Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos

Vol. 10 No. 2 **Hillsboro Historical Society** May 2017

Hillsboro in the Thirties
tales by an amazing 16-year-old runaway

Kingston's Mystery Bible

Museum News and a New Book

President's Message

Greetings…Spring is upon us, the flowers blooming, the days warming and the wind. Most of us have come to accept the wind as just a part of living in New Mexico and although we complain and fuss about its inconvenience, we for the most part accept it. I think one of the reasons I am so drawn to history is an attempt to understand how our ancestors dealt with inconvenience and the obstacles of their day. Some may think it is a longing for the days of old and its simplicity and there may be some truth in that, however I do not have to think too hard to appreciate our many conveniences. Another attraction for me is to try and understand the decisions made in the past, not to dwell in judgement, but to understand and hopefully not repeat, those decisions that in hindsight can now be considered mistakes. To preserve these artifacts for future generations gives me hope. Well I have waxed philosophical too long this morning; on to my chores.

Before closing I do want to bring attention to the new Tom Ying and Sadie Orchard displays; great job, folks. Also it is time for your annual membership dues and a reminder we are always looking for new members and volunteers. Members/Volunteers are the backbone of our society and we welcome your ideas and help. Until next time…

HHS meets on the second Tuesday of each month. 6 pm at the Community Center. Everyone interested in our local heritage is invited.

". . . we are always looking for new members and volunteers. Members/Volunteers are the backbone of our society and we welcome your ideas"

Larry Cosper

Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos is the quarterly newsletter of the:
Hillsboro Historical Society
P. O. Box 461
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The mission of Hillsboro Historical Society's is to preserve, collect, and protect the history of Hillsboro, Kingston and the surrounding area. We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

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The title for this newsletter is inspired by the association of Hillsboro and Kingston with Percha Creek. The name Percha may derive from the fact that turkeys "perch" or roost along it. Perhaps there were more historically than there are now. Of course, Hillsboro and Kingston both have their own seasonal vulture (zopilote) roosts, so the term remains appropriate. Paisanos are countrymen or friends, a term that applies to us humans who also "roost" here. In our small towns, we are extremely diverse in roots, religion, and politics, yet we remain countrymen. In keeping with the avian title motif, in the Southwest roadrunners, which also live within the Percha Creek watershed, are called paisanos.

Hillsboro Historical Society News

Garland Bills and Barb Lovell have continued archiving all of the Black Range Museum contents. During a visit to the museum shortly after HHS bought it, Toni Laumbach, retired curator from the NM Farm and Ranch Museum, looked at the mass of objects in the collection and estimated that getting the museum contents cataloged and back into displays would take four years. Its beginning to look like she may have been right. Handling and evaluating so many items is a tremendously slow process, especially when the work is being done by a small cadre of volunteers.

Even though things are moving slowly, they are moving. The Black Range Museum is proud to announce the opening on April 15 of its latest exhibit, which features many artifacts from the lives of Sadie Orchard and Tom Ying. These were two of Hillsboro's most colorful characters. You will see Sadie's personal jewelry, furniture and scrapbook, and Tom's hats and handwritten notes in Chinese, along with many other personal items. We will have photographs of Sadie and other objects related to her life, including a side saddle refurbished by Ike Wilton that probably belonged to Sadie. Also enclosed in a display case are many smaller artifacts belonging to Tom that could not safely be displayed in the Ying Kitchen room.

Tom Ying-Sadie Orchard Room

Looking farther ahead, the Hillsboro Historical Society is planning a membership and volunteer appreciation backyard barbecue for September 2, the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Many other activities are being planned for that weekend by the various non-profit organizations of Hillsboro. Our next planned exhibit will be Western Days opening in conjunction with the other Labor Days activities. Planned for this celebration are a blacksmith demonstration at the museum, a pony cart on the streets, and more. We hope to have two other advances for this weekend: revealing of the Foundational Donors plaque and opening of the Ranch Room in the museum featuring artifacts from the Ladder Ranch. We will be displaying lots of historical artifacts used in the every day lives of the early ranchers. A recent examination of what lies above the low ceiling in that room has revealed startling aspects of the historical architecture of the building that will require considerable restoration work.

Some gains have been made on the building itself. Water has been restored to two outside faucets and to the small bathroom in the building. The room still needs a lot of work before it can be used by the public, but at least volunteers working in the building now have access to running water. Steve Dobrott commandeered Dennis Franklin's backhoe to fill the ditch and reroute some runoff.

Steve Dobrott and Garland Bills somehow muscled Tom Ying's gigantic old commercial refrigerator from the ranching/blacksmith room into the Ying kitchen display. Those of us inclined to hang crepe had assumed that lifing the roof and using a crane was about the only way that beast would be moved. Since Garland and Steve were the only ones present, we suspect that they used Black Magic to squeeze the big box through that little door.

Ray Reid has once again stepped up to do emergency repairs where the elements are threatening the adobe building. He has installed gutters along the south side of the building to direct roof runoff away from the exposed adobe base of the building. He also made extensive mortar repairs covering serious holes along the foundation of the south side that were allowing ongoing water erosion, as well as providing an entryway for visiting rodents. So far our dedicated archivists or museum attendants haven't had to chase a rattlesnake from the building, but no one would be particularly surprised if one turns up. Ray also placed museum signs at each end of town and will be installing screen doors. Dennis Franklin recently installed track lighting in both exhibit rooms.

Jackie Becker, who until recently was the head curator at the Silver City Museum, stopped in and provided a critique and operational suggestions. Unless some unforeseen benefactor gives the museum a large endowment, we may never quite reach the level of administrative rigor Jackie recommends, but she has certainly elevated our vision for the museum.

We're happy to announce that *River of Spirits--a natural history of New Mexico's Las Animas Creek*--was published by The History Press in mid-March. Harley Shaw and Steve Dobrott spearheaded the book, but it includes chapters written by a host of authors, spanning a century of writing. It adds to a growing repertoire of information on our local history.

While the release of our book is a happy event, we are deeply saddened to announce that Matilde Holzwarth, who took most of the beautiful color photographs scattered through the book, passed away. Matilde had been contributing her photographic skills to documenting museum artifacts for HHS, until she became too ill to continue. She lived to see the Animas book in print and to attend the opening of her own show of fine-quality portraits of Hillsboro citizens in Las Cruces. Her book--*Hillsboro Faces*--will become increasingly valuable as documentation

The Mystery Bible

Barbara Lovell

We were first aware of the existence of the mystery Bible in 1995 when Mrs. Tice sold her house in Kingston, NM, to Mr. and Mrs. John Collier of Houston, TX. THe Colliers never lived in the house, but they did find the Lichtenwalter family Bible which had somehow been left behind. It was published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, NY, in 1901 and it contains a "Family Record" as follows: Married - John W. Lichtenwalter and Minnie P. Brown, March 9, 1904.

John W. Lichtenwalter - Aug 17th, 1879
Minnie P. (Brown) - Dec 11th, 1886
Lloyd Marvlin Lichtenwalter - Sept 14, 1905
Velma Astella " " - March 11, 1911

There are some other pieces of family memorabilia inside its pages such as a small flag with 48 stars, a memorial agenda from Grants Pass, OR, in 1971 and a recital program for Velma in 1921 from Long Beach, CA.

A search for the Lichtenwalter name was conducted on Ancestry.com. It turns out that they are from Kansas and lived in California. We contacted their descendents and they have never been to New Mexico and have never heard of Kingston. Velma did marry a man named Draves and they lived in El Paso for a time, but there is still no evidence of a connection to Kingston.

