

AYER Y HOY en TAOS

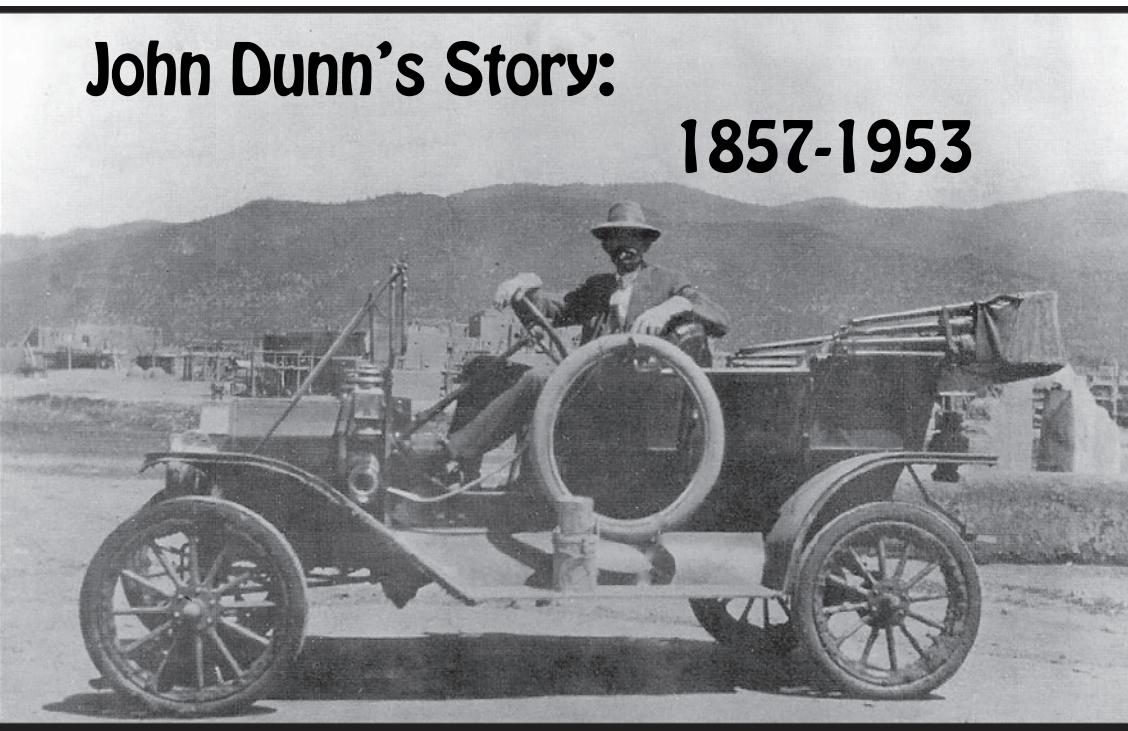
Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Fall 2019

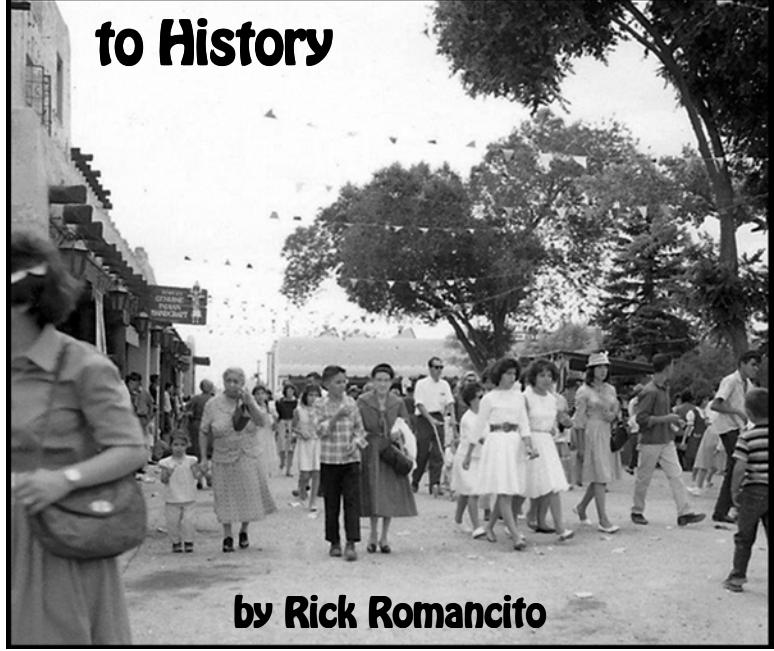
Issue #47

John Dunn's Story:

1857-1953



Our Responsibility to History



by Rick Romancito



Piñon

by Michael Miller

A publication of the Taos County Historical Society

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Fall 2019
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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.

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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 Ernestina Cordova

Dear Friends and Members,

We are fast approaching the end of 2019.



With the holidays and the New Year in the air, I want to thank everyone in our organization for another wonderful and successful year. We look forward to continuing to preserve our history in the coming year.

Ayer y Hoy is printing a lot of history of Taos and preserving written history for the organization.

The preservation committee is doing a wonderful job. The application to register the Duran Molino has been submitted and we are pleased to inform you that the Molino de los Duranes in Taos County will be considered for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the New Mexico Cultural Properties Review Committee at their next meeting.

Other programs that we enjoyed after our May luncheon, was our field trip to the Las Trampas Church and were welcomed at the home of Alex Lopez for a wonderful picnic. Thanks to all of you that attended. In August we were at the Blumenschein Home and Museum celebrating their centennial acquisition of the site, with our guest speaker Jeff Boyer telling us a lot about Helen Blumenschein's life. September's lecture "The Artistry of El Delirio: The White sisters' remarkable legacy" by Nancy Owens. Ann Van Moore brought to life Doña Tulas Barrelo, Susan Shelby Magofin & Lydia Spencer Lane, with Amazing Women of the Wild West in Oct. And November, Cindy Atkins shared "The Fechin House, Taos Architectural Treasure." Our December luncheon, held at Sagebrush Inn Conference with Frank Graziano as the speaker.

We have nothing new to report on our proposal to create a Taos County Musuem at the Old Court House but we continue to thank the commissioners for the continued investigations of creating a Museum dedicated to all things Taos and keeping the TCHS informed.

My sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Board of Directors for their support and urge them to please continue to be an active participant in our mission to "To record and preserve the Irreplaceable."

