

GUAJALOTES, ZOPILOTES, Y PAISANOS

Newsletter of the Hillsboro Historical Society

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PROJECT AND COMMITTEE NEWS

Courthouse. Perhaps the most exciting news this quarter is the recent involvement of the True West Preservation Society in our efforts to raise money to purchase the courthouse site. After the May Music Festival, which netted almost \$3000, we realized that, for all of our citizens' generous donations and event-organizing efforts, we were going to have to seek funds from a broader base, if we were to ever buy the property. With the help of Chuck and Melody Barrett, we had searched for potential granting foundations, but soon became painfully aware that few, if any, foundations were willing to allocate money to purchase property. The prospect was looking pretty discouraging, until by sheer happenstance we discovered an ad for the True West Society, which is the non-profit arm of True West Magazine. The goal of that foundation is to protect significant historic sites in the western United States.

We contacted Ken Amorosano, the president of the foundation board, and he and his wife traveled down from Tijeras, NM, to view the site and discuss plans. They enthusiastically embraced what we are trying to do, shot hundreds of photographs, and left with a promise to help us raise the money. In a subsequent contact, Ken has indicated that the foundation board unanimously supported their involvement and that they are moving toward a fundraising event, probably in Hillsboro. Ken feels that raising the remaining money needed to purchase the property fairly quickly is well within their capabilities. He also indicated that the foundation will continue to help us generate dollars to protect, stabilize, and, perhaps, even to restore the courthouse.

Fire Truck. Larry Cospers has agreed to take the lead on the fire truck project. We hope, within the next quarter, to remove the engine and evaluate what is needed to get the truck running. We'll also be investigating licensing and insurance needs. We're hoping that we can move the vehicle around the community and perhaps use it in parades without incurring these expenses.

Cemetery. Patti, Matti, and Stretch continue to work on the cemetery files and photographs, and to document locations. Patti and Matti continue to enter grave records online at <http://www.findagrave.com/>.

The Hillsboro School Reunion Committee and the local Mason's chapter are collaborating on a sign for the cemetery. It will be a wrought iron archway over the entryway to the cemetery from the highway.

Board changes. Stretch was elected to fill the job of Treasurer. Our bylaws require two board member signatures on checks, and, with Patty Woodruff's resignation from the board, the only legal signatory has been the president. Patty has agreed to continue on as volunteer bookkeeper and secretary, but feels that she should be working with a board member with the appropriate title.

Oral Histories and Archives. A recent bonanza was passed on to the Historical Society by Cindy Cornell. Four loose-leaf notebooks and assorted other files had come to Cindy from Betty Reynolds, who had acquired them some time back from Maria Lamb. In the notebooks are transcribed oral histories of Guillermo Montoya, Fred Nunn, John

(Sarge) Carrara, and Robert Burke. These interviews were carried out in 1975 by Sandra Bach. Ms. Bach was employed by Quintana Minerals, and these interviews contain a wealth of information about Hillsboro and, especially, about the Copper Flats settlements of Placers (or Placeras?), Gold Dust, and Anthony. A fourth notebook contains a large collection of newspaper articles written in 1957 and 1958 by Mae Latham Rector on Sierra County History. Also among the files is a short history of the Hillsboro Christ Church Mission, which is reproduced at the end of this newsletter.

We are working toward having a lockable file cabinet in the Community Center conference and reference room to hold our archives, with hope of encouraging local scholars to use them and dig a little deeper in our history (and thereby providing material for this newsletter).

FAMILY HISTORIES

THE LEGACY OF THE CHAVEZ CLAN IN NORTHERN MEXICO (later Territory of New Mexico) AND HILLSBORO NM.

Fred R. "Stretch" Luna

The following is from documents, genealogy files, and stories related to me, Fred R. "Stretch" Luna, by my great-grandmother, Doloritos Madrid, wife of Abel Chavez. My great grandma died at 96 years. Their daughter, my grandma Romelia (Romie) Chavez Luna-Bird, was the longest residing Hillsboro resident. Romie was youngest of eight children. She was born in Hillsboro and lived here 99 1/2 years (3/17/1895 to 9/30/1994).

As of this writing, -37 of the Chavez extended clan are buried in the Hillsboro Community and Masonic Cemeteries Mr. A. L. Bird, Romie's second husband is also buried there. There are also 24 veteran graves in the Community Cemetery and 20 in the Masonic Cemetery. I have permanent flag holders at each grave, and -put up flags on Veteran's Day, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, and Flag Day. Kingston Masonic Lodge donated the flags to me in 2008.

