

AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Summer 2025

Issue #58

“THE HISTORY OF THE TAOS COUNTY FAIR”



by Monica Wilder



JOSEFA CARSON & IGNACIA BENT

by Elizabeth Cunningham
(from www.womenoftaos.org)



Exploring Vaquero Culture & L'Idioma de los Nortenos de Rio Arriba

by Michael Miller

A publication of the Taos County Historical Society

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and Northern New Mexico

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Issue No. 58

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

A Message from the TCHS President Ernestina Cordova

Spring Reflections and A Look Ahead

As spring approaches, I find myself reflecting on what I was meant to be, where I was meant to live, and what I was meant to do. There was never any doubt in my mind—I was meant to help preserve the rich history of Taos, with the support of our board and the members of the Taos County Historical Society.



We began the year with a productive board retreat, followed by our annual meeting. During that time, we proudly welcomed three new board members: John Ubelaker, Charles Neeley, and Linda Hattendorf. Each brings unique strengths and a shared passion for our mission, and we're fortunate to have them join us.

In February, we hosted José Gustavo Cordova, who shared personal stories of growing up in Taos County. In March, Javier Sanchez presented on *The Evolution of Hispanic Settlement in Estancia*. In April, we featured *Nuevo México del Norte: St. Francis Church*, presented by Guadalupe Tafoya.

This year, we are honored to recognize Patricia Michaels as our annual honoree, along with three esteemed speakers from Taos Pueblo, who bring invaluable insight and perspective to our collective story.

Historic preservation is a conversation between the past and the future. It invites us to ask: "What is important in our history?" and "What should we preserve for future generations?" Through this work, we explore history in new ways, uncover fresh insights, and deepen our understanding of ourselves and our community.

We remain committed to preserving the history of Taos and sharing it with those who come after us. A heartfelt thank you to David Cordova, editor of *Ayer y Hoy*, for his dedication and hard work on this publication.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming lectures. Let's enjoy the summer ahead and make the most of what 2025 has to offer.

With Warmest Regards,

Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society

"EXPLORING VAQUERO CULTURE"

by Michael Miller

The introduction of the horse into northern New Spain and the *Llano Estacado* brought a revolutionary cultural transformation to the people who lived there. It allowed cultures from varied geographical origins and cultural and linguistic diversity to move into the region, as a permanent residence, rather than as a place of occasional habitation.

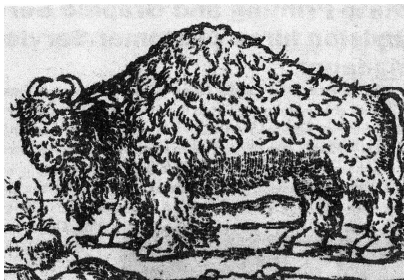


By the 19th century, native cultures on the *llano estacado* shared the same fundamental cultural lifeways. These merging cultures owed their very existence to the Spanish introduction of the horse. In a little more than a century, however, these same cultures were the victims of the American and European slaughter and near extinction of the buffalo.

Around 1794, the first permanent settlement of *Nuevomexicanos* settled the western boundaries of the *llano estacado*. A group of fifty-two *genizaros* petitioned the governor for a land grant along the Pecos river. Known as *San Miguel del Bado* the community prospered partly because of the strategic location of the grant to the *llano estacado* and the vast herds of buffalo and Governor de Anza's new policy of protection against *Comanche* raids for colonial farmers and ranchers.

Los Ciboleros

Buffalo hunting was an important part of the *Nuevomexicano* agricultural and ranching community. Following the autumn harvest and livestock roundups people from the *Rio Arriba* and the *Rio Abajo* began planning expeditions to the *llano estacado* for bison hunts. Villages joined forces and banded together to send a large train of *ciboleros* and ox carts to hunt and secure the long winter's meat supply.

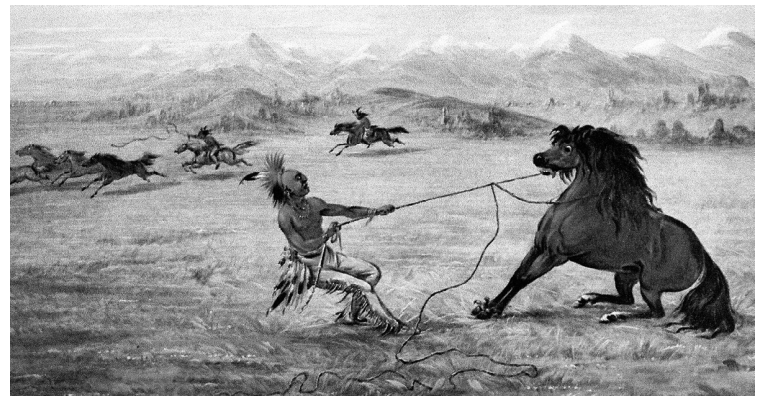


In the *Rio Arriba*, a favorite rendezvous place was in the Mora Valley at the village of Lucero, also known as *Placita de los Ciboleros*. In late September the hunters would gather at Lucero with ox carts, horses, lances, guns (in later years) and skinning knives. On the evening before their departure east, the local residents would give the hunters a *fiesta*, with much music, dancing, eating and

drinking, before they departed to the *llano* for weeks of hardship, hunting, and butchering of bison.

