens of frayed electric cords together along the attic floor!

Downstairs gas heat had later been supplied by an old furnace placed *outside* the house; the callous refurbishers had yanked out the original bricks to make room for the heat duct. Those bricks had long since vanished. But, thanks to a most gracious lady, Sinclair Hunt, who lives in the historic old Branigan House on West Las Cruces Street, and who pulled out a window of her American Foursquare and turned it into a door, we were given four bricks . . . precisely enough to restore the original kitchen wall.

On the other hand, the non-weightbearing kitchen wall was removed, along with the too large, too plastic bathroom which had replaced Mrs. McDowell’s original sitting room. The result was a kitchen light and airy with space for a new, tiny bathroom. The area beneath the stairs became a minute but efficient utility room, eliminating the need for outdoor pipes.

All of the original, interior solid-wood doors were stripped, sawed horizontally in sections; and then Tres Coll, the master woodworker who did almost all of the wood projects in the house, measured and created kitchen cabinets so that each slab of old door, turned sideways, became a cabinet door. Finishing off these cabinets are tiles, handmade, from Spain and Italy.

The original southern yellow pine floor, upstairs and down, had been repaired in several places with non- matching plywood. Also, the floors were not sturdy enough for the 1990s. Consequently, Tres Coll laid new particle board atop the southern pine, after the contractor, Bill Hughes, had braced both floors quite solidly from beneath. Finally, Tres laid the third floor, taking painstaking care with the 1900 square feet of historic red and white oak flooring from a demolished building in El Paso. Sanded, it gleams; and everyone who visits feels certain it is the original floor. It should last twice

80 more years!

Window frames, door mouldings, and banisters are original, but each piece was carefully removed and stripped, so that instead of an “umpteenth” layer of paint, everything is fresh and new in its finish.

Wherever possible, we preserved old window glass and have enjoyed looking out at the neighborhood’s lush greenery through “wavy glass.” We think Hiram McDowell would approve. Maintaining the old-fashioned look of the windows are wrought-iron curtain rods found in Santa Fe, as well as the original copper-clad door hardware, laboriously stripped of many coats of old paint and polished. Antique shops within a 300 mile radius yielded chandeliers and chandelier sets appropriate to various rooms.

Texturing is an important part of the 1910 look. The search through dozens of buildings in Old Mesilla turned up the perfect classical texture for the interior walls in an old adobe, and Bill Hughes duplicated that by handmixing to add just the right amount of sand to the plaster. The original embossed tin roof was cleaned and covered with sealer; the roof itself was secured with extra bracing, the attic vented, old insulation blown out and new R-30 blown in.

The guest house attached to the garage had been added, cheaply, by subsequent owners in the 1960s. In the renovation, poor design and artificial wood paneling disappeared. An unused storeroom became a lovely bathroom with clawfoot tub, corner toilet, and antique replica sink. Walls of tongue-in-groove board, saltilio tiles over the cement slab floor, Talavera counters atop handcrafted kitchen cabinets, and handcarved wooden shelves above the windows — reminiscent of old railcar racks — now charm the eye, attesting to the skill of Tres, and making the addition match the historic old house.

Outdoors, where previous owners had dumped gravel all across the front of the property, turning everything into a massive parking lot, now a re-created driveway and initial planting of 49 trees and 95 shrubs give the beginning of a new “old look.”

In a world of fast cars and mechanization, at this end of still-quiet McDowell Road we sometimes half-expect to see “Momma” at the door calling “Poppa” to come in from the fruit orchard to dinner.

---

DR. THOMAS ERHARD received a Ph.D. in dramatic literature from the University of New Mexico in 1960. He has been on the NMSU Theatre Arts and English faculty at NMSU ever since. Evelyn Madrid Erhard holds both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from New Mexico State University in theatre and readers theater, has co-authored plays with her husband, Tom, taught speech and writing at NMSU, and currently is a graduate student in fine arts. They bought the McDowell Farmhouse in 1991, renovated it, and moved into it during 1993.

# Hatch, New Mexico: the Story of a Village

by Roger D. Walker

Hatch, New Mexico is located on the fertile western bank of the Rio Grande in northern Doña Ana County, at the junction of state highways 185, 187, 26, and 154; Interstate 25 passes to the east of this highway confluence, on the northern side of the Rio Grande. Such ease of access would suggest dynamic growth potential, and so for a time it was realized.

A community known as Santa Barbara was founded in 1851 near the present site of Hatch.<sup>1</sup> Marauding Apaches harassed the community, and so it did not flourish. The Army constructed Fort Thorn nearby in 1853 but abandoned it in 1859.<sup>2</sup> Santa Barbara, lacking any economic base, was also abandoned.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company (AT&SF) completed the Rincon-Deming line on March 7, 1881, thereby creating a second transcontinental route from Kansas City to Southern California.<sup>3</sup> In the process, they built a rail line right by a new community which had started in 1875, very near the site of old Santa Barbara. To this new community, the AT&SF gave the name Hatch's Station, later shortened to Hatch.<sup>4</sup> The name had been chosen to honor General Edward Hatch, then commander of the U.S. Ninth Cavalry and the Military District of New Mexico.<sup>5</sup>

Settlers began to move into the valley in increasing numbers. The river sustained agriculture. Now with the railroad to facilitate commerce, Hatch was poised for promise. John G. Huntington, a railroad watchman and expressman, established a post office on February 2, 1887.<sup>6</sup> The railroad tied the community to Deming, via the Deming-Rincon Line, and to Las Cruces (the county seat) via the Rincon-EI Paso Line.

Lafayette Clapp visited the Hatch Valley in 1883 and moved his family there in 1884. Clapp managed a general store in Lake Valley until a flood washed out the family's home and destroyed all of their personal belongings. After managing a ranch in the valley for several years, followed by a short stay in Las Cruces, they relocated to Hatch in the winter of 1891-1892. The Clapps went into partnership with a family named Price, whose members had assumed Huntington's business interests in a mill. The Clapps and Prices operated the mill until the Clapps bought out the Prices. The Clapps established a mercantile business and continued to mill corn and wheat. They also served as agents for the railroad and the express company.<sup>7</sup> At this same time, they began to invest in real estate, buying and selling land until they owned large tracts of farmland in the Rincon Valley. No one tried to promote a community until Clapp surveyed the townsite on his land holdings in 1911. Many people thought that Rincon (located five miles to the east) would be the main trading point since it was a rail junction, and the

idea of a town at Hatch was subject to ridicule.<sup>8</sup>

Hatch was off to a bad start as only three lots were sold in the newly platted townsite. The first structure built after the townsite was platted became a short-lived saloon. The Bank of Hatch acquired the vacant building when the bank was chartered in 1914.<sup>9</sup> Soon other people arrived and an organized community began to evolve. The 1910 census does not have a separate report for Hatch. The Santa Teresa (now Placitas) precinct, which included Hatch, reported 489 people with the majority living in Santa Teresa.<sup>10</sup>

As with any growing community, the village established institutions to meet the needs of the populace. The Rev. Hunter Lewis of Mesilla Park established Grace Episcopal Mission.<sup>11</sup> His first service in Hatch was a wedding held on May 31, 1909. The villagers built a small public school on Hall Street in the early 1900s and it served the needs of the local children until 1939.<sup>12</sup> Publication of a newspaper began on January 1, 1926, as *The Rio Grande Reporter* began to report the newsworthy events in the Hatch Valley.<sup>13</sup>

Neither World War I nor the 1920 recession had any significant impact on the village of Hatch. Figures for the 1920 census do not reflect any significant change from 1910 figures.<sup>14</sup>

However, an early morning cloudburst on August 17, 1921, at Santa Teresa (two miles northwest) caused severe flooding. The village lay under two to seven feet of water.<sup>15</sup> The flood destroyed all structures in the village according to some newspaper accounts; however, Mrs. Clapp's account stated that the Central School building, and a railway car serving as a temporary railway station, both survived the disaster.<sup>16</sup> Hatch was cut off from the outside world, but relief soon arrived from the Salvation Army, Red Cross, state health officers, chambers of commerce from Las Cruces, Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences), Deming, and other groups.<sup>17</sup> Ralph W. Goddard, Dean of Engineering at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (now NMSU), established radio contact from Rincon to Las Cruces and kept authorities in touch with the disaster scene.<sup>18</sup>

Since Hatch lies in a basin, there was no way to remove the water quickly. Damages were estimated to be \$125,000-\$150,000, so Federal assistance was sought. Many in the community (population estimates are between 100 and 150<sup>19</sup>) thought that it would be wiser to abandon the townsite. But the majority of Hatch's citizens chose to rebuild in the same location. After the cleanup and needed additional lots (known as the Weiler Addition<sup>20</sup>) were platted just west of the existing town site, a new Hatch had emerged. Many newcomers did not have permanent homes, and so they lived in railroad



Bank of Hatch after 1921 flood. Courtesy of Hatch Public Library.

cars provided by the railroad.<sup>21</sup> During the twenties, the New Mexico State Highway Department built a main automobile road linking Hatch with both Las Cruces and Albuquerque.<sup>22</sup> Then Hatch prospered, becoming a regional center.

With the new road into town, people from the surrounding villages found it convenient to travel to Hatch to conduct business affairs, shop, get medical care and other services not offered in their villages. New businesses opened along Hall Street to serve the influx with a great variety of goods in well-stocked stores.

Among the numerous businesses in this regional center, the Kozy Korner offers a particularly interesting look at progress. The Luther and Myrtle Busby family came to Hatch in 1927, to visit Myrtle's sister, Johnnie Corbin.<sup>23</sup> The Corbins ran the Kozy Korner Confectionery. The elder Busby son, Buford, decided to remain in Hatch and try his hand baking at the Kozy Korner. By 1929 the Korner was for sale. Younger brother Haskell (Hack) had always wanted to be a pharmacist. The Busby boys saw their opportunity: purchasing the Confectionery, they operated it as the Kozy Korner Drug Botica. In 1934 they purchased the Rummel Drug Store one block down the street and, by 1939, consolidated their operation into one large store. From 1929-1968 the Busby Drugstore was the center of many social gatherings of Hatch's citizens. Many young couples met for a date at the soda fountain and stayed for the evening dance.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps the best known of the Hatch stores was the Myers General Mercantile, a department store chain from El Paso. Lewis Mercantile Company opened in 1924 and functioned until 1929, when fire destroyed their building and several other businesses. Azbill's Grocery opened in the 1920s and remained in business until the mid-1960s. Peacock's Dry Goods and Hall's Grocery opened in the 1920s, but were sold in 1929 to Taylor Morris, who consolidated them. James A. Dick, a grocery wholesaler from El Paso, also opened a business about 1930 and operated it until 1940. Other less financially secure stores opened and then quickly closed, like the Las Cruces Baker Drug Store, which lasted less than one year.<sup>25</sup>

Other new businesses opened on Hall Street in the 1930s. Photographs at that time show automobiles lining both sides of the streets, and the downtown business district much expanded from 1920s photographs.

Those automobiles could be bought locally, too. Many of the larger auto companies had sales representatives along Hall Street in the 1920s and 1930s. Clyde Jones operated the Hatch Motor Company, selling Chevrolets from 1926 until the mid-1950s. At nearly the same time, Jeff Hooker operated the Dodge and Plymouth franchise. Coke Johnson owned a Ford dealership during the 1930s, but sold it as he became involved in other business interests. Most of the farm implement companies had franchises in Hatch. Several of the car dealers also sold farm implements, as did the Myers Company.<sup>26</sup>

The Bank of Hatch announced in 1921 that it would relocate to Las Cruces effective January 1, 1922. Their announced reasons were that their building had been destroyed by the 1921 flood and that they needed a larger building. Under the name of the Mesilla Valley Bank,<sup>27</sup> they still aspired to serve Hatch's needs. The First National Bank of Hatch opened its doors on February 1, 1926. In 1927 Coke Johnson took over the presidency of the bank, and this was the sole financial institution in Hatch until the 1960s when the former Mesilla Valley Bank, now the Farmers and Merchants Bank, reopened in Hatch.<sup>28</sup> On August 9, 1968, Mr. Johnson's bank merged with the First National Bank of Doña Ana.

By the mid-1920s, the local business leaders foresaw a need to make Hatch into a legally recognized community. Town leaders drew up articles of incorporation in 1926 and sought the necessary approval from the community, the county and the state.<sup>29</sup> In 1927 Hatch was officially incorporated. Lafayette Clapp was unanimously elected the first mayor. The mayor and village council handled all village matters. The new police department was a single town marshal, relying on assistance from the county sheriff and state police as needed. A permanent fire department was organized in 1936, and the council created other agencies as the need arose.

Grace Episcopal Church was the only church in Hatch until St. John's Methodist Church was organized in 1924.<sup>30</sup> By 1939 several more churches were represented in the community. Church buildings were fewer; community space and private homes were shared.<sup>31</sup>

Hatch's Central School, while it had survived the 1921 flood, was proving too small; in 1926 the high school had 43 students. The Doña Ana County Commission established an independent Hatch School District on July 1, 1926, which included students from Derry, Arrey, Garfield, Salem, Rodey, and Rincon — as well as Hatch. Hatch Union High School graduated its 1928 class of 13 students from a brand-new building, the first act of the new school board.<sup>32</sup> The years immediately following saw additions built and numbers climb — with as many as 36 graduates in 1942.<sup>33</sup>

On October 29, 1929, when the New York Stock Market crashed, the economic pulse of the nation slowed, and that impact did not miss Hatch. With industry on





Hall Street in Hatch in 1927. Courtesy of the Mayor's office, Hatch.

its back, all types of consumer goods needed in Hatch soon became scarce. Merchants had difficulty getting merchandise to sell and farmers had difficulty acquiring farm equipment. The railroads soon felt the impact of lack of freight to ship and had no option but to begin laying off workers and cutting rail service to smaller communities.<sup>34</sup> At nearly the same time, the Lake Valley silver mines (approximately 45 miles northwest of Hatch) ceased operation. The AT&SF terminated service from Nutt to Lake Valley in 1934,<sup>35</sup> transferring some employees living in Rincon to other areas, altogether a further depletion of community in the Hatch Valley.

How was it then, that school enrollment continued to grow for several more years? How did Hatch manage to avoid the nearly total eclipse suffered by Nutt?

The Rio Grande and the railroad share top billing in the answer. The Clapp family and those who followed; indeed, even the forerunners who tried to settle Santa Barbara, had been drawn to the soil made richer by the deposits of frequent floods and to the irrigation possibilities. The advent of the railroad, and the fact that none of the small communities north of Hatch were situated on a rail line, thus mandating all shipping — of local produce going out and goods coming in — be done from either Hatch or Rincon, was fundamental to Hatch's evolution as a regional center. In fact, the AT&SF established a rail siding at Hockett, to

the southwest of Hatch, to relieve some of the congestion at the Hatch freight station.<sup>36</sup> By 1933-34, Estel L. Steward and J.W. Hammock formed S&H Truckline and transported nearly all freight not carried by the railroad, and also had the contract to deliver the milk from Price's dairy in Arrey to El Paso.<sup>37</sup>

After the 1929 crash, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and its programs were well-represented in Hatch. The Civilian Conservation Corps planted trees along the irrigation canals to protect them from erosion and constructed dikes to

protect the low-lying areas north of the railroad. These dikes saved the business district from major flooding in the 1935 flood. The former CCC dormitories are presently part of the campus of Hatch Valley High School. The Public Works Administration (PWA) built uniform sidewalks throughout the business district, several of which remain to this day.<sup>38</sup>

In fact, census reports for 1930 provide an interesting picture: the population of the Hatch precinct finally broke



Seniors of the Class of 1929 - Hatch Valley High School. Courtesy of the Hatch Public School Library. Ferguson Collection.



The student body cleans up the grounds of the new Hatch Valley High School ca. 1929. Courtesy of the Hatch Public Library. James Ferguson Collection.

the 1,000 mark, with 1,021 the official figure—including the precinct's population outside the confines of the village proper; within the village itself, the figure was 364. Quite evenly divided by sex, the precinct census showed 536 native white, 21 mixed, and zero African-Americans.<sup>39</sup>

By the 1940 census, the Hatch precinct had grown to 1617, with 822 living within the village limits. Males outnumbered females by 845 to 772. The village had more than doubled in 10 years while the precinct's growth was slower.<sup>40</sup> There were still no African-Americans.

The Rio Grande, whose flooding had plagued agriculture even as it enabled it, had caught the attention of Congress as far back as 1902, when they passed the Reclamation Act.<sup>41</sup> Construction of Elephant Butte Dam near Hot Springs was authorized in 1905; the dam itself was completed in 1916. Yet 1921 brought a disastrous flood to Hatch; 1929 saw the community of San Marcial destroyed by another watery catastrophe.<sup>42</sup> Lesser floods occurred sporadically.

With this continued flooding in mind, as well as the need for more storage space for irrigation water, the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) began, in 1936, construction of Caballo Dam, 22 miles downstream from Elephant Butte. They built, as well, some smaller diversion dams and canals to move water to the farmers. This project was completed in 1938. Hatch now was safe from future flooding.

The dams offered opportunities for more village growth and made possible larger irrigated farms. The Hayner farm, for example, contained nearly 3,000 acres, and the Gary-Archer farm nearly 1,200 acres.<sup>43</sup> Farmers such as Albert Franzoy (formerly Franzoi) leveled major portions of land along the river and introduced many types of produce: onions, lettuce, tomatoes, and small amounts of other crops. Traditional crops of corn, wheat, alfalfa and cotton continued. By 1929 Arthur Starr

formed the Starr Canning Company; jobs processing tomatoes were available there until 1948, when cotton replaced tomatoes in the fields.<sup>44</sup> The Hatch Cooperative Gin Company opened in 1939,<sup>45</sup> replacing an earlier version destroyed in the 1935 flood. All farmers in the valley could bring their cotton and automatically become members. Meantime, the dairies were producing enough milk to continue shipments to processing plants in El Paso, and ranching continued in non-irrigated areas further from the river.

Even as post-Depression prosperity came to Hatch, turbulence was brewing all over the globe. Hatch would send its share of young men to the fight. As former Governor Bruce King said, "There wasn't a town in New Mexico that didn't get hit by Bataan or Corregidor."<sup>46</sup> A massive population drain began: men left for the armed forces, their wives accompanied them to stateside bases or left for family homes elsewhere.<sup>47</sup> Still others left Hatch for California's coastal cities to work in defense-related industries.<sup>48</sup> At war's end, few returned to the Hatch Valley.

For a time, the void was partially filled by a few military families stationed at the Deming Air Base, then a bombardier training center with a huge, transient, population.<sup>48</sup> The United States government constructed a prisoner-of-war camp at the former CCC site in Hatch, and German and Italian POWs were soon made available to perform farm labor. International agreements required that they be paid a fair wage, and Hatch farmers kept accurate work records.<sup>49</sup> Initially a cause for fear, the prisoners became an accepted sight, on the streets and in the fields.<sup>50</sup> After they Doñated their own medical supplies to little Patsy Halsell, when Busby's Drugstore couldn't get the medicine to cure her pneumonia, the community welcome warmed considerably.<sup>51</sup>

The Bracero Program, based on an August 4, 1942,

formal agreement between the United States and Mexico, provided for the importation of Mexican workers to ease the farm labor shortage. Thus another transient component was added to the community mix. Most transient of all were the soldiers in the military convoys, which often passed through Hatch en route to Fort Bliss or other military installations. Soldiers got refreshments and conversation with villagers, and villagers often were treated to rides on the big trucks.<sup>52</sup>

When the federal government activated the newly created White Sands Proving Ground to test captured German weapons on April 9, 1945, Hatch and its surrounding farms saw another depletion begin: the need for technicians at White Sands drew many more workers from the fields.<sup>53</sup> Automation was coming to the farms, so the departure of the laborers did not devastate agriculture; in fact, the demand for migrant workers was diminishing.

While agriculture flourished, the human dynamic of the community did not. Faster automobiles and new roads by-passing Hatch, pre-war residents' not returning, and out-of-Valley employment opportunities combined to bring the heyday to a close. This town succeeded despite natural and man-made disasters. It has both flourished and withered. Yet today Hatch soldiers on, its remaining residents and neighbors exporting world-famous Hatch chile from the northern part of Doña Ana County.