The earliest Chavez (Pedro) in New Mexico appears on Oñate's 1548 census list, Two farming tracts were given to him near present-day Bernalillo, when Oñate came north from Mexico. Over time, -some of the Chavez family lived and mined in the Magdalena Mountains west of Socorro, NM, taking their ore to Mexico by mule train for milling and smelting. Later, the trip was shortened when two mills and a smelter opened around the Hillsboro area. As more of the Chavez family and friends came to the area, they explored the deepest cañada west from the "sleeping Indian" formation on the south end of the Caballo Mountains, prospecting in South Percha and north to the Middle and North Percha Creek areas. The Chavez' were mining the Kingston area from 1853-1860, although gold was not found in the area until 1877. After the Civil War, there were some "Buffalo Soldiers" and two Gringo officers just north at the Cunningham Ranch. The main army force was stationed at the Jaralosa Creek area. They were from Fort Fillmore, west of Nutt, NM.

Abel Chavez was one of three "Mexicans" on the Fountain murder trial jury. The accused were acquitted after a thirteen-day trial. The defense witnesses camped on the

north hill from town and the prosecution witnesses camped next to the cemetery. A telegraph line was put up from Lake Valley to Cemetery Hill for newspaper coverage.

Abel Chavez built Romie's house and the next two houses and the store building to the east, along with his own house which the two-story modern house further east on Mattie Avenue encloses today. The Presbyterian Minister and his wife owned the grocery store in town. She tutored the "Mexican" kids in the back of the store, from nine AM until noon. Romie was 6 years old then. One day two very excited women came into the store (year was 1901). A man had been caught cheating at cards and was hung from one of the cottonwood trees. Some hands took his body down about three days later. Locals called it the Hanging Tree Stream Crossing until the June 10, 1914 flood washed out most of the cottonwood trees along the creek. Most of Hillsboro was washed away, as well as the tent city at Lake Valley, 17 miles south.[* Ed note: this was the huge area storm discussed in the last newsletter] The town of Lake Valley was moved to its present site, now owned by the Bureau of Land Management.

In later years Romie was on the Spanish Mission Beautification Committee, and they replanted new trees on both sides of Mattie Avenue. The last black walnut tree, dead now, still stands directly across from Romie's house. In 1939 when the Black Range highway from Silver City to Hot Springs was completed, the N. M. Highway Department moved the road from the black walnut tree across the creek to where Vesta Millers' trailer and the old smelter site and slag dump now sit. One of the old mill buildings is still standing overlooking Percha Creek.

Doloritas at every season, made "chicos" from dried apples, apricots, peaches, and grapes. During the flood of June 10, 1914, all the family members moved to high ground, taking canned goods, openers and two big goat skin canteens. Two days later, after the creek level went down, they returned to town, and women gathered wood to dry while the men searched for canned food. Every one ate a large supper of "chicos" and what-ever was in the food cans, as labels had been washed off. Another flood occurred in 1932, when my father was 13 years old.

Cement forms of another mill are still standing at the end of Happy Flats, near the junction of Warms Springs and Percha Creeks. At one time, some entrepreneurs made bricks forms and the Union Church, so-named because of the five religions practiced there, the George Miller home, and five other local buildings were made from the heavy black slag blocks.

As you go up on "White Hill," you can see to the north, a stack at the site of a restaurant that served miners from the nearby mines. Romie worked there as a cook for Sadie Orchard. Other jobs Romie had after her husband died in 1919 included the relief Hillsboro telephone operator, interpreter for teacher Mrs. Martin at Ladder Ranch, and "Nanny". She later married Mr. Bird after he bought the Hillsboro Hotel from Sadie Orchard.

Sadie kept three girls living in back of the Hillsboro Hotel. Sadie tore down the wooden building next to Ocean Grove and built her home and the Hillsboro Hotel, when she and husband started hauling mining equipment on her Mountain Pride Stage-coach line. During "Hillsborough's" heyday, she had a 12-passenger stagecoach. From 1877 to about 1925, there were close to 7800 people living in the Percha Creek town and on hillsides.

During the 1918-1919 flu epidemic, two mines donated labor for two weeks to dig graves for the 140 people who died. Romie lost her sister and niece, who left four sons and one daughter for Romie and mother Doloritas to care for in addition to Romie's three kids and two other orphaned children. There are 70 graves from the flu epidemic in two rows in the community cemetery, most holding two and in some cases three bodies. Locals named it "Children's Row."

Romie lived to see a third major flood during the 1972 Labor Day week-end and Apple Festival. Three lives were lost in that one.

