

# *AYER Y HOY en Taos*

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



*Christmas, Los Pastores and History*

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## Editor's Page

by Kathy Cordova

This issue, as with all the recent versions of **Ayer Y Hoy**, offers the readership a theme. The Christmas holiday, a true time for honoring shared traditions and the spirit of giving, naturally lends itself to using this theme.

Dr. Thomas Chavez, director of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, shares his research of Christmas history, most notably the shepherd's play, **Los Pastores**.

By reader request, Deacon Donald Martinez shares his meticulous research on the history of the well-known Pilgrimage for Vocations. For over twenty years, groups of interested persons have participated in a 100 mile trek to the Santuario de Chimayo as a prayer in support of vocations. The walk originates from various points of the state, but all participants meet in a grant, impressive *encuentro* (encounter) at the Santuario on the final day.

Even the book reviews of this issue offer a theme. At this time, when book purchases spur ideas for excellent gift suggestions, the chief topics center around books by or about area residents. The reviewers this issue offer a "thumbs up" to these "must read" selections.

Retired Forest Service employee and Taos County Historical Society president L.A. (Andy) Lindquist shares the fruits of his labor in the story on pages 10, 11 and 12.

An enjoyable bit of local color awaits the reader as John B. Quintana, retired Health Department employee, reminisces the Taos of "the good old days" of his youth in his tales "Echoes of the Past."

Be certain to note the credits, explanations and notices that tie in all the Society's work.

## ISSUE NO. 18: Winter 1994

### *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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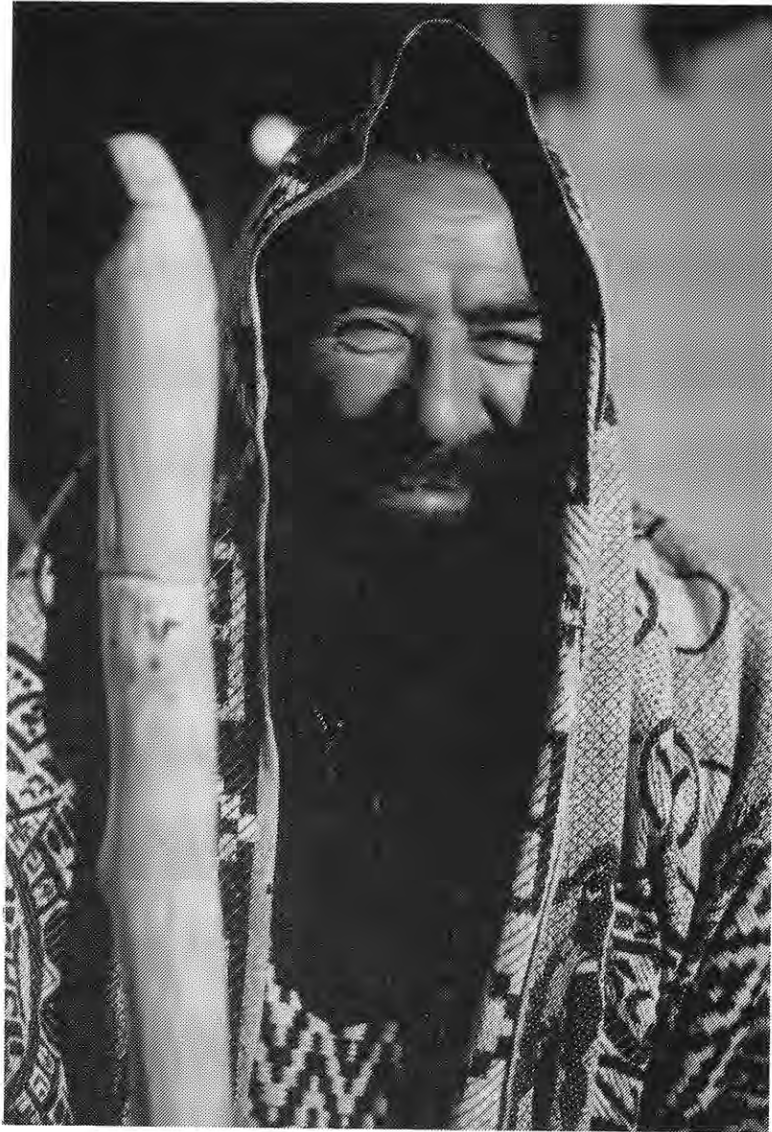
#### **Editor**

Kathy Cordova

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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## **CHRISTMAS, LOS PASTORES AND HISTORY**

By Dr. Thomas Chavez

Long before the modern Christmas of electric lights, Santa Claus of North Pole and the now popular Christmas carols, the day commemorating the birth of Christ in the Hispanic world was a holy day of obligation. People read or heard all the Nativity stories from the Bible. They imagined what it must have been like for Joseph and Mary to give birth to their child in a Bethlehem manger. They knew the story of an angel appearing to a shepherd and of a bright star leading him and his friends to the scene of the Nativity. This story was known to all Europeans as affectionate and easily remembered.

Then, the Hispanic world expanded to the Americans and millions of souls that they believed needed conversation to Catholicism. A new religion had to be taught to these people, and the only way to do this was to give lessons using illustrations and demonstrations.

How these efforts evolved to dramatic musicals playing out Bible scenes is easily pieced together from documentary tidbits and the results that have survived today. Imagine those early missionaries when they first tried to communicate to people who did not understand the language. With translators in tow, the friar had to use gestures, sounds, mimicry, and act. He put on a show. As people began to learn each others' language in varying degrees, all sides came to realize that Bible lessons lent themselves to drama and music. Music, they knew, always served as an excellent tool for teaching language or anything else.