Hunting caravans of *ciboleros* from *Taos*, *Santa Cruz de la Canada*, *Santa Fe*, *San Miguel del Vado*, *Manzano*, and *El Paso del Norte* also began to arrive on the *llano*. After weeks on the trail searching for a large buffalo herd, the *mayordomo* of the hunting party would select a campsite, usually near a waterhole, when the herd was located. The next day the chase would begin. Rising at dawn, the *ciboleros* would mount their fastest horses, select their favorite steel lance, and begin the pursuit. As soon as they killed one buffalo, they immediately pursued the next one, leaving *los seguidores* to come behind and slit the animal's throat to make sure it was dead.

Next the carts arrived with a team of butchers who would cut up the carcasses and haul them back to the camp. For many days the *carniceros* worked nonstop salting down hides, preparing tallow, and converting fresh meat into *tsajo*.



The caravans carried a large supply of fiber rope that was stretched between carts and wagons or tied to poles to form drying lines. The meat was cut into long, thin strips, draped over the lines, and left in the sun and air to dry. When the jerky was completely dry it was packed into bags and placed into carts for the long journey home. Marrow bones were also preserved and packed for making stews. The tongue was salted and preserved for markets in *Chihuahua* where they sold for as much as a *peso* apiece. The buffalo tallow was used for greasing wheels on the *carretas* and to make soap and candles. Candles were important items for trade, lighting homes and church altars all over the province.

The journey home was often a dangerous one because the *ciboleros* were intruding on Native hunting grounds. In the 1830s, the attacks by hostile tribes became so frequent that it affected the buffalo harvest for many *Nuevomexicano* communities. The governor of the province began to send soldiers and cannons to protect the hunters on the *llano estacado* from attacks because the bison hunts had become an essential part of the food supply in *Nuevo Mexico*.

Michael Miller is a writer and poet from La Puebla, New Mexico. The founding Director of UNM Center for Southwest Research.

“JOSEFA CARSON and IGNACIA BENT”

Written by Elizabeth Cunningham (from www.womenoftaos.org)

Hispanic women of New Mexico found their sense of identity in belonging to la familia, an extended family in which their role as housekeeper, bearer of children, and caregiver was highly valued in the community. Nevertheless, authority was tightly concentrated in the hands of the male head-of-household, so that his wife and other female members were accustomed to having his paternalistic rule, be it benevolent or harsh, guide them in everyday matters both large and small.

Marc Simmons,
Kit Carson & His Three Wives (2003)

Two sisters, descended from one of New Mexico's oldest and most respected families, played an important role in the history of Taos during the tumultuous 1800s. Maria Ignacia Jaramillo and her younger sister, Maria Josefa, were each married to famous men. For that reason fragments of their stories survive in print, and illuminate the lives of 19th-century Hispanic women. Life was very different back then – particularly for women. 2012 marks the Centennial of New Mexico statehood and more history of Northern New Mexico, Taos, and women of the west may be found at www.newmexicohistory.org.

By the time Charles Bent began a family with Maria Ignacia Jaramillo in 1835, he was a renowned trader. He started working for the Missouri Fur Company in 1822. He soon became a partner owner and helped with reorganization efforts. Within seven years the company flourished due to his business acumen and knowledge of Indian country west of St. Louis. It could not compete, however, with the American Fur Company. Consequently Charles set his sights on the burgeoning Santa Fe trade. In 1829, at age 30, Charles and his younger brother William escorted a caravan of 93 wagonloads of goods from Missouri to New Mexico. After this highly lucrative expedition, Charles went into business with Frenchman and fellow trapper Ceran St. Vrain. Their firm Bent, St. Vrain and Company became one of the West's leading mercantile enterprises. Annual profits from the fur trade alone averaged \$40,000. The partners opened stores in Santa Fe and in Taos where St. Vrain had resided since 1826.

In 1833 Charles, his brother William and St. Vrain established Bent's Fort. Built in 1833-34, the immense nearly 170 feet square adobe structure, constructed by Hispanic masons from Taos, protected their trade goods and supplies. Located strategically at the confluence of the Arkansas and Purgatory rivers, this settlement in southeast Colorado served as a major trade center between trappers and Plains tribes. According to Bent's daughter Teresina, the Bents were known for fair treatment which won

them the respect of “Indians of all tribes, the French and American trappers and traders” as well as emigrants, and officers and service men of the U. S. Army.

At the time the centuries-old Trade Fair also made Taos a favored base of operation. Starting in the late 1700s French Canadian and American trappers had come to the area to procure hides and exchange goods with regional Indian tribes and long-time resident Hispanos. Decades later, trade drew the Bent brothers and St. Vrain, and other renowned mountain men like Hugh Glass, Ewing Young, Baptiste LaLande, and Kit Carson to northern New Mexico.

