

# AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

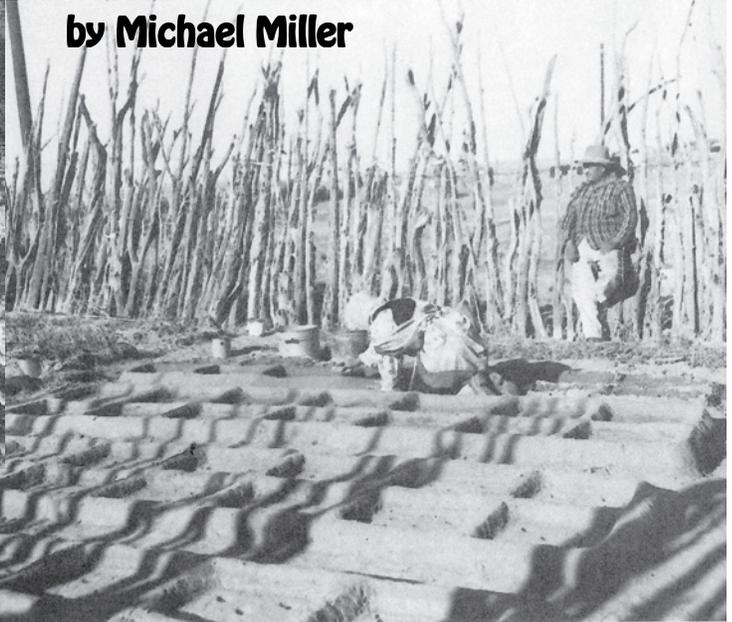
Summer 2020

Issue #48

## Obra de Agricultura

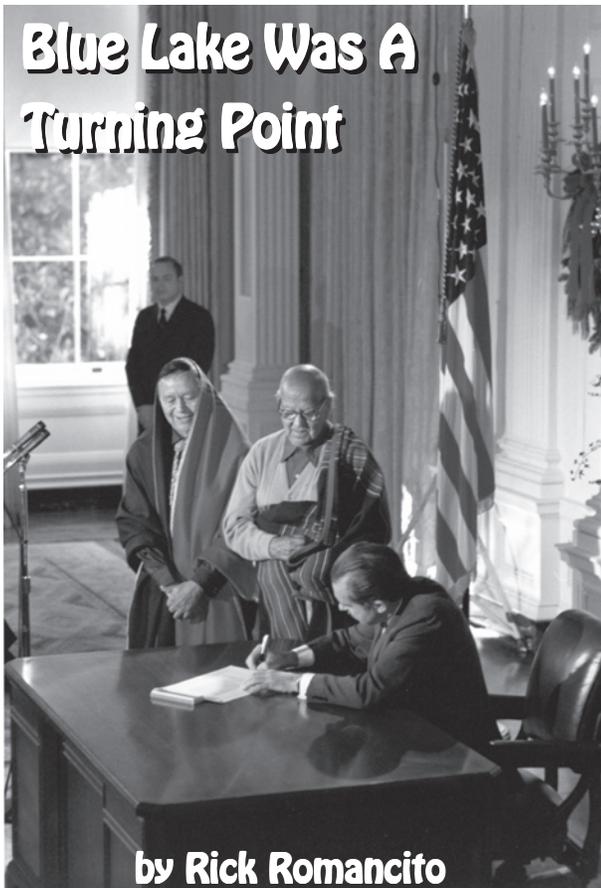


(left) Traditional waffle garden layout in Spain.  
Credit: Juan Estevan Arellano.



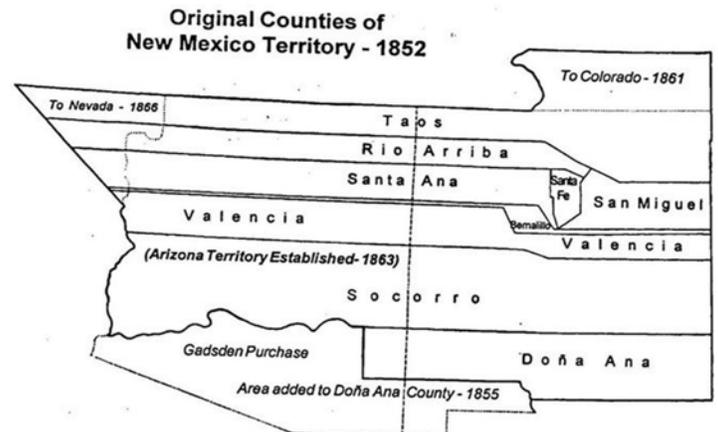
by Michael Miller

(right) Traditional waffle garden layout at Zuni Pueblo.  
Credit: MNM Photoarchives.



## Blue Lake Was A Turning Point

by Rick Romancito



## Evolution of Taos County

by Dave Cordova

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Issue No. 48

ISSN 1088-5285

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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,

I am delighted and honored to have the opportunity to serve you, our valued members. I am pleased to continue the tradition of speaking to you through our semi-annual newsletter, Ayer y Hoy. While our newsletter is coming to you in July, I appreciate your understanding. We had postponed the annual Honoree Luncheon, but had to cancel it for this year and hope to be able to have our annual Christmas Luncheon in December. This decision was made for safety reasons. I hope that you and your families are safe and healthy as our country, and indeed, the world deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.



We started the year with a board retreat, where we gathered at IHOP Restaurant meeting room to discuss our plans and goals for the 2020. At our annual meeting in February, we elected a new Vice President, Elizabeth Romero, Treasurer, Jacquelyn Chase, Board Members, Effie Romero, and Bernadine DeHerrera. Heading the Preservation committee will be Corky Hawk and Hospitality is Sylvia & Irene De La Torre-Spencer.

Our lecturer in February was Roberto Lavadie. He shared his recollections of "Growing up in Taos," And in March, Wayne Rutherford spoke on the history of Tio Vivo. Our programs for April, May, June and the July field trip were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hopefully we will be able to reschedule these cancelled programs for the coming year.

Still on the schedule for August 1 is "Olla Bearers and Indian Detours: New Mexico Indian as Tourist Attractions by Joseph Sabatini. We regret that our honoree luncheon on August 9<sup>th</sup>, commemorating the 50-year anniversary of the "Return of Blue Lake," has been cancelled due to the pandemic.

We are very hopeful that our lectures will continue on September 5 - Tale Teller and Tony Hillerman's Landscapes, by Ann Hillerman. October 3, Spellbinding Drama within Solemn Walls: History of New Mexico District Courthouses, by Denise Tessier (HSNM). November 7, The Book of Archives and other stories from Mora Valley, Gabriela Mejendez, UNM, Sunday, December 6, Holiday Luncheon- Crossing the Camino Real: Folktales by Dr. Larry Torres.

My sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Board of Directors and all our members for their support and understanding of our cancelled lectures. Together we will continue to preserve our mission: "To record and preserve the Irreplaceable."

*Ernestina Cordova, President  
Taos County Historical Society*

*Ernestina Cordova, President  
Taos County Historical Society*

# BLUE LAKE WAS A TURNING POINT

by Rick Romancito

Poets have often extolled the virtues of a pristine forest, how nature untouched by human hands possesses a quality unsurpassed in its ability to convey a primal state. Poets have also bestowed upon this state a religiosity wherein the very being of a place that has been allowed to exist as wilderness is itself holy for time immemorial.

