



GUAJALOTES, ZOPILOTES, Y PAISANOS

Newsletter of the Hillsboro Historical Society

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Editor: Harley Shaw

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MINUTES

HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY MEETING, MAY 3, 2011

The meeting was called to order by President Larry Cospers at 6:30 PM at the Hillsboro Community Center. Because we had a number of guests present, the meeting was moved to the Community Center Kitchen, where we have more space. Board members present were: Larry Cospers, Stretch Luna, Patti Nunn, Matti Nunn, Sonja Rutledge, Jim Laupan, and Harley Shaw. Guests included Kay Bower, Russ Bowen, Barbara Reed, Ray Reed, and Patty Woodruff.

Patti moved that we accept the minutes as written and distributed by the secretary. Sonya seconded. Passed unanimously.

Matti presented the treasurer's report and recommended that, because of the complexity of 501c-3 reporting the board consider hiring an accountant to do the year-end balance sheet report and tax forms. Patty Woodruff discussed the accounting problems and complexity of the IRS report. She noted that if our annual gross receipts do not exceed \$50,000, no IRS report is required. She said a year-end report and balance sheet for the board plus submitting a yearly short form to the IRS was none-the-less important, and she is exploring individuals who might have the skills to help with both reports. Sonja noted that she might be able to help locate someone. The board discussed moving money from the checking account to the money-market account and decided that this was unnecessary at the present time. Stretch moved we accept the treasurer's report as presented. Sonja seconded. Pass unanimously.

Old business

Harley reported on the replies to our letter to courthouse purchase donors. A written report is filed with the minutes. No donor has yet to request their money returned. So far, 14 individuals have replied. None have requested return of their money. A majority said the board should determine how the money should be used. Second in support was to use money in some way to help the Black Range Museum. There were no specific suggestions. Support for participating in restoring the Kingston school building and restoring the fire truck came third and fourth respectively.

Harley and Patty reported briefly on the status of the raffle of the ironwood statue. To date, 75 of 100 tickets have been sold. The statue has been at the Black Range Lodge for the past three months and they have sold 10 tickets. The statue will be moved back to the community center for major events. At present no other suitable location to display it exists in Hillsboro.

Stretch commented on our potential involvement in restoration of the Black Range Museum and emphasized that skilled adobe workers be used for any work that might be done there.

Larry reported on plans for the fire truck. He recommended that our goal be to make it movable but not get into major restoration. It has more historic significance in its present condition, showing both Hot Springs and Hillsboro signs on the door. The first job will be to rebuild the flathead V-8 engine, and Larry is working on estimates to get this done. Harley suggested we might consider replacing that engine with a later model engine, if the cost of rebuilding the flathead was prohibitive. Barbara Reed suggested we explore getting grant money for restoration. Jim suggested we wait for estimates on rebuild costs before deciding which way we will go. Ray Reed noted that kits exist that allow easy conversion from the flathead to later engines. Matti noted that we needed to house the truck

somewhere that it will be protected from vandalism and from the elements. Several possible locations were discussed. Harley noted that cost of a metal carport to protect it would not be excessive.

Jim Laupan discussed the status of conversations regarding HHS involvement in the Black Range Museum. He pointed out that in addition to the lot where the museum resides and the structures and artifacts associated with it, the property also includes the front of the park across the street. This is the portion of the park that has the public restrooms. The Hillsboro water board owns the back portion of the park. A consensus of the board, as well as the present owner of the museum seems to be that the best outcome would be for the Hillsboro Historical Society to own the museum. The owner would consider selling. Sonja asked if she had mentioned a price. Jim said that their discussions were still pretty preliminary and no definite number had been mentioned. Sonja noted that it would be difficult to find suitable comps for an appraisal; Harley suggested that the National Historic Preservation Foundation or the State Historic Preservation Officer might be able to put us in touch with a specialist on appraising historic properties. A general discussion of possible actual monetary value of the museum followed, with a variety of opinions expressed regarding its actual worth. Larry asked if any of the artifacts might be removed by present owners if HHS were to buy the museum. Jim said he felt that would not be a problem. Ray Reed asked if any of the artifacts were not the actual property of the museum. Jim said that good records existed regarding any artifacts on loan. He said we would definitely have to notify the owners of these artifacts, if they were still alive. Sonja asked if the owner would consider selling the museum on a contract, with a suitable down and annual payments. Jim said that such would be a possibility but that the owner did not want it to stretch out for many years. Harley commented that if the board was truly getting serious about owning the museum, we should begin developing a business plan for its operation. It will be a big job that will require major commitment of time by a number of people. We should try to make it a money-maker. Jim noted that the building itself is actually in pretty good condition, although a part of the roof needs replacing. He is trying to have materials donated for the roof. Ray asked if the owner might consider some kind of corporate structure, with her being a shareholder. Jim felt this was unlikely. Kaye asked if the owner might consider selling the artifacts to the society. Everyone present felt that the artifacts and the buildings should remain as a unit.

