

# **AYER Y HOY en Taos**

*Yesterday and Today in Taos County and  
Northern New Mexico*



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Winter 1993    \$3.00

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## **New Mexico's Village Novels**

*A publication of the Taos County Historical Society*

## Upcoming Schedule of Events

**January 8:** Personal history sharing. Bring a photo, book or poem of historical significance to share with persons in attendance.

**February 5:** Taos High School Cultural Reporter students share their research. Election of officers.

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## ISSUE NO. 16: WINTER 1993

### *AYER Y HOY en Taos*

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The Taos County Historical Society's publication, *AYER Y HOY en Taos County and Northern New Mexico*, is published semi-annually by the Historical Society.

We invite articles of a scholarly nature, as well as book reviews of recent historical publications pertinent to the Taos-Northern New Mexico area. We are open to publishing occasional reminiscences, folklore, oral history, and poetry that are of lasting historical interest.

The Taos County Historical Society endeavors to maintain high standards of quality in *AYER Y HOY*, and we seek to make improvements as we go along. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcome.

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*AYER Y HOY* is mailed to all members of the Taos County Historical Society as a benefit of membership. Memberships are \$10 individual, \$15 family, and \$25 sustaining.

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THE TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY is a New Mexico non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of the historical resources of Taos County and Northern New Mexico. Membership is open to any interested person, regardless of residence.

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## EDITOR'S PAGE

by Kathy Cordova

This winter's issue focuses on the main issues of the season, the spirit of sharing.

In his scholarly article, Dr. David Caffey shares his insightful research and views on New Mexico novels. If one truly takes this article to heart, you're in for some delightful winter reading and great Christmas gift giving ideas. If you desire more ideas about books, check our book review section.

Did you ever wonder what happened to Elizabethtown? (Some history buffs also fondly remember this area as E'town). Or do you even know what the town is all about? Local writer-historian Fayne Lutz, who has studied the area quite thoroughly, generously allows us to reap the fruits of her work.

'Tis the season... in keeping with the Yuletide flavor, Taos News Spanish editor Jerry Padilla reports on the local cultural traditions of Las Posadas and Los Pastores. John Duncan also shares more tales of the Maidu Indians, now an extinct tribe. The Christmas season is not only the time to give, but to receive. If there was ever a season to "ask and ye shall receive," this is it. Taos High School Cultural Reporter student Julie Vigil takes advantage of this opportunity and requests help from history buffs. Her plea: "Please help the young cultural reporters in my class with information on various topics." Her article lists the research topics currently underway by her fellow students. Some of the youngsters plan to address the Taos County Historical Society at the regular February meeting.

May the blessings of the holiday season be with you and yours. Hopefully, the articles in this issue and our busy winter lecture series will keep your love of history alive and active. Plan to take advantage of Jenny Vincent's work on the winter sequel, and may it be as successful as the field trips organized by summer program director Andy Lindquist.





## NEW MEXICO'S VILLAGE NOVELS

By Dr. David Caffey

New Mexico's mountain villages have long been a source of fascination for visitors. In early travel narratives like Lewis Garrard's Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail (Cincinnati, 1850) and W.W.H. Davis's El Gringo: New Mexico and Her People (New York, 1857) outsiders found the appearance and lifestyle of the northern Hispanic villages remarkable.

Some observers were sympathetic, but the comments were more often unfavorable, reflecting to some extent the vast gulf between the cultures of Anglo Americans from back East and Indian and Hispanic natives of the Southwest. Typical of several early observers who refused to be impressed was the comment of C.M. Chase, a Vermont newspaper editor who visited Taos in 1881 and advised readers back home, "All the general crowd think or care about, is to live along just as they have from time immemorial, and when a chimney tumbles over, or one end of a house caves in, they dig a little more dirt, mud it up again, and lie down." (The Editor's Run in New Mexico and Colorado, Montpelier, Vermont, 1882).

The villages have also attracted the attention of historians and social scientists, inspiring such recent works as Suzanne Forrest's The Preservation of the Village: New Mexico's Hispanics and the New Deal (Albuquerque, 1989) and William deBuys and Alex Harris's River of Traps (Albuquerque, 1990), about the mountain hamlet of Las Trampas. New Deal

support of photography, writing and folk art projects helped focus attention on the unique cultural values of village life, and caused much source material on the villages to be collected and preserved; the material has been well used in recent years, supporting such works as Marta Weigle's New Mexicans in Cameo and Camera (Albuquerque, 1985) and William Wroth's Russell Lee's FSA Photographs of Chamisal and Penasco (Santa Fe, 1985). Alice Bullock's Mountain Villages (Santa Fe, 1973) and similar works have made the villages more accessible to a popular audience.

Not to be overlooked in the literature of village life are a dozen or so "village novels"--works of fiction produced mainly in the 1930s and 40s. Produced primarily by Anglo writers--mostly newcomers and non-residents--these books are likely to present a perspective somewhat influenced by the generally shared cultural heritage of the authors, as well as the individual point of view of each. The books are nonetheless of interest, both for their portrayals of people and lifestyle and for the opinions and value judgments they express. In reading the village novels, the reader might well bear in mind the claim stated by Eugene Manlove Rhodes on behalf of his own stories of range life in southern New Mexico: "They may or may not be 'art'--but they are Archeology, or will be when the few survivors of

that brief bright day are buried.” (Rhodes to Ferris Greenslet, 6 March 1933, Huntington Library).

The village novels are also archeology of a sort, providing glimpses of a life that was common in northern New Mexico for many decades before the Great Depression and World War II, as well as indications of the attitudes with which Anglo outsiders regarded the villages and their people, and clues to an understanding of the changes that eventually transformed the lives of the villagers.

Much originality is apparent in the various village novels, but they also have much in common. The central institutions of village life--church and store, and important characters--power broking priest and enterprising storekeeper, recur in virtually all of the novels. The books also share a common theme: the prospect of earthshaking change from without, which threatens a traditional life that has gone on undisturbed for as long as the villagers can recall. The fear of impending change is frequently a source of dramatic tension, and often is the major theme of the work.

The first typical New Mexico village novel, ironically, is set not in New Mexico, but just across the state line in southern Colorado, where Hispanic culture and tradition have developed much as in the northern New Mexico villages.

The Penitentes of San Rafael (Indianapolis, 1900), by Louis How, is not one of the better village novels, but it has many characteristics in common with more memorable works that came later. It is written from an outsider's perspective, and it evokes much of traditional village lore. Its setting is the village of San Rafael, apparently based on the church and rural community of San Pedro y San Rafael, near Antonito, Colorado. The book's province is the San Luis Valley, including San Rafael, Antonito, La Jara, and the Mormon community of Manassa.