Blue Lake is such a place. Located high in the mountains above Taos Pueblo, it has sustained the people of this Native American tribe as a site of great spiritual significance. It is held in such sacred regard that the people of this tribe hold all information about their Native religion and spiritual practices away from the scrutiny of outsiders.

The relationship between Blue Lake and the Taos Indians was symbiotic through centuries even before the arrival of Spanish explorers scouting for the conquistador Francisco Vásquez de Coronado during his 1540-42 expedition from California through what is now the American Midwest. Spurred by erroneous tales of riches to be discovered among vast Cities of Gold, what the explorers found instead were Native souls ripe for conversion by Catholic priests. Still, Coronado's expedition was deemed a failure and he returned to Mexico, where he died in 1554.

Throughout the Spanish Colonial Period that began after another conquistador, Juan de Oñate, led a caravan of settlers to what is now the Pueblo of Ohkay Owingeh (formerly called San Juan Pueblo) in 1598, Taos and other New Mexico pueblos gradually accepted the presence of these new people from a distant land. But, it was not without conflict. Due to the colonist's establishment of governmental systems that forced labor, took lands and resources, and, worst of all for them, deemed Native religion an abomination, the seeds of revolution grew.

In 1680, a holy man from Ohkay Owingeh named Pope organized a revolt while in hiding at Taos Pueblo. On August 10 of that year, the feast of San Lorenzo, the Pueblos scattered throughout New Mexico rose up against their oppressors and violently evicted them. Although they were allowed to return 12 years later and despite occasional violent conflicts, the Spanish remained.



The systems of land management remained through the Mexican period and into the American period in the 1800s. Other violent conflicts flared up too. But, during all this time, sovereignty over Taos Pueblo lands were honored by the Spanish and Mexican governments, particularly under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Still, the people of Taos Pueblo maintained their religion and looked to Blue Lake for solace and inspiration.

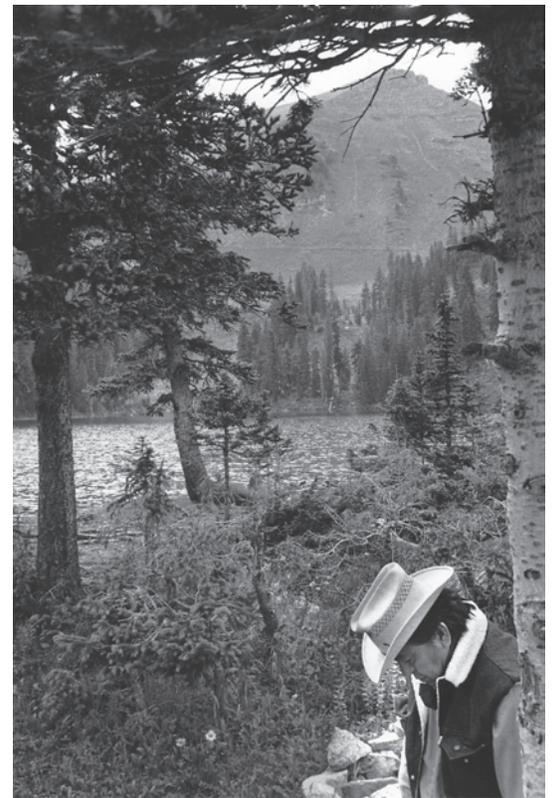
That is until 1906 when U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt established the Carson National Forest encompassing millions of acres of forest in Northern New Mexico including the Blue Lake Watershed above Taos Pueblo. This was news to tribal members who were never informed of this decision and immediately objected to the government's "multi-use" policy which meant that non-Indians could now use their sacred lands for recreation and resource extraction. Worst, was that the establishment of the forest stripped the tribe of aboriginal title to their land.

Thus began an epic fight to return Blue Lake to tribal control. It was a fight that would marshal the resources of generations of tribal elders, their descendants, and many non-Indian allies who recognized this outrageous offense.

In testimony before Congress in 1969, the tribe's Paul Bernal stated, "In all of its programs the Forest Service proclaims the supremacy of man over nature; we find this viewpoint contradictory to the realities of the natural world and to the nature of conservation. Our tradition and our religion require people to adapt their lives and activities to our natural surroundings so that men and nature mutually support the life common to both. The idea that man must subdue nature and bend its processes to his purposes is repugnant to our people."

Finally, in 1970, after decades of hard work and anguish, President Richard M. Nixon signed legislation returning the 48,000-acre Blue Lake Watershed to the people of Taos Pueblo. This was hailed as a victory for not only this small New Mexico Indian tribe, but for all Native people across the nation. Until this happened, the United States had never given back lands that were taken from an American Indian tribe.

Today, Blue Lake remains a protected area where no one but tribal members are allowed. It is hoped that this place will remain holy, and pristine, forever.



Paul Bernal at Blue Lake (photo: Taos Pueblo)

# CAPTAIN MILTON SPOTTS: A Colorful Taoseño

by William Christmas

Milton Arthur Spotts was born on July 3, 1884 in Milton, Pennsylvania, which is located in the central part of the state about 80 miles north of Harrisburg. He was the middle of three children born to Epharim K. and Harriet J. Spotts. Milton entered Susquehanna University in 1905, received an A.B. in 1909 (Classics) and an A.M. in 1911 (Theology).

On Nov. 25, 1908 Spotts married Mary Etta Anderson, born on June 6, 1884 in Juniata County, PA, when he was an undergraduate senior at Susquehanna University. Their daughter and only child Mary was born on September 12, 1909.

Milton was ordained a Lutheran minister in 1910 and served several pastorates in Pennsylvania until 1916. He then entered the Princeton Theological Seminary for a year and earned a B.D. In 1924 Spotts wrote on an application to the New Mexico Army National Guard that he could read and write Greek and Latin and had fluency in German, French, and Spanish. He also claimed to have studied the law for two years and to have taken an archeology course in 1922-23.

On Feb. 5, 1918 Spotts enlisted in the United States Marines, Chaplain Corps, (U.S.N.R.F.) as a Presbyterian minister with the rank of Lieutenant and received a reserve commission. He was stationed in France for six months during World War I until Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, and remained on active duty until discharged on July 1, 1922. Spotts took readily to military life and went to great ends to continue in the military as a career officer and chaplain following the armistice. All of his postwar duty in the Marines was spent at the Marine Barracks Recruiting Depot in San Diego, CA.

In 1921 he sought to become a career officer in the Navy and applied for a regular commission meant for officers wishing to make a career in the military. It was an inopportune time for such a request because of a large nationwide reduction in the size of the armed forces following World War I. The first step in the process was for Spotts to undergo a physical examination on May 14, 1921 at San Diego. He failed this exam due to a variety of conditions that included neurosis, neurasthenia, valvular heart disease, and active tuberculosis, presumably contracted while on active duty. Spotts requested a repeat evaluation at the Navy Department in Washington, D.C. He was summoned to appear on June 20, 1921 and was found physically fit but not professionally qualified for a regular commission. He received an honorable discharge from the Navy on July 1, 1922.

Spotts was not one to let the grass grow under his feet. He spent the next few years in San Diego when he was not traveling. In 1922 and 1923 he lived at 4320 Campus Drive with his wife Mary. They are not listed in the San Diego City Directory for 1924. Milton next appears in New Orleans, LA in 1925 without Mary; in fact, Mary never appears again in association with Milton in various sources, e.g., city directories, voter registrations and census records. Spotts was listed in the 1930 San Diego Directory suggesting that he may have kept his house there, although by that time he was well established in Taos, New Mexico. Mary stayed in southern California for the rest of her life and died in a nursing home in Los Angeles on Nov. 29, 1974 at the age of 90. Her Certificate of Death recorded her marital status as widowed.

