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## AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County  
and Northern New Mexico

Winter 2023

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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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P.O. Box 2447 • Taos, New Mexico 87571

## A Message from the TCHS President Ernestina Cordova

Happy Holidays,

The Taos Historical Society thanks you for another successful year. We continue to be dedicated to preserving the history of our beloved Taos, New Mexico and Southwest. We take a lot of pride in our organization that adds greater value and participation to our monthly meetings.



This year our field trip took us to Santa Fe – to the School for Advanced Research. We had a tour of the grounds and “El Delirio” or Indian Arts Research Center collection. In August our lecture speaker was Dr. Kathleen Holscher of UNM. She spoke on the The Dixon School Case. In September, Bill Haler presented “DH Lawrence in Taos.”

In October, Eric Valencia lectured on “Land Shapes the People”. In mid-October, we traveled to Ft. Burgwin with John Ubelaker, and learned about the history of the Fort and how the doctor who resided at Ft. Burgwin studied and documented the environment and how his research was shared with the Smithsonian and the information is still archived there. The November presentation was “Descansos; The Haunting Beauty of New Mexico’s Roadside Crosses” by Peter Warzel. Our final presentation ends with our annual Christmas Luncheon and Silent Auction. The presentation provided the history of Los Pastores presented by Theresa Cordova, Ph.D.

This year, our Archival and Library committee has been working hard and has obtained several grants. They have worked with two college student interns from UNM who have helped to archive Corina Santistevan’s files.

The re-construction of the Taos County Court House on Taos Plaza continues to progress to completion. I contemplate how to best utilize the second story of the courthouse for the establishment of a museum dedicated to Taos County.

The TCHS has really helped our members to learn the stories of the land and people of Taos. Some are stories that we have seen or experienced in one way or another. Some stories are newly discovered, shedding light and adding new pieces to the puzzle. By attending our monthly lectures, members will learn the type of coverage we give Northern New Mexico, and the history that we have uncovered. We will continue our mission: To preserve the history of the area. The Taos County Historical Society has a wealth of information to offer about various topics and it is truly astounding!

*We wish you a Merry Christmas and Feliz Año Nuevo.*

Sincerely,

*Ernestina Cordova, President  
Taos County Historical Society*

# DON DIEGO DE VARGAS'S EXPEDITIONS TO TAOS

by Helen G. Blumenschein

As Americans, we have travelled, we pride ourselves on our technical knowledge, but we have failed to understand the cultural habits of those different from our own in the world around us. For those of us who live in the Taos Valley, this attitude has debarred us from much enjoyment in our human relations with peoples of different standards.

The western frontier was an area where sheer survival was the all-important thing in life, ambition and desire came next. The "wild Indians" were almost obliterated by the Americans in the late 1800's. They in turn had almost obliterated the Spaniards in the 1700's and 1600's. Most of the Rio Grande Pueblos held firm during all this turmoil and in 1680 had thrown back the first Europeans and their culture.

They returned, however, and today in this ever-increasing overpopulated world we will become more and more closely associated with each other, so we would do well to understand one another's cultures.

The best method is through history, trying to separate the false from the truth and to cut around the inevitable feuds built up in an isolated area like ours, to see the basic courage and fortitude of each people, determined to stay and practice their way of life.

The very isolation in Taos Valley promoted an independent spirit, so that today it attracts people who are not just sheep in this mechanized world.

In the days of Spain's domination, 1540-1821, the two outstanding leaders, in my opinion, were de Vargas and de Anza. The first mentioned saved the colonists from starvation and the second saved them from annihilation by the Comanches. De Anza, previous to becoming Governor of New Mexico, had founded San Francisco and had helped to establish the missions of Arizona and California on a firm footing. Earlier still the Spaniards had reached up the Pacific coast and removed the threat of the Russians who had established a seal trapping colony on this continent. To the east, Florida, which was first discovered and settled by the Spaniards in 1539, finally succumbed to the pressures from France and England and eventually the U.S.A.

From these isolated events, one can see the frictions caused by contact with outsiders – the original primitive urge to resist changes and to fight for survival which goes on century after century.

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The foregoing episodes in the history of Taos Valley are taken from military journals of de Vargas which are in the Crusaders of the Rio Grande, translated and written by J. Manuel Espinosa (including 1694 expedition to Taos) and First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico 1692, translation, with Introduction and notes by the same author. Vol. X of the Coronado Historical Series, UNM Press.



To understand de Vargas' loyalty to his colonists and his first, 1692 and second expeditions, 1694 through Taos, one must go back to Europe at that period to see what forces moved such a man of wealth, title and education to follow his military profession in this far away land in order to add to the "glory of his king."

## DE VARGAS'S FIRST AND SECOND EXPEDITION 1694 TO TAOS

Today Americans are travelling all over the world to spread democracy and trade. It seems to me a similar parallel appears in the seventeenth century when Spain was determined to spread Catholicism as to seek wealth in foreign lands.

"In 711 A.D. the rush of Mohammedanism engulfed Iberia (i.e., Spain and Portugal...), the last of the Moorish strongholds on the peninsula had fallen by 1492." "Crusades were in the Spaniards' blood."

The next step was the colonization and Europeanizing of foreign lands. By 1664 when de Vargas married at Madrid, Spain was already in the decline but the colonists in the Americas were booming. A migration from Spain to Mexico and South America, in which 40,000 people were leaving Spain every year, weakened

her even more. The Spanish Inquisition begun in 1478 by Queen Isabella reached its height in the 1700's. Only colonists who were not heretics were allowed to sail for the New World. The Spanish Inquisition was established in the colonies about 1522. It did not include the Indians of the New World.