The area is hopelessly backward in the eyes of the narrator, Deloss Devlin, a traveler who has no qualms about intervening in local customs considered by him to be barbaric. He is shocked at tales of the Penitentes, whose ways are related in an offhand way by the Antonito hotel keeper.

Devlin learns that the Penitentes are about to renew a misguided religious practice, culminating in the crucifixion of one of their own members. He determines that the ceremony must be prevented, and undertakes to inform military and church officials in Pueblo and Denver. Both authorities send representatives for a final showdown with the renegade fanatics of San Rafael.

So begins the long fictional ordeal of the Penitentes, a pilgrimage that often seems as tedious and painful as the storied rites of the self-flagellating brotherhood. How's Penitentes are portrayed as ignorant and superstitious backwoods folk who enjoy

a loose moral code, paying for their sins in a seasonal rite of penance.

The outsider, the rival priests of Antonito and San Rafael, and the village storekeeper are usual characters in village novels, sometimes competing and sometimes collaborating, each seeking to manipulate the naive villagers to his own will.

Typical of the village novels, The Penitentes of San Rafael involves an insular society steeped in its own tradition, facing a threat of intervention by outside forces. The people of San Rafael face the dramatic arrival of ecclesiastical and military authorities with trepidation, realizing fully that practices that have continued undisturbed for centuries may be stopped or altered. This in turn raises the possibility--and the fear--that their lives may change in ways they cannot imagine.

How's book sets the tone for a whole series of fictional works dealing with the Penitentes, almost every one of which focuses on the sensational and the macabre, while failing utterly to delve for any understanding of the brotherhood. Though not primarily a novel of village life, Harvey Fergusson's The Blood of the Conquerors (New York, 1921) is another early example of such treatments. Fergusson takes his main character, Ramon Delcasar, out of Albuquerque and into the villages of the north, where he is to "preach the race issue" and rally beleaguered rural Hispanics against Anglo land grabbers. In a pragmatic act designed to gain the trust of the villagers, the aristocratic Delcasar joins the Penitentes, enduring their gory rites of initiation in order to achieve his own ulterior purposes. It is his understanding that "if he betrayed the secrets of the order, he would be buried alive with only his head sticking out of the ground, so that the ants might eat his face."

The Penitentes continued to interest the writers of novels set in the mountain villages in the 1930s and 40s, as Raymond Otis, D.J. Hall, Frank Waters and Joseph O'Kane Foster all invoked the lore of the Penitentes in works of fiction published between 1936 and 1942.

In Perilous Sanctuary (New York, 1937) by D.J. Hall, the Penitentes are again portrayed as sinister cult followers, willing to murder to preserve the secrecy of the order. Again, it is intimidated that the Penitentes are primitive creatures who regularly crucify one of their own--a notion which has obvious dramatic appeal, and which occurs regularly in works of fiction in spite of meager evidence for the practice as historical fact. In this instance, an accidental visitor--a fugitive from justice, actually--stumbles onto the isolated village of San Bartolo, northwest of Albuquerque. As the Holy Week ritual is in progress, he is detained by a wealthy patron of San Bartolo. He is marked for death by the suspicious



Penitentes, who fear he will betray their secrets to the outside world.

The conventional, sensational lore of the Penitentes is again repeated in Frank Waters's People of the Valley (1941) and O'Kane Foster's In the Night Did I Sing (1942).

The sin of such works is not so much that they disseminate untruth--Waters insists that his portrayal of Penitentes in the Mora valley is based on events which he witnessed--but that they embellish the most sensational aspects of the brotherhood while usually failing to comprehend or interpret the role of the Penitentes in their villages or the meaning of their religious practices. For the novelist, the Penitentes are primarily a source of local color contributing to an unflattering stereotype of Hispanics as backward, superstitious and inclined to violent behavior.

In Fray Angelico Chavez's story, "The Penitente Thief" (1940), Chavez also includes the conventional lore, but conveys something of the religious and social significance of the brotherhood as an institution of village life. A greater service in this respect is his masterful work of regional interpretation, My Penitente Land: Reflections on Spanish New Mexico (Albuquerque, 1974).

Among the outsiders writing fiction about the mountain villages, Raymond Otis had perhaps the greatest understanding of and sympathy for the Penitentes. An Easterner by birth and a Yale man, Otis moved to Santa Fe in 1927 in an effort to improve his fragile health, but he responded to his new surroundings with approval and interest. Otis published three novels before his untimely death due to chronic nephritis in 1938.

Otis had an uncommon affinity for the rural Hispanic people of northern New Mexico. His appreciation found expression in two village novels, Miguel of the Bright Mountain (London, 1936) and Little Valley (London, 1937).

Otis came to think of Miguel of the Bright Mountain as "my Penitente novel." There is a good deal more to the book than that, but one of Otis's accomplishments in Miguel assuredly is his sympathetic and understanding treatment of the Penitentes.

Otis understands the Penitente brotherhood as offering a path of peace and reconciliation for the village people who have little else in the way of spiritual guidance. Otis rejected the shallow sensationalism of more popular accounts, concluding in an essay on the brotherhood, "... to pass judgment on these people without first attempting to understand them, is an injustice too often committed. They are good and kindly and hospitable, and their crowning virtue is integrity." ("Medievalism in New Mexico," 1936).

One of the most thoughtful of village novels is Otis's Little Valley. It is perhaps the best example of a plot based on the tension between tradition and change. Little Valley is nominally the story of the Trujillo family of Vallecito, a village apparently patterned on Cundiyo, a tiny settlement hidden away in a narrow strip of bottomland in the pinon-juniper hills near Chimayo.

Otis chronicles the personal loves and betrayals of the residents of Vallecito, but more important, he creates a portrait of change imposed on a quiet people much accustomed to their age-old way of life. First, one of the Trujillo sons goes off to World War I. Having seen the world, he cannot return to life as he knew it in Vallecito. Neither can he make a living there, with his dead grandfather's land already divided among his father and two uncles. He leaves for the mining camps of Colorado.

With new technologies and the coming of the Depression, other difficult changes fall on Vallecito. Lands once open to grazing and woodcutting are fenced off and forbidden to the village people; the Forest Service has its rules. And with people in town (Santa Fe) using gas or coal to heat their homes, men from the villages can no longer raise small but essential sums of cash from selling firewood.

In some residents of Vallecito, the hard times produce a resentment of government aid to their Pueblo Indian neighbors. Says Cruz Trujillo in frustration:

Seems to me the Indians get everything. If an Indian wants an eighty-dollar wagon all he has to do is ask for it and it's given to him. If he wants a well they dig it for him, or a windmill or anything. If he gets sick they send him to the doctor or the hospital. Why don't we get some of that?