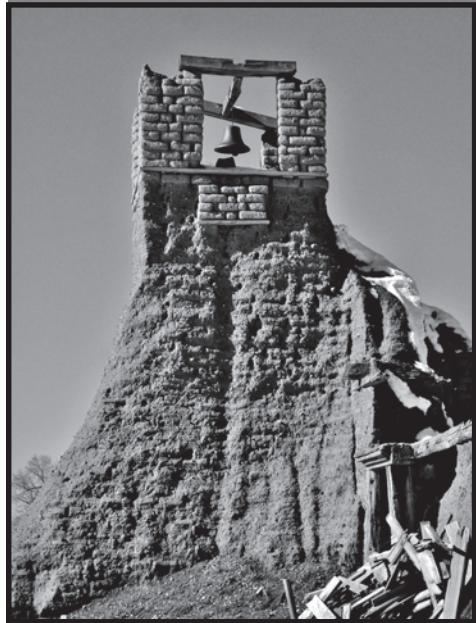
*We wish you all a blessed and happy holiday
& a prosperous 2020!*

*Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society*

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO HISTORY

by Rick Romancito, Tempo Editor with The Taos News

History should keep us grounded. It's the one thing in our existence that can keep us pointed in the right direction. It can provide us focus and give us a clear view of the path that led us to where we are now and what we need to do to prepare us for the challenges that lie ahead.



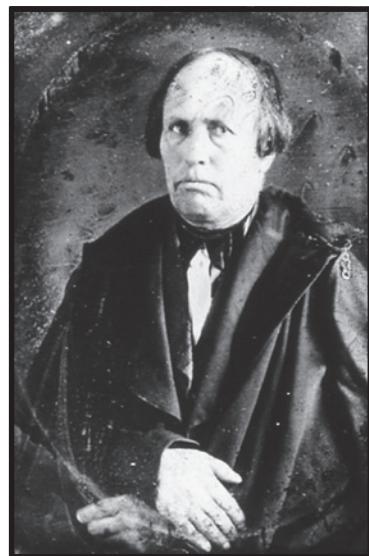
But, history can also be manipulated. "History is written by the victors," some people like to say, probably because it sounds good and doesn't require evidence to back it up. It's a false maxim that sets up the idea there is only one view, one that relies on the written chronology or even the legend accepted as truth. In reality we all write history.

When we were school children, many of us were taught that only one revolution was

good. The American Revolution fought against the religious and political tyranny of England and created the land of the free, home of the brave. But, if you dig a little deeper you discover the seeds of that freedom were sown by the Iroquois Confederacy, a political system founded by Native people in the 12th century and that it wasn't until 1988 that the U.S. Senate paid tribute with a resolution that said "The confederation of the original 13 colonies into one republic was influenced by the political system developed by the Iroquois Confederacy, as were many of the democratic principles which were incorporated into the constitution itself."

That was a "good" revolution. The ones that happened in New Mexico in 1680 and 1847 were harder to deal with because they involved people the authors of history books and grade school teachers weren't prepared to untangle for school children. In the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, for instance, the victors were Pueblo Indians who rose up against the Spanish Colonial military and Catholic priests who, since the beginning of the 17th century subjected Native Pueblo People to religious persecution and tyranny.

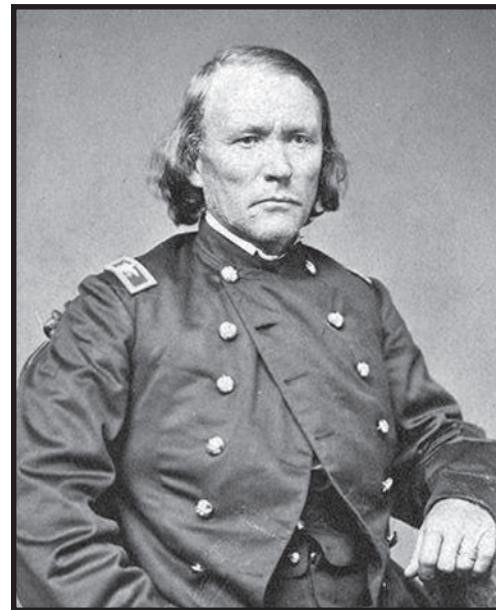
After the Spanish colonists were run out of New Mexico, they returned 12 years later in what the framers of the Fiestas de Santa Fe until a few years ago liked to call the entrada, the peaceful retaking of the New Mexico capitol. It wasn't until a group of Native people and allies rose up and forced the Santa Fe Fiesta organizers to acknowledge that maybe history was exactly the way they chose to tell it.



The great Ethiopian leader Haile Selassie once said, "Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph."

Evil, of course, is in the eye of the beholder. And whether one might say it is evil or not, the ideas inherent in the creation of alternate histories or even "fake news" work to shape public opinion about the past in order to further agendas that thrive on ignorance.

Again, when we were kids, the Taos Revolt of 1847 was portrayed as an uprising among local Indians and Hispanos who, fearing their lands would be taken away by the encroaching Americans, started a riot that resulted in the murder of Territorial Governor Charles Bent. Then, when the American Cavalry in Santa Fe led by Colonel Sterling Price heard about this uprising, they sent soldiers to Taos to put it down.



That's about as much as we knew, but the reality still known among the families of local people is that Price and his men chased the so-called rebels, Hispanos and Indians, into the San Geronimo Church at Taos Pueblo. The people hiding in the church believed the soldiers would respect the centuries old practice of sanctuary. But, Price trained his guns and cannon on the church and opened fire, killing dozens of mostly women and some children. It turns out that most of the men fled, leaving them to the safety of the church. The rebels were rounded up and hanged on the Plaza in Taos.

This part, you don't hear much about.

Interestingly, Padre Antonio Jose Martinez established the first press in Taos not long after. This first newspaper was called "El Crepusculo de la Libertad," the dawn of liberty.

And, since then in all its various forms until today's Taos News, we have tried to create a chronicle of events in Taos, good or bad, to inform and perhaps educate the people of this community. It too has become part of history. While publications across the nation are suffering from falling readership, rising prices and challenges in public trust, it is the community newspapers that literally help those communities stay together.

Studies have now validated what we all know intuitively: The disintegration of community journalism leads to greater polarization, lower voter turnout, more pollution, less government accountability and less trust.

In Taos, this part of living history is part of our strength as a community.

“Piñon”

by Michael Miller

The Oldest Food Source In Pueblo Culture

There is a *cuento* in Northern New Mexico that tells the story of a *pinonero* (most likely a pinon jay) that followed the route along what is known today as *El Camino Real* from Santa Fe to Mexico City, the home of the great Aztec ruler Montezuma. The story tells us that the pinon jay carried the seed of a Colorado pinon tree from the heart of Aztlan (northern New Mexico and southern Colorado) to Mexico City, and left the seed there before returning north. From this single pinon seed, Montezuma was born.

In ancient Pueblo cultures the vast pinon and juniper forests of the Southwest were orchards that produced fuel, building materials, tools, medicine, and food. Tewa tradition reveals that the nuts of the pinon were their most ancient food source. Pinon cones have been found at Pueblo sites from the 12th century. The gathering and harvesting of pinon was done in several ways.

Early in the season the cones were picked while the pitch was still visible. This method of collecting had several advantages. It reduced competition from pinon jays, rats, and other animals who also gathered pinon for food. It was an especially useful method of gathering during times when the harvest was small and the collecting was competitive. The cones were opened by drying or heating on a fire. Once the nuts inside were stored the cones were used for kindling to start fires. A bumper crop of pinon nuts came around every six years. In ancient times the pinon forests were so abundant that gathering could be accomplished in the region close to ancient villages almost every year.