In addition, the church has a long tradition of music and drama. At base, a high Mass sung in Latin, was a musical drama. Organs and choruses performed some of the best music written then or now. The Mass itself reenacted parts of Christ's life like the Last Supper or Pontius Pilot washing his hands. Early missionaries quickly made the musical transition to catechism.

As Spanish settlement expanded to New Mexico at the end of the sixteenth century, so too did the tradition of music and acting. Even one of Juan de Onate's captains wrote a drama that was performed during Easter for the first expedition. There is evidence of instruments and music coming with the first colonist and every generation after. Each of the succeeding generations was culturally a little bit different because society was changing in Mexico. The influences of the great Indian population had an influence on European culture and vice versa. Something new was happening--these people were no longer European; they were American.

One of that fusion of cultures came a series of musical plays that were locally produced and performed. Most of these plays had something to do with the Christmas theme. Los Tres Reyes Magos, Las Posadas and Los Pastores are the most prominent. Matachines did not originate as a Christmas musical or dance, but has become associated with the season.

Los Pastores was most assuredly developed in Mexico during the colonial period. Generally, this drama tells the story of the Angel telling a shepherd that the Christ Child has been born. The shepherd

then goes to his camp to tell his buddies about the revelation. A debate ensues during which others reveal that they heard celestial music or had a dream confirming the story. Many versions of the play include a hermit who has befriended the shepherds and is looking for the newborn child. Of course, the shepherds travel to Bethlehem where they present gifts and adore the newborn babe.

The story is infused and livened with a devil who tries to find out what the shepherds know about this new Messiah. Possibly a play of the killing of the innocents, Herod ordered all young children killed in order to prevent the new "King" from fulfilling his prophecy. The devil wants to foil the new birth. The devil fails to trick the shepherds into giving him the desired information and is defeated in a struggle with the angel Michael.

In addition, the main characters themselves take on traits and personalities. One shepherd is obviously lazy. In one version of the play, the lazy shepherd will not even get up to eat. Others have varying degrees of doubt and/or faith.

Researchers have spent years traveling throughout the Southwest and Mexico searching for written manuscripts of Los Pastores. Some manuscripts have been uncovered--none from the early colonial period. The discoveries gave rise to comparisons of the different copies. Scholars continue to investigate which copy came from where and what.

Some manuscript copies are available in local archives and libraries. They have been copied and some have been published, even translated. So, for the person who does not understand Spanish and wants to learn more, the opportunity is there. After all, learning was the very basis of the origins of Los Pastores.

Today, Los Pastores is done in New Mexico more than anywhere else in the United States. In addition, there has been a resurgence in New Mexico as well as elsewhere. Every New Mexican knows that plays like Los Pastores is as much a part of Christmas as Santa Claus. Moreover, such prominent evidence of yesteryear's influences is illustrative of the persistence of culture and tradition that makes up today's whole. So enjoy Los Pastores, for you may find pleasure on many levels.

*Dr. Thomas Chavez is the director of The Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, a division of the Museum of New Mexico and the Office of Cultural Affairs.*



## History of the Pilgrimage for Vocations

by Kathy Cordova

(Editors note: Due to readers' request, the following article came to fruition. Special thanks to Deacon Donald Martinez for so generously sharing the information.)

The late Rev. Michael Patrick O'Brien, who in 1972 was a young priest in Estancia, organized a camping trip to Chimayo for teenagers who wished to participate in a religious experience. As the young people began their 100 mile trek on foot, the annual pilgrimage for Vocations was born, although that first year, no one realized this as such.

1973 marks the first official date of the Pilgrimage. Slightly over 40 young men from the churches of the Estancia Valley, and the Mountainair parish formed the group. The Southern route of the Pilgrimage for Vocations was officially initiated. This trek, formed mainly to encourage religious vocations, earned the distinction out of necessity.

The following words, written by Rev. O'Brien for the introduction to the Pilgrimage

handbook, explains the rationale behind the effort.

"In the early 70's the church in general or in particular in New Mexico was suffering from a crisis of vocation or a vocation crisis. One seminary was practically empty and the numbers of those entering the seminary was low. More importantly, many of us had lost touch with our call from God throughout our life to be a pilgrim people and to respond to the call of God in our daily lives as they unfolded." He also explained in the guide that for generations, native people of the southwest had gone on pilgrimages to Chimayo for healing and prayers of petition and thanksgiving.

The second year, 1974, offered a bit of a disappointment. 24 young men attended the long walk, slightly over half of the number of the previous year. However, the Pilgrimage also received a symbolic boost, as the newly named Archbishop Robert Sanchez joined the group and celebrated the closing Mass that year at the Santuario.

As the momentum grew, so did the numbers. By 1978, a second route opened. The northern route from Costilla to Chimayo added to the original trek.

1979 saw the formation of the Guadalupanas, the women who wished to share in the pilgrimage experience. The group first formulated as an auxiliary organization to assist the pilgrims, but eventually became active enough to participate in walking as well. Today, the women may participate in one or both of the two possible activities: the women's walk from various northern New Mexico communities to Chimayo the day prior to Mother's Day and/or the annual 100 mile walk.

During the years that the Pilgrimage for Vocations continued to grow, its evolution toward the current organization also continued to develop. Rev. O'Brien attended a 100-day retreat, from October 7 to December 12, 1980, at the Sangre De Cristo Center near Tesuque to renew himself as

the group's spiritual leader. Likewise, the Peregrinos and Guadalupanas immersed themselves in prayer and preparation.