By 1672 de Vargas was making preparations at Cadiz to sail for Mexico. He was appointed as a special courier of the King to carry dispatches to the Viceroy in New Spain at Mexico City. Don Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon was given various posts in Mexico until he became the successor to Governor Cruzate as Governor and Captain General of New Mexico for the usual five-year term. On February 22, 1691, he took over the government at El Paso del Norte (now Juarez). There were frustrating delays, due to the poverty of the remaining Spaniards who had been there since the revolt of 1680, when they were expelled from New Mexico by the Indians. There was no enthusiasm by the colonists to return to such a savage land. De Vargas finally got his military expedition of 1692 off, after persuading the Viceroy to land him 50 professional soldiers. At his own expense, he decided to reconquer New Mexico with no attempt at colonizing.

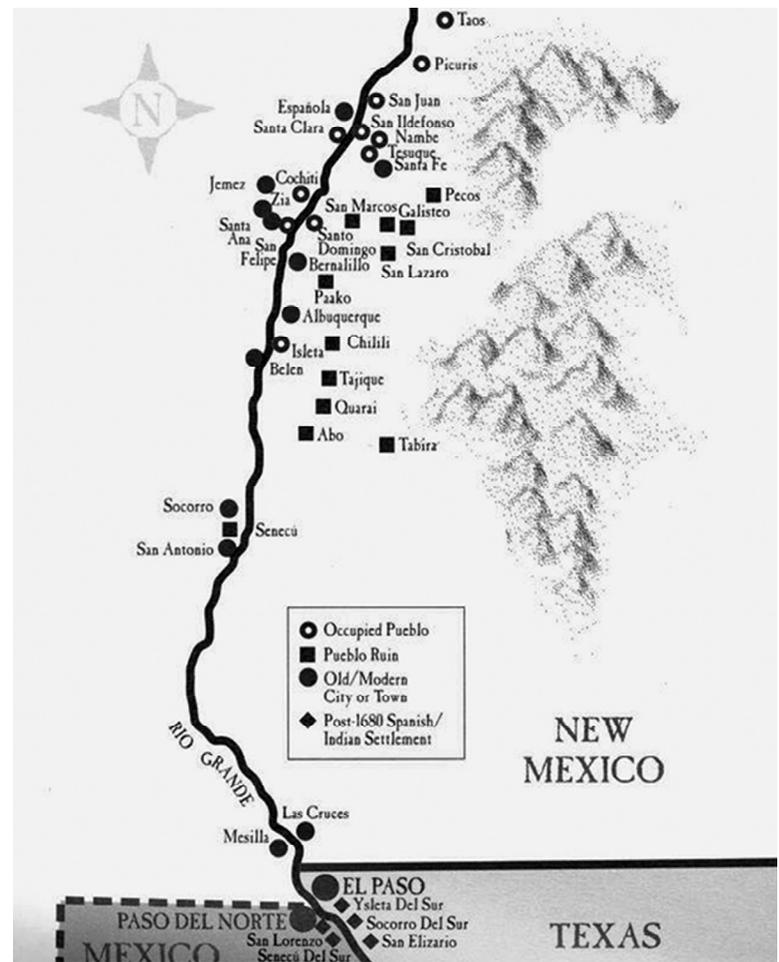
After this 1692 expedition was accomplished de Vargas returned to El Paso from the Zuni Pueblo by an almost fatal shortcut caused by dry waterholes. The only thing that save them was an occasional snowstorm.

During this first expedition he fought no battles with any of the Indian pueblos, but forgave them the revolt of 1680 and the Franciscan fathers in his escort baptized them again. He came to the Taos Pueblo that first time via present day San Juan Pueblo, Velarde, then by the Ojo Sarco, Las Trampas, Chamisal to Picuris Pueblo, where he spent the night, then on up the Telephone Canyon veering northwest to the Miranda Canyon, where he camped. He left the next morning at 4:00 A.M., arriving at the Taos Pueblo only to find the Indians had fled into the mountains. However, as at the other pueblos he persuaded them to return, he forgave them, and had them baptized. He continued his trip back to Santa Fe but not before he had made note of the excellent resources of Taos Valley and its need for a presidio, i.e., fort.

This amazing reconquest of New Mexico by 63 Spaniards obviously under a strict disciplinarian spoke well of the Indians' willingness to compromise and be friendly and intelligent use of Christianity by the military General. During the period 1680-1692 there had been a great deal of friction amongst the Indians themselves.

When de Vargas returned to New Mexico with colonists in October of 1693 he had a bit of trouble with some of the colonists as he reached the top of the La Bajada Hill between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. What met their eyes, but the snow-covered Sierra Madre Mountains as the Sangre de Christos were called in those days. This was too much for some of them and they deserted that night. The rest of them continued.

He had to fight his way into Santa Fe because as word came up the valley that no only army, but settlers were coming with him,



the Indians decided to make a stand at Santa Fe, where they had unsuccessfully set up a type of all-Pueblo Council. This had not held together so well during the peaceful years of 1680-1692, since they were inexperienced in this type of government. De Vargas shut off their water supply into Santa Fe as the Indians had done to the settlers in 1680, and that was the end of the fight. By January of 1694 word was received that 70 more colonizers led by Father Farfan were to arrive in June. The continual attacks by the "wild Indians", as the migratory Indians were called, made de Vargas realize he must loot the granaries of the Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande if his colonists were going to survive. There was a population of 1,100 at that time in Santa Fe, some of them Indians brought up from Mexico.

This brought about the second expedition to Taos Pueblo, since the other Indian pueblos had fled into the hills and hidden their surplus corn. He had with him a larger force than before plus innumerable mules to carry the corn, 50 "leatherjackets" and 50 militia plus a army of Pecos Indian allies. He left Santa Fe June 30 and camped that night a league from San Ildefonso on the Rio Grande.

After leaving his camp on the Rio Grande south of the San Juan Pueblo, he passed through the pueblos of San Lazaro and San Cristobal, which were at that time settling in the vicinity of Santa Cruz de la Canada. De Vargas spent that night at the abandoned hacienda of Moraga, in the area of present-day Chimayo, July 1. The next evening, July 2, they had reached the, you guessed it, the abandoned pueblo of Picuris. He had obviously taken the

summer route via present day Truchas and Trampas. He allowed no pillage, but continued on to Taos “by a rough and trying mountain pass”.

