

AYER y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

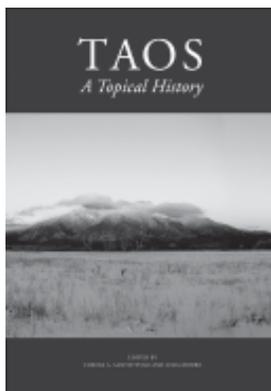
Spring 2014

\$5.00

Editing TAOS: A Topical History

By Julia Moore

Sometime in 2004, Corina Santistevan and I were introduced by a mutual friend who was aware that Corina needed to find an editor who was up to the task of making a reasonably cohesive history book from nearly fifty pieces the Society had gathered from a most impressive range of men and women, each with special knowledge of aspect of Taos' past.



Ten years later, *Taos: A Topical History* was published. In the first six months since its release in November 2013, the publisher has sold most copies of the first printing and looks forward to release of a paperback edition. The so-called back-story is tortuous, however.



Book Committee members—Corina, Bob Romero, Corky Hawk, Nita Murphy, Ernestina Cordova, and I—met frequently for years .

They helped me shape the contents by reading chapters and sharing ideas. After I did a first-pass edit, they read again. Besides editing for grammar and spelling, I fact-checked, cut material that I knew was covered in another chapter, and edited for “tone” while keeping each author’s “voice.” Corina read every iteration of every chapter, made suggestions, and checked the Spanish, which I was unable to do. I wrote headnotes to every chapter to provide cohesion. It was also my job to find a good publisher for our book.

(“Editing” continued on page 2)

That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons of history.

Aldous Huxley

Book Signing by the Authors



Several book signing events have been hosted by the Historical Society and have created a lot of excitement for the much anticipated publication of “*Taos: A Topical History*.” Taos’ biggest book outlet, Moby Dickens Book Shop, has joined in to promote the book and hosted a book signing in late-March at the Old Court House on the Plaza. Several authors were on hand to personalize buyer’s books.

TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN NEW MEXICO - By MICHAEL MILLER PART I

ANCIENT PUEBLO GARDENS

The Pueblo ancestors, also known as the Anasazi in some circles, have lived and farmed the high desert plateaus of New Mexico and the Southwest for centuries. To understand traditional Pueblo agriculture it is necessary to define the Pueblo concept of the theology of place and spiritual ecology in a historical context. The traditional relationship of Pueblo people with place not only includes the land, but also their perception of their culture and their personal identity within their society. Pueblo people in New Mexico and throughout the region have been formed by the land for generations. This kinship with the land, the climate, the soil, the water, the mountains, the lakes, the forests, the streams, the plants and the animals define Pueblo theology. The land became an extension of Pueblo thought and life because as the elders remember, “it is this place that holds the memories and bones of our people.” Sacred orientation to place and land is key to the ecological relationship Pueblo people have within their natural environment. The Tewa, Tiwa, and Towa of northern New Mexico have place names for all the unique places in their region and they represent important environmental features within the landscape.

(“Ancient Gardens” continued on page 3)

A publication of the Taos County Historical Society

A Message from the TCHS President

Dear Members,

It gives me great pleasure to report to all of you that last year was a very good year for the Taos County Historical Society. We have



published our long-awaited history book titled, "Taos, a Topical History." This is the book that took 17 years to get it published. Our sales and book signings have been very successful and we will soon be ready for a re-print. If you have not purchased your book yet, now is the time to buy it to own a hard cover first edition. This book reflects the newly-recorded history of Taos that will affect many generations to come.

We are very proud of the growth of our organization; we are currently housed upstairs at the Old Taos County Court House in the heart of the historical Taos Plaza and we thank the Taos County Commissioners and their staff for providing us space. We hope to be able to stay in this space once the Court House is completely renovated. It is a great honor to be in the same building as the Mural Room, now open to the public.

I have been the president of the Taos County Historical Society since February 2009. During my tenure I am proud to say that we have come a long way. Our memberships have increased tremendously. We have had a full year of monthly lectures, which are held the first Saturday of every month at 2 pm at the Kit Carson Board Room. We have held luncheons in May and December each year, honoring various respected community members. At our next luncheon, May 4th, we will honor Rey Torres, retired Taos County Extension Agent, and Palemon Martinez, retired Northern District Extension Director. Both honorees are respected in our community.

Other accomplishments include raising funds for the publishing of our book and to build a website. Please visit our new website: www.taoscountyhistoricalsociety.org. We also secured a grant from the New Mexico Historical Society Advisory Board, which allowed us to digitize 200 historical audio tapes. We were able to preserve rare and valuable voice recordings of many historical figures in Taos. The recordings can be heard at the Southwest Research Center at UNM.