Spotts was not finished dealing with the Navy. Through a bureaucratic mix-up in 1920-21 he had missed a window of opportunity to apply for a disability pension related to his service-

connected health problems. In April 1926 he enticed the Honorable John Morrow, a Representative to the U.S. Congress from the State of New Mexico, to introduce a piece of legislation (H.R. 10918) requesting retroactive approval of his pension. A hearing took place on June 2, 1926 before the Committee on Naval Affairs. Spotts was represented by Representative Morrow and after due deliberation, the Committee recommended that H.R. 10918 not be enacted as it would set a potentially expensive precedent. Spotts had lost but not without a considerable amount of effort that included a demonstration of his skills in journalistic, editorial and legal work.

In the records of the Washington, D.C. hearing of 1926 noted above, Representative Morrow said, "...he is now out in New Mexico an active tubercular patient ... He is out there and his wife and child are back in Pennsylvania supporting themselves." However, the records show they were in San Diego,

CA. In another exchange Morrow replies to a question about whether or not Spotts is receiving compensation from the Veterans' Bureau, "No, sir, I understand that he gets nothing. He is receiving \$30 a month as a sort of pension through a church board in a little town in New Mexico." This town was Taos, New Mexico. Between 1880 and 1940 New Mexico became a destination for patients seeking a cure for pulmonary tuberculosis. According to Nancy O. Lewis, by the mid-1920s there were no fewer than 60 sanatoria in the new State of New Mexico. This was before the era of antibiotics and treatment consisted of rest, fresh air, and ample food. It is tempting to speculate that the reputation of New Mexico as a destination for the treatment of tuberculosis might have lured Spotts here in early 1923.

Spotts applied to the Army National Guard, State of New Mexico on June 12, 1924. At that time he had an address in Santa Fe and indicated on the application that he was Head of Religious Education for the Presbyterian Church in the State of New Mexico. On July 5, 1924 he was appointed Chaplain with the rank of Captain of the 111<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in the Officer Reserve Corps. He passed his reserve physical examination with flying colors at the age of 41. He weighed 180 lbs., was 69½ inches tall, and had an abdominal girth of 40 inches qualifying him in this modern day as overweight.

During the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century major changes occurred in Taos. Until this time the populace was predominantly Hispanic and Indian, but the picturesque small town in the mountains of northern New Mexico was discovered by Anglos from the eastern United States. Mabel Dodge Lujan moved to Taos permanently in 1916 and was instrumental in bringing prominent artists and writers to Taos. Also during this time the Taos Society of Artists was founded. At its peak it numbered twelve members and was active during the first fifty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Taos become nationally known as an Art Colony.

Spotts "assumed charge of the Presbyterian Church in Taos on Nov. 1, 1925," according to the minutes of the church written in Spotts' handwriting in April of 1926. He further wrote:

*Since many people of all faiths had come into the community, a strong feeling prevailed for a long time that a greater work could be done and more people would unite with the Church, if it was made a Community Church.*

Spotts wrote new bylaws and a small delegation of the church traveled to Santa Fe to make a proposal to the Santa Fe Presbytery,



the governing church body in the state. The proposal was accepted, and for the next 4½ years the church was an ecumenical Protestant Church. At first it was known as *The Community Church of Taos*, but later was called *The Presbyterian Community Church of Taos*.

At the annual congregational meeting on March 17, 1929 Reverend Spotts was reelected minister for another year by unanimous vote. According to the local newspaper, "...never in the history of the Church was a more generous support given for the work of the Church and Minister-elect, everywhere the people expressing their confidence in the leadership and the ability of Mr. Spotts by making a substantial pledge for his salary for the year 1929-1930."

At the annual church meeting in March 1930, Reverend Spotts unexpectedly resigned his position as minister. He said publicly that the many burdens of his position had affected his health; there was also a financial reason. The minutes of March 30, 1930 disclose that the church was in serious arrears in paying his salary. For 1928-29 he was owed \$838 and for 1929-30 \$1360. This was a considerable amount of money at the time. The Great Depression, which began on October 29, 1929, likely impacted the fiscal health of the church.

During his ministry from 1924-1930, Spotts was active in the New Mexico National Guard. Almost every week he ran an advertisement in the Taos newspaper listing himself as a Notary Public, Adjutant of the American Legion, Chairman of the American Red Cross, and was available to military veterans to handle all government claims and home service cases. In fact, there are numerous brief notes in the local newspaper during this time documenting his work with veterans; e.g., driving them to Santa Fe, Raton or Fort Bayard for meetings or medical services.

In the spring of 1929 Bert G. Phillips, artist, Floyd W. Butler, attorney and Milton A. Spotts bought the Valley Abstract and Title Company from William M. Frayne. Phillips and Butler probably helped finance the purchase, as Spotts was the working partner according to subsequent articles in the newspaper. In his biography of Arthur R. Manby, Frank Waters mentions Spotts several times. He had become the principle of the Valley Abstract and Title Company, which was the one Manby used for his many real estate acquisitions. Spotts was well liked by Manby, became a confidant of his and baptized his children. Waters, who interviewed Spotts for the book, described him as "a big-boned, heavy-set, and jolly man."

On Sept. 3, 1928, Spotts purchased a former adobe church on what is now Quesnel Street, about two blocks from the Plaza and neighboring the E.O. Couse House. The building had been a Methodist Episcopal Church (Spanish Mission) of the New Mexico Conference from the mid-1880s at which time it became defunct having become run down and in need of repairs. Membership in New Mexico protestant churches was waning badly in the 1920s. Spotts purchased the property, including a separate parsonage, for \$1.00 plus "other valuable consideration." This was a common practice in this era to escape taxes on the sale. Within a year Spotts had replaced the territorial roof of the church with a pueblo style one. Also, in 1928 he met Frieda Merker while she was in Taos visiting her brother, then the supervisor of the Carson National Forest. They apparently hit it off, because they were married in 1929. It should be noted that no record was found of Spotts legally divorcing his first wife Mary.

Spotts took great pride in being a member of the military. His highest rank in the Navy Marines was Lieutenant, and when he joined the Army National Guard, he was given the next higher rank of Captain. Forever afterwards he liked to use the title captain when he did not use reverend. In June 1926 he requested promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, a jump of two officer ranks. The request was turned down by his Commanding Officer because at the time the highest rank for chaplains in the New Mexico Guard was Captain.

Over the summer of 1930 it became evident that Spotts was in another bureaucratic bind with the military. Having been discharged from active duty in the Navy in 1922 with medical disabilities, he was placed on the Retired List of Emergency Officers in 1926 making him eligible to receive a pension. Because of new regulations that took effect in October 1930, his activity in the New Mexico National Guard conflicted with his disability pension and he was advised to resign from the guard to preserve his Navy pension, which was considerably more per month than his Guard earnings. His official resignation date from the New Mexico National Guard was backdated to Nov.1, 1927, when his activities with the Guard ceased in October 1930. Shortly after his discharge the Adjutant General of his unit wrote him a letter of reply in which he said, "I, too, regret greatly your inability to have remained with the guard, for you were an exceptionally fine officer in the capacity of chaplain and the regiment will feel your loss."