This time, since he complains about the rough mountain pass, he probably took the short-cut or the Picuris Trail straight north from their pueblo over the mountain into the south Hondo and then up again and over the Picuris Mountain into the Taos Valley. He arrived at the Taos Pueblo at 4 P.M., again empty of people. Crosses had recently been painted on the houses and crosses planted in the fields. The Taos Indians had fled again to their box canyon in the Taos Mountain, or embudo as de Vargas called it. The nights of July 3 and 4 de Vargas spent under heavy guard. After waiting several more days he sent word to the Taos Indians at the embudo by the chief of the Pecos Indians that they must return by 1:00 P.M. or he would give orders to loot the pueblo. The Indians did not appear, so the soldiers spent until late that night loading the mules with the corn they had husked. By moonlight, several smoke signals were seen issuing forth from the Picuris Mountains. The next day smoke signals from all sides of the valley were sending their messages. One of his men suggested taking a roundabout route via the San Luis Valley to the north in the country of the friendly Utes where the herds of buffalo were so plentiful that they would no lack for food.

On July 7, at 1:00 A.M. the army left in hopes that they would not be followed, but followed they were. After six miles they crossed the arroyo hondo. From there they moved north hugging the mountains so as to avoid the deep canyons that had eroded west of them. At 10:00 A.M. they were 15 miles north of arroyo hondo when they were attacked by 80 Taos Indians in a deep gully they could not avoid. Five of the Indians were killed and two captured; after questioning, these two were executed. The army next camped at Red River, today Questa, late that evening. His next camp was on the Culebra River 30 miles north at present day San Luis (no mention of Costilla). The Culebra was followed for 14 miles west, to where it empties into the Rio Grande. The water was too swift at this point, so again he took the advice of one of his men, a San Juan Indian, and went down the Rio Grande for miles where he spent the night on an island. He crossed the river at this point by throwing brush against the bank, so the mules could get down the steep banks.

The next day after crossing the river, they continued west towards present day Antonito, Colorado. Soon they came upon a herd of 500 buffalo. The soldiers killed 14 buffalo and some large deer (elk?). The next day one hundred men went hunting and returned with seven buffalo.

On July 12, the Spaniards were attacked by the Utes, much to their surprise, since they had always been their allies. The Utes wounded several of the Spanish soldiers who were just resting in their camp. The chief called off his men and apologized for their mistake, explaining that in recent years the Indians coming from the south had been dressing in Spanish costume and hunted in the Ute territory. They reaffirmed their friendship with de Vargas and after he had talked with them, the Utes were invited to come

to Santa Fe to trade their buffalo hides, meat and Paiute slaves. They parted friends and on the same day, July 12, at 1:00 P.M. the expedition traveled six miles (2 leagues) to a point where the river (San Antonio) turned toward the direction of the trail designated by the San Juan Indian guide.

July 13, quoting de Vargas' diary, “Traveled 18 or 21 miles (6 or 7 leagues) to the right along the narrows (of the Tusas River – H.G.B.) where there was a mountain also named San Antonio (now Kiowa Lookout Mountain – H.G.B.) because said river descended through a steep gorge to the left of the mountain. Rested here from noon until 3:00 P.M. “Went on to camp at a small waterhole.”

July 14: “The Indian guide says that the Rio de Ojo Caliente would be reached today, it being 9 or 10 long leagues distant (33 miles). It was reached at 4:00 P.M. Camped here.”

July 15: “Traveled all morning. After traveling 10 long leagues (33 miles) to the mouth of the Chama River we also reached the Rio de Norte. The San Juan pueblo was 9 miles distant.”

After resting amongst the trees along the Chama River the expedition came out of the canyon and grove along the river and went on to ford at the crossing of the Rio del Norte south and within view of the pueblo. They spent the night on the east bank of the Rio Grande near the San Ildefonso Mesa.

The next morning the pack train was sent on to Santa Fe with its 300 fanegas of husked corn (approximately 450 bushels) while de Vargas checked the mesa where the hostile San Ildefonso Indians were still entrenched. He then continued on to Santa Fe, the same day, having traveled 17 days and gone 360 miles to save his colonists from starvation. By Fall, they would have their own crops. This was the first good turning point in history for the Spanish colonists of New Mexico.

De Vargas had again accomplished the impossible in the face of the gravest dangers of heat, ambushes, and starvation, but it would cost him another revolt.

In 1696 due to the raids on the pueblos in 1694, the Pueblo Indians were to revolt again but not in such great numbers and this time facing an experienced general who defeated them in battle for the last time. Thereafter the pueblos were to remain peaceful for many years while the “wild Indians” were to intensify their attacks against the pueblos and the Spaniards.

De Vargas's third and last military expedition to Taos in 1696 is still another story and an equally fascinating one.

Originally published in two newsletters for the Taos County Historical Society, in April and June of 1966, by the Society's Secretary, Helen Greene Blumenschein.

Miss Blumenschein was an avid historian and is credited with numerous papers, articles and drawings based on her very extensive research. She left a tremendous legacy for future historians and researchers to fuel their endeavors.

Thank you Helen Greene Blumenschein.

# MARC SIMMONS: May 15, 1937 - September 14, 2023

by Dave Cordova



by Kitty Leaken

Marc Simmons, a long-time friend, supporter and contributor to the Taos County Historical Society, passed away last September in Albuquerque after a long illness.

Marc authored about 40 books over his illustrious career, and almost all his books have New Mexican themes and stories. I don't have all his books, but I have two that I hold very dear and revisit regularly. "The Little Lion of the Southwest a Life of Manuel Antonio Chaves," published in 1974, tells the heroic exploits of Manuel Chavez during the Civil War. Dubbed "The Little Lion" because of his small physical size, he was ultimately responsible for several Civil War victories in New Mexico. The other, "Kit Carson and His Three Wives," published in 2003, is a compendium of letters, diaries and journals written by the people closely associated with Kit Carson, as told from their points of view. Kit Carson had more admirers than detractors during his lifetime, and Marc's gathered collections are neatly presented in this book.