---

ROGER D. WALKER received a bachelor's degree in history from New Mexico State University in 1993 and a master's degree in public history in 1998. He served in the United States Air Force for twenty-five years (1966-1991) and has traveled extensively in Europe, Asia, and the United States. He is currently employed by the Department of Aerospace Studies at New Mexico State University.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Robert Julyan, *The Place Names of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press: 1996), p. 162.
- 2 Russ Soper, "History of Hatch" ms. (no date) published as "History of the General Area," *History of the Hatch Valley*, Ed. Friends of the Hatch Library (privately printed, 1989).
- 3 Marjorie White, "Rincon Was a Hub for Railroaders, Miners," *El Paso Times Sunday Magazine* (August 15, 1971), p. 1.
- 4 Julyan, p. 162.
- 5 Ellen Lucy Clapp, "History of Hatch, New Mexico," *Hatch Reporter* (July 18, 1940). Hereafter, Clapp.
- 6 *History of Hatch Valley* (1989); hereafter *HHV*.
- 7 Clapp.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Population*, Vol. 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 163.
- 11 *HHV*.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Population*, Vol. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1921), p. 526
- 15 *Rio Grande Republic* (August 18, 1921), p. 1 Hereafter, *Republic*
- 16 *Las Cruces Citizen* (August 20, 1921), p. 1 Hereafter, *Citizen*.
- 17 *Ibid.* and *Citizen* (August 27, 1921).
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Republic* (August 18, 1921) and *Citizen* (August 20, 1921).
- 20 Biography of Frank Weiler, *HHV*. This land was owned by Frank and Dale Weiler prior to platting and sale as a new subdivision.
- 21 Anita Cunningham Gary, oral history interview January 26, 1997. Hereafter, A.C. Gary.
- 22 Clapp.
- 23 *HHV*. The account of the Busbys is in several sections of this book.
- 24 Effie Jeffers, oral history interview, January 24, 1997. Hereafter, Jeffers.
- 25 *HHV*. Also, oral interviews with A.C. Gary and Hollis Edwin Gary (hereafter, H.E. Gary), May 4, 1997.
- 26 A.C. Gary, interview May 4, 1997.
- 27 *Citizen* (December 17, 1921), p. 1. This bank became Western Bank in 1978.
- 28 *HHV*. Also, A.C. Gary May 4, 1997.
- 29 Articles of Incorporation, handwritten in 1926. Original copy at the Hatch Public Library.
- 30 Effie Jeffers, "St. John's Methodist Church," *HHV*. Also interview January 24, 1997.
- 31 Jeffers, interview.
- 32 *Rio Grande Reporter* (February 26, 1926). Hereafter, *Reporter*.
- 33 Hatch Union High School Annuals (privately printed, 1931, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1942). Also *HHV*.
- 34 Harlan O. (Ho-Ho) Brewer, oral history interview February 12, 1997.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 A.C. Gary, March 3, 1997.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 A.C. Gary, April 13, 1997.
- 39 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population*, Vol. 3 (Washington: GPO, 1932), p. 249.
- 40 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population*, Vol. 3 (Washington: GPO, 1943), p. 1002.
- 41 *HHV*.
- 42 Julyan, p. 317.
- 43 H.E. Gary and Ralph W. Hackey, oral history interviews, June 4, 1996.
- 44 H.E. and A.C. Gary, May 4, 1997.
- 45 H.E. Gary, June 4, 1996; also Patricia Halsell, oral history interview July 16, 1996.
- 46 Governor Bruce King, Foreword, *Victory in World War II: The New Mexico Story*, Eds. Gerald W. Thomas, Monroe L. Billington, and Roger D. Walker (Las Cruces: New Mexico State University, 1993), p. viii.
- 47 Jeffers, oral history interview March 10, 1997.
- 48 Jeffers, January 24, 1997. Also, A.C. and H.E. Gary, May 4 1997.
- 49 Ira G. Clark, "Pow Programs in New Mexico During World War II," in *Victory in World War II: The New Mexico Story*, pp. 88-90. Also H.E. Gary, February 14, 1997.
- 50 Jeffers, January 24, 1997.
- 51 H.E. Gary, January 5, 1997. Also, Patty Halsell, October 4, 1996.
- 52 Jeffers, January 24, 1997.
- 53 *Ibid.*

# Lincoln County Women and Frontier Cross-Cultural Contact

by Ann Buffington

That there WERE any women on the Lincoln County frontier might be a surprise to many of the Lincoln County War-Billy the Kid *aficionados*. Notwithstanding the formidable presence of Susan McSween, the Lincoln County War story, with its images of feuding factions, gunfights, blood in the streets, and gangs of young men galloping about on horseback shooting things up, leaves little room for women. It is this history that dominates the imaginative landscape of Lincoln County's history the way its Sacramento Mountains dominate the physical landscape, overshadowing anything else with its legendary juvenile and its worldwide Wild West fame.

This history presents a distorted picture of early life in Lincoln County. It basically ignores the Hispanic people, who had been leading pastoral and relatively peaceful lives along the Bonito River for at least a generation before the rowdy intruders arrived. Before, during, and after Billy the Kid's brief splash into Lincoln County history, many people were quietly trying to carve out a life and raise families on the Lincoln County frontier. The many writers and historians who have focused on the brief period of violence in the county's history, the 1870s, have not been interested in, or explored, the less glamorous topics that would lead to a better understanding of the lives of the early families who lived here. By turning to accounts of women's lives in that settlement period, roughly 1860-1900, we can perhaps get a more balanced picture of life in those early days.

While violence in Lincoln County has overshadowed its other history, because of it there was considerable interest in and research going on early in Lincoln County. This spawned a number of happy results in first-hand accounts that might otherwise never have appeared. As early as the 1920s, historians were descending on Lincoln County and interviewing the survivors of the Lincoln County War. People were beginning to realize that their memories of the early days were of interest to others.

Lily Casey Klasner came to Lincoln County with her family from the Texas frontier in 1867, when she was five years old. When she was in her sixties, between 1925 and 1929, she wrote an account of her life growing up in early Lincoln County. The uncompleted manuscript was discovered and edited long after her death by writer-historian Eve Ball and was first published in 1972. Entitled *My Girlhood Among Outlaws*, and still in

print, it is a classic of the Lincoln County War, which accounts for all the attention that it has received. No doubt it would never have been published except for that. However, Klasner also gives a detailed and colorful picture of her family's life, especially what everyday life in Lincoln County was like for her mother, Ellen Casey. She was growing up in the midst of a Hispanic community and her observations and detailed perceptions of early Hispanic life are particularly valuable.

By the 1930s writers and historians employed by the WPA through the Federal Writer's Project were busy interviewing surviving pioneers in Lincoln County. Much valuable work was done by Edith Crawford, who was the daughter of a Lincoln pioneer, Annie Lesnett, the subject of one of her interviews.<sup>1</sup> Annie Lesnett had led a comfortable life in Chicago before coming to the Lincoln County frontier with her husband Frank in 1877, a year before the Lincoln County War, when he bought an interest in Dowlin's Mill (today the Old Mill in the heart of Ruidoso).

Amelia Bolton Church arrived in Lincoln from Ireland as a child in 1873. The Boltons were the first Anglo family to settle in that village; it was three years before another Anglo family moved in. In her later years Church was one of the leading citizens of Roswell. Because she had been an eyewitness to the Lincoln County War, she was interviewed by historians and journalists. She also became a public speaker. In a talk she gave to the Roswell Women's Club in 1950, she spoke in much detail of Hispanic life in Lincoln during her childhood, providing insight into early Hispanic customs and the cross-cultural contact between Anglos and Hispanics.

Lorenzita Miranda was born in Lincoln in 1861. In 1952 she was interviewed by Nan Boylan, then curator of the Courthouse Museum in Lincoln. This interview is particularly valuable, providing the most complete picture we have of early Hispanic life in Lincoln County; it is the only first-person account by a Hispanic woman.

Sophie Poe came along a bit later. She was married to John Poe, sheriff of Lincoln County following Pat Garrett, and arrived in Lincoln County as a bride in 1883. Pressed for money in later years following Poe's death, she wrote a book entitled *Buckboard Days*, subtitled "The Thrilling Experiences on our Southwestern Frontier of John William Poe as Buffalo Hunter, U.S. Marshal, Sheriff, Rancher, and Banker." She obviously thought

her adventurous life would find many readers. For today's reader, however, the real interest lies in the latter half of the book, after she comes into the picture, with the story of her own experiences and her sensitive observations as a young woman on the Lincoln County frontier.

Eve Ball's book about Barbara Jones, *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos*, is not a first-hand account, and has been criticized in recent years for presenting a romanticized version of the Jones family, the first Anglo settlers in vast Lincoln County, who settled there in 1866. However, present day readers owe a debt of gratitude to Ball for the depth of her knowledge about everyday life and customs and for writing an engrossing book about ordinary people at a time when everyone else was concentrating on Billy the Kid.

These various accounts help illuminate unique aspects of Lincoln County's frontier and shed light on what their experiences had in common. One of the interesting themes that emerges from these accounts is the degree of cross-cultural contact here where three distinct cultures lived in proximity. Here in Mescalero Apache country, where the western frontier of the U.S. met the far northern frontier of the former Spanish empire in the New World, clashes and conflicts frequently occurred. However, women, concerned most of all about the welfare of their families in this primitive country, recognized that they needed their neighbors and quickly learned to respect and learn from them, and to become friends across cultural differences.

Frontier women, whether they came from poor families, old Hispanic families, or had been gently reared by prosperous families from the East, had much in common. One thing they all had in common was WORK. The Lincoln County frontier was a great leveler of class, as well as culture. Everyone was trying to settle in a primitive land, far from access to transportation or material goods. Everyone had to work under the most primitive conditions. Most of them were farmers.

Hispanic settlers first arrived in the fertile valley of the Rio Bonito sometime in the 1840s from villages on the Rio Grande and the Manzano area. They were attracted by the rich soil, good grazing land, and plentiful water for their small subsistence farms. Before



Amelia Bolton Church. Courtesy Historical Society for Southeast New Mexico, Roswell.

their arrival, these were hunting grounds for the Mescalero Apache, who did not take kindly to the intrusion of these foreign farmers. Therefore, immigration and permanent settlement were limited until after the U.S. Army built Fort Stanton close by in 1855. These first settlers commonly migrated in groups of five or more families, many of them related. They established *placitas*, small clusters of homes up and down the valley, some of them with a *torreon* (fortified tower) for protection from the raiding Mescaleros. They tilled nearby fields, planted orchards, and raised livestock. This traditional pattern of life was significantly different in one aspect from the life of the typical Anglo pioneer woman. The Hispanic woman was surrounded throughout her lifetime by extended family and friends. The loneliness and separation from family which characterized the frontier experience for many Anglo women did not exist for the Hispanic female.<sup>2</sup>

Cooperation was necessary for survival; it was a way of life.

Although the work was hard, the life primitive, and the tools crude, this communal life lived close to the land apparently provided happiness for the valley people. Miranda said of that life:

The people were happy most of the time. So many were poor. But people were united; they helped each other with their work. If someone was building a home, neighbors would help... If wheat was being cut, everyone would gather to help. The womenfolk would help each other also. Women friends would help their neighbor when they had a bunch of men to feed... There was no envy...sometimes neighbors had more unity than brothers.<sup>3</sup>

The soldiers at Fort Stanton were attracted to the idyllic country of the Rio Bonito, and to the young local women as well. Many of them decided to stay after their enlistment was up and settle in the valley, marrying these young women. The presence of Anglo women was almost non-existent before the mid 1860s. Marriage between Anglo men and Hispanic women became common.<sup>4</sup> Here was cross-cultural contact at its most intimate, about which disappointingly few details have yet come to light.

By the time the first few Anglo families began to

arrive in the mid-1860s around Lincoln, San Patricio, and the Hondo Valley, the Hispanics, themselves from old New Mexico families, had been there for close to a generation. They had well-established *placitas*, orchards, and farms. They understood the land. They knew the best ways of surviving. Because of the nearby presence of Fort Stanton and the number of intermarriages, a familiarity with the Anglo culture had sprung up, and these first Anglo settlers were greeted with hospitality and warmth.

It was a different world from the one they left back home. Lily Klasner said that [at age five] “My first impression of New Mexico was that it was a foreign land... The people were Mexican in dress. I remember how astonished I was at seeing all the native women going about with rebozos draped over their heads so as to leave but one eye visible.”<sup>55</sup> Even as late as 1883, when John Poe drove his bride Sophie in a wagon from Roswell up to Lincoln to settle, she said “It was wild and impressive country... Along the banks of the Hondo the adobe houses of the farmers — Mexicans, for the most part — were set before small orchards of apple, peach and pear. Cottonwoods were green near the irrigation ditches. It was easy now to understand the enthusiasm I had heard expressed...for this ‘Upper Section’ of Lincoln County.”<sup>56</sup>

In 1867 when the Jones family moved up the Hondo from their original settlement near the Pecos to the vicinity of Picacho, there were many Hispanic neighbors. The people pitched in to build a *chosa* (dugout home) for the family and made a fiesta of it. When they arrived in their new home, every woman in Picacho had contributed food for a huge feast that awaited them.

The Casey family also arrived in 1867 in the same general vicinity. Lily Casey said, “We speedily imitated the Mexican methods of farming... They taught us methods used, I think, in Bible times.”

The Bolton family, too, was welcomed to Lincoln. Said Church, “We children were constantly invited to join our neighbors for supper, which was delicious...atole, a salted cornmeal gruel, served with gourds into pottery bowls, with boiled salted milk poured over all...”

The first shelter for both Anglo and Hispanic families was often a *chosa*. Many Anglo families also lived in *jacals*, either built by Hispanics or by Anglos taught by their neighbors. *Jacal* construction consists of upright poles stuck into the ground and plastered with mud. The Caseys lived in a *jacal*, as did the Boltons when they first moved to Lincoln. With its dirt floors, *vigas*, and flat roofs of wheat, straw, and mud, Klasner said, “It was protection enough in wet weather and thick enough to afford insulation from the hot rays of the sun.” Women plastered and painted the interiors with whitewash. Barbara Jones and other Anglo women learned to do this as well.

Anglo and Hispanic women alike borrowed recipes and learned different methods of cooking from each

other. Conditions may have been hard and primitive, but food was plentiful and good. Said Miranda, “There was an abundance of food from the crops... We ate good food.” Klasner confirms the excellence of the cooking and the delicious food. She stated, “I found their methods of cooking strange until I became accustomed to it.” There was a savory stew called *caldillo*, simmered slowly over the



Lorenzita Mirnada. Courtesy Lincoln County Historical Society.

open fire which was as appetizing a dish as I ever tasted, and it did not take me long to learn to make it.” Staples in the Hispanic diet included mutton, beans, tortillas, chiles, squash, and corn. These were the traditional foods that had nourished the Hispanic people in New Mexico for over two hundred years. Tortillas and chile were new to Anglo women but quickly adopted. In *Ma’am Jones of the Pecos* Ball says that Barbara Jones “had been skeptical at first as to the value of chile as a food, but she saw people living on mutton, beans, and chile and thriving on the diet, and decided that there must be good food properties in the pepper. And her family learned to like it.”<sup>58</sup> Klasner stated, “Even today I prefer tortillas to any other kind of bread.”

Miranda explained that wheat and corn for tortillas, *atole*, and other foods were ground on *metates* and that the women had a special white-washed room, “very clean,” for that purpose. She said that “the women knelt on sheep pelts to grind.” Barbara Jones learned how to do this as well. “Mrs. Chavez grinds her corn and wheat with two stones, a *metate* and a *mano*. She is going to each me how.” *Hornos* (outdoor ovens) were used for baking. In an appealing image Church said, “I remember the smell of fresh bread up and down the whole street of Lincoln.”

The primitive conditions of their lives, coupled with the Hispanic’s long familiarity with the land, the necessity for cooperation, and the similarity of their farm lives, must have led to this openness among these women from different cultures in an age when appreciation of others’ customs seems to have been rare. It should also be noted that both Klasner and Church were children

when they came to Lincoln County, and not yet entrenched in their own ways of doing things. Both became fluent in the Spanish language and acted as interpreters for their parents. Klasner performed that function in the Casey store at an early age. She also learned bookkeeping and how to write accounts, bills, and legal notices in either Spanish or English by the time she was 12 years old.

The presence of friendly neighbors must have been a godsend to these women, providing support and advice to the newcomers and female companionship and comfort to women often left alone. Heiskell Jones worked at Fort Stanton, too far to travel home each night, while Barbara was trying to raise ten children in a strange land. Robert Casey was often away from home on business for long periods of time. Then in 1875 he was killed by a former employee, and Ellen Casey was left to run the farm, the store, and the mill, and to raise the six children by herself.

In addition, the basic housekeeping problems frontier women faced — how to house and feed and clothe their families, raise their crops, cope with illness, keep their families healthy, clean, and warm — had already been solved by a generation of Hispanic women before them.

Since a large part of their daily chores revolved around housekeeping tasks, Anglo women were naturally interested in the household techniques of the Hispanic women and were admiring of their skills. Church writes:

The Spanish people were industrious and immaculately clean and they made the most out of what they had. Their homes, inside and out, were regularly scrubbed, swept, and newly plastered with white native plaster and whitewash.

Klasner was particularly impressed with the ease with which women could balance *ollas* full of water on their heads and walk for long distances, while simultaneously hauling a bucket of water in each hand. She adds that she could never master the art.

The observant Klasner described the method of washing clothes in the river, using *amole* (yucca) for



Juana Chavez Baca. Courtesy Lincoln County Heritage Trust.

soap and found that “this made a fine lather and was exceptionally good for bathing and washing either clothing or hair.” Laundry was then hung on bushes to dry, eliminating the need for clotheslines and pins. When the women ironed, they spread blankets on the floor and squatted beside the piece to be ironed, using a flatiron which had been heated over the coals. Says Klasner, “Impossible though it may seem, a Mexican woman could iron a fine shirt with a pleated bosom beautifully and she took great pride in her skill.”

Despite the hard work, the people found time for frequent fiestas, *bailes*, and *fandangos*. Sometimes the Anglo people took part. Church: “We had many gay times in old Lincoln... When a *baffle* or *fandango* was called, an old man with a fiddle would walk up and down the street playing some gay tune to let everyone know. No other invitation was necessary.”

The main fiesta of the year was on San Juan’s Day, June

24. Church says “the day began before sunrise. Men, women, and children went down to the river to bathe. It was something of a religious rite. During the whole day they celebrated.” This was one fiesta in which the Boltons did not participate. “We always locked our door and viewed them from a window. It was so wild [that] it was dangerous to be out.”

One of the most important ways in which women shared knowledge across cultures was in medicinal lore and medical practices. Women were mainly responsible on the frontier for healing the sick, delivering babies, and comforting the bereaved. Barbara Jones, particularly, was eager to learn all she could about traditional herbs and cures from both Hispanic and Mescalero women. She did draw the line at one Apache remedy, “a cockroach tea, to be administered every half hour.” Combined with the knowledge she brought with her from her own background, she became a legendary figure on the Lincoln County frontier for her healing abilities, called on even by Apache women, who sometimes brought their sick babies to her to cure. Once she was repaid with the gift of a beautiful handmade Apache cradle for her newest baby. She could remove a bullet, deliver a baby, and once even sewed her own son’s eye back in place after an accident. She entered the homes of those suffering

from the deadly smallpox to care for the invalids.

Contact with Mescalero women was much more limited than that between Hispanic and Anglo, but interchange and sharing of knowledge did take place. Barbara Jones looked around her and learned from both Mescalero and Hispanic neighbors. From the Apache she learned to make buckskin shirts and leggings, sewing them with sinew; and that “to clean bedding of vermin one carries the bedding outdoors and places it by ant hills and lets the ants take care of the offending fleas.” She dressed her younger boys in Hispanic fashion, with a long shirt down to their knees and high moccasins.

One of the great fears women had in coming to the frontier was fear of Indians. Hispanics bore the brunt of Apache violence in Lincoln County. And Apache women suffered terribly from the violence perpetrated on their tribe by both Hispanics and Anglos. By the time the Anglos arrived, the presence of Fort Stanton and the efforts to force the Mescaleros onto the reservation had had the desired effect of subduing their raiding. However, Amelia Bolton Church and her family spent one night in the *torreon* with their neighbors, the Saturnino Baca family, for protection against an anticipated raid that did not materialize. Said Church: “Often as my mother would turn from a household task it was to find an Indian standing in her kitchen looking at her, or to see a dark face peering through the window. On moccasined feet, they came and went silently and usually harmlessly.”

Not always though. Lorenzita Miranda told of one incident: “They (the people) were quite afraid of the Indians because they had killed women. Doña Genovevas’ grandmother was killed coming from Las Chosas in a *carreta*. The grandmother was holding a baby in her arms and the Indians killed the baby and the grandmother and others in the *carreta*.”

The first spot where Heiskell and Barbara Jones settled in Lincoln County was on the Hondo River about six miles from its confluence with the Pecos (now part of Chaves County). They were warned to watch out for Apaches, but Jones was determined to make friends with any human beings who came their way. She found her first chance when they came across a young Apache boy with a broken leg. She had her first chance to practice medicine by setting the leg and nursing the boy back to health. Later, Magoosh, as the Jones’ called him, returned to his people. Probably because of that incident, the Jones never had a problem with Apaches, despite their isolation in that first year.

Klasner stated, “The threat of Indian depredations hung over us constantly... Livestock losses were frequent and costly.”

Annie Lesnett, who had never been west of Chicago before moving to Dowlin’s Mill on the Ruidoso in 1877 said that she was “very much afraid of the Indians” when she arrived. The reservation was nearby, and she soon got used to their presence. “I was always good to the Indians. I gave them doughnuts and cookies when

they came to the Mill and it was not long until all the Indians were my friends.”<sup>99</sup>

In 1885 John and Sophie Poe left to live on an isolated ranch Poe had purchased near present-day Alto. Sophie, used to the social life of Lincoln, the county seat, suffered from loneliness, with no female companionship and a husband who was often gone.

...the most interesting breaks in the natural monotony came with the wandering Indians who were frequent visitors. We saw not only Mescalero Apaches from the neighboring reservation, but Pueblos and Navajos as well. These last wandered down from the vicinity of Santa Fe, peddling fruit, which was always welcome...

The Indians were always friendly, never doing us any injury or abusing any privileges we granted them. My first nervousness at sight of them quickly disappeared, and presently I would allow them to come into the kitchen and cook on my range.

Church a decade earlier spoke of the Pueblo Indians who came each fall from Isleta: “...camped in the middle of the street, and sold small apples, peaches, and grapes. They arrived with burro trains, sometimes 50 burros at a time, with panniers of fruit on their backs, and the Pueblos made camp and remained in the street until their stock of fruit was all sold.”

By the time Sophie Poe had come to Lincoln in 1883, circumstances had changed. The Lincoln County War was over. Lincoln, as the county seat and the closest town to Fort Stanton, experienced a degree of prosperity and sophistication. With that prosperity came class distinctions and social rivalry. Although it was still predominantly a Hispanic town, and would remain so until well into the 20th century, life had become urbanized and Americanized. Gone were the days when the Casey’s store carried “three kinds of woolen goods — calico, lawn, *manta*, domestic, both bleached and unbleached, gingham and cotton check. Piles of shawls, for the natives used them altogether as protection from the cold. Silk and satin were conspicuous by their absence.” Instead, Hispanic women of the merchant class — the Bacas, the Montañós, the Salazars had exchanged their loose and comfortable clothing for the confining corsets and stiff fabrics of middle-class Victorian women everywhere.

