



GUAJALOTES, ZOPILOTES, Y PAISANOS

Newsletter of the Hillsboro Historical Society

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Edited by: Harley Shaw

MINUTES

HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY August 3, 2010

Meeting called to order by Harley Shaw at 6:30 PM. Community Center. Present: Paul Torres, Larry Cosper, Ike Wilton, Sonja Rutledge, Patti Nunn, and Patty Woodruff.

Larry moved we accept the minutes from the previous meeting as presented. Paul seconded. Paul moved we approve the financial report. Larry seconded. Minutes and financial report both approved unanimously.

The courthouse project was discussed briefly. Because of recent efforts by Craig Springer, the board decided to wait on any decisions regarding the future of the project. Craig has sent out news releases and contacted our national Congressmen for help on the courthouse purchase. All congressmen responded favorably.

We have a contract with Arcadia Publishing to do a photo book in their Images of America Series. Patti and Matti are gathering and reviewing photographs. Harley and Craig will assist with organization and writing captions.

Ike reported on the upcoming music festival (Sunday, Labor Day weekend). Patty has been helping with arrangements for advertising. We will have a silent auction at the Community Center on the same day, to be organized by Patty and others. Larry agreed to MC the festival.

The board agreed to raffle the large ironwood carved table donated to the Historic Society. We will offer 100 tickets at \$20 each and will hold the auction when all tickets have been sold. The Barbershop Café has agreed to display the table and sell tickets.

Sonja reported on the new cemetery gate. The funds have been recovered by the bank, and the Hillsboro Alumni are dealing with a craftsman to build it.

Harley and Patty noted that we've added oral histories of Fred Luna, Sr. and Romie Luna Bird to our collection of cds.

Paul moved we adjourn, Larry seconded. Meeting adjourned 7:30 PM.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBERS

HILLSBORO BUSINESSES (1912-13)

The following historical list was sent to Stretch Luna by Delia L. Crafton of Las Vegas, Nevada. Delia is a descendant of an extended family who settled in the Happy Flats neighborhood dating to the early 1820s thru early 1940s. Delia's mother, Carolina Sanchez, and Delia's aunt, Felipa Duran, operated a grocery store (where the big house with lawn and 6-foot wrought iron fence are now—Dusty Henson's place) for several years.

Another grocery store was across Mattie Avenue and was owned by the Presbyterian minister and his wife until 1933, when they sold it to the Schoenrad family and moved to El Paso, Texas. The minister's wife tutored Mexican children in back of the store, while the husband took care of customers. When automobiles began to come to town, he set up a garage and two gas pumps. Romie Bird was one of their students between 1900 and 1904.

Hillsboro's population was 2500. The town had a Catholic Church and the Union Church where 5 denominations held services. It had two weekly newspapers and a daily mail stage to Lake Valley.

Businesses:

- Sierra County Advocate. W. O. Thompson, Editor and Publisher.
- Sierra Free Press. J. H. Latham, President; Roscoe C. Stevens, Secretary and Treasurer; E. D. Tittman, Editor.