We do know that the house in Kingston was purchased in 1962 by Dr. and Mrs. Wehrheim. Dr. Wehrheim passed away sometime in 1971 and in October of that year Mrs. Wehrheim sold the house.

How did something as important as the Lichtenwalter family bible end up in a small house in Kingston, NM being passed down from homeowner to homeowner instead of family member to family member? We are hoping someone reading this might know more about the name Lichtenwalter or Brown living in Kingston and help us solve this mystery.

The Bible is now on its way to California to be reunited with the Lichtenwalter family descendents where it belongs.

Hillsboro In The 'Thirties

Michael Taylor

Hillsboro in the 'Thirties is a manuscript in the Hillsboro Historical Files. It appears to be part of a longer manuscript written by Taylor, but we have no idea what happened to it, if it existed. A short autbiographical sketch precedes the article. This was excerpted from Aggies Oh Aggies--the glory years: New Mexico A&M 1935-1939.

Michael F. Taylor, 1938

I came down from the Black Range village of Kingston, NM to Las Cruces, where I lived in the William E. Johnson home during my first year at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (New Mexico A&M). I had in my pocket $100, the gift of Bell Drummond, Kingston's oldest and wealthiest widow and a good friend. It was a sign of the times that $100 then provided not only tuition and books but also much needed clothing, which I bought at the Stern's store on Las Cruces' Main Street. I was a recent graduate of Hillsboro High. Kingston had no schools of any kind so we had to commute to Hillsboro, nine miles east. I looked forward to becoming Kingston's only college boy with a mixture of anticipation and apprehension. I had been valedictorian of my class, but that was not saying much since there were only six of us in all. The enrollment at Hillsboro High was around 40 in those days, the teachers ranged from fair to frightful, and the science and language courses were weak as weak could be. I doubted that I knew enough to get by in college, and I worried about the collegiate social life. Kingston and Hillsboro were rustic hamlets with few refinements. I had heard of a professor at A&M who castigated the ignorant with such barbed phrases as "flop-eared yokels" and "country bumpkins." I did not wish to be so assailed by any professor but I was even more concerned with how the other students would see me. Would they laugh at my country clothes and manners and my less-than-genteel poverty? With all the self-consciousness of youth it was my feeling that I would surely stand out, embarrassed among the suave, sophisticated, 'with it' collegians of my imagination. It was with great relief that I found on registration day that my name was legion, that among the 236 members of the incoming freshman class there were scores who were from places as small or smaller than my own, whose preparation was just as wanting, and whose dress was no better.

In the spring of 1931, Jacob Henry Crosby (known to most people as "Cook") and I came to Hillsboro, New Mexico, to open our Tip Top Café. I was a runaway from Kansas City and 16 years old. I had gone to work for Cook in Hot Springs, N. M., and later went with him to Hobbs, then in its great oil boom, where we ran a pie bakery. When the U. S. government limited oil production, the boom died and so did our business. Hence the move to Hillsboro.

I went through high school in Hillsboro (1931-1935) and lived and worked both there and in Kingston, the small ghost town 9 miles to the west. Many years later (1945), I wrote some recollections of the two Sierra County towns. I have now resurrected a portion of them as of possible interest to the Hillsboro old-timers. This fragment I present, with no conditions whatsoever to the Hillsboro Reunion Committee, Mrs. James Thwaites, Chairman, to use as it may see fit. Michael F. Taylor.

Cook and I hit it lucky in Hillsboro. On the main street (like the others, it once had a name but by our day it was simply the street) there was a vacant building-between the post office and the Slease store. This we got on a promise to pay and Mr. Slease agreed to supply us for two months on tick. With that much backing, Cook persuaded the El Paso Hotel and Restaurant Supply Company and Sears, Roebuck to send some items on account and by July 1, 1931, we were in business. That was just right since beginning on the fourth there were big doings afoot, with everybody coming to town for three or four days. The cattle business was only so-so, if that, but some Eastern speculators had reopened the El Oro mine, working it around the clock and there were a good many prospectors in the nearby hills.

We had some unused fried pie wrappers from the Hot Springs days marked Tip Top, so that became the name of the Hillsboro restaurant too. Outside we put up a small blackboard to advertise the menu of the day, stew or

roast or short ribs of beef, it being understood that chili, pie, and coffee were always to be had, as well as steaks on order. We had a counter with six stools and two small tables besides. These were for women customers but it was taken as fact that no respectable female would sit at a counter. TABLES FOR LADIES was a common sign in those days. We charged forty cents for a full meal, pie and coffee included, and twenty cents for a bowl of chili without beans.

I had expected that Tom Ying, who for years operated Hillsboro's only restaurant, would be upset by our competition but such was not the case. Tom was, I believe, a Cantonese who had lived many years in San Francisco before coming to New Mexico. He was a mild little man, brown and wrinkled, with old-fashioned Ben Franklin spectacles and streaky gray hair. He was devoted to his dog and to Mr. Fred Mister. The dog was a nondescript yellowish-brown mongrel with an abbreviated tail and a strange resemblance to its master. The town boys in fact called the dog Tom. Mr. Mister was a retired gentleman who to the very end was Tom Ying's friend, adviser, and daily customer. His hobbies were playing bridge and making wine and he was highly skilled at both. It so happened on the day of our opening that Tom Ying was undergoing what I learned was an annual ritual—he got his hair cut and he got drunk. All the rest of the year he was sober as an owl but barbering did something to him that called for booze. Tom reeled into our place around ten in the morning, all smiles and giggles, and we gave him pie and coffee on the house and were always friends thereafter. A year later Tom closed his restaurant--aside from Mr. Mister his only customers were one or two ranchers and a few chance strangers-—and took off for Canton, China. Some folks said he took his coffin with him, but Mister Mister said that was all bosh. Others say he returned to Hillsboro, died there, and is buried in the Hillsboro Cemetery.

Hillsboro in 1931 had a population of around 500. No one knew for sure, or how far out into the hills one went to get to that number. Anyway, for its size it had a lot of bustle. There were two hotels, three groceries, a power plant, a drugstore, an ice plant, a one-woman bawdy house and a vigorous boot-legging enterprise. This last was the principal business of the Lett brothers, Herb, Joel and Earl, who were also professional gamblers. The Letts made a very fine moonshine, using clean equipment and the best ingredients. No one suffered from their product except in the normal way of swilling too much, and this was in the time when many men died or became cripples from rotten booze or developed "jake-leg" from a concoction called Jamaica ginger. The Letts were from the South—Alabama, I believe—and Herb, the eldest, was highly regarded, as he should have been. He was a big, happy, generous man, always ready with a smile or a loan or, what is more unusual, both. Every year he played Santa Claus at the party held at the Protestant church. No revenue agent stood a chance against the Letts. The most respectable citizen in town would have given them sanctuary and an alibi. On my first birthday in Hillsboro when I became sixteen, Cook gave me a pint of the Letts-whiskey—a gift to remember.

To get to Hillsboro from the Rio Grande Valley you go north from Hatch or south from Hot Springs to a point almost exactly halfway between. There what is now State Highway 90 (later highway 152) leads westward. It was a gravel road then, and fairly straight for the ten miles or so before the hills are reached. Just before them came Gold Dust, a tiny settlement where placer miners wrested a living, or nearly so, from sluice box and cradle. After Gold Dust there were six miles of twisty road before one came to and went down White's Hill, in low gear, if you were wise, to the valley of the Percha. There you were in Happy Flat, an area of small farms run by industrious Mexican-Americans. Their houses were adobes with flat roofs, vigas sticking out on all sides, doors and window frames painted blue, and chili pods spread on the roofs or drying in strings. There was only one business in Happy Flat, Bill's Camp, a small grocery with a few rustic tourist cabins on one side. Soon after Bill's place, the highway crossed the Percha and became Hillsboro's Main Street..