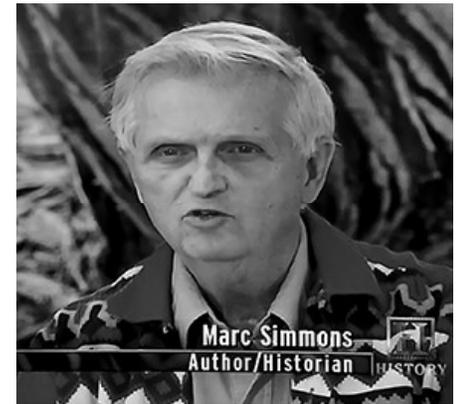
I met Marc about 30 years ago through Art Bacharach of Moby Dickens, who invited Marc to speak at one of Moby Dickens' Book Club meetings. Art asked me to introduce Marc, so I spent

an hour or so of deep conversation with him. The man was very "down-to-Earth" and, within minutes, I felt I'd known him all my life. I knew very little about Marc, but I became a fan that day. A few years later, Marc was again invited to speak at the Book Club, this time in support of his just published, "Kit Carson & His Three Wives." I learned a lot about Kit Carson that day, which to my regret, just hadn't been an interest in my world. Needless to say, that all changed that day, thanks to Marc. That began a very serious interest in Kit, and by extension, his wife Josefa Jaramillo, his children, and his incredible exploits in and around Taos.

Soon after I became the editor of "Ayer Y Hoy en Taos", I reached out to Marc for a contribution to our newsletter, to which he gave me a humorous story about Kit Carson. The story took place soon after the end of the Civil War, when as a Colonel in the New Mexico Volunteer Militia, Kit Carson was ordered to attend a Military Ball in Santa Fe. The order included a demand that the Military Officers not wear their Cavalry boots to the ball, but

rather, wear proper dress shoes. Kit scoured Santa Fe for a pair of dress shoes and wasn't able find a pair to fit him. The closest he got to such a pair of shoes was a pair of women's pumps... which he purchased. That night, preparing for the ball, he put on the pumps, but just couldn't bring himself to go to the ball wearing the pumps. He took them off and polished his Cavalry boots and put those on. About ready to depart, he got to thinking that he certainly didn't want to disobey orders, took the pumps and put them in the inside breast pockets of his dress uniform. One in the left pocket and one in the right, and went to the ball. Entering the ballroom, he was met with strange looks and much snickering and pointing in his direction. He became the source of much jocular humor because, as it turned out, the pumps created bumps in his uniform that made it look as if he had a bust.

We didn't communicate very often, but when we did, I memorialized our conversations, and remember them to this day. After he became ill with dementia, I got his phone number and called just to say hello. I spoke with his caretaker, who informed me that Marc may not remember me, and he didn't. He was polite, recounted a story about living in New Mexico, and how much he missed Santa Fe. He was living in Texas at the time. I told him that I enjoyed his books. He said, "Thank you." And with that, he hung up.



**I believe that I will never forget this incredible man,  
and will forever live in my memories.**

# “TWIN TAOSEÑOS IN THE CIVIL WAR”

by D. F. Arquello

I found out about my ancestor's participation in the civil war through oral history stories told to me by my father, Fermin Arguello. Much of the oral history is at least particularly rooted in actual events, then embellished at least somewhat by the storyteller. Imagine the Taos vicinity during the years 1861 to 1865.

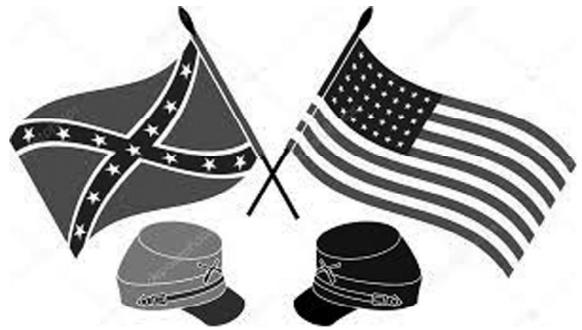
Apparently, the Talpa, Llano Quemado, and Chamisal areas were sufficiently populated for military recruiters to draft men and boys for the war effort. Colonel John Chivington leader of Colorado militia passed through this area enlisting men for the Union Army. Among those recruited were adolescent twin boys named Francisco and Domingo Arguello. They were identical twins. As the story goes, one was given the Union flag and the other a marching drum. Both were placed at the head of the marching column in prominent positions for both.

The real story does not give much detail about the route taken to engage the enemy battle until the army volunteers reached Valverde on the banks of the Rio Grande north of Las Cruces. The armies exchanged fire from opposite sides of the river Rio Grande and had some close-quarter hand to hand exchanges. The oral story does not recount much detail of the events only to state that Francisco was terrified. He chose to leave the battle and walk back to the Taos area where he arrived safely.

Eventually Chivington soldiers defeated the Texas volunteers at a battle near Pecos, New Mexico. The Texan soldiers marched forward to engage the Union Army at Las Vegas but left the majority of supplies and animals at Apache Canyon east of Santa Fe. The New Mexico volunteers were able to find these supplies almost unguarded and destroyed the supply wagons and stole 200 mules and horses.

No mention of Domingo's participation in any of the battles is given in the story as told by my father other than to mention Francisco had gone AWOL. Sometime after the war's end, Union Army officials search for deserters, AWOL personnel. They arrived in the Taos area and were able to locate both brothers, one in Llano Quemado and the other in the Talpa area. Both must have been in their late teens since they were so very young when they were drafted.