- Sierra County Bank. (\$30,000 capital) J. Corber, President; J. B. Herndon, vice President, A. M. Gillispie, Cashier.
- Mining. W. H. Bucher.
- Union Saloon. Owned by E. Carabajal.
- Barbers. Disinger brothers.
- Jeweler. Eva Disinger.
- Black Range Mining and Milling Co.
- Empire Gold Mining Co. M. S. Miller, Mgr.
- Restaurant. Eliosa Featherman.
- Flying Dutchman Mine. R. H. Hopper, Mgr.
- Gem Saloon. Luther F. Foster, owner.
- Garfield and Butler Mine. W. H. Bucher, Agent.
- Physician. Frank J. Given.
- Meat Market. H. A. Harrington.
- Hillsboro Hotel. S. J. Orchard, owner.
- Keller, Miller, and Co. (Scott F. Keller and Dan S. Miller).
- General Store. Ira A. Knight.
- Laundry. Kee Sam.
- Leatherbee and Hiler Stage Line. F. A. Hiler and A. S. Leatherbee.
- Hay. J. B. McPhersen.
- T. C. Long General Store. Thomas H. Byrne, Mgr.
- McKinley Mine Group. W. H. Bucher, Agent.
- Grocery. Jnd. Opgenorth.
- Meyers Brother's Meats. George F. Meyers and Charles E. Meyers.
- Saloon. Charles H. Meyers.
- Druggist and Postmaster. N. S. Miller.
- Saloon. Thomas Murphy (Sheriff).
- Civil Engineer. J. P. Parker.
- Pitch-Fork Land and Cattle Co. James W Hiler, Mgr.
- Richmond Gold Mining and Milling Co. J. H. Leidigh, Proprietor.
- General Store. Wm. M. Robins, Owner.
- Shephard and Bolander Saloon. W. A. Shephard, Edward Bolander, and Grover Bolander.
- Sigma Development Company. Fred Phillips, Agent, Mines; John E. Smith, Real Estate.
- South Percha Group Mining and Milling Co. H. A. Walford, Agent.
- Statehood Mines Co. F. W. Moffett, Agent.
- Livery. E. Teafood.
- Attorney at Law.U Edward D. Tittman.
- Vanadium Queen Mining Company.
- Lawyer. Howard A. Walford.
- Mountain Pride Stage Line. S. J. Orchard.
- Ocean Grove Restaurant. S. J. Orchard. Later owned by Tom Ying.

The following information is from Romie Luna Bird's files:

- *Don* José Duran's swimming pool and saloon and his wife's restaurant were in a two-story building at the end of Yankee Street near the Happy Flats bridge. They charged 25 cents for all day swimming. Mrs. Duran ran the restaurant at one end of the building, José ran the saloon at the opposite end. During prohibition days José ran a whiskey still in a back room of the Percha Hall Building. He was caught and did a couple years at Latuna Federal Pen. near

El Paso, Texas. He was released after serving his sentence, was caught again, and died in prison after a few months. The couple also owned a store in Derry, New Mexico.

It is unknown which company owned the smelter at the west end of Mattie Avenue and the Mill on top of the hill. Also there was the Black Stone Mill at the east end of Mattie Avenue—operator unknown.

LOCAL HISTORY AND COMMENTS

THOUGHTS ABOUT HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

We seem to have reached a plateau in our efforts to purchase the courthouse site. We have about \$20,000 in the courthouse purchase fund, mostly from donations by Hillsboro residents. This was a good start, but we've probably tapped the community for about all it can do for the present. Craig Springer has brought new energy and ideas to the effort and these have already born fruit. We have a contract with Arcadia Press to produce a photo book of Hillsboro. If you haven't seen books published by this press, check in at the Barbershop Café or Black Range Museum which have one Patsy King assembled on Sadie Orchard. As noted in the minutes above, Patti and Matti Nunn are gathering photos to be used, and we will be organizing and labeling these through the fall. We have a February deadline to get the book to the press, so if anyone has materials we might use, please get in touch with one of us.

Once we signed the contract with the press, Craig sent out a news release to the Truth or Consequences, Las Cruces, and Silver City newspapers. We've already been contacted by several people who read the articles in the papers, with offers of family photographs. Tom Sullivan dropped by with a few photos and manuscripts, which we have copied. He also shared stories of his family and friends, which we were able to record and add to our oral history file. We're not going to be able to transcribe all of these oral histories, but if anyone wants to listen to them, contact me.

On that subject, we now have recordings of Stretch, his father Fred Luna, Romie Luna Bird, Luis Zamorra, David McCall, Donald Graham and Art Evans (taping a 5-hour trip around Ladder Ranch), and Tom Sullivan. Some of these are fragmentary, and none of us are pros at interviewing. We're learning, nonetheless.

Craig's news releases also resulted in an invitation for members of our board to participate in an El Paso radio show the morning of August 21. This is a regular program on the Leon Metz show, KTSM AM 690 between 10 and 12 AM. Metz, now 80, is the dean of El Paso area history and has written histories and biographies on Pat Garrett, Fort Bliss, John Wesley Hardin, John Selman, and Dallas Stoudenmire. He also wrote *The Encyclopedia of Lawmen, Outlaws, and Gunfighters and Turning Points in El Paso Texas*. Wicpepedia lists him as an American cultural historian, author, television documentary personality, and lecturer on the American Old West period. He has presented hundreds of his programs to groups all over the U.S. particularly in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona. Metz has also made numerous TV appearances television documentaries most notably, [A&E's *The Real West*](#) series, which is also shown on [The History Channel](#).

