

# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW



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# The Last Dragoon: Enoch Steen at Doña Ana

by Richard Wadsworth

The Civil War had already begun when, on August 3, 1861, the word “dragoon” went into disuse by the United States Army. At Fort Craig, New Mexico, on the Rio Grande, and at any other army posts throughout the country, the word “cavalry” was substituted, the latter being then a more accepted word descriptive of mounted soldiers. On that date, the 1st and 2nd Dragoon Regiments of the United States Army became the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments under the new designation. The two then-existing cavalry regiments became the 4th and 5th Cavalry Regiments; the 3rd Cavalry Regiment was created from a unit called the Regiment of Mounted Rifles.<sup>1</sup>

This change is why students of the famous Battle of Valverde, which took place near Fort Craig in 1862, find only Regular Army cavalry regiments participating. In fact, were a reenactment to take place, men portraying the 1st Cavalry Regiment, which participated in the original battle, should be wearing orange trimmed blue uniforms, the color of the old dragoons, while the 3rd Cavalry units would be wearing the green trim of the defunct Regiment of Mounted Rifles. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Regiments wore their old orange and green trimmed dragoon and rifle uniforms until they wore them out, and then they changed to the new yellow color for cavalry.

To the antebellum United States Army, a dragoon was a horse-mounted soldier, armed with a short musket and a heavy sword, capable of fighting either mounted, like a cavalryman, or dismounted, like an infantryman. Differences between cavalryman and dragoon were subtle, as least as the United States Army used the terms. By 1861 there were two dragoon regiments (formed in 1832), and two cavalry regiments, the latter being formed in 1855. The cavalry regiments were to fight mostly on horseback, with revolver and sword, though they could fight dismounted as well, as they also were provided with a carbine. By the time of the Civil War differences between dragoon and cavalryman were slight. There was no longer a valid reason to have two different names.

One army officer was present when the first dragoon regiment was created by Congress on March 2, 1833, and remained active with that same regiment until the dragoons were changed to cavalry in the summer of 1861. That man was Enoch Steen.

Historian Dan Thrapp in *The Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography* describes Enoch Steen as being “the last of that class of men like Bonneville, Boone and Martin Scott, who were the mighty hunters and woodsmen of our little army. He was a man of splendid physique, of the most temperate habits, and he had the endurance of old

Daniel Boone himself. He was, in woodcraft, the equal of any Delaware Indian.”<sup>2</sup>

Enoch Steen served for 34 years as an officer in the United States Army, well into his sixties, most of that time in the hardest kind of frontier duty. To some, Enoch Steen might be said to have lived a fortunate life, in a privileged time, for he saw much of the Western United States before civilization fully arrived.

Steen was born in Kentucky in 1800, but eventually moved to Missouri, the state he called home. He was a farmer, hunter and stock raiser until his 32nd year. This was rather an advanced age at which to begin a new career as an army officer. Steen’s close friend was Nathan Boone, a son of Daniel Boone, who, like his father before him, had a restless spirit leading him to seek the edges of the frontier. In 1832, Boone was asked by Colonel Henry Dodge to form an experimental mounted unit called the U.S. Mounted Ranger Battalion. The Mounted Ranger Battalion was to have six companies, with the men enlisted for one year. It was formed at Fort Gibson on the Arkansas river.<sup>3</sup>

Steen was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in Boone’s mounted ranger company. The rangers were not provided with uniforms. Most of the men wore whatever they had, and used whatever weapons they owned. Appearing slovenly and often ill-disciplined, the army quickly recognized that, although they desperately needed horse-mounted soldiers on the frontier, the Mounted Ranger Battalion was not going to be suitable.<sup>4</sup>

There had been no horse soldiers in the United States Army since 1815, mounted units being considered too expensive by a penny-pinching Congress. Once the army appeared on the plains of the West, however, it was quickly recognized that mounted Indians made any threat from infantry almost laughable.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, Steen was transferred, with Nathan Boone, to the 1st Regiment of United States Dragoons when the unit was formed in 1833 at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. Boone was given command of Company ‘H’. Steen remained as one of the company officers.<sup>6</sup> In fact, Enoch Steen stayed with Company ‘H’, 1st Dragoons, until just after the end of the war with Mexico. He was 49 years old then, and already an army legend. The dragoons, which would eventually adopt orange uniform trim, were soon to be the pride of the antebellum U.S. Army.

Steen had ridden with Colonels Henry Dodge and Phil Kearny on some of the first dragoon expeditions into the vast plains area, where many native peoples were encountered and lessons learned. Steen, then a captain, was brevetted to major in 1847 for bravery at the Battle of



“Main Street,” Doña Ana, New Mexico, undated. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

Buena Vista during the Mexican War. The soon-to-be President, Zachary Taylor, then the army commander at Buena Vista, may have owed Steen his Presidency. When all was blackest, and an American defeat seemed close at hand, it was Captain Enoch Steen, with only 100 dragoons, who saved the day by taking matters in his own hand and striking a much larger Mexican force in the flank at exactly the right moment, thereby preventing a collapse of the American front.<sup>7</sup>

In July, 1849, Steen found himself in Santa Fe, in the American Army of occupation. Titled Brevet-Major (for Buena Vista) and Captain,<sup>8</sup> the 49 year old Steen was directed to join his company of horsemen, ‘H’ Company, 1st United States Dragoons, south of the *Jornada del Muerto*. ‘H’ Company was quartered at Doña Ana, a village first settled in 1842 by Mexican farmers under the leadership of their *alcalde*, or mayor, Pablo Melendrez.<sup>9</sup> Certainly courageous men and women, these farmers had come north from *Paso del Norte* (now the City of Juarez), settling a land totally at the mercy of the elements, the heat and the Apache. Now the citizens of Doña Ana also found themselves under the heel of an American conqueror.

Enoch Steen’s company of regulars were on their own at Doña Ana. They were the first United States Army unit to patrol Apacheria, the name outsiders then called the land of that fierce warrior people. The dragoons would live or die there by Steen’s experience and leadership alone. The nearest military help was a dragoon detachment at the village of Socorro, the county seat of Valencia County, of which Doña Ana was soon to be a part. Socorro was over 140 miles away, across the dread, nearly waterless *Jornada del Muerto*; it was almost like being on the moon as far as the isolated Company ‘H’ at Doña Ana would be concerned.

What a situation for even a seasoned American army officer in that summer of 1849! Steen was used to Indians. That was his greatest asset. He had been among the Pawnee and Sac and Fox, the Cheyenne, the Sioux and the Kiowa.<sup>10</sup> Now it was the turn of the Apache. The soon-to-be U.S. Territory of New Mexico was still an occupied Mexican province, only recently taken in battle between two great nations, a land feeling the hurts and antagonisms generated by combat and conquest. The borders between the United States and Mexico were unclear, not yet mapped or defined. Hostility was on every side.

The inhabitants of Doña Ana could not be expected to provide Steen with a particularly friendly welcome. They were a conquered people, occupied by their conqueror. The fact that ‘H’ Company would ostensibly be there to protect the Mexican population from their even more mortal enemy, the Apache, would be a factor, but its importance had yet to be determined.

There was only one other known settlement in the region at that time, the tiny farming community of Las Cruces; the townsite had been laid out only recently by Brevet-Major and Captain Delos Sackett at the request of Don Pablo Melendrez. The acequia (irrigation ditch) that would aid the Las Cruces farmers was still being dug when Steen arrived.<sup>11</sup>

Major Sackett had been in the village since the beginning of the year 1849, when the place was still called Doña Ana, Mexican state of Chihuahua.<sup>12</sup> At some point he had been given temporary command of ‘H’ Company, 1st Dragoons, the company of which Enoch Steen was captain. As was sometimes the case, none of ‘H’ Company’s officers were in New Mexico at the time enlisted men arrived. Brevet-Major Steen was still at Fort Leavenworth, where he had been since November, 1848. Brevet-Captain and 1st Lieutenant Abraham Buford was

in the East on furlough, and 2nd Lieutenant Samuel Davis Sturges had never reported to the company since his promotion. Sackett, whose actual unit was 'B' Company, of the 2nd Dragoons,<sup>13</sup> found himself not only in temporary command of an unfamiliar group of men, but also the only dragoon officer in southern New Mexico. Sackett had been huddled there for months, ignoring Indian depredations and banditry, trying to establish some form of stable civil government. 'H' Company, not being his company and, therefore, having little incentive to jump to his command, Delos Sackett no doubt welcomed the directive that Steen was coming.

Brevet-Major Enoch Steen arrived at Doña Ana on July 22, 1849, escorted south via the Sacramento Mountains by a mixed group of soldiers. A few were members of 'H' Company, 1st Dragoons, Steen's unit. Others were from Company 'C', 1st Dragoons, and 'H', 2nd Dragoons. There was an officer of the 3rd Artillery and one from the 5th Infantry. Why they detoured through the Sacramento Mountain range is unclear. Perhaps they were responding to an attack somewhere up north. Whatever the reason, on the first day Enoch Steen arrived at Doña Ana one of the officers of his escort described the first known encounter between the Mescalero Apache and United States troops in Southern New Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

This brief campaign, with Enoch Steen in command, was described on July 22, 1849, in a letter from 1st Lt. F.J. Thomas to Brevet-Major Enoch Steen, now commanding at Doña Ana. Thomas's report was an after-action report detailing his part in Steen's foray into the Sacramento Mountains. Enoch Steen, aggressive as always in his dealings with potential enemies, had challenged the Mescalero band of Apaches who lived in that area, and who often raided Doña Ana.

Doña Ana, N.M.  
July 22nd, 1949

Major,

Agreeably to your instructions I have the honor to submit the following report of the expedition sent out by you under my Command on the 18th Instant.

On the afternoon of the 18th I left your camp at the mouth of the Canon del Perro (Dog Canyon), with a detachment of twenty-seven men from Companies 'H', 2nd Dragoons, and 'C', 1st Drags. on foot. Assisted by Lieut. O.H.P. Saylor, 1st Dragoons, and Lieut. M.I. Harrison, 5th Infy, the latter a volunteer for the occasion. A small party of four men under the guidance of Juan, a Mexican, who had been for many years a prisoner among the Apaches, had been previously sent forward as spies. After much severe labor, succeeded in reaching the top of the Sacramento Mountain (Sierra del Sacramento) about eight O'Clock on the morning of the 19th, when I met two

of the spies returning, with information that they had discovered the smoke of the enemies fires.

I hastened forward with as much expedition as the nature of the ground would permit, for about eight miles when my approach was discovered by the spies and scouts of the enemy, who immediately gave the alarm. Continuing to advance at a run whenever practicable for three miles further, I struck the track of the squaws, who had packed their lodges & on mules returned north in the direction of the Sierra Blanca. My men being by this time completely exhausted, it was impossible to pursue them further. I should have mentioned in its proper place that I dispatched a small party to the right, under Lieut. Harrison, in pursuit of the scout who had discovered and given warning of our approach.

Halting when I struck the trail last spoken of, I sent a sergeant and four men back upon it to discover the point where the Indians had been encamped, and to search for food. The men having been out already twenty-four hours without provisions.

While these two detachments were absent, a small party of warriors, probably twelve or fifteen in number, were discovered within eighty yards of us among the trees, passing in the direction of the trail. Springing to our feet, we delivered a volley which drove them off in great confusion, the dead were left upon the ground, but from the marks of blood upon the spot, and from the fact that some of the warriors, who were on foot, were picked up and carried off on horseback by the mounted Indians, it is certain that they must suffered considerably. The enemy was pursued for a short distance, but the condition of my men rendering all chance of overtaking them hopeless, I ordered the recall to be sounded and, after halting half an hour to rest, started on my return to camp.

When near the point where I had met the spies in the forenoon, and about eight miles from your camp, a strip of red cloth was discovered laid across the trail. The sagacity of our guide at once discovered that an ambushade was intended, that the cloth had been placed there in the expectation that the men would gather about to examine it, that affording the concealed enemy a more certain aim for their rifles.

As soon as they discovered that their intention was foiled, they opened a rapid fire upon the party from the summit of a rocky precipice some hundred yards on our right, and probably three hundred feet high. Their fire

was returned for a short time, but, finding that no effect could be produced in that way, the enemy being completely covered by the rocks, I ordered an assault on the heights, and moved upon them at a rapid pace, with Lieut. Harrison and about half the command. Lieut. Saylor being necessarily left with the remainder to divert the enemies [*sic*] attention, and to cover our flank and rear. After severe labor and exertion we reached the top of the precipice and drove off the enemy, who showed by the blood upon the ground, that they had not had their position with out loss.

Dispatching Lieut. Harrison with a party to scout the wood upon the right, I moved again forward in the direction of camp, Lieut. Saylor keeping parrallel [*sic*] with us upon the road.

When I discovered from my position at the summit of the mountain above your encampment the nature of the chasm through which we approached you was such, that it occupied us about three hours in descending, and the command reached camp about eight o'clock at night, having been thirty hours without food, and after marching more that thirty five miles over the most difficult mountains I have ever known troops to operate over.

During the assault on the heights, Privates Bushe of Co. 'H', 2nd Dragoons and Stanley, Co. 'C', 1st Dragoons, were severely wounded and Private [unintelligible], Co. 'H', 2nd slightly so.

I cannot speak too highly of the gallant and efficient services rendered by Lieuts. Saylor and Harrison. The former not only was of important benefit to me on the march and in action, but by his judicious advice, on several occasions, rendered me most essential service. Lieut. Harrison was equally conspicuous for his gallantry and effective aid in the assault of the heights, and I beg that the conduct of both be represented in the highest terms in the proper quarter.

Sergeant Pease and Corporal Dier, Co. 'H', 2nd Drags and Corporal (?), Co. 'C', 1st Drags, were also conspicuous for efficient and gallant service.

F.J. Thomas

The people and troops at Doña Ana, Mexican farmers and American soldiers, faced potential foes from both sides of the Rio Grande. To the east of the Rio Grande, stretching all the way to the Pecos River, were the lands of the Mescalero Apache. To the west of the Rio Grande, from the Gila region well into what is now the state of Arizona, lay the lands of the Apache bands, called by Americans many names; such as the Gila, Mogollon, Black

Range, White Mountain, Mimbres, etc., but in fact related to each other as members of the Chiricauhua Apache peoples.<sup>16</sup>

Doña Ana was a place where herds of cattle, horses and sheep waited to be taken, as well as crops to be harvested in season. The Apache were not land-bound farmers. The Apache were not stock raisers. The Mexican people, far greater in numbers, and more dedicated to permanent settlements, were doing that for them.

While Brevet-Major Enoch Steen was at Doña Ana, every Apache incursion was met force-with-force. Though Company 'H', 1st Dragoons, never numbered more than 74 men, and sometimes only half that readily available, Steen never refused to react to a challenge. The challenges were many. He felt no restraint in pursuing a raiding band for hundreds of miles, right into the heartland of their territory, though often outnumbered many times over. During one foray into Eastern New Mexico he passed right through the entire Mescalero country, almost to the Texas border, running into Comanches and "Eutaws" (Utahs) on the way, and got away with it.<sup>17</sup> His reactive form of response began immediately after he arrived at Doña Ana.

Doña Ana was, at that time, and in many ways still is today, a small place. The original buildings were flat-roofed adobe structures, sitting up on a slight rise not far from the Rio Grande. The river was closer in Steen's day, but the feeling remains the same, at least when one is standing in the central part of the old village.

The dragoons were stationed on what was either the southeast or northeast edge of the village. The surviving data are unclear. Steen uses certain phrases that indicate they were in a position to see clearly whoever was coming into town from the east. One raiding Indian band was spotted from the windows of the dragoon barracks as they were coming to attack a group of Mexican farmers working their fields in the bottomlands slightly east of the village. But in which direction, north or south?

During Enoch Steen's command at Doña Ana, the Indians hardly let up on the industrious Mexican farmers. They would sometimes come into town wanting to trade or talk, at other times to steal and take captives. Brevet-Major Enoch Steen was not a West Point officer. His roots were in the people of the Western frontier. His language was often strong, his spelling and sentence structure atrocious. He could be merciless when provoked, and his reactions could be quite harsh.

In this letter directed to the 9th Military Department in Santa Fe on October 1, 1849 his anger appears to have overcome his desire for correctness.

Doña Ana, New Mexico

Octr. 1st 49

Sir,

On the evening of 28th September a small party of Apaches came to this village about 12 O'Clock at night, kild [*sic*] one Mexican and

drove off eleven oxen. I sent next morning as soon as it was known a Sergt & 12 men and 10 Mexicans after them. They followed the Indians about 50 miles without being able to overtake them. They went into the country called Sacramento and White Mountains, the country I passed in July last and where we had a small fight with them. There is Apaches in from the country near the copper mines watching the road above and down to El Paso. On the 10th September they keld [sic] the Mexican about seven miles from this who was carrying the mail to Santa Fe. The returns of the election, many public documents, were all lost. I heard of it the next day & sent out and had him buried. In my opinion nothing short of a good whipping will do any good. They will brake [sic] treatys [sic] faster than ten men can make them until they are well whipped. Say 200 mounted men can leave Socora (Socorro) and in 5 days be in the heart of their country, just about the copper mines. There is a good wagon road all the way. I would want no better than to have B. Col. May's Squadron, Capt. (?) Co. spend say 4 to 6 weeks in this country. All their women & children & horses might be taken. Kill all the warriors you can & in 4 or 5 weeks in their country with good horse, they will be glad to make a peace & keep it too. Then such an expedition east of this in the Sacramento Country, say 3 or 4 weeks, will in my opinion settle nearly all the Indian troubles in this part of the country. To attempt to make treatys [sic] with those Indians until they are well whipped is time poorly spent I think.

Enoch Steen  
B. Maj. 1st Drag.<sup>18</sup>

By October of 1849 Company 'H' was no longer alone in Southern New Mexico. Though of little utility to him in Doña Ana, the army had moved six companies of the 3rd Infantry Regiment into the region. One of these, Company 'B', 3rd Infantry, would eventually settle in for guard duty at Doña Ana. That would free Steen's dragoons to better chase Apaches.

Most of the 3rd Infantry troops were stationed out 60 miles south, on the river island where the villages of San Elizario, Socorro, and Ysleta lay, and another detachment of troops was directly across the river from the Mexican town of Paso del Norte. These troops were commanded by Brevet-Major and Captain Jefferson Van Horne, a man of far different temperament than the volatile Enoch Steen. Steen, the rough frontiersman, and Van Horne, the polished West Point officer, certainly handled the Indian problem differently. Of course, Van Horne's infantry were of little use against the well-mounted Apache. They were good only for area defense and for

escort duty. They couldn't catch the raiders. At times, Steen's dragoons could, and did.

For a while in 1849 and 1850, it looked as if some 3rd Infantry units were about to be mounted, either on mules or horses. One such incident involving mounted infantry took place at Doña Ana, as described by Steen in a letter to the 9th Department on October 20, 1849. Rumors and facts were mixed, but in essence a large party of California-bound emigrants had been captured near the Mexican town of Janos. Some were rumored killed, and the others were believed taken to the region of the Santa Rita copper mines. Van Horne, in El Paso, mounted a detachment of infantry on mules, and with two mountain howitzers in tow, sent them to Doña Ana to enlist Steen's Dragoons in a campaign of rescue. Steen recorded their arrival, but added that he had only one sergeant and ten men to give to Brevet Major and Captain Israel Richardson, who commanded that most peculiar unit. In addition to mule-mounted 3rd Infantrymen, Richardson was accompanied by 45 horse-mounted Mexican lancers!<sup>19</sup>

Most of Steen's men were out on other missions. Twenty of the men of Company 'H' were at Socorro, a matter that infuriated Steen, who wanted them back, while others were responding to Indians in the area stealing corn from the recent crop and in pursuit.

The mounted infantrymen went off seeking the elusive Apaches, but did not find any. The Apaches had set the surviving California-bound Americans free and headed for safety in Mexico.<sup>20</sup>

The Apache were certainly not used to dealing with a man like Enoch Steen. The often polite negotiations, coupled with periods of often intense violence, conducted with the Spaniards and the Mexicans, were a thing of the past. What thoughts must have crossed the minds of the Mescalero warriors who sauntered peacefully into Doña Ana on the 9th of December, 1849. Steen had learned that this band had two or three captive Mexican boys, and livestock belonging to a local man named Lynch. When the Apaches arrived to treat with him, he had the leaders arrested. Among them were such Mescalero notables as Buffalo, Santos and José (probably Josécito, a well-known chief). Steen refused to release them until all stolen property, including the boys, was returned. Major Steen was quite clear in his message. He notified the still-free Apaches, that if everything was not returned, he would hang his Apache captives. Not only that, he told them that after hanging the captives, he would send the men of Company 'H' forth to exterminate the entire tribe of Apaches on the east side of the Rio Grande. Steen certainly did not have the force to do that, but he might have tried.<sup>21</sup>

Enoch Steen didn't appear to hate Apaches. He was willing to treat with them, as later documents clearly show. He was, in fact, the first United States Army officer to make a treaty of peace with the Apaches in the Gila area.

The Apache were simply the local enemy as prescribed by the army. Relentless is the best word to describe Enoch Steen. Nothing was spared in the chase, and his chases were many. One Apache chase truly stands out. On the second of February, 1850, a band of Apaches from the Gila region struck the Mexican herders on the edge of Doña Ana. The pursuit is described by Enoch Steen:

Doña Ana, New Mexico  
5, February 1850

Sir,

I have the honor to submit it to the Comdg. Officer of this Department the following report.

On Saturday, the 2nd Instant about 8 O'Clock a report was brought to my quarters that the Apaches had made a descent upon the herds grazing in the rear of the town & driven off the stock after wounding four Mexican herders, one of whom is since dead, & carrying away one boy. On enquiring I found the facts as stated & that the Indians had come within a mile of the town, so near that they were seen by the men from their quarters. Immediately ordered out Company 'H', 1st Dragoons & started in pursuit accompanied by Lieut. L.W. O'Bannon, 3rd Infantry; before however we could get started the Indians had gained some six miles.

My first impression was that they were the Apaches from the Gila & thought that by going up the river I could intercept them at the crossing, the Mexicans all saying that they had gone in the direction of San Diego. I was induced to follow directly in their trail; some six or seven miles from the garrison we found the "Boyado" which the Indians, seeing themselves closely pursued, had left, after spearing the animals. Going on fifteen miles further we were evidently gaining on the Indians. I ascertained that my first impressions were correct and that the Indians were endeavoring to reach the river. There I divided my command & sending about twenty-five of the men who were best mounted with Lt. O'Bannon to follow directly on the trail of the Indians & cut them off from the mountains. I took a more southerly route to come in between them and the river & thus drive them upon the level plain of the "Jornada" where I thought we could easily succeed in running them down; the result however was contrary to my expectations & the Indians to be better mounted than we were. For after riding more than forty miles at our best speed we were obliged to give up the chase, our horses being completely broken down & the command so scattered that at last I had but six men with me; abandoning the

chase we dismounted & led our horses to the river & returning, still leading them, we espied two men standing by their horses half way up a little rise some half mile distant, and a herd of cattle grazing near. Supposing them to be Mexicans we approached to within a few hundred yards when to our surprise they proved to be the Indians [*sic*], who jumped upon their horses & galloped up the hill beckoning us to follow. We did so as fast as our wearied animals would permit, but arriving at the top of the rise, we saw in a little thicket of cotton woods on the other side some thirty or forty warriors all mounted & dashing about on their horses, cursing us in bad Spanish & calling us to come over and fight them. As I did not choose to do this with the few men I had I dismounted my party and made arrangements to defend myself if attacked, at the same time building a fire in the hope that the smoke might bring Lt. O'Bannon's party to my assistance when we would be able to give them a fight. Remaining here an hour & a half recruiting my horses. Lieut O'Bannon with his party following directly in the trail of the Indians gained upon them rapidly, but coming to a canyon above the San Diego he was obliged to dismount his men to lead their horses down the rocky pass in single file. Here the men mounted as they passed through & continued the chase, four of the first through, which were best mounted, were close upon the heels of the Indians, & one man, Private Teagarden, Co. 'H', 1st Dragoons, came up with a party of eight men who were thrown out as a rear guard, wounding one of them with his carbine. Three of the others turned upon him and attacked him with their lances. He, however, succeeded in parrying them with his sabre, receiving only a slight scratch in the back; who, perceiving the command closing upon them, two fired on him, one shooting him through the thigh, severely fracturing the bone.

I must take this opportunity to urge upon the Comdg. Officer of the Dept. the necessity of arming Compy. 'H' with Colt's Revolvers. Had this man had one of those weapons he would probably have killed several of these Indians. I should have mentioned that before the Indians turned the other three dragoons had closed in & exchanged fire, wounding two other Indians. The whole command had now passed the canyon & here ensued a most exciting scene — the Indians in full sight not more than a mile and a half in advance upon a level plain, & the dragoons in hot pursuit, both parties at the top of their speed & thus the chase was continued thirty miles until the horses

were completely broken down — Towards the last the Indians were to be seen throwing away blankets, provisions, and everything but their arms, rendering themselves as light as possible.

Lieut. O'Bannon in returning fell in with another small party of Indians mounted on fresh horses & driving more with them. From the fatigued condition of his animals, they easily escaped him.

Three of my best horses were left dead in the road. I can only say the company without exception behaved admirably; & every possible effort was made to overtake the Indians & was owing to our having to run our horses over the first & most difficult part of the country, that we were unable to come up with them after getting upon the plain.

On my return I was informed that about the time we started in pursuit another party of Indians had come in at the lower side of the town near the river & driven off stock from there. This was probably the parties I saw after watering. In connection I would state that on the 27th Inst., a party came in about sundown & stole two Mexican boys who were working in a field not a mile from the quarters & drove off some stock. At the same time another party came in some four miles S.W. of us & drove off twenty-three head of oxen, the property of Mr. Beck.

I cannot close this report without urging upon the Comdg. Officer of the Dept., the necessity of a campaign against these Indians, and that as speedily as possible, when Indians become so bold that they will come in broad daylight within a mile of an U.S. Garrison where dragoons are stationed & drive off stock & murder the defenceless herders. I think it then becomes necessary to chastise them & this can only be done by a regular organized campaign against them.

When these Indians start on a marauding expedition they come mounted on their best horses, which are equal to any of ours, & at the same time have relays waiting for them at twenty five or thirty miles distant. They do their mischief & get off with several miles start. Up come their relays & thus are mounted on fresh animals & can snap their fingers at us whose horses are (so) broken down by the long chase, that is next to impossible for any dragoons to overtake them & for this I urge the necessity of an expedition against them.

I would suggest that a depot be selected at or near the Copper Mines and that point be

established as the base of operations. All of which I most respectfully submit.

E. Steen<sup>22</sup>

Steen's dragoons did get their Colt revolvers before he left Doña Ana. They were the Colt Dragoon model in .44 caliber. The men of Company 'H' were also able to exchange their antiquated Hall Carbines for .69 caliber Model 1847 Musketoons, a weapon just becoming available for use on the frontier in large numbers.<sup>23</sup>

Steen mentions the loss of three horses, run to their death chasing fleeing Indians. Steen's dragoon horses were bred at that time most often in Kentucky or Missouri. It took time to acclimatize them to New Mexico. When ready, they had to carry about eighty pounds of saddle and gear, not to mention the rider and weaponry. The Indian horses, bearing a far lighter load, and rested by relay, had the great advantage. The loss of three animals must have been a terrible blow to Steen, so difficult was it to procure their replacements.

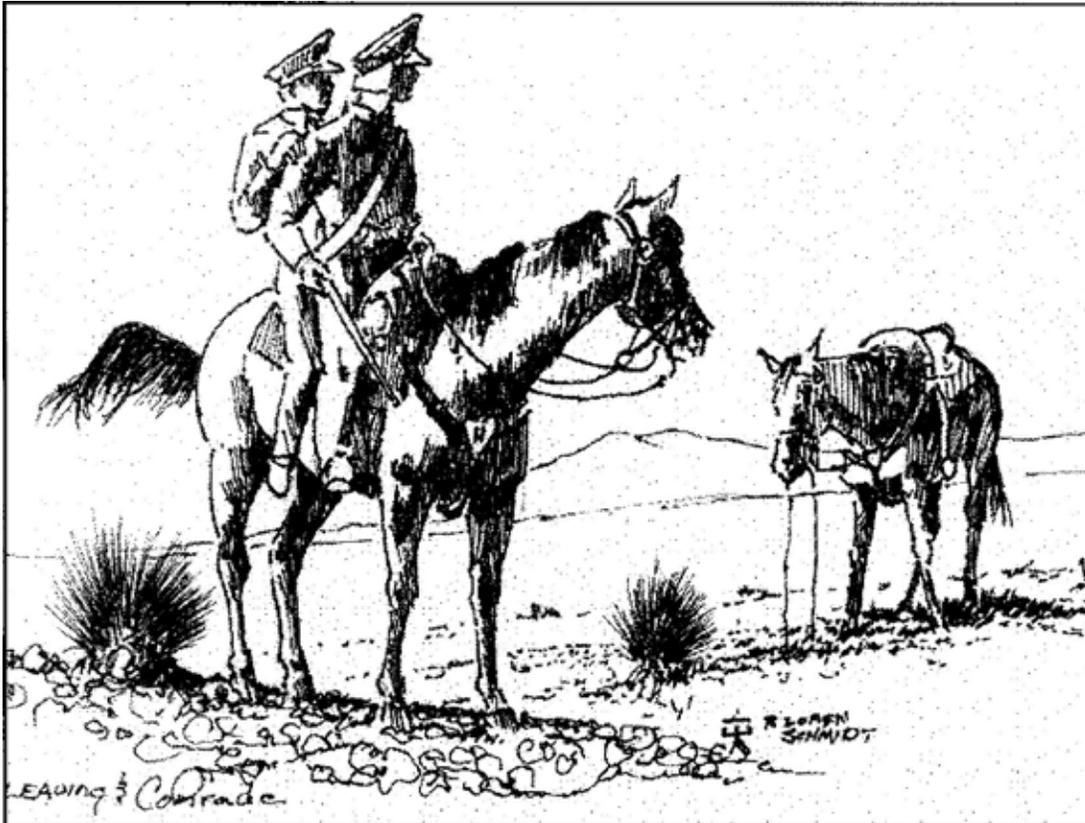
Steen's recommendation for a structured campaign against both the Mescalero and Chiricauhua (Mimbres, Gila, etc.) Apaches would not become possible for many years. There simply were not enough troops to undertake the campaign. The first major effort would not be mounted until the year 1855, and even that effort was directed only against the Mescalero. The campaign Steen visualized moving into the Gila Region would not take place until 1857. We should not forget that the army had problems everywhere, with Indians, bandits, recalcitrant Mexicans, deserting soldiers, wild-eyed and sometimes dangerous California immigrants, with equipment, sustenance, etc.

As for Brevet-Major Steen, he never stopped chasing the Indians until he was forced to leave Doña Ana in October 1850, the result of events beyond his control but in which he became a participant.

One of the side issues in New Mexico at that time was the fact that the State of Texas claimed all of New Mexico to the east bank of the Rio Grande River. Early in 1850 a man named Major Robert Neighbors, a representative of the Governor of Texas, arrived at Paso del Norte, intending to claim all the lands up to the Rio Grande River for Texas and to establish local Texas government. That claim meant Doña Ana and Las Cruces, as well as Albuquerque and Santa Fe, were liable to become part of Texas. Until late in 1850 this claim appeared to have a great deal of validity. Land speculators from Texas, arriving with Neighbors, began threatening to dispossess many of the Mexican citizens from their lands.

Enoch Steen, receiving orders from 9th Department not to interfere with the Texas takeover, went along with Texas claims.<sup>24</sup>

Representatives from Texas began to flood into New Mexico and into Doña Ana. So difficult became the situation for the Mexicans that on March 1, 1850, Rafael



“Leaving A Comrade” is an original drawing by Western artist Loren Schmidt, taken from Enoch Steen’s description of chasing Apaches onto the Jornada in 1850. Note the ‘H’ Company martingale on the horse’s breast.

Ruelas, a local farmer, led 60 Mexican families from Doña Ana across the Rio Grande to the Mexican side, where he founded the village of Mesilla. Ruelas believed that Mexico would maintain control there, but, by virtue of the Gadsden Purchase agreement, the rapidly growing town he founded would come under United States control once more by the middle 1850s.

Enoch Steen made no mention in his reports of Ruela’s departure. He certainly recognized the Texas claim, as per his orders. Steen even changed the name of Doña Ana, New Mexico to Doña Ana, Texas in his correspondence, beginning on April 29, 1850.<sup>25</sup> Then, in the month of May 1850, after Steen himself had bought land at Doña Ana, which was in dispute between Texas claims and those of the Mexican citizens, the United States Congress brought forth the Compromise of 1850. This agreement not only prevented civil war for another 10 years but ended the claims of Texas to New Mexico lands. Texas was paid a bonus and all of its claims on New Mexico lands were dropped.

Though he invested but a trivial amount of money in disputed claims, apparently only \$50, Steen was the object of a petition drawn up by some of the remaining Mexican land owners around Doña Ana. This petition was referred to by Steen in a letter sent to the 9th Department and forwarded, with the petition, to higher head-quarters.

Steen obviously knew he was in trouble.<sup>26</sup>

After the usual long delay, orders arrived in Santa Fe directing Steen to report to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, as soon as a replacement could be found to take over Company ‘11’. He was verbally reprimanded by the Adjutant General’s Office because, “the officers of the Army are expected to give protection to the citizens and quiet their fears, should they have any, in respect to their property, whereas the course pursued by Major Steen has quite the contrary effect.”<sup>27</sup>

Reprimanded and relieved, Steen divested himself of his land claim and departed on October 10th, his fate and career in the balance. So much for remembrance of past heroism. So much for bravery in action. So much

for all he had done for Doña Ana and its protection. Yesterday’s hero is quickly forgotten. Brevet Captain and 1st Lieutenant Abraham Buford, Steen’s replacement, was not as aggressive an Enoch Steen, though he was very competent, becoming a Confederate general officer in a civil war still many years in the future.

Brevet Major Enoch Steen was not punished upon his arrival at Fort Leavenworth. He was able to clear his name and continue his career. In July 1852, at the age of 52, Steen was back in New Mexico and once more in command of Company ‘H’, 1st Dragoons, replacing Abraham Buford. Company ‘H’ was then quartered at Fort Millard Fillmore, the army fort established some twenty miles south of Doña Ana in September, 1851, which replaced both Doña Ana and the Posts at Paso del Norte and San Elizario. Steen stayed at Fort Fillmore until November, 1852, when he was given the command of Fort Webster, located near the Santa Rita copper mines and the Gila Wilderness region.<sup>28</sup>

In 1856 Enoch Steen was sent to establish Fort Buchanan, in what is now the state of Arizona, becoming a thorn in the side of the Apache once more. Promoted to the permanent rank of Major in 1853, Steen had the honor of being the first American Army officer to engage the Apache in combat and negotiations in both Southern New Mexico and Arizona. His final service



1830-1840s Dragoon button found at Ft. Fillmore which may have belonged to Enoch Steen. 'D' for dragoon. Courtesy author's collection.

in New Mexico took place in 1857, when he led the Western column of troops in the great Gila Expedition of that year.

The beginning of the Civil War found him and his dragoon battalion at Fort Walla Walla, Washington. Steen was then 61 and declared too old to be given high rank, as so many of his fellow majors were. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Cavalry Regiment (the former 2nd Dragoons) September 28, 1861. His old company, Company 'H', 1st Dragoons, had become Company 'H', 1st Cavalry Regiment, in the summer of 1861. Steen's promotion to lieutenant colonel took place while contemporaries of lesser capability and repute, but younger in age, were advanced quickly to the rank of general. Steen retired in 1863, but was soon back on duty at Sandy Hook, New Jersey, in control of a battalion of heavy artillery. Retiring again in 1864, he went west once more, and at 66 was commanding troops at Fort Lyon, Colorado. He simply could not stay away from duty. It took an act of Congress to retire him permanently. A law was passed preventing retired officers from serving actively, and Enoch Steen's military career came to an end.<sup>29</sup>

Enoch Steen was the last American dragoon on active duty also present at the dragoon's birth in 1832. During his service he saw the term 'dragoon' fall into disuse after 1861, while he still wore the blue and orange. He spent his final days in the state of Missouri, from where he had set out on his long and distinguished career so many years before. Enoch Steen died on January 22,

1880, and is buried in Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>30</sup>

Though little of Steen's family life has been reported (his wife was not with him at Doña Ana), it is recorded that while he was serving as Lt. Colonel of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, one of his sons, Alexander, a Confederate Brigadier General, was killed at the Battle of Kane Hill, Arkansas in 1862.<sup>31</sup>

Alexander Early Steen, Enoch's son, was also a career Army officer. He was not a West Pointer, and was commissioned in 1847 from civilian life as his father had been. Alexander was brevetted for bravery during the Mexican War, and, following that conflict, served near his father for a while in New Mexico Territory during the 1850s. For one brief moment in February 1857, 2nd Lieutenant Alexander Steen, then serving with the 3rd Infantry, paused to write a letter from Fort Fillmore, the post at which his father had served for so long. In the summer of 1857 Alexander was serving with Colonel Benjamin Bonneville's Gila Expedition. His father, then commanding Fort Buchanan in what is now Arizona, detached some troops to participate in that battle, but did not go himself. The younger Steen was wounded in the eye with an arrow during the most intense battle of that campaign. There is no mention that father and son saw each other during that conflict.<sup>32</sup>

No picture of Enoch Steen has been located by this author. The author discussed this lack with noted Western artist, R. Loren Schmidt. It was decided to take a scene from his recorded words and bring it to life. Major Steen had been quite distraught over the loss of three of his horses during a long chase into the Jornada. His own words were, "three of my best horses were left dead in the road." So aggressive was this man that he had run his precious Kentucky and Missouri-bred animals to death. The scene of a dying horse, his rider safely mounted on the back of a fellow, the 'H' on the horse's martingale visible, recalls Steen's words. Mr. Schmidt, while creating the work, said the words, "leaving a comrade", kept coming to mind, and hence the drawing received a title.