As it happened, they reached Francisco's residence in Llano Quemado first. Now the story I'm sure embellishes the dialogues between Francisco and Union officials. It could have gone something like this. "You know I have an identical twin who left the Valverde battle and came home. The SOB



really disgraced the family and now lives in the Talpa area. Here is his address and how to get there. The Union officials left him and went to search for the other brother.

At the Talpa home they informed the people there that Domingo had directed them to Francisco's home and that they were there to arrest and punish him for going AWOL. Domingo was handcuffed and jailed at some secure building where he spent that night. Domingo's parents, extended family and even the priest that had baptized him affirmed that this was Domingo and not Francisco who had gone AWOL. The Union officials were finally convinced of Domingo's identity and let him go. When they returned to Llano Quemado, Francisco had re-located his family and couldn't be found. After the Union officials left the area, it was revealed that Francisco had relocated his family to the Chamisal area where they lived their lives and were never again bothered by those searching for AWOL soldiers.

The oral story skips to the time Francisco had died and left his wife a widow with an eight dollar a month pension from the Army, without much detail the story says many of the local men solicited Domingo's widow's hand in marriage. The pension made her a very attractive target. The story says that in the process of soliciting her hand in marriage more than one pair of men had rather serious fist fights, and maybe he even gun battles. The story never mentions whether the widow remarried.

The Union official, Colonel John Chivington was the same person who on November 29, 30<sup>th</sup>, 1864 lead military soldiers from Fort Lyon's attack on the Big Sand Creek camp of over 500 Cheyenne and Arapaho without provocation. About 160 men, women, and children, including elderly and infirm were killed. The attack ignored the American and white flags flying from the camp. The sign of their supposed protected status. More than half of the Indian casualties were women and children.

My father's oral history story follows a well-known pattern of "informing," "entertaining" and moralizing.

Copyright by D.F. Arguello, November 2023.

# from “THE TAOS MASSACRES” by John Durand (© 2004 by John Durand)

## Chronology of Events

### Pre-1845

Following years of conflict between the distant government of Mexico and the thousands of American and European settlers moving into sparsely populated areas that today comprise much of Texas, supremacy in the region is settled in 1836 at the battle of San Jacinto. In that battle a volunteer army under the command of Sam Houston defeats a Mexican army under the command of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Santa Anna is held captive until he signs a treaty conceding the disputed territories to the nascent Republic of Texas. Conflict continues however, because Mexico rejects the legitimacy of the treaty. Under pressure from American settlers in Texas, the United States is drawn into the dispute.

### 1845

Unable to secure Mexico's recognition of the Mexico-Texas boundary by treaty, out-going President John Tyler forces a resolution through the Congress offering annexation to Texas, and thus setting up a conflict with Mexico to greet in-coming President James Polk, a political rival. Having run on a platform of expansionism, however, Polk does not seek to reverse Tyler's policy.

**March** ● Polk is inaugurated as President. ● Mexico recalls its ambassador to the United States. ● America recalls its ambassador to Mexico.

**May** ● Zachery Taylor is ordered. to hold his Army of the Southwest in readiness. ● J.D. Sloat, commanding the U.S. flotilla in the Pacific, is ordered to seize ports along the California coast in case of war.

**July** ● Texas accepts annexation into the United States.

**November** ● Elements of the American Army of the Southwest take up positions just north of the Rio Grande, which the United States intends to establish as its boundary with Mexico.

### 1846

**April** ● American and Mexican cavalry skirmish on disputed territory near the Rio Grande. Reports of these skirmishes and the loss of American life is pretext for Polk's declaration of war.

**May** ● President Polk declares war on Mexico on May 11, an act ratified by the Congress two days later. ● The Secretary of War dispatches Major George Howard with orders 1) for Missouri's governor to raise two volunteer regiments for service in the West 2) for Stephen Kearny at Fort Leavenworth to occupy New Mexico as far as the Rio Grande with his 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons 3) to find Charles Bent and send him back to Washington, and 4) to warn Americans on the Santa Fe Trail and in New Mexico that they should be prepared for the coming conflict.

**June** ● Kearny learns by a new communication that President Polk's objective was now to take California as well as New Mexico. ● Charles Bent and Ceran St. Vrain meet up with Major George Howard at The Crossing and learn that President Polk has summoned Bent to Washington.

**August** ● Kearny's Army of the West occupies Santa Fe without bloodshed on the 18th.

**September** ● Kearny (now General Kearny) appoints Charles Bent as governor of New Mexico on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, then sets out with 300 men to invest California. ● Lewis Garrard leaves Westport with St. Vrain's wagon train.

**October** ● Sterling Price arrives in Santa Fe with his 2nd Missouri Mounted s volunteers and assumes military command of New Mexico from Alexander Doniphan (1<sup>st</sup> Missouri Mounted Volunteers), who marches south to Mexico.

**December** ● The American government in Santa Fe learns of a conspiracy to rid New Mexico of every American and American sympathizer.

### 1847

**Thursday, January 14** ● Governor Bent, Stephen Lee, Cornelio Vigil, Narcisse Beaubien, and James Leal depart Santa Fe for Taos.

**Monday, January 18** ● Governor Bent and his party are met near Taos by a party from the Taos Pueblo demanding the release of jailed Indians.

**Tuesday, January 19** ● In the very early morning a mob murders Cornelio Vigil, Charles Bent, Stephen Lee, James Leal, Narcisse Beaubien, and Pablo Jaramillo. ● Charles Town is warned by his father-in-law and flees for Santa Fe. ● Town meets Charley and Tom Autobees on Picuris Mountain with news of the uprising. ● Charley hurries north to warn the men at Turley's mill, then goes to his ranch, where he finds En-di-ond. ● In mid-afternoon an organized force attacks and besieges Turley's mill in Arroyo Hondo. ● Charley and En-di-ond return to Turley's mill, then Charley heads for Santa Fe.