To prepare their minds, hearts, and bodies, all participants register annually. They participate in an interview, prayer, test, meetings and practice walks throughout the year. A special Good Friday pilgrimage to the Santuario or various parish churches also compromise the requirements. Guadalupanas and Peregrinos (pilgrims) must also serve in their own parish activities and ministries. Persons over 30 must partake in a physical exam, while those younger must complete medical history questionnaires. Some under 30 may also be required to seek medical advice if staff members deem it necessary. In addition, required study in the following areas fills meeting times: church history, concepts of ministry, concepts of vocations and physical conditioning. Each pilgrim must complete a practice walk of at least 20 miles, and staff members and others also attend at least one retreat.

As the numbers and momentum continued, so did the roles of the participants. Staff members serve as student leaders, "assisting in the many tasks necessary to keep the Pilgrimage running smoothly, both spiritually and physically," Priest leaders (deacons) learn first-aid and help brother and sister participants in distress by popping blisters, applying Ben-Gay, and other medically related tasks. Each route includes a rector, a person

responsible for the discipline and safety of the group. The spiritual director reflects with the rector to insure that the spirituality of the group remains intact.

Everyone abides by specific rules: no fighting, hitching rides or using drugs or liquor during the walk.

In 1982, as participation in the activity spread to other areas of northern New Mexico, two new routes were established. The western route from Chama to Chimayo and the eastern route from Wagon Mound to Chimayo added yet another dimension to the Pilgrimage for Vocations.

Just as the leadership of the participants changes from time to time, so does that of the clergy. On October 1, 1985, after 12 years as the official spiritual leader of the Pilgrimage, Rev. Michael O'Brien stepped down as director. Father Steve Rosera assumed that role.

In 1987, two major changes occurred. The southern route from Albuquerque to Chimayo opened up, thus spreading the spiritual activity in yet another direction. Father Phil Herndon then assumed the role of spiritual director.

The following year, 1988, the women's route now offered the opportunity for the Guadalupanas to establish and maintain their own leadership.

In 1989, Rev. Edmund Savilla became the spiritual leader of the Archdiocesan Pilgrimage for Vocations.

Participants with the communities through which the groups walk remain the order of the day- prayers, Masses, community meals, and

communal stays all form the ritual of sharing and community involvement. Cooperation, encouragement to those pilgrims who need help in their continued journey and follow up after the pilgrimage is over remain important aspects of the program as well.

At the request of the readership, I began the search to locate an author of this history, for publication in AYER Y HOY. I contacted Rev. Michael O'Brien who I considered as a family member. He replied, "Why Me? You're the writer in the family. You do it." He had recently been diagnosed with cancer at the time, and had little energy to spare, so I agreed to do so.

On January 14, 1993, Father Mike, as many called him, passed away. He made his final pilgrimage to a grave in the church courtyard at Monte Aplanao, a mission capilla (chapel) of the Mora parish (St. Gertrude's) where he once served as pastor.

The year of his death, at the time of the annual Pilgrimage, those involved in the eastern route made a visit to their former leader's grave. In the true spirit of the Pilgrimage for Vocations, they prayed and offered tribute to the priest who had started it all. Their final message: " May he rest in peace."

Though Father Mike is gone in a physical sense, he still remains with us in a spiritual sense. The fruits of his work, and the efforts of others who follow the Pilgrimage will long remain. This is Rev. Michael O'Brien's legacy to us all.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Stories Behind the Street Names of  
Albuquerque, Santa Fe, & Taos

By Donald A. Gill, PhD

Published in 1994, 284 pages; 6 pages of  
Bibliography, 10 pages of index

Price: Paper \$14.95

Bonus Books, Inc., Chicago

Each section of the book begins with a short introduction on the history of the area beginning with an introduction on the discovery and settlement of New Mexico by the first European expeditions led by the Spanish conquistadores. Then there is a brief introduction on Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos.

I found the short histories and anecdotes on the different street name origins interesting. Many of the streets in the old town and rural areas in Albuquerque are Spanish and were named by the first settlers. The later developments in the eastern and western foothills were named by the developers. Some are names of the developer's family members; others chose themes such as pueblos, minerals or mines, ie., silver, copper, lead, etc., and names of artists. The author erroneously stated that Helen Hardin lives in Santa Fe. Helen died of cancer at the age of 41.

Since I have lived in Taos the greater part of my life, I find I must correct a few errors in this section. The main street running north and south through Taos is incorrectly spelled in part as Paseo del Pueblo Sud, which should be Sur, meaning South. The author writes of Ed Lineberry in the past tense and Ed lives with his second wife at the Van Vechten Estate. Also, the author says no one by the name of Karavas "currently resides in Taos" and Saki Karavas is very much alive and resides in his establishment in the middle of Taos Plaza, La Fonda Hotel.

The author spent two months living in New Mexico and obviously did a great deal of research for this book. Readers will gain an insight to much New Mexico history. It is easy reading and will serve as a good reference book.

Sadie O. Knight

"BARRIOS AND BORDERLANDS"  
Cultures of Latinos and Latinas in the United  
States

by Denis Lynn Daly Heyck.

Published by Routledge, 1994

London and New York

Soft Cover

485 pages, some illustrations

This anthology of Latinos and Latinas is organized around six cultural themes: family, religion, community, the arts, immigration exile and cultural identity.

Featured in the religion section titled "Buenas Dias, Mi Dios; La Religion" is Taoseno Arsenio Cordova. The introduction to the interview with Senor Cordova states: "He is a highly regarded ethnomusicologist who lives and works in northern New Mexico. He has dedicated himself to keeping alive the oral performance tradition in New Mexico folk and religious culture". The interview that follows proves just how knowledgeable Arsenio is about his culture. He discusses the Matachines, La Posada, his family history, the penitentes, plus Abuelos and their place in the culture of northern New Mexico.