During the next fifteen years Spotts focused his efforts on his business. He retained his position as a minister in the Presbyterian Church, but his ministerial activities were minimal except for performing marriages, and he held no pastorates. According to Eloy Jeantette, at this time it was relatively easy to get married in New Mexico compared to other neighboring states. Because Taos was the most northerly sizeable town in the state, couples from Colorado and other nearby states often eloped in Taos. Over this period Spotts developed a brisk side business performing marriages, which occurred at the County Offices as well as in his home, the former Methodist Episcopal Church. From January 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945 he performed 229 marriages, none of which were registered with the Presbyterian Church.

In April 1945 an unknown party brought to the Santa Fe Presbytery five charges against Spotts for conduct unbecoming a minister of the Presbyterian Church. They were:

1. "...accused has been absent from worship in the Presbyterian Church for over two years, absent from Communion for 19 months, and non-contributor for 9 years."
2. "Has shown sympathy and cooperation with another branch of the Christian Church, namely, the Protestant Episcopal Church (sic)."
3. "Has performed 229 marriages (between) January 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945, no record of which has been made in the register of the Presbyterian Church, Taos, New Mexico. Certain of these marriages have been performed in the County Clerk's Office in a manner unbecoming a Minister of the Presbyterian Church."
4. "Absent from Presbytery 59 times out of 80."
5. "Regularly engaged in secular work, namely, a Notary Public and abstract work. Resigned as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Taos, New Mexico in 1930 and for 15 years has had no pastorate, nor plans for regular church work."

The Presbytery formed a Judicial Commission, considered the evidence at a trial on May 1, 1945 in Taos, New Mexico and found him guilty on the following counts:

1. *The sins of neglect and omission of his ministry.*
2. *Unjust divorce and remarriage.*
3. *Inordinate motions and affections to things belonging to his neighbors.*

He was sentenced to be deposed from the office of a minister of the gospel. Spotts instead requested that he receive a certificate of dismissal from the El Rancho Presbyterian Church, Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico, which would effectively sever his relationship with the church. They agreed, and everything was done confidentially. No mention of his dismissal appeared in the Taos newspaper during this time. A brief announcement was printed in *The Santa Fe New Mexican* on May 2, 1945. Spotts never performed any more marriages after this. The official Santa Fe Presbytery records documenting these proceedings were closed to the public for 75 years until 2020; however, I applied for and was granted special permission to view them in 2013.

(continued on page 7)

# TAOS CONTRIBUTES FOR SUPPORT OF THE TROOPS - 1843

by Robert J. Torrez ©2020

1843 was a stressful year in New Mexico. As early as the spring of 1842, officials had been receiving reports from traders and allied Indians along the frontier as well as through diplomatic channels that the Texans were organizing a campaign to invade New Mexico to exact their revenge for the capture of the 1841 Texas-New Mexico expedition. By early 1843 it became clear that the Texans, desirous of the revenue New Mexico derived from the U. S. merchant caravans, planned to attack and confiscate the next scheduled caravan as it passed through "Texan" territory (keeping in mind that as of this point, Texas claimed all of New Mexico east of the Rio Grande).

The military disaster that New Mexico suffered at the hands of the Texans in late spring of 1843 is a story for another time. We will instead concentrate on one example of the extraordinary and often frustrating efforts New Mexico's civil and military leaders went through to provide for its presidio troops and militia. New Mexico's Spanish and especially the Mexican era archives makes it clear that the presidio troops suffered greatly due to the persistent lack of resources to pay their salaries and quite often, even provide minimally for their rations, uniforms, and other basic needs. This persistent lack of resources became evident as the presidio troops and militia gathered to counter the Texan threat against New Mexico.

There is no indication when Governor Manuel Armijo began to solicit funds in the form of donations and loans in order to equip and feed the presidio troops and militia that were already on their way to the Napeste (Arkansas River) to defend New Mexico's northern border but on 23 June 1843 Armijo wrote to northern prefect and military commander Juan Andres Archuleta advising him that treasury and revenue officials has been sent to the *rio abajo* (lower river, or southern New Mexico) to solicit a loan of 3,000 pesos to feed the troops already in the field.<sup>1</sup>

There seems to be no record of what if any success these officials had in obtaining funds from southern New Mexico's citizens but it must have a futile mission. A week later, June 30, Archuleta reported to the *jueces de pas* (justices of the peace) in northern New Mexico that Governor Armijo was in the process of withdrawing from the frontier due to the complete lack of resources to provide for his troops. Noting the government's inability to defend its borders, Archuleta ordered Antonio María Trujillo, the *Inspector de Armas* for that jurisdiction, to convene a meeting of all the men of means to advise them of the situation and solicit a contribution of 1,200 pesos. The desperate tone of the appeal is noted in Archuleta's instructions which say that if a contribution could not be made in cash, flour and meat would be welcome, if not immediately, at least by August (presumably at the time of the upcoming harvest). Archuleta added that the loans would be repaid as soon as funds were available in the treasury and assured

them that the funds would be used only to provide for the troops at hand as well as those on the way from Chihuahua.<sup>2</sup>



Records of our Mexican Archives of New Mexico have numerous examples of loans and contributions made by individuals in response to this type of plea but so far only one document has surfaced that lists by name the individuals from a specific jurisdiction that contributed to this particular appeal for funds. In a document dated 10 July 1843, Pascual Martínez, as justice of the peace for the Taos jurisdiction, and his co-signatory, Juan Ygnacio Martínez, submitted a list of citizens who had contributed to the "voluntary loan" that had been solicited for the "assistance and pay" of the

troops that are coming from outside New Mexico.<sup>3</sup> The list is headed by the Reverend Antonio José Martínez, who contributed one hundred twenty pesos in cash and one hundred eighty pesos in flour, rams, and other items for a total of three hundred pesos. The remaining list is as follows (all the names are listed with the honorific title of Don):

- Blas Trujillo, 25 pesos cash and 25 rams;<sup>4</sup>
- Juan de Jesus Vigil, 100 rams (*carneros primales*);
- Gregorio Lucero, 20 pesos cash a 10 rams;
- Juan Manuel Lucero, 12 rams;
- Ignacio Gonzales, a fat ox;
- Juan Domingo Tafoya, a fat cow;
- Pablo Suazo, a team (*yunta*) of oxen and one cow;
- Mateo Gomes, 25 rams;
- Buenaventura Valdes, 5 pesos cash (on August 15);
- Luis Lee, 100 flasks of *aguardiente*;
- Antonio Suares Montero, 15 pesos in flour;
- Pablo Trujillo, 100 pesos, an ox and four *fanegas* of flour (in August);<sup>5</sup>
- José María Martines 15 fanegas of wheat in August and the rest of what he has in August;
- Juan Felipe Romero, one fanega of flour;
- Lorenzo Cordova, one fat ox;
- José Ignacio Valdes, 20 fanegas of wheat in September;
- Mariano Martines, 5 fanegas de wheat in September;
- Juan Pacheco, 3 pesos;
- Matías Vigil, a horse;
- Gabriel Montaña, item not specified in August and one *almud* of flour now;
- Juan Antonio Martines, 4 pesos in flour and meat;
- José María Quintana, 6 rams;
- Juan Valdes, 6 fanegas of wheat;
- Juan Miguel Baca, 4 fanegas of wheat in September;
- Juvencio Naranjo, 2 pesos in unspecified hides (*cueros*);
- José Gregorio Martines, 25 rams and 20 pesos cash;

Francisco Xaramillo, 2 pesos cash;  
 José de la Merced Romero, 2 pesos cash;  
 José Manuel Sandoval, 4 fanegas of wheat in September;  
 Manuel Romero, 3 fanegas de wheat in September;  
 José Trujillo, one fanega of wheat in September;  
 José Rafael Cordova del Rancho, one fanega of wheat in September;  
 Abran Ledu, 6 fanegas of wheat in September;  
 Bautista Yara, one fanega of corn now and two of wheat in September;  
 Pablo Ribera, 5 pesos and 5 fanegas of flour in September;  
 Teodoro Romero 2o [segundo], 25 pesos and unspecified fanegas of flour;  
 Cornelio Vigil, one ox and 25 pesos cash;  
 José Quintana, 6 rams;  
 Ricardo Vigil, 2 elaborated hides (*de marca*);  
 Juan Julian Martines, 2 fanegas of flour in September  
 Miguel Sanches, 2 sheep and 2 fanegas of flour, the later in September;  
 Juan Ygnacio Martines, 6 fanegas de wheat.