Highlighting some of the dramatic differences in our society today and 150 years ago, besides commerce, the beauty of Taos women provided an attraction as described in accounts of the period. One written by young Lewis Garrard, who arrived with a contingent of mountain men in spring 1847, provides a rare printed depiction of particular Taos women, including Ignacia Bent. Garrard portrayed her as

Quite handsome; a few years since, she must have been a beautiful woman—good figure for her age; luxuriant raven hair, unexceptional teeth, and brilliant, dark eyes, the effect of which was heightened by a clear, brunette complexion.

Ignacia was then about 33, which must have seemed old to this young man of 17. Garrard was smitten, however, with her younger

sister who was nearly his age. To him Josefa had a style of beauty “of the haughty, heart-breaking kind” that would “lead a man to risk his life for one smile.”

Frontiersman Kit Carson evidently shared Garrard's opinion. He had met Josefa while visiting Charles Bent at his home in Taos when she was “just a slip of a girl.” Lovesick, he bided his time. When she reached the marriageable age of 14 he began to court her. He evidently won her heart but not the approval of her father, the prominent and formidable Francisco Estaban Jaramillo. In 1842, in order to prove his serious intent, Carson converted to Catholicism. Perhaps Carson's land holdings, his prowess as a trapper and success as a guide for explorer John C. Fremont's first expedition to Wyoming's Wind River country improved his prospects. Or the fact that he wanted to officially marry Josefa (although Charles Bent had several children with Ignacia, he hadn't wed her) finally won over the Jaramillo family. Nearly a year later, on February 6, 1843, Kit and Josefa were married by the parish priest, Padre Martinez, at Our Lady of Guadalupe church. Their *padrinos*, or sponsors, were Charles



Ignacia Jaramillo Luna Bent (1814-1883)

Bent's younger brother George and his common-law wife María de la Cruz Padilla. Carson bought a house for his new bride, only to spend six months on and off over the next six years there with her in Taos. His work as a guide, soldier, government agent and courier took him away from Josefa. Except for a brief period between 1854 and 1861 when he worked as an Indian agent in Taos, Josefa experienced her husband's prolonged absence.

Charles Bent's commercial ventures—tending to business at the fort, looking after the Santa Fe store—caused him to be away from his family and home in Taos. When he met Ignacia Jaramillo, she was a handsome young widow with a daughter named Rumalda. Bent took her as his common law wife and adopted Rumalda. The three lived in a small adobe just north of the village plaza and about 3 miles from Taos Pueblo. In their home, Ignacia gave birth to the first of the couple's five children (only three survived infancy). She managed the household and sheltered Rumalda who had married Tom Boggs (The Bents considered the mountain man a nephew and Boggs was Carson's closest friend and associate.). Carson, six years older than Ignacia, fondly referred to her as the "old lady." Along with Bent and Boggs, he counted on her to take care of their families while they conducted business outside Taos.

Carson was serving in California with Fremont in May 1846 at the outbreak of the Mexican War, a U.S. conflict waged between 1846 and 1848. His work involved carrying dispatches between command posts in enemy territory. This dangerous duty kept Carson apprised of developments throughout the Southwest. He learned of the U. S. government's intention to annex land east of the Rio Grande. Colonel Stephan Watts Kearny received orders to lay claim to California and to annex all of New Mexico. When the annexation proclamation reached Taos, Carson feared for Josefa's safety—for good reason.

Kearny informed Manuel Armijo, then Governor of territorial New Mexico under Mexican rule, of the U.S. government's intent to annex New Mexico. Sensing major trouble, Governor Armijo deserted. On August 18th 1846 Kearny, now Brigadier General, raised the American flag and fired a 13 gun salute at the Palace of the Governors as he informed the populace of New Mexico's capital of the pending annexation. Upon hearing the proclamation, prominent New Mexicans were outraged at U.S. aggression and ashamed of Armijo's desertion. They began making plans to defend their country against American occupation. In September Kearny appointed Colonel Sterling Price military governor and Charles Bent civil governor of New Mexico. Bent appointed his trader and merchant friends—and Donacio Vigil from Armijo's administration—to governmental positions. Although his new administration swore allegiance to the United States, the rest of the territory dissented. A rebel conspiracy formed to expel the military and civil government. Despite warnings of a revolt, Bent left the tense atmosphere of Santa Fe.