The Bacas had sent one of their sons to be educated at Notre Dame. Twice a year the outside world descended on the tiny county seat for court proceedings which lasted for two weeks. Poe says, “Court time was a general holiday. Everybody was expected to have a good time.” She describes Senora Baca as a “woman of parts, who not only ruled her own family like some Doña of Old Spain, but also dominated the social life...” Senora Baca kept open house for members of the bar during *El Corte*, showed off her five beautiful daughters who were the





Sofia Serrano. Courtesy Lincoln County Historical Society.

toast of the County, and entertained the elite of the territory. According to Poe, there was rivalry for “the social throne of Lincoln” among Senoras Baca, Montana, and Salazar. She says, “It would be difficult to say which

of the three appeared at the *baffles* displaying the most dazzling jewelry or the heaviest and most costly silks.”

With the growing influx of Anglos into New Mexico and Lincoln County, cross-cultural exchange changed from Anglo women mainly learning from Hispanic and Mescalero women here before them to Hispanic women who could afford it adopting Anglo lifestyles and fashions.

The early days of Lincoln County were gone. The women who lived through them seemed to share, despite the hardships, dangers, and primitive conditions, a feeling that their lives in those days, as Amelia Bolton Church declared, had been “rich and full.”

Of the many important contributions women made to the history of Lincoln County, perhaps none is more significant than the spirit of friendship and cooperation forged in the early days of hardship. Hands outstretched in welcome, comfort, and support among women of different cultures leaves a legacy well worth honoring today.

---

ANN BUFFINGTON, resident of Carrizozo, has been researching women’s history in Lincoln County for ten years. She is a former president of Lincoln County Historical Society and is currently president of the Carrizozo Chapter of LCHS. During fall 1998 she is teaching a class for the community education department of New Mexico State University at Alamogordo on early women of Lincoln County. She previously contributed *The S.S. Columbus Incident* to *JNMHR*, Vol. III (January 1996).

---

SOURCES

- Ball, Eve. *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1969. All quotes from and information about Barbara Jones from this source.
- Boylan, Nan, interview with Lorenzita Miranda, 1952. Carrizozo, NM: Lincoln County Historical Archives. All quotes from and information about Miranda from this source.
- Church, Amelia Bolton. Talk to Roswell Women’s Club, 1950; copy from Lincoln County Historical Archives. All quotes from and information about Church from this source.
- Crawford, Edith, interviewer. *Old Lincoln County Pioneer Stories*. Carrizozo, NM: Lincoln County Historical Society, 1994.
- Klasner, Lily. *My Girlhood Among Outlaws*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1988. All quotes from and information about Klasner from this source.
- Miller, Darlis. “Cross-Cultural Marriages” and “Women of Lincoln County,” *New Mexico Women*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1986.
- Poe, Sophie. *Buckboard Days*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1981. All quotes from Poe from this source.

# Blackboards and Ditches

by Clara Bullard as recorded by Eloise S. Evans

In 1992 I interviewed Clara Bullard as part of an oral history project I had undertaken in order to preserve the words and experiences of retired teachers who had contributed to the growth and changes in the Las Cruces Public Schools. The tapes and transcripts that I have made over the years are available at the Rio Grande Historical Collections at the NMSU Library. This article is excerpted from the complete interview with Clara.

Clara taught for the Las Cruces Public Schools at East Picacho School from September, 1959, to May 1972.

Over a year ago now, in 1997, Clara celebrated her ninetieth birthday. She lives alone in the house she and her husband purchased in 1934, watched over by caring neighbors and her son, Richard. Should you visit her in her adobe home, you would find it filled with handwork projects, many of them recent. She has one bed covered by a multitude of hand-pieced and hand-quilted covers, each of a different pattern. The latest one was completed this year. On the other hand, should you go to visit her, you might find her gone to a function of her church or another organization, or perhaps away on a trip, either to Texas or to almost any other place of interest. She still drives herself around town, but takes the bus or a plane for longer trips.

When this interview was made, I found her farming experience and her teaching experience to be of equal interest and importance to both of us. Like many other women of her time, she carried a double burden and did it well. Perhaps that is the reason for her vitality and enthusiasm for life.

Clara's father farmed wheat and cotton on 160 acres near Denton, Texas. The family, two parents and seven children, prospered during good times, but, as might be expected, there were troubled times also.

We had a hail one year. We had eighty acres of wheat, and the hail came. This was strange. There was a road that ran on the south side of this eighty-acre wheat field. My father had wheat on one side of the road, and a man had oats on the other side of it, and the hail came and beat down to this road and laid all of Daddy's wheat just flat, and on the other side it didn't bother the oat field a bit. That's true because I saw it; I was old enough to remember it. That was a strange thing. Then our house burned when I was ten years old. We had a lot of bad luck, but we had a good living on the farm and had saved a little money.

The farm was outside Denton, too far for the children to commute to school. There was

a two-teacher school near the farm, but the high school was in Denton. In order to attend, the children would have needed to board in Denton, a very expensive outlook with seven children. There were seven children in the family, and my daddy decided he wanted all of us to go to college. We lived out about eighteen miles from Denton, and he said, "Well it's cheaper for us to move to town and send all of you to school than it is to send one to Denton to a boarding school. So he bought a house and we all moved to town, and I started in high school, and Daddy worked at the County Clerk's office. It was very difficult because, at that time, times were very hard, but he was determined to send us all to school, so that's what we did.

Before moving to Denton, the family bought a Ford, 1914 vintage, and Clara at thirteen became one of the principal drivers for the family.

Then we bought our first car. It was a Ford and it was the first car in that part of the country. At school they called us "Miss Ford." It was real exciting. My mother didn't know how to drive, so she went to the wheat field — after they harvested the wheat, it's pretty smooth ground — so she just got this car and went out in the wheat field and learned to drive herself. I learned to drive it, too. First, Daddy would let me back the car out of the garage. Then one time we went down for groceries. We were four miles from this little town, and we usually went once a week. He said, "Now, Clara, you go bring the car around here, and we'll put the groceries in." I turned the car around. It was just a small passageway at the back door of the store, and I hit the fence. Then I jerked it and went back and hit the store. Of course, I was just barely going, very slow, and my father came and jumped in and caught ahold of the steering wheel and told me to step on the brake. But he kept making me drive it anyway. Then when we moved to Denton (we moved to Denton when I was thirteen years old) I drove all over town. They would let me have the car, and I would drive all over town with the kids. Just kids.

Clara continued her education; then with one year of college behind her, she started her teaching career, as was common at that time, with a "one-year certificate."



Socorro School, Socorro, Texas, as it appeared when Clara Taught there in the late 20s and early 30s. Courtesy of Clara Bullard

After I graduated from high school I went to North Texas State Teachers College (now it's the University of North Texas) and went to school one year. At that time you got a one-year certificate or a two-year certificate. I started teaching after I had one year of college. Then I kept teaching and going to summer school until I got my degree.

I taught in a little county school. It was out from Denton about twenty miles and had three teachers. I was what was called the middle teacher. Only the principal didn't like math, so I taught his math and he taught some of my subjects.

We stayed in a teacherage right there on the school ground, which was fun. It was divided into two parts. The principal and his wife had one section of it, and the primary teacher and I had the other side. It had a bedroom and a kitchen and a dining room thing together. We did our cooking and everything there.

I taught fourth, fifth and sixth grades. We went to tenth grade, then the kids went somewhere else to finish high school.

After one year of teaching in a rural school, Clara moved to Socorro, Texas, where she worked on her degree in the summers and taught during the school years. In 1929 she completed her degree from North Texas State Teachers College.

I taught there one year, then I thought I wanted to finish school. I went to summer school; then, when summer school was over, I didn't have any money, so I had to teach. I got a place in Socorro, Texas, in El Paso County. I was twenty, too young to be teaching school, really. My home room was the fifth grade. At that time they were experimenting with doing departmental work. I taught English and spelling in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh grade. I taught there six years. Then I got married.

Clara met her future husband, Bruce Bullard, at church.

The year was 1932, the height of the depression, and Bruce had lost his farm. The young couple were married that same year and moved to Las Cruces, where Bruce's family lived. For one year, they worked the A.C. Porter farm, within the city limits of Las Cruces. Then they moved to another rented farm, the same farm, five miles south of Las Cruces, where Clara still lives. In 1934, they bought the farm, with a loan paid off after one year by the proceeds from their second cotton crop.

We grew cotton and alfalfa. That's all we had then because we had a whole lot of cotton that year. In 1934 we bought the place. The first year we got only five cents a pound for the cotton, and then that's when Bruce wanted to borrow money to buy the place, and Mr. Hoover [R.T. Hoover, a loan company manager] in El Paso said, "I'll let you have what you need. Do you want me to tell you the amount?" He said, "It was \$17,000." That's what we had to have to pay for the place. At that time it was 400 acres, but only 129 in cultivation. And my husband said, "Mr. Hoover, I'll never be able to pay this back." Then the next year we had 105 acres of cotton, and cotton jumped from five cents to twelve cents, and we had the money to pay him back all of that that year. He said, "Bruce, that surely is a long time you have taken to pay that back." And then each year it [the price of cotton] went higher and higher.

Later, we started to taking a few acres each year in cantaloupes. Then we got started on lettuce and onions. That came into the valley. And then chile. About thirty years ago was when we got started with some vegetables.

When the Bullards bought the farm, the irrigation system was primitive, with no gates to control the flow of water. There was no electricity and no water piped to the house. Water for washing and general use had to be carried from the stock well, and drinking water was carried in bottles from an uncle's home. Both Bruce and Clara worked very hard over the early years to make a

comfortable, efficient farm and home for their family.

When we moved here, there were no boxes in our ditches. We irrigated, you know, but there were no boxes in the ditches. They called them [the openings to let the water through] *sangueros*. They would just cut a hole in the ditch. This is very sandy land, and instead of just a little narrow hole in the ditch, say about twelve inches wide, before they got through irrigating, it would be eighteen or twenty-four inches wide, because the water, you know just keeps washing the sand. That was very difficult. So the first year we made seventy redwood boxes. I nailed as many of them as he made. I drove as many nails as he did. They were boxes that we set down in the ditch, and they had little gates on each one of them to stop the water for each border. Now we have cement ditches. We just got them in this last year.

When we moved here there wasn't even any electricity. Mr. Carpenter, who had this little store half a mile down the highway was working for years and years to get electricity down here, and he got it in March, 1933, after we moved here in January. We had no water in the house. The pump was, I guess, about four blocks right down here in the sand. There used to be a sand hill east of the house, and you'd walk down there, and one foot would be so sandy that it'd slide back in the sand. That was where they hand-pumped the water for the horses.

Well, we carried our water to wash dishes and things like that from down there. We went over to an uncle's house with a five gallon jug and we'd bring back our drinking water and the part for cooking with, but to wash clothes and things like that, that had to be carried. We got water piped into the house as soon as we got electricity, but we didn't have a bathtub. We had to carry water for baths. At first we used mules. It seems like a couple of years before we got a tractor. An Oliver tractor. That was great too.



The Bullard home, bought and added to in middle 1930s.  
Courtesy of Clara Bullard

Two children were born to the Bullards, Shirley in 1935 and Richard in 1937. Clara still helped in the fields, often taking the two youngsters out with her. The farm prospered and the children started school at Mesilla Park Elementary, then graduated from Las Cruces High School on Alameda Street, the building now being used as a judicial complex.

I had two children, and they had a little red wagon. When they were irrigating, we would put food in that little red wagon and take them down to the fields, wherever they were irrigating. We'd have picnic lunches all up and down the ditch bank. I had a lot of fun with the children. Then, after they started to school, I watched the ditches. I would stay outside and help them on the farm. Sometimes I wonder how in the world I did the things that I did: cooking, keeping house, washing. And I did all of the sewing for the kids.

Nearly all of the years were good years. When you put in alfalfa, you know, you cut five times a year. You just

hope it doesn't rain on the hay after they cut it, because it makes the price much lower. I always said, "If we need the money, it won't rain on the alfalfa." We had one time that the hay was ruined from rain. That was all.

Bruce became seriously ill in the early sixties and was no longer able to farm. They rented the farm out and Clara devoted herself to traveling with and caring for her husband. She applied to teach as a substitute, and was



The Oliver tractor bought about 1935.  
Courtesy of Clara Bullard.



East Picacho School, ground and part of building, in early 1960s.  
courtesy of Clara Bullard.

immediately offered a full-time teaching position at East Picacho School, which she accepted.

Farming was fun. Then Bruce got sick and we had to rent out the farm. We traveled a lot then. We went fishing, down in Mexico and up to Elephant Butte Lake, because he was too sick to work. I had two children and when they left home, I decided I wanted to do something. Shirley married a Turkish man and moved to Turkey, and I was going to substitute to make money to go see her. I was to save all my money substituting till we got enough money for our trip to Turkey. But instead of substituting, I became a real teacher because Mr. Atkinson [F.E. Atkinson, the Director of Instruction for the Las Cruces Public Schools] said, "You will have a job."

I started teaching at East Picacho. We had a teacher for every grade, first through sixth. I started out the first year with the fifth grade; then they gave me the fourth grade. Mr. Barela was our principal. He was a lovely man to work for. I worked there until I retired, until they had me to quit at sixty-five years age.

Eloise Whittles was the second-grade teacher. The third-grade teacher was Mary Jackson, and I was the fourth-grade teacher. The fifth-grade teacher changed about every year, and Lois Olinger was the sixth-grade teacher.

All of the children were rural kids; they were picked up by a school bus, and we had a cafeteria for lunches. We had some good cooks. The kids were a mixture of Anglo and Hispanic, but all of them spoke English. Some of them couldn't even speak Spanish. They were

born here and grew up here. We had no problems with that portion of it. The first year I had two black children, and there was one other, just one boy that I remember that came on through the school. He was the nicest fellow. Very lovely.

We had an art teacher and a music teacher till it had to be cut out by the school system because of lack of money. I still had a certain amount of music because I think the children needed music, and we sang a lot. One year we had a piano where we could move it into our room. Just that one year. I don't know why we didn't continue. I think it was too difficult to keep the piano.

I knew very little about art, and I just continued with what the art teacher did. I tried to keep on each year doing something like they did. When we would finish our work — they knew they had to finish up what they were supposed to do that day — then we would make something for Mother's Day or Christmas. They got excited about it. Once or twice the whole school had a special program. Each room had something. One little girl, it was Mr. Barela's daughter, did the Mexican Hat Dance, and it was so cute. She had a big sombrero, and it was real cute.

My largest class was thirty-three, and the smallest was eighteen. Thirty-three is just simply too many. You can do very little for individual help when you have thirty-three children. We had recess in the morning and recess in the afternoon, and one of the recesses I had to go out with them. The rest of the times we'd take turns. Whenever I would be out with just my group we did exercises, just like the football boys do. They loved it. We'd do it for about five minutes. Then sometimes we'd play softball and I was the referee or the umpire. It was fun. I had fun with my children always.

East Picacho Elementary School, where Clara taught, was the smallest school in the Las Cruces system. It was (and is) situated on Highway 85 about five miles north of the city and it was part of the old county system. The school, completed in 1930, contained six classrooms and was constructed of stuccoed red-tile brick. An all-purpose cafeteria and kitchen were added to the building in 1951; remodeling at that time gave the school a principal's office, nurse's station, and small library. The grounds were not fenced, but play areas were located behind and to

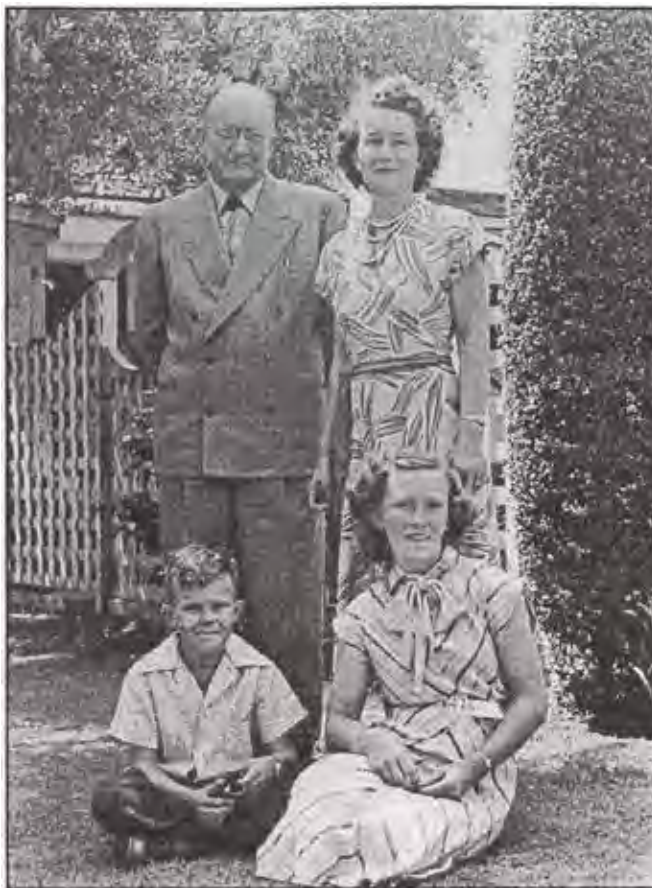
the side of the building, away from the highway. A basketball court was paved. [*Las Cruces Public Schools Building History. Revised 1970.*]

Bruce Bullard died in September, 1967. In 1972 Clara retired from teaching and, with the help of her son, Richard, returned to full-time management of the farm. She had made a major decision to plant pecan trees on part of the land; the experiment eventually paid off. Although at ninety-plus years she is no longer managing the farm, she still takes an active interest in it.

I put in pecan trees after my husband died. They kept telling me, "Put in some pecan trees, put in some pecan trees!" So in 1971, I put in 25 acres of pecan trees. It sure has paid off in the last three years. When we put them out they looked like just a little bunch of sticks. And they said, "Just wait five years, and

you'll have pecans." We didn't have pecans, but we had some pretty trees. So I went out, and guess how many pecans I got off of the twenty-five acres. Eight pecans! I went up and down every row, and I got eight pecans. Now we get I'll say 44,000 pounds. That's not the exact amount. All it cost to put them in and fix the land and everything, I broke even three years ago. [Note: This was recorded in 1992.]

Shirley is still in Turkey, and Clara has made the trip four times to visit her. Shirley is a teacher at Mideast Tech-



Clara Bullard, Bruce Bullard and their children, Richard and Shirley (about 1947).

Courtesy of Clara Bullard.

nological University, and comes to the United States more than once a year to represent her university. Richard has a trucking business and lives with his wife, Barbara, and their two children in Las Cruces.

I asked Clara how she would like to be remembered as a teacher.

You ask what I'd like to be remembered for. That I taught the kids something that they needed to know, that they needed to do the rest of their life. And that's one thing that I told them. Some of them didn't want to learn their times tables. And I said, "You'd better learn what two plus two and two times two is, because," I said "That's something you have to have for the rest of your life, when you even go to the grocery store or change money. That

was one of our lessons in arithmetic, learning how to change money and we went over and over that. I guess that would be something to help them live, help them to live a good life."

---

ELOISE S. (POLLY) EVANS is a retired teacher and administrator from the Las Cruces Public Schools. She has compiled oral history audio tapes from other retired educators, and previously contributed the oral history of Edith Berrier in "Recollections of a County School Teacher" to the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. IV, No. 1, (January 1997). Her short stories and poems have been published in *Serape, an Anthology of New Mexican Authors*.

# Storekeepers in the Public Sphere, 1870-1877

by Scott E. Fritz

Traditionally, merchants have provided much more to society than goods and services. During the 1870s, Mesilla Valley merchants not only sold manufactured goods, but also served as county commissioners, treasurers, sheriffs, and estate administrators, participated in organizations, and contributed to charitable causes. They represented local residents in times of social upheaval and organized community meetings regarding the future prosperity of southern New Mexico. A mid-century historian said, “Many attributes have been paid to the contribution to American life made by the old country doctor, the lawyer, and the preacher... The keeper of the general store, though he existed by the hundreds and thousands, has never received his due as a leader and as a civilizing influence.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the greatest public attention surrounding merchants was their participation in local politics. Political offices required education and experience in writing and arithmetic. With roughly fifty percent of the population illiterate, merchants were among the few people qualified for public office.<sup>2</sup> When Charles Lesinsky, a Las Cruces merchant, was elected as president of the Doña Ana county commission in 1877, the *Mesilla Valley Independent* remarked that he brought “to the discharge of the duties of his office the tact, energy and experience of a successful merchant, he affords another illustration of the good result that follow the election of practical business men to local office.”<sup>3</sup>

Most political offices required bookkeeping. James Griggs, an influential wholesaler from Mesilla, was county treasurer from 1873 to 1874. Griggs allocated government revenues to the justice of the peace, precinct constables, schools, and sheriff’s department.<sup>4</sup> The sheriff’s department also required fiscal management and was run by merchants. In the spring of 1876, sheriff Mariano Barela requested \$578 from county commissioners to maintain jail facilities and feed prisoners; in 1879 sheriff Henry Cuniffe collected revenues from special taxes, county licenses, and fines.<sup>5</sup>

On January 13, 1876, the territorial legislature in Santa Fe established boards of county commissioners throughout New Mexico. From 1876 to 1880 roughly half of the Doña Ana county commissioners were merchants, including Thomas Bull, John D. Barncastle, Charles Lesinsky, Guadalupe Ascarate, and Cisto Garcia. Several of these merchants served as president of the board, including Bull in 1876, Barncastle in 1878, and Ascarate in 1879. Commissioners approved expenditures, balanced county books, allocated funds for public improvement, and organized upcoming elections and civic projects.<sup>6</sup>

Commissioners appointed merchants to oversee elections, road repairs, and annual irrigation maintenance. Among the individuals to sit on election boards in 1876, for example, were John D. Barncastle, Hilario Morales, and Martin Amador.<sup>7</sup> In 1877 county commissioners named George D. Maxwell and Martin Amador to the road commission and approved funding for the construction of a road leading from Amador’s ranch. County commissioners also provided for a river commission comprising landowners, including Henry Cuniffe and Mariano Barela. In the spring of 1877, for instance, the commission met at John D. Barncastle’s house in Doña Ana and examined nearby dikes and *acequias* (irrigation ditches).<sup>8</sup>

John D. Barncastle, who received praise as an effective public official from local newspapers, won election to the board of county commissioner in November 1878. He soon quit his position, however, after Guadalupe Ascarate demanded that Barncastle resign as president of the board. The editor of the *Mesilla News* speculated that Barncastle was too busy and did not have the time to devote to this office. The vacancy left by Barncastle was filled by Cisto Garcia, a local merchant and freighter, who took over the position in summer 1879.<sup>9</sup>

Merchants were also foremen of juries, a position that required selecting jurors and overseeing court cases. In 1877, Louis Rosenbaum managed a jury of Hispanos and Anglos; merchants in Rosenbaum’s jury included Simon Blum, Louis A. Baldy, and Guadalupe Ascarate. James Griggs served as foreman in 1875 and fined Henry Lesinsky \$10 because the latter did not appear for jury duty. Juries arbitrated crimes including cattle rustling, murder, and theft. Rosenbaum’s jury in 1877 even acquitted four individuals for selling liquor and tobacco illegally.<sup>10</sup>

Merchants sold supplies to the county, including stationery, district court certificates, and raw materials. Stationery, for example, was purchased monthly from such merchants as Henry Lesinsky, Louis H. Baldy, Thomas Bull, Panfilo Gonzales, Florencio Suna, Pedro Chavez, and Jacinto Armijo. Commissioners also procured materials for annual road improvements. In early 1877 Reynolds and Griggs supplied \$78 of bridge materials, while in 1879 commissioners purchased 3,000 feet of lumber and ordered *alcaldes* (mayors) to fix bridges and passages.<sup>11</sup> Merchants were part of an upperclass in southern New Mexico that included lawyers, landowners, military officers, doctors, and businessmen. These individuals often met at parties and dances. The *Mesilla News*, for example, listed some of the guests at the 1876 Leap



Nestor Armijo, Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collection, New Mexico State University Library.

