



El Cronicón

Official Quarterly Publication of the
SANDOVAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Lorraine Stubblefield

Editor: Roy C. Skeens

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December, 2017

It's Party Time- Sunday, December 10th—2pm

*Time to
eat, drink
and be
merry
with
friends, old
and
new.*



*Please
bring
your
favorite
dish to
accompan-
y the
ham and
turkey*



President's Message

2017 started out by celebrating 40 years of the Historical Society being in existence and honoring past presidents through the years, as well as the membership. In February, Joe Sabatini spoke about the Pueblo of Santo Domingo and raids that took place in 1919 due to claims of cattle rustlers. Throughout the year we honored the Agustin Wagner and Trinidad Sanchez families, Pascuala Bernal and Juan Griego, Margaret & Andrew Mora, Manuel L. Aragon and Ida M. Miller families and extended Benjamin Minchey and Marcelina Velarde. What we learned was that the majority of citizens of Spanish Mexican descent originating in the Southwest are not immigrants to the U.S. and many families came to New Mexico with Juan de Onate in 1598. Their dual (Indohispanic) ancestral footprints in New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Texas were planted long before the U.S. took the land from Mexico in 1848. This fact separates them from sister U.S. Spanish-surnamed groups that came later as immigrants. Lolita Pena Christobal families date back to the late 1500's from Santa Ana Pueblo was also honored by the children. Her brother Juan Bartolo Pena was murdered during the Bataan Memorial Death March and he also was honored. We learned about descendants who may carry a genetic mutation called the Common Hispanic Mutation. Our November meeting we were honored with Bill Mast, Magistrate Judge who spoke about the different court systems in New Mexico and a documentary of New Mexico's Federal Judicial System the history, issues, and human drama that shaped New Mexico was also viewed. For some of you that were unable to attend our meetings you were missed and I hope that the scheduled programs for 2018 will spark your interest to attend. Thanks to all of you that are responsible for the success of our Society. I look forward to the scheduled programs for 2018 and continuing to expand our knowledge of untold stories.

My very best to all of you in 2018!

Lorraine Dominguez Stubblefield

SEPTEMBER MEETING

**Lolita Cristobal 95 years old
and a treasure to her family and
community.**

Robert
Cody
here



from
Canada,
sang in honor
of Lolita and also in honor of the sol-
diers of all the wars. He played a special
song for Lolita. It was our honor to hear
Lolita herself give a prayer to everyone
at the meeting.

Manolo , her son, talked about
her, her father Manuel, and her hus-
band and uncles. Lolita's father Manuel
was cacique in 1946, and did not speak
English. He went to KAFB with tribal
council and gave his testimony on war
and of losing Juan, his son. Juan was
killed by Japanese in the Phillipines
during the Bataan Death March.
Manual said that the sons enlist to pro-

tect the motherland and their people.
That is exactly what they did.

Elders in Santa Ana still con-
tribute to language, and Lolita is a cen-
tral figure in passing the language on,
and also one who has the knowledge of
ceremonies and societies that are an
important part of tribal life. Women are
taking the lead in moving the tribes for-
ward, and Lolita is right up front.

Viola Archuleta, daughter of
Lolita spoke eloquently and lovingly
about her mother. Lolita was youngest
of 6 siblings, and 3 brothers served in
the military—with Juan who died in
WWII. Lolita was raised in the tradi-
tional role of a woman in the tribe -food
prep, core values, womens role, and her
father spent countless hours teaching
her the protocol, verses, prayers, songs
and the history of her community. She
was taught to foster peace, well-being,
and the health of the community. Lolita
attended school thru 8th grade, but her
life lessons would be equivalent to a
PhD. In 1950 she married Cristobal,
who became a self -taught silversmith
and also was a farmer. He died in 1957,

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much too soon. Lolita was left to raise 4 children ages 2 to 7. Lolita worked, maintained cultural obligations and insisted on her childrens' educations. I think she must be very proud of them.