In all, the contributions from Taos were valued at slightly more than one thousand pesos. Subsequent records do not reflect how much of this was actually collected and made its way to the treasury in Santa Fe but in does serve as an example of what New Mexico's citizens, specifically those of the Taos jurisdiction, were willing and able to contribute in times of crisis.

1. 23 June 1843, Armijo to Juan Andres Archuleta. Mexican Archives of New Mexico, 1843 Governor's Papers, 2 January -31 October 1843, Communications sent by Governor and Comandante General to authorities within New Mexico. Myra Ellen Jenkins, *Calendar of the Mexican Archives of New Mexico, 1821-1846* (Santa Fe: State of New Mexico Records Center, 1970). Microfilm roll 33, frame 6189. Hereafter cited as MANM.
2. 30 June 1843, Juan Andres Archuleta, Santa Fe, to the *jueces de pas* of San Juan and Santa Clara. J. Richard Salazar, *Calendar to the Microfilm Edition of the Sender Collection, 1697 - 1884* (Santa Fe: Archives Division, New Mexico State Records Center & Archives, 1988). Document No. 560, microfilm roll, frame 560. By this time, the Mexican constitution of 1836, also known as the *Siete Leyes* (Seven Laws), reorganized local governments through what is commonly referred to as the Department Plan which eliminated the traditional position of *alcalde* in most communities and replaced them with justices of the peace at the various communities and jurisdictions.
3. MANM: 1843 Hacienda Records, Tesorería account books. 6 April 1843 - 1 Nov. 1843, Tesorero Departamental, voluntary contributions for military expenses (microfilm roll 34, frame 1131). The heading of the document reads, "Lista de los ciudadanos que voluntariamente se franquean al prestamo que se solicita para auxilio y ayuda del sueldo de tropa que viene de tierra afuera." The reference to troops coming from outside New Mexico regards the efforts of the Mariano Monterde, the *comandante general* in Chihuahua to send a contingent of troops to reinforce New Mexico's military forces. Mariano Monterde to Comandante General of New Mexico, 15 April 1843. MANM: 1843 Governor's Papers. 15 April - June 30, 1843, Communications received from Comandante General of Chihuahua, Microfilm roll 33, frame 469. A series of subsequent communications and records show that New Mexico struggled mightily to provide for the needs of these additional troops.
4. Rams were the standard unit of trade and commerce in the Spanish and Mexican eras and tens of thousands were exported to Mexico every year. During most of this period it was illegal to export ewes because they were breeding stock and too valuable.
5. A fanega was the standard unit of measure for "dry" volume, usually estimated at 2.3 - 2.5 bushels. In 1852 the New Mexico Territorial legislature standardized the one-half fanega at 2,478 ¼ cubic inches which made a full fanega 4,953.5 cubic inches. The *almud* was set at 1/12 of a fanega.

(continued from page 5)

For the next twenty years Spotts devoted himself to his Valley Title & Abstract Company and seems to have lost interest in both the church and the military after this.

In the course of gathering information for this article, I interviewed ten people who lived in Taos during Spotts' life there. Because so many years had elapsed, their ages ranged from 62 to 93 at the time of the interview. Their recollections were for the most part hazy, but a few themes recurred. First, both Milton and Frieda had little patience for the kids in the neighborhood. Any of them who came into their yard to retrieve a ball were yelled at to get out. The kids liked to harass him by calling him Spotty, which he loathed. Frieda evidently was physically handicapped and was never seen walking, possibly due to an old hip fracture. She ran a modest insurance business while he operated his title and abstract business from their house. When he was in his late teens, one interviewee typed abstracts for Spotts, and he observed that some of them had to be translated from Spanish. He related that Spotts always wore a vest. Another woman remembered visiting the house several times when she was about 12. She and her sister accompanied their mother, who was a nurse, while she cared for Frieda. While the girls waited Spotts, being a wonderful storyteller, often entertained them by making up exciting stories about his adventures on the high seas when he was a captain. She remembered the large room being cluttered with piles of newspapers, furniture, and other stuff. In 1965, when Spotts' health was failing, a neighborhood boy about 12 remembered delivering the local weekly newspaper. Spotts was often dressed in pajamas, disheveled and very slow in producing the money owed. The cost of the paper then was 10 cents, and Spotts sometimes tipped him 25 cents. The paperboy remembered an older woman living with him at the time. That was his daughter Mary because Frieda had died in 1962.

Spotts was admitted to the Veterans' Hospital in Albuquerque in April 1966 for an acute episode of illness and later transferred to the Rio Grande Nursing Home in that city, where he lived out the rest of his days. He died there on October 12, 1967 at the age of 83. A few days before he died, he signed his home in Taos over to Mary Cook, his daughter by his first wife, and his only heir. She had moved to New Mexico in 1962 after Frieda's death to assist her father. Spotts' Death Certificate indicated that he had *Chronic Brain Syndrome with Hemiplegia*, e.g., dementia and one-sided body weakness from a stroke. Both he and Frieda were buried in the Santa Fe National Cemetery, Santa Fe, New Mexico with full military honors.

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2. *Archives of the Presbytery of Santa Fe* at the Menaul Historical Library of the Southwest, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
3. *New Mexico State Records Center & Archives*, Santa Fe, NM 87507

Thanks to Rena Rosequist, Ernest Des Georges, Beatrice Deveaux, Eloy Jeantete, and Nicholas Oppenheimer for their interviews. Special thanks to Joan Pond for reviewing the manuscript.

# “OBRA DE AGRICULTURA”

by Michael Miller

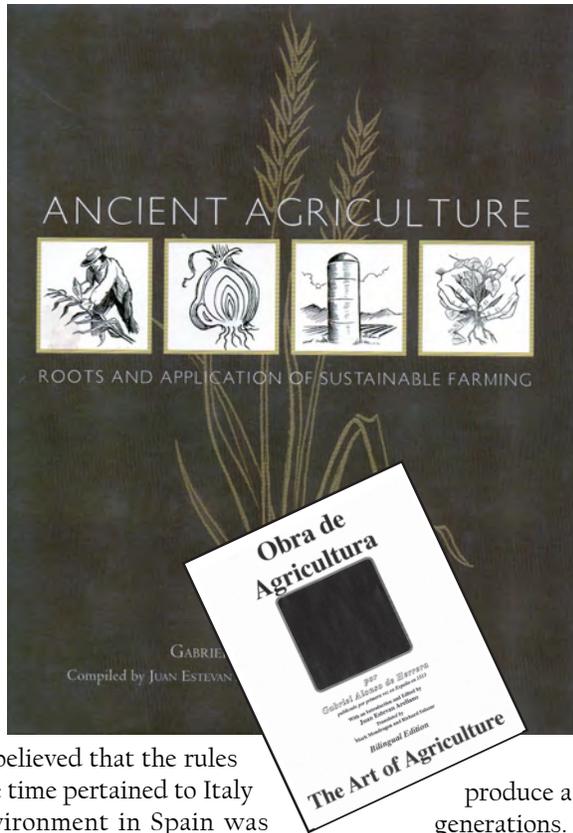
In the mid-1990's, *Orlando Romero*, Senior Librarian, at the History Library at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, made an amazing discovery. While doing research at Western New Mexico University in Silver City, he located a facsimile copy of *Gabriel Alonso de Herrera's*, *OBRA de AGRICULTURA*, published in 1513 in Spain. It was a copy of the original Spanish edition which had never been translated into English and was unknown to most U.S. scholars and students of New Mexico history.