Year Ball: “Captain and Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Lieutenant Boyd and Dr. McClain of the 8th cavalry, now en route to Texas, Mr. and Mrs. Martin of Aleman, Mr. and Mrs. Ayers of Fort McRae, Mr. and Mrs. Rosenbaum, Mrs. Lesinsky, Mr., Mrs., and Miss A. Cuniffe.”<sup>12</sup> Enjoying similar incomes, wealthy Hispano merchants mingled with the same class. The committee overseeing the 1876 centennial ball included Martin Amador, Jacinto Armijo, Bernard Weisl, Mariano Barela, John D. Barncastle, George D. Maxwell, Henry Cuniffe, Louis Rosenbaum, Charles Lesinsky, and Guadalupe Ascarate.<sup>13</sup> Marcy Goldstein, in *Americanization and Mexicanization*, found that “members of the Mexican elite who engaged in trade with the Anglo-American, at the same time, increased cultural contacts with that group. Their sons were sent to the United States for business training and college educations. This segment of the elite, for a variety of reasons, foresaw the future and opted to identify with the Anglo-American world.”<sup>14</sup>

Merchants were members of associations, including the Young Men’s Social Club which organized dances, meetings, and performances. In May, 1874, for example,

Martín Amador .....	\$200
Blun and Dessauer .....	\$100
H. Lesinsky and Co. ....	\$100
William L. Rynerson .....	\$100
Guadalupe Ascarate .....	\$50
Henry Cuniffe .....	\$50
Aaron Schutz .....	\$50
Jacob Schaublin .....	\$50
John D. Barncastle .....	\$25
Martin Lohman .....	\$25

Figure 1: Top contributors to the Las Cruces School Association in 1880. Source: *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), March 31, 1880.

George D. Maxwell, Phoebus Freudenthal, and Bernard Weisl managed a talent show at the club’s assembly hall. The show included performances by several merchants; Henry Lesinsky and his wife played the piano, Joseph Bennett sang, and Charles Lesinsky played a violin. The organization also held a ball in Silver City in November 1874, which was attended by both Grant County and Mesilla Valley merchants.<sup>15</sup>

Freemasonry was another organization that was popular among merchants. The Las Cruces Lodge, created in October, 1867, and rechartered in 1877 as Aztec Lodge No. 3, included lawyers, soldiers, and businessmen. Officers of the lodge included two former California Volunteers, William L. Rynerson and Albert J. Fountain; members included Aaron Schutz, Alexander Morehead, John D. Barncastle, Simon Blum, Henry Lesinsky, George D. Maxwell, and Joseph Bennett. Noticeably absent from Masonic membership, both in the East and the West, were farmers. Dorothy Anne Lipson, in *Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut*, found that freemasonry existed in rural towns and “tended to attract to membership men whose experience, occupation, or ambitions differed in some way from the usual ones in those relatively homogeneous, agricultural communities.”<sup>16</sup>

Merchants were leaders in politics and society, especially in times of social upheaval. The Mesilla Riot, which occurred on August 27, 1871, ultimately involved several local businessmen. Jose Manuel Gallegos, Democratic candidate for territorial representative, gave a speech in Mesilla and was later escorted to Thomas Bull’s house for refreshments. They encountered a Republican rally led by John Lemon, a Mesilla wholesaler. Shooting commenced in front of the Reynolds and Griggs store and lasted until federal troops arrived. Nine men including Lemon were killed and forty to fifty wounded. Merchants wrote a letter, in behalf of the citizens, to Colonel Thomas B. Devine of Fort Selden, requesting deployment of troops until after the elections.





Typical merchant's advertisement from the Rio Grande Republican, June 15, 1889.

Those who signed the message included Reynolds and Griggs, Thomas Bull, Louis Rosenbaum, George D. Maxwell, Alexander H. Morehead, J.F. Bennett and Co., and H. Lesinsky and Co.<sup>17</sup>

Merchants also provided relief to the needy and Doñated to charitable causes. By early 1871, Apaches had murdered several miners and stolen livestock throughout Grant County. In April, 1871, Henry Lesinsky was appointed treasurer overseeing Doñations to the besieged citizens of Silver City. Both Lesinsky and Joseph Bennett contributed \$50. Other merchants supplied flour, such as George D. Maxwell, Guadalupe Ascarate, and Louis Rosenbaum. Coffee was provided by Martin Amador and J.F. Bennett and Co. Reynolds and Griggs supplied one hundred pounds of bacon.<sup>18</sup> Merchants also Doñated to social causes, such as public schooling. In 1880, a school fund was created. Several merchants (figure 1) contributed to the fund. Merchants also organized and attended a community ball to raise funds for public education.<sup>19</sup>

Merchants' benevolence toward the community extended in other ways. In 1874, William L. Rynerson attempted to homestead 160 acres on Mesilla's communal lands, claiming that the Mesilla Civil Colony grant had never been ratified by the United States. Ratification came in the summer of 1874, however, and Rynerson was ordered to leave the property.<sup>20</sup> Rynerson brought a suit for possession of the land in December, 1874, but was further denied ownership. The *Mesilla News* noted that Thomas Bull was instrumental in protecting the colonists' land. "Our citizens owe a debt of gratitude to Thomas J. Bull, Esq., our town commissioner, for his action throughout the affair. His firm stand and prompt action has saved the town from endless litigation, for there is no doubt had Col. Rynerson been permitted to remain on the land, every foot of the town common would have become the spoil of land grabbers."<sup>21</sup>

Merchants were trusted figures in the community and were often selected to administer estates. In February of 1875, for example, James Griggs and Thomas Bull administered the estate of Jose Maria De Camara, a Chamberino merchant. Henry Cuniffe administered several estates, including the Jose De La Luz Jirón estate

in 1877 and the Francisco BalDoñado estate in 1878. Administering estates required bookkeeping and government supervision. When Henry Cuniffe was a county judge in 1877 he published a notice in the *Mesilla Valley Independent* ordering all administrators of estates to file inventories of all properties and take prompt measure to settle their accounts.<sup>22</sup>

Merchants organized community meetings regarding the future prosperity of the Mesilla Valley. In October, 1875, James Griggs hosted a convention at his house concerning a proposed military telegraph connecting Santa Fe with Fort Bayard. Among the numerous guests were several merchants: Joseph Reynolds, Thomas Bull, Charles Lesinsky, Louis Rosenbaum, and Henry Cuniffe. The convention agreed to Doñate 1500 poles to the government to guarantee its construction through the Mesilla Valley. Telegraph poles were bought on the open market and supplied by merchants and common citizens. The specifications called for pine, oak or cedar, twenty-four feet long, not less than eight inches at the bottom and six inches at the top, and the bark had to be peeled off.<sup>23</sup>

Like the telegraph, the coming of the railroad was an important issue to southern New Mexicans. In December, 1875, merchants organized a town meeting to elect delegates to the Pacific Railroad Convention in St. Louis. Vice presidents of the meeting included Thomas Bull, Louis Rosenbaum, and James Griggs. The *Mesilla News* noted that merchants, mechanics, professional men, property holders, and laboring men were present. They agreed on several resolutions, believing that the railroad would help develop the mining industry and open direct trade between New Mexico and northern Mexico. They declared that Chihuahua alone consumed in a year \$5,000,000 in northern products and manufactures.<sup>24</sup>

Merchants provided leadership in southern New Mexico. They were politicians, estate administrators, and jury foremen. They oversaw annual road and irrigation maintenance, organized dances and parties and associated with the upper class. They represented the community in times of need and contributed to relief projects and public education. Merchants also encouraged the construction of a telegraph line and the Pacific Railroad through the Mesilla Valley. In many ways they were the center of society and politics in southern New Mexico.

SCOTT E. FRITZ previously contributed "Mercantile Crossroads: The Mesilla Valley Prior to 1870" to the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. V, No. 1, January 1998.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Gerald Carson, *The Old Country Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 116.
- 2 *Population Schedules of the Tenth Census of the United States*, New Mexico, 1880.
- 3 *Mesilla Valley independent* (Mesilla), June 23, 1877.
- 4 *Mesilla News*, April 18, 1874. George Maxwell was treasurer in 1877, see *Commissioner Minutes*, Doña Ana County Court House, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Volume 1, p. 24. The *Mesilla News*, November 2, 1878 reported that Martin Amador was treasurer. Jesus Armijo and Mariano Barela received money at the Mesilla land office from



T.J. Bull Store,  
Courtesy of Rio  
Grande Historical  
Collections. New  
Mexico State  
University Library.

1874 to 1878, see *Mesilla News*, August 21, 1875; December 26, 1875; November 16, 1878.

November 5, 1874.

5 *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), July 16, 1879. On December 10, 1879 the newspaper reported that Cuniffe collected \$1,460 for the school fund and \$4,802 in county revenues. *Mesilla News*, September 14, 1878 reported that Mariano Barela was sheriff for twelve years.

16 Upson, Dorothy Ann, *Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 7. See also, *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), December 1, 1877; Lesinsky, *Letters to his Son*, p. 56. See also *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Grand Communication of the Grand Lodge of New Mexico of Free and Accepted Masons* (Alexandria: G.H. Ramey and Son, 1883), pp. 9-18, 44, 197; Neilson, John Craig "Comunidad: Community Life in a Southwestern Town, Las Cruces, New Mexico 1880-1890" (Master Thesis, New Mexico State University, 1988), pp. 117-119.

6 *Commissioner Minutes*, Volume 1, p. 1-70; *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), January 22, 1879; *Mesilla News*, April 18, 1874; December 4, 1875; December 26, 1874. *Mesilla News*, January 22, 1876 reported that Alexander Morehead was commissioner for Grant County. On May 1, 1876 Doña Ana county commissioners levied a tax on wholesale and retail merchants, see *Commissioner Minutes*, Volume 1, p. 7.

17 J.M. Ashenfelter to Thomas Devine, *Letters Received, 9th Military District, New Mexico, September 1865-August 1890*, National Archives Microfilm Publication, M1088, September 4, 1871. See also Thomas Devine to Reynolds and Griggs, H. Lesinsky and Co. and the Citizens of La Mesilla and Las Cruces, September 4, 1871. See also *Las Cruces Borderer*, August 30, 1871. The riot compelled forty families to found the colony of La Ascension in Chihuahua, see Juan Donne, "Riots in Mesilla, Holes in Flica Horn cause New Town of La Ascension to Rise in Chihuahua, Mexico," *The Southwesterner*, July 1962, p. 3. See also Griggs, *History of the Mesilla Valley*, pp. 90-93. Invitations for John Lemon's funeral were distributed to merchants, such as Martin Amador. See *Amador Papers* MS 4, box 1, folder 2. Also see Vesta Siemers, "Campaigning New Mexico Style: The Mesilla Riot of 1871," *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (January, 1995), Pp. 5-8.

7 *Commissioner Minutes*, Volume 1, p. 15; *Mesilla News*, September 16, 1876.

8 *Commissioner Minutes*, Volume 1, pp. 31, 34; *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces),

February 12, 1879; *Mesilla News*, June 12, 1880. *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), August 11, 1877 urged quick action in fixing county roads.

9 *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), January 8, 1879; January 22, 1879; February 5,

1879; *Mesilla News*, January 4, 1879.

10 *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), June 23, 1877; November 17, 1877; *Mesilla News*, February 13, 1875; November 30, 1878; June 29, 1878. *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), July 2, 1879 stressed the need for intelligent men to sit on juries and, exhibiting the newspaper's ethnic bias, stated that "it is unjust to an American citizen accused of a crime to be forced to trial before twelve men, not one of whom, probably, understands a single word of the language of his country."

18 *Las Cruces Borderer*, April 6, 1871; April 13, 1871; April 20, 1871; January 31, 1872; *Mesilla News*, February 21, 1874. *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), March 10, 1880 and March 17, 1880 reported Apache attacks on Guadalupe Ascarate's trains. Charles Lesinsky, James Griggs, Thomas Bull, and Louis Rosenbaum sent a telegram to their representative in Washington, D.C., to protest the proposed abandonment of Fort Selden, claiming that the citizens needed protection against Indians and bands of thieves from Mexico, see *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), September 29, 1877.

11 *Commissioner Minutes*, Volume 1, pp. 43, 60.

12 *Mesilla News*, July 8, 1876.

13 *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Las Cruces), December 1, 1877; *Mesilla News*, June 19, 1875; January 8, 1876; July 8, 1876; July 15, 1876; *Amador Papers*, Rio Grande Historical Collection, MS 4, box 1, folder 2.

19 *Thirty Four* (Las Cruces), January 21, 1880; March 31, 1880; June 9, 1880; June 23, 1880. Merchants frequently Donated items to local newspaper editors. *The Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), June 30, 1877 reported that James Griggs supplied its editors with "a bounteous supply of cigars and drinkables."

20 *Mesilla News*, June 6, 1874.

21 *Ibid.*, December 26, 1874.

22 *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), September 8, 1877; October 27, 1877; November 17, 1877; *Mesilla News*, June 1, 1878.

14 Marcy G. Goldstein, "Americanization and Mexicanization: The Mexican Elite and Anglo Americans in the Gadsden Purchase Lands, 1853-1880" (Dissertation, Case Reserve University, 1977), pp. ii-iii.

23 *Mesilla News*, October 9, 1875; October 30, 1875.

15 *Mesilla News*, May 16, 1874; May 30, 1874; May 1, 1875; *Silver City Mining Life*,

24 *Ibid.*, October 30, 1875; December 4, 1875.

# What Became of Susan McSween Barber's Diamonds?

by Roberta K. Haldane

Susan McSween's large home in Old Lincoln Town burned room-by-room to the ground after it had been set afire by members of the Murphy-Dolan faction on July 19, 1878, the most violent single day of the Lincoln County War. Susan's lawyer husband, Alexander McSween, died in a hail of bullets as he tried to escape from the last remaining room of the flaming house. Though she managed to reach safety during the siege, it looked very much as though the widow McSween was finished in the New Mexico Territory.

With nothing left after the fire except the sooty clothes on her back, she found temporary refuge in the Patrón house and settled in to regroup. Soon she went on the offensive and began writing letters to the Tunstall family in England in an effort to collect a debt of four or five thousand dollars she claimed was owed her husband by John Tunstall, earliest casualty of the Lincoln County War.

The receipt of one hundred pounds sterling from J.P. Tunstall,<sup>1</sup> John Tunstall's father, enabled Mrs. McSween to hire a Las Vegas lawyer named Huston I. Chapman to try to bring to justice Colonel Nathan A.M. Dudley of Fort Stanton, the man she held personally responsible for her husband's death. There was also the matter of salvaging what property she could from her husband's estate. By January 1879,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. McSween had succeeded in getting herself appointed administratrix of his estate and the estates of John Tunstall and Dick Brewer, former business associates or clients of her husband. Even the murder of Chapman on February 18, 1879, failed to deter her as she shuttled between Las Vegas and Lincoln on her self-appointed business.

On June 20, 1880, a little over a year after Chapman's murder and almost two years after her husband's death, Susan McSween married George B. Barber. Barber, a surveyor, had come to Lincoln shortly before the murder of John Tunstall and was studying law. In the small town of Lincoln, Susan must soon have come to know him well and may have turned to him for legal advice. Barber was admitted to the New Mexico bar in October 1882.

In 1883 the Barbers bought a ranch at Three Rivers, where Mrs. Barber lived and ran the ranch while her husband continued to "lawyer," first at Lincoln and White Oaks, and later at Corrizozo. On her *Tres Rios* ranch Mrs. Barber raised cattle from a starter herd either initially paid as damages owed to Alexander McSween, or sold her, by John Chisum (sources differ).<sup>3</sup> Some people said she even acted as her own foreman over her cowboys, presiding over some 5,000 head of cattle.<sup>4</sup> Others say she, Mrs. Barber, as was assisted by a black foreman,<sup>5</sup> perhaps the same man who later acted as her driver for many years both at *Tres Rios* and at White Oaks.



Susan McSween Barber. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections. New Mexico State University Library.

Sometime during this period it appears that Mrs. Barber had come to believe that, while ranches and cattle were all well and good, "diamonds are a girl's best friend." Mrs. Barber's nephew recalls her carrying around a box filled with diamonds, pearls and other gems and wearing a solid gold chain as a necklace.<sup>6</sup>

Her marriage to George Barber ended in divorce in 1891. (Barber sold his interest in the Three Rivers Land & Cattle Company in 1889.)<sup>7</sup> Susan continued to ranch at Three Rivers. J. Denton Simms, a young boy in a family from Texas who became one of her neighbors at Three Rivers, remembered her well:

One of our more interesting neighbors was Mrs. Susan Barber, the elderly widow of Alexander McSween....

Mrs. Barber, as she was now called because of a subsequent marriage...lived near us in a historic landmark known locally as "The



Otero party with Susan Barber at White Oaks. Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

Rock House.” She was thought to be very wealthy and...enjoyed being called the “Cattle Queen of New Mexico.” Wealthy or not, she still owned and wore an impressive display of diamonds and visited around the community in a fine buggy driven by a man she called Pompey. Mother recalled that when Mrs. Barber came to call on us she was dressed in taffeta, wearing a wide hat decorated with ostrich plumes...

Mrs. Barber loved to go to the dances that were held at various ranches. My brother Doñald, who was forced to dance with her on one of these occasions, complained about how stiff her legs were. Mother wondered who got those jewels when she died, since we knew of no heirs.<sup>8</sup>

Early in the 1900s, Mrs. Barber sold her ranch to a neighbor, Monroe Harper. Albert B. Fall had come into the Three Rivers country at the time and began to take over all the land he could get, but Mrs. Barber refused to sell to him. Hardly had she signed over the ranch to Harper, however, when Harper resold *Tres Rios* to Fall.<sup>9</sup>

Returning to familiar surroundings, Mrs. Barber bought a house at White Oaks, which was fast becoming

a ghost town. In the summer of 1923 her house burned out from under her for the second time in her life, forcing her to jump from an upstairs window to safety. Unhurt but now nearly destitute, she moved a short distance into a shack on Lincoln Avenue. It was there in July 1926 that the Marshall Bond/Miguel A. Otero party, formed to interview and photograph survivors of the Lincoln County War, found her. Always charming and gracious, she continued to keep up appearances in spite of the spartan conditions in which she lived.<sup>10</sup>

In a letter dated November 7, 1926, to Marshall Bond, Mrs. Barber exchanged pleasantries about his visit and obliquely alluded to her lifestyle: “We are having quite cold weather here and makes me wish I could be in a warmer clime but circumstances compel me to remain here.”<sup>11</sup>

By 1930 old age had caught up with the former Cattle Queen of New Mexico. Weakened from a bad bout with influenza, Mrs. Barber died in her shack January 3, 1931. She was buried in the White Oaks cemetery in a \$150 coffin from Kelley’s hardware store in Carrizozo.<sup>12</sup>

And what happened to her diamonds?

In October 1980 Barbara Jeanne Reily-Branum of La Luz, New Mexico, tape-recorded



Headstone with misspelled name of Susan McSween Barber, Cedarvale Cemetery, White Oaks, NM Courtesy of Carl D. Miller.

Truman A. Spencer about his early days around Carrizozo and White Oaks. Son-in-law of William C. McDoñald, first governor of the State of New Mexico, Spencer had married Frances McDoñald, only child of McDoñald's marriage to Frances McCourt. After McDoñald's death Spencer assumed control of El Capitán Livestock Company and the Carrizozo Cattle Rancho [sic] Company, corporations that managed the huge Block and Bar W cattle ranches to the north and east of Carrizozo. Truman Spencer was 90 years of age at the time of this interview with Barbara Jeanne. Mary and Jack Krattiger also participated in the discussion about Mrs. Barber:

Truman: She's buried up in White Oaks, you know. Hell, I knew her well, talked to her. You may remember old George Barber, the lawyer at Carrizozo?...she quit him and he quit her... She was at Three Rivers and had cattle down there and finally sold out...and then moved to White Oaks. She lived there quite a while. She used to come down to Carrizozo in a Ford automobile, had a driver. She was sittin' in the back enjoyin' the scenery. Mary Krattiger: Nobody knew that she didn't have any money, did they, Truman? Not for a long time. Did he ever tell you [Barbara] that she told him she was going to give him her diamond rings?