Another northern New Mexican Father Jerome Martinez, expresses himself so well in the interview under "My Roots Are Not Mine Alone La Identidad Cultural," that this particular interview should be required reading for anyone who lives in New Mexico now. It will teach you a lot about the people around you today.

This weighty tome is the text for Latin Studies on the university level. An illuminating text for any social studies course, but particularly useful for the Latino and Latina and good browsing.

Fayne Lutz

**"FACES I HAVE KNOWN," OR MEMORIES  
FROM THE CYCLES OF LIFE, NEW WORK  
BY KATHRYN CORDOVA**

Advanced Graphics, Albuquerque, N.M.

Paper: \$15.00

Published in 1994; 96 pages

What to do while recovering from surgery? Some would opt for plenty of rest, minimal physical activity and perhaps just lie around mending. Teacher and writer Kathryn Cordova used the idle time to finish writing a book she's had in the works for some time. She said, "I had written several short stories and poems for the fun of it and as an expression of feelings. While recovering from an operation I used the time to finish them and realized I'd compiled enough for a small volume. With idle time on my hands, I started working on putting the collection together as a book."

The result is *Faces I Have Known*, an anthology of short stories and poems about real people, life situations, and human feelings. Often earthy, at times bittersweet, these passages can evoke the readers similar memories. These are the kinds of humanistic vignettes that can become novels.

Faces represented depict the different stages of living, from child to elder adult, reflecting significant and some "everyday" events in living. Starting with the young, the world is seen through the eyes of children and teenagers, in "Youthful Faces." "Experienced Faces" continues with sagas of experiences of young adults. Certain events that affect one's feelings by their very nature are the theme of "Emotional Faces," while "Spiritual Faces" reminds readers that even though loved ones have passed on to their eternal reward, they still live in our hearts and memories.

"The Miracle of Enchiladas," and "Turnabout," are two stories in this last section are two with which many will identify, having experienced similar events.

The importance of family and how love does sometimes conquer all is nicely illustrated in "The Political Pact."

Utilizing Japanese styles of haiku and tanka, a favorite of Cordova's, has become a kind of trademark in her poetry. Cordova is grateful to a guest teacher from Japan who encouraged her with this form of poetry.

"Takako not only talk about cultural influences, she demonstrated them by doing a tea ceremony and a sword ceremony," shared Cordova. "She came to us as a part of a cultural exchange program. How fortunate to be an American and experience these kinds of things in school." she remembers thinking at the time.

According to her, the faces in the book are composites of real people with some creativity. Close friends and relatives will recognize personages, as each section is illustrated with unretouched favorite photos of Cordova's. One to always remember former students, Cordova invited Robert Gonzales to create the drawings illustrating the cover and section title pages.

She continued, "I wrote this book to help preserve my culture, record human nature and share truly unique and unforgettable faces I have known, and come to respect, in both real life and my imagination. Throughout the cycle of a lifetime, we all experience certain faces we associate with that part of living. That is why this book presents faces from different ages, youthful experienced, emotional and spiritual."

They will become so familiar to you, they could also become faces you have known. Perhaps you will recognize a similarity to someone you've known or yourself. Undoubtedly readers will be reminded of similar events or kinships of their own.

It is a soft cover edition promising entertaining reading, and is available locally at Moby Dickens, the Kit Carson House, the Martinez Hacienda, the Brodsky Bookshop, and the Blumenschein House, Millicent Rogers Museum, Las Palomas, (Mabel Dodge Luhan House) or from the author, retailing at \$15: Send orders to Faces I Have Known, P.O. Box 8, El Prado, New Mexico 87529.

Aside from duties as a full time teacher at Taos High School, Cordova works as a freelancer with articles periodically appearing in *The Taos News*. Her writing credits include work done for New Mexico magazine, *The Adobe Press*, *Christmas in Taos*, *Verano*, *The Santa Fe Reporter*, as well as contributions to *Las Mujeres Hablan*, *Nuestras Mujeres*, and the editing of *No Lloro Pero Me Acuerdo*.

An award-winning member of the New Mexico Press Women's Association, she is also editor of *Ayer Y Hoy* and co-author of *The Cultural Reporter Handbook*, soon to be published by Smithsonian Institution.

Also delving in the performing arts, this mother of three has taken part in husband Arsenio's productions of Spanish folk dramas, most recently *Los Pastores*.

Based on a prior review appearing in *The Taos News' Tempo* magazine.

Jerry Padilla



## The Secret Place

By Judy Romero-Oak

Published in 1993, 97 pages

Price: \$14.95

Writing Designs; Taos, New Mexico

The Secret Place - The title alone has a meaning to all who hear it, even though the interpretations may vary. So, too, the symbolism in the book will change according to the point of view of each and every reader. As an English teacher, I marvel at the various interpretations a single word such as love can evoke. One of the strengths of this book is the richness of possible explanations, each one reflecting the personal experiences of those who read it.

Romero-Oak divides the book into two sections, "The Secret Place" and "The Journey Within." The titles alone evoke ideas of our own quests for knowledge and serenity that loom within us all.

"The Secret Place" begins with a setting of "She," the central character, at her own small house nestled against a giant cliff. Her description of self, offered through a series of short scenes, changes as the book progresses. At times, she is the color of honey. Sometimes, she's sweet brown, "red as the day that wets my hands." She is white; she is black. Likewise, the setting varies, from the little house near the cliff to the rainbow, a temple... the many places that comprise a journey. The trip transpires through interaction with a variety of people and animals - Mother Wisdom, prophets, eagles, a dog. As the journey progresses, so do the emotions - from anger to a feeling of being lost to harmony. These changes reflect the natural order of our own lives.