The Percha rises in the Black Range above Kingston, which is nine miles west of Hillsboro. It is officially Percha Creek, but at times it can behave like a river that has gone out of its mind. A favorite New Mexico pastime was watching the arroyo come down. When after much snow there is a sudden warm-up, the Percha comes down indeed, roaring defiance and pushing before it a four to eight foot wall of water along with tons of tree limbs and assorted debris. Hillsboro citizens then retire to their many hills and hope for the best. There were no floods while I was there

but bad ones before and since.

Floods aside, Percha is Hillsboro's life line. It gives water to the ranches up Kingston way and to the farms in Happy Flat before wandering into Box Canyon and on to the Rio Grande. Because of its meandering, the traveler crosses it when coming into Hillsboro from the east and again when leaving town to the west. Without the Percha we would not have had the giant cottonwoods that made a green of our main street, a cool oasis even in mid-summer. In early spring the cotton from those trees blew everywhere and gave rise to considerable blasphemy, but once that was over and forgotten there was the blessed shade to enjoy until mid-autumn.

Most of Hillsboro's businesses were on the street. On the right, as you came in from the east, were the Phillip's Garage; the post office, plus jewelry store, with George Dissinger in charge; our Tip Top Cafe; the T. D. Slease and Son General Merchandise store, with great wooden doors-which could be closed over the regular doors in the event of flood; the Bird Hotel; Lett's Place, which became a regular saloon after Prohibition was repealed; the Conner Cash Grocery; the barbershop, run by Mr. Olsen; Clarence 'Shorty' Newcomb's newspaper and print shop; and the Calico Cat ice-cream parlor. Farther up the street were the grammar school, the Catholic church, and a few private homes. On the left side, again coming in from the east, were the Dissinger home; Tom Ying's restaurant (Good Eats—Regular Meals'), Percha Hall, the ice-factory, set back a quarter of a block, run by Bert La Driere, the William D. Slease home, the Slease Garage, the Hatcher Hotel (also referred to as the Morrison, for its manager), the Chisholm home, George Miller's drugstore, and a residential area with the homes of the Tittmanns, the Buchers, and Mr. Mister.

Between the Chisholm home and the drugstore a street led southward and upward to the county courthouse, a two-story brick building complete with fancy cupola, the jail, built of rough hewn stone; and on to our second thoroughfare, a street which hugged the canyon wall and ran roughly parallel to the main street. On it were the Protestant church (necessarily non-denominational, since no one sect could muster a majority—or even a respectable minority); the high school; and a number of homes, among them the Miller's, Sullivan's, Elkin's, Nunn's, and Olsen's.

At Percha Hall, back on the street, another road also led off to the south. It passed the assay office, Sadie Orchard's place, and a few other residences before becoming the highway to Lake Valley, Florida, and Deming. Hillsboro to Deming is 63 miles; Hillsboro to Hot Strings, 32. Those distances could be important. Hillboro had no dentist and, during my first year there, no doctor. Even in a Ford an ulcerated tooth or appendicitis could make a trip to either town a near eternity.

The doctor, when he did arrive, was a young man, just starting in practice. His name, as I recall, as Maloney. We became friends when one night during a poker game a June bug wedged in my left ear and began a tattoo I still remember. Doc deftly removed it. He was, I believe, a good practitioner but not above, gulling the gullible. He had in his office, at the Hatcher Hotel, a strange looking machine that had flashing colored lights and which made a whir whir sound when turned on. It was for electro-magnetic treatment of rheumatism and arthritis which, next to indigestion, are the most common afflictions suffered by ranchers. Doc admitted to me that the machine was all humbug, since all that came from it was a charge of static electricity when the patient held the two opposing handles, but he said the psychological benefits were worth the three dollars he charged. Doc later married the Dissenger girl. I should have noted earlier that most of Hillsboro's buildings were made, like, those in Happy Flat, of adobe. Exceptions were the courthouse, the jail, the Protestant church, and a few homes. Good adobe brick makers were valued highly. It is a strange thing, but two men could follow what appeared to be the same procedure yet one would turn out vastly superior bricks. The virtues of adobe construction are well known--easy to heat in winter, cool in summer, and, when well plastered, enduring. I hear that in Santa Fe developers are now building houses of "false adobe", whatever that may be, because the real thing is too expensive. So have times changed.

The Fourth of July came and went. Mr. Edward D. Tittmann gave his usual speech; the baseball team won a glorious victory over the El Paso nine; there was a dance at Percha Hall with the consumption of vast quantities of moonshine and home brew; and the Happy Flat vaqueros held a "riding for the rings." Ring riding is an ancient sport. Brass rings about the size of a silver dollar are hung from inverted 'L' poles. Riders on horseback then charge at them with wooden lances and the one who spears the most rings is the winner. Aside from the dance I saw little of these activities. The curse of a cafe is that the best business comes when everyone else is out having a good time.

The rest of the summer of 1931 passed soon enough. Our enterprise prospered and we began paying of our debts. We toiled long and hard, since running a cafe in Hillsboro was no easy matter. There was electricity from the power plant that Buzz Elkins kept going but we used it only for lighting. We cooked on a wood range which is fine for stove-top dishes but tricky for baking. We got ice for our box from Mr. La Drier's plant where it was made in 300 pound blocks and sold in 25 pound chunks. Water was a chore. Ours came from the town pump in front of Percha Hall and I did the toting, using the old five-gallon tins our cooking oil had come in. The worst task was washing up. We sold a good deal of chili and had nothing to attack the dishes with but hot water and P and G soap. The modern detergents have many foes, but chili dish washers are not among them.

Like New Mexicans generally, I am a fanatic on the subject of chili. Ours was made from a grind of beef coarser than common hamburger. We used the natural beef suet, also ground, and added to it the seasoning--garlic from fresh cloves, oregano, cumin, salt, and chili, which last we found ourselves from sun-dried pods. The beef was added and the concoction slow-cooled for ten to twelve hours. That chili had authority. Eastern cooks in those days sold a mess of hamburger and tomato sauce, with a small pinch of commercial seasoning, and called it chili, which should have been grounds for a libel suit. The pinto beans we cooked separately, with plenty of salt pork, and the chili, with or without beans, was served with an alongside bowl of small oyster crackers. Your true New Mexican requires an ingestion of chili in some form at least once a week. Otherwise he becomes morose and subject to violent outbreaks.

With all the work, I still found time to look around. Hillsboro is in a broad canyon, with hills rising to both north and south. These to the north had the mines, a few then working, like the El Oro, but most long since abandoned, as were the once famous Snake and Opportunity and Solitaire. Thus there were plenty of old shafts and tunnels to explore, with the aid of miner's hats with their tiny carbide lamps. Prospectors still had hopes for some of these old diggings and on occasion we would meet one of them climbing out of the same shaft we were climbing down. There would then be a scurry to get back above ground before the charge he had laid went off.

Box Canyon below town was another favorite attraction. There were miniature water falls there with pools below them big enough for a four or five stroke swim. And the canyon walls were a challenge. We could scale them easily enough but coming down was another matter. Now and then a climber would 'freeze' on a ledge and have to be rescued by ropes let down from above. The Box also had natural caves here and there, another enticement—but one that waned when we found the cave mouths were favored by rattlesnakes seeking enough sun to limber up by.

Besides rattlers we saw, though rarely, the deadly and beautiful coral snake. There were lizards in quantity, an occasional gila monster, horned toads, vinegaroons and, in the irrigation ditches, the 'water dogs', a kind of salamander knowm to the Mexicans as *ziolote* (*ajolote?--ed.*). The birds were mostly hawks, mountain blue jays, western mockers, and cactus wrens. And very common was the state bird, the slightly ridiculous but ever engaging roadrunner. (The roadrunner, for whatever it may be worth, is a member of the cuckoo family.)