*Herrera's* treatise and life-long work was not a popular publication in 1513. In fact, it was criticized and ridiculed by scholars and Latin authorities of the day. These “authorities” believed that the rules governing soil and climate at the time pertained to Italy alone, and the agricultural environment in Spain was drastically different and that *Herrera's* observations and research was considered useless. In addition, many scholars of the day considered a scholarly approach to agriculture was “superfluous and suspect.” There were also those among the elite classes who believed that “the precepts of agriculture cannot be considered neither an art or science.”

The belief in the 1500's was that “nothing ever written about agriculture serves any good use.” And there were the extreme elitists who said, “Why write it down, since farmers can't read anyway?” Despite these painful criticisms, *Gabriel Alonso de Herrera*, like any good visionary of his time, proceeded with his life-long research, documentation, and eventual publication of his monumental work. *OBRA de AGRICULTURA*.

When *Orlando Romero* shared a copy of this remarkable manuscript by *Gabriel Alonso de Herrera* with writer and historian *Juan Estevan Arellano* of *Embudo*, a new era in New Mexico traditional agriculture began. *Arellano* recognized immediately the importance of *Romero's* discovery. Like *Herrera*, *Arellano* learned about farming from his parents, *Carlos* and *Lucia Arellano*, who passed their knowledge about plants and irrigation techniques on to their children. He grew up in a family without much money, but their farm was a paradise abundant with vegetables and fruits, which included indigenous produce like *chile*, corn, beans, and squash, as well as a variety of fruit such as cherries, pears, peaches, apples, apricots, watermelons and cantaloupes.

It has been well-documented that traditional rural communities in New Mexico did not experience the devastating effects of the Great Depression like the rest of the urban United States and many parts of rural America, such as Oklahoma. This is an important lesson that applies to our lives today in the era of corona virus and the economic hardships and food shortages in the foreseeable future.



On a research trip to Madrid, Spain in 1997, *Arellano* was able to locate and eventually purchase a new edition of *Herrera's* book. He began to study its contents in depth and he soon realized that *OBRA de AGRICULTURA* was exactly what he was looking for to nurture and share an agricultural philosophy that he called “*agricultura mixta tradicional mestiza*.” He believed that an English translation of *Herrera's* classical life study of agriculture in Spain would help preserve the roots of the traditional agriculture that he and his ancestors had practiced for centuries in northern New Mexico.

Upon his return from *Madrid*, *Arellano* brought his recently acquired copy of *Herrera's* 14th century Spanish manuscript to the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque where I served as Director of Research and Literary Arts. His excitement and enthusiasm was apparent as he opened the manuscript and shared this newly discovered treasure with me and my staff of archivists and historians. As we perused through the pages of the *Obra* he explained his dream of publishing a complete English translation of this important literary work. Discussions began on that day on how we could

produce a translation and a publication of *OBRA* for use by future generations.

It was the year before the New Mexico *Cuartocentenario* and the 400th anniversary of the founding of the province of *Nuevo Mejico* by *Juan de Oñate* and the first Hispanic families of northern New Spain. The National Hispanic Cultural Center received an appropriation from the New Mexico legislature to help communities celebrate this historic anniversary. *Arellano* received a grant from the *Cuartocentenario* committee to begin the arduous task of translating the six complete books of *Obra de Agricultura* from the archaic Spanish used in 1513 into English, similar to that spoken during the same period.



A Taos Pueblo cornfield located below Blue Lake. Credit: Taos Pueblo.

To assist him with this translation he solicited the help of *J. Richard Salazar*, the former Chief Archivist and paleographer at the New Mexico Records Center and Archives. He also brought *Mark Mondragon* on board who had just completed some extensive archaic translation work at the University of New Mexico. For many years *Arellano* edited and pieced together the various segments and



Estevan Arellano teaching students from the Espanola Valley in the basics of traditional *manito* agriculture at his farm in Embudo, NM. (Credit: Richard Federici)

components of this extensive manuscript for the final draft of the translation. To give the translation a more modern and contemporary “read” and to make it more understandable to non-academic and general readers he also brought *Rosa Lopez Gaston* a certified 21st century translator and interpreter on to the team. She reviewed and edited the complete manuscript and the Final Draft of the book manuscript, *Ancient Agriculture: Roots and Application of Sustainable Farming*, Ancient City Press, 2006.

“The challenge of how to present *Herrera’s* work for today’s sophisticated English readers has been a central focus of all those involved with this translation project,” *Arellano* explained to me in a 1997, oral history interview. “At issue was whether to make a literal translation that would convey its original wording, resulting in language that occasionally would be awkward and difficult to read, or to make it more appealing to a contemporary audience with a modern, popular English translation. We wanted it to be a work both valued by scholars of traditional agriculture and also accessible to the general public. We wanted the book to be used by the people who work the soil, the people for whom it was originally written,” he said.

A fundamental element of New Mexico’s *Indo-Hispano* agricultural tradition is the land grant. Land grants are divided into common lands, the land irrigated by *acequias*. Other important aspects of land grant tradition are the *huertas* (the fruit orchards and vegetable fields) like an acre of tasty *Chimayo chile*, *jardines* (kitchen gardens) and *milpas* (corn fields). The term *mixta* is used to describe this traditional method of farming because it combines fruit trees, vegetables and legumes with livestock, fowl, and bees. This mixed agricultural technique created by Spain and Mexico, included both irrigated and dry farming, as well as grazing. It is this important tradition that *Arellano* wished to preserve and his work on *Obra de Agricultura* helped to make this preservation possible.

The complete six-volume manuscript translation of *Obra de Agricultura* (side by side in Spanish and English) is available for scholarly research at the Joe Sando Library and Archives at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and it is part of the Michael Miller Collection at this institution. The popular gardening book entitled: *Ancient Agriculture: Roots and Application of Sustainable Farming* is available in bookstores and can be ordered online at Gibbs Smith, Publisher.

My friend and colleague Juan Estevan Arellano passed away in October, 2014. His writing and research captured the world of traditional New Mexico agriculture. He gave voice to the agricultural community of “tillers of the soil” known in *Nuevomexicano* culture as *manitos*.

# EVOLUTION OF TAOS COUNTY

by Dave Cordova

There is much archaeological and anthropological evidence of habitation of the area known as “Taos County,” going back at least 14,000 years when the ancient peoples roamed the area. These nomadic peoples lived in the open, using crude shelters and natural caves to sleep and shelter from weather and predators, hunting large animals for their subsistence.

