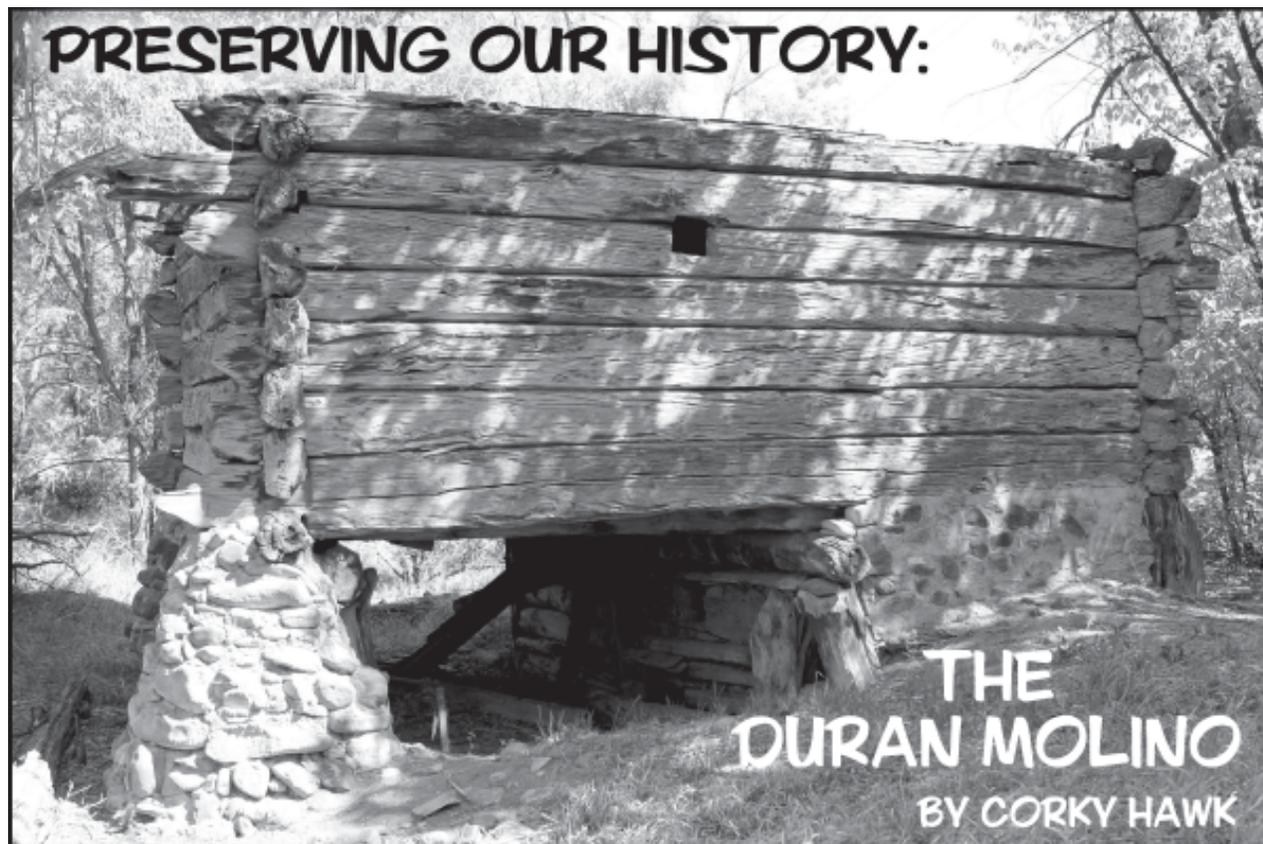


AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Fall 2014

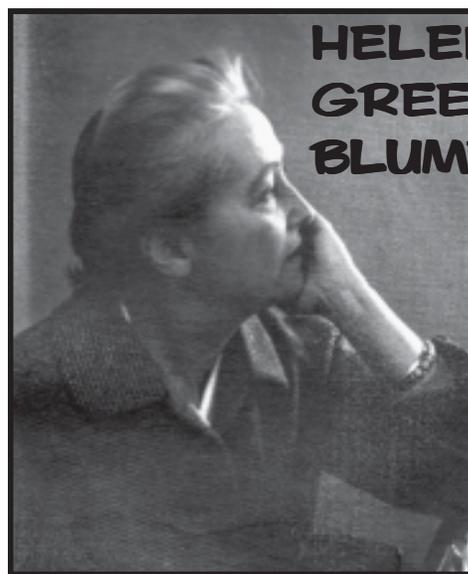
Issue #37



EL GUAJALOTE



A TRIBUTE TO



**HELEN
GREENE
BLUMENSCHIN**

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Taos County Historical Society's publication, *Ayer y Hoy en Taos - 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 publications pertinent to the Taos and northern New Mexico area. We are open to publishing occasional reminiscences, folklore, oral history and poetry that are of 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.

All articles, maps, photographs, drawings, etc., are the property of the contributors and may not be used or reproduced in any way without permission from the Society and/or the contributor.

AYER Y HOY is distributed to all members of the Taos County Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

Editor

Dave 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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A Message from the TCHS President

Dear Members,

With the Christmas Season upon us, I would like to take the opportunity to thank every one for the tremendous support that the Taos County Historical Society has received through the years, especially in 2014. Much of our success is due to the support from the community. It has been my absolute pleasure to be the current caretaker of our important history.



Among our successes this past year are the two grants we received to continue preserving our history. First I would thank The Taos County Treasurer, the Manager and Commissioners for donating the 38 books of tax rolls for posterity. The Society will preserve these tax rolls in archival boxes in the Old Taos County Court House. This is made possible by a grant from the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives in Santa Fe.

The second grant was awarded through Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area. With this grant we have been able to digitize the *Ayer y Hoy* historical collection of written publications. Our sincere thanks to David Cordova of Dave's Digital Domain for completing this project. The complete *Ayer y Hoy* collection will be available to be viewed on our website (www.taoscountyhistoricalsociety.org) in the near future.

We received the paperback of "*Taos: A Topical History*" late last spring. We now have both hardcover and paperback versions available for purchase.

The Taos County Historical Society has had many amazing programs scheduled for us by our program chair Paul Figueora throughout the year. Thank you, Paul, for a job well done.

The preservation of the Duran Molino is a preservation project headed by Charles "Corky" Hawk, made possible by a grant secured to complete the project.

For those who listed e-mail as the format to receive "*Ayer y Hoy en Taos*," future copies will be sent promptly by e-mail. Those, who prefer a printed copy instead, will receive a hardcopy by postal mail. The TCHS board and members will continue to work hard for our community.

I personally want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Thank you for your continued support.

Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society

Preserving Our History: the Duran Molino

by Corky Hawk

The History and Operation of the Molino

One of the key areas of focus of the Taos County Historical Society is historic preservation. The Society's current project is the preservation and eventual restoration of the Duran Molino in Ranchos de Taos.