The two dragoons pictured are wearing the short Mexican War period jacket and the Model 1839 field cap, one man having the flap up and the other wearing it down to protect the neck. The arms at that time would have been the Hall Carbine and a Model 1841 Dragoon saber. Steen's men didn't get revolvers and a better carbine until later in 1850.

Though arguable, and certainly unprovable, Enoch Steen may have left behind him one personal item. Enoch served at Doña Ana, Fort Fillmore and Fort Daniel Webster when all were part of early Doña Ana County. In the 1960s and 1970s numerous individuals, including personnel from the Museum of New Mexico and New Mexico State University, recovered artifacts at Fort Fillmore. Among these artifacts was a small number of a very old type of dragoon uniform button. Enough were

found to say that at least one uniform with those peculiar and beautiful buttons was discarded there. Everyone said that these had to be from a dragoon officer's coat. [See accompanying photo.]

Button sources are unclear as to the exact date of manufacture of the particular button type. One thing is certain — the type was manufactured by the early 1840s, the design dating back into the 1830s.<sup>33</sup> The manufacturer was Scovills and Company, Waterbury. The button has the most attractive eagle design on the face. The eagle is different from the more than 50 types appearing at Fort Fillmore and stands out in any collection.

The only dragoon officer who served at Fort Fillmore who was old enough to have worn the particular coat on which the button type would have been found was Enoch Steen. The name and age of every dragoon officer who served at Fort Fillmore during the 1850s is known, and all were far too young to have been in the dragoons when that style of button and uniform was in fashion.

Wishful thinking? Perhaps. But then who can say that Enoch Steen, having finally worn out the old frock coat or blouse that had served him in Mexico and both at Doña Ana and Fort Fillmore, did not find a need to discard it one day when it had become too broken down, like a tired old dragoon horse, to serve any longer.

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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Gregory J.W. Urwin, *The United States Cavalry: An Illustrated History* (London: Blandford Press, 1983), p. 112.
- 2 Dan L. Thrapp, *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography*, Volume III (Lincoln and London: Univ. of Nebraska Press in Assoc. with Arther H. Clarke Co., Spokane Wash., 1988), pp. 1363-1364. Hereafter cited as Thrapp, *Encyclopedia*.
- 3 Urwin, p. 51.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.
- 5 *Ibis.*, p. 51.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- 8 The title Brevet Major and Captain is no longer found in use within the United States Army. Such titles fell into disuse as the 19th Century ended. Brevet rank was a means of recognizing bravery in the field (and other activities) without an actual increase in rank, and especially pay. Steen was brevetted to the rank of Major during the Mexican War for bravery at the battle of Buena Vista. Thereafter, until he could be promoted to the actual rank of Major, he was, in effect, a Captain, for pay and command purposes, but was addressed as Major in recognition of his deeds. In some circumstances, as when on detached service to a lonely post like Doña Ana, far from his regimental command, Steen could use the title Major in his dealings with subordinates. The intricacies of brevet rank would be a study in itself.
- 9 The date of 1842 for the founding of Doña Ana by Pablo Melendrez, and those who followed him, is attributed in many different sources. Important period confirmation of that date can be found on an 1854 Map of the

Mesilla Valley drawn up by Captain John Pope, United States Topographical Engineers. Pope listed Doña Ana as being founded in 1842 and having an 1854 population of some 600 persons.

- 10 John Langellier and Bill Youngusband, *Men At Arms Series: US Dragoons 1833-55* (London: Reed Int. Books Ltd., 1995), pp. 12-14.
- 11 Once again, there is a multitude of references to the founding of the Town of Las Cruces through the activities of then Brevet Major Delos Sackett, at the behest of Don Pablo Melendrez. The Mesilla Valley Map of 1854 developed by Captain John Pope verifies the date as being in the year 1849.
- 12 Brevet 1st. Lt. Delos Sackett to Assistant Adjutant General, 9th Military Department, January 1, 1849, *Register of letters sent and letters received by the 9th Military Dept., Group M1102, Roll 1* (hereafter cited as MI 102, Roll 1).
- 13 The post records of Doña Ana for 1849 list the rank, grade and actual unit to which Delos Sackett belonged. In general, hereafter, whenever an officer's rank and unit are given, they may be assumed to have been taken from post records of the place where his unit was stationed in that period. These types of records list all officers of a particular company, even if those officers never appear for duty at the post as, in this case, was true of Brevet-2nd Lieutenant Samuel Davis Sturges.
- 14 Thomas to Steen, July 22, 1849, MI 102 Roll 1.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Edwin R. Sweeney, *Cochise: Chiricahua Apache Chief* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 3-5. (Note - The officers serving at Doña Ana did not seem to know the Apache name Chiricahua, using Mimbres, or Gila, etc. This author tends to agree with Mr. Sweeney's definition, but in using original data will always use the term the soldiers used in their correspondence.)
- 17 Steen to McLaws, July 8, 1849, M1102, Roll 1. The person Brevet Major Steen addressed was Lafayette McLaws, then serving a tour as Assistant Adjutant General of the 9th Military Department. McLaws, a West Point graduate of the Class of 1842, served on the frontier until 1861, when he resigned to join the Confederacy. The big barrel-chested man, with a large bushy beard and wild hair (as one photograph attests) was another one of the many who served in New Mexico from 1848 to 1861 who found themselves doing battle wearing general's stars.
- 18 Steen to McLaws, October 1, 1849, M1102, Roll 1.
- 19 Steen to McLaws, October 20, 1849, M1102, Roll 1.
- 20 Van Home to McLaws, November 13, 1849, M1102, Roll 1. Brevet Major and Captain Jefferson Van Home was 47 years old in 1849 and had been in the U.S. Army since graduating from West Point in the Class of 1827. Van Home had, like Steen, been brevetted for bravery during the Mexican War. In 1849, he commanded the 3rd Infantry Regiment battalion, divided between San Elizario and what was called the Post Opposite El Paso; meaning El Paso del Norte, the Mexican town across the Rio Grande from Van Home's post at Coon's Ranch.
- 21 Steen to McLaws, January 10, 1850, *Register of letters sent and letters received by the 9th Military Dept., Group M1102, Roll 2* (hereafter cited as M1102, Roll 2).
- 22 Steen to McLaws, February 5, 1850, MI 102, Roll 2.
- 23 McLaws to Steen, August 14, 1850, M1102, Roll 2.
- 24 Munroe to all commands, March 17, 1850, M1102, Roll 2.
- 25 Steen to McLaws, April 29, 1850, M1102, Roll 2.
- 26 Steen to McLaws, April 29, 1850, M1102, Roll 2.
- 27 Thomas to Munroe, July 5, 1850, M1102, Roll 2. Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Lorenzo Thomas, the man who reprimanded Steen, was 46 years old in 1850, four years younger than Enoch Steen. He had been in the U.S. Army longer than Steen, graduating from West Point with the Class of 1823. Colonel Thomas, then Assistant Adjutant General in Washington, D.C. would become the Adjutant General of the Army during the Civil War and retire as a general officer in 1869.
- 28 Fort Fillmore Post Records, November 1852, *National Archives Microfilm Publication, Roll 246, Fort Fillmore*.
- 29 Thrapp, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 1364-1365.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 1364
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Miles to Nichols, July 27, 1857, *Letters Received, Department of New Mexico, Group M1102*.
- 33 William F. McGuin and Bruce Bazelon, *American Military Button Makers and Dealers: Their Backmarks & Dates* (Chelsea, Michigan: Bookcrafters Inc. 1984), pp. 89-91.

# “The House,” Grant’s Peace Policy, and Four Mescalero Agents

by Nelson Boyles

Indian policy changed frequently in the effort to conquer and claim the West in the name of the United States. Control of Indian affairs fluctuated as policy makers juggled many ideas as to what should be done with the Indians. Problems created by the immorality and suspect character of many agents provided Congress with the impetus to make major changes in Indian policy. The Mescalero Apache Agency in New Mexico provides an interesting example of government policy and its effects upon Indian affairs. Its location, in Lincoln County, New Mexico, and the time of its founding, the early 1870s, involved it in a range war. New Indian policies brought missionary agents into contact with Lawrence G. Murphy & Company, locally known as “The House.” The result, as the following pages will demonstrate, destroyed the careers of four agents, while proving that “civilizing” the Indians and enforcing temperance was more difficult than merely replacing a secular bureaucratic functionary with a missionary agent.<sup>1</sup>

In 1849, the Department of the Interior gained jurisdiction over Indian affairs from the War Department. Nevertheless, the army remained an integral part of Indian policy.<sup>2</sup> Formation of the Department of the Interior led to problems in the army’s ability to implement policy because it created a secondary power structure which drew on army resources and personnel. Further, controlling the accountability of civilian agents proved more difficult than supervising commissioned officers of the army. From 1849 until 1869, Indian agents and superintendents were army officers. From 1869 until 1879, Indian agents and superintendents comprised a mixed-bag of military and civilian men.<sup>3</sup> The position of superintendent or agent often went to “friends of Congress” as a reward for political favors; consequently there was little accountability and corruption ran rampant.

## Four Mescalero Apache Agents

In 1869, President Grant initiated a “peace policy,” in which he proposed to make peace with all the Indian groups within the territorial borders of the United States. By executive order, Grant abolished the civilian offices of Indian Agent and Superintendent, and returned the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) to the Department of War. Army officers were called upon to fill the vacant positions.<sup>4</sup> However, in his peace policy, Grant also initiated the use of missionaries from the “Society of Friends” as agents. These missionaries be-

came responsible for Indians only at certain agencies. According to then-Com missioner of Indian Affairs Ely S. Parker, “the presidential plan of inaugurating a greater degree of honesty in our intercourse with the Indians, by appointment of ‘Friends’ to some of the superintendencies and agencies has proven ... a success.”<sup>5</sup>

This new era of increased “accountability” lasted for a single year. In 1870, Congress reacted to Grant’s policy with an act which decommissioned any officer of the army acting as Indian agent or superintendent.<sup>6</sup> President Grant responded to this Congressional action with radical reform. Continuing his experiment with the Society of Friends, Grant filled all agencies now vacated by officers through “appointment upon the recommendation of some religious body; and to this end the agencies were, so to speak, apportioned among the prominent denominational associations of the country, or the missionary societies representing such denominational views.”<sup>7</sup> This decision eliminated Congressional authority to name agents and superintendents as a reward to distinguished citizens and “friends of Congress”.

Increased reporting of Indian drunkenness, surfacing in Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs after 1870, arguably arose from the use of Protestant missionaries for agents. Protestant zeal for temperance in the nineteenth century was no secret. Therefore, it follows that people who considered alcohol a morally reprehensible substance likely reported its abuse to a greater degree than their predecessors, men who wholeheartedly supported the daily ration of “father’s milk.” Missionary agents fought vice more zealously than their predecessors and an increase in the number of reports reflect the morality of the new agents more than they reflect an increase in Indian drunkenness. In 1870, Commissioner Parker called the use of missionaries “wise and humane.” He explained that under costly political management, “the Indians made but little progress toward that healthy Christian civilization in which are embraced the elements of material wealth and intellectual and moral development ... the Indian [became] more degraded ... learning only [the] vices and adopting none of its virtues.”<sup>8</sup> Many billed the use of missionaries as an exodus from the former days of corruption to a more benevolent way of dealing with the Indians. However, licensed traders were neither missionaries nor government officials, and they were accountable to no one. In the case of the Mescalero Agency, traders would wantonly sell alcohol to Indians and abuse their position to put pressure upon

the Mescalero agents.

So, in 1870, when missionaries received responsibility for the Indian agencies, they reported rampant alcohol abuse on agencies and upon the frontier. The abuse of alcohol among the Mescalero Apaches stemmed from the availability of that “illicit substance.” The letters of the agents provide testimonial to their efforts to curb alcohol abuse and bring Christianity to the reservation. The Mescalero Agency provides an excellent example of the culmination of the policy of using missionaries to avoid corruption. But during the 1870s, pro curing the agency’s beef contracts provided fuel for L.G. Murphy and others in the infamous Lincoln County War. Missionary or military, the agents fell into that messy affair.<sup>9</sup>

The tenure of the first four missionary agents at the Mescalero agency lasted from 1871 through 1879. They faced many obstacles coming to the New Mexico Territory; one of the most notable was Lawrence G. Murphy. A former army officer, Murphy played a key role in the careers of those agents. He briefly served as Mescalero agent at Fort Sumner in 1865, and remained in touch with them after leaving the army and going into the beef business in Lincoln County.<sup>10</sup> In 1869, Murphy and his partners, former Lt. Col. Emil Fritz and former enlisted man James J. Dolan, petitioned to replace agent Lorenzo Labadi with former Captain Saturnino Baca. As a civilian, Labadi abdicated his position under President Grant’s peace policy. Murphy and Company attempted to have their army friend named as the agent to help their beef business operate more efficiently.<sup>11</sup> They failed in their endeavor and Lieutenant A.G. Hennisee became the agent in July. Hennisee’s reports described the land the Mescaleros inhabited, and recommended the creation of a reservation near Fort Stanton. However, he performed his job ineffectively, in part because he never met with the Mescaleros. His tenure ended without any action to contact or reduce the Indians.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the Congressional act in 1870, the Presbyterian Church received the right to recommend missionaries to serve as Mescalero agent.<sup>13</sup> In 1871, Reverend John C. Lowrie of the Presbyterian



Mescalero Agency, view to southeast, ca. 1879-1880. Courtesy Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

Mission Board nominated Andrew J. Curtis as the first missionary agent for the Mescalero Apache. Murphy had failed in a petition to have former Major William Brady appointed and unsuccessfully attempted to have the Curtis appointment overridden.<sup>14</sup>

The interim period between the tenure of Hennisee and Curtis lasted from February until June 10, 1871. During this time, Nathaniel Pope, Indian Superintendent for New Mexico, entered into contract with Murphy to provide beef and corn for the Mescaleros.<sup>15</sup> This contract initiated the missionary agents’ problems with Murphy.

Though he failed to have one of his business partners appointed as agent, Murphy awaited the arrival of Curtis. Apparently Murphy befriended Curtis upon his arrival. According to his first annual report, Curtis said that “through Superintendent Pope and the Hon. Judge Murphy, probate judge for this county, I was put in possession of the facts and fully informed as to the condition of affairs.”<sup>16</sup> This seem harmless enough, even rather neighborly. However, Murphy cared little about forging a lasting friendship with the agent; he intended to commit fraud with the help of the agent. As historian Hana Samek explained, Murphy’s “charming helpfulness, his acquaintance with the Indians and their trust in him, the firm’s economic monopoly [in Lincoln County], and the bewilderment of a novice agent, set a pattern of dangerous dependence on the company for succeeding agents.”<sup>17</sup> A beef contract, awarded by Superintendent Pope, exacerbated the dependency of the agents.

Curtis set about doing his job. He brought in some 325 Indians before his first annual report and

recommended building a school. He reported that the Indians had committed no depredations, wanted to be civilized, but possessed a strong appetite for whiskey. He investigated their source of liquor and stated in his report: “When questioned as to where they obtain their liquor, the Indians invariable [*sic*] answer, ‘Have found a spring.’” In his diligent effort to enforce the liquor laws, he enlisted the help of Murphy, who “issued a proclamation offering, besides the Government reward, an additional one of \$200 for information which would lead to ... conviction of parties dealing illicitly, and yet ... the unlawful sale of whiskey [continued].”<sup>18</sup>

The following year Curtis reported that the sale of whiskey still remained rampant. The influence of Murphy seemed helpful in fighting the scourge of alcohol; however, nobody ever faced conviction for selling liquor to the Indians. The law enforcement community, Judge Murphy included, simply tried not to convict anyone. In response, Curtis requested stricter laws, even suggesting that “any parties who shall procure the license for the sale of intoxicating drink, within one hundred miles of an Indian reservation shall give bonds in the penal sum of not less than twenty thousand dollars.”<sup>19</sup> Curtis sought to limit the sale of liquor to those few affluent men, Murphy included, who could afford to put up such a healthy sum. Much of Murphy’s competition would be removed, as many others selling alcohol to the Indians would be put out of business. The missionary agent demonstrated zeal in attempting to curb the sale of illicit substances, yet his efforts relied upon L.G. Murphy, a man who had greater things in store for agent Curtis.

The extreme rise in reported numbers of Mescaleros during the tenure of Curtis demonstrated the hollowness in Murphy’s helpful facade.<sup>20</sup> The drastic increase resulted from Murphy’s fraudulent schemes, as one historian has explained:

The common scheme involved submitting vouchers for nonexistent Indians or undelivered supplies. The agents thus could become accomplices of Murphy’s firm or perpetrators of fraud by certifying false vouchers. Their position, however, was complicated. They depended on Murphy and his successors for prompt delivery of supplies to prevent Indian raids on cattle and to keep their charges on the reservation.<sup>21</sup>

This system provided for the downfall of agent Curtis and a succession of agents who followed him. Each entered their office, scrutinized by the Presbyterian Mission Board, with the goal of teaching Christian ways to the Indians and civilizing them. Each left in disgrace or resigned in disgust after successfully being cleared of the charges against him. As Curtis’ problems mounted, Congress attempted to aid in the capture and prosecution of those dealing illicitly with Indians.

In 1873, Congress enacted new laws providing

greater leeway for civil and military officials in the search and seizure of liquor. In Section 2140 of the Revised Statutes, authorities secured the ability to search the “boats, stores, packages, wagons, sleds, and places of deposit” of white or Indian persons suspected or reported to be introducing liquor into Indian country. Further, upon the discovery of liquor, the law provided that “the same shall be seized,” and after court proceedings “be forfeited, one-half to the informer and the other half to the use of the United States.” This law meant that if Murphy, his partners, or any other post trader sold liquor to the Indians, they could lose their store, wagons, horses, and any other equipment which they used to make such sales. However, Congress again provided a loophole for the post traders, L.G. Murphy and Co. included. The act excluded liquor the War Department introduced. This allowed for the post trader to stock alcohol and continue sales to the Indians. Perhaps replacement of post traders with military-operated stores would have stopped the illicit sale of alcohol. In any event, civilian post traders proved untrustworthy and gouged the government in their contracts. Though Congress attempted to help agents in their efforts to eliminate the abuse of alcohol among Indians, protection of the “fatigue ration” stood in the way of accomplishing this.

Agent Curtis’ career did not end through his failure to eradicate liquor from the reservation, nor did charges of corruption arise before his departure. He resigned in November 1872 due to pressures from the Murphy Company. In December, an inspection by “the new Indian superintendent, Col. L. Edwin Dudley ... found that the [Murphy] company had ‘taken entire possession of Indian affairs. – Dudley blamed this on the agent for cooperating with them.’<sup>22</sup> Supposedly above reproach, the missionary agent had become corrupt under the pressures of L.G. Murphy and Co.

Samuel B. Bushnell, Curtis’s successor, entered service in March, 1873. Upon his arrival, he immediately took “vigorous steps ... to break the hold of L.G. Murphy and Co. on the Indian affairs.”<sup>23</sup> Lt. Col. N.A.M. Dudley removed Murphy and Company from the position of post trader; however, nobody dared to succeed him except Murphy’s friend, James Dolan. Already partners, Dolan would succeed Murphy when his health failed him in 1876. Thus, due to Murphy’s influence over the region, there was no other option for Bushnell to obtain supplies except Murphy’s store, now located in Lincoln.<sup>24</sup> Bushnell set out to reclaim the agency and, in response, Murphy made false charges of corruption on the part of the agent. In a May 1873 letter to Dudley, Bushnell accused Murphy of saying “It don’t make any difference who the Government sends here as Agent. We control these Indians.”<sup>25</sup> In an effort to break Murphy’s hold, Bushnell moved the agency to a ranch eight miles distant from Fort Stanton. Murphy proved harder to break. Attempting to force the government to buy his beef,

he ordered the seizure of cattle the agency contracted through Van C. Smith.<sup>26</sup> Without beef, Bushnell faced the possibility of an Indian uprising. To avoid this, Bushnell purchased three thousand dollars worth of beef from Murphy. To further Bushnell's complications, the Dolan store wantonly ignored laws regarding the sale of liquor to Indians.<sup>27</sup>

In 1873, Major William R. Price arrived to investigate alleged Mescalero depredations in Texas. Against the advice of Dudley, Price attempted to corral the Mescaleros and locate stolen stock. While on the reservation, Major Price witnessed the control Murphy had over the Mescaleros.<sup>28</sup> In the major's presence, Murphy "summoned the Mescaleros, gave them presents, and urged Price to talk with them ... when Price requested Bushnell to bring in Chief Roman, Bushnell replied that he would ask Murphy to bring him in." Price also witnessed Murphy and the Mescaleros drinking and questioned the actual number of Mescaleros on the reservation.<sup>29</sup> Curiously, when Price proceeded to call in the Mescaleros for questioning, many of them left the reservation. Many historians contend that they left for fear of the military. Yet possibly Murphy induced them to leave. Throughout the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, accounts of Indian rebellions related to drinking binges appeared frequently. Perhaps Murphy induced the Mescalero to break out in an attempt to discredit Bushnell.<sup>30</sup> In any event, Bushnell indeed faced charges for neglecting to fulfill the duties of his office. Dudley removed him from office after the outbreak which demonstrated Bushnell's "inability to control his charges or to resist the Murphy firm."<sup>31</sup> Though he fell into Murphy's hands, Bushnell did present the facade of a missionary temperance worker.

Williamson D. Crothers, his successor, proved an even more staunch advocate of abstinence from alcohol. In his first annual report, Crothers succinctly stated his feelings toward liquor:

No evil has so great a tendency to retard the progress of civilizing the Indians as the traffic in liquor, a common evil on the frontier. Until this barrier is removed but little progress can be made ... In view of its being the policy of the Government to civilize and Christianize the Indian that he may become self-supporting, I would suggest an act of Congress prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors within the bounds of the territory.<sup>32</sup>

Crothers set out for more than Indian temperance. He thought that universal temperance would better benefit society. He spoke of civilizing and Christianizing the Indians; however, the banning of liquor throughout the territory served his temperance goals to a greater degree.

Crothers also inherited the problems of his predecessors. Murphy continued to exert his dominance upon the agency and provided whiskey to post trader Paul Dowlin, who then sold it to the Indians. Crothers

appealed to post commander Major Clendenin, "one of the officers who enjoyed the firm's hospitality towards the army brass." Clendenin responded to the appeals of Crothers and also reminded him that he "occupied the agency building at the pleasure of the War Department."<sup>33</sup> In his annual report, Crothers credited the action of Clendenin for assistance in abating the traffic in liquor.<sup>34</sup>

As he failed to gain favor with Crothers, Murphy began to issue a series of accusations against him which eventually ended the agent's career. He alleged that Crothers provided "hotel accommodations" using government supplies and issued supplies to more Indians than present to receive them.<sup>35</sup> Murphy even petitioned President Grant for the removal of the agent. In his petition, he listed the charges against Crothers and argued that missionary agents could not control the Indians. To support his argument, he quoted Senator John H. Mitchell of Oregon from a speech on 12 February 1874: "Give us honest, capable Indian Agents, men whose qualifications are not to be determined by the fact that they are members of this church or that church." To replace Crothers, Murphy requested that former Major William Brady — soon to become famous as the sheriff murdered by Billy the Kid — be named as the new agent.<sup>36</sup> With Brady as agent, Murphy finally would have the freedom to commit fraud against the agency and the government without interference.

In October 1874, the district attorney indicted Crothers for "operating a hotel without a license." After he pleaded not guilty, the district attorney dropped the case. Then Secretary of War George McCrary charged him with "dereliction of duty in the matter of the killing of Indians on the reservation by raiders."<sup>37</sup> To investigate charges OIA sent former Congressman John McNulta. The special investigator exonerated Agent Crothers of wrongdoing.<sup>38</sup> In the spring of 1876, Crothers resigned his post after apparently realizing the futility of fighting Murphy and Company every step of the way. A strong supporter of the temperance movement and apparent believer in the "peace policy," Crothers succumbed to the manipulations of "The House," and Lawrence G. Murphy.

Frederick C. Godfroy, his replacement, had grown up among Indians in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, where his father had been a post trader.<sup>39</sup> He arrived at the Mescalero agency in July 1876 after the Mescalero had left the reservation on a "whiskey binge." In his first action as agent, Godfroy brought them in by paying J.A. Lucero, a civilian, to locate them.<sup>40</sup> Though his response to the outbreak seems unorthodox, he circumvented the need for an extended military campaign and exhibited a certain innate talent for his profession. During his tenure he continued to show an ability to solve problems, as evidenced in his efforts to move the reservation.

Beginning with his first report, Godfroy complained that the agency's location presented many problems.

Throughout his tenure, he continually proposed removal of the agency to the Peñasco, which he described as a remote region “about fifty miles from this [agency] and at least 35 miles from any settlement.”<sup>41</sup> This suggestion, though well-intentioned, held little merit. The army chose the Mescalero heartland for the location of Fort Stanton (1855). When the Mescalero left Fort

Sumner, they relocated there again, demonstrating their reluctance to move from this, their historic home. After a test of will,

the reservation had moved to the Mescaleros. In his effort to relocate, Godfroy overlooked this fact.

Godfroy’s complaints regarding the location included the proximity of the “Mexican towns” of La Luz and Tularosa and that the main road through the area traversed the reservation. Though he never mentioned them directly, other factors existed as well. In his letter, Godfroy suggested he meet personally with Commissioner John Q. Smith to discuss reasons for the move. In his words, “there are may [*sic*] reasons for this change that I cannot so well bring under your observation and call your attention to their importance as well in writing as I could personally.”<sup>42</sup> There are few things which cannot be explained through the written word. However, he ignored one huge predicament in his letter. This problem centered around the fact that Godfroy had arrived in Lincoln County around the same time as the Englishman John Tunstall. The arrival of Tunstall brought greater competition for the beef contracts, the chief cause of the Lincoln County War.<sup>43</sup> Godfroy probably feared that through reporting the corruption he observed, his life had become endangered. Nevertheless, his attempts to move the reservation continued until his departure in 1879.

As with his predecessors, Godfroy apparently intended to enforce temperance on the reservation. As discussed above, he attempted to have the agency moved away from La Luz and Tularosa because the Mescalero obtained liquor there. Other evidence of his temperance campaign comes from his annual reports and letters to the Commissioner. In a letter dated August 1, 1876, he discussed the Indian’s manufacture of *tiswin*, “a beer they themselves make from corn.” He continued by stating that he would “make an example of the first man I can find proofs [*sic*] enough to convict.”<sup>44</sup>

In autumn 1878, Godfroy’s complaints about La

Luz and Tularosa culminated in an unsuccessful military action. Pursuant to Special Orders #96, Department of the Missouri, 1870, a detachment of troops and an officer arrived in Tularosa to stop the sale of liquor to Indians.<sup>45</sup> This action failed because the orders to

“arrest straggling Indians and stop the selling of whiskey” conflicted with General Orders #28, which stated that an agent must accompany the troops and direct them in any actions against the Indians. Further, the troops had no jurisdiction over civilians. “Unofficially,” Lt. Col. N.A.M. Dudley explained, “I hear that it has been decided that troops cannot be used to aid the U.S. Marshall and Sheriff in even putting down the insurrection existing in Lincoln County.”<sup>46</sup> Last, Lt. M. Goodwin reported that the detachment had not witnessed any Indians in his vicinity and “what whiskey that is sold will be carried to them in the mountains.”<sup>47</sup>



Frederick C. Godfroy,  
Mescalero Agent, 1876-  
1879. Courtesy of Nita  
Stewart Haley Memorial  
Library, Haley History Center.

In December, Godfroy complained about the detachment’s general lack of progress. To Commissioner Haught, he stated that “the troops stationed at Tularosa [*sic*] have been more interested in roaming around the country looking for cattle and horse thieves than keeping the Indians from obtaining whiskey.”<sup>48</sup> He also “respectfully urged” Lt. Colonel Dudley to “instruct the officers commanding the detachment of troops at Tularosa to be more diligent.”<sup>49</sup> Godfroy did not win any friends among the military through this campaign. Among his civilian neighbors, he found even greater enemies.

Shortly after Godfroy’s arrival, Murphy sent the agent a letter describing the affairs of the agency and the careers of his predecessors. In his neighborly way, Murphy explained how Curtis had resigned after “insurmountable interference by the military.” He continued, describing the complete inadequacy of Bushnell who “ignored his duties and obligations,” and, “surrendered ... the interest of the Indians ... to a military officer.” It remains unclear whether Godfroy, indeed, cooperated with Murphy and/or Dolan and Company. However, another faction in the Lincoln County War branded Godfroy as a partisan. This raised charges against him which led to a special investigation and his dismissal.

As mentioned above, the arrival of John H. Tunstall intensified the trouble Murphy and Company made for the agency.<sup>50</sup> Tunstall became partners with cattle magnate John S. Chisum and lawyer Alexander McSween.

Ironically, McSween and Tunstall saved Murphy the effort of destroying Godfroy's career. McSween wrote letters calling Godfroy a "Presbyterian Fraud," requesting that one of his partisans replace the agent. He charged that Godfroy sold and gave supplies to citizens, exaggerated the number of Mescalero receiving rations, and delivered poor beef and flour to the Indians.<sup>51</sup> E.C. Watkins, an 01A special investigator, filed a report which included depositions of some fifty witnesses, the majority of whom sided with one faction or the other and were thus entirely unreliable. The report did include Godfroy's admission to the charge of loaning government supplies to Dolan and Riley, who had taken control of Murphy and Company after Murphy had retired. Watkins concluded that Godfroy should have the opportunity to resign and, failing that, be discharged.<sup>52</sup> Another agent had fallen victim to "The House" and its feuds.

Employing missionaries as agents sought to serve the purpose of Christianizing and civilizing the Indians. Through Grant's peace policy, the government attempted to find an alternative to Indian extermination. The case of the Mescalero Reservation provided an instructive example of the limitations influencing implementation of this plan. During the period from 1869-1879, the Mescalero reservation had five agents - not counting Labadi, who served before the peace plan, nor Agent S.A. Russell, who replaced Godfroy. After the ineffectual tenure of Agent Hennisee, the missionary agents arrived. They each faced the relentless pressures of Murphy and Company and its hold upon Lincoln County. Each struggled to effect positive changes at the agency without the help of the government, military, or local peace officers - many of whom were Murphy partisans. Evidence shows that Murphy controlled the Indians, whether through the whiskey trade or other means. The record further demonstrates that Murphy's hold over the agency counteracted whatever good came from appointing missionaries as agents. In the end, the missionary policy aided the Indians no better than had the previous administration of Indian affairs. The push toward Indian temperance did not succeed because accomplishment of this goal required universal temperance, an impossibly difficult goal to achieve at this time. In the tradition of government Indian policy, the case of the Mescalero Agency demonstrates the incoherence of the goals and the means used to accomplish them. The missionary agents proved incapable of stopping the illicit sale of liquor or Christianizing the Mescaleros. In the end, the agents left in disgrace, having become casualties of the Lincoln County politics which produced the Lincoln County War.

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## Appendix A

List of the Apportionment of Indian Agencies Among Several Missionary Associations and Religious Societies, 1872<sup>2</sup>

*Friends*, (Hicksite,) the Northern superintendency and the agencies therein, viz: Great Nemaha, 313; Omaha, 969; Winnebago, 1,440; Pawnee, 2,447; Otoe, 464; and Santee Sioux, 965; all located within the State of Nebraska.

*Friends*, (Orthodox,) the Central superintendency and the agencies therein, viz: Pottawatomie, 400; Kaw, 290; Kickapoo, 598; all located in Kansas and Quapaw, 1070; Osage, 4,000; Sac and Fox, 463; Shawnee, 663; Wichita, 1,250; Kiowa, 5,490; and tipper Arkansas, 3,500; all located in the Indian Territory.

*Baptist*, the Cherokee, 18,000; Creek, 12,300, in the Indian Territory; Walker River, 6,000; and Pi-Ute, 2,500, in Nevada; and Special, 3,000 in Utah.

*Presbyterian*, the Choctaw, 16,000; and Seminoles 2,398 in the Indian Territory; Abiquiu or Tierra Amarilla, 1,920; Navajo, 9,114; Mescalero Apache, 830; Tularosa, or Southern Apache, 1200, in New Mexico Territory; Moquis Purple, 3,000, in Arizona Territory; Nez Percé, 2,807, in Idaho Territory; and Uintah Valley, 800, in Utah Territory.

*Christian*, the Pueblo, 7,683, in New Mexico; Neeah Bay, 604, in Washington Territory.

*Methodist*, Hoopa Valley, 725; Round Valley, 1,700; and Tule River, 374, in California; Yakama, 3,000; Skokomish, 919; Quinaiet, 520, in Washington Territory; Warm Springs, 626; Siletz, 2,500; and Klamath, 4,000 in Oregon; Blackfeet, 7,500; Crow, 2,700; and Milk River, 19,755, in Montana Territory; Fort Hall, 1,037, in Idaho Territory; and Michigan, P, 117, in Michigan.

*Catholic*, Tulalip, 3,600; and Colville, 3,349, in Washington Territory; Brand Ronde, 8709; Umatilla, 837, in Oregon; Flathead, 1,780, in Montana Territory; Grand River, 6,700; and Devil's Lake, 720, in Dakota Territory.

*Reformed Dutch*, Colorado River, 828; Pima and Maricopa, 4,342; Camp Grant, 900; Camp Verde, 748; and White Mountain, or Camp Apache, 1,300, in Arizona Territory.

*Congressional*, Green Bay, 2,871; and Chippewas of Lake Superior, 5,150, in Wisconsin; and Chippewas of the Mississippi, 6,455, in Minnesota.

*Protestant Episcopal*, Whetstone, 5,000; Ponca, 735; Upper Missouri, 2,547; Fort Berthold; 2,700; Cheyenne River, 6,000; Yankton, 1,947; and Red Cloud, 7,000 in Dakota Territory; and Shoshone, 1,000 in Wyoming Territory.

*American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, Sisseton, 1,496, in Dakota Territory.

*Unitarian*, Los Pinos, 3,000; and White River, 800, in Colorado Territory  
*Lutheran*, Sac and Fox, 273, in Iowa.

### Recapitulation.

The Hicksite Friends have in their charge 6 agencies, with 6,598 Indians; Orthodox Friends, 10 agencies with 17,724 Indians; Baptists, 5 agencies, with 40,800 Indians; Presbyterians, 9 agencies, with 38,069 Indians; Christians, 2 agencies, with 8,287 Indians; Methodists, 14 agencies, with 54,473 Indians; Catholics, 7 agencies, with 17,856 Indians; Reformed Dutch, 5 agencies, with 8,118 Indians; Congregationalist, 3 agencies, with 14,476 Indians; Episcopalians, 8 agencies, with 26,929 Indians; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1 agency, with 1,496 Indians; Unitarians, 2 agencies, with 3,800 Indians; Lutherans, 1 agency, with 273 Indians.

"RCLA (1872), 73-74. The format of this document replicates that of the original.

### ENDNOTES

1 For an example of documents and discussion of the Indian wars and Indian policy, see: Felix S. Cohen, *Felix S. Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law*. Reprint (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971); Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy In Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976); and, Prucha, ed., *Documents of the United States Indian Policy*, 2nd edition, expanded, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 1990).

2 Cohen, p. 10.

3 *Ibid*.