**Wednesday, January 20** ● Town reaches Santa Fe with news of the uprising. ● Rebels attack the grazing camps of the U.S. Army and Bent, St. Vrain & Co on the east side of the Sangre de Cristos. ● En-di-ond's wife Red Willows is killed at Turley's mill. ● At nightfall John Albert, William LeBlanc, and Simeon Turley escape the siege of Turley's mill.

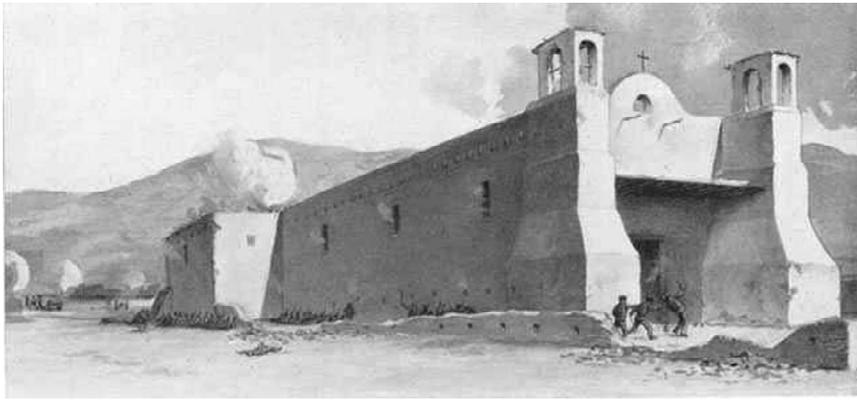
**Thursday, January 21** ● Charley Autobees reaches Santa Fe with an Indian Prisoner and confirms the news of the uprising with a captured document. ● Simeon Turley is murdered on the trail to Rio Colorado. ● John Albert passes by the camp of Mark Head and William Harwood on the west slope of the Sangre de Cristos mountains.

**Friday, January 22** ● John Albert crosses the Sangre de Cristos pass.

**Saturday, January 23** ● Price marches from Santa Fe as far as Pojoque with elements of his Missouri 2<sup>nd</sup> and a “mountain man” company of volunteers under the command of Ceran St. Vrain. ● John Albert is carried to the Greenhorn trading post by Blackhawk.

**Sunday, January 24** ● Price and the “mountain man” company defeat the rebel army in the battle of La Cañada. ● Mark Head and William Harwood are murdered on the outskirts of Rio Colorado.

**Monday/Tuesday** ● Price regroups at La Cañada. A number of horses from one of the Army grazing camps are delivered to Price.



**Original St. Jerome Church at Taos Pueblo where the rebels took refuge, razed by the American Army on February 3rd, 1847.**

●John Albert reaches Mormon Town after dark. ●Rebels raid Army and Bent, St. Vrain & Company grazing camps on the "Picketwire."

**Wednesday, January 27** ●A rider leaves Mormon Town to bring word of the rebellion to Bent's Fort. ●Price marches from La Cañada to Lucero.

**Thursday, January 28** ●At the Cheyenne encampment on the Arkansas, a company rider brings William Bent news of Charles Bent's murder and of the attacks on the company's grazing camps.

●Captain Burgwin and Company G of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons join Colonel Price at Lucero.

**Friday, January 29** ●William Bent and Lewis Garrard depart the Cheyenne encampment and reach Bent's Fort. ●Bent's Fort learns of the rebellion by way of the rider from Mormon Town.

●Elements of Price's force under Burgwin rout the rebels in the battle of Embudo.

**Saturday, January 30** ●Lewis Garrard leaves Bent's Fort with a small party to round up livestock scattered in the attacks on the grazing camps. ●Burgwin marches to Trampas to await the arrival of Price and the supply wagons.

**Sunday, January 31** ●Price reaches Trampas and joins up with Burgwin. The unified command continues as far as Chamisal.

**Monday, February 1** ●Price crosses the summit of Picuris Mountain and starts down the other side, but spends the night on the mountain.

**Tuesday, February 2** ●Price marches as far as Rio Chiquito and spends the night.

**Wednesday, February 3** ●Price reaches Taos and attacks the Taos pueblo in early afternoon. ●From their camp on the east slope of the Sangre de Cristo range, Garrard and his party hear the cannon fire of Price's attack.

**Thursday, February 4** ●The battle of the pueblo continues, culminating in the massacre in the horse meadow.

**Friday, February 5** ●Charley Autobeas sets out to track down Pablo Montoya and encounters En-di-ond. ●The Taos pueblo surrenders, giving up Tomasito Romero, one of the rebellion's principals.

**Sunday, February 7** ●Charley Autobeas reaches Taos with Montoya. After a quick military Sunday, trial Montoya is hanged.

●Burgwin dies of his wound.

**Monday, February 8** ●Private John Fitzgerald shoots Tomasito Romero dead.

**Sunday, February 14** ●An employee of Bent, St. Vrain & Company on his way to Bent's Fort informs Lewis Garrard and his party that Colonel Price has put down the rebellion.

**Monday, February 15** ●Returned to Santa Fe, Price completes his report of the rebellion and of his military actions.

**Saturday, April 3** ●Lewis Garrard enters Taos.

**Monday, April 5** ●A grand jury is convened in Taos.

**Tuesday, April 6** ●The grand jury indicts Jose Manuel Garcia for murder. A jury finds Garcia guilty.

**Wednesday, April 7** ●Garcia is sentenced to die by hanging on April 9. ●A jury finds Pedro Lucero, Manuel Romero, Juan Ramon Trujillo, and Isidor Romero guilty of murder. The four are sentenced to die by hanging on April 9.

●A jury finds Polo Salizar guilty of high treason.

**Thursday, April 8** ●Polo Salizar is sentenced to die by hanging on April 9. ●A jury finds Francisco Naranjo, Jose Gabriel-Romero, Juan Domingo Martins, Juan Antonio Lucero, and El Cuerroe guilty of murder.