As the Depression deepens, new notions come into the valley. The residents of Vallecito learn of the County Welfare Bureau, where penniless villagers can go and receive food for nothing, provided they are willing to wait patiently and answer embarrassing personal questions. Juliano, oldest of the three Trujillo brothers, once visited the welfare office, but the line was long and it seemed all wrong to him that people accustomed to taking care of themselves should suddenly begin living by handouts from the government. Like Charlie Flagg, the stubborn, drought-stricken rancher in Elmer Kelton's Texas novel, The Time It Never Rained (Garden City, New York, 1973), Juliano is the last holdout of Vallecito, refusing aid even as neighbors all around him bow to the inevitable. At last, faced with starvation and more ill fortune, even Juliano must give himself up to the mercy of the welfare office.

Little Valley depicts a hearty people whose lives are deeply rooted in tradition, enduring the trauma of jarring, cataclysmic change imposed from without. The novel also reveals much of the land tenure and social patterns of village life, the importance of water as a scarce and precious source of life, and the value placed on family relationships in rural Hispanic New Mexico.

Vulnerability to change is again a significant theme in village novels of the early forties. In People of the Valley (New York, 1941), Hispanic residents of the Mora valley are threatened when men of ambition find their valley ripe for exploitation. Two Irishmen, the Murphy brothers, settle in the valley and begin a gradual transfer of property from the villagers to themselves. As is frequently the case, they gain their foothold by opening a store and offering liberal credit. As part of an effort to ingratiate themselves to the locals, they change the name "Murphy" to a more natural "Mofre." Their ultimate objective, which is revealed only after they have gained a firm hold on the local economy, is to dam up the valley and develop it to their own commercial ends.

In Joseph Foster's In the Night Did I Sing (New York, 1942), the people of the village of Sangre de Cristo (Ranchos de Taos) carry on a normal life as best they can, despite the inexorable approach of a new, straight road pointed ominously at the village. It is a threat that can hardly be ignored, what with "a plague of surveyors" and a glittering city of aluminum, bullet-shaped trailers littering the mesa, and fire-belching bulldozers and steam shovels shaping the very earth to the whims of a distant, unknown engineer. The traditional, accepted pattern of village life is forever disrupted, as some villagers seize upon the promise of financial opportunity, while others have only the deterioration of their familiar lives to look forward to.

The Life and Death of Little Jo (Garden City, New York, 1944), by Robert Bright, takes place in nearby Talpa. Jo Sandovilla leads an ignominious life in the village, left to fend for himself when his father flees to avoid incarceration and his mother dies a pauper. Jo makes his way, mistreated by the aunt with whom he lives, but befriended by large-hearted ancianos of the village. The rhythms of the old ways, of family and poverty and occasional violence, are shattered with the news of a new war, and of laws that will take young men from the village to fight the Germans. Jo knows nothing of the Germans and personally has nothing against them, but his is not to question; his lot is to be carried along in the current of events he cannot control.

It is sometimes the job of the fiction writer to express the secret thoughts of his readers--thoughts that may be too subversive or too explosive to be openly expressed. In this, the author is greatly aided

by his medium; he can simply have fictional characters utter those views for which he does not wish to claim personal responsibility. In The Life and Death of Little Jo, an Anglo doctor examining Jo for induction into the army delivers a harangue that expresses the well-meaning but exasperated outsider's frustration with local ways:

It beats me how you Mexicans let yourselves get into this shape! ... Why don't you ever learn something? Why don't you get your miserable farms fixed up? Why won't you ever let us teach you something for your own good? You're feudal, that's what you are! Feudal and ignorant! You're degenerate with ignorance! Your own best people, your so-called leaders, they're putrid with filthy politics! And you sit there and let them fleece the skin right off your backs! And don't blame me! Don't you dare blame it on us Anglos! This is your state--New Mexico. It's you people who have got the votes. But what the hell do you do with them?

Two of the most positive views of village life occur in narratives based on true experiences that are embellished and fictionalized for dramatic effect. In contrast to most of the village novels, in which the typical villager is backward, superstitious and ineffectual, the people in these books are competent, proud, and satisfied with their lives.

... and Now Miguel (New York, 1953) grew out of the author's experience producing a documentary film about the Blas Chavez family of Los Cordovas, near Taos. Joseph Krumbgold's novel for juveniles closely follows the film made for the U.S. Information Agency, and was awarded the prestigious Newberry Medal. Readers of all ages can enjoy the book, which accurately portrays life on a New Mexico sheep ranch. Ten-year old Miguel Chavez is initiated into a proud tradition, as he finally persuades his father, uncle and older brothers to let him join in taking the family's sheep to the mountains for summer pasture. The Chavez are independent, proud, and patriotic. The parents encourage their children to do well in school, and though the older children love their home, they have no reticence about traveling in the wider world.

The same may be said of the Baca family of the village of Rociada, near Las Vegas, as portrayed in Behind the Mountains (Boston, 1956), by Oliver La Farge. La Farge wrote the book from his own observations, and from family tales related by his wife, Consuelo Baca La Farge, and her mother, brother and sisters. As in the other village stories, the Bacas enjoy a way of life that seems timeless, immutable and secure, until it is shaken violently by change imposed from without--in this case, by a disastrous drop in the price of wool in the early months of the Great Depression.

By the mid-1950s, the village novel had largely passed from view, though evocations of village life have continued to occur from time to time in novels like John Nichols's The Milagro Beanfield War (New York, 1974), and Rudolfo Anaya's Bless Me Ultima (Berkeley, 1972).

Though set on the plain south of the Sangre de Cristo mountains where most of the village novels are placed, Rudolfo Anaya's Bless Me Ultima can easily be considered with these works. The setting is the village of Guadalupe, near Santa Rosa--the area in which Anaya grew up.

Anaya's story is told through the eyes of a young boy, Antonio Marquez, whose childhood world is defined by his family, his village, and the llano. Bless Me Ultima emphasizes familial and intergenerational relationships, foundations of New Mexican Hispanic culture. Anaya uses the character of "La Ultima," an elderly curandera, to evoke the rich cultural mythology of the Mexicanos. From La Ultima, Antonio learns much of the wisdom and wealth inherent in nature.

Anaya's portrayal of village life is intensely personal. His earliest memories are of Pastura, where his family lived, near Santa Rosa:

I have haunting memories of the small pueblito: bright sun and limitless sky, herds of cattle grazing in the grass of the llano, beautiful ancianos who hobbled over dusty streets, the train forever creating dreams and fantasy of where? why?, brilliant blood-red sunsets, and immense nights that brooded over the pocket of life the village affirmed with farole-lit windows. It seemed as if we were an old people, as old as the earth, and one with the llano. ("Short Autobiography of Rudolfo Anaya," El Grito, 1972).