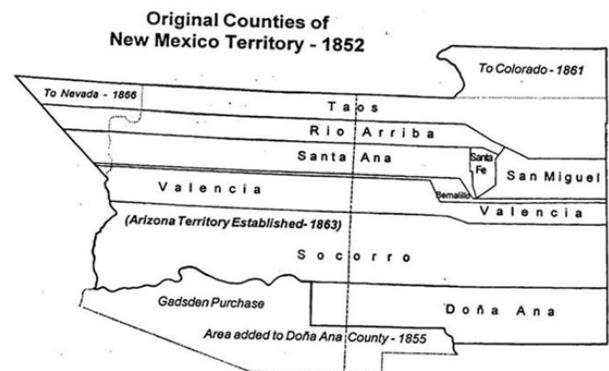
About 5,000 years ago, the ancient peoples began to settle in the area which provided good hunting and, more importantly, water for the newly discovered farming and agriculture. It is believed that travelers from Central America, namely Mexico, introduced these people to the practice of farming, leading to the construction of more permanent settlements and ending the previous nomadic culture.

Three thousand years later, the settlements, in particular the pueblos of the southwestern North American Continent, created governments, communal structures and a serious sense of community to provide for the inhabitants that were not able to care for themselves... the young, elderly and infirmed. Also, water-bearing vessels, storage pots and decorative ceramic pieces made their appearance throughout the Taos Valley and highlands.

We know that there were several ancient settlements in the Four-Corners area that migrated to the more fertile valleys and areas fed by the river tributaries, which stretched from southern Colorado down to northern Mexico. In Taos County, the people of the Pot Creek Pueblo moved to the pueblos of Taos and Picuris between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries when Pot Creek Pueblo became uninhabitable.

The Taos Pueblo became a very important trading hub in the southwest, hosting the many Plains tribes and pueblos who gathered peaceably at the Taos trading markets. By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, European trappers and hunters from the East joined the indigenous peoples to trade their furs for food staples and other trade items for their return to the East.

By the mid-1800s, the importance of Taos was well known, being a destination from the Santa Fe Trail and other trade routes west to California and south to Mexico. The map shows the original counties of the New Mexico Territory established in 1852, which shows Taos County stretching from the East Texas border, through New Mexico and Arizona with a chunk of southeastern Colorado and southern Nevada.



The area of southern Colorado was ceded to Colorado in 1861, and the southern portion Nevada was ceded to Nevada in 1866. The area of northern Arizona was ceded to the Arizona Territory in 1863. The rest of the New Mexico Territory counties were established around 1875, when the current borders of Taos County were drawn.

Today, Taos County continues to be a vital place, not as a destination for settlement and homesteading, but for seekers of history, culture, outdoor adventure and the arts.

# “A SWEET REFUGE”

by Jim Levy (Originally published in *The Taos News* in September 2019)

While preparing to write this piece, I found a journal entry from 1972:

*The Harwood keeps me sane. I go there when I'm down, because its polished floors, hand-made furniture and peaceful gloom have a quieting effect on my soul. I go there when I'm up, because it is there that I can find some esoteric book about the Cosmos or Greek poetry, and where I can see the paintings and sculptures that capture the unique and mysterious identity of northern New Mexico.*

For seventy-five years the Harwood Foundation, serving as public library, museum, auditorium, classrooms and meeting rooms, was at the heart of the social and artistic life of Taos' Anglo community. When I was hired as executive director in 1978, I set out to transform the Harwood from a predominately Anglo center to one which the entire community could use and enjoy.

My mother had been a volunteer at the library in the 1940s and had taken us kids there to borrow books. After she died in 1975, I began volunteering as a way of following in her footsteps. When the job of executive director came open, I applied. I was at the time the lead projectionist at the Taos Plaza Theater and had no administrative experience whatsoever. So how, you might ask, did I get the job? For one, few professional librarians wanted it at the salary of \$9,000 a year, and for two, local politicians had grown old saying that the Harwood didn't serve “their people.” I went to Taos mayor Larry Santistevan and said that if I was hired me to be director, I would do everything in my power to open the Harwood to everyone. “Larry,” I said, “if you write a letter recommending me, I think I have a shot at it.” He said, “You write the letter Levy, and I'll sign it.”

When I started, the main buildings of the complex were being renovated under a federal grant. The renovation modernized the electrical, heating and plumbing, and it included the first public elevator and accessible drinking fountain in Taos. We resurrected the garden in the back with new grass, trees and furniture, built additional exhibit space for the art collection, and moved the tiny children's section of the library to two spacious rooms in its own wing. The auditorium was opened again for theater, dance and poetry readings, including the world premier of Steve Parks' *Manby*.

Despite augmenting the grant with a \$72,000 loan (which was never paid back), the University of New Mexico, that owned the Harwood, felt that it was a financial burden and wanted to dump it, along with the D. H. Lawrence Ranch. They couldn't escape however, because Mrs. Harwood had cannily included in the deed of conveyance that UNM had to keep the Harwood in perpetuity. Also, fortunately, the Harwood had some powerful friends. Meg Salman was, as President of the Harwood Advisory Board, a dynamic supporter, and her brother-in-law David Salman was the NM House Majority Leader. Furthermore, Taos' own C. B. Trujillo was the Senate Majority Leader. These two men, however, did not care for each other and in fact refused to speak to one another, so during the long legislative session of 1978, when I was down there groveling for funds, they made me run back

and forth between them carrying demands and compromises. They rewarded me by getting the Harwood included in the General Funding Bill, which released UNM from most of its financial obligations. We suddenly had more money than we knew what to do with.

What we did with it was fairly spectacular. Using the new and abundant funds, we set out to revolutionize the Harwood. We fired the “tenured” UNM maintenance man and hired Carlos Rendon as head of maintenance and Gil (Gilligan) Luhan as his assistant. We increased the staff with people who were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about literature and art: Betsy Wolf as administrative assistant, Carmen Medina as a librarian, Cathy Logue as bookkeeper,

David Witt as museum curator, Kathy Rael as children's librarian, and Victoria Plata as outreach librarian.

The outreach program was ambitious. It included taking books to the senior center, jail, hospital, schools, and homebound people. We published a regular column in the *Taos News* about new books and upcoming events and broadcasted a regular radio program on KKIT in English and Spanish. Using the thousands of books that had been in storage, we

held quarterly book sales that brought in funds to buy more library books.

The Southwest Library Association funded a \$7,000 oral history project, and Juanita Jaramillo-Lavadie, the project leader, and eight other interviewers used cassette tapes to record thirty old-time citizens to relate what effect the coming of electricity had had on Taos valley. These tapes have been digitized on CDs and are available at the public library.

The Children's library was at the heart of the Harwood's revival. It was moved from a corner of the main library into its own quarters where children could be as loud and active as they wished. Under the second children's librarian, Sally Blair, we started the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program in which each child received two free books of their choice, either in English or Spanish. There was story telling by Bob Hawley, Susan Berman, Kathleen Summit and others, and in the summers, there were finger painting, puppet shows and other art projects in the garden at the back of the library.

Motivated, if not inspired, by the excitement around the new programs and the increased number of Hispanic and Native American patrons, the Town and County, which had been funding minimal amounts, stepped up to the plate and began hitting singles: \$10,000 from the Town and \$1500 from the County (plus Jeannette Martinez, a full-time library intern). We also snatched up Comprehensive Employment and Training (CETA) and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) workers whenever possible.