**Friday, April 9** ●Court agrees to postponement until April 10 of the trial for four more indicted for murder. The trial of one indicted for high treason is also postponed. ●The first six men found guilty are hanged.

**Saturday, April 10** ●The court sentences the five convicted on April 8 to be hanged on Friday, April 30. ●A jury finds Manuel Miera, Manuel Sandoval, Rafael Tafoya, and Juan Pacheco guilty of murder.

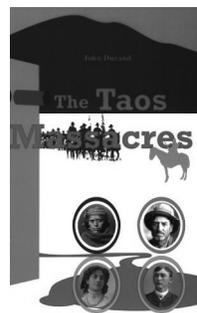
**Monday, April 12** ●A man identified only as Asencio is tried for murder and found not guilty. ●Franciso Revali is tried for high treason and found not guilty.

**Tuesday, April 13** ●Juan Antonio Avila is tried for murder and found guilty. He is sentenced to be hanged on May 7.

**April 14-24** ●Additional trials are held for theft, larceny, horse stealing, mule stealing, and receiving stolen goods. ●Lewis Garrard and his party return to ranching work on the east slope of the Sangre de Cristos mountains.

**May** ●Lewis Garrard leaves New Mexico by way of Bent's Fort and arrives at Fort Mann, where he signs on as a volunteer and later assumes command of the small outpost. From a passing wagon train, he learns that William Bent had granted Dick Green and his wife Charlotte their freedom.

**June** ●A wagon train that includes Ceran St. Vrain, Frank Blair and Private John Fitzgerald camps at Fort Mann. St. Vrain tries to persuade Lewis Garrard to leave his post and join his party, Lewis demurs. Within a few days Lewis Garrard is relieved of his command by a military officer and joins a wagon train bound for the States.



## The Taos Massacres by John Durand

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# “WHY IS HISTORY IMPORTANT?”

by Dave Cordova

I wasn't always interested in history. I couldn't see any reason to look to the past as a means of moving forward. In my studies, the lessons always began with “who invented” or “who introduced” something pertaining to the subject of these studies. Because of this, I saw this practice as a waste of time. Being forced to memorize the many names and accomplishments tied to those names was, to me, a futile practice which had to be endured. And I endured it to get to the reason I was taking these classes.

In music, I had to learn about the many composers and different epochs or periods of music. I learned that I had a particular interest in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. I even had a list of favored composers from those periods, such as Michael Praetorius from the Renaissance and Bach, Handel and, of course, my favorite – Vivaldi from the Baroque. I came to appreciate the Classical period, with the giants of the period, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Mendelssohn. But I couldn't find an association with the genre I was most interested in, Rock & Roll. I now regret my short-sightedness, and can well see how all music is related, and how, regardless of a contemporary composer's natural talents, they all owe some measure of homage to those classical composers.

In electronics, I had to learn about Ohm, Faraday, Edison, Tesla, and countless other inventors and innovators in the field of electricity and electronics. For one thing, I finally got to use what I learned in algebra and trigonometry, and because of Ohm's Law, I can now understand how electricity works.

But to get back to the topic of history, I can say that I wasn't particularly interested in what had happened in the past, but soon realized that there is no future without the past. As philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it.”

I know my teachers and instructors tried to educate me, and I also know how hard I worked at not learning their lessons. As a student at St. Francis School, we were introduced to the history of the world, the country, our state and our county. Being catholic, we were also taught about Biblical events and personalities, much aside from the teachings in church. The students were taken on field trips to the several museums in Taos, and further journeys to Los Alamos and Bandelier National Monument. The latter two bridged the ancient with the modern era.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Taos Junior High, I had world history with Mr. Hal Pfeiffer. Poor man had no idea how everything he tried to teach me fell on “mostly” deaf ears. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I must admit that I had some interest in Mr. Felix Miera's “New Mexico History” class. Maybe it was that I was getting serious about my education. Nah, it was the familiar that made me take an interest.

Then in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I had Civics with Mr. Salomon Struck. Now the subject was getting serious, but I wasn't. I took in as much as I needed to pass the class, but other than learning about the three branches of government, I am left with a tremendous gratitude for Google and computers that readily make the necessary information available today.

But now? I have an insatiable need to know all I can about the past. I have come to realize that I didn't just ‘come to be’ one day, but that there were reasons and a lot of “causes & effects” that have brought me to the place I find myself in now. Although I didn't go looking to work with the Taos County Historical Society, on the board and as editor of *Ayer Y Hoy en Taos*, I have embraced the opportunities to learn from the available material I find through the society.

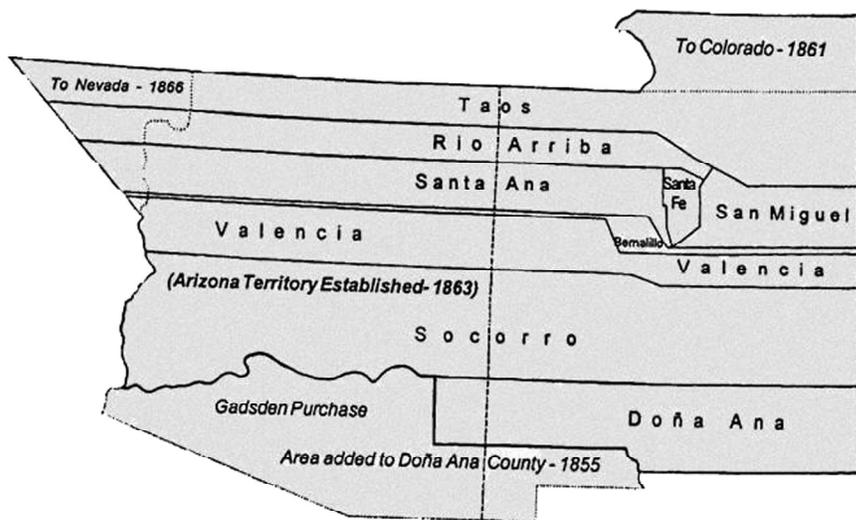
My own personal history, as much as I have been able to ascertain, has my ancestors coming to New Mexico with the reconquest by Don Diego de Vargas in 1694, settling in Santa

Cruz de la Cañada, moving to Abiquiu and then coming to Taos County in the late 1700s or early 1800s.