As with some of the village novels, the village serves not as an escape or an enclave; rather, it helps reveal the world in microcosm. Growing up in Guadalupe, Antonio encounters the full range of human values, and in so doing, loses much of his innocence.

For John Nichols, too, the village is a microcosm in which the full range of human response and possibility can be observed at close range. Of his adopted hometown of Taos, Nichols says, "It never feels like just Taos to me. It feels like some little laboratory where the whole universe is on display." (Nathan, 1987). In The Milagro Beanfield War, Nichols uses the village setting to address the issue of class struggle.

Nichols got the central idea for Milagro, a class confrontation over water rights, from an incident he heard about in the vicinity of Costilla, some fifty miles north of Taos, just below the Colorado state line. The fictional village of Milagro is widely assumed to represent Costilla, with Nichols's

Chamisaville representing Taos and Dona Luz inspired by nearby Questa.

Nichols's style and purpose are clearly his own, but his book is similar to other village novels in posing a conflict between a traditional way of life and a threat of radical change. Nichols's villagers are poor, but they have their ways of surviving. The main character, Joe Mondragon, is a handyman who will attempt just about any job that promises to enhance his meager cash flow. He pays little mind to hunting seasons or game laws--inventions of the distant and mostly irrelevant Anglo power structure. Instead, he follows the customs of his people, who have always lived off the land, taking what they needed from the common bounty of the surrounding public forest.

A jolting challenge to the peaceful poverty of Milagro arrives in the person of Ladd Devine III, an industrious disciple of the American capitalist spirit. Though clearly acting in his own self interest when he proposes to develop the "Miracle Valley Recreation Area," which will radically alter the social and economic milieu of Milagro, he acts on premises he assumes are beyond question. He assumes that economic development is always a desirable, even a noble objective, and he assumes that he is free to go as far and as fast with his dreams as his financial, legal and political resources will allow. He assumes that the insignificant villagers of Milagro know their place, or that their cooperation can be purchased cheaply enough. He does not count on their opposition, which utterly confounds his own logic.

Though presumably in decline as a viable social organism since the Depression and World War II, the village, as portrayed in Milagro, displays a weedlike hardiness. It will change with the times, surely, but it is still made up of people who have principles and traditions of their own, and who refuse to be obliterated at the whim of an outsider with big ideas and a lot of money.

Not much has been heard of the Hispanic village in works of fiction since Milagro, save for Sabine Ulibarri's delightful stories of Tierra Amarilla as Ulibarri knew it in his youth.

Some have suggested that the village is dying. New Mexico artist Harold Joe Waldrum, leading in a 1980s revival of efforts to save the beautiful village churches he treasured as simple, singular works of art, noted that many villages were populated disproportionately by the old. People in their prime working years had fled to cities or now commuted long distances to work, leaving little human energy to sustain the life of the village. This suggests that the village is no longer the microcosm of young and old, of poor paisanos and well-to-do merchants, that once attracted fiction writers.

If the village belongs to a past age, readers for whom the villages remain an object of interest have



all the more reason to be grateful for a handful of writers who have observed, recorded, and sometimes judged the phenomena of village life. Like the collectors of folklore, village arts and social research who documented much of rural Hispanic tradition during the New Deal years, the writers of fiction have also helped to record and preserve something of the attitudes and concerns, myths and realities of the villages of northern New Mexico.

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## ELIZABETHTOWN IN MORENO VALLEY, NEW MEXICO

By Fayne Lutz

### EARLY BEGINNINGS

The gold rush was still on at Pike's Peak when a Ute Indian took a "pretty rock" to Sutler William Moore at Fort Union as a gift for helping him survive a period of near starvation during the previous winter of 1865-66.

William Moore, a captain in the U.S. Army, had once been in command at Fort Union, but was then the sutler for the isolated fort. Facing release from the Army after the cessation of hostilities during the Civil War, Moore and a man named Kelly (with two others) determined to take a last pleasure trip to the high "protero." (This was the name the Spanish called Moreno Valley before the snows of winter set in.) The men

set out to visit the location which the Ute had described as the place where he had found the "pretty rock." The group set out for Cimarron and then up the Cimarron River to its source in Moreno Valley.

They found that winter was much nearer than they expected when they reached the heavily wooded Moreno Valley. The peak to the west (Wheeler Peak) was already dressed in white and the peak to be named Old Baldy located to the north and east of the valley had large amounts of early snow and was rapidly getting covered with the nightly snows common to the area. The asters were still purple, but most of the wild flowers were already frosted.

While Moore and the others set up camp and prepared supper, Kelly, thinking to pan for copper (for that is what they thought the pretty rock to

be) began to pan in Willow Creek, and with the first pan Kelly found gold! All thoughts of supper were forgotten while all fanned out along Willow Creek to pan. They found "show" everywhere and panned until it was too dark to see.

The next morning they carved the words "Discovery" on a giant ponderosa and struck camp to head for Cimarron to file mining claims.

Since that first strike on Willow Creek, the claims that were the most productive were where there was run off from Old Baldy. There were some mines on the west side of the valley, but most were in gulches on the north and east side.

Most miners assumed that the "mother lode" from which the gold came was deep in Old Baldy.

Accordingly, the Deep Tunnel Mining and Milling Company determined to drill through the mountain to find the mother lode.

They set about drilling from the east side and from the Moreno Valley side of Old Baldy simultaneously. At first they found a lot of gold near the top of Old Baldy peak on the east side and then, as they drilled deeper into the mountain, they found less and less show. Engineers had calculated that they should meet, with no more than 4 inches difference, but when they were within feet of meeting, water flooded the tunnels, on both sides. Pumps hastily installed in the tunnels could not keep the water from welling into both tunnels. After 8 years of drilling and 3,000 feet of tunnel, the company was forced to quit.

They never found the mother lode. The west tunnel was blown shut with dynamite in the 1940's. The east tunnel was likewise sealed in the late 30's.