I have mentioned that William D. Slease helped us get started. He was used to that sort of thing. He grub-staked most of the prospectors still around and carried ranchers on the books most of the year. After roundup and shipping they would pay up, if they could. If not, they would continue to live on Mr. Slease's bounty.

Slease's General Merchandise was an old fashioned store. There was a dry goods side, to the right as you entered, and a grocery side. In between were such things as cookie racks, pickle barrels, and the long low tables for fresh vegetables. The cookies came in big square tins with glass tops, so the customers could see the marshmallow and coconut topped dainties. The pickles were enormous dills, good bargains at even a nickle apiece. The vegetables were kept cool by sprinklers which the clerks turned on three or four times a day. Vegetables did not keep for long and if the customers turned finicky, as some times was the case, there could be a sizeable loss. Orrin Beale, one of Mr. Slease's managers, would do most anything to come out in the clear. Once when some cabbages did not move, and kept getting smaller and smaller as the clerks kept peeling off the dry outer leaves, Mr. Beale convinced a

miner's wife that the resulting miniatures were Brussels sprouts and sold them for a good price. And when a stalk of bananas started to go bad, he recalled Mr. Mister's favorite hobby and persuaded him to buy them for banana wine. That worked out just fine. Somehow Mr. Mister turned the trick and that banana wine became famous. It tasted like cream soda pop but had the kick of a jackass.

Beale was as a great tease. When the Mexican children came in for javon (Spanish for soap) and asked for P and G., he would say: 'Cabron Pinche! Oh you bad, bad boys!' I will not mention the meaning of cabron pinche—those vulgar words. He would also say to them: 'I have heard very strange things about you lads. A man who knows tells me you have ancestors." Once when I was in his store a rancher's wife Mr. Beale had known from childhood was there and mentioned that it was her birthday. 'Oh', said Mr. Beale, 'then you must have a spanking'!! and he spanked her gently on the posterior, and then said to me: 'Now you give her one to grow on, which I did. We all laughed and went our ways, but that devil Beale was not through with me. Later in the day, he said, very serious: Mr. X (the rancher) has heard of you pawing his wife and he is frothing at the mouth. He swears that once roundup is over there will be a raw-hiding. If I was you, I'd consider emigration. I worried about that for most of two weeks and Beale was unrelenting. I understand Mr. X has sent to Deming for two new saddle--and a whip. He would say, "and well, with any luck roundup will be over by Friday. " Finally, of course, Mr. X and his wife came in for supplies and aside from a cheery hello, paid no attention to me at all. I could have killed Beale, and would have, except he stood me drinks that night all through the blackjack games.

The beef sold at Slease's was bought, a side at a time, from local ranchers, so of course it was grass fed. That made it a bit tough but the taste was good—better, we thought, than the corn-fed beef sold in El Paso. The biggest seller, and cheapest cut was plain round steak. I wonder at these good and simple foods that have become today's high priced delicacies. Round steak is one. Others are cheese and canned salmon, and even pinto beans.

Back to Mr. Slease. He was a giant of a man who, in the old days, had run a saloon, though himself a non-drinker, and it was said that he could manhandle a keg of beer that two ordinary men could not heft. By the inscrutable laws of nature his wife was a tiny, peppery red-head and an incessant chatter. Mr. Slease was a patient man but when her tongue-wagging went on too long, in the store he would say, 'Mother, is there not something at home you should be attending to?' and she would flounce off without another word. Mr. Sleaze had the respect of all and it was a sad day when he died. He had gone out at night at an old mine he had an interest in to answer a call of nature. He somehow lost his footing, fell down a pile of tailings and suffered a concussion from which he never recovered.

Our neighbor to the east was George Dissinger, who ran the combined post office and jewelry store. George was a quiet grey little man with thick spectacles and a fondness for the bottle. His wife was a fine looking woman of strong mind and regal carriage. She fretted at his boozing and there were many contests between them. She usually won, but not always. One day while driving through Happy Flat in their old Hudson she kept plaguing George about his steering. She kept on and on until George said: 'All right, you take the wheel!', and sat back and folded his arms. Somehow they came out unharmed. On another occasion George and some cronies were fishing at Elephant Butte when a heated discussion on religion arose. George ended it by saying: "if Jesus Christ could walk on water, so can I," and stepped out of the boat. He was nearly sober by the time they got him back aboard. For all of their squabbles the Dissingers were fine people and their daughter, Edith, a gentle and beautiful girl.

Another of our business associates was Mr. George Miller, who ran our local drug store and the telephone system. I did not understand the telephone then and I do not understand it now. All I know is that from Hillsboro one line ran west to Winston, one south to Lake Valley, and another east to Arrey. The phones were big box-like affairs attached to the walls, receivers on hooks at the side. There was a small crank on the right side you turned to get your party, the numbers being so many long and short rings. Everyone who had the time and the interest could listen in and an incautious caller was likely to be hoorahed the next day by some eaves dropper. To make a call from one line to another you had to ring the switchboard, which was located in the back of the drugstore. The operator was a large, jovial woman known as Annie. Annie loved gossip and since she listened in on many calls had a goodly supply at her disposal. She was not particular about the English language. One day when I told her about a shootout two rancher families had had over a water-hole her response was: "Well, that is natural enough. They have had a fraud on for years."

Across from the drugstore were, as has been mentioned, the Kalico Kat ice cream parlor, the newspaper, and the barber shop. The Kalico Kat lacking the traditional nine lives, soon expired. Our newspaper, The Hillboro News, came out every Thursday, or was supposed to. The editor, Clarence 'Shorty' Newcomb, described himself in the News as one who believes in future of Hillsboro, and who will work untiringly for its development. The work was not all that demanding since the News was only a four page paper with the two inside pages made up of syndicated 'boiler plate' as were part of pages one and four. Half of the remaining pages were made up of ads which stayed

the same week after week. There were social columns on the social life of Kingston and the Caballo Community (Caballo, Arrey, Palomas), a 'Local and Personal' section on Hillsboro events, and an 'Out our Way' column of what were believed to be editorial comments. As time went on the 'untiring' editor became more interested in helling around with young Bill Slease than anything else and the 'development' of Hillsboro was left more and more to Mrs. Newcomb. The News came out with blank spaces where ads had once been and finally just gave up the struggle. The Newcombs departed for a perhaps greener pasture in Deming.

The barber at first was a Mr. Heath but he soon sold out to a man named Olsen. 'Ole' Olsen's shop had only one chair, and he was partial to bar soap lather, the straight razor, and hand clippers. A few customers had their own shaving mugs on a special shelf but that old custom was going fast. There was a bath room with a modern tub (porcelain, instead of galvanized tin) where cowhands fresh off the range could get a pre-dance soaking for thirty five cents. Ole was a big man with gray hair and a pleasant manner, making sly jokes to those he knew well but not talking aimlessly as many barbers do. Though generally liked he was somewhat of an outsider because of his retiring manner and his Mexican wife. I went to the Olsen's from time to time to eat *pesole* with them and exchange my few words of Spanish with Mrs. Olsen.

I did not share the prejudice some of the 'Anglos' held against our Spanish speakers, who made roughly half of the population. Most Mexican-Americans lived in Happy Flat or in scattered homes north of the Percha. They were descendants of old families that had been in the area for generations. However poor, they were courtly, and I admired their manners, their music, their food, and their love of color. Later on when I was delivering relief groceries around town, the gracious old Mexican ladies made me feel it an honor to enter their homes.