Truman: She was gonna give me two diamond rings when she died. She jumped out of her house up at White Oaks. Her house was on fire, and she jumped out of that house. The house burned up. It didn't hurt her a damn bit. She had me up there helpin' her sift the ashes to find these diamonds. And the old fella that was drivin' her says to me, "Well, don't be lookin' any more. She doesn't have any diamonds. She's got rid of all of 'em. That's what she's been livin' on."

And I traced it down and she had. She sold

the diamonds in El Paso. She didn't have any diamonds left.

Mary Krattiger: Did you know Truman was responsible for havin' the tombstone put on her grave?

Truman: How do you suppose she got it on? She didn't have any kinfolks... so I bought the tombstone for the Governor [McDoñald, Truman's father-in-law] in the cemetery, and when I bought it, I asked this fellow would he put in a tombstone for Susan McSween Barber? And he said, "yeah," so I said, "Put one in and I'll pay for it." He didn't charge me a dime, but he put it in. He says, "You're payin' for it on this big stone you bought."<sup>13</sup>

Head held high, two-stepping to the end, Susan McSween Barber no doubt would have relished finagling a free gravestone on the coattails of Governor McDoñald's final marker.<sup>14</sup> She might have relished it as much as her private joke of watching the foremost rancher in southeast New Mexico scabble through the ashes of her White Oaks house in search of phantom diamonds.

---

ROBERTA KEY HALDANE is a New Mexico native and member of a pioneer Lincoln County ranching family. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in business administration. For many years she worked as a technical writer and communications consultant for Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Now retired, she lives in Tijeras, New Mexico.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Frederick Nolan, *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), p. 355.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 516, 537-538, 565.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 436. Also, Cara Mae Coe Smith, "Women Who Made A Difference," in *Trails to Ruidoso* by Bill Rakocy (El Paso and Ruidoso: Bravo Press, 1995), p. 298.
- 4 Smith, p. 298.
- 5 Barbara Jeanne Reily-Branum and Roberta Haldane, *Corralled in Old Lincoln County, New Mexico: The Lin Brantum Family of Coyote Canyon and the / Bar X* (Alamogordo: Bennett Printing, 1997), p. 21.
- 6 Nolan, p. 436.
- 7 William A. Keleher, *Violence in Lincoln County 1869-1881: The New Mexico Feud That Became a Frontier War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1957), p. 160.
- 8 J. Denton Simms, *Cowboys, Indians and Pulpits*, editor D. Harper Simms (Santa Fe: Parker Books of the West, 1989), pp. 24-26.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 10 Marshall Bond, Jr., *Gold Hunter: The Adventures of Marshall Bond* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 169.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
- 12 Nolan, p. 438.
- 13 Taped interview of Truman A. Spencer, Sr. by Barbara Jeanne Reily-Branum, La Luz, New Mexico, October 11, 1980. Also present were Jack and Mary Krattiger of Roswell, New Mexico.
- 14 Despite the good intentions of Truman Spencer and the supplier of the marker, the headstone in the Cedarvale Cemetery reads "SUSAN MACSWEEN BARBER" with the dates "1845 and "1931."

# Herman Wertheim: A Very Personal Rememberance

by Ella Barncastle Ledesma

**M**y grandfather, the late Herman Wertheim, a Jewish immigrant American and citizen of Doña Ana, New Mexico, was born June 11, 1858, in Hesse Kassel, Germany. He had two brothers, Robert and Jacob, and three sisters: Emma, who married Max Goldenberg; Henrietta, who married Alex Goldenberg; and Jennett, who never married.

Herman's great-grandfather, when living in Holland, had no surname. At that time surnames were forbidden to those persecuted people in Europe. The family was known as Susman, meaning sweet man. Later, when surnames were allowed, Susman assembled his family to see what name they would choose. The long list simmered down to Wertheim [worth or value + home] and the descendants of Susman became known as Wertheim. In 1875, at the age of 17, Herman Wertheim brought the name to America.

He came to find freedom. He was ambitious and felt he was wasting his time at his father's business selling kosher food and candy or working at the slaughterhouse that his family owned. He was a butcher by trade and knew he could get rich in a hurry if he went to America, the land of opportunity. Before he left Germany, he trained for two years as an apprentice in "general merchandising." Many years later, Herman told me he would never forget the look on his mother's face when he told her he was going to America. She was against the idea primarily because he was only 17, and also because she didn't want her family divided. However, she knew he would be successful and wanted the best for him. He never saw his mother again.

In 1875, Herman Wertheim landed in New York Harbor at Castle Gardens, an immigrant depot in Battery Park on Manhattan Island. From there he went to Alabama to stay with some relatives on his mother's side, the Schoenstadts, and worked at a local cloth mill. This energetic boy had no trouble finding employment because of his experience as an apprentice. Working 12-hour days, seven days a week, was no problem for him. He did have to struggle to learn the English language and that delayed getting his naturalization papers.

After a short stay in Alabama, Herman followed the railroad west to seek his fortune. He came to Las Vegas, New Mexico, about 1882. After the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad, the town was ready for commerce and business. "New citizen Wertheim" was also ready, but was not done with pioneering — his work would

involve travel by stagecoach, railroad, and river. In Las Vegas he was employed by Charles Ilfeld, who had retail and wholesale businesses all over central New Mexico. Herman was using his work experience in this new world and soon realized he would also have to learn Spanish, because not many people spoke English.

Two years later, he had a bad case of smallpox and was forced to quit working. He was very discouraged and moved south to Las Cruces where he found employment at Lesinsky and Company. It seems he had just learned the business when the company was sold to Numa Raymond. Raymond had a good eye and found Wertheim had exceptional business ability. He lent Wertheim enough money to open a general mercantile store in the growing town of Doña Ana, New Mexico.

Wertheim did not depend only on the loan from Raymond. To expand his inventory, he traveled south to Mexico to buy *santos* (religious figurines and pictures) to sell to people in New Mexico. Traveling to Alamogordo, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces, he exchanged *santos* for cows and calves that he and his brothers-in-law raised at *La Jornada*, after they acquired land from the United States Government. He soon became one of the county's most responsible citizens.

He also remained responsible to his family. In the years that followed, Herman made at least four trips to Germany to bring his family to America at his own expense. Each trip, he would sponsor a brother, sister, or nephew. He was never free from anxiety for his family and their increasing struggles under anti-Semitic prejudice.

In 1891, he returned to his homeland for the first time. He needed help with the Doña Ana store and brought his brother Jacob to assist. Herman traveled first class in order to provide better food for his brother on a lower deck. He sneaked food in his coat pockets to make sure his brother had a good meal. It was sad for Herman to see his brother traveling second class — packed like a sardine. When they arrived in America, and finally in Doña Ana, Jacob was a great help in the store while Herman was away — still peddling *santos* and now buying land and houses in the community.

During those early years, Wertheim's store was one of the best between El Paso and Albuquerque. It was made up of five large rooms, a warehouse, a garage, and a big hay barn. The store carried everything imaginable at the time. Later, Wertheim even had the John Deere farm

equipment agency there. The store was well stocked with all kinds of produce, butter, *asaderos* (cheeses), and eggs he bought from villagers, encouraging them to exchange their products for coffee, tea, and sugar. The system worked well. It provided a comfortable life for the villagers and a profit for my grandfather. The store was well known and customers came from miles around. One of my grandfather's best customers was Captain Arthur MacArthur, a distinguished American soldier stationed at Fort Selden, who bought hay for the cavalry. His eight-year-old-son later became General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur.

In 1894, Wertheim joined the Aztec Lodge in Las Cruces on July 14 and was initiated on September 24 at the age of 36; he became a life member on March 14, 1934. According to a "History of Freemasonry in Las Cruces," he attended meetings for 41 years and was then the oldest member of the lodge.

Herman's brother Jacob also joined the Masons, but not until 1904 in Tucumcari. Their brother-in-law, Alex Goldenberg, whom Herman also brought from Germany, settled in Tucumcari and was a charter member and secretary in 1903. By 1919, he was a Grand Master of Tucumcari Lodge 27.

On a more personal plane, in 1898, the relationship of Herman Wertheim and Elogia Garcia produced a daughter, Frances, who became my mother. Elogia died in childbirth and left the task of raising Frances to Wertheim and Elogia's parents. Wertheim's employees enjoyed looking after Frances when they could. Mrs. Bamert (a wonderful German cook), Mrs. Ledesma, and the Goldenbergs were of great help with grandpa's daughter. Cousins Bertha, Flora, and Harry Schoenstadt visited from Chicago on many occasions and showed Frances their cooking secrets. As my mother grew older she began cooking and waiting on customers in the store. She became an excellent cook and attributed her talent to Bertha. In due course, Frances married Pat Barncastle, who became my father.

Wertheim was always interested in the education of the children of Doña Ana. The poor conditions of the village school concerned him. The little two-room adobe building was not big enough to accommodate the increasing number of students. There was no running water or inside toilets. The children had to take their own drinking water in jars to school each day. In 1911 or 1912, during a trip to Germany, Wertheim brought back the plans for a new brick schoolhouse and Doñated three acres of land where the school stands today at 400 Doña Ana School Road. In 1916, the well-constructed red



Herman Wertheim (1858-1956).

Courtesy of Ella Barncastle  
Ledesma.

brick schoolhouse opened. Wertheim looked at the project with pride and joy for the betterment of the village. Some years afterward he was elected to the school board. Years later my father-in-law, Mr. Ledesma, told me the people of Doña Ana should have erected a statue or shrine to Wertheim for his efforts in contributing to the education of the town's children.

The Wertheim store became a meeting place where the Doña Ana villagers would gather in the winter around a pot-belly stove and in the summers at *la esquina*, the outside corner of the building, to hear the latest news. The newspaper, either *The Times* or *The Post*, arrived by mail one day old; local gossip sometimes came by phone. The store held the only telephone many had ever seen and certainly the only one in the small village. Wertheim was already fluent in English and Spanish and would translate news of World War I and what was happening in France and Germany.

He also kept his eye on the market and advised farmers what crops would be in demand so they could increase their income. People came to rely on his advice about legal and financial matters and sought his help in time of trouble.

When the children of Doña Ana got sick and needed an operation they had to go to El Paso because Las Cruces had no hospitals. "Jeronimo," they called him, "We need some money to take my son to the hospital in El Paso." Never did he fail them. He was also remembered with great affection by the old timers whom he supported financially through the depression years. He helped the Catholic Church with Doñations and sent groceries to the priests, who received no salary in those days.

At a time when the world was fighting racial and religious prejudice, this Jewish man had many friends in Doña Ana. Two very special friends were Mr. Harwood, a Methodist minister, and Father Varona, a Catholic priest. Herman's only recreation after a hard week's work was sitting around the house on Sunday evenings with these two friends, listening to opera on radio and discussing different religions and world affairs. They enjoyed each other's company a great deal and looked forward to the upcoming Sunday's get-together.

On April 27, 1926, Wertheim made his last pilgrimage to Germany. He made arrangements to bring a nephew, Max Wertheim, to America. Herman posted a \$3,000 bond so Max would not be a ward of the state and Max promised his uncle he would bring the remaining family members from Germany as soon as he could. Those still left behind were Arthur, Emily, Jennett, Martha and Paula. When

Max first came to America, he lived with us at the Barncastle home and worked at the store where he quickly learned Spanish and also did very well with English. After two years, Herman gave Max \$3,000 to open a business in Bernalillo. Herman had given Max his new-found freedom, his support, and his financial security. Years later the family was saddened to discover Max had told the *Albuquerque Journal* he had to sleep in El Paso parks and pick cotton in order to survive, never mentioning the tremendous help he received from his Uncle Herman.

Herman Wertheim was a generous man looking out for his family before anything else. When Bertha, his favorite cousin, married Louis Lillienthal, Wertheim gave them a wedding present of several lots of land he had acquired in South Chicago. South Chicago held several stock yards then and the land became very profitable for the Lillienthals, who later started theatrical and hotel enterprises.

My grandfather was always both community and business oriented. Between 1911 and 1915, he was one of the first supporters of the Elephant Butte Dam Project. The project was to provide irrigation for farms and to stop treacherous floods. Some years later he read in the paper that the government was raffling some homestead land in Radium Springs; each raffle ticket cost \$20. Wertheim formed a coalition with six friends and made a deal. He would pay each of the entry fees and in turn they would share the land with him if they won. Luckily, Edwardo Curaron won 100 acres and Wertheim got 57 acres for himself. The family still owns that acreage.

Wertheim's first vote went to the Republican Party and he remained loyal to the party throughout his life. During the Roosevelt Administration he suffered a great deal because Democrats would not patronize his store. People started registering for the Democratic Party and trading at another store, not giving a thought to the man who had supported them for so many years. That didn't hurt us too much for we figured a way to keep making a profit: the Barncastles, Wertheims and Nakayamas began to hire only people who would trade at our store, like a commissary.

Sadly, in 1938 Wertheim was forced to close the store he had managed and loved dearly for 50 years. He was getting old and having a difficult time managing his business. People began to take advantage of him and tried to buy his property for next to nothing. There was a time when a

real estate man approached us and wanted Wertheim's signature on a bill of sale for a piece of property. I told grandpa not to sign anything and he didn't. Two short months later the man reappeared, telling us he had a buyer for the land and he produced a carbon copy with Wertheim's signature on it. Fortunately, we were able to get the 130-acre farm back by paying five percent (5%) of the total value. From that day on we knew my grandfather was no longer able to be responsible for his finances. My brother Pat and I took Wertheim to Judge Scoggins who declared our grandfather incompetent. With someone else as guardian, people quit bothering him.

Wertheim had made his way upward from loneliness and poverty to the prosperity he shared with his own. He never failed to express his appreciation of American freedom and to discuss with logic the changes of the world as he saw it through the eyes of experience. He passed away in 1956 at age 98 at the home of his daughter and son-in-law, Frances and Pat Barncastle, where he had lived for so many years. Before he died he was relieved that all his family was in America and safe from Hitler and the Holocaust. He was survived by his daughter, Frances and her eight children: Henrietta Whallon, Nora Camunez, Mabel Chavez, Amy Palmer, Pat Barncastle, Herman Barncastle, Arlene Waskiewicz, and myself, Ella Ledesma.

This reminiscence of Herman Wertheim is written with my brothers and sisters in mind, so they may share these memories of our grandfather, whom we loved so dearly, and so the Wertheim legacy — self improvement, hard work, community involvement, and family responsibility — may be handed down for many generations to come.

ELLA BARNCASTLE LEDESMA was the first daughter of Frances and Pat Barncastle and the first granddaughter of Herman Wertheim. Born in Doña Ana, she was graduated from Las Cruces Union High School and has traveled widely. She currently resides in Las Cruces, where she has been active in the Republican Women's Club of Doña Ana County, the New Mexico Federation of Republican Women, and was appointed Doña Ana County License Distributor by former Governor Mechem. She is a life member of the Women's Improvement Association.

Editor's Note: For additional information on the village of Doña Ana and the world of Herman Wertheim, the reader's attention is invited to "Doña Ana: Fact and Fiction," by Nancy Jenkins, *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Jan., 1997), pp. 60-61.



# The Fall Committee and Double Agent Jones

by Michael Stone

During much of the Mexican Revolution, 1911-1920, United States Senator Albert Bacon Fall led the Republican party's push for United States intervention into Mexico. In 1919, the Senate named Fall chair of a committee to investigate American losses in Mexico. Fall and his investigative staff carefully selected witnesses who would present evidence to support intervention. The committee's findings became a Senate document, the *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*.<sup>1</sup> Yet because of Fall's strong bias and domination, many contemporary observers and historians have viewed his findings as mere interventionist propaganda.

However, some truthful and interesting accounts do exist within Fall's *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*. One of Fall's most interesting witnesses, Charles E. Jones, a newspaper reporter and United States double agent, exposed his cover by testifying on Mexican intrigues in the United States. Although he may have had ulterior motives, Jones had great ability in obtaining information. He suited Fall's purpose well by presenting anti-revolutionary testimony.

Little is known of Jones' background; his movements were, "very mysterious and...not understood by the Department [of Justice] officials..."<sup>2</sup> Jones spent numerous years as a newspaper reporter on Mexican and Central American affairs. He also worked as an arms dealer to Mexican revolutionaries.<sup>3</sup> His brother, N.T. Jones, assisted him in these affairs.<sup>4</sup> Through these positions he made numerous contacts within the United States and Mexican governments and Mexican revolutionary factions, procuring invaluable information. As often as possible, he obtained documentary evidence, essentially becoming an archivist of revolutionary activity.

In 1915, the Bureau of Investigation Division Superintendent in New Orleans, Forrest C. Pendleton, offered him a position with the Bureau investigating Central American activity. Jones did not accept due to the low salary and his own business affairs, although he did agree to provide information if the Bureau kept his name confidential and allowed him to use information in a series of newspaper articles he was planning.<sup>5</sup> However, because publishing the information would have interfered with Bureau plans, he had to, "choke 95 percent of it to death."<sup>6</sup> Jones claimed this arrangement was unprofitable because with the information he obtained he could have published stories virtually every day. Jones claimed to have never received any remuneration from, nor ever to have been sworn in by, the Bureau. He claimed that his motivation was patriotic; and due to his friendship with Pendleton, who, as Jones knew, did not have sufficient manpower to cover Mexican and Central American affairs.

Jones became a double agent for the Bureau by becoming a confidential agent in the Mexican government's Foreign Office.<sup>7</sup> In late 1917, Candido Aguilar, the Mexican secretary of foreign relations, employed Jones as a publicity director. Jones apparently also advised him on affairs in Washington and Mexican revolutionary interests within the United States. In 1918, the Mexican government offered Jones the position of secret service head in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

Jones gathered information by concurrently gaining opposing factions' confidence. At one time or another, he penetrated numerous organizations involved in Mexican affairs including: the Fall Committee, the Bureau of Investigation, the Mexican government, Carranza officials in the United States and various Mexican revolutionary groups.<sup>9</sup> He infiltrated, secured and distributed information to and from numerous sources, although it appears most of his information benefitted the United States. He also kept detailed records of his meetings with all groups. He transcribed many of his conversations word for word immediately after they took place. This allowed him to later quote his conversations verbatim. He also obtained documentary evidence through various means.

During the next four years Jones provided the Bureau with over 3,000 reports. Bureau of Investigation Chief A. Bruce Bielaski praised Jones as a "very valuable source of information and assistance, especially with respect to matters pertaining to Mexico and Central Arnerica."<sup>10</sup> Pendleton also lauded Jones for supplying "as much, or more inside information pertaining to revolutionary movements in Mexico as any man in this country." He also lauded Jones' accuracy, resourcefulness and for being "thoroughly trustworthy...you can absolutely rely on anything he tells you."<sup>11</sup> Jones quit providing reports for the Bureau in August, 1919, because of Bielaski's resignation.<sup>12</sup>

Jones continued his involvement in Mexican affairs, however. While doing so, he allegedly came upon a plot to discredit the Fall Committee. According to his testimony before the Fall Committee, Jones met with Ramon P. De Negri, Mexican consul general in New York City, in late October, 1919. De Negri desired employing Jones as a propaganda agent to spread information the Mexican secret service had secured that supposedly would discredit the Fall Committee and greatly reduce interventionist attitudes. De Negri also offered Jones \$40,000 for the Mexican revolutionary documents he had obtained. Jones later claimed to have agreed with De Negri's plan only to procure further information which he would then use against the Carranza government through publication.

De Negri wanted Jones to travel to Mexico City to meet directly with Carranza. Jones feared a trap and made an excuse. However, De Negri told him that the arrangement must be made on Mexican soil to avoid any legal difficulties. Jones agreed to meet an intermediary and made the trip to Laredo, Texas, on November 7.<sup>13</sup> De Negri's vice-consul, M.G. Seguin, also made the trip to handle negotiations.<sup>14</sup> In Laredo, Jones held a few meetings with Seguin who repeated the plans to discredit the Fall Committee. On November 11, the two crossed to Nuevo Laredo where they held a telegraphic conference with a Mexico City official, who had been unable to travel to the border in person. The official stated that Jones was perfect for the propaganda agent position and authorized Seguin to make all future negotiations. Seguin then requested that Jones return to New York to await further instructions.

Instead, Jones traveled to San Antonio where he contacted A.C. Sullivan, a close friend employed as a Department of Justice agent. Jones informed him of a different plot involving various federal government departments to discredit the Fall Committee, as well as the Fall Committee's chief investigator, Texas Ranger Captain W.M. Hanson.<sup>15</sup> Apparently the unnamed departments worked against the Committee by not allowing access to government records and information. Also, these unspecified departments planned on arresting several "Oil men" for conspiring against, "a friendly Government [Mexico] with a view of forcing intervention."<sup>16</sup> The plotters planned to destroy the Fall Committee by showing that it was, "completely sprinkled with Oil. [*sic*]"<sup>17</sup> These unidentified government departments hoped that by discrediting the Fall Committee they would end interventionist attitudes and destroy Fall's political clout.<sup>18</sup> During this meeting Jones mentioned nothing of his dealings with the Mexican officials. Hanson notified Fall of the plot. Fall likely believed it, considering this previous accusation that the State Department had suppressed information.<sup>19</sup>

The day after the meeting with Hanson, the Jones brothers left San Antonio and returned to New York City. On November 19, Jones met with De Negri who told him that he would soon have another telegraphic conference with the Mexican foreign office to finalize arrangements. During this meeting De Negri let slip, "Fall and Hanson ought to be shot, and by God, they will be. Just wait and see; it will happen very soon."<sup>20</sup> Jones attempted to get more details from De Negri on this plot, but was unable to do so.<sup>21</sup>

Within a month Seguin echoed De Negri's claim that, "you will not hear much more of Fall and Hanson pretty soon for we have a man who has plenty of guts and who at the proper time will put Hanson and Fall out of the way."<sup>22</sup> Attempting to gain specific details, Jones agreed with Seguin. However, Seguin would not comment further.