The Taos County Treasurer has also given us the tax rolls and records for 1924, 1929, and 1931-1963, which are no longer required to be preserved by the County. We have applied for a grant to pay for shelving and archival supplies to preserve these treasures. We will know by May 9th if the grant is awarded to us from the New Mexico Historical Advisory Board.

We have also applied for a grant from The Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Advisory Board to preserve and digitize all the archival copies of Ayer y Hoy to make them available to the Public.

This Ayer y Hoy is a start of what we hope to be the return of established custom for the Society. We invite our entire membership to become active in this regards. If you have ideas or stories to share please do.

Thank you for your continued support.

Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society

Winners of the Lansing Bloom Award!

Corina Santistevan and Julia Moore

Dear Corina and Julia,

Congratulations! You have just been selected as the winners of the Lansing Bloom Award for the excellent book that you edited, "Taos: A Topical History" published by the Museum of New Mexico Press. This award, which includes a one-year membership for each of you in the Historical Society of New Mexico (HSNM), is offered annually by the society for an outstanding publication in New Mexico. Your broad selection of chapters offer a thoughtful assessment of topics ranging from geography to archaeology, the arts and culture, and from institutional history to economic and ecological development. It also provides valuable insights into broader historical ideas and questions as well.

Sincerely,

Nancy Owen Lewis, Chair
HSNM Awards Committee

The award was presented at an Awards Banquet hosted at the Montezuma Castle in Las Vegas on Saturday, May 3rd, during the New Mexico History Conference.

("Editing" continued from page 1)

In 2008, we submitted the manuscript to UNM Press. We had the equivalent of 540 book pages. Every few months, I called the director of the press for word on its decision. After almost two years, we heard that the board of UNM Press had declined it. It was too long.

I collected the manuscript in Albuquerque and we regrouped. The Book Committee and I cut a significant number of words before submitting the tightened manuscript to Museum of New Mexico Press. That was in 2010.

The Press liked the book and envisioned the 252-page hardcover we have today. But to achieve that format, it was necessary to cut more words and, at the last moment, more chapters and scores of illustrations.

The book was scheduled for release in fall 2013 and made its local debut with a gala book launch and signing on November 10 at the Pond House in Taos. A memorial of flowers honored the five contributing authors who had passed on in the ten years of the book's gestation: Art Bachrach, John Bodine, Jerry Padilla, Mildred Tolbert, and Alberto Viduarre. Most of the book's living authors were present to celebrate with scores of Taosños.

In April 2014, we learned that the book's two editors, Corina A. Santistevan and I had been awarded the Lansing Bloom Award by the New Mexico Historical Society. The awards chairperson wrote: "Your broad selection of chapters offer a thoughtful assessment of topics ranging from geography to archaeology, the arts and culture, and from institutional history to economic and ecological development. It also provides valuable insights into broader historical ideas and questions as well."

In future issues of Ayer y Hoy, we plan to publish all or parts of chapters that are not in the book.

(“Ancient Gardens” continued from page 1)

Some examples include, *Cuyamungue* (place where rocks are falling), *Guachupangue* (muddy flat place), *Pojoaque* (water drinking place), and *Chimayo* (place of good flaking stone). These places are important to Pueblo agricultural tradition because they tell the people the natural characteristics of their landscape. Pueblo experience with the landscape here in northern New Mexico is ancient (thousands of years) and reflects the belief in Pueblo culture in what is called the long view. This metaphor is best defined by the elders when they tell the young people, *pin peye obe* (look to the mountain). This saying reminds the next generation to look at things, as if you are looking out from the top of a mountain. It teaches the young people to see things from a broader perspective and to think about what they are doing now and how it will affect future generations. In other words, farming and agriculture and the relationship with the land must be planned in terms of thousands of years into the future, not just what is happening in the present.

Pueblo culture depicted this ecological understanding in many ways, one of the best known symbols of this knowledge in today's world is the symbolic figure known as *Kokopelli*. *Kokopelli* can be found everywhere in New Mexico and throughout the Southwest, especially in galleries, trading posts, and tourist destinations. Everywhere you look there is *Kokopelli*. On shower curtains, napkins, drapes, pictures, dresses, skirts, T-shirts, menswear, women's wear, even tennis shoes, there is *Kokopelli*. Yet, amazingly, few people in New Mexico know that *Kokopelli* is the sacred seed carrier, the spirit of fertility in the Pueblo world, the symbol of good fortune, culture, music, dance, and art. *Kokopelli* carries the procreative powers of nature and the creative power of the human mind. Pueblo people in historical times, and today, see themselves as reflections of *Kokopelli* in sacred interaction with nature, the land, and as planters of seed.