- 4 For discussion of the Peace Policy and documents both for and against the transfer of Indian Affairs, see: Prucha. For documents, see: Documents, pp. 117- 143; and Cohen, *Federal Indian Law*, 18n165.
- 5 *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1870)*, 10. Hereafter referred to as *RCLA*.
- 6 Cecil Byron Trammell, *Mescalero Indian Relations in Hew Mexico, 1865-1885*, Master’s Thesis (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1938), 45-46. Also: *RCLA (1870)*, 9-10 and *RCIA (1872)*, 72-73.
- 7 *RCLA (1870)*, 10; *RCLA (1872)*, 72. Army officers would not be allowed to serve as agents until the passing of the Indian Bill of 1892. *RCIA (1892)*, 10. For a complete list of which agencies went to which denominational society, see Appendix 1.
- 8 *RCLA (1870)*, 10.
- 9 The Lincoln County War seemingly rivals the American Civil war in the number of volumes written about it. Scholarship concerning the feud presents a dialectical debate each author taking the side of either Murphy or his counterpart Tunstall. Though too voluminous to list here, a few of the texts are: Maurice G. Fulton, *History of the Lincoln County War: A Classic Account of Billy the Kid*, ed. by Robert N. Mullin (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968); John P. Wilson, *Merchants, Guns, and Money: The Story of Lincoln County and Its Wars* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1987); and, William A. Keleher, *Violence in Lincoln County 1869-1881*, 2nd ed., with introduction by C.L. Sonnichsen (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). Additionally, many of the participants published their accounts, the best known being: Pat Garret, *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, ed. by Maurice G. Fulton (New York: Macmillan Company, 1920).
- 10 Wilson, p. 34. Wilson argues that the contact between Murphy and the Mescaleros remained minimal between 1866-1872.
- 11 Hana Samek, “No ‘Bed of Roses’: The Careers of Four Mescalero Indian Agents, 1871-1878,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, LVII, No. 2 (April 1982), 139-140; and Wilson, pp. 20-24. Wilson describes how Murphy, Fritz, Dolan, and Baca met in the army and worked together after retirement, becoming key figures in the Lincoln County War.
- 12 *RCIA (1869)*, 22.
- 13 Specifically, the American Unitarian Association, a division of the Presbyterian Church, received the honor of recommending agents. Morris E. Opler, “Mescalero Apache”, *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 10, Southwest*, Gen. Ed. William C. Sturtevant, Vol. Ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian, 1983), 422; and Morris Edward Opler and Catherine H. Opler, “Mescalero Apache History in the Southwest”. *NMHR* XXV, No. 1 (January 1950), 22.
- 14 Samek, 140.
- 15 *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior (1871)*, 816. *RCIA (1871)*, 400, and Samek, *No ‘Bed of Roses’*, 140.
- 16 *RCLA (1871)*, 400.
- 17 Samek 141.
- 18 *RCLA (1871)*, 400-404
- 19 *RCLA (1872)*, 304-306
- 20 The number of Mescalero during the “Curtis Regime” rose from 400 to 2,679. Frank D. Reeve, “The Federal Indian Policy in New Mexico, 1858-1880. IV,” *NMHR*. XIII, No. 3 (July 1938), 267.
- 21 Samek, 141.
- 22 Samek, 142.
- 23 Reeve. 270; and, Opler, 24.
- 24 Samek, 142. Successors to Murphy as post trader included an old friend Captain Paul Dowlin, one of the men whom Murphy had earlier attempted to have named as agent, and Murphy’s partner, James Dolan. See Samek, 144 and Reeve, 272.
- 25 Bushnell to Dudley, 1 May 1873, Fort Stanton. quoted in Reeve, 271.
- 26 In October, 1872, the beef contract had been awarded to Smith in an effort to break Murphy. Samek, 141.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 143-144.
- 28 Lawrence L. Mehren, “Scouting for Mescaleros: The Price Campaign of 1873”, *Arizona and the West, Vol. X. No. 2* (Summer 1968) 171.
- 29 Samek, 144.
- 30 Evidence to support this claim remains thin, yet conveniently the pieces of the argument appear. Murphy controlled the Mescalero, sold them the whiskey, and called them in previous to their outbreak. Price witnessed Murphy drinking with them, and then they broke out. This could amount to more than mere conjuncture.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 145.
- 32 *Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners (1874)*, 47.
- 33 Samek, 144-146.
- 34 *RCIA (1874)*, 306.
- 35 Reeve, 273.
- 36 L.G. Murphy’s Form of Petition for the Removal of Indian Agent Bushnell to his Excellency, U.S. Grant, President of the United States, 24 February 1875, Lincoln, New Mexico. Transcript from *Lawrence L. Mehren Collection*, MS 281, Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.
- 37 Reeve, 273.
- 38 *ROA (1875)*, 39.
- 39 Phillip J. Rasch, “Frederick C. Godfroy, Indian Agent”, *Corral Dust: Potomac Corral of the Westerners, Vol. VIII, No. 3* (Summer 1963). 1.
- 40 Reeve, 274\_ Reeve notes that Godfroy paid Lucero a premium of \$1.00 per man and \$1.00 per woman and child. This system may have encouraged people to entice the Indians to leave in order to collect the premium.
- 41 Godfroy to John Q. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 10 November 1875, Mescalero Agency. *Lawrence L. Mehren Papers*, MS 281. University of Arizona Library. Tucson. See also: *RCIA (1877)*, 154-158.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 Samek, 148-149.
- 44 Godfroy to John Q. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 August 1876. Mescalero Agency. *Rio Grande Histot ical Collection (RGHC) 110 /16 / 4*
- 45 George McCrary, Secretary of War to Ezra A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 18 October 1878, Washington City, RG 75/M234/R575.
- 46 Lt. Colonel Dudley to Lieutenant Goodwin, Commanding Detachment. 1.i September 1878, Fort Stanton, RG75/M234/R575.
- 47 Lieutenant Goodwin to Post Adjutant. Fort Stanton. 19 September 1878. Tularosa, RG75/M234/R575.
- 48 Godfroy to E.A. Haight, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1 December 18 /8, Mescalero Agency. *RGHC 110/16/ 4*.
- 49 Godfroy to Dudley, 6 December 1878, Mescalero Agency. *RGHC 110/16/ 4*.
- 50 For discussions related to Agent Godfroy’s involvement in the Lincoln County War, see: Reeve, 275-276; Samek, 147-149; Opler and Opler, 27-28; and Rasch, I & 19-20.
- 51 Alexander McSween to Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior, 11 February 1878. Lincoln, New Mexico. Transcript, *AU*, 281/2/14. McSween wrote at least one more letter similar to this which he addressed to the Reverend Lowrie. Samek. “No ‘Bed of Roses’”, 149.
- 52 *NA*, RG 75, Roll 11321, includes report of E.C. Watkins investigation of agent Godfroy, *AU*, 281/2. For discussion, see: *Mid*

# Mesilla Valley Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade, 1870-1879

by Scott Edward Fritz

The Santa Fe Trail is a popular topic with historians because it was a major commercial wagon route between St. Louis and Santa Fe. However, New Mexico historians have not studied Mesilla Valley merchants and their involvement in the Santa Fe trade. Las Cruces and Mesilla storekeepers sold goods to farmers, miners, and retailers in Southern New Mexico, Eastern Arizona, and Northern Mexico. Such customers frequently paid for merchandise with grain or precious metals. Wholesalers sold corn, beans, and wheat to United States military forts in Southern New Mexico. The federal government paid merchants in hard currency and the profits allowed them to buy Eastern goods. Mesilla Valley merchants' outlets in New Mexico mining towns, such as Silver City and Pinos Altos, enabled them to sell goods for gold, silver, and copper. They also owned mines in Grant County, Arizona, and in Chihuahua. Precious metals were remitted to jobbers in the East, thereby paying off wholesale debts. By marketing grain and minerals, they were able to sell goods to a population with little money and at the same time control both agricultural and mining communities in the Southwest.

The Mesilla Valley's vibrant economy has escaped the attention of Santa Fe Trail historians. Early studies covered the trade between Santa Fe and St. Louis without considering Southern New Mexico storekeepers. Henry Inman's book, *The Old Santa Fe Trail: The Story of a Great Highway* and R.L. Duffus's work *The Santa Fe Trail* deal almost exclusively with Anglo traders and their business activities between Missouri, New Mexico, and Chihuahua. However, neither author discussed the first traders to open stores in the Mesilla Valley after the Mexican-American War. Louis E. Atherton wrote several articles about Missouri merchants and the Santa Fe trade. Atherton's essay, "Business Techniques in the Santa Fe Trade", published in the *Missouri Historical Review* in 1940, viewed the Santa Fe trade as a risky venture for Missouri mercantiles because debts incurred in Mexico often took a year to collect. Most studies on the Santa Fe trade have been limited to its commerce in Northern New Mexico. Historians have previously ignored the large communities of merchants living south of Santa Fe.<sup>1</sup>

Studies regarding Northern New Mexico merchants continued in the 1960s as historians increasingly examined German-Jewish merchants and the Santa Fe trade.<sup>2</sup> Floyd S. Fierman's book *The Spiegelbergs of New Mexico: Merchants and Bankers, 1844-1893*, documented

only one Northern New Mexico Jewish mercantile family. His article published in *Arizona and the West*, "Jewish Pioneering in the Southwest: A Record of the Freudenthal-Lesinsky-Soloman Families," is concerned primarily with the clans' farms, mines, stores, and banks in Eastern Arizona.<sup>3</sup> Likewise William Parish's book *The Charles Iffeld Company: A Study of the Rise and Fall of Merchant Capitalism in New Mexico* was devoted entirely to a Jewish-owned mercantile in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Parish's book, while limited geographically, showed that German Jews engaged in mercantile capitalism. They sold merchandise to a low-income population and extended credit and loans to farmers, sheep raisers, and miners in northern New Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

Research on Northern New Mexico merchants broadens our knowledge of different cultures and their involvement in the Santa Fe trade. Susan Calafate Boyle's recent book, *Los Capitalistas: Hispanos and the Santa Fe Trade*, proved that Hispano merchants were active mercantile capitalists and "pioneered many of the activities that Parish associated with the German Jews."<sup>5</sup> Hispano merchants such as Felipe Chavez of Rio Arriba bought merchandise in Eastern cities, owned farms, and raised sheep. They were also large freighters, who transported wares into Northern Mexico and returned each season with wool and bullion. Like previous works, Boyle's book documented only the Santa Fe trade merchants living in Northern New Mexico.

Inman, Atherton, Fierman, Parish, and Boyle show that Santa Fe traders came from diverse backgrounds. Mesilla Valley merchants, like their northern counterparts, were a heterogeneous group. The 1870 New Mexico census reported that Mesilla boasted seven retail merchants, four of whom were Hispanic: Juan de Milla, José Massau, and Ramon Gonzáles, all born in Mexico, and Ignacio Gonzales, a native of New Mexico. The other retailers were Rockwell Blake of New Hampshire, Pedro Duhalde of France, and Jules Diammot of Switzerland. Las Cruces, in 1870, had a retail merchant population of nine, which included New Mexican-born Jesus Armijo and Perfecto Armijo. Numa Grandjean and Arnold Auditet came from Switzerland, Martinet Chaffie from Italy, and Jose Llear from Spain. United States-born retailers included Lawrence La Point, a liquor dealer from Missouri, and George Maxwell, a retailer from New York. Mexican-born retailers included Mariano Molono, Blaza Banks, and Juan Ochoa.<sup>6</sup>

Several large Mesilla Valley wholesalers sold general merchandise to smaller merchants and the public. The 1870 census reveals that the wholesalers had been born in either Europe or the United States. Joseph Reynolds of Ireland and Edgar Griggs of New Jersey, for example, owned the largest wholesale firm in Mesilla. Two other wholesale merchants, Thomas Jefferson Bull and John Lemon, were natives of Ohio and Pennsylvania, respectively. The two wholesalers in Las Cruces were Henry Lesinsky and Louis Rosenbaum, both Prussian-born.<sup>7</sup>

Wholesale merchants in the Mesilla Valley imported many of the wares consumed in Southern New Mexico. The Las Cruces *Borderer* estimated in 1871 that Henry Lesinsky had shipped 460,000 pounds of goods to his Las Cruces warehouses. Reynolds and Griggs, of Mesilla, imported half as much that year.<sup>8</sup> Every season wholesalers traveled to Eastern cities to buy goods. Often one partner in a wholesale company served as purchasing agent, while the other owner remained in New Mexico. Joseph Reynolds, for instance, managed the Mesilla store, and his partner, James Griggs, traveled eastward to deal with financial matters and make purchases. Lesinsky's uncle, Julius Freudenthal, owned an interest in H. Lesinsky and Company and resided permanently in New York to serve as the company's purchasing agent.<sup>9</sup>

Mesilla Valley merchants selected a large assortment of goods according to regional needs. They purchased medicine, spices, fabrics, liquor, hardware, arms, and clothing. Luxury items included chocolate, coffee, tea, and china. Traders supplied their stores with goods for Mexican merchants and included cigars and linens. Wholesalers stocked Grant County stores with canned food, fuses, explosives, tools, liquor, and steel. Stores in farming communities offered the latest farm equipment.<sup>10</sup>

Merchants transported their wares using freighting firms and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.<sup>11</sup> Since a railroad did not reach the Mesilla Valley until 1881, goods destined for the region prior to this had to be transferred from railroads at the railhead onto mules or ox-drawn wagons. Commission merchants operating from the railroad terminus charged a fee for this service, handling all freight destined for the Southwest. Advertising in the *Mesilla News* in 1875, Chick, Browne, and Company in Granada, Colorado promised that "particular attention will always be given to receiving, storing and forwarding all goods for Southern Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Chihuahua."<sup>12</sup> Commission firms did not limit their activities to forwarding goods, however. They were also large wholesale and retail merchants, who sold their wares to merchants in New Mexico and Mexico and advertised in both Spanish and English, often inviting merchants to personally select items from their showrooms. Since the volume of business was immense they required ample storage space. In Granada, for example, Otero, Sellar and Company had retail sales rooms 30x50 feet each, and wholesale warehouses measuring 30x180 feet, from

which they sold or consigned goods to merchants.<sup>13</sup>

Freighters transported goods from commission warehouses to the Mesilla Valley using several routes, including *El Camino Real* and the Fort Stanton Road running through Lincoln County. Both roads were more than 200 miles in length and took over a month to traverse. Freighters and animals had to brave storms, washed-out mud roads, and freezing temperatures. When wagon teams arrived in Las Cruces and Mesilla, they often camped near the firms where their freight was to be unloaded. After a brief stay, freighters continued their travels, often to Grant County with goods marked for Silver City merchants. Other freighters hauled bulk agricultural commodities, such as flour, beans, corn, and other produce, to military forts or exported it out of the territory.<sup>14</sup>

Mesilla Valley wholesale merchants rarely owned their own teams and relied on numerous freighting firms to carry their goods. Freighters were often Hispanos. Among the largest in the Mesilla Valley were Martin Amador, Guadalupe Ascarate, Cisto Garcia, Rafael Bermudes, Mariano Barela, and Ramon Gonzales. Anglo freighters, although fewer in number, included Charles Ellis of Texas, George D. Maxwell of New York, and Bradford Daily of Missouri. The latter two were partners and ran freight out of Las Cruces.<sup>15</sup>

The largest freighters also owned stores. George D. Maxwell and Company, for example, was run by Bradford Daily and George Maxwell. The firm's stables, warehouses, and store were located on an 85 foot block in Las Cruces. The partners began advertising in August, 1871, promoting themselves as dealers in general merchandise. Their freighting activities were often noted in local papers. In September, 1871, for example, they delivered 30,000 pounds of ore to the A.T. & S.F. depot at Kit Carson, Colorado, for shipment to St. Louis and England.<sup>16</sup> Martin Amador was another freighter and retailer. He owned stores in Silver City and Las Cruces. His store in Las Cruces was part of the Amador Transfer Company, located at the southern end of town, and like George Maxwell and Co., had livery stables patronized by travelers and his teamsters.<sup>17</sup>

Much of the merchandise entering the Mesilla Valley was destined for storekeepers elsewhere. Businessmen in nearby towns, including John D. Barncastle of Dona Ana, traveled to Las Cruces and Mesilla to purchase goods. Arizona merchants, such as Munsen and Hamor, also obtained wares in the Mesilla Valley, as did merchants in the mining towns of Grant County, New Mexico. In one week, for example, Reynolds and Griggs sold 35,000 pounds of merchandise to Silver City merchants. Goods were also sold to El Paso merchants. The *Mesilla Valley Independent* in the summer of 1877 commented that merchants in Mesilla and Las Cruces sold large quantities of goods to El Paso merchants.<sup>18</sup>

Mesilla Valley merchants also sold goods to Mexico, but to a lesser extent. Charles Moye, American Consul in



Merchants diversified their investments. Martin Amador went into the hotel business after the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad arrived in Las Cruces in 1881. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

Chihuahua, observed that American goods were expensive in Chihuahua. European merchandise was abundant and cheaper because it was easily transported across the Atlantic and deposited at Mexican ports, such as Vera Cruz. American goods, on the other hand, traveled longer distances overland and transportation costs were high. Susan Calafate Boyle in *Commerciantes, Arriero, Y Peones: The Hispanos and the Santa Fe Trade*, found that Santa Fe merchants “had to pay for packaging, carrying the merchandise to the *almacen* (warehouse), and from the *almacen* to the port [of entry], handling charges, insurance, and a 2.5 percent commission, in all about 6.1 percent surcharge over the original purchase.”<sup>19</sup> William Pierson, American Consul in Ciudad Juarez, noted that the average cost to transport goods from Kit Carson to the customs house in Paso del Norte was from five to eight cents per pound. He informed the Secretary of State that merchants invested little capital to export goods into Mexico, which he attributed to the high duties charged by Mexican customs.<sup>20</sup>

Mesilla Valley merchants still sold goods to Mexican storekeepers. The *Mesilla News* reported that during one week in 1874 Mexican merchants, including a representative from Gonzáles and Trevino Brothers of Chihua-

hua, were in Mesilla buying goods. In December, 1879 the *Thirty Four* noted that a Mexican colonel and a large number of influential Mexican citizens purchased goods in the Mesilla Valley. Political developments in Mexico often dictated buying patterns. Solomon Schutz, commercial agent at Paso del Norte, reported in spring 1877 that Portfirio Diaz, after taking control of Chihuahua, forced businessmen to provide his government a loan. Since the loan was to be paid back using customs revenues, Chihuahua merchants purchased goods in El Paso and imported them into Mexico duty free. The large amounts of goods bought by Chihuahua merchants that spring compelled El Paso merchants to make additional purchases in the Mesilla Valley.<sup>21</sup>

To facilitate trade, wholesale merchants in the Mesilla Valley entered into partnerships enabling them to supply distant regions. Henry Lesinsky and Eugene Angerstein, and early merchant of Mesilla, owned stores in El Paso, Fort Bliss, and Ciudad Juarez. Located within major population centers and adjacent to the international border, these stores allowed Mexican merchants to readily purchase American goods. Goods for their stores were shipped from Lesinsky’s main store in Las Cruces or overland from San Antonio, Texas.<sup>22</sup>

Lesinsky also owned several companies in partnership with ex-California Volunteers. He was a partner, for example, with Benjamin E. Davies. After the Civil War Davies became an influential Dona Ana County rancher and businessman. For several years he and Lesinsky ran a sutler's store at Fort Selden, known as Benjamin E. Davies and Company. It served local soldiers and residents of the nearby settlement of Leasburg. Joseph F. Bennett, discharged from the army in 1865, ran several businesses with Lesinsky, including Bennett Brothers and Company and the Southern Overland Express Company. The former was one of the largest mercantiles in Silver City, selling goods both wholesale and retail. The latter, based in Mesilla, transported passengers, gold, silver, drafts, currency, and government mail; travel arrangements were obtained at any one of Lesinsky's stores, including his outlet in Tucson.<sup>23</sup>

Merchants employed clerks to run their stores. Such experience enabled employees to establish future businesses. Alexander Morehead of Missouri, for example, was a bookkeeper in 1871 for H. Lesinsky and Co. A year later he worked for Reynolds and Griggs. By 1875 Morehead became post-trader at Fort Selden and opened a new store in Silver City known as A.H. Morehead and Company. Another clerk to become a businessman was Hilario Morales. Born in Mexico, in 1871 he managed the Reynolds and Griggs outlet in Las Cruces. A year later the *Borderer* noted that Morales opened his own retail store in the same building which was known as Morales, Adkins, and Company.<sup>24</sup>

Success in business required not only experience, but also markets for raw products. Southern New Mexico merchants often sold goods to subsistence farmers on credit and anticipated that their customers would pay the debt in agricultural produce. The ability to market raw products allowed the merchant to sell goods to low-income residents. Merchants sold corn, wheat, and forage to Southern New Mexico military forts, which paid contractors in hard currency. Retail merchants throughout Southern New Mexico, West Texas, and Northern Mexico received agricultural produce from their clientele and sold it in bulk to wholesalers in Mesilla and Las Cruces. Darlis Miller, in *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885*, found that "merchants like Charles Ilfeld secured much of their grain through their retail stores, selling merchandise and receiving in payment corn, wheat, oats, and bran, as well as hay, lumber, cattle, and sheep, which they could then sell to the army or to other government contractors."<sup>25</sup>

In the early 1870s wheat grown in Chamberino, New Mexico, was marketed in this way by local retailers, who included Guadalupe Miranda and Jose de Camara. El Paso merchants collected grain from Texas and Mexico. In 1872 Eugene Angerstein bought 16,000 pounds of wheat in Mexico to fill military contracts signed by Henry Lesinsky. Angerstein also shipped 100 sacks of barley to

Louis Rosenbaum. Lesinsky owned stores in El Paso and Fort Bliss with Bernard Weisl, a merchant of Tularosa. In December, 1874 corn, beans, grain, and wine were gathered at these stores and shipped to Las Cruces. The *Mesilla Valley Independent* reported in 1877 that Solomon Schutz and Brothers of El Paso sold wheat to James Griggs in Mesilla and then purchased goods.<sup>26</sup>

Anglo wholesalers sold produce to military forts in Southern New Mexico. In 1874, for instance, Henry Lesinsky held grain contracts to supply Fort Selden with 80,000 pounds of flour at \$5.25 per one hundred pounds and Fort Bayard with 18,000 pounds of flour at \$5.75 per one hundred pounds. In January, 1873 Louis Rosenbaum supplied several forts with flour: Fort Craig, 100,000 pounds; Fort Stanton, 70,000 pounds; Fort Selden, 80,000 pounds; and Fort Tularosa 35,000 pounds. Thomas Bull also held similar contracts for Fort Stanton and Fort Selden.<sup>27</sup>

Deriving profits from military contracts was not without difficulties. In July, 1873 Lesinsky delivered inferior wheat, which was baked into bread and found to be slightly yellow. The military allowed Lesinsky to fulfill his contract, but officials recommended he be debarred from bidding in the future.<sup>28</sup> James Griggs also encountered troubles. In 1861 Griggs delivered only a portion of 200,000 pounds of corn that he had contracted to sell to Fort Cummings. First Lieutenant Julian R. Fitch, quartermaster at Fort Cummings, failed to collect the whole shipment. The Civil War erupted shortly after and the matter was not resolved until 1871, when Griggs was ordered to supply the fort with 9,000 pounds of bran free of charge.<sup>29</sup>

Since the grain trade was lucrative, merchants endeavored to serve as forage agents for the military. The position required supplying local forts with large quantities of grains and fodder. Alexander Bull, the son of Thomas Bull and an up-and-coming merchant, worked for his father's stores in Mesilla and Rio Mimbres. In 1876, Alexander applied for the position of forage agent at Fort Bayard. His father wrote the chief quartermaster urging the acceptance of his son, believing that the army could easily receive grain at or from the Rio Mimbres store. There was competition for the job, however. Other merchants applying for the job included Johnson, Kohn and Company of Silver City and Staab and Company of Santa Fe.<sup>30</sup>

In retrospect, the grain trade provided the hard money necessary to pay off debts in the East. The federal government paid their contractors in government script and this allowed merchants to remit earnings to finance debts with Eastern wholesalers. William Parish found that Charles Ilfeld and other merchants directed post-sutlers to remit profits made on military contracts to Eastern creditors. By marketing raw produce merchants acquired hard currency by which they paid wholesale accounts.<sup>31</sup>

Mesilla Valley merchants also acquired precious met-

als to finance wholesale purchases. In order to remit and sell bullion in Eastern cities, Las Cruces and Mesilla wholesalers opened stores in Grant County because the region contained mines producing gold, silver, or copper. Joseph Reynolds and James Griggs began their Pinos Altos outlet in 1866 in order to sell goods to local gold miners. Henry Lesinsky started his Silver City store in 1872 with Joseph Bennett, an influential Southern New Mexico freighter, whereby he obtained silver on a weekly basis to be sold in Eastern markets. Bennett, Brothers and Company, of Silver City, for instance, shipped in one week 1400 ounces of silver and 50 ounces of gold to Henry Lesinsky's Las Cruces store before the partnership sold it in New York.<sup>32</sup>

Henry Lesinsky was the first to sell flour in Silver City. E.E. Burlingame, an up-and-coming entrepreneur, noted in *Mining Life* that Lesinsky sold flour for \$15.00 per sack, while the same amount went for \$10.50 in Rio Mimbres, some 20 miles east of Silver City. Burlingame had a negative opinion of Lesinsky and asserted that Lesinsky conspired with the owners of the Brockman and Kimberlie mill on the Rio Mimbres to keep the price of wheat high. He also argued that Lesinsky contracted the first buildings in Silver City, not out of philanthropy, but for his own profit. In spite of the attack, *Mining Life* noted in August, 1874 that Jews invested over \$60,000 in Silver City's development.<sup>33</sup>

Wholesalers were not the only merchants to open stores in the region. Martin Amador was the largest Hispano retailer in Silver City. His store, known as Amador, Macias and Company, sold groceries, general merchandise, and mining tools and freighted for Grant County miners and merchants in Arizona and Southern New Mexico. Goods were often obtained in the Mesilla Valley or from northern commission firms, such as Chick, Brown and Co. Amador also procured merchandise in the East. In spring 1877 Brookmill and Renken, of St. Louis, sold Amador tobacco, grease, and assorted food items. The goods were transported along the Missouri Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroads and deposited at the warehouses of Chick, Brown and Co., in El Moro, Colorado. Amador's ox wagons then brought the goods to Las Cruces and Silver City.<sup>34</sup>

Grant County merchants, including Amador, developed a lucrative trade with Mexico. Mexican merchants traveled to Silver City and sold corn, beans, potatoes, flour, sugar, lemons, cheese, and candy. They also bought manufactured goods and paid in Mexican silver dollars, which contained more silver than U.S. dollars. Harry B. Ailman commented in *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City*: "They would come in caravans of twenty-five, thirty, and forty pack mules. On arrival, their first move would be to see who would make them the best price on *manta* (unbleached muslin). Whoever caught them on that would get all their trade."<sup>35</sup>

Another way to acquire precious metals was to own

mines in Grant County and Mexico. Wholesale merchants from Northern and Southern New Mexico founded the Pinos Altos Mining Company in 1866 and included Gustave Elsberg and Jacob Amberg from Santa Fe, and James Griggs and Joseph Reynolds of Mesilla.<sup>36</sup> Henry Lesinsky owned an interest in the Santa Victoria mine on the Hacienda de Santo Domingo in Chihuahua. Other owners of the Mexican mine included Silver City merchant Joseph Bennett and Edwin Angerstein, a brother of Mesilla merchant Eugene Angerstein.<sup>37</sup>

The Longfellow copper mine in Eastern Arizona was Lesinsky's largest mine. He purchased a share of the mine in 1870. Copper production was slow due to the crudeness of the furnaces, which were made of adobe and often melted. On an average day they produced 1,000 pounds of metal. In 1874, however, Lesinsky lined the kilns with copper. The improved ovens withstood the heat and produced 100,000 pounds of copper monthly. Lesinsky also bought out the last original claim owner in 1874, leaving himself \$60,000 in debt.<sup>38</sup>

Copper production increased throughout 1874 and 1875, requiring Lesinsky to employ more people. The furnaces were in constant need of fuel. Local residents supplying charcoal made from mesquite roots included Isador Elkan Soloman, a distant relative of Lesinsky and Julius Freudenthal.<sup>39</sup> Lesinsky also hired freighters, such as Ramon Gonzáles and Mariano Barela, to export copper to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe depot. The need for freighters also compelled Henry Lesinsky's son, Morris, to close his Mesilla store in 1874 and buy 40 mules and six wagons and haul copper to the railroad for three years.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, merchants played an important role in settling the American West. The existence of rural communities depended on merchants to provide jobs for local residents; merchants created the need for freighters, clerks, miners, and farmers. Merchants improved the standard of living for rural people by selling goods that made life easier and more exciting. They also provided the arms that allowed Anglos and Hispanos to settle on Apache lands. Businessmen owned stores, mines, farms, orchards, and flour mills, provided wine, traded in bullion, and transported gold, silver, and copper to distant markets. In many ways Mesilla Valley merchants were the center of the economy and society in Southern New Mexico.

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SCOTT E. FRITZ previously contributed articles to *SHMHR* in both Volumes V and VI.

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#### ENDNOTES

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- Robert Aull: A Frontier Missouri Mercantile Firm,” *Missouri Historical Review*, (October 1935) Volume XXX, No. 1, 3-27; “Disorganizing Effects of the Mexican War on the Santa Fe Trade,” *Missouri Historical Review* (May 1937) Volume VI, No. 2, 115-123.
- 2 Historians in the 1960s revised Frederick Jackson Turner’s frontier hypothesis which romanticized Anglo American settlement in the West. See Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton and Co., 1987), p. 22; William H. Goetzmann, “The West and the American Age of Exploration,” *Arizona and the West* (Spring 1960), Volume II, No. 3, 276-277.
  - 3 Floyd S. Fierman, *The Spiegelbergs of New Mexico: Merchants and Bankers, 1844-1893* (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1964), pp. 1-5; “Jewish Pioneering in the Southwest: A Record of the Freudenthal-Lesinsky-Soloman Families,” *Arizona and the West* (Spring 1960), Volume II, No. 1; William J. Parish, *The Charles Ifield Company: A Study of the Rise and Fall of Merchant Capitalism in New Mexico* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 6-7.
  - 4 Parish, pp. 6-7.
  - 5 Susan Calafate Boyle, *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), p. 71.
  - 6 New Mexico Census, 1870.
  - 7 *Ibid.*
  - 8 *Borderer* (Las Cruces), December 13, 1871. Thomas Bull of Mesilla imported 50,000 pounds.
  - 9 *Ibid.*, April 13, 1871; June 19, 1872; March 16, 1871; October 25, 1871.
  - 10 *Mesilla News*, February 21, 1874; See “Mining Life,” August 16, 1873, *Borderer*, June 15, 1871.
  - 11 *Daily Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 30, 1873; Keith L. Bryant, Jr., *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1974), p. 30.
  - 12 *Mesilla News*, August 30, 1875. See also Las Cruces *Borderer*, January 31, 1872.
  - 13 *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 30, 1873; *Borderer*, January 24, 1872.
  - 14 *Borderer*, June 15, 1871; January 24, 1872; September 26, 1874.
  - 15 New Mexico Census, 1870; *Mining Life*, December 6, 1873; December 27, 1873; *Borderer*, February 28, 1872; May 18, 1871; May 27, 1871; *Mesilla News*, March 28, 1874; June 19, 1875; September 26, 1874; October 2, 1875.
  - 16 *Borderer*, August 28, 1871; September 27, 1871; February 28, 1872; *Mesilla News*, June 27, 1874; June 19, 1875. The *Mesilla News*, March 14, 1874, noted that G.D. Maxwell and Co. completed a two-story buildings in Las Cruces. New Mexico Census, 1870 reported that Maxwell owned \$13,000 in land and assets.
  - 17 Amador Papers, Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University, MS 4, Box 27, folder 1, June 16, 1873. The papers contain an 1873 Grant County liquor license issued to Amador. See *Borderer*, September 27, 1871 for a description of Amador’s freighting activities.
  - 18 *Mesilla News*, September 25, 1875; September 26, 1874; October 3, 1874; March 14, 1874; March 28, 1874; May 23, 1874; August 22, 1874; *Borderer*, July 3, 1872; *Mesilla Valley Independent*, July 14, 1877.
  - 19 Susan Calafate Boyle, “Comerciantes, Arriero, Y Peones,” *The Hispanos and the Santa Fe Trade* (Southwest Cultural Resources Center, Professional Paper No. 54, 1994), p. 45.
  - 20 William Pierson to Second Assistant Secretary of State, *Despatches from the United States Consuls in Ciudad Juarez, 1850-1906*, October 5, 1871, National Archive Publication, microcopy number 184, roll 2. *Mesilla Valley Independent*, July 7, 1877 reported that Southern New Mexican merchants paid roughly \$300,000 in transportation costs.
  - 21 Charles Moye to Secretary of State, *Despatches from United States Consuls in Chihuahua, 1830-1906*, September 16, 1870 and August 16, 1870, National Archive Publication, microcopy 289, roll I. Moye wrote that American items entering Chihuahua often included mining equipment, quicksilver, iron, steel, and canned fruits. See also, Joseph Knotts to Second Assistant Secretary of State, July 22, 1876; Wm. H. Brown to Second Assistant Secretary of State, October 17, 1873; Solomon Schutz to Second Assistant Secretary of State, *Despatches from United States Consuls in Ciudad Juarez 1850-1906*, May 5, 1877; *Mesilla Valley Independent*, July 14, 1877; *Thirty Four*, December 31, 1879.
  - 22 *Borderer*, May 18, 1871; January 31, 1872; December 6 1871; *Mesilla News*, February 21, 1874. See March 28, 1874 for descriptions of various El Paso merchants.
  - 23 *Borderer*, June 15, 1871; July 19, 1871; August 15, 1871; October 14, 1872; April 13, 1871; March 30, 1871; July 26, 1871. *Arizona Daily Citizen* (Tucson), November 30, 1872 reported that Lesinsky’s Tucson store closed in late 1872. New Mexico Census, 1870; *Mesilla Valley Independent* (Mesilla), October 20, 1877 reported that Henry Lesinsky and Benjamin Davies owned cattle. Their company was called Davies, Lesinsky, and Co.
  - 24 *Borderer*, March 16, 1871; June 15, 1871; October 5, 1872; *Mesilla News*, August 29, 1874; June 10, 1875; July 3, 1875; December 12, 1874; December 25, 1875.
  - 25 Darlis A. Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), p. 66.
  - 26 *Mining Life* (Silver City), January 30, 1875; *Mesilla Valley Independent*, July 14, 1877; *Mesilla News*, March 14, 1874; September 5, 1874. On February 21, 1874 the *Mesilla News* reported that Rafael Bermudes collected wheat from farmers on the Rio Mimbres. William S. Pierson to Second Assistant Secretary of State, *Despatches from United States Consuls in Ciudad Juarez, 1850-1906*, October 13, 1872. Pierson wrote on October 5, 1871 that Mexican exports consisted of silver dollars, gold coins, corn, barley, wheat, sheep, hogs, cattle, wool, liquor, corn, chocolate, coffee, and eggs. George D. Maxwell offered the “highest market price paid for all kinds of grain and country produce”. See *Borderer*, August 16, 1871. Henry Lesinsky and Bernard Weisl, owned the Mesilla Steam Mill.
  - 27 *Daily New Mexican* (Santa Fe), January 14, 1873; *Borderer*, December 13, 1871; Louis Rosenbaum to Fred Myers, *Letters Received*, January 4, 1874, roll 23.
  - 28 W.H. Wack to William A Kobbie, *Letters Received*, January 13, 1871, roll 14.
  - 29 *Daily New Mexican*, February 18, 1873.
  - 30 Thomas Bull to J.A. Belcher, *Letters Received*, September 11, 1876, roll 28. Louis Rosenbaum’s Rio Mimbres store is mentioned in the *Mesilla Valley Independent*, June 30, 1877.
  - 31 Parish, p. 37.
  - 32 *Ibid.*, p. 42; *Mining Life*, February 21, 1872. See also *Borderer*, June 15, 1871; March 16, 1871; April 24, 1871; February 28, 1872; Harry B. Ailman, *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City: H.B. Ailman’s Recollections of Silver City and the Southwest, 1871-1892* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), p. 148, (hereafter cited as *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City*); *Mesilla Valley Independent*, July 14, 1877 reported that George Maxwell owned the Providencia Mine near Silver City. *Thirty Four*, March 26, 1879 reported that Henry Lesinsky owned a stamp mill in Grant County.
  - 33 *Mining Life*, September 20, 1873.
  - 34 *Amador Papers*, Box 15, folder 1. In Fall 1877 Dodd, Brown and Co., of St. Louis, sent two correspondences urging Amador to pay a debt totalling \$1,474. Amador held a liquidation sale in December and dissolved his partnership with Jose Macias, the store manager, on January 8, 1878. For more information see, Box 16 and Box 27, folder 1. See also, *Mesilla Valley Independent*, November 10, 1877. *Mesilla News*, December 25, 1875, and Michael Rock, “Silver City, a Frontier Market,” *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Volume IV, No. 1 (January 1997), p. 55.
  - 35 Ailman, *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City*, p. 70. See also *Mining Life*, November 29, 1873; January 16, 1875; January 23, 1875. *Mesilla Valley Independent*, December 1, 1877 reported that twelve wagons loaded with flour and beans from San Elizario, Texas was destined for Silver City.
  - 36 Parish, pp. 9-10, 283.
  - 37 In the spring of 1874 the *Mesilla News* reported that it had veins twenty yards wide and fifteen yards high. Approximately 150 men worked there and were producing from \$150 to \$200 of silver per ton of ore. *Borderer*, May 11, 1871; *Mesilla News*, March 28, 1874 reported that the mine produced 503 pounds of lead silver worth \$382.
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  - 39 Isador Elkan Solomon and Anne Freudenthal Solomon, *Memoirs*, Lesinsky Files, University of Arizona, Tucson.
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# Joshua P. Church, Early Roswell Entrepreneur

by Elvis E. Fleming

*Editor's Note: Ann Buffington's Lincoln County Women and Cross-Cultural Contact. "SNMHR" Vol. VI, included Amelia Bolton Church.*

Joshua P. Church was a businessman and public-spirited figure in Roswell for more than a quarter-century. Attracted to New Mexico Territory by the climate and the White Oaks gold rush, he lived an adventurous life and became an important element in the development of Roswell and Southeast New Mexico.

Church first came to New Mexico Territory in 1880 to prospect for gold in the White Oaks area from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he was born in February, 1862.<sup>1</sup> He and some companions were searching in the Sacramento Mountains just west of Nogal in 1882, when Church got a notion to climb a certain peak. His exhausted companions scoffed at his plan and deserted him. Together with his faithful burro, Church succeeded in ascending to the summit. There he built a monument of rocks, carved his name on a board, and placed the board in the monument. While on a trip to Fort Worth, Texas, in 1884, Church purchased a government survey map. To his amazement, he learned that government surveyors had found his monument and honored him by naming the 8,802-ft. mountain "Church Peak."<sup>2</sup>

Church served as a Lincoln County deputy sheriff for much of the tenures of Sheriffs John W. Poe and James R. Brent, 1883 through 1888. Church traveled to South America in 1889 for a couple of years to explore economic opportunities there. In 1891, he came back to New Mexico, purchased the Hotel Pauly, got married, and settled down in Roswell.<sup>3</sup>

Hotel Pauly, built of adobe bricks, was a new hotel that opened in 1890 at 114 N. Main in Roswell (in the same spot where the International UFO Museum & Research Center is now located). Allene O'Neal was the first operator of the hotel. Interestingly, she was a former actress, who had been on the Ford's Theater stage in Washington when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865. The Pauly probably was financed and owned by P. F. Pauly, who also built the first Chaves County courthouse in 1889-90.<sup>4</sup>

Some six months after the hotel opened, Joshua P. Church bought an interest and began to manage it. Amelia Bolton Forest Fritz, an Irish immigrant who had suffered two short-lived, tragic marriages at White Oaks and Lincoln, wed Church in Roswell on July 18, 1891, both at age 29. They lived in the hotel for about four years.<sup>5</sup>

The Pauly was considered to be a high-class place and the first "real hotel" in the Pecos Valley. The office, dining room, kitchen, and verandah were on the ground floor; and there were eight bedrooms on the second floor.