On January 14, 1847 he set off through the wintry cold for Taos intent on dispelling discontent and seeing his wife and children. Three days later yelling awakened the Bent family in the early morning hours. When Charles opened his door in hopes of

calming the crowd gathered there, he was shot in the leg. Ignacia pulled him inside, and bolted the door shut. She urged her husband to flee, but he refused. While the enraged throng chopped through thick adobe, Rumalda Boggs and Josefa used a spoon and a poker to dig through the walls of the adjoining house. When the opening was large enough, the women pushed their terrified children through the hole, then followed. Ignacia urged her husband to flee with them just as the first rebel burst into the



Maria Josefa Jaramillo Carson
(1828-1868)

room. Bent, shot through with arrows, then scalped, urged his wife to flee with the family. She had been wounded and, had her Pueblo servant not stepped in front of her, would have been shot dead. Ignacia and her husband got as far as the adjoining room before a man reached them and shot Bent in the face with a pistol. While she knelt by her slain husband, the story goes, Josefa and Rumalda begged the bloodthirsty mob for mercy. Luckily for them town resident Buenaventura Lobato entered the Bent house and, too late to save Charles Bent, intervened and spared the women's lives. The attackers departed leaving the Bent family in a

state of shock. Left wearing only their night clothes, they stayed in the house through the following night. Courageous friends supplied them with food and blankets, then Ignacia and her children escaped to the home of Juan Catalina Valdez. Another family sheltered Josefa and Rumalda, and to ensure their safety disguised them as household Indian servants.

The family tragedy did not end with Charles Bent's assassination. In defense of their country, the defiant insurrectionists hunted down and killed anyone or destroyed anything connected with the murdered man. They found Ignacia and Josefa's brother Pablo Jaramillo and his friend Narciso Beaubien and lanced them to death. The rebels destroyed the personal property of Rumalda's grandfather and pillaged the Carson home, robbing it of everything. Retribution for these and other crimes came on February 3, 1847. U.S. troops headed by Ceran St. Vrain marched on Taos plaza. When the rebels fled for the sanctuary of Taos Pueblo's church, the Army shelled the adobe structure in an all-out attack. By the end of the day, the U.S. troops had quelled the rebellion and 150 defenders had died in the fight.

In the series of trials that followed, Ignacia, Rumalda and Josefa were called on as eyewitnesses. Lewis Garrard, who would publish *Wah-To-Yah* and the *Taos Trail* about this troublous time, attended the trials and stated, "The dress and manner of the three ladies bespoke a greater deal of refinement than usual." Giving

testimony, and so reliving the horror of Bent's murder, must have been excruciatingly painful for the three women. A glimpse of how it affected them was indicated in an interview Ignacia granted to Lt. John G. Bourke in 1881. Recounting her husband's slaying, her voice quavered and her eyes brimmed with tears.

Kit Carson learned of the Taos revolt three months later. When he rode into Taos on April 9, 1847 after guiding Fremont's third expedition, Josefa told him what had transpired. The loss of Charles Bent, Pablo Jaramillo and other friends and family members embittered him. With their deaths came new responsibilities, including taking charge of the Bent children. Carson and Josefa became Teresina's guardian and Ceran St. Vrain had custody of Estafina. Teresina later recalled that whenever the children left home, they were accompanied by Carson, St. Vrain or an escort provided by the two men. The Taos rebellion had left deep, lasting scars.

No matter how long he was away, Carson's family remained important to him. A junior officer recalled him lying on a blanket with his pockets stuffed with candy. His children jumped on top of him, raided his pockets, and ate the candy. Clearly such small episodes brought him great pleasure. And all his happiness depended on Josefa. Teresina Bent, who lived with the Carsons, once described Josefa as follows: "Rather dark [complexion], very dark hair, large bright eyes, very well built, graceful in every way, quite handsome, very good wife and the best of mothers." Teresita also related Josefa's hospitality:

The Carson door was always open to neighbors: Indian, Spanish and Anglo, and to it also came practically every representative of the Catholic clergy, including Bishop Lamy a family friend, [and] every renowned writer and traveler, and army officer who came to New Mexico.

When the intrepid explorer John C. Fremont, weakened from near starvation, staggered into Taos in January 1849, Kit took his friend home to Josefa. Under her care, Fremont regained his strength and his mental equilibrium following his disastrous Fourth Expedition. Commissioned to search for a railroad route from the central Rockies to California in 1848, he had lost ten men and nearly perished himself in the heavy snows of Colorado's La Garita Mountains (northwest of present Del Norte). Later in a letter to Kit, Jessie Benton expressed her gratitude for the kind care her husband had received from Josefa. Fremont had his own fond memories of Josefa, whom he held in high esteem as a New Mexican lady of great worth.

One of Josefa's most loving actions showed the depth of her love for her husband. In early 1868 Carson began suffering acute pain in his chest and neck. Around the second of April, Kit stopped in Pueblo en route to join his family in Boggsville, Colorado. In distress, he sent for the town physician who found a bulge in the carotid artery—a weakened wall that could burst any moment. Somehow Carson let Josefa know of his pending arrival. Although near term with her 8th pregnancy, she persuaded Tom Boggs to drive her in the family carriage to intercept her husband. She reached him near La Junta (about 20 miles west of Boggsville) and the couple returned home to their children. Reunited with his family, Kit's health improved enough for him to consider building a house on his land. Everything seemed to be improving.

Then after Josefa gave birth to her baby on April 13th, instead of rallying she grew increasingly weak. Fourteen days later she called out to Kit in Spanish. He rushed to her side and held her. She spoke her last words to him then died in his arms.