They left Moreno Valley to its dark and foreboding forests and winter snows. So dark and foreboding was Moreno Valley in those days that the valley acted as a natural barrier to separate the Utes from the Taos. Two trails ran across the valley. One from Rayado, used by Kit Carson a couple of decades earlier, ran near Agua Fria Peak toward Taos. The other ran from the Cimarron and Ute Park Canyon up and over the pass, then north toward Red River. These were the only paths for men to follow. There were no permanent residents in Moreno Valley, just plenty of game and lots of trees. The valley floor was covered with timber, with little streams running down the sides of Old Baldy and the sharp peak later named "Touch Me Not." By the spring of 1867, the valley teemed with miners who had set out from Pike's Peak, for that rush was over. They now streamed down from Colorado through Uncle Dick Wooten's toll road into Raton, to Cimarron, and then up to Ute Park, and finally Moreno Valley. They had to carry in everything - food, mining equipment, and clothes. There was no shelter in the valley, so the first huts were crude indeed, and not designed for wintertime living. The sound of axes rang all over the valley as they felled trees, then re-erected them on the spot where they fell to create lean-tos, crude sheds or simple cabins. Firewood for heat was at the door step. Soon, there were cleared areas

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around all the claims. Six hundred soldiers at Fort Union were mustered out and they joined the gold rush.

Captain Moore and Kelly enlarged their claims - Michigan Gulch, Pine Tree Ravine, Nigger Gulch and Humbug Gulch, the richest - while others were created. That first winter, all fled the approaching snows, and the valley was quiet during the heavy snows of the winter months.

The spring of 1868 had William Moore opening a store on the site of the town he was to name after his daughter; the first child to live in Moreno Valley. The town was named Elizabethtown, commonly shortened even then to E'town. Soon Moore added cabins near the store since there was no place to stay in E'town and every stage brought in more and more gold seekers.

### CHRISTMAS TIME AND WINTER IN E'TOWN

Winters were, and still are, bitter cold in E'town. The wind blows a lot and snow drifts are often higher than the cozy houses. The first few Christmases in E'town were very sparse and lacking in any festivities. Most miners fled when winter arrived for lower altitudes like Cimarron and even Raton to spend the winter since they could do little work outside during the winter months. Some families built more and more secure homes and accumulated huge wood piles to hedge during winter storms. When the town had a population of about 10,000, there were undoubtedly merry times at Christmas, but during the times of poor production in the valley, E'town suffered from this lack of production, and Christmas times were less festive. By the turn of the century, E'town was a small mining town, prosperous with a fine new school, churches, a lodge, and all the amenities of a larger community.

One of Elizabeth Moore Lawrey's daughters (Mrs. Annie Haddow) recalled many glorious and festive Christmas times in E'town. "We ice skated on the frozen pond around the Dredge 'Eleanor,' went for sleigh rides, caroled and there were dances and special parties as well."

Mrs. Haddow also described going into the woods to cut that special Christmas tree and decorating the tree with popcorn strings and home-made decorations with real candles on the tip of each branch. She also

remembers lighted candles in the windows.

In spite of the isolation, they cooked great feasts on the wood stove: venison, ham, beef, and wild turkey. Special goodies arrived via the railroad from places far, far away (fresh oranges, a small keg of oysters from Maryland.) There were also wild raspberries and wild blueberries gathered during the summer months and made into jams for special occasions. There were nuts to crack and use to decorate the cakes that came from the wood stove. "Best of all," Mrs. Haddow reported, "there were plenty of fresh eggs." Chickens have never laid well at that altitude, nor have cows given much milk, so the residents of E'town had many things city folks enjoyed. Some things most of us take for granted were not present except at Christmas in E'town. Of course, everyone went to church, and there were often church Christmas "trees," at which sites every child received a bag of candy or an orange and a small gift.

### EXPANSION AND DECLINE

The stage ran from Cimarron to E'town and the horses were changed after their last hard pull into the valley at a spot that was named Thermal for the hot springs that existed near the spot. This stage coach rest stop became the base for the town of Eagle Nest, which was not incorporated until 1976.

Just as the present town of Eagle Nest was first named Thermal, the town of E'town was first named Willow Creek. A lumber mill, a planing mill built by Walter Witt, later of Taos, was built on Willow Creek and proved to be the only source of planed lumber in all of northern New Mexico. Walter Witt never mined for gold. Instead he became a rancher in Moreno Valley and later moved to Taos where he built San Geronimo Lodge.

One of the reasons for the large number of prospectors descending to Moreno Valley was the fact that it was not a part of the Maxwell Land Grant. Lucien B. Maxwell had no claim to the land, so claims could be staked with impunity. His headquarters at Cimarron supplied the miners and early settlers, but neither Maxwell nor subsequent land owners of the grant interfered with the



settlement or mining in Moreno Valley until much later.

By 1870, there was enough population at E'town, and residents petitioned the New Mexico Territorial government for incorporation. The incorporation was granted and Elizabethtown became the first incorporated town in the Territory of New Mexico. It also became the county seat of Colfax County, which had been created out of the northern part of Mora County.

E'town was chiefly supplied via Raton to Cimarron and for awhile via a railroad from Raton to Ute Park. At one time, E'town had a population of between 7,000 to a maximum of 10,000. By 1871, there were more elaborate buildings and a Masonic Temple, a minister, a newspaper, and then two newspapers. It was a prosperous mining town and county seat. Most of the population was centered around E'town. The thick forests still covered most of the valley floor.

But by 1868, E'town was a dying municipality mostly due to decreased gold production. In 1868, an attempt was made to bring more water for mining into the valley. Called the "Big Ditch," it took a year to build. When it was finished, the 41 mile flume system leaked so badly that it was declared a monumental failure and abandoned. The steel pipe that hauled the water up Bobcat Pass from the Red River had been hauled from Independence, Kansas and cost a quarter of a million dollars.

Despite talk in the late 1800's of a railroad from Cimarron to Taos, and thence to Santa Fe, transportation in and out of the valley was difficult. Placer miners had failed in their attempt to find more water, and E'town began to decline. Chef Henry Lambert of Paris, France moved his fine hotel and dining room to Cimarron where he opened the St. James Hotel. By 1875, E'town and Moreno Valley were almost abandoned. The County Seat was moved to Raton. In 1889, the railroad had come through Raton and down to Las Vegas before going on to Santa Fe. There followed a 10 year political unrest usually called the Colfax County Wars.

## PERIOD OF CHANGE

During this ten year period, the history of the west was violent. It

was not until the coming of the railroad in 1889 that any sort of peace and prosperity returned to Colfax County with the purchase of the Maxwell Land Grant by a Dutch holding company and the departure of the English company who had purchased the grant from Maxwell.