The Duran Molino was a water-powered grist mill built in 1879. The photo on the cover of this issue is of the Molino taken in 2011. As far as we can determine, it was built and operated by the Duran family from 1879 until the 1930s. It served farmers in the valley of the Rio Rancho del Rio Grande, grinding both wheat and corn into flour and other products for both home use and sale.

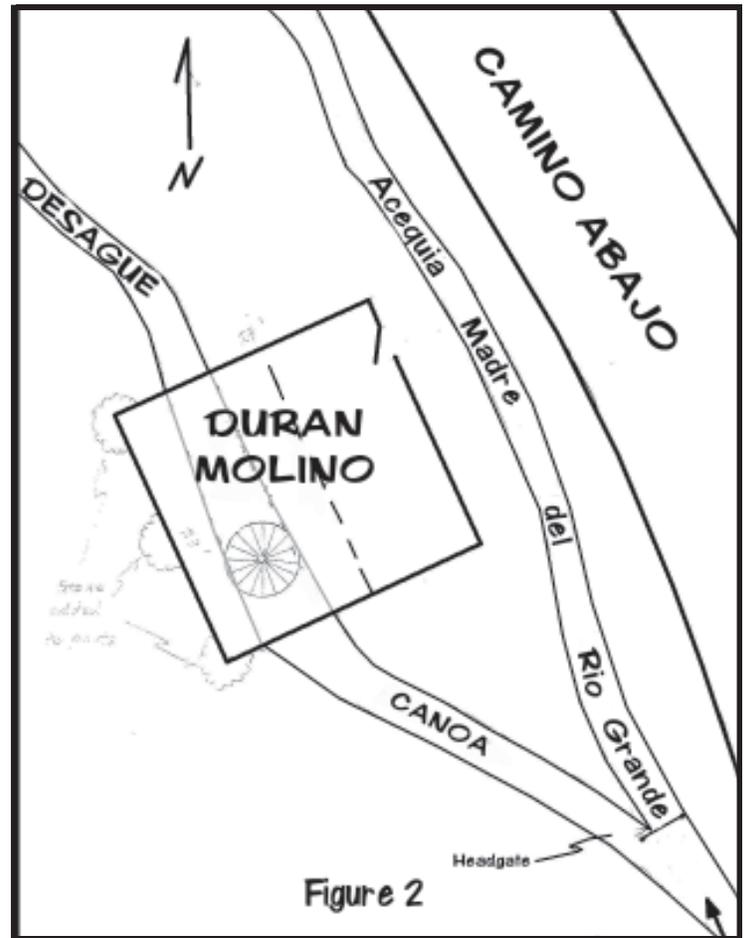
The Duran Molino is located on Camino Abajo de la Loma, which runs west from NM Highway 68 in Ranchos de Taos. The structure is less than a mile west of the intersection of Camino Abajo de la Loma and Highway 68. The land on which the Molino is situated is owned by descendants of Innocencio Duran, the last member of the Duran family to actually operate the Molino. We believe the Molino was built either by Innocencio or his father, and possibly other family members.

During most of the nineteenth century, milling of grain was the most important industrial activity in Taos Valley. Its only distant rival was distilling. Grist mills, in the early days all water powered, were a critical part of the 19th century and early 20th century agricultural economy. They were the way that the abundant wheat and corn grown in Taos Valley was ground into flour and related products for use by Taos residents and for export outside the valley.

From the photos of other molinos, it appears that these early mills were very similar in construction, appearance and operation. While they appear primitive, they were in reality a superb example of local technological innovation at a time when little "modern" technology of any kind was available to Taos Valley farmers. The Duran Molino is the only surviving water powered grist mill from its era in Taos Valley. We believe it is the only mill from any era whose structure is largely intact and has not been changed.

The Duran Molino was built next to one of the area's largest acequias, the Acequia Madre del Rio Grande. This acequia supplied the water to power the Molino. The site is also immediately adjacent to the Camino Abajo de la Loma, a local road which was likely in existence serving the local farming community at the time of the Molino's construction in 1879. The road ran along the north edge of the Rio Rancho Valley, and would have provided easy access to the Molino for local farmers.

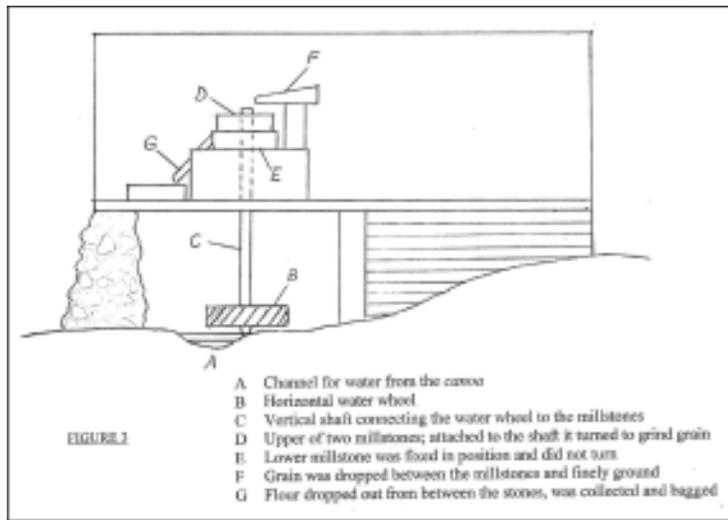
Figure 2 is a diagram showing the size and orientation of the structure, and also showing how the Molino used water from the acequia to power its grinding stones. Whenever the mill was going to operate, water from the acequia was diverted using a *compuerta* or headgate located as shown on Figure 2.



The water was then directed down a very steep channel called a *canoas* which considerably increased the speed of the flow. The water, flowing very fast at this point, then hit the horizontal water wheel under the structure. The rotating wheel turned a vertical shaft that powered the mill's mechanical works. After passing through the "tunnel" under the structure and powering the wheel, the water was diverted down an outflow channel called the *desague* and flowed back into a branch of the Acequia Madre.

Figure 3 is a schematic drawing, looking at the mill's southeast exterior wall. It shows in detail the mechanics of the operation of a nineteenth century water powered grist mill like the Duran Molino.

Water diverted from acequia flowed rapidly down the *canoas* and through a wide channel under the mill at point A. The water struck the horizontal water wheel B, which had wooden blades much like a paddle wheel steamboat. The power generated by the water was sufficient to rapidly turn the wheel, which then turned the vertical wood shaft C, which powered one of the two very heavy millstones. The millstones used were hand fashioned to very close tolerances out of local stone. The upper millstone D, was attached to the vertical shaft, and turned as the shaft turned. The lower of the two millstones, E, was fixed in place and did not move. The grinding action of the turning upper millstone against the stationary lower one is what turned grain into flour!