The author tells the tale through a story line of a gift given to "She," a small blue chest of seven drawers. Each morning, the central character (Romero - Oak's own persona), receives a key that will open a new drawer in the chest. The receipt of this key, one of seven, begins a new quest, and therefore a new adventure. This series of short scenes weaves the entire search into one common cloth.

As the scenes, and therefore the search, progress, Part II of the book envelopes "The Journey Within." Again, the changes - from conflict to happiness - continue to exist. The plot unravels occurrences, not unlike all our lives, but experiences which help to eventually affect "She," just as ours affect us.

Romero-Oak sums up the prevalent attitude toward a search of this nature in her introduction:

"Spiritual growth must begin with a knowledge of the self. If we try to evade that knowledge, our spiritual practice becomes empty ritual without soul or spirit. If spiritual worship is not invested with all of the worshipper's self, it is empty and vain. Yet our society too often discourages the exploration and knowledge of self as egotistical and self-indulgent. This produces people who are self-righteous, but spiritually bankrupt, living in fear and condemnation." She quotes from Scripture throughout, thus offering credence to the fact that, for her, this is very definitely a spiritual journey.

Every person has their own "inner me," their special place that is "home" - a secret place identifiable especially to self. This book, a self published work, includes both an entertaining story line and an opportunity for self exploration. Its strength can be summed up in three words - "something for everyone."

Kathryn M. Cordova

## White Sands: The History of a National Monument

By Dietman Schneider-Hector

Publication date: June 24, 1993

Price: \$17.50

Binding: Paper

University of New Mexico Press

In addition to the narrative, this book contains 37 pages of notes; a 22-page bibliography, and a 23-page index.

This is a very detailed history of White Sands National Monument (WSNM) beginning in 1931-32 when environment-conscious citizens in the preservation-oriented National Park Service insisted that the dunes be maintained and protected as a natural area. Its first custodian, Tom Charles, encouraged tourism and wanted the public to enjoy the monument as a giant playground. He allowed visitors to take gypsum samples and to drive over the dunes. Later on, this was not allowed and a more conscious effort was made to preserve the dunes with minimal off-road traffic permitted.

An on-going battle was carried on with the Defense Department because of encroachment on the monument and the violations by rockets landing in the dunes. The proximity of White Sands Missile Range and Holloman AFB created many problems and a great deal of protesting by the different monument custodians. From September 1945 through March 1980, 32,019 missile firings were recorded at the missile range.

(continued on page 12)



## RANGER'S HOUSE AT TRES PIEDRAS, A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION PIONEERS

By L. A. Lindquist

The community of Tres Piedras, New Mexico takes its name from the three large granite formations that are visible for miles around. The local people refer to the middle rock as "Ranger Rock", recognizing that it marks the location used continuously as a ranger station from the early days of the Carson National Forest.

The site was originally called the Granite Ranger Station, and was for a time the headquarters for the entire Carson National Forest. In 1908, part of the Jemez National Forest and all of the Taos National Forest were combined under the new name. The new National Forest was administered first from Santa Fe, then from Antonito, Colorado until its headquarters was moved to Tres Piedras in 1911.

In 1915, the Carson supervisor's headquarters was moved to Taos, where it remains today. The Tres Piedras location remained as a ranger station. Today, it is the headquarters for the Tres Piedras Ranger District, which has a modern office building and work center a quarter mile to the west along Highway 64. A group of the oldest buildings, still in use, but significant to New Mexico and Forest Service history, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of an historic district that includes seven buildings and five structures. This site still retains the appearance and feel of the early days of the Forest Service.

In July of 1911, when the Carson NF headquarters was moved to Tres Piedras, the office was located in a small hotel that was leased for this purpose. Photographs of this building exist, and it returned to its status as a hotel after 1915. It later burned. Apparently at this time, the town of Tres Piedras was in decline due to reduced logging operations in the vicinity and numerous buildings were vacant. Charles C. Hall, the Forest Supervisor, and Forest Assistant Ira T. Yarnall lived in a rented house on Main Street. Deputy Supervisor Aldo Leopold lived in a bungalow nearby (1). It wasn't until 1912 that construction began on a permanent headquarters.

By 1911, most of the western National Forests had been established by Presidential proclamation from the Federal public domain, although there was still much work to be done in locating and adjusting boundaries, establishing ranger stations, and organizing the work force. At that time, the Forest Service had about 2,500 employees to protect and administer about 190 million acres of land, much of it unsurveyed (2).

The early policy was to organize by combining technical expertise of the early forestry school graduates with the practical knowledge of local men who knew about grazing, surveying, horse packing, and using an axe and a gun. Forest Supervisor Hall had local experience from the early Forest Reserve days in Oregon and Montana and Leopold and Yarnall were the forestry graduates on the first Carson staff. Raymond Marsh, who had known Leopold at Yale and worked with him on the Apache National Forest, arrived a few months later to head up timber reconnaissance operations on the Carson. The rangers at Taos, Questa, San Antone (Ortiz, Colorado), Servilleta, Canjilon and Vallecitos were already in place as part of the

former Jemez and Taos National Forests. The Jicarilla District was added in 1911.