By 1900, there was once more a boom in Moreno Valley and in E'town, with the floating of a dredge in the valley floor just east and south of E'town. The dredge named "The Eleanor" was producing about \$1,000 a day in gold. This was about 1/3 of the gold production in the New Mexico Territory. Soon after the turn of the century, "The Gold and Copper Deep Tunnel Mining and Milling Company" began mining operations. Starting about Big Nigger Gulch, they bored for 3,000 feet into Old Baldy. They continued to tunnel until 1908 when lack of production drove the company into bankruptcy. It was at about this time that the Dutch who controlled the Maxwell Land Grant complained about the pollution of the Cimarron River from the dredging and all placer operations were stopped. With the prosperity brought by the dredge in the 1890's came a wave of immigrants from Europe who, taking advantage of the Homestead Law and cheap one-way fares on the railroad, poured into Moreno Valley to farm. They built square log cabins and cut more timber from the valley to clear it for farming and firewood. Stumps were pulled for farming and the valley began to look as it does today, heavily wooded on the slopes of both sides of the valley and barren all through the valley floor. Immigrants from all over Europe settled throughout the valley: Italians, Bohemians, Swedes and German. The tide seemed endless.

By the 1890's, E'town had 3 hotels, a new school, a newspaper, drama societies, clubs, parades, musicals and a daily stage, plus the Mutz Boarding House. (The two story remains stand today as the symbol of E'town.) The population hovered at around 2,000. Then came a series of disastrous fires. The cemetery remains today. Never a "boot hill," it contains the names of the many families who cast their lot with Moreno Valley... and remain there still.

In the 1940's, there was an attempt to re-establish a mining district, but to no avail. They blasted the Deep Tunnel shut after that, and

not too many years later, they blasted the milling operation at the Klondike. Old Baldy Town is a ghost town along with The Aztec, Montezuma and other small mines shut down permanently except for visits by Boy Scouts. That land is now the property of Philmont. Moreno Valley was developed in the late 20's to mid 30's into a center for vegetables, grown to sell in Denver and other big western markets. Grown in Moreno Valley and shipped by truck from the valley to the railroad, farmers specialized in peas, potatoes, carrots and even lettuce. Very successful crops were raised for a number of years and the valley prospered until the water table subsided and a blight hit the potato crop. The raising of vegetables was moved to Alamosa, Colorado and the San Luis Valley where it remains today.

In 1916, The Springer Cattle Company started the dam at the site of the old pass just east of Eagle Nest. Completed in 1920, the resulting lake was and is used as water for cattle and irrigation in the lower reaches of the Cimarron Valley. As a fishing lake, it was developed in the 1930's. It was leased by the State of New Mexico in the 1980's and has provided a lure for many tourists to visit Eagle Nest and Moreno Valley today.

Angel Fire, a developed year-round recreation area, was begun in 1965 by a local rancher. Incorporated in 1990, today it is a community of about 1,000 residents. Eagle Nest has a population of about 350. E'town has no permanent residents and is listed as a ghost town. It really has no buildings or residents... only the skeletal remains of the Mutz Boarding House, erroneously labeled a "hotel."

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Fayne Lutz has done graduate work in History of the West at the University of Oklahoma. She presented this information at a series of 7 lectures in 1971, including the Taos County Historical Society members as participants.





**Preserving the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains**

By Elaine Freed

Published June 11, 1992

Price: \$50.00 (cloth), \$30.00 (paper)

University of New Mexico Press

Included in this well-researched book were preservation programs and efforts in the states of Montana, North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The foreword was written by Clark Strickland, Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mountains and Plains Region.

The book covers preservation of buildings of the early West, railroad towns, ranches, farms, and in some instances, the preservation of entire villages, mining towns, urban centers, neighborhoods, and streets of city buildings with architectural history.

I found it interesting to note the places in New Mexico and other states familiar to me. Among those were churches such as the St. Francis de Asis church in Ranchos, the church at Las Trampas, the Martinez Hacienda, Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, the church of San Rafael at La Cueva, old Colorado mining towns of Leadville, Crested Butte, Butte, Montana and Billings, Montana. I was surprised at the many preservation groups in the 10-state region that are working hard to save and protect the historic buildings and sites. In many instances, it took the destruction of a historic building to galvanize the citizens into action to keep the wrecking ball from creating any more havoc on these irreplaceable emblems of our past. More and more people are realizing the importance of saving these beautiful old structures. Many have been renovated and put to use so that they can be enjoyed not only as museums, but as shops and malls and office buildings. There are hundreds of photographs in the book, adding to the interest. The book is divided in two sections. The first focuses on architecture, the tradition of Native American and Spanish dwellings found by the first Anglo settlers and the first structures, the latter built on ranches, mining sites, and forts. The second section deals with the historic preservation movement and how the different segments of society have taken the challenge.

This book is a wonderful addition to the library of anyone interested in historical and archaeological preservation.

-Sadie O. Knight

**Quest for the Origins of the First Americans**

by E. James Dixon

Publication date: April 4, 1993

Price: \$24.95

Binding: Cloth

Quest is a fresh look at Arctic prehistory and the Bering Land Bridge theory by a respected Alaskan anthropologist. Dixon brings the scientific adventure to life with a narrative that presents new evidence and challenging concepts. Archaeological finds from Siberia to the far tip of South America are described. New work that shows that microscopic residues on stone tools contain identifiable blood components from extinct animals is especially fascinating and should cause museum curators everywhere to rethink how they handle artifacts.

Well illustrated and clearly written, this little book (133 pages) will delight readers who love science and the quest for knowledge about our human past.

-Andy Lindquist

**Encounter with an Angry God  
Recollections of My Life with John Peabody Harrington**

by Carobeth Laird

Publication date: September 16, 1993

Price: \$11.95

Binding: Paper

University of New Mexico Press

This sensitive and slender volume is a reprint of a tale of a marriage first published in 1975. Written by an 80-year old woman, it is a provocative story in that it chronicles the life of the prominent linguist-ethnographer John Peabody Harrington, an eccentric, and one of the giants of American anthropology in the early days of this century. The chronicler was indeed first his student, and then his much-abused wife. This story of a marriage where the husband is the abuser could only have happened in another earlier time, since Carobeth would not have been nearly so idealistic and naive had this happened in the last half of the twentieth century. Forced to disengage herself not only from her family, and even their child, she endured unbelievable privations to work with Harrington. The conditions were only relieved when she went on a field assignment alone and met with a Chemehuevi informant who showed her the Indian way.

Along the author's way to spiritual maturity, she did some field work in New Mexico, first at Taos Pueblo and then at Isleta in 1917. She is sure that somewhere, there is a slender notebook entitled, Taos Pueblo Grammar. She was the collector and author.

A real romance and a very human story, this book is hard to put down. Heartily recommended for a winter night's reading.

-Fayne Lutz

**BIG EYES, The Southwestern Photographs  
of Simeon Schwemberger, 1902-1908.**  
by Paul V. Long  
University of New Mexico Press

Simeon Schwemberger was a lay brother at the Franciscan Mission of St. Michael's near Windowrock, Arizona, during the years 1901-1908. Using a simple box camera, he began photographing the Navajo families in that area and became so interested in the native people and their customs that he later branched out and photographed Hopi, Zuni, and Pueblo Indians in both Arizona and northwestern New Mexico.