Raw grain was dropped from a chute at F into the area between the millstones, where it was finely ground. The resulting flour was then collected at point G, and bagged for use.

We do not know much about the production capacity of the Duran Molino or others like it. But we do know there were many such mills built to serve local needs; apparently up to a dozen along the Rio Rancho del Rio Grande alone. We know they satisfied the needs of Taos Valley farmers who planted and irrigated hundreds of acres of land. For many decades these local mills were the only place Taos farmers could take their grain for milling. A few large capacity commercial mills were opened during the late 1800s and early 1900s, but they never replaced the local *molinos*. It was the availability of cheap retail flour in the early 1900s that finally made local milling uneconomical.

The Archaeology of the Molino

The Taos County Historical Society took the first step toward preservation of the Duran Molino in 1969. The Molino was placed on the State Register of Cultural Properties by the Society in that year.

In June, 2011, a team led by University of New Mexico archaeologist Dr. Tom Windes spent a week studying and photographing the entire structure of the Molino. Dr. Windes and his students took many wood core samples from all parts of the structure, and submitted over 40 to the University of Arizona Tree Ring Laboratory. The results of that analysis were received in 2013. According to the dating of the wood samples submitted, the Duran Molino was built in 1879.

Dr. Windes' also compiled very detailed information about the construction of the Molino. Each piece of the wood structure was given a "Field Specimen" number. Using these numbers, each of hundreds of pieces were measured, catalogued and photographed. Photos were also taken of the interior of the structure, with the same numbering system used to identify each major wooden element. From the photos Dr. Windes and his students then produced detailed drawings of the entire structure.

From this data, and from close observation, Dr. Windes was able to reach some conclusions about the construction process

used by the Molino's builders. The large horizontal beams are Ponderosa Pine. They were hand cut with axes in the mountains, probably up Miranda Canyon to the southeast. Each beam was squared with adzes at the cutting site and then dragged by horse or mule to the site of the Molino. Dr. Windes can identify the individual adze "signatures" of some of the workmen. Many of beams also have both the drag marks and hand cut notches to secure dragging ropes or chains.

The large beams, averaging 16 inches by 10 inches, had their ends notched at the building site. Where needed when assembling the walls, small shims and wooden pins were used to level and secure beams in place. Most of these have survived and are still performing their intended functions. No metal nails or fasteners were used. There also was no effort to "dress" the beam ends to any uniform length. The structure was totally practical.

The Molino is supported by eight very large vertical pine posts set in the ground at each corner and in the middle of each wall. Three of these vertical supports, the ones along the north wall, are shown as FS-99, FS 102 and FS 104 in Figure 4, one of Dr. Windes detailed drawings. Dr. Windes could not determine if any kind of footings were used to support these posts. Because of the serious settling of the building on the south side, footings were probably only river cobbles or large stones.

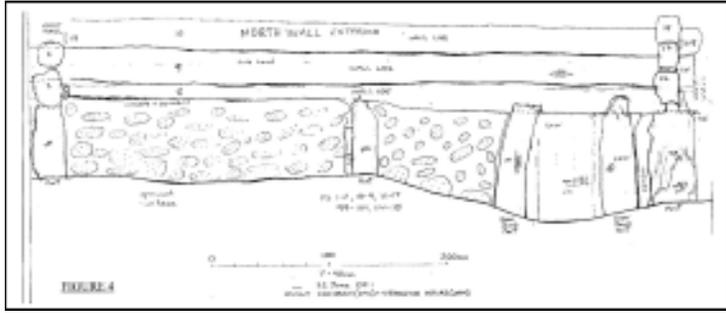
In addition to the main vertical posts supporting the frame of the building, there were six additional posts that supported the "working floor" of the mill. These posts held large horizontal floor joists running NW-SE. Across these joists were placed abutting smaller pine beams that formed the base of the "working floor." Thus separate sets of vertical posts supported two separate structural frames: one was for the four exterior walls, and the other for the working floor above the water wheel and the "tunnel."

Above the floor beams the builders added about six inches of adobe mud, which was compacted and formed the surface of the interior floor. There appears to have been an interior floor in only half of the structure; that floor held the mill machinery located directly above the mill water wheel in the "tunnel" below. The other half of the inside of the mill, on the northeast side and entered by the exterior door low in the northeast wall, was open from the ground to the ceiling. We believe this large open area was for storage of both grain and the flour produced by the mill.

It is clear that the interior joints between the horizontal wall beams was plastered with adobe mud. Some of the plaster is still in place today. The plaster was essential in keeping wind and water from interfering with the milling process.

There were no metal fasteners, screws or nails used in construction of the original Molino. The wood samples taken by Dr. Windes indicate that, in about 1970, a simple new wood roof replaced the roof which existed at that time. We do not know whether the roof replaced in 1970 was the original or a successor. Nails were used to install the 1970 roof, but whether nails were used in one or more earlier roofs is not known.

Prominent in all photos of the Molino is the stone and concrete reinforcement of the three vertical support posts holding up the south wall. The archaeologists who have looked at the structure have not yet been able to tell us the age of the concrete used to reinforce these posts. We do not believe the stone and cement reinforcing the three posts on the south side was part of the original Molino. This was probably added at some time after the mill reportedly ceased operation in the 1930s. A later addition of reinforcing material would be consistent with the Duran descendants' interest in preserving the old structure.



There is also a stone and concrete wall enclosing the northeast part of the interior of the building. It appears that a feature of this kind would have been needed as a retaining wall to enclose and protect the large “storage area” which comprised half of the interior space. A stone foundation wall, mortared with adobe, would have accomplished this purpose. An interior wall made of adobe bricks would be subject to moisture erosion below grade, and was therefore probably not used.

Enclosing the interior space in the northeast part of the Molino would have been necessary to protect both grain and flour from rain and particularly wind and dust. Our guess is that the adobe mortar was replaced years after original construction with the cement mortar now in place. Finally, there would have been no need for the door on the northeast wall to the Molino if the retaining/foundation wall was absent!

Current Preservation Efforts

After Dr. Windes' study of the Molino in 2011, it was clear that action was needed to protect the structure from both further decay and possible collapse.

There were two major issues. The first was the need to prevent further settling of the three wood/stone support posts on the southwest side of the building. That side has already dropped about ten inches from its original horizontal position. The second issue was the imminent loss of the present roof. The only part of the roof that is original to the Molino is the seven large vigas supporting the roof structure. Of these original vigas, two had collapsed and one was cracking and would soon join the other two. This collapse had exposed some of the interior to rain and snow, with much resulting water damage.