One tool that C.C. Hall, the Supervisor, brought with him from previous assignments on the Alamo and Deerlodge N.F.'s. was publication of a monthly newsletter. Leopold became the "editor in chief". This newsletter contained summaries of business on the forest, news of interest to the employees, ideas for improving the work, and social notes. The *Carson Pine Cone*, as it was called, also had an occasional poem, congratulations for good work, and exhortations to "pull together". Apparently it was a chore to gather sufficient material to fill this newsletter, as there are occasional lapses, but it was continued for many years, and provides a record of early work and life on the Carson National Forest. An entry for August 1911 reported "...a most brilliant and successful dance (was) given in ...the Tres Piedras Casino. The surprise of the evening was our dignified and respected Supervisor calling the square dances with a skill, precision and versatility which spoke volumes for his younger days."

From the December 1911 *Carson Pine Cone*:  
"From the Santa Fe New Mexican -- Mr. and Mrs. Alfred M Bergere announce the engagement of their daughter Estella to Mr. Aldo Leopold of Burlington, Iowa."

In addition to boundary work, the rangers laid out telephone lines, investigated settlement claims (homesteads), mapped and measured timber, inspected timber sale areas, fought fires, and issued grazing permits. Travel then was mostly on horseback, and the work required hard riding and long days, but allowed the Rangers to become familiar with vast areas and varied habitats and conditions. On a salary of \$900 per year, rangers were expected to furnish their own horses, but did receive a horse feed allotment. In addition, they built their own ranger stations. In 1911, cabins were built at Cow Creek, Canjilon, and San Antone.

What roads existed around Tres Piedras were steep and rough. The *Carson Pine Cone* reported in 1912 that "Forest Assistant Yarnall is the proud possessor of a new buckboard which, named by him "The Spectacular Speeder" fully lives up to its cognomen ....considering what happened on its maiden trip a better name would be "The Spectacular Spiller".

In March of 1912, Hall left New Mexico for an assignment in his home state of Oregon, and

Leopold was made Acting Supervisor. Also in the same year the *Carson Pine Cone* reported that "The new Forest Supervisor's Headquarters Office, which has been about to be started since February has now materialized to the extent that about half the lumber and other materials are on the ground." and later, "The District Forester has recently authorized the construction of barns at Tres Piedras, Taos and Cow Creek" and, "The Supervisor's Headquarters Office at Tres Piedras ...is now completed and it is believed will compare favorably with other Headquarters Offices in District 3."

What is interesting is that the building plans which match the present house, signed by Aldo Leopold December 5, 1911, are titled "PLAN FOR SUPERVISOR'S HEADQUARTERS" (3). Evidently this was the "Supervisor's Headquarters Office" reported in the *Pine Cone*, but was, in fact, the house. Another smaller building adjacent to the house was added as an office building later.

Leopold married Estella Bergere in Santa Fe on October 9, 1912 and they moved into the new house in Tres Piedras. The next April, Leopold barely survived a trip to the Jicarilla District when he was caught out, alone on horseback in a severe storm and with a wet bedroll, came down with an almost fatal illness and was forced to take leave from the Forest Service for 18 months. He returned to the house at Tres Piedras only briefly in 1914 to retrieve his household goods. (4)

Raymond Marsh took over at Tres Piedras, and later became Forest Supervisor when Leopold was reassigned to the District Office in Albuquerque. Marsh, Leopold and Yarnall all went on to distinguished careers in the Forest Service after their early experiences in organizing the Carson National Forest.

Leopold, of course, became a national leader in wildlife conservation, and an early advocate for wilderness preservation. He left the Forest Service in 1928 and later chaired the study of game management at the University of Wisconsin. Today, Leopold is most noted for his *Sand County Almanac* (5), not published until after his death in 1948, which continues to appeal, not only for its ideas, but as a wonderfully clear and enjoyable sketch of a thoughtful man's experiences with the world around him, and his hopes for its future.

While Leopold and his wife Estella lived in the house at Tres Piedras only a few months, it somehow exhibits the feelings that Leopold has inspired in others of closeness to the land and its creatures. The house, superbly cradled by "Ranger Rock", is a wonderful symbol of Leopold's belief that man's place should be in harmony with nature.

#### FOOTNOTES

(1) *Carson Pine Cone*, Newsletter of the Carson National Forest, 1911-1914, Taos, New Mexico

(2) Steen, Harold K., *The U.S. Forest Service: A History*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1991.

(3) Carson National Forest Files, Historic Register Nomination, Taos, New Mexico.

(4) Meine, Curt, *Aldo Leopold, His Life and Work*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1988.

(5) Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac, and Sketches Here and There*, Oxford University Press, 1949.



(continued from page 9)

The relationship between the Interior and the Defense departments has been a mixed blessing in that the proximity of the military prevented the private and commercial exploitation of the land, but their activities continue to plague the fragility of the dune fields, flora, and fauna.

The dunes were proclaimed as the WSNM on January 18, 1933, and from that time to the present they have been an extremely popular tourist attraction. The city of Alamogordo enjoys the economic boost from this popularity, as do Las Cruces, and even El Paso, Texas. Attendance at the monument grew from 12,000 in 1933 to 667,000 in 1986.

This book takes the reader through the long process in establishing a national monument, the politics, the personalities, and the many obstacles to overcome in reaching the final goal.

Sadie O. Knight



## ECHOES OF THE PAST

By John B. Quintana

Our legendary Llorona not only cries for the soul of her lost child, she also cries for the lost memories of a certain group of people from Taos.

Like the Llorona's child that was engulfed by the water that took its life, so has apathy engulfed the memory of these people that were the heart and soul of this community during the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties.

The culture and customs of these people were the ingredients that bewitched the artist and the affluent to remain here once they were drawn into this magic web.

Up to this time, three existing cultures intermingled freely religiously, socially, culturally and economically. For all intents and purposes, they were one, el Indio, el Chicano and the Gringo.

Once people from other parts of the country started

coming and settling here, a change began to take place, although slowly at the beginning. The live and let live philosophy of the natives turned out to be the quicksand that eventually sucked them into oblivion.