The book contains a total of 129 black and white illustrations taken from over 400 negatives produced by Brother Schwemberger which the author found in the archives of the Mission of St. Michael's. The Franciscans were very interested in collecting Brother Schwemberger's photographs and preserving them in their archives, and had asked the author to undertake this project. He followed Brother Schwemberger's life at the mission and his work there where the primary goal was to convert the peoples to Christianity. The photographs, while not professional, nevertheless portray the native people in their natural surroundings and blending their daily tasks and rituals, while at the same time showing the transition to that, being introduced to them by the Catholic missionaries.

Eventually, Brother Schwemberger became disenchanted with his work at the mission and he left St. Michael's. He left the Franciscan order and married. However, his first marriage ended in divorce when his wife left him.

He was, at different times, a trader, a store proprietor, and a photographer. He produced post cards from many of his photographs and sold them at his trading post. He, at one time, began a business making soap from the yucca root and selling it. After his divorce, he moved to Gallup, New Mexico, and opened a store where he also served coffee and different foods. After hours, he would set up card tables and entertained with songs and played his jew's harp.

His second marriage, when he was 56 years old, was to a 20-year old girl from Woodward, Oklahoma. They had a daughter, Eunice Adeline. After Schwemberger died in 1931, his wife operated the store for 10 more years. His estate had been left to her and his daughter, including all his glass-plate negatives and his camera. She subsequently married and she and her new husband sold all the negatives and his camera to a Gallup photographer, Peter Havens, for \$5.00. Havens informed the Franciscan Fathers that he had the negatives, and they paid him \$50.00 for them, as the fathers felt the negatives belonged to the mission. The items are now in their archives and in the Museum of Northern Arizona. There are some photographs, also, in the Stewart Culin Archival Collection at the Brooklyn Museum and the collection of Nello Guadagnoli of Gallup.

Long's book is an excellent addition to any collection of Southwestern history.

-Sadie O. Knight

**Inocencio: Ni Pica Ni Escarda, Pero  
Siempre Se Come el Mejor Elote**  
By Juan Estevan Arellano  
Publication date: February, 1993  
Paseo del Norte/Editorial Grijalbo

Has the Hispanic picaresque novel tradition revived?

So often utilized by Spanish writers to criticize or poke fun at their institution's conditions of their society, the picaresque novel often serves the historian in understanding other essentials of locale, customs, colloquialisms, and social norms of a given time period.

Juan Estevan Arellano, native of Embudo and professional photographer, architect, sculptor, artist, freelance writer and editor of various publications has proven that the tradition was brought to the New World by our Hispanic forbearers and has managed to survive in northern New Mexico.

His recently published picaresque novel, *Inocencio: Ni Pica Ni Escarda, Pero Siempre Se Come el Mejor Elote*, utilizes this literary style to illustrate the importance of traditions and folkways of small northern New Mexican Hispano villages. Through the experiences of Inocencio, a man who manages through his astuteness not to work, yet manages to have all his needs provided for, Arellano takes jabs at life's institutions and daily routines.

Written in the vernacular of northern New Mexico Spanish, the dialogues, while bringing on mirth and glee to those who have lived here long enough to be called Taosenos, could cause fits for language purists. The importance of the dialect Arellano so richly quotes is that this is the true Spanish of the 'paisanos nortenos' as spoken and understood among themselves for centuries. A language within a language, Arellano makes note of the reality that when necessary to speak formal Spanish, most nortenos can and do, but amongst ourselves, many still prefer their own colorful metaphors and colloquialisms. Verily, it has often been said that, could a 16th century Spaniard travel in time to our present day, he/she would find difficulty being understood by modern citizens of Spain, but could freely communicate with 20th century descendents of New Mexico Spanish colonials.

Drawing from a wealth of traditional proverbs, each chapter's theme is introduced by one. This is not a yarn for the squeamish who hold certain of society's institutions sacred. Entertaining while criticizing lifestyles, as Inocencio manages to get through each new day and adventure living by his wits and the kindheartedness of his *vecinos*, *primos* and *camaradas*, Arellano brazenly criticizes religions, career choices (the daily routines of making a living), relationships, ideals and the lack of them, and in general the daily ups and downs of small town rural 'paisanos.'

(Continued on page 15)





## Las Posadas, Hispanic Christmas Tradition Since Colonial Times

By Jerry Padilla

*Posada*, translates as lodging, the giving or receiving of hospitality; More than a lay-over, less than an extended visit. In the Hispanic world, especially more so historically, the providing of lodging to wayfarers, be they familial relatives or strangers, was seen as a sign of good upbringing and common courtesy. It was and sometimes still is an unwritten code of honor and sign of respect to share one's abode with those in need.

Ironically, one of our more beautiful traditions associated with the Christmas season is based in part on a series of refusals to provide such lodging to no less than the Holy Family.

*Las Posadas*, a religious musical quasi drama procession, performed in Northern New Mexico since Spanish colonial times, is another facet of culture with historical ties to part of our roots in the Iberian peninsula.

Traditionally, upstanding young men and women were chosen in northern New Mexico and later southern Colorado towns and villages. It's something held in common with Hispanic Texas, California, Arizona, Mexico and basically the rest of the Spanish speaking world. One portrayed

Saint Joseph; the young woman, Mary, the expectant mother of Jesus.

Accompanied by local musicians playing guitars and violins and a throng of merrymakers singing the verses, it is about the Holy Family's search for lodging in Bethlehem as Jesus' birth approached. Starting nine evenings before Christmas, 'Joseph' and 'Mary,' proceed to the homes of parishioners, a different one each night. Asking for '*posada*,' followed with those braving the cold, they are politely, if sorrowfully refused.

Costumed the same each night in the garb of an ancient middle eastern carpenter and his wife, originally *Maria Santísima*, rode donkey led by San José, striving for authenticity, in some variations.

On the ninth night, those in the home they approach wait in anticipation as the strains of the music announces their journey. In anticipation, for it is *La Noche Buena*, the Holy Night, Christmas Eve. Finally, this night those asking a night's lodging are invited in. A nativity scene is displayed in the home for the family so honored. Everyone following comes in with the musicians to partake of holiday treats such as sweet homemade wine, *biscochitos*, *empanaditas*, or

perhaps *chile colorado* and *posole*.