Shelled pinon nuts contain about three thousand calories per pound, making them the most valuable food source in ancient times, except for fresh meat. The protein content of pinon is comparable to steak today, and the nuts also contain twenty amino acids necessary for human growth. Seven of these amino acids are more concentrated in pinon than in corn. In more recent times, pinon was collected by setting up camps in the woodlands when seeding began in the fall. The trees were shaken or beaten allowing the nuts to fall on blankets or woven mats placed under the trees. The nuts were roasted on a fire and stored in sacks where they kept for several years. Nuts were also robbed from blue jay stashes and pack rat nests, which yielded several pounds of nuts in a short period of time. In *los años pasados*, when this was done, the human gatherers often left cornmeal for the wildlife to replace the pinon stash that was taken.

There are many historical uses for pinon in addition to food. Pitch, which oozes from the tree trunk and is visible on the bark was used as a “band-aid” to cover cuts and sores and to protect them from exposure from the elements. The Navajo burned resin to create fumes which cured head colds. They also used pinon and juniper needles to treat headaches, coughs, and fevers. Earaches were treated by fumigation with crushed, dry, buds. The pitch of the tree had many uses as an adhesive and sealer. It was used to repair broken pottery,

and to cement turquoise stones into silverwork made into bracelets and necklaces. Water jugs made from *jara* were sealed inside with melted pinon pitch to hold water and other liquids. Arrow points were secured with pitch and sinew and the feathers were held with pinon glue. Red pottery paint was made by combining the resin of old and new trees and a turquoise paint was made by boiling pinon gum. The pinon gum was also chewed like chewing gum today.

In the Pueblo and Nuevo Mexicano traditions of the past, storytelling was done mainly in the winter. At storytelling time there was always a basket of roasted *t’o* (pinon) in the room. The storytelling shortened the evenings and the long winter nights and children’s stories were always told first. The *pajaro pinonero* (*ts’ay kw’aa*), the *padrino* of Montezuma and the godfather of the historic trail known today as *El Camino Real*, was often

a favorite tale in many Rio Arriba communities.

A Traditional Resource

There are around twenty species of pine trees worldwide that produce seeds large enough to harvest and use as a food source. In other pine species there are seeds that are edible, but are simply too small to be valuable for human consumption. *Pinon*, however, produces a seed that is large enough to harvest and has been used for human nutrition for centuries. In New Mexico and the Southwest there are three species of *pinon*. Colorado pinon is the best known and is found in the north central and northwestern part of the state. It thrives in altitudes from 5,000 to 7,200 feet, but can also be found at elevations as low as 4,500 feet and as high as 9,000 feet above sea level. Pinon forests are abundant and form extensive woodlands that are mixed with cedar (*cedro*) and alligator juniper, also known as *sabina*. Single-leaf pinon is found primarily in southwestern New Mexico and Mexican pinon grows in northern Mexico around *Valle Allende* and *Santa Barbara*. Colorado pinon is the preferred species for harvest among most cultures of the Southwest. The mature trees are ten to forty feet high with a trunk of up to three feet in diameter, depending on location. The seeds are a quarter to a half inch long, with thin shells and a tasty endosperm inside. The seeds are collected by pinon jays, rodents (especially pack rats), squirrels, and other wildlife and are stored as a food source for winter. The seeds not eaten by wildlife are consumed by humans or often grow into new trees.

Fray Alonso de Benavides was one of the first Spaniards in New Mexico to mention pinon in writing, in his official document the “Memorial to the King of Spain, 1630.” Benavides mentions a “lively trade” in pinon nuts between the provinces of Nuevo Mexico and Mexico City. He also describes the pinon tree in this way, “their nuts are so interminable.” Nuevo Mexicano traders have included pinon in their inventory of goods going south to Mexico along *El Camino Real* for centuries. In general, early records do not give the amounts of pinon on colonial caravans, but later records indicate that the amount was substantial.



The Bond & Nohl Mercantile Company, owned by Frank Bond mentions in an inventory in 1906, 181,291 pounds of pinon that was headed to northern Mexico from Espanola for sale and trade. This load of ninety tons travelled by train during the early 20th century, but in colonial times oxen and hundreds of pack mules provided the transport of goods along *El Camino Real*. Other territorial and early statehood traders such as the Ilfeld Company also bought and sold pinon for export providing income and sustainable food for many New Mexicans.

During the mid-19th century large tracts of pinon forest were cut down along *El Camino Real* to make charcoal for processing ore in mining operations. This destruction affected the traditional lifestyles of many indigenous cultures that depended on pinon gathering for food supplies. Cattle ranching also contributed to the destruction of pinon forests during this period when large areas of pinon and juniper were clear-cut to make room for grazing livestock. Destructive land use practices supported by the U.S. government on behalf of the livestock industry have also contributed to the destruction of pinon forests and the promotion of commercial agricultural interests have destroyed thousands of acres. In the 1950s, the practice of dragging a surplus battleship chain between two bulldozers was finally discontinued when no improved results for forage for cattle resulted. These and similar practices have also contributed to beetle infestations, especially in times of drought, when trees are weak and begin to die.

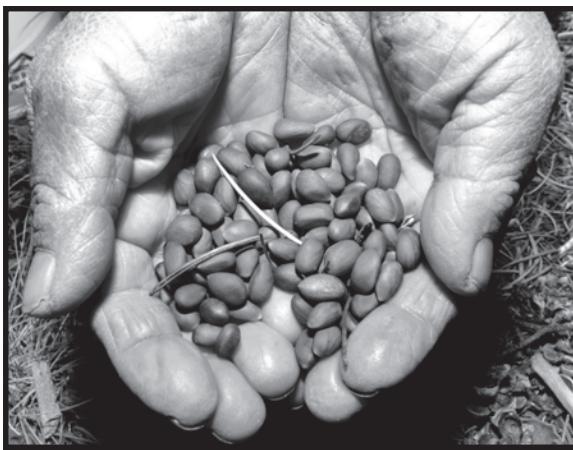
The introduction of power saws in the mid-20th century also contributed to the destruction of the pinon forests. Before the introduction of power saws to New Mexico, the *leñeros* were respectful of the oldest and youngest pinon trees, cutting only the dead branches or trees that died. The most sought after wood was *pinon blanco*, wood that was still standing and had lost its bark. The tree branches were grey on the outside and white inside and well-cured for burning. *Ocote* was saved for the coldest morning fires because the concentration of pitch made for excellent kindling. The green trees were left and preserved for nut harvesting and for future generations.

Pinon nuts are also used today in traditional cooking and baking. It is an essential ingredient in venison stews, stuffed and baked in trout to make the meat more flavorful, and it is a special ingredient in many New Mexican recipes. A favorite recipe (especially during Christmas time) with pinon as a main ingredient, is *empandas de carne*. The recipe:

Ingredients: 2lbs of veal or tongue, 1/2 cup of shelled pinon, 1pkg. of raisins, 1 tsp. of allspice, 1 pkg. of mince meat, 1 small glass of sweet red wine, sugar to taste. Cook: meat until tender, grind in a blender. Mix well and place on top of stove in sauce pan for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. If to dry add mince meat broth. Roll out dough 1/8 inch thick. Cut in circles 2 inches in diameter. Place 1 full tsp. of meat filling in center. Fold over and pinch edges together so it will seal filling. Deep fry a few at a time in hot oil. Drain on a paper towel. Cool and enjoy.