With the consent of the land owner, the Society did what it could to address the roof problem. The viga which is in danger of collapsing was given addition support with two large wooden posts, anchored in the ground of the “tunnel.” This has been successful so far. Also, some of the wooden roof boards supported by the vigas, which date only to about 1970, have been removed. Many were broken and all added weight on the vigas without protecting the Molino's interior. Finally,

heavy plastic sheeting was placed over the entire roof. The plastic has also been successful in keeping the interior dry.

The more serious structural problem is stopping the entire building from continuing to settle on one side. Even though the settling is very slow, if it continues for a few more years the entire structure will collapse.

To determine what was needed to deal with this problem, professional engineering help was essential. In 2012, the Society began applying for grant assistance to hire a structural engineer to do a full analysis of the preservation needs of the Molino. Fortunately, two very generous grants were obtained. One was from the Healy Foundation of Taos and the other from the State of New Mexico Historic Preservation Division.

In the spring and summer of this year, Druc Engineering of Santa Fe did a thorough study of the Molino. They looked at both the structural problems and issues involving decay and severe weathering of parts of the wood components of the building. A comprehensive report of their findings and recommendations was given to the Society and the Historic Preservation Division on September 30, 2014.

Some of the recommendations in the Druc report can be implemented with little cost and volunteer effort, beginning in the spring of 2015. But many of the actions needed will require the help of professional contractors, and will be very costly. Therefore the Society will continue to seek additional grants and other sources of funding so this important historic structure can be saved for further generations.

The Molino Restored

The goal of the Society's Duran project is twofold.

First, the structure must be stabilized and protected from further decay. This will require much effort, and substantial financial assistance, over the next two to three years. Only if this essential preservation phase of the project is accomplished can work on restoration of the inside of the Molino begin.

The second phase is restoring the *canoas*, the water wheel, the “working floor” and the mill machinery so that it is as close to the original as possible. The Molino's owner has saved and stored much of the mill machinery as it existed when milling operations ceased. Other Duran descendants have saved and protected at least one of the millstones. It is hoped that the restoration phase, lasting about a year, can be done largely by volunteer labor. This would provide an excellent opportunity for community involvement and education as the project moves forward.

Once completed, the Duran Molino can “come to life” as both an historic exhibit and an educational tool. The public, and particularly students, can learn how the mill converted grain from the valley fields to flour for tortillas. In the process they will also learn much about the ingenuity and resourcefulness of those pioneers who made the valley flourish, and about the critical role of agriculture and the acequias in enabling those pioneers to survive and prosper. Hopefully visitors to the Molino will come away with a renewed appreciation for Taos history and for those who made that history possible.

RECOLLECTIONS OF TAOS ARTISTS

by Helen Greene Blumenschein

MY FATHER first met Bert Phillips in Paris, where they were taking art courses. Phillips spoke so highly of the West, with its Indians and beautiful mountains, that he persuaded Blumy to meet him in Denver, Colorado, buy a wagon and team of horses, and go south to Taos and on to Mexico. They had no experience with horses and wagons, so had to watch closely as they were shown how to hitch the horses to the wagon.

They left Denver and headed south, camping near a mountain stream where they tied both horses to trees near the stream. One of the horses broke his rope and went to the stream to drink. The men caught and retied him, and the next morning they were on their way again. Within twenty-five miles of Taos, the wagon broke a wheel. Bert and Blumy tossed a coin to decide which would take the wheel to Taos to be repaired. My father's toss won him the trip to town. He rode one of the horses, carrying the wheel over his shoulder.

The scenery Blumy observed on the ride was so outstanding that, upon his return to the wagon, he told Phillips that he was going to stay in Taos instead of continuing south. Phillips agreed, and when they arrived in town, the men found rooms opposite what is now the Taos Inn but was then the house of Dr. T.P. Martin, whose sister was subsequently courted by and married to Bert Phillips.

Bert Phillips loved to paint the yellow aspens in the fall. My father loved the Indians and so mostly painted them. They made good models and were paid for sitting. Phillips was successful in selling his aspen paintings, and my father in selling his Indian—portraits and dances—as the tourists were already coming to Taos.

Blumy did have to return to New York to fulfill a contract to illustrate for a magazine, as well as to rejoin his wife and daughter. He finally persuaded us to come for a brief visit in 1913, and we later moved to Taos permanently.

The American artists who followed Joseph Henry Sharp to Taos were a friendly group. They took turns entertaining each other. My recollection as a ten-year-old child was of Walter Ufer being a long-winded, famous storyteller, recounting his tales with sound effects! His landscapes with Indians on horseback captured the sunlight of New Mexico as no other artist has done since.

Mrs. Ufer was a long-suffering, hard working woman. When Ufer died, he left her nothing, as he had spent all he had on the slot machines scattered around town. This upset my father so that he passed the had to collect money for Mrs. Ufer.

Ufer's being nearsighted explains the minute detail with which he painted. My only personal objection was that the subject

matter was always the same during the period in which I knew him: his favorite arroyo with Indians riding horses, always under a bright blue sky. Most of those early artists sold their paintings through dealers in New York. I wonder what ever happened to all of Ufer's brilliantly lit paintings.

In Taos, Joseph Sharp purchased a Christian Brothers chapel next to his property. I do not know what he used it for—perhaps for storing his paintings. His wife was terribly deaf and Sharp's voice was so mild. I wonder if they could communicate well.

After "Buck" Dunton sold us his property on Ledoux Street, he moved to La Loma, where he had a two-story house. He would tell tale after tale of his successful hunting trips. This is probably what started me hunting for the table—rabbits, turkey, and deer in later years, even an unsuccessful bear hunt, but that is another story.

Dunton painted a picture of his two children and their horses, a masterpiece, which is now in the Museum of Fine Art in Santa Fe. I knew the children after they were grown up. Ivan lived in Oregon and Vivian lived in Alaska, where she did medical work.

She retired in Anchorage, she told me, because they had given her such good compensation there. Several years ago I was in Alaska with friends from Maine. We stayed at a ranch at the foot of Mount McKinley—I did a watercolor, and later a large oil of that awe-inspiring mountain. While in Anchorage, we had lunch with Vivian, and she seemed quite happy there. She returned to Taos just once to settle family affairs. She gave her saddle to the Kit Carson Memorial Foundation.

Our neighbors on Ledoux Street, the Harwoods, made a lasting impact on the Taos community with their great interest in art and creativity in general. After Burt Harwood's death, his wife turned their property over to the community and later to the University of New Mexico, to be used for art and craft shows, along with the development of a public library. For some years the University of New Mexico ran a summer art school at the Harwood Foundation, as it came to be known.

Leon Gaspard was a long-winded and fascinating monologist at the yearly get-togethers given by the Karavas brothers for the artists and their families. These were held at the La Fonda Hotel, on the south side of Taos Plaza. What a shame it is that we did not have tape recorders in those days!