Members of the language program and talking circle at Santa Ana spoke of the knowledge she gladly shares and what a resource and "treasure" she is. She is their dictionary—what to say, how to say it, and how to say it better. She is not stingy but shares her knowl-

edge readily. She advised, comforted, nurtured, and taught community ways. She has kept language alive, traditions, and core values. She was taught to share, nuture, be kind. She often said "We can never catch up with past, there is no going back, just move forward." "Never forget where you come from, who you are." She is an advocate for her people, is knowledge keeper, and a source of strength for her people. Her daughter praises her sharp memory and wealth of knowledge.



Her grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren are here to celebrate her life, along with her community members. Our meeting room is full – what a testament to a life well lived. Lolita herself hopes to live to 100...what a blessing that would be..

Her community NEEDs her, so do we all.

reported by Lorraine Dominguez Stubblefield

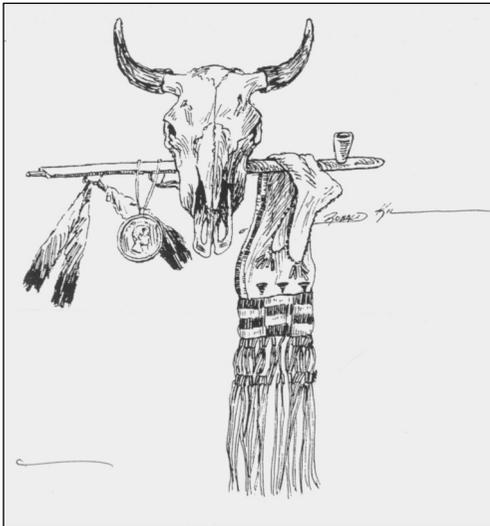


Illustration - Rpn Kill

Gary Lee Williams



Age 72, passed away Monday, November 6, 2017, following a long illness. A Native of Illinois, following school and service in the Marine Corps, he and his wife moved to New Jersey, where he worked in data processing and information technology. He and his wife retired to Corrales, NM in 2003.

Gary was active in the Sandoval County Historical Society, serving as President from 2007-2008, as well as the Friends of Coronado Historic site, in which he served as Program Chair, and later as Vice-President. He was also an active member of the New Mexico Artist Blacksmith Association and often demonstrated smithing at local schools, and historic sites.

Gary is survived by his wife, Barbara; daughter, Katherine (Ms. Blaise Ganzel) of Ann Arbor, MI; son, David (Barbara) of Toronto, Canada; and two granddaughters.

www.sandovalhistory.org/

Check out our **web site** that Ben Blackwell puts together for all current information on the Society:

OCTOBER MEETING

Nora Chavez, Community Engagement Specialist, and Joyce Gonzales, Staff Genealogist presented information regarding the Baca Family Historical Project.



History of the Camino Real and the impact on the distribution of

Northern New Mexico families is an important factor in the occurrence of the Common Hispanic Mutation that has been found in the descendants of Cristobal Baca and his wife Ana Maria Ortiz. Cristobal traveled the 1500 miles from the El Paso area back to Northern NM in 1598 after the Pueblo Revolt. Nora noted that special credit goes to the women who mostly walked the Real while they also cooked, cleaned, had children, tended the ill and buried the dead.

In the 417 years since Cristobal came to NM, the unknown maladies they brought with them, their genetics, and culture have all woven together to make the mystery of CCM, cerebral cavernous malformation, a devastating illness.

The Angioma Alliance has been created in March 2017 to

enhance awareness and work with the families who have this disease, as well as their physicians. Abnormal blood vessels in the brain can cause stroke-like symptoms and seizures. UNM and Leslie Morrison have worked to identify the gene and try to identify families at risk for the disease. Nora has included a handout to help families determine if they are related to either Baca or Ortiz, and thus at risk of having the disease. DNA testing may be provided if you can show that you are related to this family. Nora is available to help you, as well as help being available via the website: bacafamily.org. **Joyce Gonzales,** a staff genealogist for the **angioma alliance project**, is herself affected by this disease. She reports that it took more than 15



years to make the diagnosis, but she was stubborn and persisted until the reasons for her illness were found. Her 4th great grandparents married into the Baca family. She had symptoms of a stroke, but they ycame and went, mostly affecting her arms and a burning pain in her spinal cord that lasted months and would return. Many of her cousins have the CCM as well.