Not everyone of course was thrilled by the changes we were making. Henry Saurerwein Jr., director or tyrant of the Wurlitzer Foundation, wrote an outraged letter to the *Taos News* complaining that Levy had removed the portraits of Lucy and Burt Harwood from the library's entry. You can sure I did; the last thing I wanted locals to see on



entering the library were two Midwesterners who had lived in Paris for many years peering down on them.

From the very beginning, the Harwood depended on the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers. Serving on Boards and committees or in an informal capacity, they helped with the public library, the museum and the auditorium. In the library, the Friends of the Library, headed by Louise Dice, were of significant support. Other volunteers were Lucy Cruz, President of the Advisory Board, and Vivian Baum, Ellie Huff, Hetty Bailey, Margaret Crowl, Phaedra Greenwood, Reggie Cantu, Rebecca Romero, Bridget Gallegos, Ann Crawley, and Beth Livingston. In the museum, Bob Ray, Ivan Rosequist, Cliff Harmon, and others provided astute knowledge of art. For theater programs, Otto Mears Pitcher, Wallace Bacon, Charlotte Lee, Ben Hazard and others lent their immense talents. There were many other generous volunteers throughout the its history. Wish I could name them all.

The library attracted a variety of colorful patrons over the years, the old crowd of course; it was said that Lucy Harwood herself would sit in front of her home offering tea to anyone who came to borrow a book. The artists of the Taos Society of Artists donated paintings to the museum, and Mabel Dodge Luhan donated many hundreds of books. There was the older gentleman in ragged clothes who carried his library card and a few bills in a Screts can. When he died in one of Taos' dreariest motels, he left nearly a million dollars to his even older mother. And let's not forget the artist who checked out the best and most valuable art books and wouldn't return them. We sent threatening letters which he didn't answer and made phone calls he didn't return. Finally, after a year, a friend of the library who had worked for the FBI went to his house in Ranchos and recovered the books, but we never did collect the overdue fines.

The librarians were no less colorful. The first to take the helm, when the library was in its new wing built under the 1937 WPA renovation, was Mr. Albert Gee who had been hired by Lucy Harwood just prior to her death in 1938. Spud Johnson, editor of the Horse Fly, was the director from 1944 to 1947, and Toni Tarleton, once a Harvey Girl, single-handedly ran it from 1954 to 1972. Librarians in my day included Dorothy Kethler, John Flexner, Tracy McCallum, Carmen Medina, and Dixie Gillette. Being true Taosños, they brought distinctive personalities to the party, various blends of skills, wit, idiosyncrasies and independence.

In 1981 we received another federal grant to renovate the Alcalde Building on the west side of the property, and that completed the construction project. Although the complex was stabilized and the programs expanded, the Harwood's success also exposed its weaknesses. There was too little parking for the dramatic increase in patrons, and there was insufficient space for an expansion of the art and book collections. In 1983 the Town took over the management of the library and eventually, in 1996, built a new public library in its present location. With the indefatigable efforts of Bob Ellis, the Harwood was transformed into a renowned art museum which includes world-class artists.

John Nichols used to come to the Harwood and for a dime a copy, copied his latest novels on the copier, one page at a time. As always he expresses it better than anyone. *"I have always thought of the Harwood as a sort of nest, a safe place, a sweet refuge, promising wisdom, comfort, a familiar respite from the storm. Cornball sentiments, I know, but the Harwood never did me wrong, and so I can't help it, I just feel that way."*

*Jim Levy has published eleven books of poetry, memoirs, essays and other nonfiction. His most recent book is "Those Were the Days, life and love in 1970s northern New Mexico," co-authored with Phaedra Greenwood. He wishes to give big thank yous to John Nichols for the use of his quote and to Carmen Medina, Betsy Wolf, Sally Blair, and John Flexner for sharing their memories of the Harwood and providing invaluable advice about this article.*

## Notes from the Editor by Dave Cordova

As this article is written, at the end of June 2020, the United States and, indeed, the world, are still in the throes of the dreaded Covid-19 Pandemic. We have been very fortunate that the 2020 pandemic did not live up to the projected figures, and not coming anywhere near the loss of life seen during the most infamous pandemic the world has ever experienced... the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918 to 1920.

The Spanish Flu Pandemic or the 1918 Flu Pandemic claimed an estimated 50 million people worldwide, with 675,000 in the United States itself. The Spanish Flu was made much worse with the added burdens of Tuberculosis and WWI.

Now in 2020, I have come to some knowledge about my own family's history, as it relates to the Spanish Flu.

Through research, I found that my great-grandfather Ramon Cordova was counted in the 1910 US Census, but not in 1920. He disappeared from the census records in those 10 years, as did his second youngest daughter Celina, and no one ever talked about it. I had some genealogy information that lacked detail, but slowly, some of the missing pieces of the puzzle are taking shape, thanks to an article about Taos County citizens who succumbed to the dreaded disease.

When I first received the article, I was hesitant to read it because I felt so far removed from anything that occurred years before I was even born, but I soon got some perspective when I found my great-grandfather's name.

My great-grandfather was born in 1855, making him about 63 years old when he died. His daughter Celina was only 14. Many Taos County citizens suffered the same fate as Ramon and Celina Cordova from (Los) Cordovas.

The late Albert Vidaurre's research cites "La Revista de Taos" in trying to compile a list of the unfortunate Taos County citizens who perished in the Spanish Flu pandemic, but the records appear to be incomplete, due to poor record keeping and the isolation of the areas affected. In some cases, reports of the deaths came months, sometimes, years later. (<https://nmahgp.genealogyvillage.com/taos/Deaths1918flu.html>)

There were at least 300 Taos County Citizens who died in 1918. The virus again claimed lives in 1919 and 1920 but, apparently, not in the numbers suffered in 1918. The numbers of affected people were not recorded, only the deaths.

There are stories told of families who suffered losses, whether or not they are attributed to the pandemic but, by virtue of the timing, could have very well been from the Spanish Flu. It is also a mystery as to why some were affected and others not in many close-knit families. In my own family's case, there are no records or information that speak to the condition of my great-grandfather's health or that of his young daughter. Today, their health records may have indicated underlying conditions.

As of this writing, 48 people in Taos County have tested positive for the virus and only one death has been recorded. The numbers are far lower, owing to the great work of the CDC who made us aware of the dangers and encouraged us to practice good hygiene and self-quarantine to keep the dread virus at bay.

Even one death is too many, we remain grateful that, so far in Taos County, the pandemic of 2020 has not approached the numbers suffered a hundred years earlier.

## Lectures, Field Trips & Special Events (Tentative Schedule)

August 1, 2020 - Lecture by ZOOM  
"Olla Bearers & Indian Detours"  
Joseph Sabatini (HSNM)

September 5, 2020 - Lecture  
"Tale Teller: Tony Hillerman's Landscapes"  
Anne Hillerman

October 3, 2020 - Lecture  
Spellbinding Drama Within Solemn Walls  
Deniece Tessier (HSNM)

November 7, 2020 - Lecture  
"The Book Of Archives"  
A. Gabriel Melendez, UNM

December 6, 2020 - Holiday Luncheon  
"Crossing the Camino Real: Folktales"  
Dr. Larry Torres

Please visit our website for a complete schedule  
First Saturday of the month at 2:00 PM  
Kit Carson Coop Meeting Room  
118 Cruz Alta Road - Taos

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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:

Individual .....	\$20
Family .....	\$30
Sustaining .....	\$50
Business .....	\$75

To become a member sign up on our website:  
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or send a check, along with your name and address, to:

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

For more information call (575) 770-0681  
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