Barbara and Ray Reed discussed the repair of the Kingston school building. They estimate that about \$15,000 in repairs are needed. This includes an estimate of labor. Items needed are: new roof, stucco repair, window restoration, and a general cleanup and repainting of the interior. The wiring is okay. Larry noted that he has access to volunteers trained in window restoration and will ask if they might be interested in doing that part of the work. Harley suggested that the Kingston group come to our board with a request for a specific amount for specific projects. A discussion of ownership of the Kingston Schoolhouse ensued. Barbara said the county owned the building. The possibility of the county helping with restoration was discussed.

Harley reported briefly on the Arcadia Books publication—Around Hillsboro. It will be out on August 8, well in time to do sales and a book signing at the Heritage Music Festival.

Larry led a discussion on the Heritage Music Festival. Patty Woodruff discussed past expenses and income, noting that the music portion of the event roughly broke even and the silent auction brought in our profit. Ike Wilton has requested an upfront allocation for bands. Harley suggested that he give us a specific amount. In general, the board agreed that an increase in gate fees is needed. The executive board will discuss this and come back with a recommendation. The Community Center will hold only about 150 people, and we might consider selling a limited number of tickets at a higher price, perhaps as much as \$40/per person. This is in keeping with such events in other places.

New Business

The need for some kind of strategic planning session for the board was discussed. Larry indicated that he would prefer to have an executive session between meetings and will set up a meeting with the officers.

The possibility of becoming a membership organization was discussed. The board in general is

favorable and feels that the time has arrived for us to move in that direction. Barbara Reed discussed the value of membership funds and member involvement to the Fort Garland Museum in Colorado. Patty Woodruff noted that modifications of the bylaws would be required.

Barbara Reed requested that we consider broadening the name of HHS to include Kingston, perhaps the Hillsboro-Kingston Historical Society. Board members agreed that acknowledgement of Kingston and, possibly, Lake Valley would be appropriate. Stretch recommended that this, as well as other tabled items be discussed at an executive session fairly soon and that specific requests be brought to the board at the next meeting.

Harley discussed the possibility of purchasing a storage container or building to house artifacts donated to the Historical Society, such as the piano now stored in Bill and Matti's shop. He agreed to explore possibilities and costs. Harley and Patty noted that they would consider allowing the storage facility to be placed on property they own.

The continuation of the newsletter was discussed briefly. Harley asked if it was needed, considering the fine job that Craig Springer is doing on the HHS Blog. Everyone agreed that the newsletter should continue, especially with us now moving toward having members.

Sonja moved for adjournment at 8:35 PM. Patti seconded. Adjourned.

THE EDITOR'S REPORT: NEWS AND COMMENTS

With sadness, we have to announce the passing of two people who have been important in saving historical materials of our area. Betty Reynolds, who developed and managed our fine little library passed away in Deming on April 22. Betty had served as head librarian for New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. She applied her knowledge and skills to Hillsboro Community Library, developing an excellent collection of books on local history. The administrative structure she created for our library lives on in the form of the Hillsboro Community Library board and the group of dedicated volunteers that see that the library keeps regular hours. While many communities around the country are cutting budgets for libraries or even eliminating libraries, ours continues to function at no cost to the taxpayer. We have Betty to thank for this legacy.