One side of my family, the Cordovas, established the small village of Los Cordovas along the Rio Pueblo. The Martinezes settled further north along the Rio Pueblo in Ranchitos, site of the Martinez Hacienda. I have traced my Cordova ancestors back to 1807, when Francisco Cordova was baptized at San Francisco de Asis Church in Los Ranchos de Taos. Next came Antonio Cordova who was born in 1829, married Maria Longina Trujillo in 1850, and who was listed on the Union rolls as having fought in the Civil War, perhaps under Kit Carson's command.



In 1855 my great-grandfather, Ramon, was born in Los Cordovas, married Maria Ascension Martinez in 1882. I had found Ramon in the 1910 Census but he had disappeared from the 1920 Census. With Covid-19 rampant a few years ago, the subject of the 1918 Spanish Flu brought some interest in the similarities of the two pandemics. I was sent files from a Taos newspaper that had



published the names of Taos County residents that had perished in the 1918 Flu epidemic. Amongst the many names of Taoseños that died then, was the name of my great-grandfather Ramon and my grandfather's younger sister, Celina, who was 14 at the time of her death.

My grandfather Porfirio Necomedes Cordova Sr. was born in 1889 in Los Cordovas, married Anna Maria Martin (Martinez) in 1912. Anna Maria is a descendant of Severino Martin Serrano. My father Porfirio Nick Jr. was born in 1926 in Los Cordovas, married Rosana Martinez in 1953. My mother is also a direct descendant of Severino Martin Serrano and making him my 3<sup>rd</sup> Great-grandfather.

In recent years, I have been able to gather interesting and important information about my family. I believe I have many relatives scattered throughout northern New Mexico. Some in Santa Cruz and some in Abiquiu, but certainly, throughout the world. After getting my DNA report, I was contacted by distant relatives from far away New Zealand. Recently I met a woman who was a descendent of Maria Josefa Jaramillo, wife of Kit Carson. This woman discovered a distant connection to me, leaving me to wonder if there is a distant connection to Josefa herself.

The earliest inhabitants in the Taos Valley were the people of Taos Pueblo, having settled in Taos in the 12th century, and who have continually inhabited the Pueblo to the present time. The people of the Taos Pueblo served as both welcoming hosts and rebellious activists standing up to the injustices suffered from the invaders. In 1680, the several pueblos of northern New Mexico participated in the rebellion that drove the Spanish colonists out to El Paso del Norte. In 1693, Don Diego de Vargas re-entered New Mexico, bringing with him many soldiers and colonist families prepared to establish settlements throughout the inhabitable areas of our state.

The colonists and the people of the Taos Pueblo learned to live peacefully, helping each other survive the many hardships of time, place, and occupation. The Spanish claimed the wide Rio Grande Valley for the Crown in 1598 and named it Nuevo

Mexico. The Spanish were the governing body providing the law until Mexico gained independence from Spain about 1823. By the way, 1821 was the year that the country of Mexico was established, which name curiously came 223 years after New Mexico got its name.

Mexico ruled the New World from 1823 until 1846 when the United States conquered the Mexican Province in North America. The conquering US Army claimed New Mexico for the Union and President Polk appointed Charles Bent Governor of New Mexico in September of 1846. The inhabitants of New Mexico were not all welcoming of the Americans, and in January of 1847, a coalition of the

Spanish/Mexican citizens joined the people of the Taos Pueblo to expel the American "invaders." The rebellion caused a lot of hardship for the Spanish/Mexican colonists and the people of the Taos Pueblo. When the American Army came to put down the Taos Rebellion which claimed many lives in Taos. Amongst the lives lost were the newly appointed Territorial Governor Charles Bent and Taos Sheriff Stephen Louis Lee. Since that time, the Taos Valley has enjoyed mostly peaceful coexistence.

Taos history is mostly pleasant, but it also has some very painful memories for the descendants of the original colonists. It is important for the new inhabitants to understand the relationships and coexistence of the several communities in the county. Our history is similar and different from the histories of America. There are stories that could easily be the subject of great fiction, but which are very much a historical account. These stories exist to educate and connect present day Taoseños to those hearty colonists that suffered so much to leave the legacy we now enjoy.

While working with the Taos County Historical Society, I have exposed myself to a lot of serious historical accounts and quite a few nuanced accounts. Every story comes with follow-up information needed to complete the bigger picture. Still, it seems there are always gaping holes in the research, which seem to hit a dead-end. Yet, there are times when a piece of the puzzle just drops in our lap to give us clues to continue our research.

This is where the Taos County Historical Society becomes the all-important vehicle to drive historical learning. If a person wants to learn about the ancestral families of the Taos Valley, Penasco settlement and Questa's gateway to northern Taos County, there are several archived sources to facilitate research. There are audio tapes featuring the voices of long-gone Taoseños, telling forgotten stories of Taos and its inhabitants. There are many written papers gathered from many sources that carry the recorded histories of our earliest Taoseños.

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

January 10th - 10 AM  
2024 BOARD RETREAT

February - 2 PM  
ANNUAL MEETING-BOARD ELECTIONS

Panel for Growing Up In Taos

March 2nd - 2 PM  
T B A

April 6th - 2 PM  
T B A

May 5th - Noon  
T B A

Sagebrush Convention Center

TCHS Lectures  
First Saturday of the month at 2:00 PM

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## Taos County Historical Society Board of Directors

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Donovan Lieurance-Peter Allen-Scott Abbott

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Carmen Lieurance

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 ..... \$30

Family ..... \$50

Sustaining ..... \$100

Business ..... \$60

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

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

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



Taos County Historical Society  
PO Box 2447 i Taos, NM 87571