Carson pined for his wife and his health declined. He wrote Teresina's husband Aloys Scheurich with instructions to move Josefa's body and his, if he should die, to be buried in the family graveyard in Taos (today they are both in the Kit Carson Cemetery in the center of Taos in Kit Carson Park. Many other famous Taos individuals are also buried there.).

Carson added: *Please tell the old lady [Ignacia] that there is nobody in the world who can take care of my children but her, and she must know that it would be the greatest of favors to me, if she would come and stay until I am healthier.*



Josefita Carson (1868-1892)

Ignacia and Teresina Bent Scheurich hastened to Boggsville. When they arrived, Tom Boggs told them that Kit was so weak that he couldn't see them. Nor could he see his beloved children. Knowing that they would soon be orphans, it was too painful for him to bear. Carson never regained his health. He died on May 23, 1868. After his death, Ignacia became the Carson children's guardian. She cared for them until her death in 1883.

The lives of Ignacia and Josefa serve as exemplars for Hispanas of the 19th century. Their stories are representative of a multitude of courageous, resourceful women in Taos and throughout the Southwest. When their men found work elsewhere, these women nurtured their families, tended huge gardens, took care of the livestock and cultivated crops, prepared and preserved food, and even fought off marauders. This tradition continues today, a legacy left by Ignacia, Josefa and countless Hispanic women whose stories will never be known.

To see the Taos homes where Ignacia and Josefa lived and learn more about them, please visit the Governor Bent House and Museum (117 Bent Street) and the Kit Carson Home & Museum (113 Kit Carson Road).

And for in-depth history and a fascinating read, get a copy of *Kit Carson and His Three Wives: A Family History* by the eminent New Mexico scholar and historian Marc Simmons.

By Elizabeth Cunningham, 2011

Blog host, "Mabel Dodge Luhan & the Remarkable Women of Taos"

“Taos’s Early Natives”

Written by John Ublelaker

Archaeological evidence indicates that as long ago as 23,000 years evidence of humans in footprints were found in White Sands New Mexico and humans may have arrived in North America 32,000 years ago. When they arrived, they hunted wild animals including deer, bison, elephants, mammoths and smaller animals. Other large animals that they had to deal with included the American lion, *Panthera Leo atrox*, Saber tooth cat, *Smilodon fatalis*, short faced bear, *Arctodus simus*, *Camelops*, and Irish elk. Wild fruits and vegetables were also collected and remains of yucca pods, amaranth seeds, juniper seeds, cactus seeds and pumpkins have been recovered from several sites.

About the year 500 ceramic artifacts appear in the Taos area and individuals and families constructed pit houses. Pit houses in the Taos valley have been dated from the years 500 to 1200. The houses were dug on ridges overlooking the valleys and streams. The ridges contained trees, such as pines that could be used as poles allowing entrance to the pit houses. The valleys provided a rich area to grow plants and items recovered from the pit houses included corn, cotton, sunflowers, peppers, beans and squash. The plants collected were commonly stored in clay vessels in the pit houses and a common plant, bee weed, was collected, boiled into a paste and applied to the clay vessels by using a brush made from the tips of yucca plants.

Research at the 13,000 year old La Prele mammoth site in eastern Wyoming revealed 32 small bone needles likely used to sew clothing suitable for cold weather. The bones were from hares, foxes, bobcats and American cheetahs or lions. Survival required clothing with fur fringes and tightly spaced seams.

The Taos hills and valleys had many plants that were used by the Native people. Oleta Merry Boyce 1974, Plant Uses by New Mexico Early Natives. RLDAL Press, Santa Fe. 32 pages reported that the food plants found in the Taos area included bee weed, beans, cacti, cattails, chokeberry, corn, cow parsnip, currant, dandelion, honey mesquite, hackberry, horsemint, locust, maize, melons, mesquite, milkweed, wild onions, lamb’s quarters, pinon pine seeds and ashes, prairie clover, pursland, wild raspberries, horsetails, squashes, sumac, sunflower, tansy mustard, jimsonweed, willow, wolf berry and yucca.

Also available as medicinal plants include aspen leaves, penstemon, bee plants, cedar, cow parsnip, dandelion, white gilia, juniper berries, mallow, milkweed, mountain monogamy, mullein, penstemon, sage, sumac and tansy mustard.

Juniper bark was used for garments with shredded bark woven into fabric for garments including sandals and diapers for infants. Yucca was combined with cotton for weaving and with the fur of beaver, otter and rabbits for warm fabric.

Calo! L’Idioma de los Norteños de Rio Arriba

by Michael Miller

In a recent COMMENTARY in the Santa Fe, New Mexican, by Northern New Mexico College Professor of Chicano Studies, Patricia Trujillo, she wrote and correctly acknowledged, and documented, in her letter the little known and often forgotten, 75th anniversary of the “Zoot Suit Riots” in 1943, in Los Angeles, California. Trujillo, recognized this, often ignored and conveniently forgotten, but significant historical event in our nation’s history as an, “important symbol of cultural resistance,” that emerged from a period of anti-Mexican racism and discrimination in Los Angeles and in many other parts of the United States (including New Mexico) during World War II and beyond.