The Future of Pinon

On March 16, 1949, the New Mexico State Legislature officially adopted the pinon pine as the state tree. For the next five decades the species maintained a stable population of new and old trees. In recent years many of the pinon forests throughout the state have died off due to drought and warming conditions in the earth's temprature. This warming has also created an environment for an increase in the population of bark beetles which also kills pinon pine in large numbers.



trunk spreading a fungus that eventually killed the trees. They compared this event with conditions in the 1950s (the last devastating drought in the area) and they discovered that although the 50s drought was actually longer and drier than the more recent occurence, the kill rate was lower. The assumption was that trees die during and after drought, but no one can predict where this will happen, and what trees will be affected.

To add to the scenario, juniper trees have also begun to die in northern New Mexico in larger numbers. Pinon has the ability to close the stomata (a small opening in the epidermis) during severe drought. Juniper, which has a more sturdy build with deeper roots, doesn't do this. When under stress, junipers shut down the water supply to entire limbs which reduces the amount of water the whole tree needs to survive. Pinon, however, is more cautious. Pinon closes the stomata completely during times of drought.

During periods of limited water the pinon (in theory) should have kept the stomata shut. Photosynthesis, however, is like cooking for humans; it is how the tree eats. By protecting themselves from dying of thirst, pinons had actually "shut down" and starved themselves to death.

The scientific hypothesis now is that the rise in global temprature of two degrees Fahrenheit since the 1980s is killing the pinon and other species. "We have gained a huge amount of confidence that, under warmer conditions, we're going to get a lot more mortality," Dave Breshears of the University of Arizona concluded in the LANL study. If this study is accurate, by 2050 the landscape of the Jemez mountain range and other large pinon forests in New Mexico, could look more like the landscape in Albuquerque, primarily grass and creosote bush. According to climatologist, Park Williams, who also worked on the LANL project, "even if we think of a couple of degrees of warming as relatively minor, forests notice a couple of degrees, and they express it by dying."

The imagery of thousands of New Mexicans picking pinon on a warm Indian summer day, or sitting in the sun with friends and enjoying the beauty and warmth of a beautiful winter day and sharing a batch of freshly roasted, or sitting by a warm fire in the dead of winter and watching the snow come down while eating pinon and *carne seca* could actually become a thing of the past, if we humans don't take notice and make changes in our use of fossil fuels. Let's all hope, for our sake and for future generations, that the New Mexico dicho, "*las malas nuevas siempre son ciertas*" (bad news is always certain) does not come to pass.



LONG JOHN DUNN - 1857-1953

by Polly Raye, from John Dunn House Shops Website

Long John Dunn—bronc rider, stagecoach driver, saloon-keeper, gambler and lovable rascal—is a legend in Northern New Mexico.

John's lanky six-foot-four frame, broken-nose twang, spicy vocabulary and wide-ranging humor left a lasting impression on everyone he met. That included just about everyone who came to Taos, for over 30 years, because he owned the only bridge and the only stage-coach (later the taxi) into town.

John was born in Victoria, Texas in 1857 on what he later described as a "slow-starvation farm." As a young man he made several trail drives of nearly 2,000 miles up into Canada over the old Chisholm Trail with as many as 5,000 cattle. In those days Caldwell, Kansas was the last white settlement after Fort Worth and there wasn't a house or a fence from there to Canada. Buffalo herds were small, but bones were sometimes piled twenty feet deep over an acre of ground and collected as fertilizer. The river bottoms swarmed with mule deer and there were hundreds of thousands of antelope.

"A feller learned to use a rope," John reminisced, "for more reasons than one. Sometimes it would save miles of hard riding after a steer...and it was handy to drag wood to the cook, tie up a bronc or even hang a man. Out of necessity the man, the horse, the rope and the gun became inseparable."

John caught the gambling bug in Dodge City. Bat Masterson was marshal. John also knew Buffalo Bill, Calamity Jane and Billy the Kid—"he was as ugly as the devil with his teeth sticking out in front like a mad beaver," John said.

John himself had trouble with the law. He accidentally killed his wife-beating brother-in-law during a fight in Texas, was imprisoned and escaped by sawing through his leg irons and floating down a river. Evading the law in Texas by hiding under a Taoseno's load of hay, John landed in Elizabethtown, New Mexico where a gold boom had started in 1866. There he opened a saloon and gambling

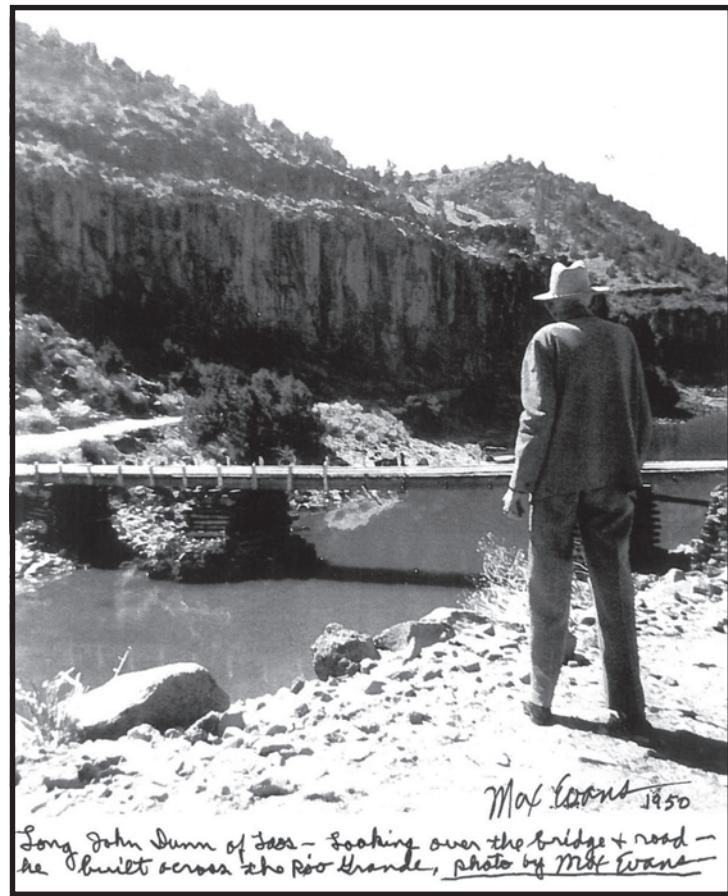


business that prospered with the mine. He became friends with Doc Martin, an Easterner who arrived around the same time and was credited with healing more bullet holes than illnesses.