Leon and his wife, Evelyn, first visited Taos in 1918. My first memory of them was the rabbit episode in the 1920s. In 1931 they finished building the only early eccentric house in Taos. It was accidentally painted iron red instead of lavender pink. Little do I remember of the interior of the house, which seemed unusually dark to me. I do recall buying fresh eggs from Evelyn, who was a very jealous woman.



After Evelyn's death Gaspard married a much younger woman, Dora Kaminsky, a talented artist. After Gaspard's death, she gave many Russian artifacts for display in the Blumenschein house. Dora, in turn, married a much younger man, Paco Blackman, but her life ended when she died of a blood clot after a face lifting operation.

Victor Higgins was a lady's man. His best friend was Eleanora Kissel, who also lived on Ledoux Street in later years and had her studio where R.C. Gorman's gallery is today. Victor was unfortunate after his first wife passed away. He married a well-to-do lady from Texas, moved to Texas, and later divorced her and moved back to Taos.

I did a charcoal head of Higgins, but threw it away because he did not look well. I could never make myself draw anyone younger or prettier than they were. Those who sat for commissioned portraits always understood that I would not charge them if they did not like what I did. None of my drawings was rejected.

Kenneth Adams was fortunate in his early years to have a devoted friend, Hilda, whom he married in spite of the fact that she suffered from tuberculosis. She and Eulalia Emetaz had one of the early galleries in Taos, which helped Ken a lot. Hilda died young, however, and Adams married again. The second wife had been a teacher. Instead of letting Adams continue with his painting, she helped him secure a position teaching art at the University of New Mexico for the rest of his life—a sad end for a creative person, but he did help so many young art students. His wife enjoyed entertaining and so Ken sold a picture now and then.

Regina Cooke was one of my earliest friends, along with Eulalia Emetaz, who had her gallery on Guadalupe Plaza. Regina first studied with Walter Ufer when she came to Taos. When I became acquainted with her, she was writing about the local artists' work for our local newspaper. She mentioned Walter Ufer being dressed in army clothes in the 1920s, as was my father, his legs encased in khaki puttees. Probably it was because our streets were so muddy or dusty in the early days; they didn't want to get their trousers dirty. Regina continued writing for the Taos paper for many years, and was still writing an art column from her bed in a Santa Fe nursing home until shortly before her death.

Eulalia Emetaz began showing my prints and silk screens in her gallery in the 1930s. She impressed me by selling at least one a week until they were all gone after ten years.

Nicolai Fechin, the Russian artist, never bothered to learn English when he arrived in Taos with his family. His wife, Alexandra ("Tinka"), and his daughter, Eya, both knew English, but it would only distract Fechin from his work. Like so many artists and writers who came to Taos, Fechin wished to concentrate on his work. He not only painted during the day, but sometimes at night, besides which he did beautiful wood carving all through the two story house he had purchased from Dr. Bergman. What a workaholic he was!

On the spacious grounds Fechin added a large studio and still another small house where the cooking was done a la Russian

style. Tinka gave parties now and then. She served a homemade cordial from the raspberries they grew in their front yard. It must have been quite potent, since everyone had such a gay time. Fechin remained silent but smiling as he watched the animated visitors and friends. Though he spoke no English, I'm sure he understood it. His paintings were impressionistic in style, vigorous and with good color and composition.

I made an hour-long tape recording of Tinka telling how they all escaped from Russia and landed in Taos, probably at the invitation of Mabel Luhan. Tinka also wrote an excellent book of her life in Russia, then the coming to America with her husband and daughter Eya. Mabel liked the book and told Alexandra she should "liberate" herself and write more books. She never wrote another book, but was liberated from her husband when he left her and moved to California.

Eya Fechin Eranham trained as a dancer, but eventually created her own method of body movement called Eutonics, which she taught in New York City and then in VA hospitals, in one of which she met the doctor to whom she was married for a time, and with whom she had a daughter. Eya came back to New Mexico, but used her talents for some while in Albuquerque, at Nazareth Hospital and the University of New Mexico, before coming to Taos in her mother's declining years.

Oscar E. Berninghaus was such a friendly person. He came to Taos from St. Louis, where he had created the costumes and floats for the Parade of the Veiled Prophets and the famous ball they had every year. He also illustrated, as so many of the early artists did to make a living. When he moved to Taos he settled La Loma, with a beautiful view to the west. From then on he fell in love with the landscape and Indians. He, too, had his favorite Indian model, and those early Indian models were true friends of the early artists and their families.

Berninghaus had a son, Charles, and a daughter, Dorothy, by his first wife. After her death he married Winnie, who was an active participant in the civic affairs of Taos. Dorothy married Jack Brandenburg, who started the first, Conoco station on the plaza and ran an insurance business with Floyd Beutler, who married Bert Phillips's daughter, Margaret. Brandenburg also became President of First State Bank of Taos. Among those who worked in that bank were Ben Tenorio, our neighbor on Ledoux Street, and Eloy Jeantete, a descendant of one of the early French trappers who were after beaver in the 1800s. Around 1934 I did one of my charcoal heads of Oscar Berninghaus. This I gave to his granddaughter, Barbara Brandenburg Brenner, in 1987. She has a strong attachment to the historic past, which many young people do not seem to have today.

Howard Cook and Barbara Latham had a house out in Talpa. Howard was widely known for his black and white pictures and Barbara an excellent illustrator for children's books, although they never had any children of their own. After I bought a house in Nambe from Edith King, who enjoyed art and artists, I rented it one whole year to Howard and Barbara, as Howard needed a warmer place at that time. But it seems Edie came over too often to have Howard give a critique of her paintings, so Barbara ended their stay in the Nambe house.

Fortunately, a friend offered them a home and studio in Roswell, where they stayed for some years before entering a retirement home in Santa Fe. Howard had been seriously ill and feared ending up in the infirmary permanently. Sadly, one day when Barbara was out shopping he shot himself. Where he had hidden the pistol was a mystery to her.

Andrew Dasburg, an artist and well known former art teacher in the East, was someone who appealed to me. He came here from Santa Fe and bought a house in Talpa, not far from Howard and Barbara Cook. His work became more modern as it developed out here. The few times that I took my work to get a "critique" from Dasburg, he always said, "I think this is the best work you have done." After several times of this flattery I quit asking for his opinion. He did pose for me for one of my good charcoal and conte heads, which is in my booklet, *Sounds and Sights of Taos Valley*. He was one of the few artists who came out to my studio in Arroyo Seco during 1962-1970 to give me encouragement in my work, as both my parents had passed away by then.

Dasburg had a faithful helper who took care of him in his last days. Earlier he was a strong influence on the young artists coming to Taos after World War II. He had a fine old cottonwood tree on his property; he would point to the tree and say, "I will be here as long as that tree will stand." The tree is still there, but Andrew gave up and told his helper he would not take his medicine any longer. He had lived in Talpa from 1930 to 1979.