An advertisement in the January 15, 1892, *Roswell Record* reads "Hotel Pauly, J. P. Church, proprietor; Only First-Class Hotel in the City."<sup>6</sup>

The Churches built a house at 210 South Kentucky Avenue in Roswell in 1895 and sold the Hotel Pauly, probably to Jaffa, Prager & Company. Mrs. Church built a small greenhouse on Alameda Street behind her residence and went into the floral business.<sup>7</sup> Stig Santheson leased the small greenhouse from her in 1905, and he operated it as the "Alameda Greenhouse" for several years.<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Church's "green thumb" benefited the development of garden clubs and the beautification of Roswell for a half-century. She became an expert on the flora of the Pecos Valley.

J.P. and Amelia Church had four children: Sophie; J.P., Jr.; Aileen; and Eleanor.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph Dixon, a former slave who had been employed by Mrs. Church's parents' family in Lincoln, came to Roswell and worked for the Church family as a gardener, janitor, and handy-man for the remainder of his life. He probably lived with the family for much of that time. Eventually, Mrs. Church bought a house for Dixon at 109 East Tilden Street.

Apparently white people in Roswell who knew Dixon had a high opinion of him, but some called him "Laughing Joe" because he had Tourette Syndrome and tended to laugh and dance at inappropriate times. Some white folks liked to tease him to hear him laugh. Mrs. Church tried to prevent anyone from poking fun at Dixon and considered such teasing to be cruel.

In 1985, Mary Warren, J.P. and Amelia Church's granddaughter, told an interesting story about Dixon to Morgan Nelson of Roswell. Church owned a building which was used as a house of ill repute. This was an embarrassment to his wife. Such establishments were legal and provided a source of revenue for the town, but it almost caused the Churches to get a divorce when Amelia found out about it. Nelson stated, "It was a two-story, pink house on [South] Virginia [Pecos at that time] St. It had a large porch in front of it, and the 'soiled doves' would sit on the porch and greet passers-by in a friendly manner. Two little girls were impressed with their friendliness."

Just who those two little girls were is not clear — probably one of Mrs. Church's daughters — either Eleanor (Mrs. Warren's mother) or Aileen, and Myra Martin (Spence).

"These two little girls thought the ladies were so nice and friendly that they would like to call on them and have tea. They dressed up so prettily, as was the custom

of the day, and went calling. The madam invited them in. They could not understand why men that they knew left so hastily in all directions!"

That little social event infuriated Mrs. Church. It was not long before a mysterious fire burned the brothel to the ground! The rumors had it that Mrs. Church fired the bawdy house herself, but Mrs. Warren thinks her grandmother probably sent Joseph Dixon to take care of it for her. No published evidence has surfaced to confirm this anecdote or to establish a date, but Nelson and Mrs. Warren believe it is true.<sup>10</sup>

Josh Church pursued several varied occupations and activities during the last twenty years of his life. Primarily, however, he was a saloonkeeper. His granddaughter, Mary Warren, explained that Church was "...a gregarious, progressive man. He was constantly involved in various schemes of both public and private nature."<sup>11</sup> Church was named vice-president of the Pioneer Telephone & Manufacturing Company on May 24, 1894, with John W. Poe as president, L.K. McGaffey, secretary, and E.A. Cahoon, treasurer. This undertaking apparently failed; but the same men started the Roswell Telephone & Manufacturing Company in 1899, which provided the first telephones in Roswell.<sup>12</sup>

Church was active in civic and political affairs in Roswell, serving six years on the city board, during two of which he served as chairman. Roswell's streets were graded for the first time under his leadership.<sup>13</sup>

City directories show that Church operated the Oriental Saloon at 106 North Main from about 1896 to 1904 or so. In 1911, he was manager of the Roswell Telephone & Manufacturing Company. He was listed as a stockman in 1912. The 1913 directory shows that he was proprietor of the Oriental Drug Company at 213 North Main, which was a billiard hall as well.<sup>14</sup>

About 1913 or 1914, Church sold his business assets in Roswell and became a partner in the International Auto Company in El Paso with J.W. Stockard, former Roswell mayor and owner of the Roswell Auto Company. Mrs. Church refused to move to El Paso with her husband, so his partnership in that endeavor did not last very long. Suffering ill health by that time, Church returned to Roswell and retired.<sup>15</sup>

Mrs. Warren declared in the Nelson interview, "His main failing was his excessive indulgence in the wares that he sold. Today he would have been classified as an



J.P. Church (1862-1917), early Roswell businessman, entrepreneur, and civic leader. Courtesy of Historical Center for Southeast New Mexico, Roswell (#3862).

alcoholic."<sup>16</sup> Tuberculosis took the life of Joshua P. Church on April 9, 1917; he was only 55. The Rev. Edward Doan of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church officiated at Church's funeral, which was held at his home under the auspices of the Roswell Elks Lodge.<sup>17</sup>

Church's widow, Amelia, lived some forty years after his death and was very active in the community. There are two main monuments to her life's work: *El Torreón* defensive tower in Lincoln and the Roswell Museum & Art Center.<sup>18</sup>

Josh Church was an interesting man who, today, would probably be called a "good old boy." He suffered his share of hardships, but he also contributed much to the economic, political, and social development of Roswell and Southeast New Mexico. Two present-day monuments to him are Church Street in south Roswell and Church Mountain in the Sacramentos. Where would New Mexico be today without the work of pioneers such as Josh and Amelia Church?

ELVIS E. FLEMING previously contributed articles to SNMHR, Vols. V and VI and has performed as John Chisum for a DAC HS monthly meeting.

## ENDNOTES

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# Both Sides of the Law: Cattleman Lee Green, 1872-1940

by Roberta K. Haldane

Lured by word of a cool mountain land covered with pine trees and crisscrossed by running streams, Tejanos had begun to settle in the Sacramento Mountains of Southern New Mexico by the mid 1880s.

Lee Green joined this migration as a boy of 14 when his parents, John and Anna Green, pulled up stakes and left their home near the Texas hamlet of Rogers Prairie for a new life in the "Land of Promise."<sup>1</sup> John Green had heard there was a fortune to be made in New Mexico by selling beef to the U.S. Army. The family spent all of 1886 preparing for the trip and started out in the spring of 1887 with one heavy wagon, one medium wagon, one flat hay rick with iron wheels, draft oxen, and a large herd of cattle and horses. They headed first for Seven Rivers [located near present-day Artesia], New Mexico Territory to join John's father, Ananias, a justice of the peace in that rough gateway town.

The Green party consisted of eleven people: John and Anna, two of John's younger brothers, and seven children ranging in age from 18-year-old Jim to infant Jesse Jones. All who were able helped drive the herd. Lee Green, as the third eldest son, did his share along the trail.

At the New Mexico line in the fall of 1887, a New Mexico sheriff quarantined the cattle for fear of tick fever. John decided to leave his older sons (Jim, Jack, and Lee) to look after the herd on the *Llano Estacado* [Staked Plains] all winter while he and the rest of the family crossed the border bound for Seven Rivers.<sup>2</sup>

The three boys (18, 16, and 14) were given pots and pans, flour and salt, and a large tarp for shelter. Eating nothing but beef, beef, and more beef, they lived on the prairie all winter long, moving their tarp from one scarce grove of trees to another, all the while trying to avoid the icy winds raking the

Staked Plains. The Plains are no place for the novice, winter or summer.

Since cows go where grass is, quarantine or no, the brothers ended up trailing their herd right up the Pecos River into New Mexico. By the time John Green found them the next spring and collected his cattle, his sons had toughened into hardened veterans of the outdoors.

The older Green brothers began working for various cowmen soon after arriving at Seven Rivers, with Lee making his first long trail drive when he was barely 16 years old.

In 1891 the Green family moved again, this time to the Sacramento Mountains three miles above Weed, New

Mexico. They settled temporarily on the Cox place. In the fall of that same year John Green traded 140 head of cattle plus \$200 cash to Joseph Smyth for a homestead on the Agua Chiquita, seven miles above Weed at the mouth of Spring and Potato Canyons, remaining there until 1917. John's family in later years always referred to this 160 acres with its cabin as "the old home place."

John Green's older sons worked away from home through the summers as cowboys, returning to the Agua Chiquita to spend the long mountain winters in their log cabin. Lee made this homestead his base off and on until his marriage to Annie Reed at the turn of the century.

## On the Wrong Side of the Law

In 1895, while working as a cowboy in and around the Tularosa Basin, Lee Green got caught in the middle of the Albert Fountain-Oliver Lee feud.

After the widespread rustling of cattle belonging to several large livestock companies in Southern New Mexico, a meeting was held in 1894 in Fountain's law office at Las Cruces to establish the Southeastern New



Lee Green about 1897. Courtesy of Ellen Green Key.



The John Lee Green homestead on the Agua Chiquita, Sacramento Mountains, 1903 or 1904. On left: John Green and second wife, Nannie Buckner, and Ola Merrill Green holding the reins of Old Dick, John's prized Percheron. Courtesy of Ellen Green Key.

Mexico Stock Growers Association. W.C. McDonald of Carrizozo was elected president and James Cree of the V Pitchfork V in Ruidoso became secretary. Fountain was named special investigator and prosecutor for the association.<sup>3</sup>

Fountain hired his own staff of investigators to police association ranges. One of them, a Texas-born cattleman named Les Dow, began riding the southern ranges investigating stock thefts and checking brands.

Taking to the field during the 1895 fall roundup, Les Dow followed herds north into Lincoln County. He kept the roundup wagon of Oliver Lee and Billy McNew under watch by enlisting an informant to tell him when the cattlemen began to cut out their herds and head for their home ranches.

When his informant told him he thought the brand on one steer had been changed to a Lee and McNew brand, Dow moved in to arrest McNew. (Lee was not there at the time.) Handcuffing McNew to the wagon wheel of the roundup's chuck wagon, Dow roped the steer, shot it and called on the camp cook and two cowboys working the cattle — the hapless George Bunting and Lee Green — to help him skin the steer. Dow then rode off for Lincoln with prisoner McNew to turn his evidence over to the sheriff there.

McNew made bond at Lincoln, turning up a few days later in a Dona Ana County posse with deputies Oliver Lee and Jim Gililand to arrest Bunting and Green! Charged with unlawfully killing and skinning a steer

belonging to Lee and McNew, a Mesilla justice of the peace released them on \$1,000 bond each.<sup>4</sup>

These legal maneuverings all preceded the fateful January district court session in Lincoln, where Oliver Lee was indicted for cattle theft. A.J. Fountain disappeared following that court session.

#### **On the Right Side of the Law**

A decade later, Lee Green had become a respected cattleman and deputy sheriff in the Weed precinct. (At that time, deputies in the Weed precinct reported to the Otero County sheriff in Alamogordo.)

In 1905 a killing took place near their father's homestead and is described by Lee's younger sister Ellen:<sup>5</sup>

When Wash Parker was killed in front of our house, Daddy's many neighbors had gone to Roswell to sell wool.<sup>6</sup> Parker sold one load ... and he banked most of his money. Tom Gentry knew he had been bringing some money home (as did everyone).

About a mile past our place, Gentry shot Parker while hidden behind a tree. It had rained for a week or two and was boggy. The rain stopped, and Gentry could be traced by his steps to a tank ... [His horse] was easily trailed by its crooked foot ...

Lee Green was a deputy in the group to get Gentry. They hid behind the trees ... Gentry shot at them, knocking bark off trees near

them. Lee guessed he hit Gentry's wrist when he shot and the gun fell. The posse killed him.

The funeral was simple. The posse dug a hole. There was no word of praise. Someone threw in a pack of cigarettes and all threw in dirt.

The *Alamogordo News* of April 29, 1905, ran Lee Green's report of the incident:

Deputy Sheriff Green writes to Sheriff Phillips as follows:

Wright, NM, April 26, 1905  
 Sheriff A.B. Phillips  
 Alamogordo, NM

Dear Sir:

I have been having a time over here. A man waylaid the public road below Blue Water Sunday ... and shot and killed and robbed Mr. Wash Parker ... I went down and took the man's trail and trailed him till [*sic*] yesterday. And when I went to arrest him he took out his six-shooter and fired at one of the men I had with me and hit the tree the man was behind. Then he fired at me and knocked the bark off a tree by me. Then I fired at him ... he died in about an hour. His name was Tom Gentry. He was wanted in California ... and I think he was wanted in Texas...

Well, Bomar, I did the best I could. He wouldn't give up and would fight and that was all we could do.

Respt,  
 Lee Green

The officer acted in self defense while trying to perform his duty. Gentry needed killing and Mr. Green saved the county a lot of expense by killing him.<sup>7</sup>

During the winter of 1907, Lee Green was involved in a manhunt for a Mescalero Apache killer.<sup>8</sup> Kittychin was skinning an animal that he had stolen from the Flying H ranch near the reservation when Don McLane, younger brother of Flying H foreman Roy McLane, rode up and surprised him. Kittychin shot and killed McLane, then ran from the law south along the rim of the Sacramentos trying to reach Mexico.

Chief of Police on the Mescalero Reservation, Sam Chino, asked Alamogordo Sheriff H.M. Denny to be allowed to deal with the fugitive in his own way. Chino and his posse pursued Kittychin on foot for five days, catching up to him in Grapevine Canyon, southeast of Alamogordo. There the Mescaleros shot and killed their man.

A posse under Sheriff Denny followed the Mescaleros as they trailed Kittychin. Lee Green was in this posse, which did not interfere with Chino's own brand of justice. Lee Green and his older brother Jim were deputy

sheriffs in Otero County around 1910 at the time of this manhunt related by Dale Greene, the youngest son of Jim Greene.<sup>10</sup> (Jim added an "e" to the end of the family name.)

Two bandits had robbed a train of \$80,000 worth of gold bars, about 160 pounds of gold, near Alamogordo. The two robbers, both red-bearded, were believed to be brothers. Lee and Jim were only one hour behind the men, when the robbers cut close to the Malpais. Lee and Jim caught up to the fugitives and shot and killed them both. From the robber he shot, Jim took a .45 pistol that remains in the Greene family to this day.

Somehow the robbers managed to hide the gold, probably in a rabbit hole or burrow, since they had no shovels. The Pinkerton Detective Agency worked on the case but found no trace of the gold. Lee and Jim searched the chase area several times in later years, without success.

On May 8, 1940, Lee Green died at Hotel Dieu, El Paso. By then he had spent many years as a lawman in Otero County. The *Alamogordo News* summed up his life in three complimentary statements:<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Green was a kindly man and one who bore hardships cheerfully. Close friends never heard him speak in any but genteel language, and he declined to speak any ill of his fellowmen. He was known as an excellent stockman and rancher and when employed, was faithful to his task.

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ROBERTA KEY HALDANE previously contributed to SNMHR, Vol. VI, January 1999 was "What Became of Susan McSween Barber's Diamonds?"

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## ENDNOTES

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- 2 From "Crossing the Pecos", by Jim Greene, undated. Floyd Packer of Sedona, Arizona, supplied this article by letter to Haldane dated July 3, 1996. Jim Greene was Floyd's father-in-law.
- 3 A.M. Gibson, *The Life and Death of Colonel Albert Jennings Fountain* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. 219-220.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 226.
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- 8 Mrs. Tom Charles, *Tales of the Tularosa* (El Paso, Texas: Guynes Printing Company, 1954), p. 35.
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# The Columbus Raid

by Rhonda A. Jackson

*Editor's Note: See companion article "Airpower in Mexico During the Punitive Expedition of 1916," in this issue.*

## Villa Moves North

Maud Hawk Wright, an American living on a ranch in Pearson near the Mormon Colony of Colonia Dublan in Mexico, was cooking dinner for her husband on March 1, 1916, when a group of sixty Mexican riders came to her door requesting food. She fed them. Her husband, Ed and their hired man, Frank Hayden, rode in shortly thereafter with supplies for the ranch. The Mexicans took everything edible and began destroying what was not. Meanwhile, those inside eating made Maud open her pantry and they took all the food supplies they could find.<sup>1</sup>

The men told Ed and Frank to find food for the Mexican horses. They ordered Maud to give her son to the Mexican maid and go outside to help her husband. When she stepped out, she did not see him. The Mexican leader did not reply to her questions, only pointed to a distant hill. She was told to mount a horse, but she ignored the order and walked to the hill. Her husband was nowhere to be seen. They placed her on a horse and she began a nine-day journey to Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

On March 2, the band of riders camped at Cave Valley, 30 miles from her ranch. Her husband and Frank Hayden were escorted into camp after she arrived. She realized that they were with Pancho Villa's entire army, which she said was made up of 2,500-3,000 men.<sup>3</sup> She briefly spoke to her husband before he and Frank were taken away from camp around a hill. The three Mexicans with them came back alone. She knew then that her husband and Frank were dead. She was on her own.<sup>4</sup> Later that day, Maud was brought before Villa. She demanded that he kill her then, if that was his intention, and get it over with. Villa told her that he was going to Columbus and that if she lived through the trip, he would let her go. He ordered his men not to mistreat her, but not to help her either.<sup>5</sup>

Villa's men butchered beef, which they hastily cooked and tied to their saddles. They mounted up and rode all night, taking detours and backtracking to make sure that they were not followed. At sunup, they stopped until noon, butchering and cooking cattle. This continued for the next seven days. (A Villista's diary found at the site of the raid in Columbus verifies Maud's testimony by stating that on March 2nd, the Villistas were at Coloniopacheco and left without provisions of any kind. On March 4th, they encountered cattle which they butchered. On March 6th, they left the canon and butchered more cattle. By March 7th, he reported nothing new. The diary stops at the point.<sup>7</sup>)

During the rest stops, Villa would tell his men how rich they would be when they reached Columbus. Maud stated that all the soldiers knew their destination. Villa also said that he needed to be in Columbus by March 9 because he expected an arms shipment to be delivered there.<sup>8</sup>

On the fourth day, they raided a ranch, captured an African American cook named Buck Spencer, and promised him his life if he cooked for Villa. They took his cooking supplies and utensils for him to use on the trail.<sup>9</sup> They finally reached the Boca Grande River, where they camped. Maud heard that three cowhands had been killed as they rounded up cattle nearby, and she witnessed the murder of a fourth American cowboy.<sup>10</sup>

The group mounted and rode down the river, then turned and headed north to the border. Villa stopped to meet spies, whom he had sent to Columbus. They reported that the American army was scattered and Columbus would be easy to raid. Villa picked about 600 men, by Maud's count, to go to Columbus, sending the rest south into Mexico. Shortage of ammunition and good horses kept the group actually attacking Columbus small. Villa changed into his uniform and led his troops toward Columbus.<sup>11</sup>

They reached Columbus around midnight, March 8, 1916. Unknown to Maud, the *El Paso Times* had reported the deaths of Ed Wright and Frank Hayden, as well as her own. Her child was reported to be in the hands of friends in Pearson.<sup>12</sup> She could see the signal lights on the hills around Columbus and knew that Villa was about to attack.<sup>13</sup>

Columbus, New Mexico, was one of the last places in the continental United States to be invaded by a foreign army.<sup>14</sup> Villa's reasons for attacking Columbus and the question of his status as an army officer or a bandit have been examined in many articles and books. But other questions remain unanswered, including what actually happened during the battle. This paper attempts to answer that particular question, to separate the myth from reality.

## Location of Columbus, New Mexico

Columbus, in 1916, was located three miles north of the international border, having been moved from its original location to be closer to the railroad. Palomas, Mexico, its nearest neighbor, was four miles south of the border. Deming, New Mexico was located twenty-five miles north of Columbus, and Gibson's Ranch fourteen miles due west.



Ruins of Commercial Hotel and adjacent buildings. View to northeast. Courtesy Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

Columbus, a water stop for the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, was also the location of the United States Customs House. Columbus had a depot, four hotels, a movie theater and a bank, a telegraph office, a weekly newspaper, and was headquarters for the 13th Cavalry, encamped south of town. The telephone exchange had burned down sometime in February of 1916 and the temporary switchboard was in the office of the *Columbus Courier*. Broadway and Boulevard Streets contained the main stores and hotels for Columbus with the exception of the Commercial Hotel and the Lemmon and Romney grocery store near the railroad depot. The bank was on Broadway near the Hoover Hotel.<sup>15</sup>

The Deming-Guzman Highway, built on the old Northern Pacific railroad grade and also known as the Old Mormon Road, ran north and south through the west side of town. The Customs House and the depot sat west and east of the highway, respectively, and across from each other at the intersection of the highway and Jones Street. Not only were they separated by a highway, but also by a wide and deep arroyo that ran for several miles along the west side of the highway.

The married military officers lived off post in the town itself. This effectively cut them off from their men when Villa attacked the town, and then moved against the post itself. Caught in the crossfire, most could do little but try to get their families out of harm's way.

#### **Advance Warning**

The United States Army had standing orders not cross

the international border for any reason. Rumors were flying about Villa's impending attack on some town in the United States, but no one knew which one, or even exactly where Villa's army was. Reports reached General John J. Pershing and General Frederick Funston through Consular Agent George Carothers that Villa was around the Palomas area, but no reliable sources could be found who knew where he was going from there.<sup>16</sup> Colonel Herbert J. Slocum, commanding officer of the Thirteenth Cavalry at Columbus, was flooded with reports, but had no way to verify them.

Other warnings did come in that coincided with Carothers' initial reports. Jessie Peterson and Thelma Cox Knoles interviewed Juan Favela, an eighty-one year old man at the time of the interview and former range foreman with the Palomas Land and Cattle Company for their book, *Pancho Villa: Intimate Recollections of People Who Knew Him*. He stated that several Villistas captured near Casas Grandes claimed that Villa was headed for either Hachita or Columbus, both small towns in New Mexico. Favela sent a cowhand to Columbus to warn of the impending attack. Favela claims that this was five days before the actual raid on Columbus.<sup>17</sup> He states that on May 8, 1916, he himself witnessed the murders of three fellow Palomas Land and Cattle Company employees, riding foreman Arthur McKinney and his cowhands, James McNeil and Bill Corbett. Accounts vary as to what happened next.<sup>18</sup>

According to Peterson and Knoles, Favela claims to

have ridden to his home ranch, where his wife told him to go to Columbus and warn the town. Favela instead sent Antonio Muñoz, a young Mexican cowhand, to spy on Villa. When Muñoz returned, he reported that Villa was indeed heading for the border. Favela then rushed to Columbus and demanded an audience with Slocum. When he arrived in Columbus, he told B.M. Reed, a grocer, what had occurred and Reed secured Favela's audience with Slocum.<sup>19</sup>

In a second interview, with Bill McGaw, an elderly Favela states that he saw O'Neill killed, then later, McKinney. Favela rode for the border, passing Corbett, and warned him about Villa. Favela said that Corbett rode to meet Villa anyway. Favela continued on to Columbus and did not witness Corbett's murder and did not stop to talk with his wife. In this version, Favela reported to Customs Agent Lee Riggs, who took him to Slocum.<sup>20</sup>

Pearl McKinney Wallace refutes Favela's assertions concerning the deaths of these cowhands in an oral interview with Knoles and Peterson. She said that Buck Spencer had witnessed the deaths of McKinney, Corbett and O'Neill. He later led McKinney's father to the death site to bring McKinney and the others back to Columbus for burial, or internment elsewhere, and filled in the story of the three cowboys' last moments. Spencer reported that they all died within moments of each other, unlike Favela's second interview, where Favela reports that they died in separate incidents.<sup>21</sup>

A third version is that of Lee Riggs in his testimony before the Fall Committee. Riggs states that he had heard that Favela sent a message five days before the raid warning of Villa's possible attack. But Riggs claims that it was not Favela who reported to Slocum on March 8. Riggs said that Favela had reported the deaths of McKinney, O'Neill, and Corbett three days before the raid and that it was Slocum who sent a Mexican not known to Riggs to ascertain Villa's position and strength. It was this man who reported to Slocum, not Favela, on the 8th. He further states that he, Riggs, spoke fluent Spanish and took shorthand notes of this individual's report to Slocum. Riggs agrees with Major Elmer Lindsley; later statements that this man distinctly reported to Slocum that the main body of Villa's band was moving down the Boca Grande river towards Guzman.<sup>22</sup>

Favela claims in both of his interviews to have had a meeting with Slocum on the 8th. Favela claims that Slocum told him to calm down and added that he (Slocum) had sent troops to the border and to Gibson's Ranch. Slocum felt that there would be ample warning if Villa attacked. The *El Paso Herald* reported on March 8 that McKinney and his men were missing, which means that the reporter more than likely filed the story on March 7th. It was also picked up by the *New York Times*, which printed it on the 9th. Favela must have erred on his dates. Favela also makes the accusation that Slocum later took all the officers and their wives to safety, leaving the

town at Villa's mercy.<sup>23</sup> Craig Smyser, son of Captain Rudolph E. Smyser, wrote later for the *Southwest Review* that there had been a dinner at their house on the west side of town for all the officers, their wives, and children on the evening of March 8th. He claims that the party was interrupted about 8 p.m., when they received a report that Villa was crossing the border. Patrols were sent out until 2:30 a.m. on March 9th, finding no sign of Villa or his men. The men were recalled at that point and were just settling down to sleep when the attack came around 4:00 a.m.<sup>24</sup>

Major Frank Tompkins' account differs still further. He wrote that it was not Favela, who warned Slocum on the 8th about Villa's impending attack, but Antonio Muñoz, who did so on the 7th. Slocum heeded his warning by hiring Muñoz to return to Mexico and spy on Villa. Muñoz reported back on the 8th that Villa was in the area, but that the main troops were headed south, away from the border, with only 30 or 40 troopers headed for Palomas. George Carothers also called Slocum on the 8th, stating that he had received reports that Villa was headed for Columbus. Slocum sent out extra patrols despite Muñoz's report that Villa was headed south, but recalled them about 2:00 a.m. when they found no evidence of Villa's advance.<sup>25</sup>

The *Cavalry Journal* reported that Slocum, in response to rumors of Villa's advance to the border, sent Major Lindsley to Gibson's Ranch, fourteen miles due west of Columbus, with Troops E and L. Captain Jens Stedje and Troop G went to Bailey's Ranch at the Border Gate two and one-half miles due south of Columbus on March 6th. Both commands were to patrol the international border for any signs of Villa or his men. These particular spots were probably chosen because of their proximity to large sources of water, which Villa's troops and horses would need after a long march in an arid land.<sup>26</sup>

On March 7th, Slocum received word that Villa was two miles south of the border and advancing towards the international line. First Lieutenant William A. McCain and Troop K moved to reinforce Stedje. When reports came back that Villa was nowhere to be found, Slocum visited the Border Gate and recalled Troops K and M about 2:00 a.m.<sup>27</sup>

Tompkins cites a letter allegedly written by M.M. Marshall, son of the president of the Palomas Land and Cattle Company, and published by his father in the *New York Times*. This letter states that it was M.M. Marshall, who took Antonio Muñoz into Slocum's office to report the deaths of McKinney and his men, and that Muñoz was sent by Slocum to scout Villa's position. The letter quotes Muñoz stating that he told Slocum Villa was headed to Columbus with 500-700 men on the night of March 8th.<sup>28</sup>

Favela and Lindsley fail to mention Marshall at all. Muñoz mentions him only in a letter written by the Marshalls. As it was the Palomas Land and Cattle Com-

pany that was losing cattle and horses, and therefore money, to Villa, it was in their interest to promote dissatisfaction among the general public, which would swing support for an invasion of Mexico in order to protect private property. The testimony of the son of a prominent businessman would have carried far more weight than that of an unknown Mexican cowhand in gaining that public support.

Major Lindsley, who Tompkins reported to have interviewed Muñoz in Spanish and translated for Slocum, states that Muñoz reported that Villa's men were headed down a branch of the Boca Grande River that turned south further into Mexico.<sup>29</sup> Lee Riggs' testimony in the Fall Investigations supports this.<sup>30</sup> There is no indication that a map was consulted for clarification in either Lindsley's or Muñoz's version of the interview, or in Riggs' testimony.

Craig Symser's account is probably less accurate due to the passage of time, as he wrote from memory in 1983 and was only a young boy in 1916. The *Cavalry Journal* article was written in 1917 from the military reports of the officers on duty at that time. Favela's account differs considerably from those of Major Frank Tompkins and others. Favela was extremely bitter about what he perceived to be Slocum's dishonor to him. Also, Favela's wife was pregnant at the time of the raid and the newborn died of convulsions, which Favela attributed to the mother's trauma during the raid. Both his accounts were given at an advanced age, which may have added to the difficulties in matching the incidents to other stories recorded closer to the raid. Tompkins, on the other hand, had military honor to protect. His account may have been slanted towards defending the reputation of his troops and of Slocum, both of which had taken a beating after the raid from newspapers, townspeople, and Fall's Senate hearings.<sup>31</sup>

### The Attack

March 8th continued to be filled with rumors, but the camp, according to First Lieutenant James T. Castleman, remained quiet. Castleman, as Officer of the Day, met the Drunkard's Special, the last nightly train west, at the train station around 3:00 a.m. He greeted returning Second Lieutenant John P. Lucas, who had been in El Paso, inspected the guard, and read in the Officer of the Day's quarters until about 4:00 a.m., when he began to get ready for the final inspection of the guard.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, Villa apparently cut the fence on the international border about three miles west of the border gate in the early morning hours of March 9th. Avoiding the sentries along the border and the Guzman-Deming Road, Villa and his small force headed for Columbus. Dismounting, they proceeded up the arroyo on the west side of the 13th Cavalry encampment and in front of the Customs House. Dividing his forces into two columns, he sent one into town from the west along Boulevard Street and a second around the cavalry post

to attack from the east.

The *Deming Graphic* reported that the Mexican troops proceeded east down Broadway Street, looting as they advanced. A second group of reserves fired on the military encampment from the east, protected both by the arroyo and the elevated road grade. A third group entered the army camp by circling it to the southeast and then attacking from the east. The actions of the three wings were simultaneous. Villa's strategy effectively cut off the 13th Cavalry enlisted men south of the railroad tracks from most of their officers who lived north of the tracks, and created a delay in the defense of the town and its citizens.<sup>33</sup> This delay was not long enough for Villa's men to act in a riotous fashion. By their actions, they had apparently been assigned tasks in the taking of the village. Some were to break into the bank. Others were to take horses, and still others were to get supplies. One group was sent to find Sam Ravel, who was rumored to have reneged on a sale of arms to Villa, taking the cash, but not delivering the goods.

The Villista wing entering the town did take time to loot, as well as to fight. Villa's troops had not been well-fed during their journey north and may have stuffed food into their mouths as they moved through town. Maud Hawk Wright's account claims that Villa's men ate nothing but badly cooked beef on the trip north from Mexico. If so, food would have been one of Villa's objectives for the raid. Bill Rakocy's book, entitled *Villa Raids Columbus, N.M.-Mar. 9, 1916*, implies that the group who looted the Lemmon and Romney Store brought back groceries to Cootes Hill and casually ate lunch, then arose from their feast to resume the battle. This occurs in no other account and seems unlikely.<sup>34</sup> Eyewitnesses noted that dead Villistas also had small items on their bodies, such as ballet slippers and toys taken from stores in Columbus.

Lt. Lucas was one of the first officers on the scene, dashing across the parade ground in his bare feet to open the machine gun cases, which were locked to prevent theft. Lucas had heard gunfire at Guard Post 3, the Headquarters sentry post, where Private Fred Griffen was challenging the Villistas. Lucas noticed that Griffen was dying, but did not render aid. Instead, Lucas organized a small company of machine gunners from soldiers who showed up to fight, but were not necessarily from his unit. Soldiers reported to the officer or sergeant available to command during the early part of the fighting. When Lucas arrived at the guard tent to obtain the key for the guns, he noticed that the guard there had been wounded. Again, Lucas did not give aid, but set up his machine gun along the EP&SW railroad lines and fired at the flashes of guns in the town. When the first machine gun jammed, he went back for another, set it up, and continued firing at random flashes of gunfire.<sup>35</sup>

Lt. Castleman, the Officer of the Day, had also run to the guard shack at the sound of the first shot. There he

found that Sergeant Michael Fody had aroused and armed a troop of cavalry. Taking command, Castleman began moving the troops towards the eastern edge of town to protect the bank.<sup>36</sup> (Several people, Lucas and Craig Symser being the most vocal, criticized this move as an excuse to protect Castleman's family, who lived just west of the bank. Indeed, he stationed his line of troopers with one end in front of his own home. However, he did engage in the town's defense, which is more than most other officers, who remained with their own families, could report.)<sup>37</sup>

Raiders entered the town itself, moving west and east. The Symser and Tompkins families, as well as the family of Lieutenant McCain, found themselves surrounded by Villistas. The Symsters and McCains fled out into the mesquite, where they were able to hide. The Tompkins family barricaded their doors and hoped that the Villistas would not break in. Apparently, this group was looking for horses and not intent on breaking into homes at this point.