"A feller leaned to use a rope for more reasons than one. Sometimes it would save miles of hard riding after a steer...and it was handy to drag wood to the cook, tie up a bronc or even hang a man."

Long trail rides and his escape from the law fueled Dunn's dream of starting a transportation business. "If I could just find a place that was good and isolated and so damn rough it wouldn't pay to build railroads," John said, "I'd have just what I wanted."

In 1887 John rode from Elizabethtown through Eagle Nest and down to Taos. Teams of wagon horses and burros loaded with wood stood at hitching posts encircling the plaza. Families from Taos Pueblo watched. In a 1930 interview John said, "Taos was set up here then just as it is now in a little world all by itself. Our nearest railroad point was Tres Piedras on the Denver and Rio Grande and we got mail when someone happened to be coming out to bring it." To earn enough money to finance his transportation business John ran a prosperous saloon in Golden, Nevada, started two gambling houses in Taos and when gold was



found in Red River, opened another gambling house there. In the 1890's John bought the bridge at Taos Junction from a man named Meyers and the bridge at Manby Springs from Miller and Gusdorf. Soon afterward floods wiped out both bridges. John built a new bridge in Arroyo Hondo that still stands. "I put in a bid with the Post Office to establish a mail line from Tres Piedras to Taos and got the contract for daily service. There was also quite a passenger and freight business to be done, but we had to get some sort of road better than the pack trail that was our only line of communication. I put \$2,500 of my own money into the road and raised another \$2,500 by passin' the hat among the people of the valley. Men who couldn't contribute any money put in labor and soon we had the road build—a road such as it was."

John Dunn's toll bridge across the Rio Grande near Arroyo Hondo gave him a monopoly on road travel in and out of town. He charged \$1 per person, 50 cents for horses and cattle and 25 cents for sheep. In good years he averaged \$250 a day. He also erected a hotel at the bridge—he called it a "road ranch"—and it is said that he timed the arrival of the statecoach so that darkness would keep the travelers there overnight. He prided himself on clean beds, kept a milk cow on the premises and hired a man to fish the Rio Grande for a constant supply of fresh trout.

John hauled all the artists as well as others who came to Taos until 1930. On his mail route much of the parcel post was paintings and painting supplies for the artists who had recently begun arriving—Sharp, Phillips, Blumenschein and Couse. He was a close friend of Mabel Dodge and met Will Rogers and Vice President Dawes.

"In handlin' the public as I've been doin' all these years, a fellow sees a great cross-section view of the human animal," he later recounted. "I've met so many worthless people, I've often thought the world is bossed by an unjust God. A just God would have put fur on some the the people I've known—skunk on some, and beaver on others. Then they could be hunted in the winter for their pelts and be of some use to the rest of mankind."

John bought the first car in Taos from Mace MacHorse who had opened a Ford agency. He stocked brake lining by the hundred-foot roll and when starting down a steep grade, made his passengers get out and push up to save the brakes.

He disliked the coming of the mechanical age and the roads that were eventually build from Santa Fe and Raton to Taos because he said "they changed peoples' personalities—friendships broke up when folks no longer needed to depend on each other for company, sympathy and entertainment. I think I've lived through the most dramatic period of history the West will ever see. This is an age of specialization, one-track jobs and one-horse minds."

The man affectionately known as Juan Largo de Taos died on May 21, 1953 at the age of 96. His old friend Doughbelly Price—a little potbellied ex-bronc rider, newspaper columnist and realtor whose sign read "Doughbelly's Clip-Joint"—

covered most of the front page of El Crepusculo (which later became The Taos News) with John's obituary. "The early part of his life was rocky and uphill. ...He was caught in the web of law and Texas gave him 40 years in the State Pen. ...He had no education, but what he knew was plenty and was learned from cattle, horses, natural observation and mother nature—the hardest, most tolerant, and wisest teacher humanity ever had. ...John Dunn was at his best behind a roulette wheel or a monte table, where you never got more than was coming to you and if you didn't watch it was less."

"Transportation made the West, not blazing guns as is so often preached."

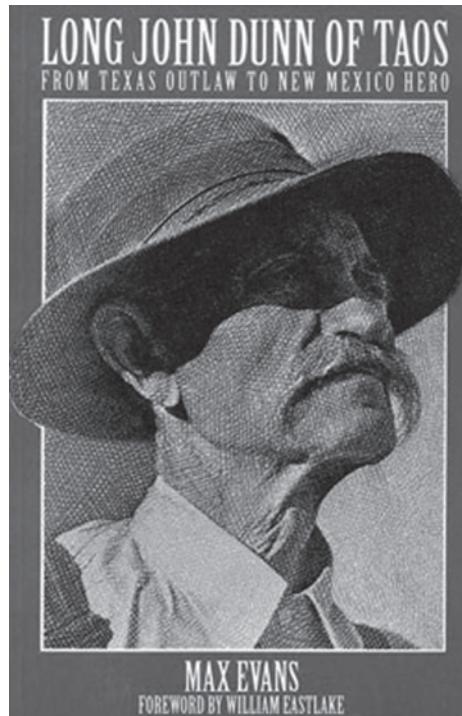
Long John Dunn lived through three phases of the West: the gun-fighting days, the cattle-working days and the modern

West. John said about the making of the West: "Transportation made the West, not blazing guns as is so often preached—although I know the guns played a big part. It was those sweat-stained horses and tireless mules, those worn saddles and creaking wagons and the men and women who were riding them across muddy rivers, rocky ridges and up those long dusty trails."

"I invested everyting I had in Taos County. I build a home, opened up four saloons, a gamblin' hall and a livery stable." John Dunn's home still stands today between Bent Street and Taos Plaza. It is the center-piece of a beautiful garden courtyard and pedestrian walkway and home to Taos's best shops.

Sources: J. Hogg's interview with John Dunn, 1930. El Crepusculo, 1953. Long John Dunn of Toas, Max Evans, Westernlore Press, 1959.

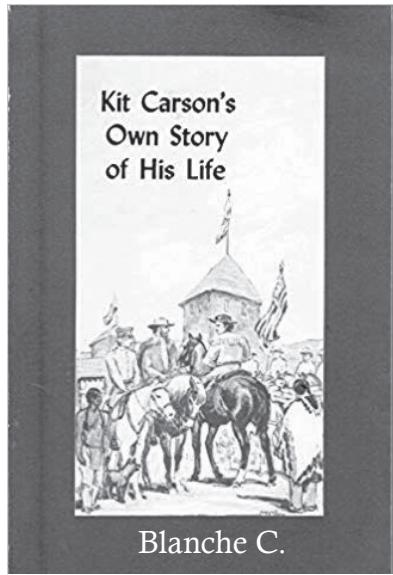
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"THE LITERARY SCENE"

by T.N. Luther, author of "Collecting Taos Authors"

There are fragments of Spanish explorer accounts that tell of contact with Taos. American and French fur trappers related of their use of Taos as a base for their trade. The heroic struggle of the defenders of Turley Mills appears in government reports. The highly regarded Wah-lo-Yah and The Taos Trail, written by Lewis H. Garrard, writes of the events of Taos when he arrived to witness the judicial proceedings of the trial of some of the ringleaders of the 1847 revolt against American authority. Janet Lecompte's Rebellion in the Rio Arriba 1837 tells of the short-lived rebellion of northern New Mexicans against the Mexican authorities.