Dasburg's wife, Marina, was the daughter of Owen Wister, who wrote *The Virginian*. In the 1940s she gave musical evenings once a week at their house in Talpa, playing classical records from their extensive collection for invited guests. She was a talented pianist and had one of the few grand pianos in town. On occasion she invited our art group to be her audience while she played. Another inspiring recital took place at the Dasburg home when a friend of mine, Ilda Emetaz, came from back east to visit Taos. A famous French-Italian pianist, she had come to show her young son, Roland, to his grandfather, Henri Emetaz, who lived on a ranch northeast of Ranchos.

I have purposely not mentioned all the many artists I knew except the few very early ones in Taos, like Ila McAfee Turner, who came to visit Taos in 1926 with her husband, Elmer. The Turners were then on their way to California, but they returned the very next year to stay. In 1928 they built a studio home on Armory Street, calling it the "White Horse Studio," as Ila is famous for her painting of horses. She grew up on a ranch near Gunnison, Colorado. Ila also likes to paint wild animals of all sizes. Whenever "Elmo," as she called her husband, painted a landscape, she always put creatures in his foreground. Once he did a still life and she put in a mouse! So you see she has an excellent sense of humor besides being a prolific painter. She has large canvases in private homes, in museums like the Stark Museum of Orange, Texas, and she has done murals for the Chicago World Fair and the Greely, Colorado library, and for other public buildings.

Elmer Turner, who was badly affected by gas and flu in World War I, met Ila while they were studying art with the same

teacher in Chicago. Before they were married, a doctor warned Ila of the lifelong consequences to Elmer's health from his war experience, but she was willing to face those with him. Ila had been a Methodist and Elmo a Baptist, but they joined the Presbyterian Church in Taos as it was the only one other than the Catholic Church when they came to Taos.

Unfortunately, Elmer's condition caused a creeping paralysis that curtailed his movement until he was chair bound. Ila helped him with his paints and brushes. Eventually he could not talk above a whisper, much less paint, but his mind was not affected and he retained his faculties to the end. After he passed on, Ila would boast of sleeping in twenty-five different beds every winter visiting her friends. Ila was given an appreciation dinner on January 30, 1988, to celebrate her being ninety years old, but age hardly slows her down. She still paints and travels and sleeps in many beds!

Ila and Elmo had a Siamese cat that became famous to the extent of having two movies done of it. They called the cat "Sanka," because it didn't keep them awake at night. It learned over seventy tricks and lived a long, long life, much of which was spent entertaining people who came to the White Horse Studio to buy paintings. Ila later got another cat named Carlos, and began teaching him tricks.

In our younger years Ila and I often rode out on the west mesa together on our horses. There were no houses out there then. A retrospective of Ila's paintings in 1988 brought back many memories from a long stretch of years.

As I mentioned before, the early Indian models were an intimate part of our daily life. I remember Jim Romero eating lunch at the table with us. After Jim died, Don Mondragon and his wife, Maria, posed for us. Another picture in Blumy's studio is of Epimenio seated before the fireplace there. This fireplace was later taken down to give more room for Blumy's large exhibition paintings.

Maria Mondragon also posed for an excellent photo show painting, in which she is seated on our adobe home on the south side of the house in the 1920s, in her shawl and boots. In those days, women at each of the pueblos had distinctive hairstyles and their boots, pure white and made of deerskin, had a distinctive design. The Taos men in those days wore two carefully braided pigtails in front on either side of the chest, except when they danced. Then their long black hair was allowed to ripple down their backs like the women's, often to their waists.

During the depression years of the 1930s, almost all the artists in Taos painted murals for public buildings under the W.P.A. program. In Taos in 1933-34, the program supported the painting of murals in the

Taos County Courthouse on the north side of the plaza, in the second floor courtroom. The artists selected to do these murals were Bert Phillips, Emil Bisttram, Victor Higgins, and Ward Lockwood. Lockwood lived for a time to the west of our house on Ledoux Street. It is said that the artists received \$56.00 a month for their labors, but I wonder if that is possible. Perhaps, because posing or yard work earned only \$2.00 a day then.

Even in Europe during 1929-1931 I paid only \$20.00 each for those beautiful armoires in the Blumenschein house. They were put together with pegs, and were easily disassembled. When we brought them to Taos, the local Spanish carpenters had no trouble putting them together again, as they used the same method for making their trasteros.

Howard Cook was famous for his murals in post offices, and Kenneth Chapman did one for the Raton, New Mexico post office. Ila McAfee has one in the post office at Gunnison, Colorado, where she went to school, as well as in the post offices at Edmond and Cordell, Oklahoma, and at Clifton, Texas.

My father painted an excellent mural of the Walsenburg Peaks for the post office at Walsenburg, Colorado. He stayed in Walsenburg while he made a study sketch for the mural from nature. As I remember, he was paid \$2,000 for that job. The mural is still there, protected now by glass. I asked that the glass be removed, as the canvas cannot "breathe" when covered that way. And, in any event, the mural is placed high so that curious hands cannot touch it.

During the same period, the Albuquerque High School purchased paintings done by the Taos artists, including one of my father's best, "White Sun and Star Road." All of those paintings have recently been placed in the Albuquerque Museum.

Helen Greene Blumenschein's "Recollections of Taos Artists" was reprinted from *Ayer Y Hoy* - Issue #10 - Spring 1990

HELEN G. BLUMENSCHHEIN

November 21, 1909-September 9, 1989

Helen Blumenschein was founding President of the Taos County Historical Society, a long-time board member, and a lifelong active member of the society.

Helen had a rich heritage in Taos history. She was the daughter of early Taos artists Ernest and Mary Greene Blumenschein and she moved with them to Taos in 1919. She grew up on Ledoux Street, near the home of Burt and Lucy Harwood, and witnessed the inception and development of the Harwood Foundation. She was a member of Taos' first ski club, a forerunner to the modern ski industry. She served her country in World War II as a member of the Women's Army Corps.

Ms. Blumenschein had an enduring interest in the archeology and History of New Mexico and the Taos Valley. She Participated in numerous digs and carried out varied historical researches, publishing some of her findings in the *El Palacio Magazine* of the Museum of New Mexico. She also researched and published on old trails of the Taos area. As President of the TCHS, she published an occasional "history letter" to the membership. An artist, she did portraits of many notable Taoseños; many of the images are included in her *Sounds and Sights of the Taos Valley*. She gave her parents' home on Ledoux Street to the Kit Carson Foundation.

WHAT IS HISTORY AND WHY DO WE HAVE TO STUDY IT?

by Dave Cordova

During my school days in the Taos Municipal School system, I was required to take several history classes. I say required, because I don't think I would have chosen to study history on my own... then. There were courses on World History, US History and the course that came closest to raising my interests, New Mexico history with Mr. Frank Miera.