NOTE: Hope you enjoy this narrative of one of Hillsboro's families (if not the oldest). This is only a small part of what I intend to put in my book on Grandma Romie's life story. The Chavez clan has been living here since 1850, according to family titles, totaling 159 years to this date.

Fred R. "Stretch" Luna

July 2009

NATURAL HISTORY

HILLSBORO JAVELINA HISTORY

Harley Shaw

Javelina, or if you please, collared peccaries are very much a presence in Hillsboro. As might be expected the town citizens have differing feelings toward them, although our populace is more tolerant of them than other places I've lived. Personally, I have a certain fondness for the little beasts, even though I've had to have four different dogs stitched up after encounters with them over the years. I also had to have my own leg stitched up after a feisty little pig grabbed me while I was helping on a pen study of peccaries at the University of Arizona. This incident gave me immediate membership into the unofficial Order of the Purple Pig made up of biologists dumb enough to allow themselves to be bitten by a peccary. In my case, I was pouring pellets a feeding hopper and the ungrateful sow reached through a protective gate and sunk her canines just above my right knee. The damage wasn't all that serious, I healed, and now, at my venerable age, there's cachet in telling the tale. Over the years I helped with various peccary projects, including catching them in wooden traps and darting them with tranquilizer guns. I also did a bit of low-level chopper time counting them.

One of my earliest projects, as a student assistant to Dr. Lyle Sows who became known as a peccary authority¹, involved dumping capsules of colored glass beads down the throats of trapped peccaries. I then spent weeks wandering the foothills around Tucson, breaking up peccary poop, hoping to learn how far the mistreated pigs had traveled from the trap site. I never found any beads, but I can definitely identify pig poop and tell you where they put their latrines.

But back to Hillsboro. From all I can learn, peccaries, like the white-winged doves I discussed a while back, are pretty recent arrivals in town, so I can consider them a suitable subject of history. After a quick literature review on the creature, tempered by some 50 years experience in wildlife biology, I'm once again reminded that -one should

never predict the fate of a species. In 1927, J. Stokley Ligon, one of New Mexico's earliest and most respected biologists, wrote:

"Peccaries formerly occupied suitable range on a narrow zone all along the southern border of the state, from Arizona to the Texas line, east of the Pecos. They have, however, been persistently hunted and killed until only a few remain. They are now most numerous in the extreme southwestern corner of the State and a few survive in the sand country, east of Carlsbad, where they were formally abundant. These strange and interesting animals should be well protected. If not given absolute protection, their extermination seems inevitable. In addition to conserving the few remaining peccaries in refuges, a close [sic] season of from four to six years is recommended.

" . . . Even where little molested by man, they probably would not become abundant on their limited New Mexico range."ⁱⁱ

Javelina were so scarce in 1927 that Ligon didn't bother to put a map of their distribution in his book, although he displayed maps of every other big game species in the state.

I rather imagine that most current Hillsboro residents would now take issue with Stokley's prediction. These little wild pigs are here full time. Given a chance they can be devastating to gardens and flower beds. And they're not above latching on to any dog that gets too close. Given their tendency to both bite and slash with their 2-inch tusks, damage to an overly brave *perro or perra* can be severe, often requiring stitches to hold their hide together until it heals.

Over the 82 years that have passed since Ligon warned of the demise of the peccary, the species has expanded its range widely in New Mexico, as well as throughout the southwestern United States. The expansion has been incremental over time, consistently accompanied by overly-conservative predictions. In 1975, the authors of *Mammals of New Mexico*ⁱⁱⁱ wrote:

" . . . The southeastern population, which was centered in the sandy country east of the Pecos, was early reduced and perhaps eliminated, and the southwestern population was also low. However, in recent years the southwestern peccaries have become common and have spread through Hildago County, east to the Tres Hermanas in Luna County, and north into the Gila and San Francisco drainages."

These authors note a sighting of a single javelina west of Carlsbad Caverns National Park in 1954. Their map for the species shows solidly documented records only in the boot heel of extreme southwest New Mexico. They show very limited potential, but unoccupied, habitat along the lower Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers and in the Guadalupe Mountains.

By 1993, the New Mexico Game and Department reported:

"Biologists believe that javelina have expanded their range in this century, as scattered herds can be seen in Catron, Dona Ana, Sierra, and Socorro counties."^{iv}

In 2004, biologists were reporting multiple sightings as far north as Zuni and the Malpais National Conservation Area.^v

These are the most recent records I've found, but if New Mexico peccaries have paralleled those in Arizona, I suspect that the animals are showing up at other parts of the Land of Enchantment. When I hunted javelina in Arizona as a teenager (early 1950s), we never thought of looking much north of Phoenix for the little pigs. By 1967 we were

seeing them around Flagstaff. They have now reached the south rim of the Grand Canyon and biologists wonder how long it will be before they find their way across the Colorado and on to the Arizona Strip.