Paul Torres and I participated in the show. One outcome was a gentleman who called in and challenged our story about the naming of Hillsboro. I had repeated the story I remembered that a fellow named Joe Yankee suggested naming the town after his home town of Hillsborough, Ohio. The caller stated adamantly that Hillsboro was named after a family living there named Hill. Neither Paul nor I had heard this story, and we'd be interested if anyone else knows anything about it.

Finally, Craig has contacted all of New Mexico's congressmen and senators asking for help on the courthouse project. A joint response from all of them said they would see what they could do. Could be we might become the focus of a true bipartisan effort. What a concept!

So the above is the good news. The downside regarding the courthouse is that while we continue to seek a way to own it, the old jail is deteriorating badly. It needs a lot of work, just getting it stabilized. The northeast corner is leaning more each day, and a chunk has recently fallen out of it. A major section

of the wall could fall any day. Until we own it, however, we don't feel comfortable seeking grants or consultation for protecting it.

A LITTLE MORE *NATURAL HISTORY*

Rather than belabor floods and murders, I'll offer a little more about historic change in wildlife in the area. As anyone in the area who has had to listen to me over the past four years knows, I've been researching a gent named J. Stokley Ligon. My focus has been on his early work centered around 1913—just after statehood. I've heard a few people bemoaning lack of wildlife in the area (usually unsuccessful hunters). After reading Ligon's 1913 diary, as well as several books about our area 100 years ago, I've concluded we have it pretty good. By the time New Mexico became a state, the elk had been extirpated, antelope were nearly gone, deer were scarce except in the wildest parts of the state, turkeys were sparse and disappearing from much of their range, desert bighorn were almost extinct. By the 1920s, grizzlies were effectively gone, as were wolves, and an all-out effort to rid the state of prairie dogs was afoot. In terms of habitat, 50 years of unrestrained grazing by goats, sheep, horses and cattle, and an extended drought in the 1880s had depleted forage and allowed widespread erosion (mainly channels cut in wagon ruts and trails trails of domestic animals).

Much of this early decline in wildlife numbers resulted, of course, from the attitudes and values of the times. Settlers saw wildlife as theirs to use and predators as the enemy. What few people now realize, I suspect, is that many more people were spread across the wild lands of the Southwest then than now. Our total human population has increased, but most of this has happened in cities. In 1913, when Ligon made his statewide horseback survey, small homesteads were spread throughout the prairies and forests, doing what it took to survive. Little by little, people were made brutally aware that a 160 acre homestead or even a 640 acre one in the arid Southwest would not support a family over the long haul. The homesteads were gradually absorbed by bigger ranchers. As range management practices have improved, these larger ranches have become better as wildlife habitat. The same is true on the National Forests and on BLM lands, where grazing and logging practices have changed, generally for the better insofar as wildlife is concerned.

As a brief contrast with 100 years ago, elk are back big time. Not too long ago, I counted 300 grazing in the wet pastures at Slash Ranch headquarters, and herds of over 100 are common on Ladder Ranch. Several times I've seen fifty or more feeding near the mouth of Racehorse Canyon within 3 miles of Hillsboro. I suspect they are doing even better further north in the state, which is generally better elk habitat than we have here. Antelope are doing well throughout the grasslands. Deer of both species are easy enough to see on a Sunday drive. Wild turkeys are doing well and have been reestablished throughout their historic range. Even prairie dogs and wolves are being re-established. The success of the wolf program is doubtful; not everyone loves prairie dogs, so neither of these species are likely to return to presettlement numbers. The odds of the grizzly coming back are zilch.

We don't know much about historic change of smaller creatures, but there but Gambel's quail and whitewings are much more widespread than they were at statehood. And of course we now have the collared dove. Waterfowl are more abundant, largely due to reservoirs on the Rio Grande and Pecos, managed refuges such as the Bosque de Apache and Bitter Lakes, and the many scattered stock ponds on ranchlands.