Now, as the sun of life sinks deeper and deeper into the horizon of history, not many of us are left to resurrect these people from the depth of forgetfulness and display them in the gallery of history. Many of these people were entrepreneurs, starting with Dona Soledad, a heavy set, bronze complexioned woman with a very gentle nature. This wonderful lady was one of the first to put into practice the "Bed and Breakfast" industry. She was the owner of a large house consisting of two apartments and three rooms for overnight stays just a city block from the town square. She also

served three daily meals. Travel in those days was difficult - horseback, horse and buggy and horse drawn wagon.

The roads were such that people living in the outreaches of the county having business at the county seat had to spend at least one night either with relatives, friends or in one of these houses. The yard was big, consisting of an orchard, lawn, flower and vegetable garden beds. An old Indian man called "Chija" was in charge of all the yard work.

Chief among the Spring cleaning chores was the washing of the bedding, wool mattresses and pillows. The task was done by two special people: Don Pedrito, "Gallina" as he was called, and his wife Elena. Elena was a petite woman with a very cheerful personality. She was really the one that did all the work, as she would say to

my Grandma; "ya mi viejito no sirve pa nada, mire nita, yo la harinita, yo el cafecito, yo la mantequita, yo la rentita, ya vera nita que apenas me alcanzo." All this time, she would be fluffing the wool that went into the mattresses and pillows with a slender willow stick, chuckling and giggling all the time. To fluff the wool, people would spread it out on a tarp to sun dry. After it dried, they would whip it with a willow stick until it was ready to be stuffed back in the mattresses and pillows. Several other families would employ this couple for the same work because they were good at what they did.

Next door to Dona Soledad, the Welch brothers had their blacksmith shop. Epifanio and Henry were bachelors. They were very good at their profession and were usually swamped with work, repairing buggy and wagon wheels, plows, horseshoeing and other work. They would tolerate three or four of us kids watching them at work for a while, and when they would tire of us, they would pretend to get mad at one another and start swinging sledge hammers at each other. Then, we would scatter to the four winds. They had a sign hanging from the shop ceiling which read: "Si fio pierdo lo que es mio, si doy pierdo la ganancia de hoy, si presto me hacen un jesto, y para que no haiga nada de esto, ni fio, ni doy, ni presto."

Felipe Guttman, a man of medium stature, was presumably of German lineage. He was a professional jeweler, and worked together with Dona Hilaria Luna in her shop in the Rita Gomez Plaza. Mr. Guttman was also a musician, and was able to play all kinds of instruments-violin, accordian, guitar, organ and others. He would play for the fiestas in

different outlying communities as well as Taos proper.

El viejito Castillo, as he was known, was a self employed person. He was solitary old man who made his living by making and peddling tamales. He was always neatly dressed, clean shaven and never seemed to have any problem selling his few dozen tamales. By present standards, the tamales were possibly a health hazard, although no one ever complained, to our knowledge, of having gotten sick from eating his food. Living poetry was portrayed by a man named Alberto, most commonly known by his nickname "Alberto Ronco".

Every morning of the week, this man could be seen driving his wood-laden donkeys from Canon into town to sell his wood. He was never known to carry his load back home. In the evening, he would be seen driving his burros home whistling a happy tune.

Donaciano "Doncito" Martinez was fondly referred to by the County Sheriff that pinned a personalized deputy's badge on him as the best damn deputy this side of the Rio Grande. In his days, before being deputized, he would hang around the square and watch the young girls as they went home from school and try to flirt with them. During the Town fiestas, he would help direct traffic and other minor chores. He was a petite, kind-hearted, religious and peace-loving man,

Arsenia, nicknamed "Ginger," was a heavy set woman that liked to wear large floppy hats and colorful print dresses. She was the belle of the town fiestas, as she would dance by herself while the different bands played, sad to say, to the humiliation and embarrassment of the local women.

Pascual and his son Perez were the only tailors in town. The local politicians and the young dandies would order their tailor made suits from them. After Don Pascual passed away, Pedro joined the local National Guard as a bugler. After winning first place as a bugler several years in a row, he was promoted to mess sergeant, at which rank he served until his retirement.

Don Toribio, a small and very congenial gentleman, made his living with his team and wagon hauling trash for different people who knew him and were glad to employ him. This man knew strangers, whomever he met, he would greet with a good day asking, "How is your father, your mother, your brothers, your sisters?" This man was living proof to Will Rogers' saying, "I never met a man I didn't like".

The Braulio family, commonly known as "Los Chopos", evidently because all the sons were short and stocky, was noteworthy because all of them wore bib overalls with a turned-up leg cuff about eight inches wide. To our knowledge, none of them ever did a lick of work, and how they got by is a mystery up to this day.

Bud, the only colored person living in the area at the time, was a giant, mild mannered individual. He kept to himself most of the time, although he seemed to mix well with the rest of the people. He made a living as a cook and doing odd jobs.

Jim Burns was, in retrospect, a person forty or fifty years before his time. He sported a full beard, wore the same clothes forever, went around mumbling to himself and socialized with no one. Very little was known about him, except that he claimed to be a surveyor. No one questioned his

claim, and he served as the County Surveyor for years. We mention the fact that he was years before his time, for in the 1960's he would have qualified as a full-fledged hippie.

Onofre and Orcelia were husband and wife. Onofre, a carpenter by trade, was a master craftsman. During his time, ice was the method of keeping food fresh. The iceboxes that he made were, in later years, considered pieces of art. A few of them were seen as late as the 1950's and were highly priced as rare antiques. Orcelia was not one to be outdone by her husband. She was an expert seamstress and highly sought after by the society women of the area to make or alter their clothes.