Craig Symser remembers hiding in the stable with his father, mother, brother, and an orderly. He heard bullets smack into the wooden stable and saw boards lift as Villistas poked long knives into the cracks to see if horses were inside. When the Villistas began talking about burning the stable, the Symsters and their orderly slipped out the burro gate. The orderly passed Mrs. Symser and the two boys over a barbed wire fence to Captain Symser just about daylight. The Villistas spotted the white nightclothes of Mrs. Symser and the boys and fired in their direction, but the family was able to escape into the mesquite bushes and the Mexicans turned back to search for horses.<sup>38</sup>

The Riggs family, in the Customs House, covered themselves with mattresses and waited out the worst of the fighting. They were unable to leave their home, as it was at first surrounded by Villistas and then was in the line of fire from the machine guns fired by the 13th Cavalry at the retreating Mexicans.<sup>39</sup>

Another group of Villistas moved down Broadway looting drug and grocery stores. A third group went straight to Ravel's store and broke down the door. Two of the three Ravel brothers were inside. Louis Ravel, second oldest brother, lay hidden under a pile of cow hides. His fourteen-year-old brother, Arthur, was taken prisoner by the Villistas, who demanded to know where his brothers were, and Sam Ravel was requested by name. Arthur said that his brothers were in El Paso, which was where Sam Ravel was staying to have dental surgery on his teeth. They did not believe Arthur and demanded that he open the safe. He responded that he had never been given the combination. Taking him by the arms, the Villistas marched him down to the Commercial Hotel to look for Sam, after searching fruitlessly for Louis and Sam in the store. After their departure, Louis came out from under the last two cow hides in the stack, left unturned by the

Villistas that had been searching. Louis fled the store through the back door.<sup>40</sup>

Mrs. G.E. Parks was sitting the night shift on the switchboard in the *Columbus Courier* office when she heard the gunshots and saw the Villistas move into town. The *Courier* office was very small and unimpressive. The Villistas surrounded it, but had no reason to enter the building as it obviously had no guns, ammunition, or food supply and there most probably wasn't any cash handy. Mrs. Parks laid her baby in a protected area of the room and answered the phone when it rang. Several bullets cracked the window glass, cutting her face, but she continued to talk to the caller, a woman from Deming who soon put the commander of the Deming National Guard unit on the line. He told her to stay on the line, if possible, and not to turn up a lamp. Mrs. Parks continued to occupy her post, even though she was alone except for her baby. When Villistas peered through the windows, she would duck into the back room, and then resume her duties when they had passed on down the street.<sup>41</sup>

While she was reporting to Deming, a Mexican officer and a bugler approached the office and stood in the alley next to the Columbus Hotel. The officer was in uniform and was approached by various men, to whom he appeared to be giving orders. He remained there for some time and then moved westward. Mrs. Parks insisted that the man was Villa. She recognized him from pictures, his hat, and most notably to her, his moustache.<sup>42</sup>

Other families were now awake in Columbus. Families in frame homes began to feel the impact of bullets entering their domiciles. Many used mattresses and trunks as protection. Others fled down alleyways to the adobe homes of neighbors. The Deane family roused themselves, and Mrs. Deane took her husband and children next door to an adobe house. James Deane, her husband, worried about his store and finally began walking up Boundary to check on it when the flames from the Lemmon and Romney store lit up the night.<sup>43</sup>

C.C. Miller, the druggist, moved toward the Hoover Hotel, which was more solid than his frame house, as did El Paso & Southwestern pumper, Milton James and his wife, Bessie, whose homes were in the line of fire between the Villistas and Castleman's troops. L.L. Burkhardt and his wife went over the railroad tracks and, using the grade for cover, walked down the tracks to a train that had pulled into Columbus, and then backed out. They found the conductor telephoning Ft. Bliss and provided them with information for the army command there.<sup>44</sup>

The camp cooks were the first to fight the Villistas hand to hand as Villa's men tried to enter the cook shacks to take provisions. The cooks were already up and boiling water. They met the enemy with meat cleavers, game rifles, and a baseball bat, driving the Villistas back outside by tossing boiling water on them and forcing them towards town. (The baseball bat was later found to be covered with pieces of skull and human hair).<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, Villa's troops invaded the stables where farriers and stable hands, awakened by Castleman as he ran by to organize Company F, met them with pitchforks and shovels. The Villistas, intent on rounding up the horses, did not engage the unarmed men for long before moving to fight Castleman and his troops.<sup>46</sup>

Castleman, Fody, and Troop F were now making their way northeast to protect the bank, having been successful in forcing the Villistas out of the army facility and into town. Castleman moved north to Main and Jones where the Villistas jumped into the EP&SW coal bins and laid down a hail of bullets. It was returned in kind by Castleman's men. The Villistas fell back into town and Castleman moved northeast towards the bank.<sup>47</sup>

Stopped by a wire fence, the troops were again fired on by the Villistas. One trooper was wounded and left in the darkness as the Villista fire slackened and the rest of Castleman's troops ran to the bank, where they formed a line across the road just behind the Hoover Hotel, extending to Castleman's front lawn. Because of the darkness, Castleman's men fired volleys west, north, and south at intervals and shot at anything that moved.<sup>48</sup>

Castleman's wife and children were inside his home with a hired hand. Mrs. Castleman had placed mattresses over the children and herself, while the hired man ran from the kitchen and hid under the clawfooted tub. They remained there for the entire battle.<sup>49</sup>

According to Dr. Roy Stivison, Mr. and Mrs. Milton James and Mrs. James' sister ran for the Hoover Hotel when the firing slackened for a moment. Mrs. James tripped over something, and remarked that it was Mr. Miller, as she ran for the door. She was fatally wounded at the doorstep. C.C. Miller had apparently seen his store begin to burn and was running in that direction with his keys in hand when last seen alive.<sup>50</sup>

Jack Thomas, Columbus' deputy sheriff, in a interview with Bill Rakocy years later, stated that Mrs. James was wounded before she reached the Hoover Hotel. He remembered that the headlights of the train caught the James' lying on the ground. Two men leaped off the train and carried both Mr. and Mrs. James to the hotel through heavy gunfire. Mrs. James died within minutes of entering the hotel.<sup>51</sup>

James Deane moved down Boundary Street heading for Broadway. When the Lemmon & Romney store went up in flames, the Commercial Hotel caught fire. According to Father Stanley's account, this fire was accidental. Kerosene drums that were stored on the porch were apparently hit by gunfire, exploded, and set the store ablaze. Fires were deliberately set at Sam Ravel's store. Miller's Drug and Deane's Grocery caught fire from that blaze. When Deane saw his store afire, he ran down Broadway towards it and was killed in the middle of the street in front of Walker's Hardware Store, having received a sizable wound to his stomach. (Local legend has it that he was caught by the Villistas, who slit his throat,

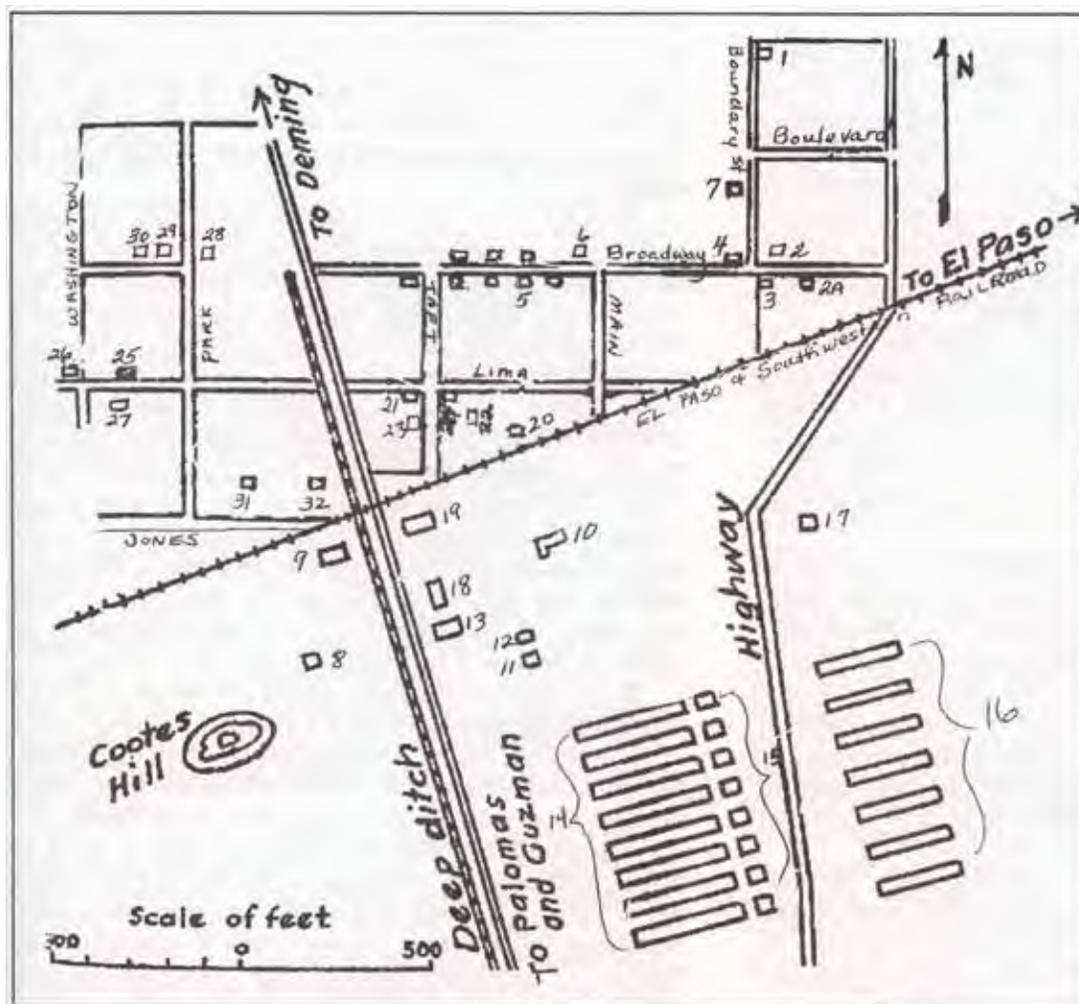
but there is little evidence of this. His son mentions in the Fall hearings that his father's body was riddled with bullets, but doesn't mention knife wounds, nor do any other eyewitnesses who recorded their memories of finding Deane's body the next day, including Dr. Stivison, who found the body initially.)<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, Lucas had set up four Benet Mercier machine guns along the railroad tracks. One was placed under the railroad water tower in front of the depot and aimed west towards Cootes Hill, where the Villa reserve shot from the arroyo. Trapped in their home, the Riggs family counted bullets as they hit the Customs House with a smack. The Villistas tried the doors, but never forced their way in. The Riggs family was in the rear and had stuffed a sock in the baby's mouth to keep it quiet, hoping that the Villistas would think the Customs House was only used for an office and was empty. When the Villistas fell back, Mrs. Riggs removed the sock; the baby had passed out from lack of air.<sup>53</sup>

Arthur Ravel was taken to the Commercial Hotel. Manager W.T. Ritchie, his family, and the guests were awakened as the doors to the hotel were forced open and Villistas crowded in. All the men were rounded up and taken downstairs. Jolly Garner and Ben Aguirre, customs employees, crawled out the windows and went down a back staircase. Steve Birchfield was caught in his room and wrote checks to the Mexicans, telling the Villistas to help themselves. When they did, he too went out a window to safety."

W.W. Walker, honeymooning at the Commercial Hotel, shoved and threatened several Villistas as they separated him from his new bride. Walker was shot dead on the inside stairwell as his bride pleaded for his life. The rest of the men, including Mr. Ritchie, were taken out to the front porch and shot. (Among these was a Señor Perera of the Mexican Consulate who had come to Columbus in place of his superior, an ailing Mr. Gray.)<sup>55</sup> Mrs. Ritchie and her daughters were stripped of their jewelry and Mrs. Ritchie was forced to show the Villistas Sam Ravel's room. They promptly shot it to pieces.<sup>56</sup> The Lemmon & Romney store was now ablaze and the Commercial Hotel caught fire from the flames and sparks. Mrs. Ritchie testified at the Fall hearings that the Villistas did not deliberately set the hotel on fire. The Villistas retreated, leaving the Ritchie women trapped on the second floor along with the now hysterical Mrs. Walker. According to Mrs. Ritchie's testimony at the Fall hearings, Juan Favela had seen their predicament and helped Mrs. Ritchie and two of her daughters escape down a staircase. Jolly Garner and Ben Aguirre also returned and climbed up to the hotel's second floor to lower the eldest daughter and Mrs. Walker to safety. Favela took them to an adobe building after his own home caught fire from the hotel and burned to the ground, where they remained until the end of the battle.<sup>57</sup>

When the Villistas left the Commercial Hotel, they



Locations of places on the map of Columbus:

1. Col. Henry J. Slocum
  2. Bank
  - 2A. Bank (Tompkins' Map)
  3. Hoover Hotel
  4. 1st Lt. James Castleman
  5. Columbus Courier
  6. Ravel Bros. Store
  7. Capt. George Williams
  8. Lt. John Lucas
  9. U.S. Customs House
  10. Hospital
  11. Surgeon
  12. Officer of the Day
  13. Capt. Thomas F. Ryan
  14. Barracks
  15. Mess Halls
  16. Stables
  17. Guard house
  18. Headquarters, 13th Cavalry
  19. El Paso & Southwestern Railway Depot
  20. Capt. Frederick G. Turner
  21. Lemon and Romney Store
  22. Juan Favela
  23. Movie Theater
  24. Commercial Hotel
  25. Capt. Rudolph Symser
  26. Maj. Frank Tompkins
  27. Palomas Land and Cattle Company
  28. Luis Ravel
  29. Sam Ravel
  30. Lt. William W. West, Jr.
  31. Lt. William A. McCain
  32. Capt. Hamilton Bowie
- Adapted from Tompkins' map on p. 49 of *Chasing Villa: The Last Campaign of the U.S. Cavalry*.

dragged Arthur Ravel with them. He saw the bodies of five men, including Ritchie, in front of the hotel. The Villistas told him they were taking him to the bank. One man was on either side of him. The man on the left was shot, but the man on the right continued towards the bank, telling Ravel not to worry and that they would make it there. The Villista was shot several minutes later and Arthur ran down Broadway to his brother Louis' house, where he hid until the raid was over.<sup>58</sup>

With the light of the fires of the Lemmon & Romney store and the Commercial Hotel and other burning buildings, Castleman and Lucas could now see the enemy and began to fire in earnest. Lucas had set up the machine guns at the Taft Street and Main Street intersections with Jones Street. He also had placed one at the depot water tower and one covering the Deming-Guzman Highway. The Villistas were in a heavy crossfire and began retreating slowly toward Cootes Hill to the southwest.

Villa's bugler blew retreat around 6:30 and the last Villistas moved out around 7:00 a.m. This made it safer for the officers to move around. Tompkins left his family and worked his way toward the army camp. Captain

Williams had been slowly circling the town from east to west throughout the entire battle trying to get to the military camp. At this point, he was moving stealthily across the parade grounds.<sup>59</sup>

Williams stumbled onto the McCains, who were still hidden in the mesquite. As they moved toward the camp together, the Villistas began to retreat to the southwest. One Villista spotted them. Williams clubbed the man to death several feet from McCain's wife and daughter.<sup>60</sup>

With the skies growing light, Riggs stuck his head out the door to let the cavalry know that his family was still in the Customs House. The soldiers escorted the family over to the hospital, where they began to nurse the wounded.<sup>61</sup>

Captain Bowie arrived at camp and Lucas turned the machine guns over to his command around 6:00 a.m. Lucas had lost one man, Sgt. Mark Dobbs, who had been wounded, but would not leave his post to seek aid. He died firing the machine gun. Taking a few men, Lucas moved northeast hoping to clear the town to the east of Villistas. He ran into Castleman and his troops and remained with them until the end of the fight. Shortly after his arrival, at approximately 6:30 a.m., Slocum

appeared behind them.<sup>62</sup>

Slocum had been trapped in his home and had finally taken to the mesquite with his wife. When Castleman's men cleared the area of Villistas and stopped firing north up Boundary, Slocum moved south and took command. Leaving Castleman, after ordering him to hold the east side of town at all costs, Slocum next appeared on Cootes Hill directing fire at the retreating Villistas around 7:00 a.m. Favela's assertion that Slocum was absent appears to be unsubstantiated.<sup>63</sup>

When the Villistas began their retreat, the stragglers left first. J.J. Moore and his wife, Susie, had watched the battle from their front porch. Realizing Villa was attacking the town, Susie had asked her husband to go with her to the storm cellar, but Moore was sure that Villa would not harm them because they had always been sympathetic to his cause.<sup>64</sup>

The Moores saw more and more men coming down the road and finally a large contingent stopped for water. The Moores retreated to the back room. The Villistas broke down the doors. After a brief exchange with J.J. Moore, the Villistas beat him to death. Mrs. Moore managed to distract her captors and went out a window into the mesquite. She was shot jumping a fence, but managed to drag herself from that spot far enough away that the Villistas either thought that she was dead, or realized they didn't have enough time to hunt her down.<sup>65</sup>

The Symyers were also still in the mesquite. The cavalry, now pursuing Villa, found the Symyers, and Captain Symser reported for duty, leaving his family with the orderly. The cavalry also found the McCains and the men left to pursue Villa. The women and children were escorted to camp, and later taken to Deming for safety in National Guard trucks.<sup>66</sup> When the army passed by, Mrs. Moore flagged them down. A man was sent for an ambulance, and Mrs. Moore fainted. Castleman's relief group found her again and were loading her in an ambulance, when Mrs. Maud Hawk Wright appeared asking for water.<sup>67</sup>

Arriving at Columbus, Maud and Buck Spencer had been left with Villa's reserves. She indicated that Villa's horse was shot from under him and men had to return to the horse holders to get another, which indicated that he was in danger somewhere away from the reserves. However, Maud did state that Villa was mainly at Cootes' Hill during much of the battle. When Maud realized that Villa's men were retreating, she asked Villa himself if she was free to go. He gestured toward Columbus and gave her a horse. The horse was battle mad and hard to control, so she walked away from Cootes Hill, leading the horse to the south to avoid the machine gun fire in town. She headed for water and ended up at the Moore Ranch.<sup>68</sup>

Maud later explained to American authorities that she endured her husband's death by not thinking about him and concentrating on surviving to find her baby. Villa let her live because she talked back to him and threatened

to kill his soldiers when they made jokes about giving her a gun to shoot other Americans after they arrived in Columbus. Her foremost thought was her son and, when she was told by Slocum that she could not go back to Mexico to look for him, she threatened to walk there by herself.<sup>69</sup>

Wright's story did not change much from interview to interview. Small details changed, but not the important ones. The newspaper reporters earned her ire because they did not report her interviews accurately and she stopped giving interviews for many years. A reporter told Maud that the Mexican woman who had received the baby from the Villistas at the time of the Wrights' capture had walked to Pearson, Mexico and placed him with Mormon friends of the Wrights. The *El Paso Herald* then misquoted Wright as stating that her son was bright enough to have found his way to Pearson, Mexico, some thirty miles away from their ranch, by himself. The same reporter also wrote later that her two year-old child was ten years old. The male child was also reported to be female in several accounts in the *New York Times*.<sup>70</sup>

Buck Spencer escaped during the battle. When he was found, he was taken for a Villista spy in the hysteria of the moment. Wright vouched for him and he, in turn, reported that Wright was indeed telling the truth about her adventures with Villa moving north from Mexico.<sup>71</sup>

Tompkins, Symser, and Williams took a body of troops, with Slocum's permission, to pursue the Villistas out of Columbus. Chasing the Villistas across the border, Tompkins paused to get permission to continue into Mexico.<sup>72</sup> Castleman followed with a second column, while Lucas took men to reinforce the international gate. The battle for Columbus was over.

### Conclusions

Although, the exact details of the Columbus Raid will probably never be known, it is interesting to speculate about certain aspects of the raid itself. Did Villa expect to meet Mexican and United States government officials and go into exile in the United States? Was Villa in the town proper during the raid? Where was Slocum during the raid? Could Slocum have done anything differently that would have prevented the Villistas from entering the town? Where did Villa's plan go awry?

Villa's plan worked extremely well in the beginning. On his way to Columbus he killed anyone he met who he felt might have warned Slocum of his intent. Thus, the element of surprise was on his side. His plan of attack was very good. While he may not have intended to do so, it divided the officers from the enlisted men, introducing an element of chaos that enabled him to take the town without much opposition. His plans broke down because he did not maintain personal control over his men. He allowed them to burn Ravel's store, which made them easy targets for Castleman's and Lucas' troops.

Villa's obvious interests in Columbus were horses, food, and Sam Ravel. The Villistas only took small items

as loot, such as jewelry and slippers, and were focused on obtaining horses. Ravel may have been sought by the Villistas for revenge, but it is more likely that Villa wanted either the guns Ravel may have had for him, or money and provisions.

Although Villa and his men had ample opportunity to kill a number of civilians in Columbus, there were relatively few civilians killed. Of those killed, three were most probably killed by friendly fire (Deane, Bessie James, and C.C. Miller). Two, Moore and Walker, were killed in direct confrontations with the Villistas. Walker probably caused the deaths of the other males captured at the Commercial Hotel by becoming angry and threatening. On the whole, civilians were treated fairly well by the Villistas, who let many go without even firing at them.

Maud Hawk Wright claimed that the Villistas were short of ammunition and horses. However, there were reports of machine gun duels with the Villistas, who apparently brought some of their own along. One report told of a machine gun placed on Cootes Hill by the Villistas, but added that it never opened fire. The Villistas seemed to be badly trained in the use of hand guns and rifles. While expending a large quantity of ammunition, they managed to kill only 18 people, several of whom were probably killed by friendly fire in the inky blackness of the night.

Colonel Slocum did little to protect the town itself. He failed to post sentries in town, even though he received warnings of Villa's impending raid, because he was sure Villa would go to water first. However, he sent extra patrols to outlying areas, set out extra sentries in camp, and made sure that major water sources were being monitored for Villa's approach. Villa again insured that the attack would be a complete surprise by failing to do the expected or the obvious. Instead, he waited until after the battle to water horses and men at wells along the way, which is why the Moore ranch became a target.

Was Villa in town during the battle? Historians have noted that Villa rarely wore his uniform even in battle and have not taken Mrs. Park's testimony seriously, even though Maud Hawk Wright claimed to have seen Villa change into his uniform and reported that he was away from the reserve force. She claims that he also had a horse shot from under him, so he must have been at least in a dangerous situation.

It should be noted that Villa was well known on the border. His picture was often in the papers and he had lived for a time in El Paso. People in Columbus knew him personally and even considered him a friend. He had apparently even stayed in the Columbus and Commercial Hotels several years before. Mrs. Parks would have had no trouble recognizing him.

Secondly, Villa was on foreign soil. It was one thing to fight out of uniform in his own country in a revolution. If he were captured, he could expect to be shot immediately, or after interrogation. But on foreign soil, a

uniform was a necessity. If he were captured, conventions of war would keep him from being tried as a bandit or murderer. He might even be seen as a patriotic soldier leading a doomed cause and invoke public sentiment into letting him go free. Villa may have been wearing a uniform for this reason or he may have decided he would show the United States that his army was a legitimate power to be respected. His anger over Wilson's recognition of Carranza had helped to provoke the attack. Wearing a uniform merely emphasized Villa's claims for recognition as the head of government in Mexico and legitimacy of authority over an armed body of Mexican troops. He was flaunting his claim to power in the face of the American President and the American public.

Captured Villistas testified at their trial in Deming that Villa waited with the reserve on Cootes Hill and did not go into town at all. They further testified that they did not know that they had entered the United States and that Villa had not told them of their destination. This is refuted by Maud Hawk Wright and Buck Spencer's testimonies of the trip north from Mexico as captives of Villa that Villa did tell this men that he was attacking either Hachita or Columbus and that they would have American women, food, and guns there. If the captured Villistas denied that Villa was in town and that they knew that they were in the United States, their chances of living, poor as they were, might have increased by gaining public sympathy as mindless stooges in the game of war. They could be either protecting Villa, or they really had not seen him in the town, as they were actively engaged in other activities while he was in outlying areas.

Another question that often arises is: Was Slocum in town? Castleman and Lucas saw him around 6:00 a.m. and Tompkins saw him on Cootes Hill around 6:30 a.m.<sup>73</sup> Robert Bruce Johnson attributes a letter in the Hugh Lennox Scott papers as one written by Mrs. Slocum detailing the events of the early morning hours of March 9, 1916. She states that she and the Colonel were awakened by gunfire at 4:00 a.m. It was so heavy that it sounded like hail. They dressed in the dark and dashed across to an adobe house neighboring theirs. Leaving his wife there, he left to join his regiment.<sup>74</sup> This leaves a number of hours unaccounted for, but Slocum may have been pinned down in the crossfire and had to detour widely to get behind Castleman's riflemen safely.

Another question arises with the rumor that Villa actually came to surrender and, fearing a trap, attacked Columbus instead. The rumor involves a special train sent for Villa and certain individuals who were supposed to meet with Villa. One man killed in the Commercial Hotel was a Mexican consular official who arrived in place of his superior, who had been taken ill. Also, Sam Ravel, known to be a friend of Villa's, was not in town. A tantalizing piece of evidence was a train mentioned in the Fall Investigations that was either the morning train arriving very early or a second unscheduled train equipped

with a telephone. Apparently, the conductor was in touch with Fort Bliss on this line. (Jack Thomas stated that it was a westbound freight train in his interview with Rakocy. If so, why would it have a conductor, as mentioned in the Fall Investigation testimony?) Could Villa have expected a train to be in and have met with two men, Ravel and Gray, who by chance had fallen ill and were not in town? When these men and the train failed to appear, could he have attacked the town thinking that he had been set up by the government, as he was in Agua Prieta?

Slocum had one ace up his sleeve and that was Lucas. Villa made one mistake (and had little control over it) when he attacked Columbus while Lucas was on duty. Lucas had actually come in a day earlier than planned. If he had not been there, the battle might have gone differently. Lucas had just returned from fighting in the Philippines, and was experienced in combat. Lucas arrived first on the scene because he did not even stop to put on his boots, but fought the entire battle in bare feet. When Lt. Horace Stringfellow, one of the few officers in the actual campground, arrived to help early in the battle, Lucas ordered him to protect the flanks of the machine crews. This allowed Lucas and the machine gunners to concentrate fire on the enemy without worrying about attacks from their flank or rear. Lucas knew how to set up his guns for best effect. He protected them with good troop placements and kept his attention on the job at hand, adjusting gun placements as needed. Secondly, Lucas let his men be expendable. He did not stop to send wounded men to the rear or give them first aid. His mind was on containing the situation first.

Lucas had no family. He was willing to risk death when most of the other officers remained home to protect their families or, like Castleman, moved to protect their families as part of the military plan. Captain Bowie and Captain Williams did leave their families to move towards the fighting. Both were able to get into the battle, albeit late, because they were reluctant to take chances. Lucas took chances that the others would not take. He was a soldier's soldier, like Villa, liking combat and willing to lose his life to win. Villa was unlucky to have picked a night to fight when Lucas was in camp.

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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Johnnie Wright, "My Mother, Maud Hawk Wright," p. 1, Columbus Historical Society Archives, Columbus, New Mexico.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Ibid.* 485 men is the accepted number of men that Villa brought north with him.

- 4 Gerry Hawk, "Nine Days to Columbus," *True West*, January, 1998, 36.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Zach L. Cobb to Secretary of State, March 11, 1916, RG 59, RDS-M, Reel 51, 812.00/1727, National Archives (hereafter cited as N.A.).
- 8 Wright, 8.
- 9 Hawk, 36.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Wright, 10-11.
- 12 *El Paso Morning Times* (El Paso, TX), 8 March 1916.
- 13 Wright, 12.
- 14 Some historians take exception to this statement for several reasons. Several raids by Carranza's forces took place on towns in Texas later in the Mexican Revolution, but none on the scale of Villa's raid on Columbus. Others point out that Francisco "Pancho" Villa was not a commissioned officer of the Mexican government recognized by the United States government. Villa was a revolutionary leader in an unstable country leading a large military force, an army, even though it was not recognized as a legitimate arm of the Carranza government. In fact, his anger at the United States for recognizing the Carranza government, and aiding it during the Battle of Agua Prieta, had much to do with his attack on Columbus on March 9th, 1916.
- 15 Major Tompkins' map of Columbus is the most reliable of the time. However, he shows the bank on the right of the Hoover Hotel. The bank vault stands across from the Hoover Hotel. Tompkins errs in its location.
- 16 Carothers to State Department, March 8, 1916, RG 59, RDS-M, M274, Reel 51, 812.00/17637, NA.
- 17 Knoles-Peterson, "I Could Have Saved Columbus," *True West*, August 1965, 24-25.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 Jesse Peterson and Thelma Cox Knoles, eds. *Pancho Villa by People Who Knew Him* (New York: Hastings House Press, 1977), 215-16.
- 20 *El Paso Herald-Post* (El Paso, Texas), 23 February 1961.
- 21 Peterson and Knoles, *Pancho Villa*, 212-13.
- 22 U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Mexican Affairs. *Preliminary Report & Hearings on the Investigation of Mexican Affairs*, 66th Congress, 2nd sess., 7 February 1920, 1589-92.
- 23 Peterson and Knoles, *Pancho Villa*, 216.
- 24 Craig Symser, "The Columbus Raid," *Southwest Review* 68, no. 1 (1983): 79-80.
- 25 Frank Tompkins, *Chasing Villa: The Last Campaign of the United States Cavalry* (Silver City, NM: High-Lonesome Books, 1996), 43-44.
- 26 "The Columbus Raid," *Cavalryman's Journal* 27, no. 114 (1917): 491.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Tompkins, 61.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 30 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1589-92.
- 31 Although several enlisted men gave their lives heroically in this engagement, including Private Griffen who died giving the first warning of the attack, and Sergeant Mark Dobbs, who died manning a machine gun after being wounded severely, and Lts. Castleman and Lucas managed the battle extremely well despite the absence of superior officers, no one but Maj. Tompkins received a military decoration. Although the military closed ranks publicly, military authorities were not pleased with Col. Slocum's actions, even though he was exonerated in the investigation following the raid.
- 32 Tompkins, 49.
- 33 *Deming Graphic* (Deming, NM), 10 March 1916.
- 34 Bill Rakocy, *Villa Raids Columbus, N. Mex. Mar 9, 1916* (El Paso: Bravo Press, n.d.), 34.
- 35 Tompkins, 50-53.

- 36 *Ibid*, 49-50.
- 37 Tompkins, 52; Symser, 82.
- 38 Symser, 80-81.
- 39 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1593.
- 40 Roy E. Stivison, "When Villa Raided Columbus," *New Mexico Magazine*, December, 1950, 41; Haldeen Braddy, *Pancho Villa at Columbus: The Raid of 1916 Restudied* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1965), 24-25.
- 41 *Rio Grande Republican* (Las Cruces, NM), 14 March 1916.
- 42 Peterson and Knoles, *Pancho Villa*, 228.
- 43 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1612-1614.
- 44 *Ibid*, 1605-1609.
- 45 Tompkins, 58.
- 46 *Ibid*, 58.
- 47 *Ibid*, 49-50.
- 48 *Ibid*, 49-50.
- 49 *Ibid*, 49-50.
- 50 Stivison, 37.
- 51 Rakocy, 32.
- 52 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1613-14 and Stivison, 37.
- 53 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1592-94.
- 54 *Ibid*, 1599-1605.
- 55 Stivison, 37.
- 56 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1599-1605.
- 57 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1599-1605 and Knoles-Peterson, "I Could Have Saved Columbus," 56.
- 58 Johnson, 64. Larry Harris in *Villa: Strongman of the Revolution*, page 89, suggests that was a four mile run. If Ravel ran to his brother's home, the run was less than a mile. If he ran to his high school teacher's home as in other accounts, it may have been longer.
- 59 Tompkins, 59.
- 60 *Ibid*.
- 61 Senate Hearings on Mexican Affairs, 1592-93.
- 62 Tompkins, 52-53.
- 63 Oscar J. Martinez, *Fragments of the Mexican Revolution: Personal Accounts from the Border* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 178.
- 64 *Ibid*, 183-189.
- 65 *Ibid*, 183-189. Several accounts including Clendenin's *Blood on the Border* assert that Mrs. Moore was either raped and/or her baby was killed by Villistas. By her own account, she was not raped nor did she have any children. No children or unborn babies were killed in the Columbus Raid.
- 66 Symser, 82.
- 67 Martinez, 183-189.
- 68 Wright, 13-14.
- 69 Braddy, 29.
- 70 *El Paso Herald* (El Paso, TX) 11 March 1916.
- 71 Hawk, 37 and 39.
- 72 Tompkins, 56.
- 73 Tompkins, 52 and 55.
- 74 Johnson, 51.

# Air Power in Mexico

## During the Punitive Expedition of 1916

by Karen M. Keehr

*Editor's Note: See companion article, "The Columbus Raid," in this issue.*

The use of aviation by the American military during the Punitive Expedition against Mexico marked a significant turning point in American military history. The airplanes of the First Aero Squadron assisted U.S. Army forces in their pursuit of Mexican rebels led by Pancho Villa in 1916, performing reconnaissance missions over hostile territory. They carried mail and dispatches between the expedition's headquarters and the advancing columns. The courageous young aviators faced numerous obstacles, including hazardous weather conditions, violent air currents, high altitudes, and inadequate equipment. The under-powered engines on the bi-planes they flew proved to be insufficient for the high altitudes of the Mexican mountain ranges they flew over. The pilots captured the imaginations and hopes of the American public, as day after day, newspapers across the nation reported on the valiant efforts of the aviators of the First Aero Squadron of the United States Signal Corps.

On March 9, 1916, Mexican rebel leader Francisco (Pancho) Villa, with a force of 484 men, crossed the Mexican-American border in the early morning hours to raid the sleepy little border town of Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, Villa's raid has engendered much speculation, but few definite conclusions. Some scholars believe that it was an act of revenge on Columbus merchants, who had tried to cheat Villa. Documents found on a dead Villista, however, suggest that Villa, who had been friendly with the American government and had hoped to gain their support in his rebellion, declared an unofficial war on the U.S.<sup>2</sup> This followed American President Woodrow Wilson's official recognition of First Chief Venustiano Carranza's regime in October of 1915. Furious over what he thought of as an American betrayal, Villa began taking his anger out on private American citizens. Villa first attacked a group of U.S. mining engineers and technicians from the Cusi Mining Company as they traveled by train into Mexico on January 9, 1916. Villistas boarded the train, dragged the Americans off, and murdered fifteen on the spot.<sup>3</sup> No retaliation followed.

The March 9th raid on Columbus resulted in American retaliation. The Thirteenth Cavalry stationed at Camp Furlong in Columbus was able to drive the Villistas off after sunrise. They could not prevent the eighteen American casualties, the eight wounded, and the burning to the

ground of nearly half the town.<sup>4</sup> United States Senator Albert Bacon Fall called for half million men to occupy all of Mexico. President Wilson, however, took a slightly more conservative stand and sent a small punitive expedition under the command of Brigadier General John J. Pershing into Mexico after Villa.<sup>5</sup>

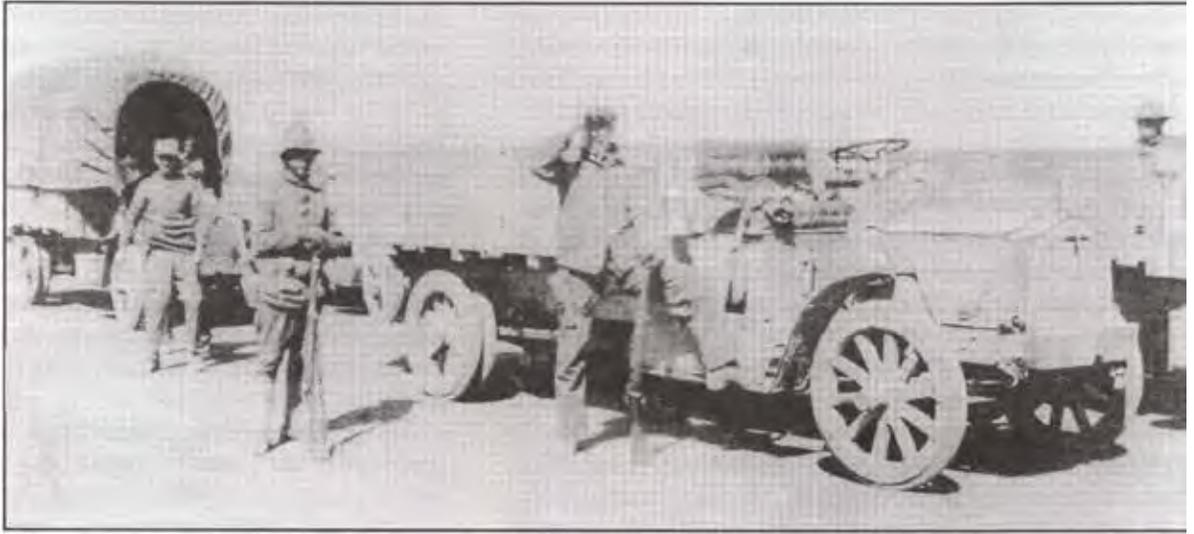
General Pershing organized his expedition of 4,800 men and 4,175 animals in a week, but Villa had already sufficiently covered his tracks. The U.S. Army's Punitive Expedition entered Mexico in two columns, twelve hours and fifty miles apart. The first column entered Mexico in the early dawn hours, and the other followed shortly after noon on March 16, 1916.<sup>6</sup> Pershing wanted to use every available means to find Villa. The Punitive Expedition into Mexico would, therefore, become the first American military campaign to utilize motorized transportation [see accompanying photo]. In 1908, Pershing had met Wilbur Wright, while he was giving flying lessons to French officers at Tours, France. Wright predicted that airplanes would play an important role in future wars and may have influenced Pershing's use of aviation during the Punitive Expedition.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Pershing's use of the First Aero Squadron was of little surprise.

At noon on Saturday, March 12, 1916, the First Aero Squadron, stationed at Fort Sam Houston, received orders to proceed to Columbus, New Mexico, to participate in the Punitive Expedition. Captain Benjamin ID. Foulois writes in his memoirs that as the news reports came in on Villa's raid on Columbus and subsequent withdrawal into Mexico, he began mentally planning what to do should the First Aero Squadron be called to assist General Pershing.<sup>8</sup> Foulois talked with his men to find any problems they were having on or off the job, checked over the equipment assigned to the squadron, reviewed maintenance and inventory problems, and memorized places, elevations, and distances on maps of Mexico. He wrote that he drove his men to distraction with his questions about their personal readiness and found the answers to his own questions disturbing. He concluded that with the spare parts, gasoline, and personal equipment, the squadron might be able to last thirty days until it would be in "deep trouble" for parts.<sup>9</sup> The inadequate equipment and lack of parts would play a major role in the experience of the First Aero Squadron in Mexico, just as Foulois predicted.

Within four hours of receiving the order to proceed to Columbus, Foulois and his men had the squadron's complete equipment packed and ready to go.<sup>10</sup> On the morning of March 13th, the First Aero Squadron flew their eight airplanes to the drill grounds at Fort Sam Houston, where they were disassembled and loaded onto flatcars for rail transport. Foulois assumed that their planes would be used primarily for observation of enemy forces and for advanced parties of expedition, carrying mail and dispatches, and for aerial photography. Before leaving San Antonio, he also requested Scott bomb sights and bombs and asked that they be permitted to equip the planes with machine guns.<sup>11</sup>

On March 13th, shortly after midnight, eleven officers, eighty-two enlisted men, and one civilian mechanic, Jacob Bailey, left San Antonio for Columbus, New Mexico.<sup>12</sup> Their equipment consisted of eight Curtiss JN2s (Signal Corps numbers 41 through 45, 48, 52, and 53), ten trucks, and one automobile.<sup>13</sup> The Curtiss JN2 planes used by the squadron during the Punitive Expedition were biplanes with 80 to 100 horsepower engines. Each plane weighed about 1,350 pounds and could carry 450 pounds, or an observer in addition to the pilot.<sup>14</sup> First Lieutenant S.S. Warren, a medical officer, and three hospital corpsmen<sup>15</sup> joined the squadron en route on March 14th in El Paso, Texas. Two more trucks were received in El Paso from the depot quartermaster, thus giving the squadron about fifty percent of its necessary motorized transportation.<sup>16</sup> According to the *1916 Report of the Quartermaster General*, the move from San Antonio to Columbus by the First Aero Squadron cost \$3,958.<sup>17</sup>

The squadron arrived at Columbus on March 15th and immediately began unloading and assembling their planes. The motor transportation was turned over to the quartermaster of the Punitive Expedition to haul supplies to the troops already in Mexico.<sup>18</sup> Supplies for the troops arrived daily and the base quartermaster had only a few horse-drawn wagons before the First Aero Squadron arrived with their trucks. Foulois was temporarily put in charge of all transportation and the squadron's soldiers worked around the clock to fit wagon bodies and make the necessary changes to the chassis of the seventeen Jeffery



U.S. military trucks in Mexico, 1916. Courtesy Rio Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library.

“Quads” (four-wheel drive) that arrived in Columbus on March 18th. The Aero Squadron also possessed the only military truck drivers, until these were supplemented by civilian truck drivers.<sup>19</sup>

The *El Paso Herald* reported that by sundown on March 15th, the first airplanes ever seen in Columbus were “skimming the sky to the south.”<sup>20</sup> The arrival of the squadron at the border had been much anticipated by newspapers across the country. The Punitive Expedition into Mexico was to be the first test of the use of airplanes in a military campaign by the United States. The exploits of courageous European pilots had already captured the hearts of the American public, who now awaited their own pilots on the border to prove themselves fearless. The *New York Times*, *El Paso Herald*, and *El Paso Times* all carried articles and features on the Aero Squadron throughout its time in Mexico. Reporters wrote almost daily about the hardships and heroism of the First Aero Squadron, with headlines sometimes larger than the articles. Fearless young men risking their lives on dangerous missions into hostile territory for the sake of their country sounded exciting and glamorous to newspaper readers, and they craved story after story.