But in surveying the Taos literary scene, the first thing that comes to mind is that Padre Antonio Jose Martinez had a printing press brought to Taos in the 1830's and was its first published writer.

One of the most important works on this era in Taos history was Pedro Sanchez's able defense of Padre Martinez, which strongly contradicted the opinions of some of the Padre's critics, such as W. W. H. Davis in his book *El Gringo*. Part of the negative criticism of the padre undoubtedly resulted from

Willa Cather's rather one-sided support of Bishop Lamy's opposition to the good Father. Her book, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* was often regarded the best of all New Mexico novels.

One of the first Taos authors, Blanche C. Grant, issued historical pamphlets about Taos Indians, a Kit Carson autobiography, and events 100 years ago in old Taos, and also her book *When Old Trails Were New. The Story of Taos*, published in 1934. She also did at least one historical novel about New Mexico. She loved the Taos area, as one can tell by reading her output.

The greatest boost to the Taos literary scene occurred because of the arrival of Mabel Dodge Sterne in the teens. Although some critics have concluded that she was not of high intellectual ability or talent, I do not believe they have done her full justice. I have concluded she was a woman far advanced for her time, as well as being a catalyst who inspired or stimulated other authors. In Europe, married to Edwin Dodge, she entertained widely, drawing such intellectuals as Leo and Gertrude Stein, Arthur Rubenstein, Andre Gide, Paul and Muriel Draper, Bernard Berenson, and others, in France and Italy. Re-turning to New York after World War I broke out, she maintained a salon which attracted other intellectuals such as Max Eastman, John Reed, John Dos Passos, Walter Lippmann, Isadora Duncan, John Collier, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Emma Goldman, Alfred Kremberg, Lincoln Steffens and many others. She had writings published in *The Masses*, helped produce the 1913 Armory Show, which helped introduce modern art to America, and, after a divorce from Dodge, and breaking up with her lover John Reed, had a new marriage to Maurice Sterne. A visit to the Southwest with Sterne introduced her to New Mexico and Taos, which became her home for the rest of her life. Her fascination with the Taos Indians led to her breaking with Sterne and to her marriage to Taos Indian Tony Luhan. She induced D. H. Lawrence to come to

Taos in 1922, and he maintained a residence until he departed for good in 1925. Some of his important work was written while he lived at Lobo Peak on the ranch which Mabel gave him. Mabel related her impression of his presence here in Lorenzo in Taos, published in 1932. Frieda Lawrence and Dorothy Brett accompanied Lawrence, and both wrote books which relate of their experiences in Taos, written after Lawrence's death. Frieda's book was *Not I But The Mand*, published by The Rydal Press in 1934. Brett's book, *Lawrence and Brett. A Friendship*, published by J. B. Lippincott in 1933.

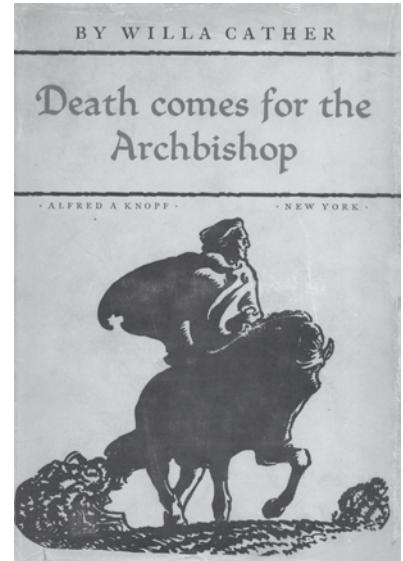
In Taos, Mabel wrote her four volumes of *Intimate Memories*: Vol. 1, *Background*, 1933; Vol 2, *European Experiences*, 1935; Vol 3, *Movers and Shakers*, 1936; Vol 4, *Edge of Taos Desert*, (1937). One of the best books ever written about Taos was her *Winter in Taos*, 1935. Her book on the Taos artists is useful. There are a great many books by other authors that relate of Mabel's life which are of interest.

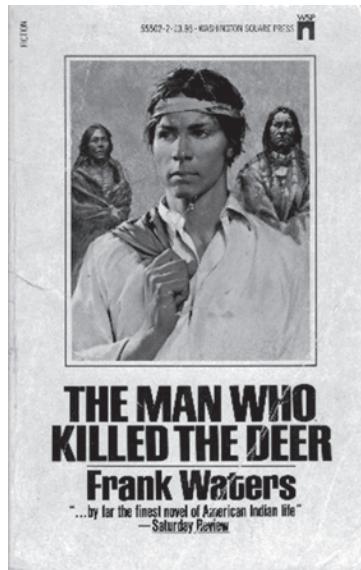
One of the interesting facts about her experience with psychoanalysis is that she left Jungian treatment to be treated by a Freudian, the reverse being a more common sequence. Her memories are a fascinating account, for Mabel never tried to cover up her faults and her honesty makes reading her work a remarkable experience. It should be mentioned that her dynamic personality was responsible for many important literary figures coming to Taos in addition to D. H. Lawrence. Among the many were Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Robinson Jeffers, Frank Waters, Carl Van Vechten, Thornton Wilder, Thomas Wolfe, Witter Bynner, and Mary Austin.

Myron Brinig was from Montana and was induced to come to Taos by Mabel in 1934. He produced 21 published works from 1928 to 1958. In his first novels, women were the main subjects, and his first work with a Taos setting was *All of Their Lives*, 1941. The main character in this book was Mabel Dodge Luhan herself, under a different name. The only other work of his centered partly in northern New Mexico was *You and I*, published in 1945.

While in the Taos area, D. H. Lawrence wrote several novels: *St. Mawr*, 1925; *The Princess*, 1925; *The Woman Who Rode Away*, 1928; *Mornings in Mexico*, 1927; *The Plumed Serpent*, 1926; a play, *David*, 1926; and *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, 1923.

Other than Lawrence, Frank Waters was the best-known writer whose works spanned many years in Taos. Frank has been regarded by many literary critics as the best of Southwest fiction writers, and by some as the greatest Western American writer of the past century. He was nominated seven times for the Pulitzer prize. Three of his first four novels were centered in Colorado, *The Wild Earth's Nobility*; *Below Grass Roots*, and *The Dust Within the Rock*, and one in lower Mexico, *Fever Pitch*, his first novel. Two of his early novels were collaborations with Houston Branch, written in 1941 and 1948, *River Lady* and *Diamond Head*. His 1941 novel, *People of the Valley*; which is about a Spanish woman of the Mora Valley area, has been regarded





as one of his best and served as an inspiration to such other Hispanic writers as Rudolfo Anaya and Jose Martinez, while Denise Chavez regarded Fever Pitch, 1930, as a major forerunner. The great Western critic, Lawrence Clark Powell, regarded People of the Valley as his greatest novel.