The Anglo-Spanish prejudice aside, Hillsboro folks were free and easy and with few social pretensions. Some--Mr. Mister, the Buchers, and the Tittmanns lived in better homes, and some--Mr. Slease, Herb Lett, and Pete Kinney, the sheriff--were more looked up to, but the measuring stick was not money or position but character. Those who chose to do so could 'put or airs' but they were to be considered more amusing than impressive. When the Tittmann's dressed Alberto, their handyman, in a fancy uniform, white gloves included, to pass refreshments to their guests, Hillsboro smiled and poor Alberto, only 17, was subjected to considerable joshing by his friends.

Mr. Edward D. Tittmann was a lawyer who found little to do between the times that the District court was in session in Hillsboro. In the early days he had been a local hero. The territorial legislature had voted to move the Sierra County seat from Hillsboro to Cutter, a settlement on the railroad below Engle. He had scurried to Washington, D. C. and persuaded Congress to reject the proposal. He was always well dressed, in an old fashioned manner, and kept his white goatee neatly trimmed. When the Letts installed a pinball machine in their bar Mr. Tittmann became an addict and could spend hour after hour trying to improve his score, glaring fiercely at anyone who made a noise in his vicinity. The Tittmann boy, Edward, Jr., went into the diplomatic service, and their daughter, Sandy, was a pretty and popular belle. She was theater struck and directed most of the plays we put on.

I have been speaking of the town folks--the ranchers were another matter. I soon-discovered that they were a separate clan, holding themselves a cut above any non-rancher. And any cowman, no matter how sorry, was a member of the club. The ranches themselves could be huge spreads, like the Ladder, or medium size, like those of Pryor Nunn and Henry Opaganorth or starveling outfits like Andy Robinson's. There were some reservations about ranchers who ran sheep or goats instead of cattle. I did not know any sheep men but I was friendly with the Reids and the McGregors, both highly successful goat raisers. Mr. Grant McGregor served for years as one of county commissioners. His wife was a peerless cook, making dishes from preserved goat meat that were unsurpassed. Goat, properly butchered and prepared, is fine food.

Despite a somewhat disdainful attitude toward town folks, the ranchers were dependent on such merchants as Mr. Slease to keep them going during the lean months. They disliked any reminder of this, however, and sending a bill was considered an insult. I recall Pryor Nunn storming into Slease's one day, waving his account in the air. On his last visit to town he had paid $100 toward his balance due and the bookkeeper had mistakenly entered it as a charge. Mr. Slease calmed Pryor down and called to his bookkeeper: 'John we have made an error. Credit Mr. Nunn with a $100 payment. I doubt that Pryor ever figured out that he was still $100 to the bad.

The rancher kids were vary touchy about what they called their 'rep' and would fight anyone guilty of impairing their dignity, which was easy to do--by declining the offer of a drink or failing to laugh at a joke; or laughing when no joke was intended. Pryor's two oldest boys, Toughy and Bill, were especially quick to take offense and seldom hit town without raising a ruckus of some kind.

Despite this sensitivity the ranchers were good people and noted for their hospitality which was extended to all who came their way. Their friendship once won was enduring. Within their own ranks, their skirmishes were mostly over water rights--a matter, quite literally, of life or death--or what Gene Rhodes called 'clerical errors in the brand business'. Regardless of the glory stories, ranchers and cowboys lead a hard life indeed. In the movies they appear to be on an eternal round up, and the round up is an exciting time. One spring, I awoke to a sound like low

rumbling thunder and looked out on a memorable scene. The streets of Hillsboro were filled on every hand with bawling cattle. The ranchers had teamed up for a drive from Kingston to Nutt Station. Most of the cattle had been free in the wilds for a year or more and they protested every foot of the way. The easiest route led through town and that part of the drive had begun at 3 AM so as to clear Hillsboro before people were astir. Ahead of the herd were three chuck wagons, which gives some idea of the size of the enterprise. When not on round up the cowmen perform many onerous chores, not one of which is at all glamorous—dehorning, treating for scabies, worms and other afflictions; putting up hay and worst of all, mending fence. Their days were long and holidays few, so it is little wonder that when they came to town they whooped it up. One thing that would always bring them in was a good rain. They would then gather at Lett's place for booze and poker, and quite a few would eat at our café, always ordering steak. Whether this mania for steak was to promote business or just habit, I do not know.

The miners were another distinct class. They were of two sorts, hired hands brought in to work such mines as the El Oro and the lonely prospectors. The first accustomed to working for others for a daily wage, the second refusing to toil under any regimen not set by themselves. The El Oro, sad to day, did not last long. Its promoters were three flashy men from somewhere in the east. They were usually drunk during their infrequent visits to Hillsboro. One evening they came to our café and ordered steaks on the side, a dollars worth of French fried potatoes, an enormous serving. Two of them then got into an argument about our counter top, one saying it was white oak and the other insisting it was bird's-eye maple. The third man stood this for a while then said: ' It's no wonder we are having problems all over the place. Look, you goddam fools, it's Congoleum.' Which it was. The El Oro shut down soon after this incident. It was said to have been nothing but a tax fraud dodge from the beginning.

Prospectors, unlike cooks, are naturally happy and optimistic, always confident that today's lead will guide them to tomorrow's fortune. In the few cases where a strike was made, the 'fortune' was soon spent and the prospectors returned to the hills they loved more than money. Prospectors were highly dependent on their burros for transportation of their equipment and supplies and, most important, for companionship. There were many burros in and around Hillsboro and their raucous brays and bally ways afforded much amusement.

One of our old prospectors was so fond of his animals he was known as Burro Jim. Jim was a devout Christian who somewhere along the line had come across the Swedenbergian theories which held that Heaven was divided into seven parts, one above the other. Jim had no doubt but that he and his burros, two jacks and four jennies, would makes it to Heaven but the worry of his life was whether they would all get together in the same stratum. When a little fuddled with drink, Jim would collar anyone who was handy and pose his question: can a human soul in, say, layer three, go down to seven, or can a jackass in seven ascend the celestial ladder up to three?

Jim was not the only eccentric. There were many others, so many that it sometimes seemed that those who were not a bit odd were in the minority. There was a miserly old couple whose name I forget who spent the daylight hours collecting any kind of junk they could carry. It was not to sell—that would have made sense—but to keep. I later took relief groceries to them. Their shack was filled with pieces of garden hose, worn-out car carts, rusted nails, stacks of paper and cardboard, and discarded tires. There vas a narrow pathway through this collection to a tiny area where they had a sagging bed, a plain wood table, a kerosene stove, a few chipped and dirty dishes, and nothing else at all. The windows had been boarded over and the odor was indescribable.

Not far from the misers lived Mrs. Young. She was reputed to have money and was, though well stricken in years, a sharp dealer. Until, that is, the Russians came to town. They were two brothers who were able mechanics. We knew them as Bill and Al—their last name was unpronounceable—and were quite sure they were Russians, though they could have been Polish or Lithuanian.

Bill and Al got the idea that Hillsboro should have a stamp mill, a set of machinery for reducing raw ore to powdered form which can then be treated to produce concentrates. Their big problem was money, and Al decided that the answer was for him to woo Mrs. Young, then in her late 70s. He was successful enough to get from her a promise of cash once the knot was tied, so work on the mill began.

Mrs. Young was not one to take another's say-so where her interests were involved, so she located a tree with a perch from which she could spy on the building of the mill. That was fine until the day her rheumatism was acting up. While making her upward skinny, she slipped and fell onto the ground. Al heard her screeching and ran to the rescue. Lucky for her, she was only mite bruised —until Al said: 'And vat did you think you vere—a skvirrel?' The mill was never completed.