On March 16, one day after their arrival in Columbus, the First Aero Squadron completed its first reconnaissance flight into Mexico. Captain T.F. Dodd piloted airplane #44, with Foulois observing, thirty miles into Mexico, completing the first aerial reconnaissance by United States military aircraft ever made over foreign territory.<sup>21</sup> From this notable flight, Dodd and Foulois were able to report to General Pershing that no Mexican forces were within a day's march of the head or flank of his infantry and cavalry columns.

On the morning of March 19th, Foulois received telegraphic orders to report for immediate duty to General Pershing at Nueva Casas Grandes, Mexico, a small town

125 miles south of the Mexican border.<sup>22</sup> All eight planes were in the air by 5:30 p.m. and headed for Ascension, where they planned to spend the night. Foulois writes in his memoirs that he was proud that they managed to get all eight planes airborne, since it was their first combat order and they were one hundred percent ready.<sup>23</sup> Ten minutes after take off, however, one of the planes, flown by Mike Kilner, experienced engine trouble and was forced to return to Columbus. Major General Frederick Funston, commander of the Army's Southern Department, received a report that seven of the First Aero Squadron airplanes left Columbus for Casas Grandes on the afternoon of March 19th.<sup>24</sup> By the time the planes reached Ascension, the sun had set. Four of the planes were able to land safely, using signal fires the men on the ground had built around the landing area. Foulois wrote in the War Diary of the First Aero Squadron: "The landing of four machines at Las Ascension, without damage, was remarkable, as a huge cloud of dust, approximately ten feet high, caused by a regiment of cavalry on the march, rolled over the ground, just as landing was being made."<sup>25</sup> The other three planes, however, missed the fires in the darkness and landed at different places.

Lieutenant H.A. Dargue, who was trailing the four leading planes, failed to see the other four planes land and continued past Ascension a few miles. Dargue safely landed in an open valley without any damage. He stayed with the plane all night in fear of being attacked by hostile Mexicans, and rejoined the other four planes in Ascension in the morning.<sup>26</sup>

The other two pilots, Lieutenants R.H. Willis and E.S. Gorrell, were not as lucky as Dargue. Flying a thousand feet higher than the other planes, Willis and Gorrell also failed to see the other planes land. After losing sight of each other, Gorrell and Willis separately spotted what they took for the lighted landing field at 7:45 p.m. With Willis going west and Gorrell going south, they nearly collided with each other over what turned out to be a forest fire.<sup>27</sup> During his descent near Pearson, Willis struck a slight rise in the land and broke part of his landing gear. Realizing that he had overshot his destination and could be attacked by unfriendly Mexicans, Willis began walking back to Ascension in the dark with only a small amount of rations and a map. At daylight, he hid out on a mountaintop, and began his hike again when darkness fell. Later he told his fellow pilots that, as he walked, he began to doubt whether he was headed in the right direction. Around midnight, he spotted something burning ahead of him. He crept up on what was a burning railroad tie to examine his map. Suddenly, a short yell came from down the track and three armed Mexicans rushed towards him. Willis fled and hid in the underbrush until the men gave up looking for him.<sup>28</sup> He reached Ascension by 2:00 a.m. the next morning. Foulois sent a truck to retrieve spare parts from the downed plane, but someone had beaten them to it. The rescue truck found

the plane literally chopped into pieces. Only the engine was salvageable.<sup>29</sup> Thus, plane #41 became the first aircraft casualty of the Punitive Expedition.

Willis, however, was not the only pilot having a bad night. Lieutenant E.S. Gorrell, in a third plane, also proceeded beyond Ascension in the darkness, missing the landing fires. In a newspaper interview, Gorrell told of his experiences.<sup>30</sup> After watching Willis' crash landing and comprehending the dangers of landing in such a place, Gorrell turned northward attempting to find the American camp or make it back to the border using the north star to guide him. A hole in his gas tank forced him to land.

Without damaging the plane, Gorrell landed three hours after dark near a stream forty miles east of the line of march and about fifty miles south of the border. Gorrell crawled around three little Mexican adobe houses and walked three or four miles north to a high peak in order to gain his bearings. Reaching the peak at 2:00 a.m. Monday morning, he had to wait until 6:00 a.m., when it became light enough to read his map and recognize where he was. With a canteen of water, Gorrell began walking toward Ascension, where he knew he could find American troops. Skirting the few homes he saw, Gorrell drank half the water in the canteen, thinking that he would come across a water hole. With no people or water anywhere to be found, Gorrell realized he could not make Ascension with the little water that he had and decided to return to his plane. Fighting the terrible alkali dust that got into his eyes, ears, and hair, he carefully doled out the remaining water, allowing himself only a quarter of a teaspoon of water at a time. Gorrell passed out for an hour at one point and saw mirages. He finally reached his plane and the stream at 10:00 p.m. that night.

The next morning, remembering that he had seen some horses when landing near the houses, Gorrell decided to capture one to ride to Ascension. Just as he was slicing his overalls to make a bridle for the horse he had caught, the Mexican owner appeared. Gorrell jumped into one of the adobe houses. The Mexican called out "*Buenos Amigo*," which Gorrell understood to mean "good friend." Gorrell pulled his pistol and induced the Mexican to get another horse with a saddle. Then he followed the Mexican to his ranch, where they got a second horse. Together they rode towards Ascension, Gorrell staying slightly behind the Mexican. Just outside the town, Gorrell gave the man \$4.00 for the use of the horse and continued to the American camp, where he spent Tuesday night. With eight gallons of gas and a gallon of oil, Gorrell made his way back to his plane in a Ford with a driver he borrowed from the Sixth Infantry. With the help of his old guide, they found the plane in good condition.<sup>31</sup> The next morning, Gorrell said this about his experience:

It was a long, lonesome wait, one in which I could not help feel that I was face to face with death. But I was comforted by the thought

that the American troops on their way to Casas Grandes could not help but find my note. Yet, there were times when I was about ready to give up.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile back at Ascension, the four planes that had landed safely proceeded to Casas Grandes on the morning of March 20th. When they arrived, Foulois and his pilots were surprised to find no American troops and no suitable place to land. After flying around in every direction, they finally landed 10 miles northwest of Casas Grandes. Foulois later learned that headquarters were actually fifteen miles away near the Mormon colony of Colonia Dublan.<sup>33</sup> Dargue and the pilot who had been forced to return to Columbus joined them on the same day.

Foulois and his pilots reported to Pershing to receive their orders. They were to attempt to locate Villistas moving south towards Lake Babicora. This aerial reconnaissance mission would take them south toward Cumbre Pass in the heart of the Sierra Madre Mountains.<sup>34</sup> At noon on March 20th, plane #44 with Captain T.F. Dodd as pilot and Foulois as observer took off toward mountains higher than Foulois had ever been in a plane.<sup>35</sup> They only got about twenty-five miles into the flight when the plane began to buck and shake violently. Caught in whirlwinds and vertical currents of air, the insufficient engine power of the planes was no match for the high altitudes of the *Sierra Madre* foothills. With the throttle open as far as it would go and the engine straining to its limits, Dodd and Foulois regretfully admitted they could not complete their mission. They were forced to return to headquarters and report their failure.

As he was fretting over their uncompleted mission, Foulois writes in his memoirs that he “looked up just in time to see Lieutenant Tom Bowen get caught in a vicious whirlwind just as he touched down, and end up in a pile of splinters and cloth.”<sup>36</sup> Caught in “puffy”<sup>37</sup> air, Bowen and his plane plummeted over fifty feet.<sup>38</sup> Bowen suffered only a broken nose, cuts, and bruises, but his plane was not so lucky.<sup>39</sup> Within two days of operations, the First Aero Squadron was down to six planes. Before the crash, Bowen reached an altitude of 10,000 feet above sea level, but only 4,000 feet above Casas Grandes country. He told reporters, during his recovery in El Paso, that he was able to make out American troops very easily and was confident that if there had been Villistas below he would have seen them without trouble.<sup>40</sup> Bowen also reported that since the squadron joined the column, the airplanes had traveled about sixty-five miles ahead of the cavalry on scouting missions.<sup>41</sup>

The First Aero Squadron’s battles with inadequate engine power, defective equipment, lost aviators and the Mexican air currents and weather were only beginning. Over the next few months General Funston<sup>42</sup> and General Pershing<sup>43</sup> expressed their disappointment in the performance of the First Aero Squadron. Their disappoint

ment was directed at the lack of decent equipment, rather than the aviators. The newspapers reporting on the Punitive Expedition often carried stories of how aviators risked their lives flying “suicide machines” across the treacherous Mexican skies.<sup>44</sup> Throughout their time in Mexico, the First Aero Squadron attained a great deal of support from the public, especially the Aero Club of America, in their battle with the inadequacies of their airplanes, lack of personnel, and the harsh weather conditions.

On March 21st, the First Aero Squadron received orders to locate American troops in the Galeana Valley. Dodd and Foulois flying plane #44 took off from Dublan and succeeded in finding Colonel Erwin and his troops at Galera Lopena.<sup>45</sup> They received Erwin’s report and his request for supplies and returned to headquarters. Six trucks were loaded with supplies and sent to Erwin’s advancing column.

On March 22nd, the squadron received orders for two missions. Lieutenant W.G. Kilner, pilot, and Lieutenant Ira A. Rader, observer in plane #42, and Lieutenant J.E. Carberry in plane #45 succeeded in locating Colonel G.A. Dodd’s command in the Galeana Valley. Kilner, Rader, and Carberry landed, received Dodd’s reports, and returned to Dublan to present them to Pershing.<sup>46</sup> The second mission of the day was not as successful. Captain Dodd, piloting plane #44, with Lieutenant A.R. Christie observing, and Lieutenant C.G. Chapman piloting plane #53, attempted to locate troops moving south along the Mexican Northwestern Railway. Dodd, Christie, and Chapman flew into the heart of the *Sierra Madre* as far as the northern end of the Cumbre Pass tunnel.<sup>47</sup> They once again encountered terrific vertical air currents and whirlwinds similar to the ones Foulois and Dodd had experienced in their first flight into the *Sierra Madre*. At times, the pilots found themselves flying within twenty feet of tree tops before returning to Dublan without finding anything.

After another disappointing day, Foulois wrote a memorandum to Pershing recommending that new equipment replace the JN planes, which proved themselves “not capable of meeting military service conditions.”<sup>48</sup> Foulois requested the immediate purchase of better and more powerful planes and equipment.<sup>49</sup> He knew that he was optimistic in thinking that he would receive of the ten planes he had requested, but Foulois felt duty bound to ask for the equipment his men needed to perform successfully.<sup>50</sup>

On March 23rd, Christie, Carberry, and Chapman, piloting planes #44, #45, and #53 respectively, flew to El Valle to report to Colonel Dodd. High winds, dust, and snowstorms prevented them from returning to headquarters until March 25th.

Despite the problems and dangers the squadron was experiencing, it proved itself invaluable to the Punitive Expedition. The high altitudes, however, were proving to be more than the squadron’s six planes could handle.



Map adapted from Vandiver, Frank E.; *Black Jack: The Life & Times of John J. Pershing*, Vol. II, p. 61 5, Texas A&M University Press: 1977.

This lack of horsepower in the engines made flying near high mountains dangerous and limited the number of hours the planes could be flown each day.<sup>51</sup> Another problem the aviators faced was the dry climate that caused the wooden propellers to warp and layers to come apart. In an attempt to save propellers, the squadron removed the propeller as soon as the plane returned to base and placed it in a humidior to preserve the viscosity of the glue. Another propeller was then placed on the machine. Despite valiant efforts by the commissioned and enlisted personnel of the First Aero Squadron, the needs of the expedition could not be met with the planes that they had.<sup>52</sup> They continued to make the best of what they had, completing a total of seventy-nine flights between March 26th and April 4th. The purpose of most of these flights was to carry mail and dispatches between Columbus and the expedition's camps in Mexico.

On March 30th, Foulois again requested ten new high-powered planes and submitted four plans to Pershing regarding the establishment of bases for airplanes and fuel in advance of the expedition headquarters.<sup>53</sup> The third plan Foulois suggested was put into action. It called for the establishment of effective radio-telegraph communication between Namiquipa and the advancing troops. The final recommendation of the plan was the discontinuation of flights between Namiquipa and El Valle for communication purposes and the concentration of every available plane at Namiquipa to maintain communications south of that point. The approved plan went into effect April 1, 1916.

On April 5th, the squadron moved its headquarters to San Geronimo and continued

delivering mail and dispatches. On April 6th, plane #44 was badly damaged while landing at San Geronimo after completing its mission. All serviceable parts were salvaged, but the plane was condemned and destroyed. The First Aero Squadron was now down to five operational planes.<sup>54</sup>

The Aero Squadron experienced one of its most dramatic incidents on April 7, 1916. The squadron's mission was to deliver dispatches to the American Consul, Marion Letcher, in Chihuahua City, Mexico. Dargue piloted plane #43, with Foulois observing, and Carberry piloted plane #45, with Dodd observing. Each plane carried identical messages. Dargue and Foulois were to land south of the city, while Carberry and Dodd landed north of Chihuahua City. The observers were then to walk into the city from opposite directions, while the pilots protected their machines.

The airplanes caused quite a commotion as they flew over the Mexican city. Carberry and Dodd landed to the north without incident. Dodd commandeered a carriage and was taken directly to the American Consulate.<sup>55</sup> Dodd delivered Pershing's request for Letcher to explore options in arranging for Pershing to receive the large sums of money that he would need. Letcher also made arrangements for the supplies Pershing urgently needed to be shipped to San Antonio, Mexico.<sup>56</sup>

While Dodd was succeeding with the mission, poor Dargue and Foulois were being rushed by an angry mob. A number of townspeople had seen the plane circling and came running to the field where Dargue was landing the plane. Four Mexican *rurales* began waving rifles at the aviators, not looking happy to see the American pilots. What the American officers did not know was that Pancho Villa had threatened to bomb Chihuahua City with his own airplanes. So naturally, when unidentified planes circled the city, the locals assumed they were Villa's planes and sounded the alarm.<sup>57</sup> After they stopped the plane, Foulois instructed Dargue to take off immediately and fly north to join Carberry. Dargue gave the engine full throttle, leaving Foulois in the dust. Attempting to ignore the shouting crowd shaking their fist at Dargue's plane, Foulois began walking briskly toward town. The Mexicans fired four shots at the plane. Foulois attempted to distract the armed Mexicans by shouting at them, only to have them wheel around and level their rifles on him. With only his small pistol against the Mexicans' four Winchesters, Foulois writes in his memoirs, "There was nothing I could do but put my hands up — and pray. I did both."<sup>58</sup>

Foulois was pushed towards the jail and, without understanding much Spanish, knew he was in trouble. He writes, "There was hate on the faces of the hundred or so men and boys who were herding me down the street yelling '*Mata el gringo!*' (Kill the Yankee!)." <sup>59</sup> As the crowd pushed him towards the jail, Foulois heard an English voice in the crowd ask him if he needed help. Foulois

sent the man after the American Consul. As the iron door of his jail cell clanged shut, Foulois received the honor of being the first U.S. aviator to become a prisoner of war.

As Foulois sat in his jail cell, Dodd was chatting with the civilian governor of the state of Chihuahua, who was an old schoolmate of his from the University of Illinois. Meanwhile, the supplies were being loaded on the train. Dodd's reunion was interrupted by the news of an American aviator in jail. The civilian governor had no jurisdiction over the police, so he sent Dodd to see the military governor, General Luis Gutierrez. Back in his jail cell, Foulois attempted to convince the warden that he was not an enemy of the Mexican people, in his most polite blend of "Tex-Mex" Spanish. The warden tried to explain in his best English that Foulois was guilty until proven innocent. Finally, the warden agreed to send a messenger to General Gutierrez, but was told that the messenger might have to wait several hours to gain entrance to the headquarters since it was almost *siesta* time. Foulois, however, was lucky and the general's chief of staff, a Colonel Miranda, showed up and took custody of him. General Gutierrez was affable and agreed Foulois should not be detained. Foulois told Gutierrez about the two planes north of the city and asked for guards to keep them from being harmed. The general also agreed to allow Foulois to visit the planes.

While Foulois was having his adventure, the pilots were having their own as well. Dargue had made it to the north side of the city and joined Carberry. Upon Dargue's arrival, a large crowd began to gather around the planes, making disparaging remarks and using cigarettes to burn holes in the fabric on the wing. When Dargue and Carberry attempted to stop the mob, several people slashed the cloth with machetes and young boys began to swarm over the planes, loosening nuts and turnbuckles. Carberry and Dargue decided they needed to get out of there fast, so they jumped in their planes and attempted to take off. Carberry got off all right, but dusted the mob badly. He was able to land in a field beside the smelters of the American Smelter and Refining Company six miles away. Dargue, however, did not get away that easily. Just as he was taking off, a piece of the fuselage behind the cockpit flew off and struck the tail. Dargue was forced to chop the throttle and land. When Foulois arrived with the guards, Dargue was doing his best to hold off an angry mob with his bare hands and wits.<sup>60</sup>

With the help of the Mexican guards, the crowd was dispersed. Carberry and Dargue repaired the damaged planes, while Foulois and Dodd finished their business of getting the supplies together in the city. The four aviators spent the night at the American Consulate. The local evening papers ran big headlines attesting to the "enthusiastic reception" the American aviators received. Foulois writes: "The four of us could have been killed by that kind of enthusiasm."<sup>61</sup> Letcher, in an April 9th telegram, also down played the incident, reporting only

that one of the airplanes was stoned by a mob of boys and fired upon by soldiers upon landing. According to Letcher, only minor damage was caused and "a good feeling attended" the visiting aviators.<sup>62</sup>

Before sunup the next morning, the aviators took off to return to San Geronimo. For reasons only they understood, Carberry and Dodd flew over Chihuahua City one last time. Several hundred Mexicans saluted them from the roof tops by firing rifles at the plane. Luckily, all the shots missed the plane completely.

After the mission to Chihuahua City, the First Aero Squadron returned to its reconnaissance and communication duties. The men moved their headquarters to San Antonio, Chihuahua, on April 8th and then to Satevo on April 10th. American troops were having little luck finding Villa. They were finding that the deeper they went into Mexico, the more hostile Villa sympathizers and Carranzistas became. On April 12th a small detachment of cavalry under the command of Major Frank Tompkins fought a battle near Parral with Carranza troops, who were also supposed to be looking for Villa.<sup>63</sup> The First Aero Squadron participated in reconnaissance missions to help locate troops moving toward Parral on April 11th and 12th. Carberry and Foulois received the first information regarding the fight at Parral while flying plane #45 to Chihuahua City with despatches for the American Consul.<sup>64</sup> On April 14th, Foulois delivered a message from Pershing to Letcher in Chihuahua City, and was immediately transmitted to General Funston, about the unprovoked attack at Parral. Pershing reported that he had no details at that time, but an airplane was probably there by the time Funston received his message.<sup>65</sup>

Also on April 14th, plane #43 piloted by Dargue, with Gorrell observing, completed a 315 mile non-stop flight, a new American record for distance with two men in a plane. The flight's purpose was a reconnaissance mission from Columbus to Boca Grande, Pulpit Pass, Carretas, Janos, Ascension, and back to Columbus, in order to locate a large Carranza force reported to be moving east toward the American line of communication. Dargue and Gorrell encountered no hostile troops.<sup>66</sup> On this day, Lieutenant Rader was forced to abandon plane #52 in hostile country while trying to locate Major Robert L. Howze's command in the vicinity of Ojito. The plane, too deep in unfriendly country, was never retrieved.<sup>67</sup>

Dargue and plane #43 continued to make several more notable flights and continued to set new American aviation records. On April 15th, he exceeded previous long distance flights with a 415 mile reconnaissance flight, stopping only twice. Also on the 15th, plane #42 was dismantled and destroyed. Its lower wings were placed on plane #45, leaving the First Aero Squadron with three semi-functional aircraft.

With a great deal of excitement still going on at Parral, Colonel Brown suggested that Pershing send an airplane

or automobile there as the quickest and best means of transmitting messages.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately, the First Aero Squadron's three remaining planes would not be in service long enough to assist Brown. His request demonstrates how much the Army had come to rely on the use of airplanes for fast and reliable communications.

Plane #43, which had carried Dargue on many notable flights, took to the air for the last time on April 19th. Motor failure, while making a reconnaissance mission from San Antonio to Chihuahua City, forced Dargue to make a crash landing. He was knocked unconscious for awhile, and Willis, who had been observing and taking photographs, suffered a severe head wound and had his leg pinned under the plane. Dargue pulled Willis from under the wreckage and used water from their canteen to clean Willis' head wound. Wrecked beyond repair, the plane was burned on the spot, and Dargue and Willis began walking the sixty-five miles to San Antonio, the nearest base. Two days later, after considerable hardship due to lack of food and water, Dargue and Willis reached the base. They remained at San Antonio for two days and then continued by automobile to Namiquipa to report the results of their reconnaissance mission to Pershing.<sup>69</sup> Doctors later discovered Willis had walked the sixty-five miles with a broken ankle!

With only two planes left, and those in unserviceable condition, the squadron received orders on April 20th to return to Columbus to await the arrival of new planes, which came on April 22nd. The new planes were a big disappointment to the squadron and were not what they had been expecting. After numerous requests for more powerful planes better suited for the Mexican terrain, the squadron unpacked four new planes nearly identical to the inadequate JN25 they had been flying. After considerable testing at Columbus' Aviation Field,<sup>70</sup> the aviators declared the new planes unfit for Mexican service. Two Curtiss R-2 types with 160 horsepower engines, which were the planes the squadron had felt best suited for the type of flying they were doing in Mexico, arrived May 1st, but proved to have problems with defective parts, propellers, and defects in construction. To work on the propeller problem, three civilian employees from the Curtiss Aeroplane Company arrived to Columbus on June 29th to try and construct propellers for the dry climate of the Southwest.<sup>71</sup>

Between March 15th and August 15th, 1916, the First Aero Squadron completed 540 flights, logged 345 hours and 43 minutes of air time, and flew 19,553 total miles.<sup>72</sup> The pilots suffered no casualties despite the numerous forced landings caused by bad weather and inadequate equipment that wrecked five planes, caused the abandonment of one, and rendered the other two unserviceable. Foulois and his men learned many invaluable lessons, which many of the aviators took with them into distinguished careers in World War I and the United States Army Air Corps.

In his report of operations for March 15th to August 15th, Foulois made several recommendations based on what he felt that he had learned from his experience on the Punitive Expedition. First, Foulois felt each squadron operating in the field should have a fully equipped base conveniently located from which all supplies, materials, and personnel could be drawn. The base should be able to receive, assemble, and test all new airplanes and motors intended for field use and be able to make the necessary repairs and alterations. Second, Foulois suggested that an aero squadron minimally consist of twelve planes, twenty-five trucks, and 149 men. The First Aero Squadron had operated with 129 men during this time. Foulois also wanted all new planes to be ready for service as soon as they were unloaded. He wanted all alterations needed for field service to have been done by the manufacturers, so that his men need not spend their time on them. Foulois insisted that all planes used by the military be tested in conditions similar to those that they would experience in the field. Until that time, planes had been tested at sea level altitudes under generally favorable conditions. Foulois wanted the planes tested in extreme conditions, so that any problems could be dealt with before operating in the field. Foulois recommended that a testing station be developed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, where planes and fliers could experience higher altitudes and climatic conditions similar to those in the field.<sup>73</sup>

The courageous spirit and tenacity of the men who flew in the Punitive Expedition is undeniable. They overcame the hardships, bad weather, hostile country, forced landings, and poor equipment to dramatically expand the capabilities of United States military aviation. Though it still lagged behind the aeronautical accomplishments of German and French aviators, the U.S. learned its lessons from the experiences of the aviators of the Mexican Punitive Expedition and confirmed the invaluable use of airplanes in military campaigns. On August 29, 1916, Congress passed a huge appropriation bill for that era of \$13,281,666 for the improvement of U.S. military aviation.

The aviators of the First Aero Squadron who flew in Mexico risked their lives daily in the service of their country. General Pershing, in his official report on the Punitive Expedition, wrote:

The personnel [of the First Aero Squadron] had displayed the most commendable spirit, and personal efficiency if of the highest order. Officers have literally taken their lives in their hands without hesitation, although several aviators have had narrow escapes. Unstinted praise for the aviators who have served with this Expedition is universal throughout the Command.<sup>74</sup>

The aviators of the First Aero Squadron became heroes and gained the respect of not only General Pershing, but of the whole nation. Newspapers reported almost daily about

the courage of the pilots and the miserable conditions they operated under with little complaint. Many field-inspired aircraft improvements were made at Columbus as the squadron searched for ways of making the inadequate equipment perform their missions. The Punitive Expedition's use of aviation in Mexico marked a significant milestone in the development of American air power.

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#### ENDNOTES

- 1 The number of men attacking Columbus with Villa has been questioned since the raid. Early newspaper accounts put the estimate at 1,000 men. See "Night Attack on Border", *New York Times*, 10 March 1916, p. 1, while reports from the Department of Justice just hours after the raid say between four and five hundred Villa troops attacked Columbus, New Mexico", Cobb to Secretary of State March 9, 1916, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929 (Washington: National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1959) 812.00/17377 (hereafter these records will be referred to as *RDS*.) Most recent scholars agree that 484 or 485 men were with Villa. Louis R. Sadler, "Preface," *Chasing Villa: The Last Campaign of the U.S. Cavalry*, (Silver City, New Mexico: High Lonesome Books, 1996) and Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, 5th edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 540.
- 2 These documents were missing until located in the National Archives by historians Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler. For details on what they found in the documents see Charles H. Harris, III and Louis R. Sadler, "Pancho Villa and the Columbus Raid: The Missing Documents," *Border and the Revolution: Clandestine Activities of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920* (Silver City, New Mexico: High Lonesome Books, 1988) pp. 101-112.
- 3 Meyer and Sherman, pp. 539-540.
- 4 Sadler
- 5 Meyer and Sherman, pp. 540-541.
- 6 Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr. *The Great Pursuit* (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 85. Also see the first hand account of Colonel Frank Tompkins of the 13th Cavalry, who lead the first column: Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, or Report of the Secretary of War, *War Department Annual Reports, 1916* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916) 64th Congress, 2nd session, 1916, H. Doc 1378, 8.
- 7 Donald Smythe, *Guerrilla Warrior: The Early Days of John J. Pershing*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 140.
- 8 In his memoirs, Foulois discusses why he felt no better man than Pershing could have been chosen for the mission into Mexico. Foulois had served with Pershing, then a captain, in the Philippines in 1902. Foulois had "profound respect for him as a man and as a leader of men" and compared Pershing's personal magnetism to that of Douglas MacArthur. Benjamin D. Foulois and C.V. Glines, *From the Wright Brothers to the Astronauts: The Memoirs of Major General Benjamin D. Foulois* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 122.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 11 Foulois writes that he had heard of Germans and French equipping their planes with machine guns. He, however, never received the sights, bombs, and guns he requested, since none were to be had. Foulois, *Memoirs*, 126.
- 12 The officer pilots who went to Columbus at this time were Captains Benjamin D. Foulois (Commanding Officer), T.F. Dodd. Lieutenants C.G. Chapman, J.E. Carberry, Herbert A. Dargue, Thomas S. Bowen, R.H. Willis, Walter Kilner, Edger S. Gorrell, Arthur R. Christie, and Ira A. Rader. This list appears in: Foulois, Capt. Benjamin D., "Report on the Operation of the First Aero Squadron, Signal Corps with the Mexican Punitive Expedition, for Period March 15 to August 15, 1916." Appendix B in Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*.
- 13 Juliette A. Hennessy, *The United States Army Air Arm: April 1861 to April 1917*, General Histories (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, 1985), p. 167.
- 14 "Fliers to Aid Troops in Search for Villa", *New York Times*, 12 March 1916, p. 2.

- 15 In his Report of Operations, August 15, 1916, Foulois says Warren and only one enlisted man joined them in El Paso, but in his memoirs he says three corpsmen. It is, therefore, unclear exactly how many men other than Warren joined the squadron in El Paso. Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 236 and Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 126.
- 16 This is according to Foulois in his 1916 report. Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 236.
- 17 Report of the Quartermaster General, War Department Annual Reports, p. 437.
- 18 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 236.
- 19 For a more detailed discussion on the use of the First Signal Corps trucks see: Roger G. Miller, "Wings and Wheels: the 1st Aero Squadron, Truck Transport, and the Punitive Expedition of 1916," *Air Power History*, 42, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 12-29; Clarence C. Clendenen. *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars*, (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1969), 316; Dillow, Daniel John. "Mission in Mexico: Logistical Operations During the Punitive Expedition into Mexico, 1916-1917" (Master's thesis, New Mexico State University, 1993) or Captain Francis H. Pope, "Motor Transport Experiences with the Mexican Punitive Expedition," Appendix C, Tompkins, *Chasing Villa*, pp. 246-254.
- 20 "Aeroplanes Scout Work," *El Paso Herald*, 16 March, 1916, p. 1.
- 21 Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 126.
- 22 Report from Funston about message from Pershing, March 20, 1916, RDS, 812.00/17532. Pershing reports that the Aero Squadron was expected the following day, March 19th at Casas Grandes.
- 23 Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 126.
- 24 Report from Funston, March 20, 1916, RDS, 812.00/17537.
- 25 "The First Aero Squadron War Diary, Period March 18 to April 23, 1916," submitted by Capt. Benjamin D. Foulois to the Division Adjutant, Punitive Expedition, on July 25, 1916. Folder 5, Box 8, MS 17, Benjamin D. Foulois Papers, Air Force Academy Library (AFAL.).
- 26 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 236. And also see Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 127.
- 27 Edger S. Gorrell, "Why Riding Boots Sometimes Irritate an Aviator's Feet," *U.S. Air Services*, (October 1932), 26.
- 28 The story of Willis' wild hike back to Ascension was told to *New York Times* reporters by Lieutenant Thomas S. Bowen in Columbus after Bowen's injury in his own crash landing. "Aviators Prove Value as Scouts," *New York Times*, 25 March 1916, p. 2.
- 29 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 236. And also see Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 127.
- 30 The following story of Gorrell's wanderings is compiled from his interview appearing in the *New York Times* and from his 1932 article about his experiences. "Lieut. Gorrell Tells of His Wanderings," *New York Times* 28 March 1916, p. 3, and Gorrell, "Riding Boots," pp. 24-30.
- 31 According to Gorrell, this is how his adventure truly ended. The newspapers, however, relate a different story of Gorrell returning to his plane with a little oil and gasoline and flying to Federico, near Ascension, and the road connecting General Pershing's column and Columbus. Gorrell then supposedly walked to the road, tacked a note to a post and returned to his airplane. Lieutenant J.L. Parkinson of the Twentieth Infantry discovered the bit of paper as he was traveling north in charge of a train of empty motor trucks early in the morning of March 23. The motor train halted at once and a rescue party hurried Gorrell. According to this version of the story, they found him asleep under his plane. Instead of returning to base with his rescuers, Gorrell, who had been without food for twenty-four hours, strained gas from the trucks, fixed the hole in his gas tank and took off in his airplane flying south towards Casas Grandes. In his 1932 article, Gorrell fervently denies this version, saying he never talked to any reporter and calling the story fiction. Gorrell, "Riding Boots," 29.
- 32 "Lost Flier Found After 84 Hours," *New York Times*, 24 March, 1916, p. 1.
- 33 Foulois in his memoirs writes that it was a blessing that this error had occurred, because the landing area that he had requested was unsuitable. He says that if they had attempted to land in the area prepared for them the entire combat air force of the United States would have been wiped out. Foulois, *Memoirs*, pp. 127-8.
- 34 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 237. And also see Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 128.
- 35 Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 128.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 37 This is the description Bowen used to describe to reporters the air on the afternoon of his accident. "Aviators Prove Value as Scouts," *New York Times*, 25 March 1916, p. 2.
- 38 "Army Aviator Falls Fifty Feet; Breaks Nose; Two Planes Lost," *El Paso Herald*, 21 March 1916, p. 1.
- 39 Bowen's nose was set in place back in Columbus by surgeons under Colonel E.B. Frick. "Aviators Prove Value as Scouts," *New York Times*, 25 March 1916, p. 2.
- 40 "Aviator Bowen Back from Front," *El Paso Herald*, 25 March 1916, p. 2.
- 41 "Air Scouting Aids Pershing," *El Paso Herald*, 25 March 1916, p. 4.
- 42 "One Aviator is Reported Found," *El Paso Herald*, 22 March 1916, p. 1.
- 43 Smythe, *Guerilla Warrior*, p. 232.
- 44 For stories on aviators risking lives in poor equipment see: *El Paso Herald*, 21 March 1916, 23 March 1916, 28 March, 1916, 27 April 1916; *New York Times* 23 March 1916, 24 March 1916, 25 March 1916, 26 March 1916, 28 March 1916, 4 April 1916, 23 April 1916, 26 April 1916, 24 June 1916, 9 July 1916; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, March 25, 1916.
- 45 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 237; Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 128.
- 46 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 237.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- 49 For a complete list of planes and equipment Foulois requested, see "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, pp. 237-8.
- 50 Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 237.
- 51 Hennessy, p. 169.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- 53 For the complete listing of the four planes see: Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, 238-9.
- 54 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 240.
- 55 The stories of the aviators delivering the message to the American consulate is told by Foulois in his *Memoirs*, pp. 129-132.
- 56 According to this telegram, Letcher sent flour, coffee, bacon, jam, salt, sugar, gasoline, auto oil, transmission grease, horseshoes, and nails to Pershing at San Antonio, Mexico. Telegram dated April 8, 1916, received April 9, 1916, from Cobb to Secretary of State regarding message from Letcher to Edwards, RDS, 812.00/17787. Also see RDS, 812.00/17772.
- 57 Calvin W. Hines, "First Aero Squadron in Mexico," *American Aviation Historical Society*, (Fall 1965), 195. The *El Paso Herald* reported Villa equipping an aviation corps March 10, 1915: "Villa equips Aviation Corps" *El Paso Herald*, March 10, 1915, p. 12.
- 58 Foulois, *Memoirs*, p. 130.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p. 130-
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 132.
- 62 Telegram dated April 9, 1916 to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/17797.
- 63 Tompkins, *Chasing Villa: The Last Campaign of the U.S. Cavalry*.
- 64 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, 241.
- 65 Telegram dated April 15, 1916 to Secretary of State, RDS, 812.00/17870. Also in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 519.
- 66 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 241.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 241.
- 68 Telegram dated April 18, 1916, rec'd. 11:15 p.m. from Letcher to Secretary of War regarding telegram received from Colonel Brown, RDS, 812.00/17912.
- 69 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 241.
- 70 The Columbus Aviation Field was created to test planes before they were sent into the field. "Prepare Aviation Field," *Columbus Courier*, April 7, 1916, p. 1; and "Columbus has Aviation Field," *El Paso Herald*, March 30, 1916, p. 3.
- 71 Foulois, "Report," in *Chasing Villa*, p. 242.
- 72 *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- 73 *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- 74 "Comment and Recommendations extracted from Report of Operations, Mexican Punitive Expedition", Appendix D in Robert S. Thomas and Inez V. Allen, *The Mexican Punitive Expedition under Brigadier General John J. Pershing, United States Army, 1916-1917*, Chapters 1-V (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, May 1, 1954.), A-19.

# Howard S. Beacham, Otero County's Eliot Ness

by David A. Townsend and Cliff McDonald

The National Prohibition Act, more commonly known as the Volstead Act, which became the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, was enacted by the U.S. Congress over the veto of President Woodrow Wilson in 1919. The great experiment was underway, but the people of Alamogordo, Otero County and surrounding areas were among the many who made a national pastime of violating the effort. The Twenties were ready to roar.

Otero County had one lawman who intended to see that the roar was a non-alcoholic one. Howard S. Beacham, a strong law and order man who believed in Prohibition, was elected county sheriff in the 1920 election. He took the enforcement of Prohibition seriously and did his best to apprehend all of the bootleggers, still owners, and others connected with the trade. Moreover, he pushed the courts to prosecute the cases. Beacham's effectiveness in the war on bootleggers brought him to the attention of the Department of Justice, and he was chosen to be a federal Prohibition Agent. As an agent he had jurisdiction in four counties in addition to Otero County: Chaves, Eddy, Lea and Lincoln.

Nothing in Beacham's background indicated that he would become such an effective lawman. Born January 27, 1883, he traveled west in his late teens and early twenties, making his way to Colorado, where he engaged in mining. On his way to South America to get rich at mining, he stopped in Alamogordo and Cloudcroft to visit friends. He traveled as far as Mexico before he decided that he liked what he had seen in the new towns of Otero County, and returned in 1907.

In Cloudcroft, he went to work for Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Jones at the Virginia Hotel. He became a cook of wide reputation, and he won the hand of Mrs. Jones'

daughter by a previous marriage, Juanita Chase. They were married in 1909. The Beachams moved to Alamogordo and operated the Hotel Alamogordo from 1913 to 1917. He remained a restaurant operator until his career as a peace officer began.

In one of his raids, Sheriff Beacham confiscated a Stutz Bearcat, one of the fastest sports cars of the time. This car became his official vehicle, and no rumrunner was going to outrun the sheriff. Among the many arrests Beacham made, one was of an individual calling himself Franklin Turner. When Turner was turned over to federal officials, his real identity became known: "Machine-gun Kelly"!