Other critics have regarded The Man Who Killed The Deer, about the spiritual life of a Taos Indian, as the greatest novel ever written about the American Indian. These critics consist of Steven Vincent Benet, Alexander Blackburn and Thomas Lyon. Other critics consider the most mystical of his

works, The Woman at Otowi Crossing, about a woman who operated a tea room at the time of the construction of the atom bomb at nearby Los Alamos, as his major novel. His book about Arthur Manby of Taos, To Possess The Land, is also highly regarded. His nonfiction books about the Indians of the Southwest, Masked Gods, (the Pueblo and Navajo Indians), 1950, and Book of the Hopi; 1963, are major contributions in this field, although some experts believe the Book of the Hopi is too concentrated on one particular religious faction of the Hopi. This latter work has gone through 54 printings, the most of any of his books.

Frank's nonfiction book on the Colorado River, 1946; and his Colorado mining tril-ogy which was combined in the rewritten version, Pikes Peak, 1971, remain regarded by others as the best ever written on the American western mining scene. The serious reader will want to read others of his books, including works edited by his wife, Barbara, after Frank's death in 1995, such as Of Time and Change. A Memoir, published in 1998. Barbara is also a fine writer. Her book, Celebrating the Coyote, published in 1998, tells of her life with Frank.

Fredric Brown and Frances Crane were two popular mystery writers who lived in Taos for some years in the 1940's and later. Brown is probably best remembered for his extremely popular 1947 novel, The Fabulous Clipjoint, which was the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award as the Best First Mystery Novel of the Year. In all he produced over 30 books, including some in the science fiction field. His novel with a surprise ending, The Far Cry, 1951, was set in the Taos area. Frances Crane lived in Taos for various periods, and several of her mysteries were centered here, including her first, The Turquoise Sky, with one of the major characters being suggestive of Mabel Dodge Luhan. Crane's detectives were a husband and wife team and her characters, especially the criminals, were often over exaggerated. Various colors appeared most often in her titles and this helped them to be recognized as hers by her fans.

Lawrence Clark Powell, perhaps the West's most famous literary critic, regarded Peggy Pond Church as New Mexico's greatest poet. She called Taos home, but lived later in Los Alamos and Santa Fe during her most productive literary career. Other best known poets of the Taos area were Phillips Kloss, author of several poetry books, and Judson Crews, the most prolific of the Taos poets. Wendell Anderson, an associate of Crews, lived in Taos for a time. R. P. Dickey, a Taos resident in later years, probably could compete with Judson Crews for Taos' most prolific poet, with over 8,000 poems to his credit.

Perhaps the area's most critically regarded novelist of more recent vintage, although one of the least likely to be recognized as a Taos writer, is William Goyen. He arrived in Taos from Texas in 1945 and his best-known novel, The House of Breath, was written in Taos, and

published in 1950. Much of the body of his work was more highly recognized critically in England, France and Germany than in this country. Although he lived in various other areas of America, he also retained a home in Taos on land given to him by Frieda Lawrence. Much of Goyen's work was set in Texas.

Edward Abbey lived in Taos for a short period, during which he edited the Taos newspaper. His early books, the first three, published in 1954, 1956 and 1962, are very expensive to collect. The Brave Cowboy, 1956, fine in dust jacket, might cost over \$ 3,500.00 for a signed copy. The Monkey Wrench Gang, a novel published in 1975, is his most popular book, but Desert Solitaire, 1968, is regarded by many as his best book.

Max Evans is a gifted storyteller. His career in Taos included working as a mine promoter and as an artist before he began his literary career. He has written short stories, also screen plays. He has also produced, directed and acted in films. One of his nonfiction books, Long John Dunn of Taos, has been very popular and an expanded edition has been printed.

Mabel Dodge Luhan rented a home to Walter Van Tilburg Clark in 1946. He lived in Taos only six months when he was forced to abandon a teaching position in Rye, New York, after he was nearly in a state of

physical collapse due to a touch of TB and overwork. Although he wrote no books while he lived in Taos, his son said his visit was a greatly

healing experience. He devoted so much of his life teaching others that his literary output was quite limited. It is interesting that two of his Nevada novels, The Ox-Bow Incident and The Track of the Cat, are regarded as two of the best western fiction books ever written, along with Frank Waters The Man Who Killed The Deer and People of the Valley

The most prolific of all authors who have resided in Taos was Frank O'Rourke. He wrote in many fields. In sports he wrote baseball, football and boxing books. He wrote Westerns of both the past and the contemporary scene, many set in the Taos area. He also wrote mystery novels, using the pseudonym of Patrick O'Malley. He also used the pen names of Frank O'Malley and Kevin Connor. His Taos residence covered a period of six years from 1954 to 1960. In all he authored 69 published books, at least two of which were published posthumously. In spite of this extraordinary production he cannot be regarded as a mere hack writer. Overall, his sales amounted to over twenty-five million copies. The Far Mountains, an historical western set mainly in the Taos area, was his most highly regarded work.

Another popular Taos author is John Nichols, who arrived in Taos as a permanent resident in 1969. His first three books were all made into successful motion pictures. They were The Sterile Cuckoo, The Wizard of Loneliness, and The Milagro Beanfield War. The Milagro Beanfield War, based partly in Taos, has been regarded by many as his best novel. His recent works have had a strong anti-materialistic, pacifistic and environmentalist bent. He also has written some non-fiction and photographic works on this beautiful area.

No article on Taos authors should overlook Willard "Spud" Johnson, secretary of New Mexico authors Witter Bynner in Santa Fe, and later Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos.

(Continued on page 11)

“LANGUAGE OF TAOS & NORTHERN NEW MEXICO”

by Michael Miller

In the northern frontiers of New Spain many Spanish speaking communities were, until more recent times, isolated from European linguistic modernisms in Spain and other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Consequently, many linguistic archaisms have been preserved from the 16th and 17th centuries in New Mexico.

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 Vasquez 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 turkeys which were often an important part of the offerings of food by the Indians of New Spain.

In 1540, the Spaniards had named the wild 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 term *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, a Santa Fe barrister and governmental deputy from Mexico City, refers to turkeys as *los pavos* or *los guajalotes*.

From these documents by Antonio de Barreiro, in a report entitled, “*Ojeada sobre Nuevo Mexico*,” which was a detailed social and economic manuscript commissioned by the Mexican government. It can be ascertained that turkeys in New Mexico were abundant in most parts of the territory. There were both wild and domestic varieties, domestic turkeys were less common in 1832, than in earlier times and 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 indigenous people of the area.

The differences between the nine terms used for turkey in New Mexico Spanish, can be traced to the early roots outlined above. These differences 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 for goose has taken on the meaning of turkey in this area of New Mexico. It is most likely a colloquialism that survived in these communities. 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” in that ancient language. This term is commonly used in Northern New Mexico and usually refers to domestic turkeys. The use of *pavo* 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 turkeys, although in isolated areas it may also refer to prairie chickens or mountain grouse.