The Bernalillo area is composed of many of the descendants of the original Spanish settlers that came to NM, in particular Manuel Baca and his sister Francisca, and thus may have a higher percentage of occurrences here. Santa Rosa has also been found to have a high concentration of CCM. Pena Blanca had a

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Spanish settler Louis M. Caveza de Baca who has been found to have had the gene.

Symptoms may include focal seizures (primary symptom), headache, weakness, and bleeding into spinal cord. It is important to have this genetic information to give to your doctors should this be found in your family.

Several medications in the pipeline that may help with diagnosis and treatment.

The Angioma Alliance group can help with getting tested and in scheduling follow up with doctors.

If you would like to research your ancestors to confirm or discover if you have a connection to Cristobal Baca and Ana Maria Ortiz, contact Joyce Gonzales.

If you would like to schedule an outreach or presentation, just contact Nora via email..

Joyce Gonzales Staff Genealogist
 505 473 1622 *joyce @*
angioma.org

Nora Chaves Engagement
 Specialist 505 450 5902 *nchavez*
@angioma.org

reported by Karen Lermuseaux

***CORRECTION TO THE
 VILLAGE OF ALGODONES article by Sam
 McHaney in the
 September issue***

- 1. The railroad reached
 Algodones in 1880.***
- 2. The Spanish governor,
 Bautista
 de Anza served as governor
 of the Kingdom of New
 Mexico from 1778- 1788.***

December, 2017



Ophelia Rinaldi age 84, passed away on Wednesday, October 18, 2017 surrounded by her family. She was born March 26, 1933 in Las Cruces, NM to parents, Fred and Ofelia Sandoval. She is preceded in death by her parents; her son, Alex (Hacky) Rinaldi; sisters, Mary Louise Lucero and Sylvia Gale; brothers, Benny and Rupert Sandoval. She is survived by her brother, Fred Sandoval; and sister, Josephine Sprigg; her children, Marc and Evelyn Rinaldi, Nick Rinaldi, Gino Rinaldi and Michelle Rinaldi and partner, Anna Atencio. She had 11 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. Ophelia graduated from Our Lady of Sorrows High School in Bernalillo. She attended the University of NM and received a BS and received her Master's in Social Work from Denver University. She worked most of her career providing services and advocating for seniors, behavioral health and Veterans. She retired from the VA Hospital in Albuquerque. She had a passion for advocating for the rights of Older Adults and Women. She was a founding member of the National Hispanic Council on Aging; and inducted into the AARP New Mexico Hall of Fame and New Mexico Aging and Long Term Services Department for her volunteer advocacy work on behalf of New Mexico seniors.

French Mortuary obituary

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ANN RUSTEBAKKE passed away peacefully in her sleep at her home in Placitas, New Mexico, on the morning of September 30, 2017, at the age of 89. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on May 9, 1928, Ann is survived by her son Leif, her daughter Siri, and her granddaughter Tiana. She was definitely a Taurus.

Ann resided in Sandoval County since 1962. A warm, caring woman, she looked at the world with an open heart and mind and was a friend to many. She was politically active, gave freely of her time to numerous causes and contributed to many charitable concerns. She lived her life resiliently, joyously, deliberately, and on her own terms.

She worked with the Bernalillo School District and served on the board of the Bernalillo and Placitas libraries. She was the first editor of the *Sandoval County Times-Independent*, served for three years on the Sandoval County Planning and Zoning Commission, and worked for two years as Chief Appraiser in the county Assessor's Office. She was also an appraiser for the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology.

Ann had an abiding respect for local wisdom and the natural world. She worked with many local organizations addressing water and agricultural issues. She was instrumental in getting the Bernalillo Farmer's Market off the ground.