This was the birth of *pachuquismo*, a cultural phenomenon that still exists and thrives today throughout northern New Mexico and other parts of the southwestern United States. According to Professor Trujillo and other Chicano scholars in the U.S. the *pachucos* had “their own language known as *calo* which is a combination of English, Spanish, and other indigenous languages,” in the the Southwest.

Professor Trujillo explains that, “the *pachuco* culture influence is

still felt in many New Mexican homes and seen throughout our communities. The many New Mexican families who had relocated to Southern California in search of work during the difficult economic years of the Great Depression and the New Mexican men who were stationed in and around Los Angeles were conduits for sharing fashions, culture, and language they encountered. Pachuco culture found its way to New Mexico and is

considered foundational to the lowrider culture celebrated in the North.”

In the 1960s, at St. Michaels High School in Santa Fe I had the opportunity to work, as a student intern, on a project that documented the *Calo* idiom of northern New Mexico and other parts of the Southwest. This project documented the influences, evolution, and expansion of the Spanish language in the southwestern United States. Future columns will include the evolution of *calo* in New Mexico, the preservation of archaic Spanish in the north, the influence of indigenous languages on Spanish, the contributions of Mexican linguistics to New Mexican Spanish, and the documentation of colloquial Spanish to the idiom of the north.

THE HISTORY OF THE TAOS COUNTY FAIR

by Monica Gonzales Wilder

2025 marks the 51st consecutive year of the annual Taos County Fair. The first Taos County Fair was held at the New Mexico National Guard Armory (present day Bataan Memorial Hall) in Taos in 1934, during the height of the Great Depression.



2002 - Clothing & Quilting Exhibit

The main focus of the Fair that year, and throughout the war years was to school citizens of Taos County in the latest agricultural, livestock and home economics advancements.



2008 - Amanda Lefthand, Julie Kay Vigil-Romero & Desera Duran

Times were very hard then — food was scarce and livestock mortality rates were unacceptably high. Survival of people and their animals depended on knowing current advancements for food and livestock preservation.



2019 - Arts & Crafts Division



2014 - Sewing Division

The main attractions of the Fair that year were needlecrafts, gardening and plants with improved seed varieties, as well as canning techniques and livestock herd health.

The Fair ceased to exist in 1961 but was resurrected again in 1974 by Roberto Apodaca, then Taos County Cooperative Extension Agent; Mr. Felimon Gutierrez, then Vocational Agriculture

Teacher at Taos High School, a group of very community minded citizens and several local businesses. The emphasis at this time was on learning as a family unit.



2006 - Neomi Rosales & Beatriz Gonzales with Best Of Show Lamb

Organizations such as the 4-H Clubs and Future Farmers of America (FFA) taught better farming and home economics techniques to youth committed to various County Fair projects. Parents were encouraged to help their children by participating as group or project leaders. Outside aid and advice could always be counted on from the Taos County Cooperative Extension Office.



2019 - Home Ec. Division

The County Fair was hosted at the National Guard Armory (present day Taos County Road Department) from 1974 until 1996. In 1996 with the generosity of land owner Beatriz Gonzales, who donated 3 acres of land to be the homestead of the Taos County Fair Grounds, Gilbert Segura, then chairman of the Taos Soil & Water Conservation Board; Fermin Arguello, then President of the Taos County Farm & Livestock Bureau, a rancher, and a farmer; Reynaldo Torres, County Extension Agent from 1983-2010, then Taos County Commissioners, Representative and Senators assisted in making the dream come true "The Juan I. Gonzales Memorial" Taos County Agricultural Center. Since 1996, this has been home for the Taos County Fair held yearly in late August.

Today, the goal of the Taos County Fair remains on community and education. The Taos County Fair Association, its Board of Directors, and the Taos County Cooperative Extension Office are committed to teaching families the very latest in agricultural, consumer and environmental science techniques by offering enjoyable, stimulating projects and entertainment to appeal to each family member. The Taos County Fair supports family education, family fun and family unity far into the future.



2010 - Floral Exhibit

This year we will be celebrating the Taos County Fair August 21-24, 2025. We will be accepting entries August 21-22 and open to the public on August 23-24. The Fair is a showcase of many products, skills and handiwork of the people of Taos County. All people - adult and youth, professional and amateur, are encouraged to enter and participate in some way in the Taos County Fair.



2010 - Vegetable Division

Contact information for the Taos County Fair: (575) 758-3982, email: tcfa@taosnet.com, website: www.taoscountyfair.com.

2025 Taos County Fair - August 24th - 27th

“When It All Began for the Taos County Historical Society”

by Paul C. Figueroa (Archives & Library Committee Co-chair)

I was perplexed by the various dates stated for the beginning of the Taos County Historical Society: correspondence indicated 1952, our website cited 1960 and official documents noted 1962. Processing the Society's archives the following narrative sheds information of our history.