El gran mozo

Perhaps, the most interesting variant, from a linguistic point of view, is the word *guajolote*, because of its double meaning and its origin. There are several linguistic theories about the origin of this word. The Nahuatl-Azteca word *Huexoloth* meaning *gran moza* (great handsome one) is a mythological being of the Aztec culture.

The allusion is made to the male turkeys mating dance which Aztec glyphs describe as follows, “*A que cuando esta en celo anda tras de la hembra durante mucho tiempo con gran majestad 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 *xuaxolotl* which simply means, “turkey bird.” The double meaning of *guajolote* is intriguing. The term is also used to signify a salamander or water dog which in ancient times was a popular culinary delicacy among many indigenous cultures. The Spanish word for salamander is *ajolote*, which is derived from the Aztec term *axolote*. This may explain the confusion over this word.

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 and a few good laughs for Spanish-speaking visitors to New Mexico, especially if it concerns the menu for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner.

The variations of meaning in the words for turkey can be best explained as a circumstance of historical isolation in the north, and the modernization of the Spanish language in the south. The Spanish language, in general, is extremely conservative and subject to infrequent change until modern times. Nuevomexicano 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.

Michael Miller is an historian and author.



Notes from the Editor

by Dave Cordova

It is my sincere wish to extend a hearty Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year in 2020 to everyone and, most especially, to the members of the Taos County Historical Society.

It has been a pleasure to have a reason to immerse myself in the incredible history of Taos and its inhabitants. Because of my duties as editor of this publication, I have been exposed to stories, anecdotes and remembrances that serve to give color to the rich tapestry that is "Taos."

In this issue, we read short essays by our talented contributors. "Our Responsibility to History," written by Rick Romancito, is a thoughtful and intelligent call for understanding our history. T.N. Luther's "The Literary Scene" is a map or guide to the many authors who have called Taos home, permanently or temporarily. We get a better picture of one of Taos' most colorful characters in "Long John Dunn - 1857 to 1953," written by Polly Raye, which whets our curiosity to read more about John Dunn in the writings of Max Evan, a personal friend of Dunn's. Also, in this issue, we get two articles by New Mexico author and columnist, Michael Miller. Michael, a frequent contributor to Ayer Y Hoy, offers an article,

(Continued from page 9)

He produced the magazines/newspapers The Laughing Horse, and The Horse Fly, printing unique and original

writings from many Taos authors and which were full of local history, as well as creative writing. His one book, poems, was Horizontal Yellow, published in 1935. He also wrote a column for some

years for The New Mexico Historical Review.

Nancy Wood concentrated at first on writing about Colorado themes, but in the late 1960's until about 1989 lived in Taos and wrote much about the Pueblo Indians. Many Winters, 1974, covered the prose and poetry of the Pueblo Indians, while The Man Who Gave Thunder To the Earth, 1976, reflects the Taos Indians way of understanding. Other material followed about the Ute Indians of Colorado. Her book Taos Pueblo was an unvarnished account of life at the Taos Pueblo. Following this she concentrated on several poetry books about the Southwest Indians. Her book The Serpent's

Tongue. Prose, Poetry and Art of the New Mexico Pueblos, is an outstanding anthology of works on the American Indians of this area.

Claire Morrill will always be remembered for her book, A Taos Mosaic. Portrait of a New Mexican Village, Albuquerque, (1973), first edition, University of New Mexico Press. As a former book store owner, she and her partner, Genevieve Janssen, observed Taos for nearly a generation. Claire wrote of her observations over a 25-year period and of earlier events.

appropriate for the season, about the many names by which turkeys are known in the Spanish tongue in "The Language of Taos and Northern New Mexico" and a second article, the importance of "Piñon" to Native New Mexicans and trade commodity.

I do hope that you are entertained and, perhaps, learn something new about "Taos," "New Mexico" and our history.

In coming issues, topics and subjects relating to the roles of culture, religion, race and language, will be prominently featured. The next issue will delve more deeply into the Ancient Castilian Spanish spoken in some Northern New Mexico communities. Michael Miller, a resident of La Puebla, south of Espanola is now working on the article that recalls archaic words and phrases, forgotten through use, and their importance in their time. We are also working on articles about the incorporation of the Town of Taos, the mayors, public servants, and "Characters."

The Taos County Historical Society is always on the lookout for interesting articles or stories to share in Ayer Y Hoy. If you have always thought that a story needs to be shared to be preserved for future Taoseños, then we want to see your stories for possible publication in future issues.

Don't forget the educational and edifying monthly lectures, sponsored by the Society and occasional field trips. As always, the lectures are open to the public.

Robert Bright, who lived in adjoining Talpa, wrote The Life and Death of Little Jo in 1944, published by Doubleday, considered by many as one of the 100 best novels set in New Mexico. Bright later moved further west where he concentrated on writing many children's books.

Joseph O'Kane Foster's In The Night Did I Sing is usually regarded as one of New Mexico's best novels. It was published in 1942 with Taos as its setting. Foster wrote a handful of other novels set elsewhere. His nonfiction book, D. H Lawrence in Taos, written years later in 1972, gives some interesting information about Lawrence's stay in Taos.

John Evans, Mabel Dodge Luhan's son by her first husband, had two novels published, in 1933 and later in 1936, Andrew's Harvest, and Shadows Flying. The latter work involved a homosexual relationship, and its subject matter was daring at the time of its printing.

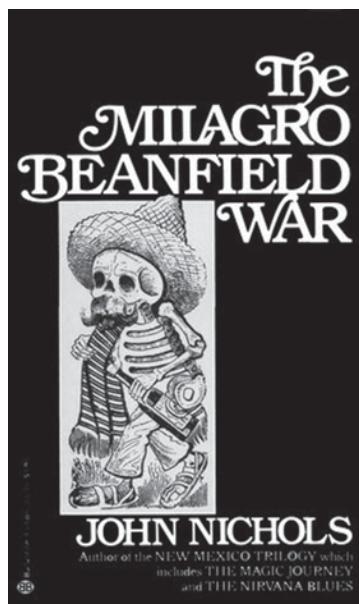
Victor White, a part time summer resident in Taos, moved here after retiring from his career as a teacher. He recorded the life of an Austrian, Peter Dominic, who moved from Vienna to America. This was done in a series of four volumes published from 1944 to 1950.

We should mention that Emily Hahn, the prolific authoress of many books, worked in the Taos area for Joseph Foster's postcard company, although she was not published during her stay here. She did do a biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan, published in 1977.

I would be remiss not to mention Dee Strausberg, who uses the pseudonym Damona Winston. Dee has spent time in Taos every spring and fall, and has been doing so for over 50 years. She has written several novels centered in this area, and she probably could be counted as a resident. She has written in a variety of genres, from Gothic novels and mysteries to historical novels and love stories.

Authors still come to Taos to live for varying periods, and this will be true for future generations as long as Taos exists. This is the call of the underlying spirit of this beloved land.

T.N. Luther's article was originally written for "Taos: A Topical History.





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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.

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:

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