Bill Shaw, whose name has appeared in past newsletters, passed away in Texas in April. Bill moved to Hillsboro, after a career as a foreign correspondent with the Army as well as various news media. While living here, Bill applied his journalistic skills to begin writing a general history of the Hillsboro, Kingston, Lake Valley area. Unfortunately, before he could publish this history, he suffered a stroke, and his health forced him to move away. Before leaving, however, he passed his manuscript and notes on to Patty and me, and they are now part of the Hillsboro Historical Society Archives in the reading room at the library.

Since Hillsboro Historical Society was formed and began publishing this humble newsletter, more and more people are accessing our historical collection and/or contributing material to it. Some are submitting stories for the newsletter. To me, the first hand stories by people who lived through past events make the most interesting reading. Such is the case of our feature story this quarter, written by Bobbie Ostler, who lived through the 1972 flood when she was five years old. Bobbie introduces herself in the first paragraph.

And we have a new feature this month—a book review. Mark Thompson, who gave us the excellent story of Judge Parker in our last newsletter tells us here about the Teapot Dome scandal.

Finally, do not forget to check in on our Hillsboro Blog site maintained by Craig Springer. Craig continues to find stories and photographs and facts; they can be found at <http://hillsborohistory.blogspot.com/>. If you have photos or information to post, I'm sure Craig would be happy to help you.

Hillsboro Historical Society Vice President, Stretch Luna, asked me to mention that he has produced a 32-page booklet of sketches of local historical structures, along with a traditional history of inhabitants of Percha Creek prior to 1884. Stretch will mail you a copy of this for \$8.00—a price that barely covers his costs to make copies and mail them. If you are interested, write Stretch Luna, P. O. Box 244, Hillsboro, New Mexico, 88042.

LOCAL HISTORY

Stormy Night Bobbie Hale April 1978 5th Grade T or C Elementary Mr. Garcia's Class

I wake up from another dream about lace curtains. The sun is shining through the lace curtains. It is so bright that I cannot see outside. I recognize the curtains from the "Old House" on Second Street in Hillsboro. It was the house we lived in until the flood of 1972. I think about the essay that I wrote in 5th grade.

"I really should re-type that essay and share it," I tell my husband, Phillip. So here it is, an essay I wrote in the 5th grade. I was trying to give a first-hand account of the '72 flood which happened when I was five.

I want to start with a bit of background about me. I was born November 18, 1966 to Embree (Sonny) H. Hale, Jr. and Margery Reid-Hale. I have two siblings from my mother's first marriage. My brother's name is Reid McGregor. My sister is Kathleen McGregor Bustamante. I have been living in Albuquerque, NM for almost 20 years. Every night I dream of Hillsboro. Hillsboro will always be home.

The words in italics were added today for detail and clarity. It started one rainy night. Rain was coming down in torrents, and it was thundering and lightening (loud) enough to wake the dead. My brother Reid, and my sister Kathleen and some of their friends went to a dance at Lake Valley. Meanwhile my mom and I were asleep at home. The telephone rang. After a while the lights went on. I woke up and asked mom what was going on. She said, "Your dad called and said it's flooding downtown. About 8 feet of water is coming through the Percha Creek and running down Main Street."

Mom was telling me all this as we got dressed. Then mom grabbed an umbrella, her purse, and some dry socks and shoes for both of us. Mom said, "Bobbie, hurry up and get your flip flops on and be ready to run. Daddy said if another rise comes the dike will break and flood out the whole town!" I did not ask where we were going, I only went.

I was only five years old, not really old enough to get scared. I thought it was fun because the dogs came along and I got to wade in the water. *We left the house about 2 in the morning and it was very dark. The street already had a couple of feet of water in it. I clearly remember the dogs swimming by us.*

As I looked down another street, I saw car lights. Then I saw it was my dad's pickup. Daddy got out and talked with Mom. I heard mom say, "You had better go get the Coles. *(Our neighbors to the east of us and I am uncertain of spelling)* Mrs. Coles has a very weak heart, and her husband can't hear." So Dad went to get Mr. and Mrs. Caul.