I won't go into the biology of the species here. Anyone wanting to know more about the critter can look up one or more of the references given below. My main goal here is to point out, once again, that wildlands and wildlife have histories, too. Things change, with or without the help of humans. What has brought on this continued shift in peccary distribution? Effective game law enforcement? Changing global climate? Both of these and more? I for one won't speculate, nor will I predict whether or not the trend will continue. Our historic views of species show that nature, is infinitely variable and too complex to predict. Waiting and watching is more enjoyable.

- ⁱ Sowls, L. K. 1997. Javelinas and other Peccaries—their biology, management and use. Texas A&M Press.
- ⁱⁱ Ligon, J. S. 1927. Wildlife of New Mexico—its conservation and management. State Commission, Department of Game and Fish. Santa Fe.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Findley, J. S., A. H. Harris, D. E. Wilson, C. Jones. 1975. Mammals of New Mexico. University of New Mexico Press.
- ^{iv} http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/education/wildlife_notes/documents/javelina.pdf. This state bulletin provides a summary of the basic biology of the peccary.
- ^v Albert, S., C. A. Ramotnik, and C. G. Schmidt. 2004. Collared peccary range expansion in northwestern New Mexico. *The Southwestern Naturalist* 49:524-528.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

HISTORY OF THE MISSION

Rev. Ethelbert H. J. Andrews
1896

The history of Christ Church Mission begins with the arrival at Hillsboro of Dr. and Mrs. C. C. Crews and family from Florida, in June, 1879 [see May Newsletter for C. C Crews obituary]. On their arrival they found just the nucleus of a town. In the early part of '77 Dan Dougan and Dave Stitzel, two prospectors, accompanied by a Mexican, discovered gold quartz in the neighbourhood, and concluded to locate at this spot. Dougan, a Scotsman, built what is known as "Rock Cabin" in the shade of a gigantic old juniper tree, which has since succumbed to decay and the woodman's axe; and Stitzel, (who is still—1896—a resident of Hillsboro) the old adobe dwelling now in the rear of Mr. Murphy's premises (in which, by the way, the first religious service of any kind was held—viz, in 1879). By and bye, gold-dust was found in large quantities at the "Placers", and, the fame of the camp spreading abroad, numerous miners were attracted hither. When, later on, it became necessary to name the camp, the earliest settlers each and all claimed the privilege of selection. As a way out of the difficulty, the names suggested were written on slips of paper and shaken up in a hat. A selection was then made, with the result that the nomination of one Joe Yankee was successful, Hillsboro being the name of this gentleman's native town in Ohio. It would be interesting to know what other names were in the hat. The writer knows of but one, viz. "Golden," the nomination of the aforementioned Dave Stitzel.

Mrs. Crews, a devoted churchwoman, who has the distinction of being the fourth American woman in Hillsboro, and to whose untiring exertions in the face of almost overwhelming difficulties, the present prosperity of the mission is largely due, began at once in the Master's service by gathering the children together on the Lord's day and instructing them in Scriptural truths. In this noble work she was gallantly assisted for some time by Mrs. Macpherson and Mrs. John Bennett. In this modest way, the Union Sunday School had its origin. It still flourishes (Aug., 1896) and remained the only Sunday school in the town until the spring of '96, when children belonging to Methodist parents were withdrawn and formed into a separate school. The children met at Mrs. Crews' own residence at first; then at the "Blue-room", adjoining Mr. Macpherson's premises; then at the school-house-on-the-hill, and, finally, at the Union Church. Much of the time Mrs. Crews was alone in the work. She met with numerous discouragements and difficulties, the majority of the scholars at this time were Mexicans, and she found it necessary to learn their language in order to instruct them. Not only was this energetic lady for some time the sole teacher, but also organise [author's spelling retained here] and (sic) choir! It was in the fall of this year (1879) that news of the approach of a band of renegade Indians created considerable excitement in the camp. Happily they did not raid Hillsboro. Nevertheless, seven miners belonging to the camp who went in pursuit of them, in the defense of outlying families, were ambushed and killed not a great distance away, while several people were brutally murdered between Hillsboro and Lake Valley.

In 1880 a church clergyman (a Rev. Mr. Green, of Silver City) made his way into town afoot, and was prevailed upon to hold a service. He did so, baptizing three of Mrs. Crews children. The congregation numbered about 20. On Thanksgiving day of the same year, the Rev. Mr. Harwood, a Methodist minister, conducted religious worship in one of the saloons which had been placed at his disposal for the time being. Both services were well appreciated.