As a business owner, she operated the Canyon Quarters in Jemez Springs for the American Youth Hostel. She also owned a unique landmark business—Chile Hill Emporium—sited near where the new bridge is being constructed on Highway 550 in Bernalillo. Her store specialized in Native American art, chile, and other New Mexico-related books and items.

She had a deep appreciation for all kinds of art and expressed herself artistically as a jewelry-maker. She was an avid collector with a keen eye for detail. And she was a good cook.

Ann was a longtime subscriber to the Placitas Artist Series, a member of the League of Wmen Voters, the AAUW, Friends of Placitas, the Sandoval County Historical Society, the Albuquerque Corral of Westerners, and a frequent contributor to the *Signpost*. She worked for ten years as a host for the Albuquerque Foreign Visitors Committee.

"Later, Mom. You had a good run. You touched many and you will be missed." —LEIF RUSTEBAKKE^o

Courtesy Sandoval SignPost and the ABQ. Jnl.

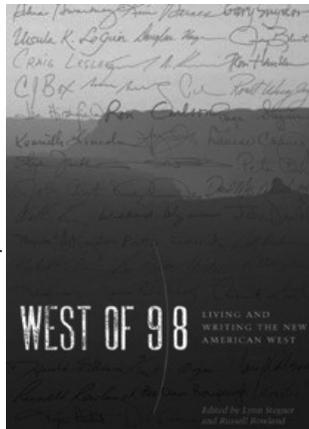
Ed note: Ann was active in the Society; donating the iron sculpture that graces our entrance and helping choose the Chinese Pistacheo tree and plants for the Westside andscaping

December, 2017

Book Review

WEST OF 98 :Living and Writing the New American West, edited by Lynn Stegner and Russell Rowland. University of Texas Press (Austin, 2011). Three-hundred ninety-two pages, with an introduction by Lynn Stegner and biographies/bibliographies of contributors.

West of 98 is a collection of essays (and a few poems) about living in the West - taking into account its history, culture, mythology, and landscape. The editors solicited work from authors who write primarily about the Western United States: "Among other things, the initiating letter suggested that what we were after was a kind of Greek chorus that might define, remark upon, and otherwise characterize the West as each of us grew to know it, and, equally important, the West that is still becoming." Sixty-seven writers responded with works ranging from a few pages to twenty, and on a variety of subjects, from memoirs of growing up on ranches or



farms to humorous essays about the vestigial myth of the cowboy in today's society. There are quite a few familiar names here -- *Larry McMurtry, Rick Bass, Louise Erdrich, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams* to list a few -- but also a good selection of essayists not so well known to the mainstream. After sampling their talent in this anthology, you'll want to read more of their work.

The "98" in the title refers to the isohyetal line, which is the meridian on the globe that cuts through the Great Plains, marking the approximate point where rainfall drops below the 20 inches per year required for dry-land farming. If anything defines the region known as "The West," it is aridity. John Wesley Powell became famous for being the first to run the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, but Eastern politicians and captains of industry ignored his reports about the inability of the region to support families on the 140 acres allocated to settlers through the Homestead Act. The boosterism of Manifest Destiny with its false promise that "rain follows the plow" created enormous hardship for many settlers and resulted in the Dust Bowl and denuded range land, "cow-burnt" by overgrazing. Rain -- or specifically, the lack of it -- is one of several themes to run throughout the essays.

Another is the notion of wide-open spaces and natural beauty. Immigrants were drawn to the West by the opportunities it

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afforded, from free land to the harvesting of its natural resources: first the beaver for the millinery industry in the East, then mineral wealth ("Thar's gold in them thar hills"), then beef, and now water itself (New Mexico imports water from Colorado and exports it to Texas). The West also "sells" its picturesque landscapes. Tourism has become an important component of the Western economy, as has the film industry which capitalizes on the sublime beauty here. At its core, the West still appeals to the American imagination as a place with room to grow, where conventions such as class and social standing have less influence over success than hard work and self-reliance, and where it's possible to reinvent oneself by "lighting out for the territory" like Huck Finn. As one of the contributors notes, "The real West is somewhere you never actually get to, it's always where you're going."