An invitation was placed in *El Crespusculo*, the local newspaper, “Are you interested in the history of the Taos area?”. In response a small group of Taosenos (1) met at the Thorne House on Thursday, October 21, 1952. Mr. Jack Boyer, Executive Director of the Kit Carson Museum Foundation shared

plans from the State Park Commission for the establishment of a Taos historical museum in connection with the Kit Carson Memorial State Park, established in 1949. Mr. Boyer's expressed opinion was that an important effort should begin to collect and preserve information and objects of historical value from the Taos area. Several present cited historic homes, structures and objects that might be restored or saved for the community. (2) After these remarks Mr. Boyer made a motion, seconded by Miss Helen Williams and unanimously carried to have this group begin the organization of the Taos County Historical Society. The group postponed indefinitely a permanent organization and election of officers. Mr. Boyer agreed to continue as a temporary coordinator and Mrs. Ruth Fish as temporary secretary.

Subsequently, Ruth Fish presided at a February 19, 1953, meeting held at the Harwood Foundation. The result of this meeting was the selection of temporary Board of Directors to make arrangements for the functioning of the group until such time as a definite program and permanent organization appeared to be necessary. From our existing archival documents years passed with no apparent need until January 15, 1960. On that date at the Blumenschein Home the group formally organized itself as the Taos County Historical Society with Helen Blumenschein elected President. Jacob Bernal Vice-President and Jack Boyer Secretary/Treasurer. After a suggestion by Mr. Boyer the group decided to organize and incorporate as a non-profit organization.

At its second meeting on January 29, 1960, Felix Valdez, Mrs. Dolores R. Montoya, Mrs. Guadalupe Vaughn and Louis Cottam were elected to the Board. Also, Mrs. Elise Weimer gifted old photos of Hondo-Twining to the Society and on February 26, 1960, Mrs. Josephine Cordova donated old photographs. On March 3, 1960, at the first official meeting of the Board of Di-

rectors the Society considered and approved an incorporation resolution for “the Kit Carson Home and Museum Foundation to act as a depository for any gifts to the Society” followed by a directive that “these gifts would be received, accessioned and catalogued according to the standards set by said museum.” (3) At its March 18, 1960, meeting the Society began regular programs with Mr. Esquipula Martinez talking about his great grandparents Juan Julian Martinez and Maria Josefa Garcia and the tragic epic of Manuel Atocha Martinez.



The Taos County Historical Society's Articles to Incorporation were witnessed on December 15, 1961, by Helen Blumenschein, President and Jack Boyer, Secretary and received by the State of New Mexico on January 20, 1962. Later the minutes of January 24, 1962, indicated that no attempt would be made at this time to get tax-exempt status for the Society. However, by 1985 the Society was recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501-c-3 non-profit tax exempt organization with an Employee Identification Number. To summarize, the Taos County Historical Society started in 1952 and was founded or organized in 1960 with its official birth or incorporation by the State of New Mexico in 1962.

Notes:

(1) Mr. & Mrs. Paul Albright, Jack Boyer, Mrs. Josephine Cameron, Mr. Sarah Etold, Ruth Fish, Mrs. Maggie Gusdorf, Tom Lujan of Taos Pueblo, Felix Valdez, Dr. & Mrs. A. F. Wasson, Mrs. Elise Weimer and Miss Helen Williams.

(2) Old millstones, old molino, sala of Scheurich home, old torreon in Talpa, biographical sketches of Spanish and Colonial families, early church authorities, Anglo pioneers, artists, writers, civic organizations and folklore.

(3) No subsequent archival materials indicate when Kit Carson Home and Museum stopped being a repository of gifts to the Taos County Historical Society. But in 1989 Curtis Anderson, Vice-President of the Society state that there were a great many records of the Society intermingled with the records of the Kit Carson Foundation. All these files of materials should be reviewed and separate the material that belongs to the Taos County Historical Society. In 1991 the Society acquired storage cabinets for its room in the old Forest Service Office on Armory Street to hold its photographs and records.

(4) The Taos County Historical Society Annual Report, Miss Helen Blumenschein President, of 1960 lists its accomplishments for 1960 “our first year.”

VERY INTERESTING HISTORY

by Dave Cordova

After many years, nay, decades of ignoring the rich history of Taos - New Mexico and, in total, America, I have finally come to my senses and begun to research and learn some of that history.

In my current career, I am immersed in history, particularly in the 19th century. Gathering bits and pieces. Some information goes nowhere, but a lot of that information opens many new possibilities and channels to continue learning. I just wish I had started sooner, but I am keeping my eyes and ears open to not miss something important.

In an impromptu conversation with Miss Helen Blumenschein, sometime back in the 80s, I learned that Taos County was once much, much larger. That it stretched from the Texas border to the Pacific Ocean. I have to say that I received this information with a bit of skepticism, but I never forgot it and with a little perseverance, I have found evidence that supports that assertion. Almost all of it was correct, but didn't extend to the Pacific.

Taos County was a much larger area in 1852, stretching from the Texas border to the California border including a piece of Colorado and the southern tip of Nevada. That was Taos County, a county in the New Mexico Territory.