Hilaria Luna, a slender woman with a friendly and pleasant disposition, was a jeweler by trade. By today's standards, she would be considered a fine artist. She was widely known for the beautiful gold filigree rings and earrings that she made. She also did considerable work with silver and copper. By the way, she was Dona Soledad's sister.

Pablita was a domestic worker employed by one of the prominent families of Taos. A widow with five children lived in our neighborhood in a one room apartment. Her three youngest were our playmates, and as such, we would occasionally go to her house at the time when she would be making tortillas. Good hearted that she was, she would give us all tortillas with a lard and sugar spread. In our hearts, she could very well be likened to the biblical woman that gave all she had to the church collection box.

Of course, a couple that could fit anywhere in the ghost parade would be Pite Baba and his wife Rita. Pite, a short stocky peglegged individual with

tobacco juice drooling down the side of his mouth, earned the nickname "Pite Baba". Rita, his mate, had a large goiter which she kept covered with a red bandanna. This couple were nomads, traveling from southern New Mexico to Denver, Colorado, as one would say "de a dedo" (hitchhiking), stopping at every little settlement along the way. They would be taken in by friends for a few days, and in this way, they would make their journey. Maybe it would take them a few months to cover the distance, but what was the hurry? Another character that fits this category was "Malogra Chavez," as he would call himself, an amputee of both legs.

In order to get around, he made a cart out of the seat of a wooden chair attached to a roller skate, using his arms to propel himself. Malogra also traveled from village to village to village, making his living by panhandling and selling pinon nuts.

Dona Secundina, a frail little lady, always dressed in black from hat to shoes, made her living by selling white cheese made out of cow's milk. She delivered it to her customers in a one-horse-drawn buggy. She had many customers in town who would invite her in for coffee and biscochitos during cold weather, as was customary in those days.

Felique Santistevan was called the guardian angel and lifesaver of "la raza". When the local people were in need of small loans of money to carry on their small business enterprises, Don Felique was the only source open to them. Without this man's help, these people were unable to operate, since the local bank of that period would have nothing to do with them.

Melaquias Cortez, in the theater of life, would have

been an Oscar winner, hands down. A short stocky man with a ruddy complexioned face and a walrus mustache, upon getting into town would walk in to the bar. He would yell at the top of his lungs, "Indios cabanes," at which time Susanna, the barkeep, would placate him with a shot of whiskey which would keep him peaceful for the rest of the day. In reality, he was not a violent man, but a darn good actor.

Don Guadalupe, better known as "El Medecinero," traveled the entire county, first in a horse-drawn yellow colored van, selling all kinds of patent medicines. This man was a welcome sight all over the county since drugstores were nonexistent outside of Taos proper.

Bob Elder, an employee of the Gusdorf Mercantile, was a short individual with a pock-marked face and a prominent nose. He was the most loyal fan of the local baseball team and its self-appointed official umpire.

Fidelia Coca was another widow that made her living as a domestic in several different homes, cleaning, washing, ironing, etc. This work left her very little time for social contact.

I knew all of these people when I was a very young boy, so my geographical area was limited and there were a great number of people that, unfortunately, I did not get to know. I did mention other people that I got to know, and got to know well, because there is already a written record of who they were and what they did, such as the politicians, the merchants, the professionals, the artists and others. May the "Echos of the Past" resound loudly enough and clearly enough to reach the eyes and ears of the future.



#### **CREDITS:**

Front cover photo, and photos on pages 3, 5, 13 and 16 by Arsenio Cordova.

Artwork on page 10 by Bill Hemp.  
Typesetting by Cecilia A. Trujillo.

#### **GRAPHICS INFORMATION:**

The cover photo illustrates the *abuelo*, the bogeyman of the Spanish culture, dancing around a *luminaria* bonfire. During the Christmas season, this figure is common as the focus turns to thoughts of Joseph and Mary looking for *posada* (shelter). According to traditional lore, the *abuelo* checks the behavior of local youngsters. If the children misbehave or don't say their prayers, legend has it that the abuelos will take them up to the mountain to learn their lessons properly.

Emilio Dominguez portrays St. Joseph (p. 3) in the centuries - old play, Los Pastores. During the Christmas season, the Nativity remains a popular theme in drama.

The third photo (page 5) illustrates the sacrifices and discipline of the *peregrinos* (pilgrims). As evidenced by the sun's rays, this photo captures an early morning walk, begun while many residing in the community were still asleep.

Bill Hemp, an artist, perfected the line drawing on page 10 to accompany Andy Lindquist's contribution to the history of the Forest Service in the area.

John Quintana's "Echoes of the Past" and the final page of this publication sport "local color" during the winter. Scenes of this nature abound during this time of the year in Taos and surrounding areas.



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#### **NEWS AND NOTES**

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#### **MEETING NOTES:**

**Saturday, January 7, 1995** - the Society's first program meeting of the year is scheduled at 2:00 p.m at the Masonic Lodge.

#### **Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairmen**

**President** - Andy Lindquist  
**Vice President** - Alex Fletcher  
**Secretary** - Vacant  
**Treasurer** - Leonard Lecht  
**Ex Officio** - Sadie Knight  
**Program** - Andy Lindquist, Jenny Vincent  
**Publications** - Kathy Cordova  
**Historical Preservation** - Mildred Buchanan  
**Archives** - Curtis Anderson  
**Hospitality** - Evelyn West  
**Folklore** - Carmen Velarde  
**Membership** - Tonic Haegler  
**Publicity** - Sadie Knight  
**Nominating** - Benton Bond