Growing up in Taos, I was also exposed to many stories, tales and anecdotes about my hometown and its residents. Every gathering, whether festive or somber, offered history lessons for the taking but my interests were pulled elsewhere. What I have recently discovered is that some of those stories made their way into some far recesses of my memories to resurface now and again as fond remembrances.

Even the courses I was interested in came with their own histories that needed to be studied before moving on to the main topics. Music, electronics, drafting and other subjects all began with history lessons to explain or qualify the subjects. I remember asking why it was important to study Beethoven who continued to compose elaborate symphonies even after becoming deaf; why I had to study men whose names were given to principles of electronics like Ohm, Faraday, Ampere and Volta.

To say that everything pointed to the importance of history is truly an understatement. This brings up so many clichéd adages: "None are so blind as those will not see; you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Was I intentionally oblivious? Did I refuse to drink from the well of history? I can't reason these questions out, only that I now regret not being more attentive.

My interest in history has become an insatiable need, and thankfully, with historical preservation societies like the Taos County Historical Society, I am able to satisfy those needs. The newly published "*Taos: A Topical History*" contained a lot interesting stories to satisfy many interests, but how can one volume ever hope to tell all the stories that a place like Taos must have in its long history. I, for one, am impatiently awaiting the next volume or installment to continue my education in history. As you can see, it's never too late.

I want to thank the many individuals who have gathered and shared their knowledge. It is easy to single out the many authors who contributed to "*Taos: A Topical History*," but it was the officers of the TCHS who breathed life into the project. Thank you to Ernestina Cordova, Corina Santistevan, Julia Moore and everyone else involved in the book project.

EL GUAJALOTE

by Michael Miller

For centuries *el guajalote* (the turkey) has been held in a position of great respect by the people of Nuevo Mexico. In ancient times the native people of New Mexico were the first to recognize the many qualities and uses of this native species. In the *Dine* culture of the Navajo the turkey is credited with saving the precious seeds of life after the Great Flood. Following this act of heroism by the turkey, First Woman, the mother figure of Navajo creation stories proclaimed that, "from now on, Turkey shall be a very important person in our community for we will use the feathers of Turkey in all of our important ceremonies." Among the White Mountain Apache the turkey was also held in high esteem. The Apache credit the turkey in helping to recede the waters of the Great Flood, as well, and afterwards for teaching the people how to live and plant corn. The Zuni culture portrays the turkey as a great mentor. Turkey was responsible for teaching the poor turkey girl the ways of life and the important values of friendship and loyalty. Turkey also instructed her in the avoidance of excess pleasures. The turkey is also portrayed as a good fighter by many native cultures in New Mexico. The Jicarilla Apache have stories in their culture which speak of the cleverness of the turkey in escaping the pursuit of the coyote. Another traditional story describes the bravery of the turkey in a fight against the eagle.

In the ancient Pueblo culture, the Pueblo people began to capture and domesticate wild turkeys and house them in rock corrals around 800 A.D. They were fed corn and other native plants, cared for, and bred for consumption and trade. They became valuable trade commodities in the large, urban trade center of *Casa Grandes* in present day northern Mexico. In northern Pueblo communities turkeys were valued for their feathers which were used in religious ceremonies, for weaving blankets, and as a major food source. As trade expanded to the south and reached the Aztec culture, turkeys also became important contributors to the native cuisine. Spanish documents from the Hernan Cortes expedition record that so many turkeys were raised in the Mexico City area that turkey meat was used to feed the carnivores at Montezuma's royal zoo.

In New Mexico there are three species of turkeys. The Rio Grande turkey, the smallest species in the area, is mainly confined to the cottonwood forests, streams, and valleys of the Upper Rio Grande basin. Merriam's turkey is the best known species in New Mexico, and is highly valued as a big game animal. It also serves man and the environment as a destroyer of forest tree pests and their larvae. The Mexican turkey is similar in appearance to the Merriam but ranges mostly in the southern extremities of the state. The Mexican turkey is best known for its domestication and for its many uses by the Aztecs in Mexico. For all its qualities and varied uses it is no wonder that the Spanish were very impressed with this remarkable bird when they arrived in the New World. Even more unusual is the fact that there are nine separate terms used in local New Mexican Spanish to identify the turkey.

In northern New Mexico many Spanish-speaking communities were, until more recent times, historically isolated for centuries from the rest of the world. Consequently, many linguistic archaisms have been preserved and are still part of the Spanish dialect from the 16th and 17th centuries. In the southern part of the state there is a large percentage of Mexican influence in the spoken language and within the Spanish speaking population. These and other factors have created a distinctive difference in dialect and the use of specific terms between the Spanish spoken in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. When Francisco Vazquez de Coronado arrived in New Mexico in 1540, he and the members of his expedition were familiar with the native custom of offering food as a token of friendship. They were also familiar with both the wild and domestic turkey which were often an important part of the offerings of food by the Indians of New Spain.

In 1540, the Spaniards had named the turkey of the New World *gallina de la tierra*, as opposed to *gallina de Castilla*, the common term in Europe at the time. The descriptive phrase *de la tierra* was used in colonial times to identify products of the New World which were unfamiliar to the Spanish explorers and colonists. Another distinguishing feature of the turkey, the wattle that hangs over its beak known as *papada* in Spanish, accounts for the term *gallo de papada* which is also applied to the bird. The native Aztec terms, *huexolotl* (tom turkey) and *totollin* (hen turkey) also were used by the native population. Spanish documents from the colonial period show the predominant use of *gallina de la tierra* and *pavo de la tierra* until around 1832. In that year Antonio Barreiro refers to turkeys as *los pavos* or *los guajalotes*. From these documents it can be ascertained that turkeys in New Mexico were abundant in most parts of the territory, that there were both wild and domestic varieties, that domestic turkeys were less common in 1832, than in earlier times, and that turkeys were used widely among the Pueblo cultures to symbolize friendship as well as to placate the enemy in times of stress. In addition, the records reveal that turkeys were an essential part of the native diet and seemed to be easily hunted by the people of the area.

The differences of the nine terms used for turkey, in New Mexico Spanish, can be traced to these early roots and often vary according to the locale within the region. *Ganso*, a term which is defined as goose in most Spanish dictionaries, is used at random throughout the state. The most common occurrences are in the north-central areas of Taos, Mora, and Sandoval counties. *Ganso silvestre*, meaning wild turkey, is also used in these areas. There is no apparent reason why the term goose has taken on the meaning of turkey in this area of New Mexico. It is most likely a colloquialism. The term *cocano* is found in most parts of New Mexico. The derivation of this word is from the Nahuatl-Aztec word *cocono* which means turkey chick. This term is commonly used in northern New Mexico and usually refers to domestic turkeys. The use of *pabo* is heard occasionally across New Mexico. It is not just a common colloquialism, but is characteristic of peninsular Spanish and is often used in the Spanish classes taught in the schools. Most Spanish-speaking New Mexicans are aware that the term *torque* is a corruption from the English. In northern New Mexico *torque* is used for the domestic fowl. When combined with the adjective *silvestre* it can also mean wild turkey. The 16th century term *gallina de la tierra* is still used in many regions of northern New Mexico today. In most cases it refers to

wild turkey, although in isolated areas it may also refer to the prairie chicken and mountain grouse.