Another well-known Hillsboro character was Sadie Orchard. Her husband had been stage driver on the Lake Valley-Hillsboro-Kingston route and on a few occasions Sadie had substituted for him. Those exploits were later greatly exaggerated both by Sadie and by writers seeking local color, leaving the impression that Sadie had driven the stage for years, fighting off outlaws and Indians every foot of the way. In any event hers was indeed a free spirit. She later turned the Orchard home into a call house and grog-shop. Although she developed the shakes it was said

that to the very end she could pour out a drink without spilling a drop. The Lett brother's superior moonshine pretty much ended one part of her business and hard times did the same for the other. The only girls' she could get were poor used-up creatures who could not command much of a price.

By the time we arrived in town the only prostitute was Don's girl. Don was a professional gambler and his fancy lady worked only when his luck went sour. She used to come to the Tip Top regularly for morning coffee. We had long talks about life in general and she loved to recall the days when she had been a choir girl and a leading member of the Epworth League.

I should note that any observer from out of state would probably have included us among the town's curiosities. I had acquired an old grease stained ten-gallon hat of the sort favored by Hoot Gibson and a three-inch belt with a buckle made of cast iron. Cook, who was stoutly opposed to cigarettes, had given me one of his large-bowled crooked stemmed pipes, which I puffed on with due solemnity as I wandered around town. Somewhere I had chanced upon a sweatshirt of a violent orange shade, which I wore on cooler days, and my trousers were made of corduroy over several years they had faded, to a sickly off-white.

After the busy summer of 1931, I found the fall even busier. Mrs. Patty Nunn, our superintendent of schools and wife of Pryor Nunn, the rancher, told us the law required that I attend school. Cook grumbled a good deal but Patty said I need not go to study hall or take anything not absolutely required. That meant I could work the breakfast trade, have an hour off at midday and get out an hour earlier in the afternoon than the other kids.

The high school, as I have mentioned, was on the street that hugged the canyon wall to the south of town. It was a stucco-finished building, recently re-plastered in a pinkish-tan tone, and had two wings of classrooms with an auditorium between. It was by no means fancy. The privies were still outdoor affairs. The ground behind the school was so steep that our playground was down along main street, between Sullivan Grocery and Slease Garage.

There were basketball goals there and we played with an outdoors ball with thick protruding ribs, which made for crazy bounces. I rejoiced to be back in school after a year's absence. There were about forty students at Hillsboro High School, a principal and three teachers. The principal when I enrolled was an uncouth individual from the rural South, a monster of a man whose size was out of all proportion to his learning. He had the ugly habit of extracting matter from his oversized nose, which with a snap he would deposit on the ground--one had to look sharp in his vicinity. He made us line up each morning outside the school doors, boys and girls in separate lines, so he could count us like so many sheep. An early incident led to no love between us. One day in his geography class we came across the Sault Ste. Maria which he called the Salt and I called the Soo. Being in the wrong was not to his liking. In any event he departed at the end of my first year and we rejoiced. His successor, Mr. Witcher, was a true gentleman, who endured my class through graduation.

Our teachers, principal aside, were all young ladies, most of them fresh out of college, were very good and some only so-so. I liked then all and had few problems. A general favorite was Miss Abbie Lewis, daughter of the famous Preacher Lewis of Mesilla Park. She was mad about the theatre, directed all the school plays, and later went to New York City to work in drama and, later, television. Another was Miss Mary Redick.

Miss Abbie did everything with a great flair and gave the impression she was always on stage. Others suffered by comparison. One I remember was entranced by the sound of squealing brakes. Because of the hills all around, there were plenty of those and every time one screeched, she would drop everything and listen. She also loved the smell of gasoline—all in all rather a weird type. Miss Abbie's successor had the strange name of Verla Booze. Miss Booze also professed to like the theatre and coached us once in a horrible one-act play, which we took to a contest in Silver City. It involved a mummy which crumbled to dust when its sarcophagus was opened. As soon as we got to Silver City, Miss Booze disappeared and did not show up again until the contest was over—a wise move, I believe, because we came in last of all.

Being a teacher in New Mexico in those days was no great fun. The school board members would drink and smoke and hell around but the school teacher was held to standards that only a saint could meet. The young ladies had to agree to spend most of their weekends in town, to be home at a certain hours, to abstain from alcohol and tobacco, and so on. Even our new principal, Mr. Witcher, had to buy his pipe tobacco on the sly from a clerk sworn to secrecy. Human nature is not to be denied, however, and all the board's petty rules did was make conspirators out of normally forthright individuals. Not being stupid, we kids knew pretty much who was doing what, and with whom, but we made it a point of honor to keep such knowledge to ourselves.

The town kids had one great advantage--they could go home for lunch. The ranch kids who drove back and forth each day over roads that no sane person would willingly travel, appeared to enjoy the fare they brought, but it seemed poor to us indeed, mostly cornpone or biscuits and salt pork with, at slaughter time, a concoction known as son-of-a-gun. Son-of-a-gun is made of what is politely called 'liver and lights' of slain cattle—actually bits of tripe and so on mixed together and stewed. I found it a revolting dish, in the same category as brains, which no right-

thinking person would eat. Some of the kids had curiously stained teeth. This was not, as I thought, from chewing tobacco, but from living in areas where there was fluoride in the water. The brown stains were unsightly, especially to the young ladies, but they covered healthy teeth.

It is after entering high school that I made first true friendships. Among the girls I favored Marjory Morrison, whose grandparents managed the Hatcher Hotel. She was an Irish beauty and I was only one of the many in love with her. We got along famously but she, alas, was partial to Dick Nunn, Pryor and Patty's youngest son, and Rupert Chisholm, whose father drove the mail route from Lake Valley. My favorite pals were Leroy "Skipper" Sullivan, Sam Elkins, and Jiggs Robison. Skipper was the youngest of the three Sullivan brothers and was slightly built but handsome, with fine features and jet black hair. Quick and lively, he was our best basketball player and full of the devil. Skip liked to juggle words around and one day taught us his version of a Stephen Foster favorite. Once a week we would assemble in the school auditorium and hear a talk from Mr. Witcher and sing a few songs. On this occasion, the other kids did not sing out and the four of us were heard, loud and clear, bellowing "My ass is in the cold, cold ground." Mr. Witcher was not amused.

Sam Elkins also had two older brothers, Chandler, a number one cowboy who was always in demand; and Buzz, who operated the town's power plant. Sam was a big, amiable, lad who was, among other things, a talented banjo player. Unfortunately, he was subject to epileptic seizures. He worked at times at Slease's meat counter and one day had a convulsion while dressing out a quarter of beef. It was a gory scene, but Sam came through with some minor cuts. We never discussed Sam's problem, but it was understood that on any trip together, someone else would drive. I have heard that epileptics, like people who suffer migraines, are generally quite smart. That was certainly the case with Sam, though it must be said that all of the Elkins, including their widowed mother were quite bright.

Jiggs was the fourth of our quartet. His father, Andy Robinson, was a colorful character, whose generosity was matched only by his love of whiskey. Andy had once had a grocery in town but his inability to say no led to too much credit outstanding and the enterprise foundered. He had a small ranch two miles east of Hillsboro and there started a dairy, with the advertising slogan, "You can't beat our milk, but you can whip our cream." The dairy was soon in difficulties, since Andy would keep on delivering its products to people who would not pay. He could not abide the thought of the children of the poor going without milk. Andy had a great laugh and a bellow so big it was said he had not seen his own shoes for the last 20 years. And he wore his pants slung so low that a poor Mexican followed him around for week at a time hoping to make off with his pants.