Bishop Dunlap visited the camp a year or two later, and held services at the Union Hotel. On one of his visits about this time he baptized Gertrude, the infant daughter of the Hon. Nick and Mrs. Galles. This event is remembered in conjunction with a big flood, which washed the town, rendering the streets for the time being impassable. The service was nevertheless well attended. The Bishop made subsequent visits, and in 1883 baptized L. W. [(?)] Crews in the schoolhouse-on-the-hill.

Bishop Dunlap's nephew (Mr. Watt) held occasional services during the following two years, and the Rev. Mr. Forrester from about 1887 till about 1892.

In 1893 [date crossed out] the Rev. A. R. Lloyd, of Silver City, visited the town and conducted an Easter service on the Sunday after Easter-day. This service was held in the Schoolhouse, which was crowded. An offertory of \$23 was taken—an indication of the prosperity of the camp at this time. Mr. Lloyd made a second visit shortly afterwards. In the summer of the same year an arrangement was made under which the Rev. W. K. Lloyd, of Deming, began a series of monthly, and, subsequently, bi-monthly, services. It was in this year the Union Church was erected by public subscription. [This sentence is crossed out]. Mr. Lloyd held the first service in the new building. A Ladies Guild was organized by Bishop Kendrick in the fall of the same year, the charter members being as follows: Mrs. Crews (President), Mrs. Nick Galles (vice-President), Mrs. Thos. Hall (Treasurer), Mrs. P. J. Bennett (Secretary), Mrs. Arthur Hughes, Mrs. Geo. Richardson, Mrs. Geo. Miller, & Mrs. Geo. Clark. the mission was then properly organized under the name of Christ church, that being them of the Church formerly attended by Mrs. Crews in Savannah, Ga., and Mrs. Nick Galles in Minneapolis, Minn.

In the spring of 1894 Bishop Kendrick confirmed eight persons, as follows: Olive Moorland, Edna Crews Hughes, Margaret Richardson, Maud May McKinney, Victoria Jewell Milligan, Lizzie Hall, Mary Vaughan Bennett, and Matty Gertrude Crews. Mr. Lloyd resigned in the fall of the same year, and removed into the Diocese of Texas.

In May, 1895, Mr. (afterwards Rev.) Ethelbert H. J. Andrews, of Deming, was placed in charge of the mission. he continued to hold monthly services until the end of August, 1896, when he was appointed assistant minister at St. Clements Church, El Paso, Texas, where removed early in September. While the mission was under Mr. Andrews charge, Mr. Lawrence E. Nowers, of Hillsboro, was appointed to act as lay-reader, and from that time forward church services were held every alternate Sunday, both at Hillsboro and Kingston. Mr. Nowers proved himself an earnest church worker, and his services have been greatly appreciated. In March, 1896, the following eight persons received the rite of confirmation: Ethel Grayson, Catherine Agnes Neal, Fanny Duval, Clara Sanders, Xana Whitham, and Lourenia [?] Campbell. On the occasion of the same visit, Bishop Kendrick appointed a church committee of the following gentlemen: Mr. Lawrence E. Nowers (Warden and Treasurer), Judge A. B. Elliott, Messrs. Thos. Hall, Thos. Handel, & Arthur Hughes. During the same period twelve persons, (three adults, nine infants) were admitted into the congregation of Christ's flock by the sacrament of baptism.

This brings the history down to the end of Mr. Andrews' charge. No records having been kept during the early years of the mission, the registry of baptisms, marriages, and burials is far from complete. The total number of baptisms on record to date is 26 (including the five mentioned in this history), marriages 4, burials 4.

Dr. Crews died Nov. 14 1884, and his remains were interred in the Hillsboro cemetery.

St. George's Mission, Kingston, after a long period of inactivity, was revived Dec. 16, 1895, on which occasion Mr. Andrews baptized five infants. One other infant and one adult were baptized in the ensuing period, and six persons received the rite of confirmation on the occasion of Bishop Kendrick's visitation in March, 1896.

[The pregoing history was written by the Rev. Ethelbert H. J. Andrews, Deacon]

REQUEST FOR STORIES

If anyone has stories to tell, history of houses or mines, anything appropriate that they might contribute, please send or email them to:

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Also, if anyone is interested in helping with the newsletter, I'm always to share the labor (that is lighten my own work). We especially need someone to help with a cover design.

If you wish to have the newsletter emailed to you, please email your e-address to the above.

Our next regular meeting will be November 3, 2009. 6:30 PM. Hillsboro Community Center.