With this knowledge, Jones warned Hanson who in turn informed Fall of the assassination plot. Hanson believed there was no "question about the genuineness



Albert B. Fall.  
Courtesy of Rio  
Grande Historical  
Collections, New  
Mexico State  
University Library.

of this plan of assassination, as I have it from another very reliable source [*sic*]."<sup>23</sup> Hanson did not specify the other source. Fall took measures to ensure his safety.<sup>24</sup> Jones told Hanson that he wanted a personal meeting with Fall to discuss the assassination plot and possibly testifying before the Committee. Hanson complied but warned the Senator, "Handle Jones carefully. Just be a good listener."<sup>25</sup> Apparently while the Committee realized the value of Jones' information, they also suspected Jones' tactics and motives. Hanson had known during their earlier meeting in San Antonio that Jones was dealing with Mexican secret service men and suspected that the Mexicans had paid Jones \$15,000. Hanson did not know the reason for this payment, but guessed that it was to help further the Mexican secret service in the United States. Hanson warned Fall not to discuss Jones with anyone else. He suspected that Jones' disclosures "may be vaporings, guesswork and may have been for an ulterior motive, and done for some selfish purpose...there may be a trap in it...or might go straight to the Departments and if they [Jones and his brother] were in good faith with me, would ruin my informants, and cut me off from future information..."<sup>26</sup> Judge F.J. Kearful distrusted Jones. He sent a memo to Fall warning, "I know Jones and his game. He is a blackmailer with stolen papers to sell. He plays both sides. He has documents implicating Carranza which he may have sold for the \$15,000 mentioned. He is very clever and would stop at nothing, even murder. Don't see him alone."<sup>27</sup> Fall's staff dealt with Jones cautiously.

While Jones had made this deal with Fall, he was also negotiating with the Mexican officials. On

December 5, Jones met with the Mexican Ambassador to the United States, Ygnacio Bonillas, at the Mexican Embassy in Washington. Bonillas wanted to further the arrangements Jones had made with De Negri and Seguin. Bonillas feared passage of the recently introduced Fall Resolution and therefore believed the time ripe to release a propaganda campaign.<sup>28</sup> Bonillas' plan called for Jones to disclose damaging information collected by the Mexican secret service as his own. According to the plan, Jones would release this information, along with his own incriminating material against Fall, through the media and an appearance before the Fall Committee.

Two days later, Jones met again with Bonillas who informed him that another strategy had been devised to discredit the Fall Committee. Instead of Jones appearing before the Fall Committee, the incriminating information would be released to the United States Attorney General who would supposedly launch an investigation into Fall and the National Association for the Protection of American Rights in Mexico (NAPARIM). Bonillas believed such an investigation would decidedly end interventionist and anti-Carranza attitudes. Bonillas never instituted either of these plans. Jones continued negotiations with the Mexicans for the next two months without obtaining any of Bonillas' incriminating information against Fall. Believing he could get no more information from the Mexican government, he severed his dealings with Bonillas on January 28, 1920. At this time, he had mentioned nothing to Fall of his dealings with Bonillas.

Jones' earlier correspondence with the Fall Committee had provided few specifics, but the same day he broke off negotiations with Bonillas he began supplying much more information. On January 28 he sent a telegram to Hanson stating, "all details regarding information sent forward to you some time ago now complete. Have also secured positive proof which completely involves their principal party here with having through lobbyists influenced and also interfered in matters regarding them before Senate Foreign Relations Committee."<sup>29</sup> A few days later he sent Hanson another letter describing his dealings with Bonillas.<sup>30</sup> Jones justified not previously informing Hanson of his activities by claiming that he had not completed his investigation and he feared leaks.

Fall wanted Jones to testify immediately before the Committee in El Paso, believing that a greater effect would occur by releasing the information on the border. Jones, however, did not want to testify yet. He realized that his testimony would eliminate all contacts he had and, believing that he could secure information through contact he had made with General Salvador Alvarado, Jones delayed his testimony.<sup>31</sup>

While briefly in New York, Alvarado, Carranza's former Governor of Yucatan and an aspirant to the Mexican presidency, met with Jones, who had gained his confidence by offering to serve as a publicity agent. During about a dozen meetings, Alvarado disclosed numerous anti-Carranza statements to Jones, believing

the information would not be made public. Alvarado claimed that Carranza had the ability to quell revolutionary uprisings but chose not to in order to keep the country in turmoil which would require a stronger military and keep himself in power. Later in his testimony Jones used this information against Alvarado. Jones stated that Alvarado, Carranza and their cronies were all of the same character and would turn on one another, which is what Alvarado had done with his statements.

By mid-April Jones had obtained all of the information he desired and began writing his newspaper exposé. He wanted to publish his articles and testify before the Fall Committee concurrently for greater effect. However, Fall had completed all hearings in the border region and would not resume hearings until early May in Washington. Therefore, Jones did not testify until May 17-18 in Washington, D.C., ten days after Carranza's downfall.

During his testimony, Jones covered the plot to assassinate Fall and Hanson and his conversations with Alvarado. He also disclosed Carranza's 1917 plot to create the country "Morazan" out of Honduras and Guatemala. Jones stated that Carranza and German Minister to Mexico Von Eckhart had attempted to overthrow the governments of Honduras and Guatemala by assisting the revolutionary groups within the two countries.<sup>32</sup> By doing so, Carranza planned to dominate Central America by controlling the revolutionary leaders in each country and thus be able to counter the power of the United States. Carranza did not achieve this aim. Yet Jones believed that the new Mexican leaders would follow the same policy.

Jones also produced copies of his Bureau reports on Baja California Governor Esteban Cantu's revolutionary activity in late 1918.<sup>33</sup> Cantu had ruled Baja California somewhat autonomously for several years. Apparently Cantu led as a puppet for his father-in-law, Pablo Dato, Sr., who had strong German ties. Because of these ties, Jones believed the United States would not have a good chance for future Mexican relations if Cantu and Dato's power rose. Cantu still held power when Jones testified.

Ironically, in a letter to Kearful, Jones had predicted that, "When Carranza is overthrown, if my information is correct, and I believe it is, there will be a split among the leaders of the present revolting crowd."<sup>34</sup> Most likely this data came from his conversations with Alvarado. Perhaps Jones had realized in February that his information against Carranza would soon be outdated and thus put off his testimony to gather implicating information against Alvarado and Obregon.

Little of Jones' testimony received exposure except the Fall assassination plot. Nationally, *The New York Times* ran a short piece describing Jones' conversations with De Negri about the assassination attempt and Americans assisting the Mexican government to discredit the Fall Committee.<sup>35</sup> Near the border, the issue created more of a stir with the *Santa Fe New Mexican's* front-

page headline, "THREAT TO KILL FALL."<sup>36</sup> However, because the situation had occurred six months earlier and Fall had received previous assassination threats, the story died quickly.<sup>37</sup>

Jones indeed played "both sides." He brilliantly infiltrated numerous groups and played one off the other, securing more information and spinning an ever more complex web of connections. While dealing with Fall, Jones retained negotiations with Bonillas at the same time, possibly waiting for the better offer between the two. He did not inform Fall of his negotiations with Bonillas until he had broken them off, claiming a fear of leaks. However he kept Bonillas informed of his dealings with Fall. In his testimony, Jones quoted Bonillas as saying to him, "With the information in possession of the Mexican Government and the information which you [Jones] claim you have been able to secure...It will ruin and discredit and also interfere with the purposes and plans of the Fall Committee."<sup>38</sup> Also, part of Jones' duties for Bonillas were, "to secure and hand over to Ambassador Bonillas information touching on the Fall committee, [and] the National Association for the Protection of American Rights in Mexico..."<sup>39</sup> Possibly, Jones did not want Fall aware of the above information but he unwittingly divulged it while quoting Bonillas verbatim. In his letters to the Fall Committee he never mentioned the above information.

Jones claimed that he never profited financially from his connections; however, circumstantial evidence suggests that he may have. The Mexican government made generous offers to Jones for his information and cooperation. De Negri's original offer to Jones was for \$40,000 for the revolutionary documents he had secured, a \$2,000 salary for both Jones and his brother, and \$100,000 for discrediting the Fall Committee and the NAPARIM.<sup>40</sup> Bonillas later offered him a different proposal — \$75,000 for discrediting the Committee and a salary of \$5,000 a month for heading the Mexican secret service in the United States.<sup>41</sup> Jones doubted these figures and may have exaggerated them in his testimony. However, he testified to receiving a total of \$4,500 from the Mexican government for his time and expenses.<sup>42</sup> This figure combined with Hanson's suspicion that Jones had sold papers for \$15,000 equals nearly \$20,000 that Jones received from the Mexican government.

It is also curious that Jones broke off his dealings with the State Department's Bureau of Investigation soon after Chief Bielaski quit. Possibly whatever arrangement Jones had with the Bureau became null, or unprofitable, with Bielaski's departure. Three months after his break with the Bureau, Jones contacted Hanson claiming that a plot existed within the Federal government to keep information from the Fall Committee. Jones possessed numerous of his own State Department reports on Mexican activities. Considering that Fall had had many difficulties securing information from the State Department, he likely believed Jones' allegations

and desired his reports.

Apparently, Jones met with the Murray Hill group in late February, 1920.<sup>43</sup> The Murray Hill group, a small group of wealthy businessmen which held meetings at the Murray Hill Hotel in New York City, spent what their leader William F. Buckley called "large amounts of their own money," for the Committee's benefit.<sup>44</sup> They provided expert witnesses and also employed an investigative staff of six men which nearly equaled the Committee's own staff. The Murray Hill group's staff screened and rehearsed witnesses to provide effective anti-revolutionary testimony. They also convinced reluctant witnesses to testify through various measures. Whether or not the Murray Hill group paid witnesses is unknown, but likely. Some of Buckley's "large amount of their own money" may have been for Jones, who would soon be unemployed. Jones would be unable to continue as a Mexican affairs correspondent since testifying would expose his cover. Considering the above information, Fall's "satisfactory arrangement" with Jones possibly included compensation for his testimony.<sup>45</sup>

Many observers have derided the Fall Committee's findings as purely anti-Carranza and interventionist propaganda. In addition to numerous contemporary politicians' derision, some in the private sector denounced Fall's claims as well. Samuel Gompers called Fall's recommendation, "a Prussian policy," which would result in war.<sup>46</sup> Historians have dismissed Fall's findings, too. One author described the investigation as "more than a hundred unfriendly witnesses who spewed hearsay and slander, and divulged bits of information and scandal... in a wholly sensational fashion."<sup>47</sup> Thus, many historians disregard the *Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, believing that its only use would be as a "source for the study of the motives and methods of appeal employed by...imperialism..."<sup>48</sup>

While Fall's bias is undeniable and many sources questionable, the *Investigation of Mexican Affairs* does contain valuable information.<sup>49</sup> Such is the case of Charles E. Jones. This fascinating figure and his activities would be lost to obscurity but for the Fall Committee's allowing Jones to reveal his findings in much greater detail than in his newspaper accounts. Other testimony within the *Investigation of Mexican Affairs* might also prove valuable.

---

Michael Stone received his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Utah in 1995. He is now working towards a master's degree in history from New Mexico State University where he is also President of the Graduate Students in History and a member-at-large for Phi Alpha Theta history honor society.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 United States Congress, Senate, *Investigation of Mexican Affairs* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920). Hereafter cited as *IMA*.

- 2 William T. Hanson to Charles V. Safford, December 2, 1919, Fall Papers, New Mexico State University Rio Grande Historical Collections.
- 3 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 3099.
- 4 N.T. Jones worked as a special agent for the Bureau of Investigation in New York City. In his brief testimony, N.T. Jones provides little information except to confirm the testimony of his brother. *IMA*, vol. II, pp. 3117-3118. It is possible that another Jones brother existed as a newspaper reporter on the Republican National Committee. Hanson to Safford, December 2, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 5 Jones used the code name "Charles Cresse" in his dealings with United States federal government officials. Charles E. Jones to Hanson, January 31, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 6 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2892.
- 7 Jones notified the Bureau of Investigation and the Fall Committee of his double-agent status. From the evidence analyzed, the Mexican government did not know of Jones' work with the Bureau until his testimony before the Fall committee. Jones to Hanson, January 31, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU. See also *IMA*, vol. II, pp. 2889-2890.
- 8 "Cresse" reports, New Orleans, February 19 and May 25, 1918, in Federal Bureau of Investigation, microcopy, no number, Record Group 65, National Archives, roll 20. Found in Harris, Charles H., & Sadler, Louis R., "United States Government Archives and the Mexican Revolution," in *The Border and the Revolution* (Las Cruces: New Mexico State University Press, 1988), p. 140 fn. 7.
- 9 Jones possibly infiltrated non-interventionist groups as well. In a letter to Judge Kearful he stated, "For your confidential information have secured some very correct inside information regarding both McDonnell and deBekker which I am quite sure you will be interested in." Jones did not specify this information in further correspondence nor did he bring it forth in his testimony before the Fall Committee. Jones to Francis J. Kearful, April 13, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 10 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2893.
- 11 Forrest C. Pendleton introduction letter for Charles E. Jones, May 28, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU. See also *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2894.
- 12 In his testimony before the Fall Committee Jones does not specify why Bielaski's resignation resulted in his discontinuance of providing reports to the Bureau. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2976.
- 13 Jones' brother accompanied him on this trip.
- 14 Jones had known Seguin before this meeting. "Cresse" Report, May 13, 1918, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 15 During this meeting Hanson asked Jones to join the Fall Committee investigation team. Jones declined stating that he had other plans. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2953.
- 16 Hanson to Safford, November 15, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Jones briefly mentioned this plot during his testimony. He quoted De Negri as stating, "one of the biggest and strongest men in Washington, who was very close to the Democratic administration - Mr. Charles Douglas, their confidential legal adviser - had told Bonillas that the State Department was most anxious to discredit the Fall committee, the National Association for the Protection of American Rights in Mexico, and others...." Other than Douglas, Jones gave the names of Lincoln Colcord and Robert Murray both newspaper reporters, and John S. Weller, employee of Penn-Mex Oil, as Americans cooperating with the Mexican government to discredit the Fall Committee. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2947.
- 19 *Congressional Record*, 63rd Congress, 1st Session. p. 1175.
- 20 Later in his testimony Jones claimed that during this meeting De Negri also revealed sympathy with "Reds." Fall had accused De Negri of socialist connections. De Negri denied the charge in a letter to the *New York Herald*. Jones claimed that during this meeting De Negri referred to the letter as "bunk," and stated that his sympathies actually lay with American socialists. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2952.
- 21 Jones and Hanson later discovered that Javier Favela was to commit the assassination. Favela owned a stamp and coin shop in New York but Jones claimed this was a cover-up for Favela's position as confidential agent for the Mexican consul general. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2975.
- 22 Jones stated that this meeting occurred at Seguin's office on November 22. This is either a typographical error or contradicts Jones' earlier testimony that his only contact with Seguin was on the telephone for that day. *IMA*, vol. II, pp. 2955-56.
- 23 Hanson to Dan M. Jackson, December 10, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 24 Fall feared some of his Mexican employees at his ranch in New Mexico. He hired a special investigator who found nothing. Report of Operative #94 of the Ben Williams Detective Agency, El Paso, February 6-9, 1920. Fall Papers, UNM. Found in C.W. Trow, "Senator Albert B. Fall and Mexican Affairs: 1912-1921" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1966), p. 416. The Washington police assigned detectives to watch Fall unbeknownst to him. *IMA*, p. 2956.
- 25 Hanson to Safford, December 2, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 26 Hanson to Safford, November 15, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 27 Kearful to Fall, December 8, 1919, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 28 The "Fall Resolution," (S. Con. Res. 21) introduced on December 3, 1919, requested the President to withdraw recognition and completely sever diplomatic ties with, "the pretended government of Carranza." 66th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 73.
- 29 Jones to Hanson, January 82, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 30 Jones to Hanson, January 31, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 31 Jones to Hanson, February 9, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 32 ones learned of this plot by gaining the confidence of Leopoldo Cordova, Honduras' consul general to the United States in New Orleans. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2989.
- 33 *IMA*, vol. II, pp. 3014-3048.
- 34 Jones to Kearful, no date, but from context appears to have been written in February 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 35 *New York Times*, May 19, 1920. The Times ran a second short piece the next day on Jones' claim that the British government aided Felix Diaz in 1917. *New York Times*, May 20, 1920.
- 36 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, May 18, 1920.
- 37 Fall received an anonymous assassination threat in March, 1920. Trow, pp. 415-416.
- 38 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2968.
- 39 *Ibid.*
- 40 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2946.
- 41 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2964.
- 42 *IMA*, vol. II, p. 2970.
- 43 Kearful sent Jones a telegram which read, "I can't go[,] see Wallace Thompson[,] Murray Hill. Kearful" Kearful to Jones, February 24, 1920, Fall Papers, NMSU. Wallace Thompson had worked as a writer for the Mexican *Herald* from 1904-1910 and served as American vice-consul in Monterrey for three months during 1918. He apparently did investigative work for Buckley. *IMA*, vol. II, p. 1909.
- 44 Trow, p. 295, n. 48; Buckley *et al* to possible members of The American Association of Mexico, January 21, 1920. Trow, p. 296, n. 51.
- 45 Jones died sometime within three months after testifying. Sydney J. Scales (Jones' widow) to Safford, January 11, 1923, Fall Papers, NMSU.
- 46 "Gompers Denounces Fall's Mexican Policy," *New York Times*, June 4, 1920.
- 47 Howard F. Cline, *The United States and Mexico* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 190.
- 48 J. Fred Rippey, *The United States and Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), p. 355.
- 49 At the end of their article "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican-United States War Crisis: A Reexamination" Harris and Sadler show that Fall's allegations of Carranza's involvement with the Plan de San Diego, viewed by many as Interventionist propaganda, actually held some correct information. Harris, Charles H., and Sadler, Louis R. "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican-United States War Crisis of 1916: A Reexamination," in *The Border and the Revolution*.

# Killed in the Line of Duty

by Elvis E Fleming

On Sunday, August 2, 1931, Chief Deputy Sheriff Rufus J. Dunnahoo, age 52, became the first deputy sheriff of Chaves County, New Mexico, to lose his life in the line of duty. His killer readily admitted guilt on the spot and again at his arraignment the following day; however, the law did not permit a guilty plea for a capital crime. The citizens of Chaves County passionately followed the highly dramatic, well publicized court proceedings.

Sheriff John Peck and Chief Deputy Dunnahoo made a routine morning drive from Roswell nineteen miles south to Greenfield, en route picking up Deputy Dwight Herbst from his service station in Dexter. They had been tipped that one Gilford I. Welch might have some parts that had been taken from Fred Powell's Ford that had burned and been left on the road nearby about two weeks earlier.

For about two years, Gilford Welch, 36, had been renting a farm just south of Greenfield on the road between Dexter and Hagerman. Four people were in the three-room frame farmhouse: Welch's wife Lillian, Estelle (16, her daughter by a previous husband), Iris (15 months, the gravely ill youngest of the Welch's three sons), and John Ross (18, family friend and employee). The Welch's other two sons, Franklin (11) and Andrew (8) were also on the property. Welch had been out front talking with his landlord Charles L. Appleby, but had walked toward the rear of the house when the Sheriff's party arrived about 11:15 a.m. Deputy Herbst recognized Appleby and asked for Welch, who appeared from behind the house.

Upon being told the lawmen's business, Welch said "The license plates are here...in this truck bed." The plates were not there and the sheriff asked "Do you object to me searching your place?" to which, according to Sheriff Peck's later testimony, Welch replied, "No, I will help you." Sheriff Peck and Deputy Herbst began searching the outbuildings while Chief Deputy Dunnahoo went in the house. He emerged with a license plate, hanger, and bracket from the wrecked car. "Here is the license plates," he said to Welch, "you might as well come across with the other things. We are going to take you with us." Welch retorted, "All right, let's go."

The chief deputy returned to the house, accompanied by the sheriff. There was no protest from Welch, but he began to tell the officers about his sick baby and that he did not want them to disturb the child. Peck assured him they would not. The sheriff proceeded into the east room and found the two missing headlights in a sack hanging on the wall. He took them to his car and returned to the room where Dunnahoo was. Welch went outside the house and looked in through the north window. He saw

Dunnahoo on his knees beside the bed where the Welch baby lay and Mrs. Welch sat beside him, crying. Welch claimed that Dunnahoo was pulling boxes from under the bed, resting his elbow on the bed, causing the bed to shake.

In court testimony, Welch explained his emotional state at the time of the sheriff's visit. His wife was "in bad condition." She was pregnant; she had been having fainting spells and they were afraid she might have a miscarriage. In spite of her other problems, she had been caring for the sick baby. Welch himself was also tired, nervous, and worried, he said. He was behind in his farm work, but he was plowing every day and sitting up with his sick child at night. When he saw Deputy Dunnahoo pulling things from under the bed, he said, and shaking the bed where his wife and sick baby were, he became enraged. He shouted for his wife and children to get away.

Presently, Sheriff Peck and then Welch came through the west doorway into the room where Mrs. Welch sat crying. Welch hurried through the middle room to the southeast corner of the house and retrieved a 9-shot 380 automatic handgun that was hanging on a nail behind a dresser. Estelle tried to talk her step-father into putting the gun away or giving it to her. He refused and told her to get back. Mrs. Welch told her husband, "Be careful now. We have enough trouble already."

Welch confronted the sheriff at the door between the east and middle rooms and told him that they were in his house without a search warrant. Peck replied, "I have a search warrant." Welch said, "Let's see it." Peck pulled a paper about half-way out of his pocket and then put it back. "Let's see it," Welch demanded. "You can't take me away from my sick baby," he raged at Peck and Dunnahoo. Peck moved toward him. "Don't come in here. G--d--- you, I will kill you," Welch declared, according to Peck.