Another theme that recurs in the book is the notion of change. The West was settled by Euro-Americans in little over a century -- and for centuries before that, changes defined the lives of the original settlers, Native Americans, then the Spanish colonialists, and finally the Anglos whose arrival brought industrialization and signaled "the closing of the frontier" in the late 1880s. What many of the contributors to this volume address is the extent to which the West is still changing -- rapidly! The population is growing and many issues here are evolving, sometimes contentiously: land use, water use, the extraction of natural resources, and the role of local and federal government in the manage-

ment of all these things. While some of these writers cast a nostalgic eye on the past, many others point out the incongruities that result from past myths trying to dovetail with present realities. Many of the essays grapple with what the region is becoming -- or might become, if only we manage the changes intelligently and steward our resources. One thing is certain: today's West is a complicated place.

There are many voices represented here: men, women, Native Americans, Hispanics, seasoned Westerners and newcomers. Likewise the tone of the essays varies widely, from deadly serious to playfully humorous. Here are some examples. "I have trouble with the idea that there is a kind of person call a Westerner. There have been days when I wanted to fire my .357 Magnum through the latest spate of photo books, all called something like *The Last Cowboy*. I have also toyed with burning down any art gallery that displays paintings of mounted Indians framed by rainbows, outlawing small statues of Kokopelli and mutilating any pink coyote displayed in front of a home." —*Charles Boden, No Direction Home*

"All this pursuit of happiness... [has] been allowed to us by the land, all along, throughout the whole American country but latterly in the West, the deep mineral wealth, the petroleum, the swift, clear cobble-bottom rivers,... the sunny lawlessness of population scarcity,... the veritable melee of social class fluidity, unlike anything Back East... After we'd either killed or married any Indians, we had easy access to unlimited resources, opu-

lent possibilities for mistakenness, and, in consequence, a cultural *wealth unmatched since the Athenians*.” —Louis B. Jones, *It’s Like they Tilted the Whole Country East to West. And Everything that wasn’t Tied Down Slid*

“I have spent all my life moving between families, countries, and languages. I still wander back and forth between my two worlds, and the third: a land that is sacred, undefined, without name, and resides at the core of my being. My heartland, my homeland. . . . This other land/other space/no state needs no naming. To experience it is the only testimony of its true nature. And this is what the West is to me. —Denise Chávez, *Entre Mundos/Between Worlds*

You may not enjoy every piece you read -- but as mentioned, the writings are brief, and if you don't like a particular essay you are bound to find the next one engaging. The editors have succeeded in compiling a "Greek chorus" of myriad voices that create a mosaic of commentary about our very unique region of the United States.

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BERNALILLO WAS FIRST

by SAM McILHANEY Writer-
Historian Rio Rancho, NM

Things they don't teach you in U. S. History class ...

THE BERNALILLO AREA WAS THE SCENE OF SEVERAL “firsts” IN AMERICAN HISTORY

1. Here the Spanish language was first spoken in a community for any length of time — two years — by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and his army (1540-1542).
2. Here horses grazed for a length of time — two years — between 1540 and 1542.
3. The first trial-for rape ever conducted in what we now call the United States was conducted in the Bernalillo area at one of the pueblos and was presided over by General Vasquez de Coronado.
4. From the Bernalillo area, whitemen (Spaniards) first penetrated into the very heart of what we now call the United States reaching into present-day Kansas.
5. The first gunpowder made north of present-day Mexico was made in the Bernalillo area when Coronado sent one of his captains, Francisco Barrio Nuevo, to “Soda Dam” in the Jemez Mountains (forty miles NW of present-day Bernalillo). There, Captain Nuevo obtained sulphur from which a crude gunpowder was made.
6. One of Coronado’s captains, Hernando Alvarado, and some men marched east from the Bernalillo area and near a river known

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today as the Canadian River, proceeded to hold the first whiteman's buffalo hunt in North America. Also, for the first time, the buffalo met the horse which was eventually to bring about the almost complete destruction of the great herds.