The beauty of this reenactment has been and is still practiced by some Taoseños in different neighborhoods yearly. In is an event with a strong affiliation with the Catholic church. Often parishioners volunteer to serve as those who will refuse the lodging request, or to serve as musicians and the following chorus, and help in the choosing of those portraying Joseph and Mary.

Sometimes the last night's activities are held in conjunction with another tradition, that of the pastoral morality play of "*Los Pastores*."

This play depicts the journey of the shepherds. Angels advise to visit the newborn Christ child. Local actors portray the shepherds, a hermit who is tempted by the devil, Lucifer, Bartolo, a slothful shepherd miraculously cured of his procrastination, Gila, the shepherdess who helps hold the group the troupe together, and San Miguel the archangel who finally vanquishes the devil.

The shepherds fulfill their adoration of the Holy Child. The beauty of 16th century Spanish is preserved in both of these traditional examples of Taoseño folklore.



(Continued from page 13)

As Inocencio makes his way through each day, he continually reminds us of time-honored traditions involving agriculture, socializing, local history, extended families, and folklore that are being forsaken in the mad dash of modern living.

This work is written in Spanish, as it should be, and poses a challenge to those who wish to truly understand northern New Mexican folkways and idioms. That this vernacular still exists after these many centuries is indicative of the resiliency of a unique people who managed to survive often with nothing left but a sense of humor. A treat for both historians and students of the language, *Inocencio* is published by Paseo del Norte under the auspices of Editorial Grijalbo, of Mexico, D.F., and will soon be available locally.

The above review was previously done for the *New Mexican*.

-Jerry Padilla

## EXCERPT: TALES OF THE MAIDU From a book in progress

By John Duncan

Bear's song The words means he's track up and down manzanita berry ravine. I suppose meantime eat on the manzanita blossoms. That's the old he bear's song. Manzanita berries are his main food. Loo, lool is manzanita blossom.

Loo, lool, em saudi  
paiu soo soonay pai toh  
loo, lool, wjem saudi  
paiu soo soonay pai toh

If you tell stories in the summer, rattlesnake might get you. Rattlesnakes out in summer, see? and lizard's out in summer. Lizard is in the story. And rattlesnake's in the story, too. Rattlesnake was kicked out of the story. Grizzly was kicked out of the story. That's why they make those mean. That's why they turn around and fight back to humans even yet. The Indian people claim that even if you talk against the dinners and the big times, they say that don't set with the rattler. They always git ya. It'll come and wait for you in the dark to git ya. That's what they claim.

### WHEN THE WORLD WAS MADE

When the world was made here, there was two fellas around here named the points around Indian Valley. And this side of Indian Valley, why you go rond there--there's a ridge runnin out. There's a great big snake comin

out of a hole over there and comes in a hole near here. Comes over there to feed, I suppose, at night, and goes back early in the morning. They set the trap for him. But he took the trap and all. Never stopped for no trap. And another man come along. Investigate how these boys are doing with the naming of this world. They was goin all over naming things. They were singin and a runnin. Runnin all the time. Make this rock mountain--had a bag full of rock here. Make this rock mountain toss one over there, pretty soon toss another one, that makes all the bluffs and different things. They were singin just like this: Henim, poompoom toh. That's their song when they're runnin around the valley and the mountains everywhere makin these mountains and ravines and hills. And so on. And meantime, this fella, main fella, come along and asked the boys how they gettin along. So far they get along good but this big animal here is gonna catch em. So they said, "You set the trap for us so we can catch him." So he says he will. He set the trap the day he left. Set the trap that morning and he's gone. And he got this blowfly to watch this trap, these boys did. They told him to holler if a big animal gets caught in this trap. So these boys were runnin around way up the other end of Indian Valley, and by God, old blowfly holler. War whoop outa him. Boys says, by God, we got somethin in the trap. And they run back. Clear down to the lower end of Indian Valley. That fella hung his goddamn trap up in the sky somewhere. And it took him up but just the tail stickin down here, just so they could reach. Little higher than they could reach. So by God, this fella jumped up and cut the tail off. And the white stuff come outa the big snake, runnin down on the ground there. That's when coyote got up there and drink that white stuff. Some drops run down his back and made white spots grow there.

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## ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

By Julie Vigil

*Editor's Note: When individuals are asked the question, "What do you want for Christmas?" some people answer by submitting a long list of long-wanted items. Still others declare, "Nothing," but keep their fingers crossed behind their backs. Others truthfully say, "Your good wishes," while a few more playful respondents quip the age-old theme to a Christmas song, "My two front teeth."*

*Taos High School's Cultural Reporter class offers a new twist to the old, familiar question by enlisting the help of history buffs.*

Cultural Reporter is an educational outreach project that was first introduced to Taos, New Mexico three years ago and made the rounds in many museums, art centers and public buildings. The first year of the project, Taos High School in Taos, New Mexico and Washington Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia were chosen by the Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution to conduct Cultural Reporter classes in their schools. The experiment became a great success.

For the past two years, Taos High has remained the sole place where Cultural Reporter is taught. Instructor Kathy Cordova heads the project.

In order to make Cultural Reporter's dreams become realities, we need your help this year. We have attended local museums, the Kit Carson Archives and the public library. We also plan to take another field trip to see what interesting history and

information Santa Fe has to offer.

Many supplies are needed for interviews, binders and research. Also, the Cultural Reporter class consists of putting up shows and becoming culturally sensitive to the people you're interviewing, the people of our community. Film and many pictures are required to make exhibits vital and can cost much money to be produced. Many different needs for equipment need to be met in a class like this, and such needs are costly. This year, the New Mexico Arts Division has provided a grant for help in financing various items for the program.

The Cultural Reporter class currently has an exhibit, Nuestra Tierra, on exhibit at the Millicent Rogers Museum. I would encourage our reading public to view the show.

We are currently in the process of trying to put together an exhibit at the Martinez Hacienda which consists of the following topics: Blacksmithing; Spanish Colonial Woodworks; Traditional Weddings; Witchcraft; Native American Witchcraft; and Various Versions of La Llorona. The Taos High School Cultural Reporter requests your support and knowledge of any of the above topics.

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Julie K. Vigil is a 17 year old senior at Taos High School. She is the daughter of Raymond and Diana Vigil of Ranchos de Taos. In addition to being a member of the Cultural Reporter class, she is also a student participant in the Millicent Rogers Museum mentorship program.

**Photo Credits:** Front and back covers and page 3, Arsenio Cordova; page 9, courtesy of Don Borgeson and Angel Fire Resort Chamber of Commerce; page 14, Jerry Padilla.

**Art Credit:** Photo of Los Pastores depicts characters in the age-old drama. The artwork by Monica Sosaya Halford of Santa Fe is a recent donation from the artist to the Millicent Rogers Museum.