My mom was now carrying me through the water when she slipped off into the bar ditch. (We were tangled in barbed wire and the water was rising higher. I don't think we were in the ditch long) Just then one of our friends, John Tompson, came and helped us out of the water and carried me to a house at the bottom of a hill.

Let me add a few facts now that was left out of the original. I remember John carrying me into the house. He put me in a bed with his granddaughter. I was told, "Get some sleep now." I remember lying awake until the sun light came in the window.

After the worst was over, everyone went to the Community Center. After a few days, my sister and I had to get a typhoid shot. That day seemed to be the worst day to me. First of all we had to stay in John Tompson's tent *(I think it was a trailer/pop up?)*. Second of all I had to get that 'ol' yucky shot. The Red Cross took me into a room to give me a shot. *I need to add to this once again for clarity. I was hiding under the basement of the community center. I was found by Henry Turner and he dragged me out of the basement and forced me to the Red Cross people.*

I screamed, cried, and kicked. Henry grabbed my hand and rolled up my sleeve and said, "Aw come on, it doesn't hurt, see I got one!"

I screamed and cried out, "Yeah, but I don't need one!"

And then a funny thing happened as soon as the needle touched my arm, I stopped crying. The shot made me and my sister very sick! We had to move down to the community center. *Actually I remember moving back and forth from the kitchen of the center to the trailer on the hill behind the center. The shot made me feverous and delirious. I remember trying to put a cold rag on Kathleen's head when I fell down or fell into a delirious s feverish state.*

After two or three hours I woke up saying, this "Kathleen" I called to my sister, "I'm hungry, and I'm going to the kitchen to get something to eat and drink!"

My sister replied, "Bobbie, stay in bed."

Being a bull head, I stood up and did some jumping jacks and said, "See, I can do jumping jacks, and if I can do that, I can walk to the kitchen to get some food."

As soon as I had my fill, I went back to the place on the hill where the pop up was. Instead of the pop up being there, my Grandpa's trailer was there. *I really don't remember my Grandpa placing his trailer there. But that is what happened in my essay.*

The next morning when I woke up in the trailer house, I thought I was in Winston. The reason why I thought I was in Winston is because the day before I thought I heard my dad say that we were to move to Winston. So all of a sudden, I started packing. I said, "Mom, Daddy, I am going to Winston, and you can't stop me!"

I can't remember what happened after that, but I do remember Daddy said our house was condemned. *I do remember going to the house on Second Street and running to the shed to recover some toys. I remember too walking into the front door. I remember the lace curtains over the windows of the front door. I remember walking into the front and seeing the wooden floors buckled from the water. I remember the floors and my toys being filled with silt. Somewhere I still have a doll from the shed. And I still have the umbrella that we used that night.*

After that we moved up to my Grandmother's homestead. (North Percha). After about two years, we moved back to town so I could go to school. We had a new house built. I'm living in it right now.

I still go back to the homestead.

A Few Years Later 1977 Percha Box Canyon East of Hillboro, my friends and I were swimming in Box Canyon almost every other day in the summer of 1977. We named the ponds there such as First, Second, and Third. My friends, D.K. and his brother John taught me to swim in Box. My final test would be swimming across Third Pond, which was the deepest. Third Pond was also the most interesting because there is a huge bolder in it. Under the huge bolder is a smashed Volkswagen Beetle. We used to speculate that it washed down during the '72 Flood.

In October 2008, mMy Aunt Mary Hale, Dad's sister, and I are driving to Hillsboro to attend my cousin's funeral. During the drive, she shared her wonderful stories of growing up in Hillsboro. One of the stories caught my attention. She shared her '72 Flood story. Aunty Mary, Reid, Kathleen, and their friend Dave were getting ready to attend the Lake Valley dance. My step-grandma, Georgia Hale warned Dave to park his little Volkswagen on high ground as it just might flood.