No one knows what our state will look like 100 years hence. If New Mexico goes the way of California and Arizona, we may well be seeing our wildlife populations at their best. In those two sunbelt states (as well as in Florida) urbanization has superseded other land misuses as the main destroyer of wildlife habitat. We've seen many wild species expand or shift their ranges over the past century—whitewings, inca doves, javelina, elk. If the climate change predicted by many scientists holds true, changes in wildlife numbers and rearranging of species may become the norm. My inclination is to enjoy every day and hope things continue to improve.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Notes on Hillsboro's stageline. An April, 1951 paper in *New Mexico Historical Review* told a story of the Lake Valley, Hillsboro, and Kingston Stage Line. The author was a high school teacher from Douglas, Arizona who was privileged to know William J. Reay who was the chief driver for the stageline from 1892 to 1904. The story Mr. Wallace relates is a little different than I've seen in other places. To summarize the key points:

On March 10, 1881, the two divisions of the Southern Pacific railroad were joined at Deming, completing the first transcontinental railroad through New Mexico and Arizona. A spur from this railroad to the mining town of Lake Valley was built in 1884. Hillsboro and Kingston were quickly joined to this railhead via a stage line and freighting services. When driver Reay moved to Kingston in 1885, L. W. Orchard owned the stage and a single coach, *The Mountain Pride* made the run. This line was probably founded between 1878 and 1882, but the exact date is unknown. Until 1884, it would have traveled between Nutt and Kingston; after 1884, it made the shorter run from Lake Valley.

Orchard sold the stage line to Fred W. Mister in 1902, and moved to Belen, then to Colorado. His wife, Sadie remained in Hillsboro. Fred Mister, in partnership with W. C. Leonard, started a mercantile in Kingston in 1883. He moved to Hillsboro in 1900 and opened a meat market. He ran the passenger service of the stage line from 1902 to the onset of World War I. By this time, motorized vehicles were replacing horse drawn conveyances.

The Mountain Pride was described as a "Southern" style thoroughbrace suspended vehicle built in Concord fashion and probably manufactured by Eaton, Gilbert and Company of Troy, New York. It was made of oak and painted dark red on the body, yellow on the carriage, and black-striped at the joints and corners. Inside, it was upholstered in russet leather. At the rear of the body and forward under the driver's seat were boots to carry luggage. The coach comfortably carried seven people, although one of these had to sit upside near the driver.

The stage left Lake Valley at noon and arrived in Hillsboro at 3 PM. It headed on to Kingston at 3:10, arriving there at 4:40 PM. It returned to Kingston the next morning in time to begin the noon run once more. One way from Lake Valley to Hillsboro cost \$2.00; roundtrip was \$3.50. Hillsboro to Kingston cost \$1.50, with a round trip price of \$2.50. Lake Valley to Kingston cost \$3.25, round trip \$5.50. Although the stage seated 7 passengers, it at times hauled many more. According to Mr. Reay, the record was 23, hauled back to Lake Valley after the Fountain Murder trial. One of the passengers was Pat Garrett.

The line had other vehicles—a six-passenger "jerky" for charter services, a mud wagon, and an assortment of freight wagons. Records for the company are scarce, but a couple names of people who worked for it in various capacities have come down: Jim Rafter (bookkeeper) and Neal Sullivan (stock tender). Wallace's paper gives many details regarding operation of the stage that we do not have room to report here. If you want to read more, the paper is in our archives at the library.

Word has it that the *Mountain Pride* now resides at Lincoln New Mexico—a shame. It certainly should be on display in Hillsboro.

QUESTIONS AND CONFLICTS

As noted above, more than one story exists regarding Hillsboro's name. Anyone have more information? Wallace notes in his paper that in 1951, ex-driver Reay owned a painting by Zavia Whitham of the *Mountain Pride*. It hung over Reay's desk in Douglas. I wonder if it still exists somewhere. Anyone remember it? Board member Stretch Luna says his family tradition holds that a Mexican farming settlement preceded Hillsboro in Happy Flats. We can't substantiate it. Anyone know anything?