"Why, man, you can't afford to do anything like that. This case doesn't amount to anything," Peck said to the agitated man. Welch said, "You will disturb my baby." Peck replied, "I will not disturb your baby; you are the only one that is making a disturbance." Welch charged, "You haven't got a search warrant." As Welch started coming toward the two officers, the sheriff tried to reason with him. "I don't need a search warrant," the sheriff maintained; "You gave me permission to search your house, search your place." Welch was very angry and ordered the men out of the house.

When the sheriff saw that Welch wouldn't listen to reason, he nodded for Dunnahoo to approach Welch from behind. Dunnahoo could have shot Welch at any time,



Rufus J. Dunnahoo Family: Rufe, son Alex, daughter Kate, wife Mary "Lady" Chewning. Courtesy of Owens Dunnahoo.

but he never drew his weapon. The sheriff had not even bothered to arm himself because he had not considered the situation to be serious nor dangerous.

Welch was standing at the foot of the bed by his wife, with the baby lying on the side of the bed. He claimed he was holding the gun down and not pointing it at anyone. The lawmen each suddenly grabbed Welch by an arm, Peck on his right and Dunnahoo on his left, and told him to hand the gun to his wife. He maintained later that he attempted to hand her the gun, but Dunnahoo grabbed the barrel and Peck grabbed Welch's hand so that all three had hold of the pistol. Mrs. Welch fled with the baby.

As they struggled, Welch pushed Dunnahoo onto the bed in the corner of the room. Welch fell on top of him, and Peck on top of Welch. Welch somehow got his right arm loose and started shooting. The first shot struck Dunnahoo as he fell on the bed. The bullet entered the left side of the neck just above the collarbone, ranged upward, and lodged in his brain. It killed him instantly.

Welch fired two more shots at Peck, one of which went out through the roof. "Get up!" Welch ordered the sheriff. "Get out!" Peck backed out of the room and ran to get his pistol from the glove compartment of his car; Welch followed him and demanded to see a search warrant. Welch fired at Peck three to five times, but none of the shots found their target. One shot went between the legs of unarmed Deputy Herbst and another narrowly missed his arm. Welch quickly reloaded while Peck got his gun and opened fire, which Welch returned. Neither man was hit.

Peck asked Welch to let him go into the house to see if he could help Chief Deputy Dunnahoo. According to Herbst, Welch warned the sheriff, "Don't you try to go into that house, or I will kill you." Welch backed into the house and soon ran out the back door and barricaded himself in a barn. When Welch left the house, Peck and Herbst rushed to Dunnahoo's side. Sheriff Peck then hurried to summon a doctor and an ambulance; he also sent to Dexter and Hagerman for back-up. Herbst and John Ross carried Dunnahoo outside and determined that he was dead.

Welch fled across a cotton field; Sheriff Peck took up the chase and fired several times at him. Welch went into a field of corn that was tall enough to hide him. A bit later, Welch came out of the cornfield and onto the Dexter-Hagerman road. Peck almost caught up to him as Welch stood by the roadside with his gun in hand. Welch then ran for his house; the sheriff fired once more at him as he renewed pursuit.

When Welch returned to the house, he ran up to Appleby and asked in anguish, "Did I give them permission to go into my house? Did they have a search warrant?" Welch called his family to him to tell them goodbye. "I am going to kill the other officers and then I am going to kill myself," Welch declared to his shocked family. They convinced him to give up without any more resistance.

By that time, a posse of armed men had arrived and were surrounding the house in preparation for a gunfight. Deputy Jim Williamson, who knew Welch, arrived from Hagerman. Welch sent a message by Estelle and Franklin that he would surrender to Williamson if the latter would come to the house. "I won't surrender to Peck or anyone else."

Williamson went in the house, disarmed Welch, and arrested him. Welch told Williamson, "I killed Dunnahoo because he made me mad when he started to search my home. The only reason I did not kill Sheriff Peck was because of the fact that I ran out of ammunition."

Peck and Williamson placed Welch in the sheriff's car to transport him to the county jail, while a Talmage ambulance carried the body of the slain chief deputy to Roswell. Feelings were already running high in Dexter over Dunnahoo's killing. As the sheriff was starting the trip to Roswell, a man came up to the side of the car, armed with a rifle and a shotgun. "If you will get out, I will end this case right here!" the unidentified man asserted. There were other "mutterings" and threats as the lawmen carried their prisoner toward Roswell.

Welch talked incessantly on a variety of subjects during the half-hour ride to town. He explained to the lawmen that he was a "good man"; he also began to recognize the magnitude of his crime and tried to get the sheriff to kill him. "Take me out to the side of the road and kill me," Welch pleaded over and over with the sheriff. They placed the suspect alone in a Chaves County Jail cell and allowed no one to see him.

That afternoon, Coroner W.C. Winston held an inquest over Dunnahoo's body. Dr. W.W. Phillips examined the wound and traced the course of the bullet which had taken Dunnahoo's life. The doctor said, "...Dunnahoo probably never knew what struck him."

On Monday morning at 11:00, Winston, who was also Justice of the Peace, arraigned Welch for Dunnahoo's killing. District Attorney Judson G. Osburn read the charge of first-degree murder, stating that Dunnahoo was killed wantonly and with malice aforethought. "I'm guilty," Welch answered; but the plea was not accepted because the law did not permit a guilty plea for a capital crime. Welch was remanded to the county jail without bond. He was kept in a cell by himself, with no visitors allowed. A group of boys from Hagerman asked to see him, but were refused.

Two days later, August 5, funeral services for Dunnahoo were held at the Talmage Chapel. The Reverend C.C. Hill, pastor of First Christian Church, officiated. A men's quartet from the church provided the music. City and county police officers were the active casket bearers, with numerous other friends designated as honorary bearers. Burial was at South Park Cemetery.

Rufus J. Dunnahoo was one of the earliest settlers of the Pecos Valley. He was born in San Antonio, Texas, on August 31, 1879, to Rufus Henry and Virginia Danner Dunnahoo. The family came to New Mexico in 1880, settling for a while at Seven Rivers before moving on to Roswell. Roswell was a little burg of only about 300 people at that time. The elder Dunnahoo started a blacksmith shop at 4th and Main in 1881.

The Dunnahoo family had four children. Pearl stayed in Texas, while Alex, Rufus J., and Maude came to New Mexico with their parents. Two others were born after the move to Roswell: Sally and John Poe. Sally and Rufe married Henry and Mary "Lady" Chewning, respectively, a brother and sister.

Rufe J. Dunnahoo started a 20-year career as a law officer about 1911, serving as constable, city police officer, and deputy sheriff. His homicide cut his life short less than a month before his 52nd birthday. The *Roswell Daily Record* stated, "He was known as an efficient, courageous, and faithful officer and...his life was snuffed out while he was acting in the line of duty."

Dunnahoo was survived by his wife, Mary, and their two children: Alex of Roswell and Mrs. Edgar Peters of Clovis. His father, Rufus H., 82, also survived; his mother had died in 1912. Other survivors were his brothers, Alex of Roswell; J.P. of Canon City, Colorado who was police chief there; and his sister, Sally Chewning of Roswell. On Friday, August 7, 1931, District Judge G.A.



John C. Peck, Sherrif of Chaves County, NM 1921-24 & 1931-34. Courtesy of Historical Center for Southern New Mexico, Roswell.

Richardson conducted a preliminary hearing for Gilford Issac Welch at the Chaves County Courthouse. Welch pleaded "not guilty" to murdering Rufe Dunnahoo. Trial was set for September 1; but Welch's attorney, George A. Threlkeld, served notice that he would file a motion for a change of venue. He said the motion would argue that a fair and impartial trial would not be possible in Chaves County because of bias and prejudice on the part of Dunnahoo's friends toward Welch. When the date of the trial arrived, it was announced that the trial would be moved to Carlsbad and would take place on October 6. Welch's trial placed some of New Mexico's leading minds before the public. First District Judge Miguel A. Otero, Jr., former Territorial governor, was assigned to preside at the trial. Attorney L.O. Fullen of Roswell — "a brilliant and powerful orator" — was secured to assist the state in the prosecution of the case, along with James N. Bujac. The defense was

directed by former District Judge Carl A. Hatch (later U.S. Senator) of Clovis and attorney Caswell Neal. The state announced that it would seek the death penalty, maintaining that the homicide was premeditated and with malice, constituting first-degree murder.

There were additional delays, but the trial finally came off during the week of October 12. There were a number of points made by the defense. One question was whether Welch intended to steal the car parts or merely hold them for the owner. A second question was whether Welch had given permission to the law officers to search his house, as they claimed. Third was the question of whether Dunnahoo was shot while trying to make a lawful arrest. Welch claimed they had made no mention of arresting him. Other points were the issue of whether Welch intended to kill any of the officers and if the shooting were intentional or accidental. Welch claimed the shooting was accidental as a result of the officers' attempt to disarm him. The prosecution and the defense differed on all of these points.

Welch's main defense was that the law officers did not have a warrant to search his house and that he had a constitutional right to arm himself to protect his home and family against unwelcome entry of his home by law officers. The jury was instructed that they could find Welch guilty of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, or voluntary manslaughter; or they could acquit him. The Carlsbad jury got the case on October 16 and deliberated for 2 hours and 15 minutes. They brought in the verdict that Welch was guilty of second-degree murder. Welch was sentenced to serve 40-to-90 years in the state penitentiary.

Welch's trial was followed by the usual legal procedures. The state Supreme Court took up the case



in the 1933 session. Its decision discussed many of the finer points of the law, such as definitions of “homicide,” different degrees of murder and manslaughter, and the proper defenses for each of the crimes.

The Supreme Court found a number of problems with the lower court proceedings. One was that the jury was not given “...correct and clear instructions regarding the law of search and seizure, of arrest, and of defense of habitation.” A major problem was that the prosecution had mixed the appropriate defenses of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, and voluntary manslaughter. This meant that if Welch should ultimately be found guilty of either of the lesser charges in this trial, he could never be tried again for first-degree murder. It was left up to the jury to determine the degree murder, which was an improper procedure.

Welch’s arming of himself in resisting the officers was a lawful act, the Supreme Court opined. Since the officers had no warrants, Welch’s shooting of Dunnahoo while resisting arrest resulted in involuntary manslaughter, which was a misdemeanor — not a felony. However, because of the curious mixing of defenses, the prosecution was “...unduly limiting (Welch’s) defense of excusable homicide...”

The Supreme Court’s decision, handed down on September 29, 1933, was to reverse Welch’s conviction and remand the case to the Eddy County district court for a new trial. The new trial was finally held in September 1934 — more than three years after Dunnahoo’s killing. The court dismissed the first- and second-degree murder counts in the original charges.

District Attorney Judson G. Osburn decided to try Welch only on the charge of voluntary manslaughter, disagreeing with the Supreme Court’s opinion that Welch’s

killing of Deputy Dunnahoo was a lawful act while protecting his home from intruders, constituting involuntary manslaughter. Welch pleaded guilty to the lesser charge and was convicted. On October 19, 1934, Fifth District Court Judge James B. McGhee sentenced Welch to four-to-five years in the state penitentiary. No further records of Welch or his family are available.

The killing of Dunnahoo and the first trial of Welch both created much excitement in southeastern New Mexico. Apparently because of Dunnahoo’s favorable reputation, the public demanded retribution. Unfortunately, the sheriff’s carelessness in neglecting to secure search and arrest warrants and to arm himself, together with the botched prosecution of Welch by the District Attorney, had the effect of trivializing the death of a capable lawman who was held in high esteem by his peers and the public.

---

ELVIS E. FLEMING, previously contributed “The Bar V Ranch: Cattle Empire on the Pecos: to the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. V, No. 1, January 1998. He is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the Dona Ana County Historical Society’s Annual Awards Banquet on 30 January 1999.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 This article is derived from contemporary newspaper accounts and court records.
- 2 In May, 1996, *New Mexico’s Finest: Peace Officers Killed in the Line of Duty, 1847-1996*, was published in observance of New Mexico Police Memorial Day. This book was written by Special Agent Don Bullis of the Criminal Intelligence Section of the New Mexico Department of Public Safety. However, there is no mention of Rufus J. Dunnahoo. The archives of the Historical Center for Southeast New Mexico in Roswell has collected information on Dunnahoo for inclusion in the next revision of Bullis’ book, expected in 1999 or 2000. Bullis already has used their documentation to have Dunnahoo’s name inscribed on the Law Enforcement Memorial Monument at the police training academy in Santa Fe.

## Book Reviews

***Into the Far, Wild Country: True Tales of the Old Southwest***, by George Wythe Baylor. Edited with introduction by Jerry D. Thompson. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1996. 442 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio. \$30.00, hardcover.

The Baylor name has figured prominently in the history and geography of southern New Mexico: George Wythe Baylor (1832-1916) was a younger brother of John Robert Baylor, who commanded the initial Confederate occupation force in Southern New Mexico. Both men had interesting careers as did other family members; perhaps a “family history” would be in order, but it would be a tall order.

This book includes writings by G.W. Baylor describing his own personal experiences and recounting many stories of persons known to him. Most interesting and useful to southern New Mexico readers are accounts published by him 1899-1906, in the *El Paso Daily Herald*. Only a few of the fifty-two original articles could be included in this book. Most of these pieces derive from the period when he commanded the Texas Ranger detachment stationed at Ysleta, 1879-85. They chiefly involve pursuing and fighting Native Americans, and the point of view and language are of Baylor’s time, not “politically correct” for the late 20th century.

Making allowance for this, readers should simply enjoy perusing these stories; they are documents of their time. But there are tidbits of information and insights to be found also. The editor’s copious, authoritative documentation is very useful and will satisfy the curiosity of most readers (184 notes for first 37 pages), but some small errors may be found. Soledad Canyon is not on the east side of the Organ Mountains, for instance (p. 343). One wonders what is meant by the “Filipino amigo game” (p. 262), and it is amusing to find Chihuahua’s capital city spelled “Ciudad” on a map (p. 274).

Other aspects of G.W. Baylor’s long, varied career are touched upon in other writings included in this book, such as life in 1840s-1850s Texas, and in gold-rush California where he spent six years. The civil war years are taken more, in writings in this book, with Baylor’s relationship and service with Confederate General A.S. Johnston than with the Texan attempt to conquer New Mexico. His service with the Texas Rangers ended, Baylor lived on in the El Paso area, busied in part with family affairs. In 1901 he moved to Mexico where his daughter Helen’s husband was involved in railroad construction, and lived there until his death.

The book’s last section consists simply of “stories,” not intended to be factual accounts nor subject to much editorial attention. They are worth a reader’s time,

however, involving much lore — see especially “Cito, the Wolf Dog,” pp. 355-408.

This interesting volume provides us with another reason to lament the “bottom line” preoccupation at the University of Texas, El Paso, reportedly forcing the closing down of a press which has given us many invaluable titles over the last forty-plus years. International renown came to the Texas Western Press because of the published work of Cart Hertzog, Jose Cisneros, Francis Fugate and many others — no more.

John Porter Bloom  
Las Cruces, NM

***Doniphan’s Expedition*** by John Taylor Hughes. Introduction by Joseph G. Dawson III. College Station: Texas ABM Press, 1997 (originally published 1847). 202 pp., \$7.95, paper.

According to author John Taylor Hughes, members of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers of Mexican-American War fame (1846-48), were a “blooming host of young life, the elite of Missouri...full of spirit, full of generous enthusiasm, burning for the battlefield and panting for the rewards of honorable victory.” In his almost day-by-day account of their military activities, he dramatically and with full “Manifest Destiny” flavor, describes the trials and accomplishments of this heterogeneous group of volunteer warriors, which included farmers, lawyers, doctors, legislators, professors, students and artisans. Without pay until the end of their tour of duty, they contributed to the taking of Santa Fe, the subjugation of marauding Navajos, victories at the Battles of Brazito and Sacramento, and the eventual occupation of Chihuahua, Mexico.

As part of General Stephen W. Kearney’s “Army of the West,” and under the direct leadership of Colonel Alexander Doniphan, lawyer turned volunteer soldier, the Missouri Volunteers began their adventure at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in June of 1846. By February of 1847, they were experienced veterans of combat deep in Mexico — celebrating their personal achievements in battle and an approaching United States victory. By July, 1847, they were headed by steamship for New Orleans and an eventual return to their home state.

Writing in the style of the day, which advanced the notion of Anglo-American superiority, Hughes, himself a member of the regiment, extols the virtues of his fellow Missourians while punctuating his work with negative perceptions of Mexicans and Native Americans. In a letter to the United States War Department, for example, Hughes suggests that if the Rio Grande valley were cultivated by an “energetic American population it would yield, perhaps, ten times the quantity of wine and fruits at present produced.”

---

Hughes describes the extreme hardships endured by the men: a constant shortage of water, a lack of food and provisions, a scarcity of forage for their animals, the rigors of navigating rough terrain, and the persistent presence of illness and disease. It is clear that the Missouri troops were driven by patriotic fervor and an urge for excitement — certainly not money, food, elegant uniforms, prestige nor comfort!

While the book's print is small, and the "daily log style" of writing somewhat laborious to read, Hughes' account is both captivating and enlightening. Furthermore, the introduction by Joseph G. Dawson, III, is a helpful and concise interpretation of early relations between the United States and Mexico and the events leading to war.

*Doniphan's Expedition* provides readers with a close-up look at this regiment's significance in the Mexican-American War. It also brings to light the passion associated with the concept of Manifest Destiny and the fervent vision of what Americans were, what they believed in, and how they justified and explained American movement West and Southwest.

Dr. Donna Eichstaedt Department of History  
University of Texas  
El Paso, Texas

***Houses in Time: A Tour Through New Mexico History*** by Linda G. Harris. Las Cruces: Arroyo Press, 1997. 195 pp., glossary, suggested reading list. \$34.95, hardcover.

Reading *Houses in Time* is not unlike spending a day in an art gallery. One is encouraged to take a stroll by some eighty-eight striking black and white photos of houses chosen from the length and breadth of New Mexico, each accompanied by elegantly written prose that describes the architecture of the house and places it in historical context.

*Houses in Time* at first glance seems a standard coffee table book, one intended to serve as a decorative item rather than a book that actually deserves to be read. But initial impressions in this case are deceptive. This is a book that deserves to be read, and everything about it has been designed to make such an effort easy and enjoyable. Each photograph is on an even numbered page, with the text on the facing odd numbered page. The casual reader can thus open the book randomly and be treated to the story of the pictured house and, in most instances, to historical information that goes beyond the house itself. If, however, the reader chooses to read *Houses in Time* straight through, the impact is mesmerizing. The black and white photography creates emotional tones impossible in color photography. It also emphasizes the structure of each home. This prepares the reader for the spare and often poignant text explaining the architecture and history of the structure.

And what a choice of houses! They bracket a range

of time from the earliest to the very recent: the Pueblos, hogans, Pueblo Revival, Territorial, Queen Anne, Jacobean, New Mexico Vernacular, Italianate, Tudor, Art Deco, Prairie, California Mission, Western Stick, Spanish Colonial, Hacienda, and Adamesque. For good measure, Ms. Harris has included a boxcar house, a *jacal* house, and a house (with an uplifting story) built by Habitat for Humanity. Some of the architects whose work is included are prominent in the architectural history of New Mexico: John Gaw Meem, the Rapp brothers, and Gustavus Trost (the brother of Henry C., who designed the original NMSU campus). The book has a glossary of architectural terms to supplement the excellent descriptions given for the houses.

The houses come not only from all corners of the State but range from the grand (for example, the Luna Mansion at Highway 6 and Highway 314 in Los Lunas) to the forgotten and forlorn — a boxcar house on Derry Street in Rincon.

The closing comments in the text for the boxcar house exemplify the reflective tone in *Houses in Time*:

Today, Rincon is nearly a ghost town. The Harvey House is gone. So are the hotels. The railroad depot and a one-room post office stand as Rincon's only proof of viability. Mobile homes are scattered among simple adobe and frame houses. On Derry Street a boxcar house, recently vacated in favor of an adobe home, is a weathered memento of the time Rincon wanted to be a railroad town.

For architectural interpretation, the text for the Thompson House at 409 West Las Cruces Avenue in Las Cruces is hard to beat:

In 1909 the newlyweds built a one-story stuccoed adobe in the Western Stick style, a California variation of the widely popular Craftsman style. Craftsman is defined by structural simplicity — open eaves, wide roof overhang, and exposed rafter ends. About 1903 in Pasadena, two brothers, Charles and Henry Greene, replaced the heaviness of Craftsman with a blend of Spanish and Oriental elements to produce high-style wooden architecture. At first, Spanish and Oriental styles seem a strange pairing. On second thought, the rafter ends of the Thompson house do resemble Spanish carved corbels and with a slight upward curve, they would be perfectly at home on a Japanese bungalow.

*Houses in Time* should be included with *Roadside Geology of New Mexico* as a traveling companion on trips throughout the State rather than being left on a coffee table. But first, find a comfortable easy chair, put on Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, kick back, and enjoy.

Richard Magee  
Las Cruces, NM

---

***Inventing Billy the Kid, Visions of the Outlaw in America, 1881-1981*** by Stephen Tatum. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997 (originally published 1982). 236 pp., \$19.95, paper.

We have all wondered why there are so many different opinions about what the Kid was like. If you asked 25 people, you would get 25 different answers. It turns out, according to author Stephen Tatum, that just about every one of those opinions has at some time in the last 118 years been touted by different dime novelists, film makers, musicians and writers of both serious and not so serious material. And every generation or two the perspective of the story teller has changed, influenced by the moods and interests of the country at the time, the creator's view of history and the extent of the literary license that he might take. This is how the many Kids have been invented.

This well written and reasoned book is not a rehash of the Kid's exploits. It is a look by a real social historian at the history of the Kid's images, those different images invented over time, which are a history in themselves.