Jiggs was not taken with dairying. So he lived the cowboy life and enjoyed the 'high lonesome.' Every summer he would work as a fire guard up on the Black Range. After the rains broke, usually in mid-July, he would return to town with his accumulated wages. Like his father, Jiggs was incurably generous and we would often plot against him for his own benefit, borrowing money from him while he was on a spree and returning it when he was again sober. He had an old Dodge coupe that he got to drive fairly often. It had a gear shift unlike that of most cars and when he let someone else drive we would often find ourselves going just the opposite of our intention. I had learned to drive in Cook's 1928 Chevy, the successor to the Star, in Hot Springs and Hobbs. Cars were still distinctive in those days and we took pride in how many we could identify on sight. We were content with our old machines until the day a former resident returned to Hillsboro in a new Cord Phaeton. It had front wheel drive, concealed headlights, and was a smooth cream in color, with red leather upholstery and two polished chrome exhaust pipes on either side of its enclosed 8-cylinder motor. And it was a convertible. No other car looked like much after that. We still think of it as the masterpiece of auto making.

It was taken for granted in the Hillsboro of those times that boys who had reached puberty-would go on an occasional spree, get into fights from time to time, and gamble if so inclined. It was also taken for granted that they would work when there was work to be done and conduct themselves like men. The work part was always there, day after day, and the jollification was restricted to Saturday nights. It was my custom and that of other lads to visit Lett's place then have a slug or two of whisky, and play poker or blackjack in the back room.

Whiskey in a shot glass, with a beer or water chaser, was the standard drink. Anyone who asked for a cocktail was considered effeminate or crazy and in any event cocktails were not to be had. The poker games were strictly orthodox: draw; with jacks or better to open, and straight stud. There was none of the namby-pamby business of wild cards, of such aberrations as spit-in-the-ocean or high-low. I was not a good poker player, one reason being that I never had enough money to force a freeze-out. Occasionally when I had gone broke another player would say, 'Well, if you like I will make a cow with you". That strange expression meant that he would stake me to a stack of chips. If I lost them, that was that; if I won we would split the profit. Poker has one rule I did not understand, and still don't. That was that you must never check a cinch hand. That could only apply to stud, of course, where you could tell from the exposed cards if your hand was a certain winner. Since poker is a game of odds, luck, and guile, it has always seemed to me that the holder of a cinch hand who did not bet was taking a chance. The other players might also check and he would lose money he might have gained. There is no use, however, in fighting a custom so

generally accepted. My favorite game was not poker but blackjack, which was played for a minimum of a dime per hand. The usual dealer was a little old man known, for no particular reason, as Gentleman Jim. Jim was suspected of cheating but that was never proved. There is no need for crookedness in blackjack dealing since the odds are all with the house.

Most of the fights which occurred began at one of the dances at Percha Hall. Our dances took place once a month, if an orchestra could be found, and were either 'old, style' or 'modern'. There were few square dances but when 'old style' was played we did the schottische, the varsuviana (which we called 'put your little foot) , the rye waltz, the 'heel and toe', and to the tune of the Zacatecas March, something akin to the polka. The 'Modern' orchestras imitated as best they could the likes of Guy Lombardo, Ben Bernis, Red Nichols, Artie Shaw, and Benny Goodman, for this was the era of the big and great bands. 'Stardust' was the favorite piece, but there were other splendid tunes that helped make the early '30s America's golden era of popular music: 'Deep Purple', 'Smoke Gets In Your eyes', 'That Old Black Magic', The Object of My Affection, and many more. Most of our fights resulted when someone ventured to dance too often with someone else's lady fair. The contestants always went outside the hall to fight and since one or both were generally on the tipsy side the bouts were soon over, the common result being a declaration of undying friendship by the participants. A feature of those days was the unabashed exuberance. Life was hard for most of us so when the hour came for a bit of fun we went all out. There was little of that morose Puritanism that whispers in one's ear, "watch it! You are having too good a time."

I will not endeavor to discuss matters between the sexes. That a certain amount of tom-catting went on we all knew, but with very few exceptions discretion prevailed. I was aware, for example, that my friend Jiggs was remarkably successful in making what our forefathers delicately termed conquests. And I was also aware that one reason for his successes was that he never, never talked about them.

Anyway, there we were--growing boys in our late teens who drank and gambled and fought and swore. Yet we were not what are called 'juvenile delinquents'. We did not lie or steal or pick on anyone not our equal. Most of us labored long and hard at man-sized jobs. We abided by the customs, and since these did not condemn our vices we lived in the open and enjoyed our pleasures without remorse. Among the joys besides those already mentioned, were such events as barbecues, informal rodeos, road shows, and turkey shoots. The biggest--and best--barbecues were, as I have mentioned, those at the Ladder Ranch, eight miles northeast of Hillsboro. And it was there that many of the calf ropers and would-be doggers tested their skills. There was little bronc busting, since that was a serious part of the rancher's day-to-day business and not something to be saved for an exhibition.

The road show was still an institution. Small companies four to six people travelled a regular circuit, carrying their simple scenery with them. Their repertoire included several comedies and one or two ancient melodramas. There was little subtlety in any of them. The hero and villain, heroine and villainess were clearly identified from the outset, and there as always the addle-pated rustic, usually in a red wig, who always managed to outsmart the city slicker (i. e., villain). We were not overly critical and the troupe played to gratifying applause each of the five nights of its Percha Hall engagement. Between times we had our own plays, such as those directed by Miss Sandy Tittmann, at the high school, by Miss Abbie Lewis. And on one less-than-memorable occasion we got up our own minstrel show. Minstrels are done in black-face, of course, and there is always a Mr. Interlocutor who asks the questions, and Mr. Bones, the end-man, who answers them. Part of our dialogue, though it is hard to believe, ran like this: Mr. Interlocutor: "Tell me, Mr. Bones, did you take a bath last night?" Mr. Bones: "No, why--is there one missing?" Mr. Interlocutor: "Mr. Bones, do you see that airplane way up there? How would you like to be up there with that airplane?" "Well, I'd rather be up there with it than without it." Mr. Interlocutor: "Mr. Bones, do you know what the chicken said when it saw the fruit in the nest?" Mr. Bones. "I do indeed. The chicken say, 'Why, look at the orange marmalade.'" The saving grace was that Hillsboro folks, starved for entertainment, went en masse to whatever was presented and considered the performers worthy of plaudits just for appearing at all.

Our box suppers, for reasons which escape me were usually held over in Lake Valley at the old schoolhouse. After the bidding and eating were over, we would dance to the tunes of an old-time fiddler. Kingston provided the favored picnic areas, especially west of the village where a number of springs added to the flow of the middle Percha. For the more adventurous there were pack trips into the Black Range especially to Hillsboro Peak, where a lookout tower gave these daring enough to climb it an unsurpassed view of the mountain wilds.

The turkey shoots were held before Thanksgiving and Christmas and were on the barbaric side since live turkeys were used. The unfortunate birds were placed in crates from which their heads and wattles protruded. The contestants paid a fee of one dollar, which entitled them to three shots at a turkey's bobbing head. If blood was drawn, they won that bird. With the possible exception of the guinea hen, the turkey is the most perverse and stupid animal known. If the creek is in flood the turkeys will huddle in a draw. If a freeze is coming on they all find perch in a tree. Still and all, I thought it shameful to use then as targets. Akin to the turkey shoot, and even more savage, was the

chicken pull, in which live chickens were buried up to their necks. Men on horseback would then attempt to lean down, seize the chicken's head, and twist it off. I saw that only once, which was more than enough.