Dave just laughed and laughed. He paid no heed to the warning. When Aunty Mary and the rest of them finally arrived home, Dave's car was gone! Reid laughed hard, "Well, Dave, where's your car?" When Aunty Mary shared this, I exclaimed, "Aunty Mary, I know where Dave's car is!"

It's been far too many years since I have been to Box Canyon. Often I laugh out loud when I think of the smashed Volkswagen.

Editors note: One thing Bobbie doesn't mention here is that her father, Embree Hale, applied his mining experience in jacking up timbers to safely rescue a women and her daughter who were trapped in their collapsed house during the 1972 flood.

BOOK REPORT

***Tempest over Teapot Dome* by David Stratton (1998) and *The Teapot Dome Scandal* by Laton McCartney (2008). Mark B. Thompson**

I must confess that I was never particularly interested in the political history of the 1920s, and specifically the so-called “Teapot Dome” scandal involving President Harding’s Secretary of The Interior, A.B. Fall. As I did more work on New Mexico lawyer/legal history, however, I became more interested in the “life and times” of Albert Bacon Fall. Craig Springer, who was working on Hillsboro, N.M. projects, gave me a push by asking, more or less, if I thought Fall was guilty of taking bribes in connection with the issuance of leases to extract oil from U.S. reserves at Elk Hills, California and Teapot Dome, Wyoming. I decided I should know more about the “scandals.”

These two recent books, although with similar titles, are very different and both worth the read. The clue to the differences is found in their subtitles: Laton McCartney saw the story as “How big oil bought the White House and tried to steal the whole country;” for David Stratton it was merely “The Story of Albert B. Fall.” McCartney’s book is like a tabloid story, beginning with the election of 1920, with brief “flash back” stories to help make sense of some of the action. McCartney starts his book by telling the story of the Oklahoma oilman who had worked for Harding’s election and then was murdered by his own mistress, preventing him from being appointed Secretary of The Interior by Harding. Stratton starts with a long explanation of Fall’s friendship with Edward Doheny, one of the oilmen who benefited from Fall’s actions at Interior, but also by writing a traditional biography, telling of Fall’s birth and early years in Kentucky, his mining adventures in Mexico, and, of course, his political career. Stratton really does not get into the events of 1921 and their aftermath until the final third of the book.

One of the things that surprised me was how Fall’s lease of the naval oil reserves followed naturally from his interests while in the U.S. Senate, 1912-1921, and his other activities during his less than two years at the Interior Department. The other main surprise was learning just how complex were the leasing arrangements. It is tempting to try a “Cliff Notes” version, or perhaps a “Teapot Dome Scandal for Dummies,” but I have limited myself to a partial chronology at the end of this report. I have not attempted to determine if Fall technically accepted bribes; I am satisfied that his actions, including asking a friend to lie to a congressional committee, show a guilty mind. He knew better!

Yes, both books mention how our ancestor, Mark B. Thompson, fainted at counsel table after the guilty verdict in the 1929 trial was announced. But Stratton also includes the photo of MBT and the character witnesses and a story I had never heard. On page 320 he describes how Edward Doheny in 1925 hired Mark to prepare a biography of Fall because Mark was long time friend and lawyer of Fall’s and because he, MBT, “had professed literary ambitions.” (Hmm, must be a genetic abnormality!) Sadly, for us, the project was abandoned in 1926.

Partial chronology of the so-called Teapot Dome Scandal.

March 1921. Albert B. Fall sworn in as Secretary of The Interior under President Warren G. Harding.

Dec. 1921. Edward Doheny loans Fall \$100,000 to facilitate the expansion of Fall’s ranch at Three Rivers, New Mexico. Fall gives Doheny a promissory note, secured by a pledge of stock in the ranch corporation. The loan proceeds are delivered to Fall in New York in cash, in the proverbial “little black bag.” A corporation controlled by Doheny was given the lease to naval oil reserves at Elk Hills in Kern County California, west of Bakersfield.