Tatum first reviews the 40 years following the Kid's death (1881-1925), when he was treated in both fiction and non fiction as the unredeemable outlaw, and Pat Garrett was treated as the mainstay of law and order, primarily as the result of his own accounts of the Kid along with those of Hough, Siringo and a few others.

The next 30 years (1925-1955) of the Kid's image is looked at in terms of the newly published William Burns' *Saga of Billy the Kid*, which was the first effort to portray him as the bandit hero. The first Kid movie appeared in 1930, and once again interest in him peaked as the public became increasingly interested in a new breed of outlaw, the gangsters of Prohibition. In the writings of his period, the Kid's outlaw deeds and tactics were actually looked at as more manly and preferable to the gangsters' way of doing business. Tatum traces the Kid's transformation in image during this period from that of a bloodthirsty, wild juvenile, to becoming viewed as a good- badman, a Robin Hood of the West, or as a bandit Samaritan, while Garrett begins to receive criticism for the shot he fired that night in Maxwell's dark bedroom.

And then from 1955-1961, the portrayal of the Kid is as a more psychologically complex outlaw. From that point on, from the Cold War years through Watergate, the pendulum again swung toward a new image, this one due to more detail-minded historians who believed in in-depth research more than storytelling. These methods tended to make the Kid's personality and deeds more factual and less hyped.

Is any image of the Kid the correct one? Each one has some truth and some fiction to it, he says, even the tales that fall into the category of legend. The Kid's exploits as legend were growing even before his death, and in the author's view, a quest for the one definitive Billy the Kid is just not possible. The facts, legend and myth need to be accepted in part right along with the

historical Kid.

The book closes with a fascinating series of answers to the question of how and why the Kid became the preeminent outlaw in New Mexico, instead of someone as equally notorious, such as Jesse Evans. His answers to this question are enlightening, revealing and objective.

This is superb reading by a gifted and thoughtful author. No enthusiast of the Kid and his times can overlook this portrayal of the historical Kid versus the invented Kid. It helps us put the Kid in perspective and appreciate the good and bad attributes that made him a very uncommon outlaw.

Herb Marsh, Jr.  
El Paso

***One Book at a Time: The History of the Library in New Mexico*** by Linda G. Harris. Albuquerque: New Mexico Library Foundation, 1998. **Illustrations,** notes, bibliography, chronology, acknowledgments, index. xi+139 pp. \$20.00, paper.

In today's world with its plethora of almost everything, including books and electronically attainable information, library users and librarians need to be reminded that not too long ago libraries were indeed being developed one book at a time. Community by community, New Mexicans share a common heritage: a library that came into being because a small group of people (often a local women's club) obstinately insisted, "We need a library!" These enthusiasts proceeded to find some books, a place to keep them, some basic supplies and furnishings, funds to maintain the library on a continuing basis, and a person or persons to systematize, process and circulate the books. This story of the myriad methods of accomplishing these goals is a valuable contribution to New Mexico's social history.

This publication is the first major project of the New Mexico Library Foundation, organized in 1992 under the auspices of the New Mexico Library Association. The Foundation trustees wisely chose as author a writer of popular history, a strong friend and user of libraries, rather than a professional librarian. Linda Harris visited many libraries and interviewed librarians throughout the state to abstract the very human experiences of the formation of its libraries in cities, pueblos, towns and villages; on reservations; in schools, colleges and universities; in state government; and in specialized institutions and organizations, both public and private.

The author painstakingly sought out existing pictures and supplemented these with current photographs by Pamela Porter, all meticulously identified to visually complement and enhance the text. Many interior and exterior views of libraries are included, but the emphasis is on people — readers, librarians, groundbreakers. Nor is the animal world neglected. See not just library cats, but riding horses, plow horses, and even a Holstein bull that contributed to library development!

---

The opening chapter documents the earliest tradition of libraries in this section of the New World, confirming the close ties between both religious and secular education and the growth of private and individual book collections. As organized government invaded the Territory of New Mexico, collections of law books became essential to extend legal interpretation beyond the two-book law library utilized by the U.S. Attorney who covered a thousand-mile circuit in the 1850s. The lack of money to house and maintain basic government documents and a scarcity of interested and capable librarians kept Territorial New Mexico's archives in a disreputable state for most of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The book makes no pretense of being a definitive, statistic-packed chronicle of the physical growth of libraries in New Mexico. It is a true, lively, anecdotal account of human beings striving to make reading matter available to people in their communities. This is its forte and this is what makes it so delightfully readable.

While *One Book at a Time* emphasizes the beginnings of libraries and library organizations, space limitations prevented the inclusion of many of the equally interesting cooperative efforts of librarians during New Mexico Library Association's maturing and fruitful years. Also, a close examination of the book's notes and bibliography reveals a real dearth of published histories of individual libraries. A valuable project that could begin now is for NMLA to foster the writing and publication of each library's individual history, perhaps sponsored by each Friends of the Library organization.

*One Book at a Time*. This is one book that every library and every librarian in New Mexico should add to their book collections to maintain a sense of the past as an historic presence.

Christine B. Myers  
Las Cruces, NM

**H***istory of the Lincoln County War: A Classic Account of Billy the Kid* by Maurice Garland Fulton. Edited by Robert N. Mullin. Tucson: University of Arizona, 1997 (originally published 1968). 403 pp. \$19.95, paper.

The Lincoln County War lasted only some five months. Nothing was gained. Nobody won. Lives were lost. Businesses and property were destroyed. It began and ended with cowardly murders by despicable, partisan lawmen. John Tunstall was killed February 18, 1878, as he rode peacefully toward members of a deputized posse. Alexander McSween was murdered July 19, 1878, as he and others in his group were attempting to surrender to a sheriff's posse.

John Chisum and the Murphy-Dolan contingent seeking political power and financial gain instigated this frontier feud and range war. Both sides wanted cold, hard Federal monies available through government contracts.

The struggle for these agreements to supply beef for the military posts and Indian reservations resulted in bloodshed, human ugliness and the legend of Billy the Kid.

Colonel Fulton's compilation of facts, quotes, legal documents, photographs, interviews, court testimony and maps presents a fact-filled narrative. It cries for the need of documentation. From whom did Fulton find out the conversation he quotes seemingly verbatim between John Chisum and Billy the Kid? Where did he discover the direction in which various parties, posses and individuals rode in pursuit or toward a safe haven? This book's value as an historical resource would be heightened with the addition of a list of sources, location of archival materials and conventional documentation such as notes accompanying each chapter and photos being dated.

A more satisfying and readable account of the same event and people is *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History* by Frederick Nolan, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. This history is also densely packed with facts but is better organized. In addition to the fast-paced narrative, the reader can refer to numerous resources included for necessary clarification: a documented list of photographs, biographical sketches of numerous participants in the war, copies of pages from Tunstall's account books, a chronology of events from 1816 to 1881, chapter notes, a full bibliography and detailed index.

Anne Stewart  
Radium Springs, NM

**E***l Llano Estacado: Exploration and Imagination on the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico, 1536-1860* by John Miller Morris. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997. 414 pp., bibliography, notes, index. \$39.95, hardcover.

The region known as El Llano Estacado, the Staked Plains, The Stake Prairie, the Elevated Prairies, the Southern High Plains, or the Great American Desert is a 50,000 square mile mesa straddling the eastern New Mexico/ western Texas border. It is a roughly triangular geographic anomaly that piqued the imagination of travelers from the early 16th century Spanish explorations (some routes of which are still largely a mystery) until after the mid-19th century U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers' expeditions for the *Pacific Railroad Surveys*. Rising from a point in Midland County, Texas, the landform tapers northwesterly along the Pecos River and northeasterly through the canyons of the Colorado, Brazos, and Red Rivers to a broad northern boundary paralleling the Canadian River and U.S. Interstate 40.

The author, assistant professor of social geography and interdisciplinary studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio, has chronicled the ancient land of the Comanches and Jumanos in four chronological sections as reported from the perspectives of European, Mexican and U.S. travelers and scholars. Their words are often

---

poetic, frequently contradictory, and exclamatory at the vast undulating landscape that camouflages canyon abysses that could shelter great herds of buffalo and which screens life-sustaining water sources from any appreciable distance.

More than history or geography, more than grand adventure or discovery, the book is also an examination of the magic of the *Llano's* illusions and mirages, of its landmark-free horizons which cause disorientation and produce an introspective sense of solitude, melancholy and loneliness. Like the artisan of a mosaic, the author has incorporated gems of information on rare flora, wildlife migrations, geological features, archaeological findings, and references to the *Llano* found in popular literature.

Professor Morris discusses various theories of the derivation of the term *El Llano Estacado* (The Staked Plains) including the practice of driving stakes in the ground to tether horses or to mark waterholes or trails, poles erected to string lines of bison-hide strips to hand meat for curing, the stockade- or palisade-like cliffs that lift the mesa to 4,500 feet above sea level, the preponderance of yucca plants with innumerable stake-like stalks reaching skyward, and a corruption of *El Llano Destacado* (the uplifted plain), employing the word *destacado* (upraised, uplifted, embossed). He displays an enthusiastic linguistic appreciation in discussing Spanish toponyms (geographical place names with a strong environmental basis useful for illiterate travelers) contrasted with later abstract Anglo place names honoring events, heroes, or themselves. He reveals the etymology of the misleading name of the Canadian River, which had nothing to do with Canadian explorers and everything to do with perpetuation of an early printer's failure to use a tilde over the "n" (ñ) in the Spanish *Rio Canada* (Canyon River).

The text of this comprehensive study is enhanced by 16 excellent historical maps depicting the imagined or known features of the high plains region during various eras and 22 other illustrations, most of which are sensitively rendered lithograph and woodcut print landscapes. Professor Morris has produced a fascinating and exhaustive examination of a unique area. It should become a major sourcebook for all interested in southeastern New Mexico and northwestern Texas. The publisher would have done it better service to have focused less on conserving paper and more on using a larger type, more friendly to aging eyes.

M.A. Walton  
Las Cruces, NM

**M***assacre on the Lordsburg Road: "Tragedy of the Apache Wars,"* by Marc Simmons. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997. 250 pp. \$27.95, hardcover.

Marc Simmons has a special talent for selecting an

historic incident (adventure or misadventure), researching it thoroughly, delving into the background, and weaving it all into an articulate and readable story. His 1997 book, *Massacre on the Lordsburg Road*, explores the little-known incident involving Judge H.C. McComas, his wife and their young son. On a spring day in 1883 the parents were murdered in cold blood by Apache Indians as the family traveled by buckboard from Silver City enroute to Lordsburg. This part of the story occurs in Chapter 6.

However, earlier chapters note that the story has its roots deep in the history of the Apache disturbances in New Mexico, Arizona, and northern Mexico. Conflicts between the various Apache bands and the increasing numbers of Anglo miners and settlers rose steadily after the 1820s and finally culminated in U.S. military campaigns. According to the author, there were "mutual misunderstandings" and... "in the matter of savagery, there is enough guilt for all sides to have their **full share.**" The author also recounts the history of the bitter enmity between the Apaches and the Mexicans of the border areas. His explanation of the Apache traditions of raiding, revenge, and collective guilt are helpful in understanding the viciousness of many of the attacks on whites moving into the area.

Attempts to confine the Apaches on reservations, particularly the San Carlos reservation in eastern Arizona, added to the turmoil. San Carlos, says Simmons, "was incapable of accommodating the large numbers of Apaches suddenly dumped within its boundaries." After outbreaks and atrocities in 1882, General George Crook was assigned for a second tour of duty in the Department of Arizona. During an earlier assignment there in 1871-75, he had earned a reputation for firm and effective dealing with the Apaches — and for treating Indians honestly. Also, in 1882, Judge McComas moved his family to Silver City, NM. He had a legal practice as well as various mining interests. The legal firm more or less specialized in cases involving the mining industry.

Unknown to the McComas family were events occurring within the Apache enclave about three days' ride south in Sonora, Mexico. On March 21, 1883, a small war party under the leadership of Chato crossed into Arizona and commenced a "whirlwind raid that would leave a string of bloody corpses in its wake." Without definite knowledge of this raiding party, Judge McComas, along with his wife, Juniata, and their 6-year-old son, Charley, started out on the ill-fated trip by buckboard on the road from Silver City to Lordsburg. He planned to take care of some legal business for a mining firm in Lordsburg.

The following day, March 28, 1883, as the McComas family stopped for a picnic lunch, their path crossed that of Chato's raiding party. The Judge and Juniata were killed on the spot. Young Charley was captured and carried away by an Apache warrior. Search parties attempted to locate him. Various stories circulated about his fate.

---

However, it is considered virtually certain that he died during an attack by General Crook on an Apache camp. This book offers a smorgasbord of the history of the Apaches, a biography of the extended McComas family, and the story of the McComas misadventure on that day in 1883 at the side of the Lordsburg road. Although wordy in places, the historical research is thorough and the bibliography extensive. The preface, explaining in detail how the author located, researched and pieced together frag-

ments of information, is an enticing introduction to the book. It is highly recommended for those with some serious interest in the history of Southwestern New Mexico and the conflicts with the Apaches.

Author Marc Simmons, Cerrillos, NM, is a prominent historian of the Southwest and the author of numerous books and articles.

Julia Wilke  
Las Cruces, NM

---

## Inquiry

### *Borderland Rider and Dog: An Identifying Symbol?*

by  
Madeleine Vessel

The sketch of a borderland rider and dog (figure 1), typical of the period 1880-1890, by El Paso artist Jose Cisneros, made its debut as the Dona Ana County Historical Society's logo when it appeared on the cover of the annual banquet bulletin in 1990, replacing the Society's original seal and motto which had been in existence since 1966.<sup>1</sup>

Cisneros presented the delightful and historically accurate pen and ink drawing to the Society at the 1990 banquet as a token of appreciation for receiving the Society's Pasajero del Camino Real Award for his book entitled *Riders Across the Centuries: Horsemen of the Spanish Borderlands*. The illustration, titled Pasajero del Camino Real (Passenger on the Royal Road), was fittingly similar to those for which he was being recognized that evening.<sup>2</sup>

When I recently queried Opal Lee Priestley, Harlan Beasley, and Joe Allen, Society board members during 1989-1990, they did not

remember discussing or voting on the logo change. But as Opal Lee so aptly put it, "Someone must have authorized it." According to Society records, the logo was changed on November 12, 1989, and announced to the membership through the Society newsletter. An issue of *Society Signals* was tucked into the banquet bulletin the evening the new logo

was first introduced with the following comment: "He [Cisneros] has given the Society the wonderful drawing that we have adopted as our logo... The drawing speaks to the role the Mesilla Valley had in the traffic along the old historic Camino Real."<sup>3</sup>

Does a rider typical of a ten-year slice of nineteenth century borderland history really speak to the role the Mesilla Valley played in the traffic along the old historic Camino Real? At least a sentence or two. But does he speak to the role the Society plays in preserving Dona Ana County history? Not a syllable. It makes one wonder whether the original seal signified the county or the Society any better?



Figure 1. *Pasajero del Camino Real*, the "new" Dona Ana County Historical Society (DACHS) logo, designed by José Cisneros, adopted 1989.

Figure 2. The original DACHS logo designed by Art Liang, adopted 1966.



Designed by member Art Liang, the old seal (figure 2) was in the shape of a Zia sun symbol, embellished with representations of cotton, a roadrunner, and an hourglass, and it was encircled by the motto: “Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.” The sun symbol represented New Mexico. Cotton symbolized Mesilla Valley agriculture. The roadrunner stood for the Chihuahuan Desert. And the hourglass denoted time. The motto, which was selected from the Bible by longtime member Opal Lee Priestley, is Proverbs 22:28.<sup>4</sup>

These symbols may be criticized for not being original, and the case of cotton, for being outdated. Who in 1966 could guess cotton would be overshadowed by pecans and chile? The motto, however, rings true. Involved in historic preservation since its founding in 1963, the Society is noted for its role in saving Fort Selden, for encouraging the preservation of historic buildings in downtown Las Cruces during urban renewal, and for

completing the first Las Cruces historic buildings survey, which was the basis for creating Doña Ana County’s first historic districts. Today, though the Society’s efforts are more geared toward recording history than preserving historic landmarks, it continues to encourage historic preservation at annual banquets where awards are given for buildings worthy of preservation and buildings adhering to regional architecture.

Obviously, it’s not easy to create a timeless, identifying symbol for an organization. Maybe that’s not the point of a logo. Maybe a logo becomes an identifying symbol simply by virtue of its use. Regarding the current Society logo, a longtime Society member recently shared an observation with me that probably says it all, “It’s a whole lot prettier than the old one.”

---

MADELEINE VESSEL is a Las Cruces freelance writer who served as Dona Ana County Historical Society Historian 1993-1997. She has written a history of the Society, which is pending publication.

---

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Dona Ana County Historical Society (DACHS) Annual Banquet Bulletin, 1990. Charlotte K. Priestley, interview by Madeleine Vessel, tape recording, 8/3/ 94, Las Cruces.
- 2 Paxton P. Price to Madeleine Vessel, 12/7/94. The drawing, *Pasajero del Camino Real*, is framed and hanging in the Branigan Cultural Center.
- 3 Christine Myers, interview by Madeleine Vessel, telephone, 7/13/98, Las Cruces. DACHS Minutes, 11/12/89.
- 4 Opal Lee Priestly, interview by Madeleine Vessel, tape recording, 8/12/94, Las Cruces.



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

Memberships are calendar year.

Please make your inquiry to:

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



Pasajero del Camino Real  
*Property of DACHS*

---

# Doña Ana County Historical Society Officers and Directors

1997-1998

## OFFICERS

President: Janie Matson  
Vice-President: Roger Walker  
Secretary: John P. Bloom  
Treasurer: Robert Pick  
Historian: Tim Blevins

## DIRECTORS

Robert L. Hart  
Beverley Pirtle

## IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Clarence Fielder

---

## Guidelines for Submissions

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

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

**Length and Format:** Manuscripts should be double-spaced on 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 17 pages, including all illustrative materials and documentation.

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

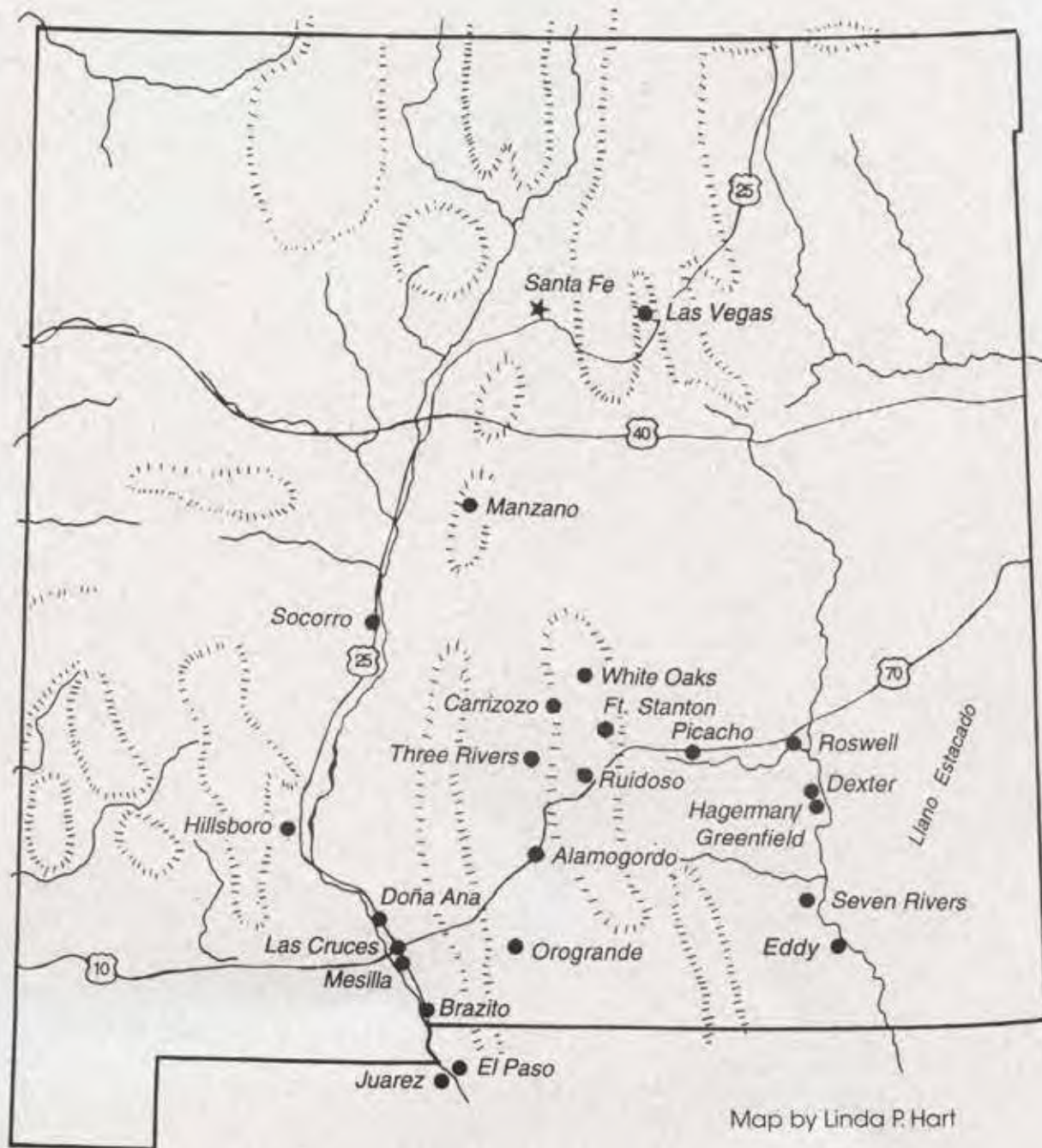
**Vita:** A brief (100 to 150 words) biographical sketch of the author together with name, address and telephone number, should accompany submissions.

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

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

**Address all submissions to:**

*Southern New Mexico Historical Review*  
Dona Ana County Historical Society  
500 North Water Street • Las Cruces, NM 88001-1224



## Doña Ana County Historical Society

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