Sheriff Beacham's most noted apprehension occurred by happenstance in Alamogordo. He was working on his automobile at his residence on Indiana Avenue when a very unusual load of lumber came by, headed north. The lumber was of good quality, without knots, a fact that struck the sheriff as odd, since lumber from the nearby Sacramento Mountains is never free of knots. Also, the lumber was dusty, indicating that it had not been cut at a local mill and freshly loaded.

Beacham followed the lumber truck on its way out of town and stopped it near La Luz. The sheriff found that it was a rumrunner's truck, cleverly camouflaged with



Sheriff Howard Beacham, the Eliot Ness of Otero County, shown with a new 1938 Buick. Beacham loved fast automobiles and especially Buicks. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.

a load of lumber [see photo on following page]. The driver of the truck, D.E. Sherry, was running his goods out of Mexico. The load contained 972 pints of American whiskey, 60 quarts of Gordon's gin, 60 quarts of tequila and cognac, 9 one-gallon cans of alcohol, and a ten-gallon keg of whiskey. It was valued at \$7,000.00. The irony of the situation was that Mr. Sherry had heard of Sheriff Beacham's no-nonsense policy and had avoided driving on the



An unusual capture of what newspapers dubbed “a booze plane” was effected by Howard Beacham on November 22, 1927. This was reputedly the first capture of a liquor plane in New Mexico. Beacham seized the plane and the five cases of whiskey on information provided to him by Special U.S. Customs Agent Juanita McDaniels. Ms. McDaniels often posed as a high-school student, a cover which allowed her to gather information on immigration and prohibition violations. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.

Bootleggers were often very shrewd in concealing illegal goods. This 1929 Nash Coupe was seized near Alamogordo in January of 1931. The liquor, which included 100 gallons of bulk bourbon whiskey and twenty-three bottles of French cordial, was cleverly hidden in “traps” under the car body and in the back of the upholstery. This photograph shows the thirteen specially made containers which held the bulk whiskey. Also shown is the bottled cordial. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.



On February 7, 1928, newspapers throughout the Southwest reported, “The largest single cargo of liquor ever captured by officials in the vicinity of Alamogordo was flagged down by Prohibition Officer Howard Beacham.” The load had been cleverly disguised in a fake load of lumber. Beacham promised the newspapers that he would “refrain from saying anything about wood alcohol.” Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.

The pursuit of "rum runners" traveling in fast automobiles was a dangerous undertaking. On August 13, 1928, Howard Beacham, in pursuit of a suspected bootlegger, was driving when his car was hit by a truck, which necessitated a brief trip to the hospital. In his long career as sheriff and prohibition officer, Beacham had only two automobile accidents. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.



A group of stalwart men doing a thankless job are pictured as New Mexico's Federal Prohibition Force - August 1930. They are: seated, left to right, Ray Sutton, W.L. Hill, Administrator John F. Vivian of Denver, Colorado, Deputy Administrator Charles F. Stearns of Albuquerque, Howard Beacham, and, standing, left to right, J.W. McBroom, M.K. Clark, C.U. Finley, Robert Neal, and Harold Dew. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.

main road through Alamogordo, Pennsylvania Avenue (now White Sands Boulevard). Sherry followed what he thought was a safer route, Indiana Avenue, and had driven right in front of the sheriff's house.

Beacham's vigorous and successful enforcement of Prohibition appeared to be his undoing for a time. Towards the end of his term in office, 1921-1923, he was not renominated at the Democratic convention because of his undue diligence. He was, however, still a federal Prohibition Agent and continued that work for the remaining nine years of prohibition, 1924 to 1933. Beacham was again elected sheriff in 1935, and reelected in 1937. After his terms ended, he went back to the restaurant business and operated the popular Plaza Café. He also served as municipal judge and justice of the peace. Howard Beacham died on March 9, 1963, at the age of 80, respected and beloved by the people of Alamogordo and Otero County.

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DAVID H. TOWNSEND is a retired college professor and former Campus Director at NMSU at Alamogordo. A former member of the NM House of Representatives, he is a well-known local historian and considered to be a leading scholar both on the life of Eugene Manlove Rhodes and the state constitution. He received the Alamogordo Citizen of the Year Award in 1981.

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CLIFF McDONALD is an Otero County native. His family ranched, farmed, and sheared their way through the Great Depression. He is considered an authority on the historical mining industry and received the Alamogordo Citizen of the Year Award in 1992.

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#### A NOTE ON SOURCES

Sheriff Howard S. Beacham's son, Arthur M. (Buddy) Beacham has preserved many of his father's papers and is in the process of readying them for the Rio Grande Historical Collections. He has already made available to the collections a scrapbook of photographs and articles concerning Sheriff Beacham's activities in Prohibition enforcement. That scrapbook is accession number RG99-054.

Gertrude Painter wrote a valuable unpublished manuscript entitled "Howard Beacham, Alamogordo's Own Sherlock Holmes." A copy of the paper can be found in the files of the Tularosa Basin Historical Museum in Alamogordo.

Howard Beacham was credited in 1928 with the "invention" of a large banner, which rolled like a scroll and allowed officers to establish a roadblock at a moment's notice. A December 12, 1928, newspaper article said of the banner,

"In numerous instances autoists have believed that they were being held up by bandits and attempt to crash the bars. When a tourist sees [this] big banner...he will be reassured, unless he has some of the proscribed stuff that is alleged to circulate clandestinely." Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, RG99-054, Ms. 349.023, New Mexico State University Library.



This 355-gallon still was seized on February 14, 1931, in Eddy County by Howard Beacham and other prohibition officers. The two moonshiners, J. Oral Whitefield and William M. Horton, who built the still, were arrested and pleaded guilty in court. Mr. Whitefield, who was very proud of his workmanship on the still, insisted on being photographed with it. Courtesy of Rio Grande Historical Collections, Beacham Scrapbook, RG99-054, New Mexico State University Library.



# Hubbard Museum of the American West

by Drew Gomber

The Hubbard Museum of the American West is a new name for the former Museum of the Horse in Ruidoso Downs. The museum opened in 1992, displaying a large collection of horse-related artifacts belonging to the late Anne Stradling of Patagonia, Arizona. During 1998 the Hubbard Museum assumed the assets of the Lincoln County Heritage Trust in Lincoln, New Mexico and announced a name change to better reflect the broadening nature of the organizational mission.

Anne Stradling liked to collect things, especially if they had to do with horses. At the age of 6, she tacked an old stirrup to her barn wall and announced that she was going to collect “horse things”. And she spent the rest of her life doing exactly that. At the time of her death in 1992, she had amassed over 10,000 “horse things,” including the 12-passenger stagecoach reportedly used by Buffalo Bill during his Wild West Show tour of Europe, and smaller items, such a silver side-saddle stirrup.

As time passed, Anne became interested in other things, still Western, but not necessarily horse-related. The “Whirlwind of Change,” a permanent exhibit at the Hubbard Museum of the American West, displays many of Anne’s Indian artifacts. There are hand carved kachina dolls, Plains Indian head-dresses and beadwork. In addition, there are also mementos from the historic 101 Ranch’s Wild West Show. Anne was more than just a collector. Born Anne Schley on March 1, 1913, she was the daughter of a family that could trace its roots back to the early 1600s, when Anne’s ancestors first arrived from England. In 1887, Anne’s grandfather, Grant Schley, purchased 1500 acres on the northern branch of New Jersey’s Raritan River. This property included the hills that, to this day, are known as “Schley Mountain.”



The main exhibition floor holds many of the vehicles in the collection as well as well as numerous saddle cases. Courtesy of Hubbard Museum of the American West.

During the days of the “Robber Barons” there were many men on the East Coast wealthier than Grant Schley, but few of them could boast of creating their own town. Grant first built a large country house on what is today known as Moorland Farm. After that came Far Hills, a town that included a school, firehouse, fairgrounds, church and house lots. After bringing the railroad to town, he founded the Far Hills Athletic Club, the Somerset Bridle Path Association and the Somerset Hills Agricultural Association. Far Hills is still a much-desired place to live.

For his home, Grant built a rambling stone and frame house with Japanese accents. Whenever he decided that another room was needed, he simply added one. The house eventually measured a quarter-mile around and housed 36 live-in servants. The house was christened *Froh-Heim*, which is German for “happy home.”

It was into this aristocratic setting that Anne was born. But living a comfortable, privileged life was simply not

in Anne’s makeup, a fact that she was to repeatedly emphasize throughout her long life. Her maternal grandfather, Colonel Archibald Rogers, had much to do with Anne’s approach to life as an adult. A close friend of Teddy Roosevelt, he frequently regaled the young Anne with tales of his hunting trips with the robust President.

The youthful Anne began to prefer the summer breaks, where she would spend time in Montana and Colorado on

ranches owned by the family. She was less than a year old when her mother held her on a horse named “Sweetness.” As she got older, she needed no help staying on. In fact, she loved horses so very much that, if anything, it was difficult to get her *off* a horse.

But horses were not her only passion. In 1929, at the age of 16, Anne applied for her private pilot’s license.

Two years later she received her license. Her first solo flight was described by her instructor: “She made a flight worthy of a veteran pilot and landed the plane as though she were bringing it down on eggshells.” Anne also came to love the dangerous profession of “barnstorming.”

Many young ladies of the period, who were born into a family of means, would never have dreamed of doing what Anne did next. Instead of marrying some equally wealthy young man, Anne, at the age of 20, married a rodeo cowboy! She and husband, Jack Webb, moved to Oklahoma’s legendary 101 Ranch, and it was there that their daughter, Jean, was born. During this period Anne began performing in rodeos and she was taught to rope by none other than Will Rogers. Ultimately, Anne was inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame, now located in Fort Worth, Texas.

The couple divorced after 12 years of marriage and Anne relocated to Tucson, Arizona. In Tucson Anne introduced fox hunting to more or less amazed Arizona cowboys and horsemen. It was also in Arizona that Anne met and married a rancher by the name of Floyd Stradling. In 1969 the couple created the Anne C. Stradling Museum of the Horse in Patagonia; the museum collection consisted of Anne’s array of horse-related items.

Over the next 30 years, Stradling’s Museum of the Horse expanded in its collection, as Anne never stopped collecting artifacts relating to the animals that she loved so much. In 1989, due to failing health, Anne contacted a number of individuals and museums in order to find a home for her collection. R.D. and Joan Dale Hubbard of Palm Desert, California agreed to provide a facility and organization for a new permanent home for the collection. By January 1990, Anne’s artifacts began their journey from Southern Arizona to Lincoln County, New Mexico. The building chosen for the museum was part of the 1960’s era Chapparal Motel and Restaurant complex. The motel building was located in what is now the museum parking lot and the future museum building was used first as a 2,000 seat ice skating rink. It was later turned into a convention center, and even later used as a roller skating rink. A gala event opened the newly renovated museum building on May 22, 1992.<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, Anne was not there to see it. She died in Arizona on February 26, 1992. A friend of Anne’s said: “Learned the other day of the death of Anne Stradling. Anne was an exceptional lady — at home with mule skinnners, the common man or the poshest of high society. A friend and helper of animals and *homo sapiens* alike... A product of ‘blue blood,’ and a marcher to a different beat, Anne embodied the spirit of the West.”

The new owners of the Stradling Collection were Ruidoso Downs racetrack owners, Joan Dale and R.D. Hubbard. Joan Dale Hubbard was born in Oklahoma, where she spent her earliest years. But her father was in the Navy at the time of the Korean Conflict and Joan Dale spent a year in California. After the war, her



Areas detailing the lifestyle and possessions of Anne Stradling and her family are always favorites with the public. Courtesy of Hubbard Museum of the American West.

family moved to Kansas, where she graduated from high school. She attended Kansas State Teacher’s College in Emporia and, after graduation, taught school in Wichita for five years. As a former educator, Mrs. Hubbard is interested in bringing knowledge of the art, history and culture of the American West to the general public. She is also very active in educational, civic and horseman’s circles. Mrs. Hubbard is an avid horse-racing enthusiast and actively promotes the sport. She and R.D. Hubbard have been married for 26 years.

R.D. Hubbard was born in Smith Center, Kansas, the youngest of eight children. As a youth, he worked in his family’s ice house and as a wheat harvester. He attended Butler County Community College, in El Dorado, Kansas on a basketball scholarship. From 1957 through 1959 he worked as a basketball coach. But in 1959 he changed careers and became a salesman for Safelite Glass in Wichita, Kansas. By 1968 he was president of that company! Over a ten year period, the company’s revenues from \$7 million to \$100 million, making it the largest auto glass replacement company in the United States.

In 1978 Mr. Hubbard left Safelite to form his own company. He directed the purchase and merger of two small and failing glass companies to form AFG Industries, Inc. A decade later AFG was a Fortune 500 company with annual revenues of approximately \$700 million.<sup>2</sup>

The Hubbards are horse-racing and gambling enthusiasts and have many business interests in tracks and casinos.<sup>3</sup> In 1988 R.D. Hubbard acquired the Ruidoso Downs Race Track in Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico. He



At 150% life size, the outdoor bronze monument, *Free Spirits at Noisy Water* is an eye-catching tribute to seven breeds of horses. Seen here (top to bottom) are the Standardbred, the Morgan and the Arabian. Courtesy of Hubbard Museum of the American West.

invested \$3.3 million in improvements and saw an attendance increase of over 30%.

The Hubbard Museum was founded in 1989 as a Texas nonprofit corporation and was originally created to handle the extensive art collections of its founders. Shortly after the museum was incorporated, Anne Stradling approached the Hubbards and inquired about a home for her extensive personal collection. As part of the agreement, the Hubbards agreed to perpetuate her name. During this early period, the museum did business as the Museum of the Horse, but still kept its legal name as the Hubbard Museum. It should also be noted that one of the Hubbard Museum of the American West's divisions is the Hubbard Collection of Western Art. This collection includes masterpieces by such legends as Charlie Russell and Frederic Remington. In fact, the two largest murals that Russell created, "The History of the West I and II" are in this collection.<sup>4</sup>

On May 23, 1992 the Museum of the Horse opened its doors to the public. Featuring a 40,000 square foot exhibition space, the museum houses approximately 10,000 items of Western art and horse-related artifacts. Sited on a hillside, the building is partially obscured by U.S. Highway 70. This problem led to the commissioning of one of the largest bronze equine sculptures on earth. Created by sculptor Dave McGary, it is called "Free Spirits at Noisy Water" and its larger-than-life horses catch the eye of virtually every driver on Highway 70.<sup>5</sup> Museum attendance was 20,000 to 25,000 visitors per year without the sculpture. After the unveiling of "Free Spirits," visitation increased dramatically. At the end of 1998 attendance had come up to an annual total of 65,000 visitors.

Dave McGary is a world-renowned sculptor, and his masterwork "Free Spirits at Noisy Water" graces the entrance to the Hubbard Museum of the American West. "Free Spirits" is nearly three stories high and its length is nearly that of a football field; it is the largest equine sculpture in the United States. McGary's creation consists of eight horses galloping through a meadow, representing seven different breeds of horse. The lead horse is a Thoroughbred and it is followed by a Quarter Horse, an Appaloosa, a Paint Mare and her foal, an Arabian, a Morgan and a Standardbred. Each larger-than-life bronze horse is sculpted, patinated and painted to reproduce the particular breed in every detail.

While the museum has been in operation for only a relatively short time, it is well on its way to making its mark. Some of its milestones follow. In 1994 the museum worked with the Russian State Agricultural Museum to bring an exhibition of historical Russian equine art to the United States. In 1995 and 1996, the museum assumed the leadership of the popular Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium. In 1997 the museum added the Ruidoso Downs Race Horse Hall of Fame.

The Race Horse Hall of Fame was conceived in October of 1996 at a museum board of directors meeting where Mrs. Hubbard suggested that the museum needed to chronicle the history of horse racing in New Mexico, then at its lowest ebb. It was the perfect time for such a move as many private individuals, horsemen all, were even then promoting the concept of casinos being located at race tracks to save racing in New Mexico. To accomplish the design of the future Race Horse Hall of Fame, the museum staff and board worked with the Southwest Museum Service of Houston and the Hall of Fame Committee. All fabrication and fundraising were accomplished by the museum. Between March of 1997 and December of the same year, \$300,000 was raised from 35 donors. The exhibit was to be located within the museum building in a 2,000 square foot area formerly used for programming. Actual construction began in March of 1997 and the facility opened on the 4th of July

weekend of that year.

And for those who love flesh-and-blood horses, one of the most eagerly anticipated events in Lincoln County each year is the Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 1999. The symposium is one of the nation's largest gatherings of cowboy signers and poets, all of whom perform in an annual three day autumn festival that also includes crafts, chuck wagon cookouts and many rodeo events. It was the Hubbard organization that provided the lion's share of the original funding back in 1990.

The late Ray Reed, cowboy, singer and one-time director of the New Mexico Horsemen's Association, stopped in one day to visit with R.D. Hubbard. Ray had participated in a cowboy gathering at Lubbock, Texas and broached the subject of possibly having such an event in Lincoln County. When Hubbard quickly agreed to finance the first two years of such an endeavor, Ray thought that he was joking. A few weeks later, when Mr. Hubbard asked Ray how the project was coming, he knew that his benefactor was most definitely *not* joking.

Ray's focus for the Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium was realism. Back in 1996, he said that "I don't hire anyone who is a legend in their own mind. I hire fine entertainers and all working cowboys. The public gets to see that and the public gets to see the chuckwagons and the swing music and they just keep coming back to it." The enormously popular chuckwagon cook-off was also one of Reed's ideas. Held for the last several years at Glencoe's Rural Events Center, the 1999 symposium was held at the Ruidoso Downs Race Track. In the words of Ray Reed, "Everything you see down there is pure cowboy."

In 1998 the museum opened the Billy the Kid National Scenic Byway Visitors Center. Owned by the Village of Ruidoso and operated by the museum, this visitor center was the perfect link between the main museum facility and its next acquisition. Late the same year the museum board was approached by the board of the Lincoln County Heritage Trust to accept the assets of the Trust, which included a museum and other historic properties in the National Historic Landmark of Lincoln, New Mexico. Founded in 1976, the Lincoln County Heritage Trust had worked first with the Old County Courthouse Commission, and then the New Mexico State Monuments Division, to keep Lincoln's historic public buildings open to the public.<sup>6</sup> The Hubbard Museum accepted the Trust's assets and renamed the Trust operation "Historic Lincoln".

The tiny, one-street settlement of Lincoln had been the eye of the storm during the legendary Lincoln County War of the late 1870s. Its unusual state of preservation and relatively unchanged nature were the factors which brought it National Historic Landmark status in the 1960s. Several famous names are associated with Lincoln: cattle baron John Chisum, Governor Lew Wallace, Sheriff Pat Garrett, and, of course, Billy the Kid. One of the goals of Historic Lincoln is to address the many myths that

surround the Kid and present the facts.

During a long-range planning process that began in 1997 and carried into 1998, it was decided that the name, Museum of the Horse, should be changed back to the legal name, The Hubbard Museum, and to then add the tag line "of the American West" to better reflect the broad scope of collections and programs. The museum began with an emphasis on the Stradling collection, built the Race Horse Hall of Fame, added Historic Lincoln, and is now planning a new wing dedicated to country music legend Willie Nelson, which will house his personal collection of memorabilia. The Hubbard Museum of the American West has grown rapidly since its opening in 1992 and continues to strive to improve our lives through the presentation of history and art.

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DREW GOMBER, a resident of Lincoln, is currently the historian for the Hubbard Museum of the American West. He also writes for *the Ruidoso News*, *the Roswell Daily Record*, *the Tombstone Epitaph*, and various other Southwest publications.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The period of use as an ice skating rink and convention center also saw periodic use as a roller rink using temporary flooring. The permanent roller skating floor was added in the 1970s.
2. Hubbard also took the publicly held company private in a \$1.1 billion buyout.
3. R.D. Hubbard is a man of diverse business interests. In 1989 Mr. Hubbard opened The Woodlands in Kansas City, as the only dual greyhound and horse racing facility in the United States. In 1991, he was elected Chairman and CEO of Hollywood Park, California, "The Track of Lakes and Flowers." Between 1992 and 1997, R.D. Hubbard expanded his already substantial interests by opening a greyhound track in Portland, Oregon. Hubbard also opened the first trackside casino in the United States at Hollywood Park, as well as acquiring additional casinos in California, Arizona, Nevada, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
4. The Hubbards are well-established philanthropists. In 1986 Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard formed the R.D. and Joan Dale Hubbard Foundation. The Foundation's goals are to provide and improve educational opportunities for students of all ages. With its goal of benefiting society in mind, the Foundation has to date donated \$12 million to various worthy projects. In 1991, when Mr. Hubbard discovered that the famous Thomas Aikins painting "Swimming Hole" was about to be sold to out-of-town interests, he pledged \$100,000 to Fort Worth's Amon Carter Museum toward the painting's purchase. After the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, he announced the area's first major rebuilding project, a \$100 million sweeping commitment to the community that included a donation of property to the city of Inglewood for their new police headquarters. R.D. Hubbard also organized the Shoemaker Foundation. This organization has raised more than \$5 million to assist ailing or injured horsemen and made grants to more than 150 individuals and their families in 21 different states.
5. Dave McGary hails from a family ranch in Cody, Wyoming. He was awarded a grant to study the bronze-making process in Italy, where he worked with master craftsmen under the tutelage of famed American sculptor Harry Jackson. Returning to the United States in 1978, he spent three years working at the Shidoni Foundation near Santa Fe. After meeting Gerald Red Elk, historian for the Sioux tribe, McGary spent a year with the Sioux in Little Eagle, SD. Living among Native Americans and absorbing their culture "changed my whole life" related McGary. One of the highlights of McGary's career is the commission he received from the city of Santa Fe to depict Don Pedro de Peralta, that city's founder for a monumental sculpture. In the summer of 1993, McGary's work was exhibited in a one-man show at the Russell Senate Rotunda in Washington, D.C. The following year, he was the only American artist chosen to participate in the United Nations Environment Program's exhibit "Art and Earth — A Dialogue with Nature." In 1999, Dave's work of Chief Washakie was selected by the state of Wyoming to represent it in the Sculpture Gallery of the United States Capitol Building.
6. The Lincoln County Heritage Trust was originally a group of historically preservation-minded artists, writers, and businessmen. For almost twenty years most of the Trust's funding was provided by Roswell oilman Robert O. Anderson.

# Reminiscence:

## Lorenzo Quintero: Candyman, Poet, and Writer

by Alfonso Guzman

**T**ax records at the Dona Ana County Courthouse indicate that Lorenzo Quintero and his wife Maria Zebredo de Quintero, purchased two vacant lots, located in the 400 block of East Organ Avenue, across the street from Klein Park, on January 8, 1905 from Victor Sarabia and his wife, Camila de Sarabia. The purchase was duly recorded on February 16, 1906.

The new property owners were no strangers to Las Cruces. Lorenzo and his candy cart were a familiar sight in front of the Rio Grande Theatre and Mr. Williams' silent movie theatre, half a block north of Hotel Roualt (later, the Herndon Hotel). Lorenzo's delicious Mexican bonbons, made in his own kitchen, carried on the tradition of the *dulceros* (candyman) so often seen in Juarez. Lorenzo's unfortunate nickname, "Toot Toot" was, however, all his own. One of his legs had an impediment which caused him to limp and drag his foot on the sidewalk. The wheels of his candy cart squeaked agonizingly, for lack of grease, reminding the passerby of the sound of a freight train screeching to a halt. So Lorenzo was re-christened by some, especially teenaged rascals, "Toot Toot." He was offended by such derision; sometimes he would wave his arm furiously at the name-callers. But being the gentleman that he was, he never gave further challenge; the appellation was not meaningful enough for him to lose his composure or his livelihood.

Besides selling candy, I am told by the few remaining neighbors that knew and remembered him, Lorenzo was also a gifted poet in his own right. He could recite amorous poems from memory or give an impromptu poem upon request. Often when someone bought candy, a request for recitation was made and happily granted, as part of the transaction. Or Lorenzo might just offer, "*Le voy a recitar un versito*" (I am going to recite a little verse for you). Then, like a Shakespearean actor on a stage, he would recite flawlessly, in rhythmic fashion and often in colorful inflection, accompanied by the gestures of his unimpaired arm.

His talented qualification as a poet was known throughout the east side of town. Three close contemporaries have told me how Lorenzo's talent as the East Side Bard was sought by many suitors; for a small fee Lorenzo would gladly pen a love poem for a

fair *senorita*. At this time no greeting cards or valentines in Spanish were readily available. Lorenzo's skill with words served further the cause of courtship; after proposing matrimony, a young man would seek Lorenzo's talent at handwritten letters to address the *finneece's* parents impressively.

The year of Lorenzo Quintero's death is not remembered surely, even by those remaining few fortunate enough to have known the talented pauper; the year, and even the decade of his passing, still stirs debate. He is, however, buried in the San Jose cemetery.

One dark evening after his death, the widow Maria Quintero was abducted from her humble abode, her *jacalito*, by some hoodlums she did not know. Surely, they must have thought, such a well-known poet, writer, and candyman must have left his widow a potful of money. Whether as a foolish prank or an overconfident assumption, they drove her to the bank of the Rio Grande. There they threatened her with bodily harm if she did not give them her riches. But finally they believed her vehement denials of any money pot, acceded to her pleas for mercy, and returned the petite widow to her home. I have been assured that she did, in fact, have no money, despite a marital lifetime of hard work and many struggles. Oddly enough, however, she never reported the abduction to the authorities.

In the mid-1930s, her sister Celsa Gallegos, who resided in Canutillo, was told of Maria's plight. Celsa came to Las Cruces and took Maria to Texas. Thus did the Quinteros' long ordeal of economic struggle compounded by the hurtful scorn of so many come to an end. The "Bard of the East Side," who sometimes tossed blossoms from his candy cart to pretty young ladies passing by for the simple pleasure of it, is today remembered by few, if any, contemporaries. His faithful wife is even more shadowy. Yet the thread of their life, matching that of many other Southern New Mexicans, is stitched into the cloth of time, and should not be unraveled.

ALFONSO P. GUZMAN'S most recent contribution was "Behold the Tubeless Tire," to *SHMHR*, Vol. V, January, 1998.

# Oñate's Converso Colonists

by Frances Hernández

*Editor's Note: In the Pioneer Park area of Las Cruces, the Knight, Bronson, and Nusbaum houses offer examples of the Drs. Hernández' hobby: restoring old adobe homes to provide low-cost housing for families appreciative of the historic, as well as the economic, value of these residences. Frances and John lived in the Stern house for over twenty-five years. In their living, as in Frances' 40 years of teaching, New Mexico history has always been a fundamental interest. Two years ago, Dr. Hernández addressed our Society on the topic of the Sephardic Jews who came to New Mexico as conversos; she subsequently turned that talk into this article, a few months before her untimely death, March 27, 1999*

When Don Juan de (Mate and his companions reached the banks of the Rio Grande for their “first Thanksgiving,” near the Paso del Norte in July of 1598, they must have offered up a silent prayer of gratitude that they had successfully put so many dry, dusty, inhospitable miles between their expedition and the Inquisition in Mexico City. Why a silent prayer, rather than celebratory shouts?

To have offered such a prayer aloud might have violated the injunction by Jesus against any public prayer, even in the synagogue, as hypocrisy. But Oñate's secrecy would have had a different cause. Like most of the *conquistadores*, he was essentially illiterate in things both temporal and spiritual. He would not have read Matthew, in the New Testament, or any of the other sacred scriptures he was sworn to defend. Literacy held no appeal; reading anything, but especially the Bible, was in fact high on the list of suspicious behavior that the Inquisitors demanded be reported to them by the faithful. Nor could he mention the Holy Office in prayer, or otherwise, because all references to the secret society were forbidden.

Privacy, even secrecy, had personal cause as well. “New Christian” was the term of the times for one who had changed religious affiliation to Christianity; the Inquisitors expended much energy to ferreting out any possible insincerity. The records show their seemingly particular concentration on the *conversos* (the common term for Jews who converted, under duress or otherwise). Association with such miscreants was deemed culpable as well. Oñate knew very well that he was personally threatened because his own brother, Diego, was on the list to be investigated for Judaic sympathies.

In addition, four of his entourage — Juan, Miguel, and Antonio Rodríguez and Francisco Hernández — who had been hiding out from the constables of the Inquisition until Oñate's departure, had been burned in effigy two years earlier. Another man had not been lucky enough to escape with them; Sebastian Rodríguez was captured by the officials before they left. Others on Oñate's roster of both soldiers and farmers believed that they had been denounced. Everyone realized that

an arrest was tantamount to a conviction; no one was ever acquitted from a charge lodged by the Inquisition, no matter how shaky the source or unproven the claim. Detention always began with the confiscation of all goods and property, as the Franciscan and Dominican monks who had organized the institution with King Fernando's enthusiastic approval were not shy about its major purpose — to refill the royal exchequer (after its draining by the Moorish wars) with equal enrichment for the religious orders.

Juan de Oñate was a powerful, influential Spanish grandee. He had been named *adelantado* (governor) of a vast area in Northern New Mexico, which he was expected to conquer. No doubt the viceroy of New Spain, Gaspar de Zúñiga y Acevedo, regarded him as qualified for this mission by his wealth, since it was assumed that he himself would equip his followers. His charge was to subdue a vast area that would later comprise the counties of Rio Arriba, Taos, San Juan, Mora, San Miguel, and Bernalillo. He was to establish a capital for the province, complete with a military garrison and government facilities, all supported by surrounding Iberian farmers and traders (the companions on his expedition), using the native Indian labor.

Yet despite his riches, good birth, and high-placed influence, Oñate knew that he was not invulnerable. Just a few years before, one of his counterparts, the able and accomplished Governor Luis de Carvajal, successful *adelantado* of the huge province of Nuevo León in Eastern Mexico, had died a captive in an Inquisitorial prison. Although he was of New Christian ancestry, Carvajal himself was never accused of practicing Judaism. The crime for which he gave his life in agonizing circumstances was his failure to denounce several relatives and employees as secret Jews. Carvajal had been pursued and harassed toward this end by the viceroy at that time, Lorenzo Suarez de Mendoza, who was savagely vindictive against the governor about disputes they had had over the profits from certain land areas that they both claimed to govern. Oñate's prayer of thanksgiving would have indicated that he dreaded the Inquisition as much as did his lowlier travel companions.

When Ofiate received his mandate to organize an expedition in 1595, he met with no enthusiasm from prospective settlers or guardsmen. In spite of his increasing offers of double wages, promotions in rank, and large *encomiendas* (grants from the Spanish crown of Indian labor) carrying the right to force the Pueblo Indians to toil on the land thus encompassed, there was little response. Prospective settlers had heard about the terrifying raids of Comanches and Cites, the bitter blizzards and extended droughts of the high country, the sullen resentment of the Indian natives, the limited arable land in the mountains, and the sparseness of the European population in the area. Nothing they had heard sounded like *El Dorado* (promised land) to them.

But after December 8, 1596, there was a sudden change of heart. Ofiate's roster soon filled with 135 eager applicants, including soldiers and farmers with families. On that December day, there had been a great *Auto de Fe* in the *Plaza Mayor* of Mexico City, which every human being from babes in arms to the Viceroy himself was required to witness. The observance began before dawn with masses in the churches and ended long after dark at the burning field. The reading of sentences for those convicted took several hours; a few escaped with terms of rowing in the galleys, lashes and exile. Sixty-eight figures, including two effigies containing the bones of men dug from their graves and 10 stuffed dummies representing those who had escaped arrest, were marched in their green *sambenitos* (small capes associated with rites of penance) to the stakes which awaited them. The odor of the incinerated flesh of men, women, and children filled the night.

Several weeks of 1597 were consumed before Ofiate could collect and organize his forces for the long march northward toward Chihuahua. Along the way, they attracted numerous other travelers who sought the protection of the armed procession heading away from the city via distant settlements. When they finally reached El Paso in April of the next year, there were almost 500 newcomers. Most of these, however, did not proceed onward with Ofiate's group. Many had had enough of desert travel; most had heard ominous stories of the *Jornada del Muerto* (journey of the dead, a phrase applied to a particularly waterless stretch of land in what is now Southern New Mexico), the great distances between inhabited locations, and the lack of welcome by the much-abused Indians in the villages along the route. In addition, they knew about an earlier, ill-fated expedition that had followed a more easterly route north in 1590. This attempt had been led by Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, the lieutenant of the unfortunate Governor Carvajal already apprehended by the Inquisition at that time. Castaño de Sosa's departure had been illegal, lacking notification of, or permission from, the authorities. He led his group of 170 folk out of the New Kingdom of Nuevo León toward the Rio Grande and up its tributary, the Pecos, seeking a safe location for them to settle.

As with Ofiate's followers most of the families who left were already listed for investigation by the Holy Office: the Rodríguezes, Nietos, Díazes, Carvajals, Hernándezes, Pórezes. This expedition did not reach its destination intact.

Oñate's expedition had better luck. Weary and bedraggled, they continued north along the Rio Grande to its confluence with a major tributary, the Chama. There they came upon a somewhat prosperous pueblo that called itself Okeh, with the related village of Yuquegunque on the other side of the river. Because of the abundance of water in the two streams and the fertile fields of the natives, the Spaniards decided that here was the appropriate place to found their new capital, which they called San Gabriel. They renamed the largest Indian settlement San Juan de los Caballeros, as it is called today. By August Oñate had begun the construction of a large irrigation system, on which he forced 1500 Pueblo inhabitants to work.

San Juan Pueblo has survived well in the intervening four centuries, with new houses now crowning the town site; San Gabriel has disappeared. An archaeological team from the University of New Mexico has unearthed the foundations of a few buildings on the site; the spot is indicated only by the erection of a sign, half a century ago, by one Samuel Harris Wells, a trader at San Juan Pueblo. On a high slope between the Chama and the Rio Grande, his marker states: SAN GABRIEL, FIRST CAPITAL OF NEW MEXICO.

#### Four Hundred Years of Settlement

In the intervening centuries San Juan Pueblo has absorbed the few outlying Indian settlements around it, and Hispanic farmers from the nearby village of Chamita till the fields that were once occupied by San Gabriel. Oñate's colonists gradually moved higher into the mountains, seeking more arable land for their expanding families and even more distance from Spanish officialdom. But they are still in Oñate's domain. An examination of the voter rolls and county assessor's property tax records reveals the same names that were on the conquistador's roster, such as Cáceres, Castro, Carrasco, Durán, Espinosa, Fernández or Hernández, Herrera, Ledesma, León, López, Morales, Pérez, Ramírez, Rivera, Robledo, Rodríguez, Romero, Sánchez, and Varela. In the following decades, as the news of their safe arrival and promising isolation filtered south, a few more settlers found their way up the Rio Grande to join their relatives and connections. During the early 17th century the population of Spanish colonists increased to about 3000 in a vast area that now comprises about one-third of the state. Very few clergy were assigned to Northern New Mexico. Government administrative centers were few and far between in a land, it was soon realized, that had little to yield in the form of profits.

Political realities supplemented geography in providing the isolation sought by *converso* families. The can-

you of Coyote Creek in Mora County, some 30 miles north of the current county seat, offers an example. This steep ravine is guarded for at least 12 miles by towering stone escarpments on both sides, perpendicular on the east and very slightly inclined on the west. Until a few years ago when the establishment of the Angel Fire ski resort demanded a passable road north to the tiny village of Guadalupita and beyond, there was no entrance to the canyon except by a rough stone track hacked out of the west wall. Now there is a road approach from Guadalupita. But still no electricity nor television signals can penetrate the depths of the narrow valley where the Cocas, Medinas, and Espinosas have lived since the 17th century.

In time, the conversos moved into settlements along the rivers for mutual protection and more trading opportunity, as almost all business was done by barter. They bred the drought-resistant *churro* sheep and horses that they had brought with them from Spain; cultivated the tomatoes, chile, and tobacco they had acquired in Mexico; and learned to plant winter wheat in order to extend the high-altitude growing season. They also sold some of the hides and piñón nuts that priests and *encomenderos* (holders of Spanish royal authority to force labor) were compelling the Pueblo Indians to collect. On the Chama River they settled at Santa Rosa de Lima de Abiquiu, where *el día de Ester* (Purim, the Jewish holiday celebrating Esther's triumph of wits over the wily, evil Haman) is still observed. They settled along the Rio Grande on the Godoi Grant above Taos, down through Peña Blanca, the Atrisco Grant (now completely surrounded by south Albuquerque), Los Chaves, Tome and Sabina!. On the Pecos River, Villanueva and Anton Chico were among their destinations.

As mostly subsistence farmers, the *converso* descendants were not much involved in the events of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which was primarily directed against the priests, estate owners, and mine operators who had enslaved their Indian workers. Many historians credit the collapse of the Chalhchihuitl turquoise mine in that year, killing a number of captive miners, along with months of drought and famine, as being the last straw that triggered the uprising of the oppressed indigenous people. Indeed, although Indians and Europeans categorically regarded each other with suspicion, the *conversos* and the Pueblos had developed working relationships during the 17th century. They maintained the *acequia* (irrigation ditch) systems together, traded domestic animals for unfamiliar medicinal herbs and vegetables, and organized security forces against the marauding Plains Indians. After the Pueblo Revolt, when Governor Otermin and his government contingent decided to retreat toward Isleta Pueblo and on south, the Indians encouraged their departure by diverting the Santa Fe River out of its course for almost three days. Amicable and essential as *converso* and Pueblo cooperation was, there was practically no genetic exchange between the two groups. Through the

generations, the *converso* descendants took great care to keep their bloodlines intact, as well as secret.