I have also learned that the New Mexico Territory was comprised of large portions of the current states of New Mexico and Arizona with the land acquisition in 1848 from the Guadalupe Hidalgo

Treaty. In 1863, the Arizona Territory was carved out, which originally took up the lower portion of the New Mexico Territory and later divided into the current borders.

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt proposed that Congress unite the territories of New Mexico and Arizona into one and admit it as a state of the Union. Much heated debate dominated the 59th Congress until U.S. Representative Edward

Hamilton from Michigan introduced H.R. 12707 to admit the united territories into the Union. Congress debated changing the name of the state. Considered were Montezuma, Acoma, Sierra, Salado, Arizona, and several others.

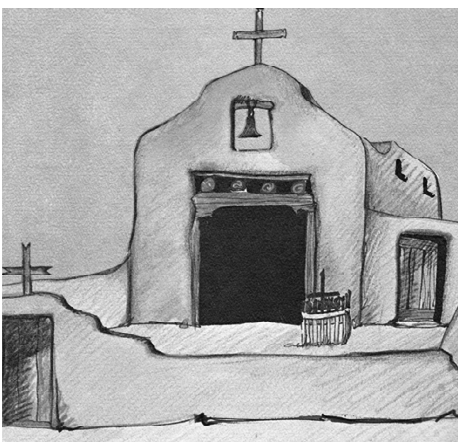
When it was finally decided to name the territory Arizona, it was proposed to keep the southwest's oldest capital, Santa Fe, as the capital of the new state. Congress passed the bill, but the residents of the two territories were given the opportunity to vote on the measure. Arizona voted 16,265 against and 3,141 for, while New Mexico voted 26,195 for and 14,735 against. Arizona's opposition killed the bill.

New Mexico became a state on January 6th, 1912 with Arizona joining the Union on February 14th of the same year.



THE DURAN CHAPEL AND PADRE MARTINEZ

by David Maes



Perhaps the most tumultuous era in Northern New Mexico history was the territorial period. This was a time of major political, cultural, and religious change. After the Mexican-American war, New Mexico became the territory of a new country, the United

States. On the cultural front, New Mexicans would have to adapt to a new language, new customs and traditions, and new political realities. On the religious front, the Catholic church, a bedrock of Spanish and Mexican culture, would bring the new territory under new church hierarchy transferring jurisdiction from Durango, Mexico, to the Diocese of Santa Fe under the leadership of newly ordained Bishop Jean Baptiste Lamy. Perhaps the most influential person living in Northern New Mexico at the time was Padre Jose Antonio Martinez. Padre Martinez was

first appointed as priest in charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 1826. In 1842 Governor Armijo certified Martinez as a civil lawyer. Padre Martinez brought the first printing press to New Mexico and founded the first formal school – *The Home-Preparatory Seminary*, working out of his home. Perhaps it was inevitable that the two most powerful figures within the Catholic Church and throughout Northern New Mexico would quarrel over leadership. After several minor clashes, a major rift developed centered around Padre Martinez' close association with the *Hermanidad*, *Los Penitentes*, and use of the Duran Chapel as his base of operations. Bishop Lamy formally excommunicated Padre Martinez in April, 1858. Thereafter, Padre Martinez continued to hold on to power and exert influence, and used the Duran Chapel as his base of operations.

The Duran Chapel played a central role in this epic Northern New Mexico struggle. The chapel, built by Nicolas Sandoval in 1838, remained intact into the 1960's then fell into disrepair. Today it is little more than piles of adobe dirt on the foundation of the old chapel walls. Doreen Duran, a descendant of Nicholas Sandoval, is leading an initiative to restore this historic New Mexico landmark.

Lectures & Special Events for 2025 (Tentative Schedule)

June 7th - 2 PM

Isaac Slover & The Estranjeros in Taos 1820-1830
by Tim Green, Professor Emeritus

July 12th - Field Trip

Lecture On The Pit House-Pot Creek by John Ublelaker

August 2nd - 2 PM

Steel Gangs: Native American Railroad Workers
by Fred Friedman

September 6th - 2 PM

La Cosecha-The Fall Harvest by Will Jaremko

October 4th - 2 PM

Bilingual Story Telling by Paulette Atencio

November 1st - 2 PM

Music of Northern New Mexico by Vito Trujillo

December 7th - "Christmas Luncheon"

Taos County Historical Society Board of Directors

President: Ernestina Cordova

Vice-president: David Maes

Secretary: Judy Weinrobe

Treasurer: Ron Stoner

Member-at-Large: Donovan Lieurance

Board Members

Trinidad Arguello • Linda Hattendorf

Charles Neely • John Ublelaker

Membership

Donovan Lieurance

Programs

Trinidad Arguello

John Ublelaker

Grants

Linda Hattendorf

Publications/Website

Dave Cordova

Archival & Library

Virginia Dodier

Paul Figueroa

Folklore/Local History

Open

Preservation

David Maes & Charles Neely

Hospitality Committee

Carmen Lieurance

Special Events

Donovan 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



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