7. Some of Coronado's men, headed by Captain Garcia Lopez de Cardenas, were sent to explore to the west. From the Bernalillo area, this group were the first whitemen to see the awe-inspiring wonder of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River.

A Brief History of Hunting in New Mexico

*By Matthew J. Barbour, Regional Manager,
Coronado and Jemez Historic Sites &
Sherry Hardage, Research Associate and Docent,
Coronado Historic Site*

Throughout the thousands of years of human occupation in the New World, hunting has been a cultural expression as well as a means to survival. Archaeological evidence includes not only projectile points and bones, but fire-pits and other landscape features transformed by human activity. In New Mexico, there are four broad periods over which archeologists often track the changes in hunting strategies: Paleoindian, Archaic, Pueblo, and Historic.

The Paleoindian Period began with the earliest known occupations of our state around 11,000 years ago, and lasted till 8,000 years ago. During this timeframe, Native American hunters used spears thrown with the help of atlatls (throwing sticks). These were

tipped with large flaked stone spear heads known as Clovis points, named for the New Mexico town near the site where the first ones were found. The hunters also flaked stones for knives and scrapers that were used for butchering and processing hides. Over time, the style of the Clovis fluted point changed. Later examples of points with longer flutes were found near Folsom, NM, and points without flutes near Plano, TX.

These Native Americans hunted very large animals, such as mammoth and bison, in groups. Often the Paleoindian hunters herded the animals into a pit, box canyon, or over a cliff to kill more effectively. Occasionally these hunts resulted in the deaths of more animals than they could eat or preserve. This overkill, when combined with climate change, resulted in the extinction of many of these animals.

With fewer large game animals people focused on grains and other plants that could supply a larger portion of their caloric needs. This marked the transition into the Archaic Period. Hunters perfected techniques that were easily utilized during plant foraging activities. Their movements coincided with times of the year when seeds and nuts would be available, or when herds of animals were most likely to be in certain areas. While looking for grass seeds and tubers along a riverbank, nets could be used to catch fish or frogs. When collecting piñon nuts in a forest, the thrown spear could be used to dispatch nearby deer or peccary.

Archaic tool-making technology changed; spear points became smaller and were mounted on lighter spears that could be

thrown further. The style of projectile points grew more recognizable and localized reflecting regional variation and preference. New technology was also added to the tool mix: stone seed grinders –better known to archaeologists as *manos* and *metates*. These allowed Native Americans during the Archaic Period to efficiently process the seeds and grasses.

As populations grew, environmental pressures made reliance on plants ever more crucial. Toward the end of the Archaic Period, people adopted agriculture and began living in more permanent camps, with pit structures and storage features. The Pueblo Period began with the adoption of pottery, ca. AD 600, and later the bow, ca. AD 700.

Farmers, during the Pueblo Period, developed a greater dependence on agriculture for subsistence, with corn (alone) possibly providing more than 80% of their caloric intake. These people built large multi-storied villages that we call pueblos today. However, not all Native American communities transitioned to agriculture; many, such as the Apache, continued to follow a hunter/gatherer lifestyle often trading with and sometimes raiding their neighbors.

Rabbits and other vermin were an increasing problem for the Native American farmers. Community based drives or “rabbit hunts” became a key subsistence strategy for preserving fields and providing a source of protein during much of the year. Winter was the time when fields lay fallow and large game such as deer and buffalo could be pursued. These hunts were blessed with ritual dances,

many of which are still performed in Pueblo villages today.

Hunted animals were used not only for their caloric value but often to fulfill a spiritual role. Birds were killed for their feathers that could be used to perform curses or prayers. Predator claws and teeth provided strength and protection. Consuming a large powerful animal could allow the hunter to become imbued with the spirit of the creature.

The Historic Period began with the arrival of the Spanish in 1540. European diseases, warfare, and migration had dramatic consequences for Native American populations. Similarly, new technology and domesticated animals had a major impact on traditional hunting practices.