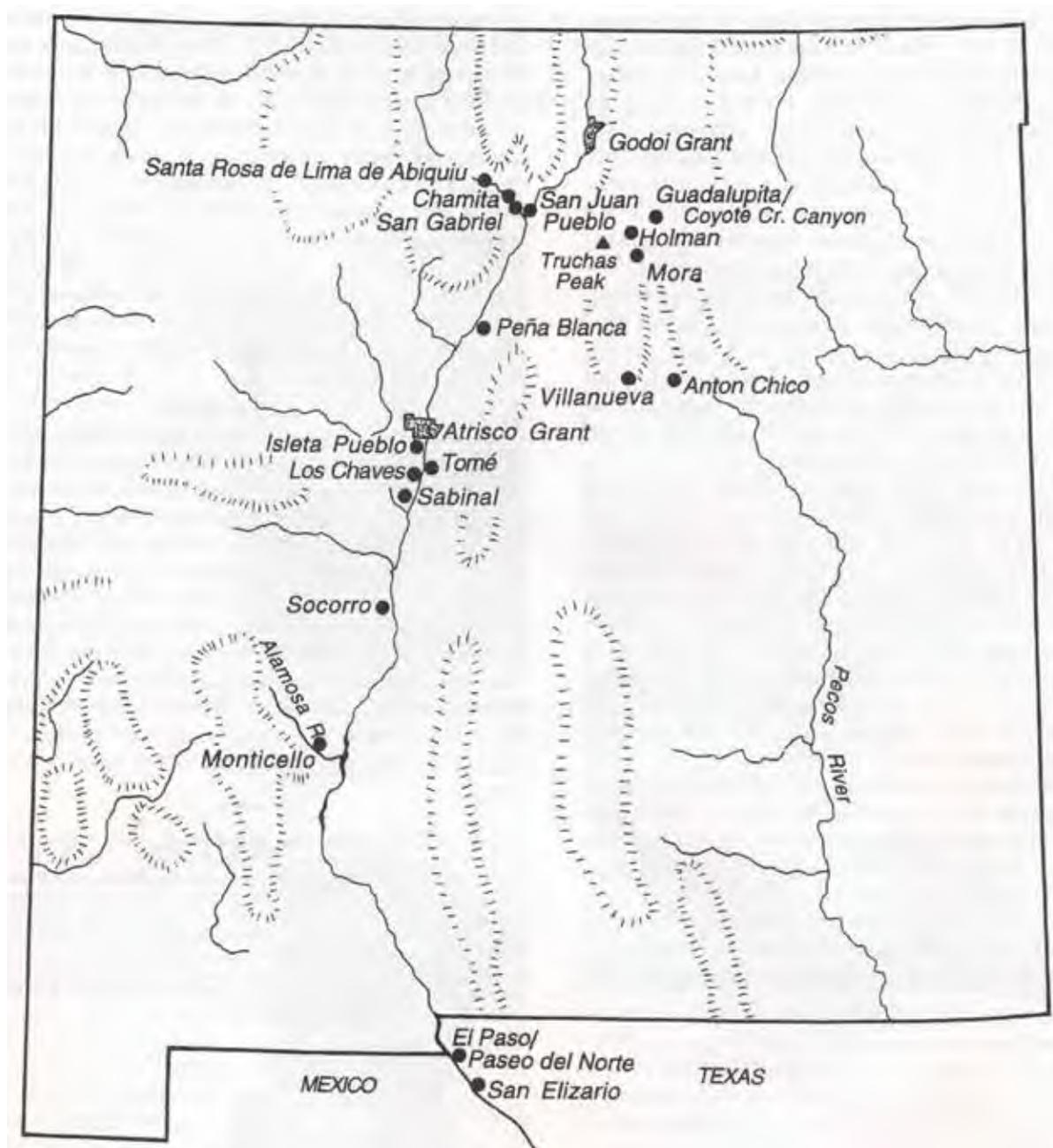
### The Secret Faith

Through 14 to 16 generations the secret Spanish Jews have endured in the general area where Oñate led them. It is probable that the vast majority no longer have any comprehension of their religious origin, even though they preserve vestiges of Judaic practices and attitudes. There are family stories about hasty burials at night without wake or coffin; grandmothers who lit candles on Friday evenings, even at the bottom of deep jars; about secret underground rooms, where nothing appeared to be stored; of grandfathers who brought home from some strange kitchen braided loaves of bread for the weekend; of old men arguing about the perfect sharpness of knives to be used in the slaughter of animals; of the elderly nun at Loretto Convent in Santa Fe who prayed for a day and a night, in solitude, every year in late September; of songs in an unfamiliar language emanating from the confines of a *Penitente morada* (a meeting place of a fraternity whose members demonstrated their piety by self-flagellation); of gravestones all facing east and bearing no Christian symbols; of the custom of turning a picture of Jesus to the wall when the family sat down for its Friday- night meal.

Some families, such as the Carrascos of the Atrisco Grant, have always known their heritage. Dennis Durán, who has researched his Spanish ancestry and who is now a Los Alamos scientist, reported that when he reached adulthood, his mother gave him a list of families in the Santa Fe area into which he could permissibly marry.

As illustration of the varying degrees of understanding, Emilio Coca, whose ancestors left the Coca enclave in Coyote Canyon to seek work in Taos several generations ago, says he always knew his background. When he met a young woman named Trudy Rattner, who had come out from New York City to Santa Fe in the course of her employment during World War II, he sought a date with her, but was refused. She explained that she was Jewish and encouraged only men of her faith. With photographs of his grandmother wearing a Star of David at her throat and with his recitation of some Hebrew prayers, Emilio finally convinced Trudy that he did indeed qualify as Jewish. Still, he was a *Sephardic* (originally, Spanish-speaking) Jew and she an *Ashkenazic* (German-speaking) Jew. This "mixed" marriage has endured for nearly 50 years.

Probably during the 17th century, according to records of *repartimiento de agua* (allotments of water), the Medina family emerged from Coyote Canyon; they sought broader pasturage on the eastern slopes of Truchas Peak, in settlements now called Holoman and Cleveland. Isabel Medina Sandoval, of the contemporary generation, says that she was not specifically told that the family was Jewish, but eventually deduced it from certain acts and attitudes. The family raised pigs to sell



Converso family distribution according to Hernández. Map by Linda P. Hart.

in the local markets, but never consumed any pork themselves. Isabel's grandfather boasted that he had read the complete Bible twice, at a time when the priests were still forbidding unsupervised perusal of the scriptures. Around 1930 the family, with their Bleya and Hurtado relatives, built a small chapel in the direction of the county seat at Mora; no clergyman ever conducted regular services there. In adulthood, Isabel, digging near the ground level of the old building, discovered a *menorah* (Jewish ritual candelabrum) deeply incised into the adobe wall.

She, along with Dennis Durán and a few other well-educated *comers()* descendants who left their villages to seek employment in the wider world, have entered into the complicated procedures to return to Judaism.

Even within families the phenomenon of secrecy has applied. One enclave of relatives on the south side of the Pecos River as it runs through San Miguel County near Villanueva is certain that they have always been Roman Catholics, but they point out that their cousins across the river are Jews. In another case, in the late 19th century a

group of *converso* families from the Socorro area moved south to San Elizario, Texas, to take advantage of crop lands being offered for homesteading. One descendant of that group, Bertha Cobos Muske, knew that her father left on Saturday mornings for “meetings” with a few older men, but she never heard of a *minyán* (10 men, the traditional pre-requisite for conducting a Jewish worship service). As her mother grew older, she became more insistent about certain unexplained customs: earnest inspection of all grocery bags entering the house, for possible pork or shellfish products; demands that all family members wash hands before eating, even though they had just come from the shower; careful separation of milk and meat items on shelves. Finally Bertha confronted her mother with the question of whether the older woman thought they were Jews. The answer: “*Tu tia dice que sí*” (your aunt says so). End of discussion.

In another case, John Sullivan, whose Irish name derives from two Union soldiers who arrived in New Mexico during the Civil War, was born and raised in the canyon-bottom village of Monticello, on the Alamosa River west of Elephant Butte Dam. His Irish ancestors had married two women from the populous, pervasive old *converso* clan, the Montoya -Tafoyas. Not told of his Judaic roots, young John and his siblings were sent some distance to attend a non-Catholic school in Hillsboro. On his deathbed, the older Sullivan told his son that the family members were *marranos* (literally, swine), a term not heard in the *converso* community of New Mexico, since it is a pejorative word used only by faithful Jews about those who have converted, even under duress. Sullivan did not learn what the slur meant until after he had gone into military service and married a *Sephardic* woman; he began to notice that certain customs she adhered to were familiar, such as the requirement that a woman who has given birth be provided rest and seclusion for 40 days afterward.

Juan Climaco Montoya, also of that extensive Montoya-Tafoya clan, was born and raised near Socorro. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and died in 1993, at the age of 75, in the Veterans’ Hospital in Albuquerque. He had applied for a government-issue gravestone, to be inscribed as is usual with his name, dates, service connection, and religious symbol. So it is that in the tiny Masonic cemetery at Socorro, which is surrounded by the much larger Catholic *campo santo* (burial ground), his is the only marker bearing the Star of David. Over the centuries of intimidation, exclusion, and secrecy, here is one Montoya — one *converso* descendant — who preserved his ancient Spanish heritage for the public to note.

### A Last Word

Oñate’s *conversos* traveled far, in terms both geographical and psychological. From Mexico City to the far reaches of Northern New Mexico they moved, first to save their lives from the Inquisition and its fires, then to eke out subsistence from an arid land, its very isolation offering safety. Gradually they dispersed from their center, geographically a little way eastward and westward and south, but still far from the enemy; psychologically one family to another, but still separate from the natives and the other Europeans in the bloodline and in the spirit. Secret compounded secret in the society they originally fled; they carried that outlook, as well as their secrets with them. The *anusim* (forced ones) have long memories.

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Dr. Hernández spent the last 30 years of her teaching career on the faculty of the Department of English at the University of Texas, El Paso. She rose to the rank of full professor, and retired as appointed emerita professor in 1997. Two of her translations are *The Catalan Chronicle of Francisco de Moncada* (1975) and *Only the Wind, Legends of the Onas of Tierra del Fuego* (1979). Her translation of the Mexican classic, *The Carvajal Family: the Jews and the Inquisition of New Spain* is illustrative of her interest in the Sephardic Jews who came to the Southwest as *conversos*, with the *conquistadores*; she was recognized as a national authority. In 1989, the College English Society gave her their Distinguished Service to the Profession Award.

# DOÑA ANA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Memorial

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### Opal Lee Priestley

Opal Lee Priestley was the ninth Dona Ana County Historical Society President, serving from March 6, 1979 to April 23, 1981.

Mrs. Priestley, during a writing and teaching career spanning more than 50 years in Dona Ana County, created some 1,000 books, short stories, and articles.

She came to Las Cruces in 1947 with her husband, Orville E. Priestly and her sons Joe and Gene, after her husband's purchase of the Las Cruces



Sun-News.

Mrs. Priestley began as a newspaper writer, but she branched into fiction writing and published her first novel, "Murder Takes a Bath," in 1952. Two non-fiction books that she authored were *Shalam: Utopia on the Rio Grande, 1881-1907* and *Journeys of Faith*.

Opal Lee was very active in her community: Branigan Library Board, PEO Sisterhood, Wednesday Literary Club, St. Paul's Methodist Church, New Mexico Press Association, Delta Gamma Alpha, and many other organizations. She championed children's causes and was the recipient of countless awards and honors from schools, county, city and state governments and all manner of associations attesting to her contributions to humanity.

Opal Lee Priestley died August 3, 1999. Survivors include longtime companion and collaborator, Daniel Newton Jones of Las Cruces, sons Joe and Gene, daughters-in-law, nieces and nephews, grandsons, granddaughters, and 10 great-grandchildren.

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### Jerri Spoekel

Jerri Spoekel was a woman equally at home free-lance writing at her computer or writing supportive checks to a myriad of good works, greeting and cajoling dignitaries or making nursing home residents, signing her letters and living her days "with joy."

She was born March 13, 1932, in Oak Park, IL, to Dr. George Alexander Hoskins and Dr. Myrtle Jean McBean Hoskins. She was a graduate of Wooster College, Ohio. Employment in the Los Angeles area, her longtime home, included KCSN public radio, as Community Relations/Development/Volunteer Coordinator; and the Volunteer Center of which she was Executive Director.

In New Mexico, where history means just yesterday, and tradition anchors tomorrow, the woman who makes a difference by playing an active role in community im-



provements has been, and remains, a familiar and staple character in our story. When Jerri came to Las Cruces in 1990, she made her home within that tradition. Leadership Las Cruces, American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, Toastmasters, Mesilla Valley Band, Las Cruces Community Theatre, Southern New Mexico Press Club, Friends of the Branigan Library, the Branigan Cultural Center, Hispano Chamber de las Cruces, and the Dona Ana County Historical Society were all improved by her contributions of heart and talents.

Her writings appeared in an array of publications: *Los Angeles Daily News*, *Las Cruces Sun News*, *Las Cruces Bulletin*, *Voz de Valle*, *Sun Country Living*, *Southern New Mexico Magazine*, *Desert Exposure*, *New Mexico Woman Magazine*, to name some. *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, DACHS's annual publication, especially benefited from Jerri's contributions of book reviews, articles, and sponsorship. The title of her monthly feature in *Moxie* was "You Can Help," and that was her principal theme: people helping people.

Jerri died July 9, 1999. She is survived by her husband of 44 years, Edwin Spoekel; son, Ronald Spoekel and wife Deborah; daughter, Jacqueline Spoekel; sister-in-law, Violet Halter; and grandchildren, Elizabeth and James Henry.

## George L. McNew

George L. McNew, a distinguished alumnus of NMSU and distinguished adjunct professor of plant pathology at NMSU from 1978 to 1987, died Oct. 30, 1998. A residence hall at NMSU is named in his honor.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from NMSU in 1930. His M.S. and Ph.D. degrees were earned at Iowa State University in 1931 and 1935. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from NMSU in 1954 and the Alumni Achievement Award from Iowa State University in 1958.



He was the author of 155 articles on plant diseases and related topics.

His professional career took him to Rockefeller University, Cornell University, Iowa State University, and NMSU. From 1949 to 1974 he was the managing director of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, which became affiliated with Cornell University in 1974.

He was born in Alamogordo, NM on August 22, 1908, the youngest son of Nettie and Bill McNew, a well-known ranching family. In addition to his professional writings, he is the author of *Last Frontier West*, a colorful historical account of his family background. His grandparents homesteaded in the Cloudcroft area. His father was a rancher and cowboy who rode with George's uncle, Oliver Lee. Bill McNew was jailed, but never tried, following the disappearance of Col. Albert Fountain and his young son, a mystery that has never been solved.

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## Camelia Albon Lewis

Camelia Albon Lewis was the second child of the well-known missionary, "Preacher," and Edith Lewis of Mesilla Park. Abby graduated valedictorian from Las Cruces Union High School in 1928 and completed junior college at Gunston Hall, Washington D.C. before taking her B.A. from NMSU in 1932.

Lewis, a Zeta, held a lively interest in the little theater *Patio Players of Las Cruces* and was the first president of the *Yucca Players* (the college dramatic club) before launching her life-long career with Windsor



P. Daggett, the Roy Blas Company and the nationally recognized Walter Hampton Company of New York in 1933.

Lewis made her Broadway debut in Hampden's production of *Hamlet* at the 44th Street Theatre. Her other Broadway credits include *Macbeth*, *The Willow and I*, *The Chase*, *A Fig Leaf in Her Bonnet*, and *We Interrupt This Program*. She was also the veteran of more than 400 radio programs, and her films include *Patterns*, *The Miracle Worker*, *Dr. Cook's Garden* (with Bing Crosby) and a current IMAX feature, *Across the Sea of Time*.

Still working at age 87, Lewis participated in a television skit for *Late Night with Conan O'Brian* two nights in 1997, having just completed episodes of *Another World* and *Law and Order*.

Abby, an ardent supporter of New Mexico State University, was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award in 1964. She was married to actor John D. Seymour from 1951 until his death in 1986.

## Book Reviews

**William H. Emory, *Soldier-Scientist*** by L. David Norris, James C. Milligan, and Odie B. Faulk. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998. 354 pp., notes, maps, bibliography, index. \$29.95, hardcover.

This valuable book fills a long-felt need in the history of the United States Army and the 19th-century West, especially the Mexican borderlands. Authoritative, readable, and comprehensive as to Emory's military and scientific service, it will be welcomed on the shelves of historians of New Mexico and many broader fields. Southern New Mexicans, especially, when they drive the exhilarating mountain road between Hillsboro and Silver City, may appreciate the significance of Emory's name being attached to the high pass one must cross: he did it the hard way, in 1846.

Born in Maryland in 1811 and a graduate of West Point, he retired as a brigadier general in 1876 and was laid to rest in 1887. The leading features of his career can only be mentioned here: an original member of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, he produced a "superb" map of Texas before being assigned to Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West, which he accompanied to New Mexico and (with its remnant) on to the Pacific. Involved in a controversy chiefly involving Kearny and John C. Fremont in California, his court-martial testimony helped the former and earned him the bitter enmity of Senator Thomas Hart Benton, among others. Chapters 3 to 5, pages 65-172, cover Emory's extremely arduous and important service with commissions surveying and marking the Mexican-American border under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase. Several ante-bellum years were required to complete preparation of his truly monumental report, involving original botanical, geological, ethnographical and other scientific data, drawings, etc.

Commanding the 2d US Cavalry in Indian Territory when the South seceded, he suffered only momentary doubt before committing his service wholeheartedly to the Union. He then contributed importantly to preserving Kansas and Missouri for the North, and distinguished himself winning several brevet promotions in action around Richmond, under Phil Sheridan in the Valley of Virginia, at New Orleans, and in the Red River campaign. During Reconstruction he was given the difficult, really miserable, command of the military force supposed to preserve order in Louisiana, especially in New Orleans. Momentarily under a cloud in this political crisis, in spite of his honest, strenuous efforts to follow instructions from Washington, Emory was nevertheless given a final topnotch army assignment and promotion by President U.S. Grant before he retired.

Obviously, one can learn a lot of American history in following the career of this distinguished soldier-scientist, including the excellent background explanations and

fascinating details found in this book. One learns very little indeed, however, about him as a person, much less about his family. Study of the copious citations shows dependence by the authors on United States published sources. The only archival collection used was Emory's own papers. From the critical scholarly viewpoint, thus, this biography is interesting, but limited. It is marred further by many small lapses reflecting hurried writing and less than perfect editorial attention.

John Porter Bloom  
Las Cruces, NM

**Adios Nuevo Mexico: The Santa Fe Journal of John Watts in 1859** transcribed, edited and annotated by David Remley. Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1999. 238 pp., endnotes, index. \$24.95, hardcover.

Author David Remley has laboriously transcribed and edited a journal written over an 8-month period by 19-year-old John Watts who resided briefly in Santa Fe, New Mexico Territory in 1859. The journal, found in the Waldron Building in Bloomington, Indiana, "amidst the pieces of old furniture, broken chairs and dead pigeons", provides readers with a day by day account of life in territorial capital, Santa Fe, from the perceptions of a young man sent there for health reasons. John's father, Judge John S. Watts, had served the region as judge and land grant lawyer prior to the Civil War and New Mexico delegate to the U.S. Congress during the war.

John's diary tells us that in spite of the perceived boredom of a teen-aged boy, life in rough and tough Santa Fe in the mid-19th century was certainly not dull. Several conclusions can be drawn from his daily entries. First of all, it is clear that the population of the territory was quite sparse and everyone knew one another. Some of western history's most prominent and notorious people lived in or visited Santa Fe during that time, and John casually mentions knowing them. There was close contact with men like Governor Abraham Rencher, Kit Carson and Civil War General E.R.S. Canby.

John's days were filled with leisure-time activities, like billiards at the "Fonda" (the site of present-day La Fonda Hotel) gambling, attending dances (*bailes*), dining at the homes of friends, hunting, horseback riding, and reading. He dutifully studied Spanish, French, history, and recited on each almost daily. (His French teacher was Governor Rencher!) Music filled his life, too, as he not only played several instruments, but attended sing-a-longs at friends' homes.

Other happy times for John included visits to the homes of daughters of prominent Santa Fe families, the most notable of which was the home of his Santa Fe romantic

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interest, and her sister, his brother Howe's intended. John and Howe lived together in Santa Fe, while their parents lived in Bloomington, Indiana. Their father made several round trips between Indiana and Santa Fe each year — looking in on business interests and providing the boys with financial support.

In spite of the “good life” experienced by John and other young men and women of means in Santa Fe during those pre-Civil War years, he still longed to return to Indiana, which he did in the fall of 1859. Graduating from Indiana University in 1861, John spent time with his father in Washington, D.C., rubbing shoulders with President Lincoln and his sons. In 1863-64 he was back in northern New Mexico, tending to a ranch belonging to his father, but, due to the hardships of ranching in the mid-19th century, moved back to Santa Fe to begin a career in banking.

Eventually marrying, he and his family settled in Wichita, and later Newton, Kansas, where he continued work in banking. John and his wife, Susan, are buried in Newton, but his journal and his New Mexico experiences live on in the pages of Remley's book.

*Adios, Nuevo Mexico* is enjoyable reading for present-day New Mexicans or Western history enthusiasts. Even the chapter backnotes are interesting. Although some entries from his log become repetitious, much can be learned about territorial New Mexico from the daily comments of a young man who would probably be quite surprised that his writings have become so historically valuable.

Donna Eichstaedt  
Las Cruces, NM

**F***ort Stanton and Its Community* by John P. Ryan. Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1998. 176 pp. \$25.00, paper.

As stated by the author, Fort Stanton was one of a string of Army posts established in New Mexico and Arizona territories as a defense against Indian attacks. Fort Stanton was named after Captain Henry W. Stanton, stationed at Fort Fillmore near Las Cruces and killed in January 1855 in a fight with Mescalero Indians. Fort Stanton was established in 1855 on the Rio Bonito, approximately twenty miles upstream from its junction with the Rio Ruidoso. The author states that there came to be a “symbiotic relationship” between this fort and the civilian community around it. Part of this was predicated on the purchase by Army authorities of food and provisions for the men and horses, and pay and salaries of civilian help and the soldiers involved. Of course, in the opinion of many historians and others, the defense against Indian attacks was part of the war of conquest for Indian lands.

Many important and interesting facts are brought out by the author. The number of casualties suffered by all concerned was astounding. This included, of course, the Indians, both warriors and families, and the soldiers and civilians. The hardships and suffering by the families of the

military seemed to be balanced by their spirit and optimism. They had many social events, including dances and musical entertainments. The involvement of Ft. Stanton and its commanders with the lawlessness of Lincoln county and the part played by the Governor of New Mexico were facts probably not well known. The “war” in Lincoln was also covered including information about Murphy, McSween, Chisum, Tunstall and even William H. Bonney (Billy the Kid). One fact that was very interesting to an old Army veteran was that on transfer from one Army post to another an officer had to move his own household goods (or sell them) and also pay all of the expenses of the move.

Fort Stanton was virtually abandoned during the Civil War and the fort itself was burned and heavily damaged before it was reconstituted after the Civil War. At one time, Lt. John Pershing was stationed at Fort Stanton early in his career and the book contains an interesting copy of a photo autographed by Lt. Pershing.

This book is very well documented, the writing, is excellent and in the opinion of the reviewer it is a significant addition to New Mexico history. Fort Stanton was closed by the Army in 1896 and became a federal hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis. In 1899 it was made available for the United States Merchant Marine and in 1996 the State of New Mexico converted it to a minimum security facility for women.

Martin J. Gemoets  
Las Cruces, NM

**T***he West of Billy the Kid* by Frederick Nolan. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 350 pp., illus., maps, index, biblio., notes. \$39.95, hardcover.

The Lincoln County War has intrigued people since the 1880s. It was the more violent portion of continuing disagreements and violence in Lincoln County which began in the 1870s and continued well beyond the death of Billy the Kid. The “war” itself covered only a short portion of time — 1878-1881 — the period during which the Kid was involved. Yet the disputes over land, military contracts, cattle, horses, mercantile business, and wills are the real story of the frontier in central New Mexico. Bonney, the Kid, is really a small part of the story.

But it is Henry McCarty, alias William H. Bonney, alias Billy the Kid, who has entranced historians, both buffs and professionals. Nolan's book is one more in the constantly growing list of books to discuss the Kid and Lincoln County.

Nolan has written a different book, however, for he presents the story, not only of the Kid, but also of the people and the country where the **Kid** lived over the years. Nolan's greatest contribution is material on the early life of McCarty. Documentation on his birthplace, his growing-up years, his time in Santa Fe and Silver City, and his movement toward Lincoln is excellent. Nolan shows how previous authors have been wrong and proves that *McCarty*

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was not born in New York City. In fact, Nolan's documentation throughout the book is extensive and detailed.

All of the players in the violence are given biographies and often photographs. No question — Nolan has done a stupendous job of ferreting out all possible sources for written and pictorial material. For that reason alone, this is a valuable book. In addition, the information on Lincoln County and the players in the War adds to a greater understanding of the conflicts.

Like all histories of the Kid and the Lincoln County War, however, this book also lacks the final word. Probably Nolan has most of the answers about what happened and why. But since he doesn't cite either Robert M. Utley's *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life* or John P. Wilson's *Merchants, Guns & Money: The Story of Lincoln County and Its Wars* in the text or bibliography, the reader is left wondering if he agrees or disagrees with those two authors, both authorities on that period in New Mexico history.

One unanswered question for this reviewer: why did Henry McCarty choose to use the alias William H. Bonney?

Overall, this is a fine addition to the literature on Billy the Kid, the Lincoln County War, and New Mexico history.

Jo Tice Bloom  
Las Cruces, NM

**J. B. 'Billy' Mathews: Biography of a Lincoln County Deputy** by Elvis E. Fleming. Las Cruces, NM: Yucca Tree Press, 1999. 102 pp., facsimiles, photos, maps. \$14.95, hardcover.

Anyone who has read about New Mexico's Lincoln County War of the late 1870s knows how confusing the events and cast of characters can be. Elvis Fleming has done excellent work in summarizing the major events of the war. The book shows careful research to correct inaccuracies in previously published material about Billy Mathews. The index and bibliography are useful features of this book.

The author has done a great job of defining the two factions — Murphy-Dolan and Tunstall-McSween and the "law" representing both sides. The reason for the Lincoln County War as quoted by the author on page 27 is "greed for wealth and power vs. greed for wealth and power." Some modern historians have judged the principal characters on both sides to be "more or less equally unrighteous." Jacob Basil 'Billy' Mathews performed a leading role in the Lincoln County War. He could be characterized as a person typical of the times — playing both sides of the law, as the situation required.

Facts about his early life are sketchy, but interesting. He was born in Tennessee in 1847. At age 16 he enlisted in the Civil War on the Union side. Reputedly his father and older brother had enlisted in the Civil War, but on the Confederate side. After the War Billy, as he was known then, moved to New Mexico, where he worked for an English mining company and then became involved in the cattle business. He began working for the MurphyDolan interests

in 1877. By 1878 he was appointed a deputy by Sheriff William Brady. In this position, Billy was able to play an involved role on the Murphy-Dolan side in the dispute with the Tunstall-McSween interests. His primary claim to fame is that he was Sheriff Brady's chief deputy in command of the posse that shot down John Henry Tunstall on February 18, 1878, which ignited the Lincoln County War, the most celebrated event in Lincoln County's history.

In 1883, Billy married Dora Matilda Bates and subsequently had three children. He became involved in the establishment of big time cattle ranching in the Peñasco Valley and farming in the Pecos Valley of Southeast New Mexico. In 1898 he was appointed postmaster of Roswell, New Mexico and served until his death in 1904.

That Billy Mathews participated in most of the violent activities of the Lincoln County War and lived to be an old man is unusual in itself. This book is an important one for anyone with a special interest in the Lincoln County War.

Carolyn S. O'Brien  
Mesilla, NM

**A dios Hachita** by George Hilliard. Silver City, NM: High Lonesome Books, 1998. 142 pp., black & white photos. \$12.95, paper.

Breathing a little life into the soul of any ghost town, or any town that is nearly abandoned, is at best a difficult task. Relative remoteness and lack of significant notoriety served only to enhance the difficulty of this author's effort. Using scant historical data and anecdotal information from present and former residents, Hilliard has woven a story of hard lives in a hard little town.

Hachita, despite having been relocated (from its original site near marginal mines) to hug the roadbed of the new El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, never achieved much either in size or significance. Hilliard records the rising and falling economic conditions of the town from the late 1800s through the Mexican border threats, both World Wars, and to nearly current times.

The swelling and dwindling of the population and economic base due to close-by military establishments was not unique to Hachita. Many small, and not-so-small, towns in the Southwest were subjected to similar conditions, including the related social problems. The massive temporary Mormon resettlement from Mexico in mid- 1912, however, was probably unique to Hachita and created an environment to bring out the best and worst in the local population.

Some stories are humorous, such as various persons dropping money in the jukebox in Frank Brown's mercantile store just to see him fume when his generator had to kick in to supply electricity. Others, such as the retaliatory gang slaying of the Haslett brothers, following their fatal ambush of two men who had intentions of "running them off of their holdings," showed how truly violent the early Southwest could be. One surprise, at least for this reader,

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was that there were significant separations between the Anglo and Hispanic segments of the town and to some degree, confrontations. Another shock was that as late as the 1960s, the only telephone line in town was a single six-party line. The otherwise consistent presentation is slightly marred by the lack of careful editing. Some issues are minor such as: endnote sources not documented, newspaper titles inconsistently italicized, railroads identified by initials prior to full-name definition, the demise of poor Frank Evans twice on the same page (105) due to different causes, the erroneous sale price for a military camp (despite the document appearing on the following page), and a mixed narrative using past and present tense, as well as active and passive voice.

A few things are more than nit-picking such as: lack of a simple map locating Hachita for the uninformed, several illustrations and photographs without captions, admission (pg. 133, note 12) that his documentation is inaccurate, but without correcting the situation. Also, as with so many others, he misplaces the Butterfield Overland Mail route. In note 14 (page 133/4) he states that in 1858 the stage line passed through Walnut Wells, 28 miles southwest of Hachita. The closest station to Hachita would have been in Butterfield's Fourth Division at Soldier's Farewell, which was approximately 30 miles due north.

Despite some shortcomings, and while the "we shared through the hard times" espoused by some of the residents, the many tales of sheriffs, deputies, ranchers, businessmen, housewives, bootleggers, full-time amateur rustlers, and children, the author managed to put some meat on the otherwise thin and fragile bones of this boot-heel town's history. Various stories of how judges, lawmen, and just plain folk solved their problems with their opponents, who ranged from mischievous kids to murderous outlaws was intriguing. In fact, it is difficult to read this book and not immediately plan for a trip to Hachita just to see what remains and what it was all about.

D.H. Couchman  
La Mesa, NM

**T***empest Over Teapot Dome* by David H. Stratton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 376 pp., sources, index. Vol. 16 in Oklahoma Western Biographies series. \$29.95, hardcover.

*Tempest Over Teapot Dome* is primarily a biography of Southern New Mexico's Albert Bacon Fall. It is also an inside look at the workings of New Mexico politics in the turbulent years leading to and just after New Mexico's admission to statehood status. As a U.S. Senator from 1912 to 1921 and as the Harding administration Secretary of the Interior from 1921 to 1923, Fall brought his free-wheeling political activities and his Western viewpoints to the playing fields of Washington, D.C. In doing so, he laid the foundation for his later involvement in the Teapot Dome scandal.

Fall was born November, 26, 1861 (the first year of the Civil War) in Frankfort, KY. He grew up in Kentucky and Tennessee during the Reconstruction years. Probably the most powerful influence in his young life was his grandfather, an eloquent, scholarly minister. More or less self-educated, he became a teacher and, intermittently, "read law." In 1881 he left Kentucky for a new life in the West (including several years in Mexico). In 1887 he settled in Las Cruces and, in 1889, he became a practicing attorney in New Mexico. With his knowledge of Spanish and his experience in Mexico, he handled cases involving both U.S. and Mexican law. Also, he tended to champion the underdog — small ranchers — in New Mexico's range disputes of the period.

In laying the groundwork for the detailed examination of the Teapot Dome affair, the author describes Fall's friendship with Theodore Roosevelt, his major differences with Woodrow Wilson, and his association in the U.S. Senate with Warren G. Harding. His battles with conservationists and his apparent empire-building in the Department of the Interior provide background for understanding the investigations into the leasing of the naval oil reserves, one of which was Teapot Dome in Wyoming.

In general, the author's treatment of Fall is impartial and objective, even sympathetic. In the end, he makes no final judgments.

The reader is left with several unanswered questions:

1. Was Albert Bacon **Fall** a scapegoat or scoundrel?
2. Was he an "economic individualist" and exploiter — or a visionary, whose oil policies have been somewhat vindicated in the 1990s?
3. Why was **Fall** convicted of accepting a bribe when **the** alleged giver of the bribe was acquitted?
4. Was the money involved a loan from an old friend and partner, secured by an interest in Fall's Three Rivers Ranch in New Mexico — or was it a bribe from a "greedy oil baron?"
5. If it was a bribe (for which Fall was convicted) why was there foreclosure on the ranch and eviction of Fall and his family in 1935?

*Tempest Over Teapot Dome* is a biography written by a historian who sets the details in their historical context. It is highly recommended for anyone with a serious interest in both the Teapot Dome scandal and the life story of a colorful, influential lawyer, rancher, miner and politician from southern New Mexico.

David H. Stratton, the author, is Professor Emeritus of History at Washington State University in Pullman, WA. In the author's words, ". . . If Albert Fall were not such a colorful, intriguing historical character, I would not have sustained the interest to dog his trail for more than forty years."

Julia K. Wilke  
Las Cruces, NM

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Contents: **Richard Griswold del Castillo**, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and New Mexico: Borders, Boundaries, and Limits*

**Mark J. Stegmaier**, *The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty as a Factor in the New Mexico- Texas Boundary Dispute*

**Malcolm Ebright**, *Land Grant Adjudication in New Mexico under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo*

**Deena J. Gonzalez**, *On the Lives of Women and Children in the Aftermath of the United States-Mexican War*

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

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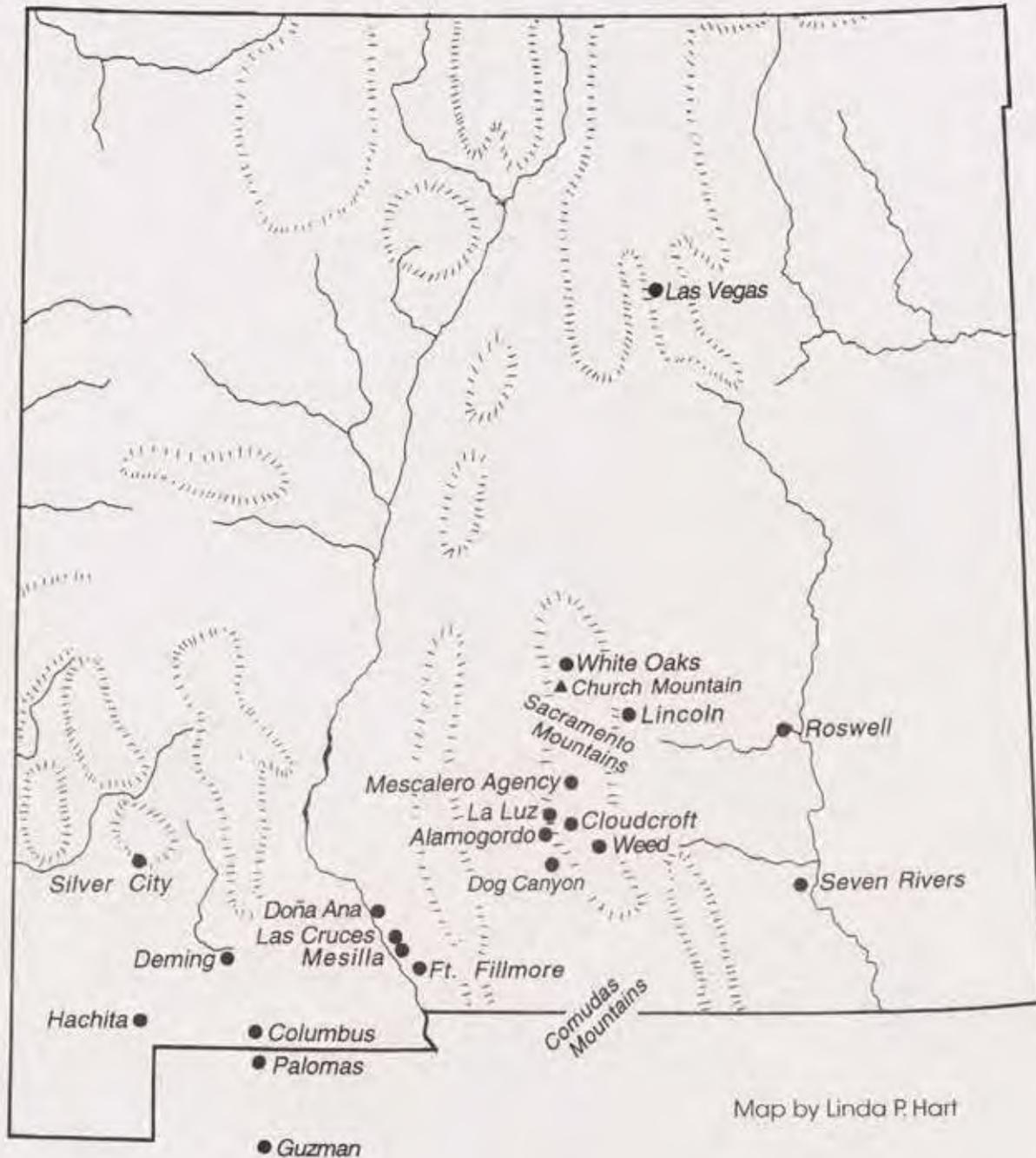
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