Dec. 1921. At a meeting in Three Rivers, Harry Sinclair tells Fall he would like to invest in the ranch and use a part of the facilities for a “retreat.” In early 1922, Sinclair’s lawyer delivers \$233,000 in U.S. Treasury Bonds to Fall’s son-in-law and ranch “partner,” Mahlon T. Everhart. Everhart deposits the bonds in a Three Rivers ranch corporation bank account in Pueblo, Colorado, where Everhart lived and worked. Sinclair is issued stock representing a one-third interest in the ranch corporation, but in the name of a “blind trust,” with Mahlon Everhart as Trustee. A corporation controlled by Sinclair is given the lease for extraction of the naval oil reserves at the Teapot Dome field, north of Casper, Wyoming.

1922. U.S. Senate begins the process of investigating the leases. The investigations will

stretch out over several years and probably result in the main, comprehensive, source of the evidence against A.B. Fall.

Jan. 1923. Fall resigns as Secretary of The Interior.

August 1923. President Harding dies in San Francisco, California and Vice-President, Calvin Coolidge becomes President. At the urging of the Senate, Coolidge appoints special counsel to look into legal issues arising out of the leases. The Special Counsel will eventually initiate both civil and criminal actions.

Feb. 1924. Fall “takes the 5th” and refuses to testify before the Senate Committee investigating the leases.

Oct. 1924. U.S. District Court Judge in Los Angeles declares that the Elk Hills leases are illegal and invalid. This decision will be upheld by the Circuit Court of Appeals and that decision appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

1925. U.S. District Court Judge in Wyoming declares that the Teapot Dome leases are valid. This decision will be reversed by the Circuit Court of Appeals and the latter decision appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Dec. 1926. Fall and Doheny are tried and acquitted of criminal conspiracy in the Elk Hills case by a U.S. District Court jury in Washington, D.C.

May 1927. Sinclair is convicted of contempt of Congress arising out of the Senate investigations and sentenced to three months in jail.

Oct. 1927. Sinclair and Fall trial for criminal conspiracy regarding the Teapot Dome leases begins in Washington, D.C. but a mistrial is declared as a result of allegations that Sinclair tampered with the jury.

1927. U.S. Supreme Court upholds the two circuit court decisions in the civil cases, finally terminating the leases at both Elk Hills and Teapot Dome.

April 1928. Repeated efforts to again bring the Fall/Sinclair Teapot Dome criminal conspiracy case to trial are frustrated by Fall’s illness and the government opts to “bifurcate” the case and try Sinclair alone, resulting in a not guilty verdict in the Washington D. C. federal district court.

1929. Sinclair is convicted of jury tampering at the 1927 criminal conspiracy case and sentenced to six months in jail, to run concurrently with the contempt of Congress sentence. Sinclair does eventually serve time.

1929. Fall is tried and convicted by a jury in a Washington, D.C. federal district court of taking a bribe from Doheny in return for the government lease to Doheny’s company for the oil at Elk Hills, California.

March 1930. Edward Doheny is acquitted by a Washington D.C. federal district court jury on the charge of giving Fall a bribe in return for the lease of oil reserves at Elk Hills, California.

July 1931-May 1932. A. B. Fall serves his sentence for bribery in the Elk Hills case in the infirmary at the New Mexico State Prison on Cerrillos road in Santa Fe. (Santa Fe legend has it that the warden was generous in his allowing Mrs. Fall to “occasionally” take Fall for respite from prison. That legend is not mentioned by either McCartney or Stratton!)

1935. After allowing Fall to use Three Rivers rent free, the Doheny corporation holding the loan secured by the ranch corporation stock completes its foreclosure action and takes possession of the ranch. (Sinclair, whose rights probably would have been diminished by the actions of creditors, apparently never attempted to enforce any ownership interest in the ranch corporation.)

Which leads us to the ultimate insider trivia question: Did anyone go to jail as a result of bribery or other malfeasance in connection with the attempted lease of the Teapot Dome federal oil reserves in Wyoming? Answer: No! Neither Fall nor Sinclair were ever convicted for their acts in connection with the actual leasing of Teapot Dome. Fall was convicted and served time for taking a bribe from Doheny in the Elk Hills matter. So much for enduring history and clever book titles!