While it should not be included among our entertainments, many of us looked forward to the occasional services at our tiny Protestant church. An old story said that the church had been built in the 1890s with money from Sadie Orchard's girls. I considered that a likely story. There was no resident minister, so we had to rely on the missionary zeal of clerics from the outside. Of these the most regular and best loved was Preacher Lewis of Mesilla Park. Preacher, and so he was called by people over a vast area, was one who truly approached sainthood. Gentle, simple, kind and generous, he brought solace to thousands. A one-time Baptist who had become an Episcopalian, he ministered to all who came to service—and to many who didn't—and was ecumenical long before that term became popular. At some point in his busy life he had learned to knit and always had with him his needles and a sack of yarn, from which he made mittens and comforters for the poor, and caps for all the babies he christened. He was a great friend of Mr. Fred Mister, with whom he generally stayed during visitations to Hillsboro. At times he would forget the deceptive nature of Mister's home-made wines and his subsequent sermons would lose in coherence. To us this was forgivable error in judgement and another proof of his true humanity.

Preacher had the habit when talking to young men or boys of gripping one by the arm. With the painful self-consciousness of youth we found this embarrassing and would try to avoid any meeting with Preacher on the town streets. Once caught there was no help for it. As he earnestly inquired about your well being, Preacher would check your biceps. And at the end of the chat, which to the captured lad was agonizingly long, Preacher would remark: "that is a fine arm you have there", and go on his way. He continued his missions until near the end of his days. He died at 78 and is buried in Mesilla Park.

Aside from the sometime sermon, our church services consisted of a few short prayers and any number of lusty hymns. The latter were mostly, I believe, of Methodist origin and were notable for their militant swing. One we favored ran as follows:

"I'm living on the mountain underneath a cloudless sky, praise God!
I'm drinking from the fountain that never, shall run dry, Hallelujah!
I'm eating of the manna from a bounteous supply,
For I am dwelling in Beulah land."

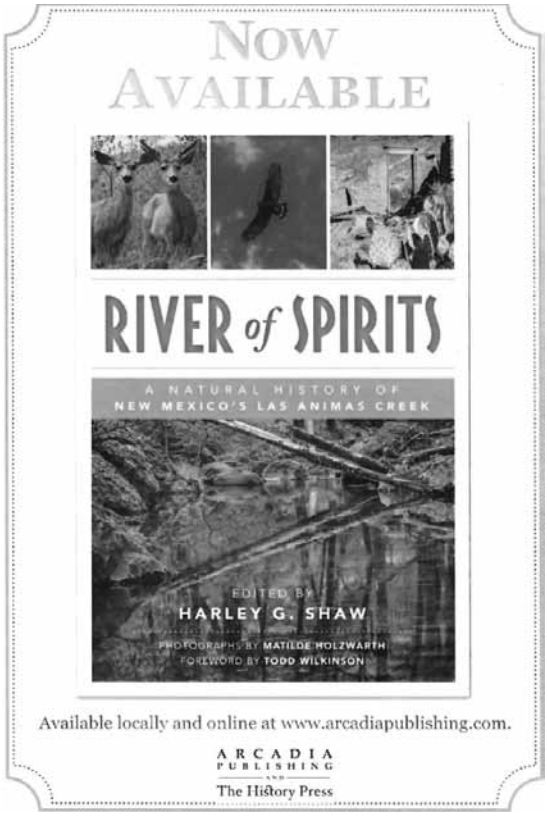
That, along with Onward Christian Soldiers, Love Lifted Me , The Fight Is On, and something I recall as Reapers, Reapers, were the ones we sang most often. I have no musical talent but have always been fond of a lively tune. While in Hot Springs a local assayer with time on his hands used to entertain us with song and guitar and from him I learned many cowboy ballads. Little Joe the Wrangler, I Ride 'em/Old Paint, and The Streets of Laredo were the most popular. others were The Zebra Dun, The Trail to Mexico, The Roving Gambler, My Pretty Quadreen[?], The Strawberry roan, and Billy Venero. This last, which was my favorite has many verses recounting the story of a brave cowboy who sets out to warn a settlement of an impending Indian attack. One stanza ran:

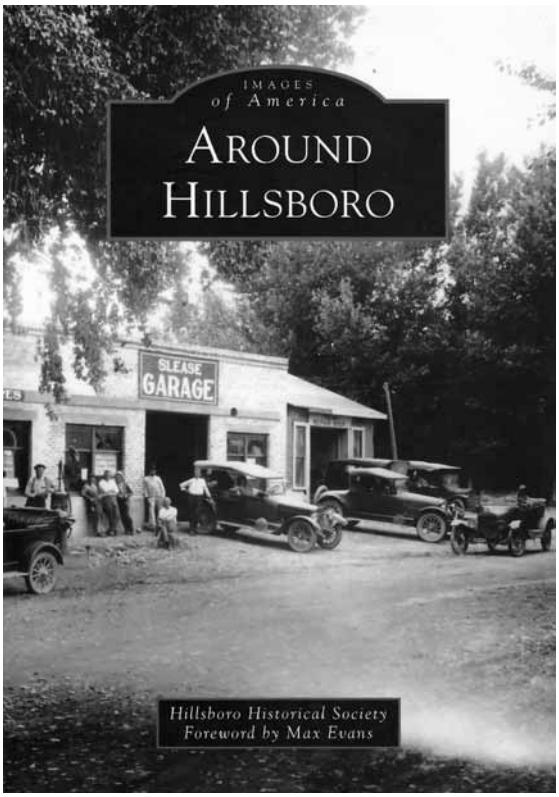
Not a moment he delayed, when his brave resolve he'd made.
"Why, man," his comrades told him when they heard his daring plan, "You are riding straight to death!'
Said Venero: "Save your breath."
"I may never reach the Cow Ranch, but I'll do the best I can!'
Billy did not make it alive, but his horse did,--with a message, written in blood, that saved the settlers.

Besides the cowboy songs--and it is quite true that singing to a herd will help keep the cattle quiet (and the cowhand awake!)--the ranch people were partial to many lugubrious compositions. With radio reception poor in our area the chief reliance was upon the old wind-up Victrola. Most ranchers had but few records, so during an evening's visit you would hear, over and over again, such mournful ballads as The Letter Edged in Black, In the Baggage Car Ahead, The Little Rosewood Casket, and They Cut Down the Old Pine Tree.

Museum Events

We are open Friday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The Sadie Orchard-Tom Ying display opened April 15.





MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIPS ARE ON A FEBRUARY 1 TO JANUARY 31 BASIS. APPLICATIONS WE RECEIVE AFTER NOVEMBER 15 WILL BE CONSIDERED 2018 MEMBERSHIPS VALID FROM FEB 1, 2018 TO JANUARY 31, 2019.

The Hillsboro Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization that preserves and shares the history and artifacts of the Hillsboro, Kingston and Lake Valley. Members may participate in many activities, including fundraising, collections and conservation, oral histories, education and interpretation, special events and programs. Member benefits include the quarterly newsletter, priority registration for lectures, programs and field trips. Dues are $25 annually for individual or family and $50 for business memberships. Please mail this completed Membership Form, along with your check made payable to Hillsboro Historical Society, P. O. Box 461, Hillsboro NM 88042.

Member Name _____

Address_____

Phone Number (_____) _____

Email _____

Enclosed is $ ____ (from Feb to Feb) individual or family membership

Enclosed is $ _____ annual business membership that includes ad in newsletter.

Additional Donation $ _____ Gift Membership $ _____ for _____

Newsletter sent (check one): _____ Digital by email _____Hard copy mailed

We prefer to send the newsletter via email. If we have no email address for members, we will mail them a hard copy. Special volunteer interests:

Museum ____. Newsletter ____. Landscaping ____. Programs____. Events ____. Publications ____.