Perhaps, the most interesting variant for turkey in New Mexico is the word *guajolote*, because of its double meaning and its origin. There are several theories about this term. The Nahuatl-Aztec word *Hue-xoloth* meaning *GranMozo* (great handsome one) is a mythological being of the Aztec culture. The allusion is made to the male turkeys mating dance which Aztec reports describe as follows: "A que cuando esta en celo andatras dela hembra durante mucho tiempo y con gran majestaly pompa como un criado ceremonioso tras de su ama." (When in his heat he struts in search of the female for a great length of time, with great dignity and splendor, pompously well-bred in pursuit of his mistress.) A second and less impressive Aztec variation is *xua-xolotl* which simply means turkey bird. The double meaning of *guajolote* is intriguing. The term is also used to signify salamander or water dog which in ancient times was a popular culinary delicacy among many cultures. The Spanish word for salamander is *ajolote* which is derived from the Aztec term *axolote*. This may explain the confusion over this term.

Regardless, of its origin, in New Mexico the word *guajolote*, today and in the past, refers either to a turkey or a salamander, depending on the topic of conversation. This double meaning has no doubt caused some confusion for Spanish-speaking visitors to Nuevo Mexico, and has probably made some interesting conversations concerning the menu for Christmas or Thanksgiving dinner among people unfamiliar with the various regions of the state and their distinctive colloquialisms. The variations of meaning in the words for turkey can be best explained as a circumstance of historical isolation in the north, and modernization of the Spanish language in the south. The Spanish language, in general, is extremely conservative and subject to infrequent change. New Mexican Spanish, until recent times, has been so conservative that much of the vocabulary and grammar remains similar to usage in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is an important phenomenon which has helped to preserve a unique heritage in the state and it is an essential component for the survival of Nuevomexicano linguistic tradition.

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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.



Chasing the Santa Fe Ring

Power and Privilege in Territorial New Mexico

Hardcover: 336 pages - illustrations & index
Published by the University of New Mexico Press
(March 15, 2014)

David L. Caffey, former president of the Taos County Historical Society (1983-1985) and the first editor of *Ayer y Hoy* en Taos.

Review by author and lecturer Stephen Zimmer, a resident of Cimarron and long-time acquaintance of David Caffey. This review was first published in the Spring 2014 issue of *High Country*, by the Philmont Staff Assoc.

Readers of New Mexico history during its Territorial Period (1848-1912) invariably find references to a group of businessmen and governmental officials who controlled much of the economic and political life of the Territory. Based in the capital, the group was called "The Santa Fe Ring" by their detractors who accused them of fraud and corruption in pursuit of financial gain.

The Ring was led by two lawyers, Stephen B. "Smooth Steve" Elkins and Thomas B. Catron. The two had been friends at the University of Missouri and after graduation in 1865 both ventured to the Territory of New Mexico in search of business opportunities wherever they might find them. They found them in quantity whether in land grants, mines, or cattle ranches. They were among other like-minded individuals from the East and Mid-West who went to other western territories like Utah, Arizona, and Wyoming for similar reasons after the Civil War.

Over more than a thirty year period the two men, in league with a diverse group of businessmen, governmental officials, lawyers, and politicians scattered throughout the Territory, attempted to acquire Spanish and Mexican Land Grants and invest in mining, railroading, and cattle and sheep ranching. In addition, they aggressively sought government beef contracts destined for the Territory's military posts and Indian reservations often using extra-legal means and collusion to achieve their goals.

In *Chasing the Santa Fe Ring* Dave Caffey, long time Philmont staff member and one of New Mexico's premier historians, has undertaken the daunting task of identifying the members of the Ring along with describing their myriad activities as well. His job was especially challenging given that the Santa Fe Ring was not an actual entity. As one writer has commented, "No one has documented its membership, organization, techniques, and purposes to show that it existed as an entity rather than simply as a group of men individually pursuing similar ends in similar ways." Furthermore, the supposed members did not refer to themselves as being a part of a "Ring" leaving that appellation to newspaper editors and others who objected to their methods and activities. Caffey comprehensively consulted an exhaustive range of court cases, government documents, and Territorial newspapers for references to the Ring, and the result is the first systematic study of the nebulous group.

Readers of *High Country* will be especially interested in Caffey's treatment of the Ring's complex involvement with the Maxwell Land Grant Company in the 1870s. Although Elkins was the company's initial legal counsel and served with Catron on its Board of Directors, they and their associates were ultimately unsuccessful in gaining possession of all or part of the land grant due to the diligence of the Land Grant Company's manager, William Morley and legal counsel, Frank Springer.

But it wasn't for lack of trying. Caffey describes the aftermath of the murder of Rev. Franklin Tolby in September of 1875. Tolby had been a staunch defender of the rights of settlers and miners who had moved into the area thinking it to be public domain. Many believed that Tolby's opposition to meddling by the Ring resulted in his death although nothing substantial was ever proven. Nonetheless, the parson's death led to a series of revenge killings that became known as the Colfax Country War.

Elkins departed New Mexico in 1877 eventually settling in West Virginia where he was subsequently elected to the United States Senate. He continued his relationship with Catron and New Mexico, however, and was invaluable in promoting Ring interests from his position on the national stage. Although residing in the East, he maintained a leading role in the Ring's entanglement in the Lincoln County War in the southeastern part of the Territory in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Caffey's book is a must addition to anyone's library interested in New Mexico's Territorial Period. Not only is the scholarship and interpretation of top rank, it is marked by his usual fluid writing.

Lectures, Field Trips & Special Events

December 7, 2014 - Christmas Luncheon
Thomas A. Romero - Executive Director of the
Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area
Sagebrush Inn

February 7, 2015 - Annual Meeting of the TCHS
"Growing Up in Taos" by Juanita Cordova
Sagebrush Inn

March 7, 2015 - "Women Marked by History"
Rosanne Roberts and Phil Archuleta

April 11, 2015 - Field Trip to Maxwell Museum
of Anthropology, UNM-Albuquerque
"El Agua es Vida, The Acequias of Northern New Mexico"

May 3, 2015 - Annual Society Honoree Luncheon
Sagebrush Inn

The Taos County Historical Society was formed in 1952 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.

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