The story of emergence plays a strong role in Pueblo agriculture as well. Pueblo people see the Earth as a feminine being. The land and all living things relate to the contours of her great body. This relationship to the land, the plants, and the animals represents their sense of identity as People of Place. It also perpetuates the spiritual ecology of the Pueblo world as a whole. There is no stronger example of this ecological belief than that of traditional agriculture. The domestication of plants and the development of agricultural techniques has been an important part of Pueblo culture since ancient times. The Pueblo culture, like other native cultures in the Americas, has developed ecologically sound ways of living with the land. This tradition is an understanding that has survived over the centuries and represents a knowledge of sustainability that can be applied to modern-day agriculture today.

The growing of plants and traditional agricultural techniques has been a part of Pueblo culture since ancient times. Pueblo people learned to cultivate corn in many different environments throughout New Mexico and the

Southwest. These different strains of corn were a result of the collective understanding of Pueblo farmers and gardeners of the local ecology in which they lived for generations. Corn was, and still is today, a blessed sacrament and a symbol of life that represents the Pueblo relationship with the land. Corn, and other staple crops such as squash, beans, and other native plants have come to represent the sacred relationship that Pueblo culture has with the earth. Corn dances are still performed in modern Pueblos today and continue the cycle of spiritual ecology of place that is passed on from one generation to the next. This “passing on” strengthens the concept of sustainability in traditional Pueblo agriculture and creates a balance of harmony for individual and community Pueblo agriculture and gardening.

CHINAMPAS

Chinampa agriculture is of Aztec origin from the valley of Mexico, but planting techniques are very adaptable to New Mexico landscapes, especially in *ciénegas* and shallow wetlands. This method of gardening is one of the most intensive forms of irrigation by indigenous cultures in the Americas and they are highly productive garden plots that produce good harvests year after year. To build a *chinampa*, which in the *Nahuatl* language means square made of canes or stakes, requires some preparation of the garden site. Posts are driven into the shallow wetlands or *ciénega* and vines and branches are interwoven within the enclosure. Rich, fertile soil is then placed on top to create the garden bed. Willow cuttings are planted around the border of the garden bed to secure the enclosure with a strong root system which eventually provides a fence if the willows are allowed to grow. This method also provides a garden plot with a deep foundation filled with organic soil. Canals for irrigation and walkways border the rectangular site which varies in size, but usually averages around 300 feet by 30 feet, to make it manageable. The surrounding wetlands also protects crops from early and late frost. In the spring seeds are planted in small seed beds and then they are transplanted in the *chinampa*. Crops such as *maiz*, beans, cotton and *chile* flourish in *chinampa* gardens. At the end of the growing season, following the harvest, the plants are dug back into the soil with rotten leaves and animal fertilizers. In the spring the soil is ready for another planting with minimal preparation.

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(Coming Next Issue: “Waffle, Weed & Terrace Gardens”)

“Ancient Pueblo Gardens,” Michael Miller’s paper on “Traditional Agricultural Practices in New Mexico” is available in its entirety on the Society’s web site:

www.taoscountyhistoricalsociety.org

Michael Miller is a writer and poet from La Puebla, NM. He served as Director of the New Mexico Records and Archives and as Director of the Center for Southwest Research, UNM. He is a contributor to the Taos County Historical Society publication: TAOS: A TOPICAL HISTORY, 2013.

Lectures, Field Trips & Special Events

June 7 - "Fiestas"
Sylvia Rodriguez

July 11 - Field Trip to Tres Piedras
Aldo Leopold Home

August 2 - "The Story of Old Martina's Hall"
Lyn Bleiler (Old Martina's Hall)

September 6 - "Book Trails Heading West"
David Farmer

October 4 - "The Harvey Girls, The Inside Story"
Liz Mikols

November 1 - T.B.A.

December 7 - Christmas Luncheon
Sagebrush Inn

The Taos County Historical Society was formed in 1960 for the purpose of "...preserving the history of the Taos area." This part of New Mexico has a fascinating history, full of people, events, stories and places. If you are interested, we invite your participation in our field trips or lecture programs, or by supporting the Society by becoming a member.

Taos County Historical Society Board of Directors

President: Ernestina Cordova

Vice-president: Benton Bond

Treasurer: Jacquelyn Chase

Secretary: Judy Weinrobe

Board Members

Ouray Meyers ● Nita Murphy

Member-at-large/Programs

Paul Figueroa

Membership

Sandi Welter

Monthly Meetings

First Saturday of the month
2:00 PM

Kit Carson Coop Meeting Room
118 Cruz Alta Road - Taos

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BECOME A MEMBER

We invite your participation and support through an annual membership, which includes subscriptions to "*Ayer Y Hoy*" and our periodic newsletters. Other activities include recordings of oral histories, maintaining archive materials and participating in community events.

Membership categories:

Individual.....\$15

Family.....\$20

Sustaining.....\$30 or more

To become a member send a check, along with your name and address, to:

TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 2447
TAOS, NM 87571

For more information call (575) 770-0681
or e-mail: cordova@taosnet.com



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