The introduction of food animals - pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, and cows - provided Native Americans a constant source of animal protein. In addition, horses gave both nomadic and sedentary people a previously unimagined mobility. Plains Indians and the Navajo quickly adopted the horse to become proficient riders, pursuing game (especially bison) over greater distances. Their long-standing tradition of raiding Pueblos for grain and high-status goods became more efficient with the horse providing a fast-getaway. To them, raiding and hunting were not mutually exclusive activities.

Although the Spanish possessed firearms, the lack of gunpowder limited the use of these weapons during the decades of Spanish and Mexican domination. It was not until the early 1800s this changed with the

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import of rifles and cartridge munitions over the Santa Fe Trail. As a result, the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of commercial hunting and trapping. American mountain men and Native Americans focused on game primarily for the sale of hides to markets in the east. Taos became a major center for this trade.

The widespread use of firearms and overhunting for commercial exploitation led to a drastic reduction in the availability of game animals during the late 1800s. In New Mexico, elk and bison became endangered –if not extinct. Other animals like the pronghorn and beaver experienced a major reduction in their population and ranges. Hunting was no longer a viable subsistence activity.

In the early twentieth century, the conservation movement began under Teddy Roosevelt and led to government management of public lands. Hunting transformed into a recreational sport with trophies as the goal. Elk and bison were reintroduced and others, such as pronghorn, were redistributed throughout the state. Non-native species, such as Persian Ibex and Namibian Oryx, were also brought in to bolster hunting opportunities.

Today, hunting in New Mexico consists of a wide-array of both traditional practices and modern sporting activities. Commercial hunting continues in a highly controlled system but no longer has a wide market for pelts or meat. Native Americans still hunt for spiritual reasons, recreation, trophies, and sustenance, but hunting as the primary means of subsistence is no longer viable.

Autumn in Bernalillo, New Mexico: Pueblo Traditions and the Pull of Querencia - *by Joseph Moreno*

Turning east onto U.S. 550. I see the old cottonwood trees that line El Rio Grande. river and lifeblood of the peoples of my region. Their leaves have turned hues of yellow and orange. I am headed to la casa de mis padres. the home of my parents. As I cross the bridge. I see the beautiful Sandia Mountains, the crest ablaze in color.

My querencia strikes, and feeling a sense of home. the place from which I draw my strength, I tune my iPod Nano to “Una casa de adobe” by Los Blue Ventures.. Pulling up to a stoplight, Sandia Mountain looms before me. I think about how this large landmark twins dark-pink at sunset, resembling a watermelon cut in half. In my county. we orient ourselves in reference to the mountain; as I continue toward it, I reflect on my small town in central New Mexico. I grew up in Bernalillo. which was founded in the 1600s and just surpassed 10,000 residents in 2010. What a blessing to call this place home. just as my ancestors did before me.

This time of year is special. Autumn in Bernalillo. like in other parts of New Mexico, is enchanting and exhilarating. As the air turns crisper, the cherished scent of roasted green chile fills the air. This smell, like the smell of

fresh rain, is like no other in this high-desert landscape.

As I turn north onto NM 313, I think about Bernalillo's ritual and agricultural calendars that come to an end in early August, only to begin anew. This past August, we celebrated the 324th annual Fiesta de San Lorenzo by performing the Matachines dance. I completed my annual promesa (promise) as a Matachines dancer, a very fulfilling act as it's such a beautiful tradition.

We ask for blessings and in turn we participate in whatever way we can, whether by dancing, praying, playing violin or guitar, feeding the community, or having the statue of the saint reside in the home for the year, along with many other ways that people make promesas. We also thank God and San Lorenzo for his intercession, for the blessings we have already received. Our promise ties us to the earliest occupation by the Spanish in this beautiful valley. Our ritual and agricultural calendars thus end and begin with the conclusion of la fiesta.

By then the harvest is in full swing, with the community celebrating the staple crops of corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, and, most importantly, chile. We roast and peel Hatch green chiles to prepare for the winter months. We hang them up in strung ristras, allowing them to dry in the cooler autumn air, thus turning red for use in the chile paste that is crucial to so many of our dishes. We make tamales and posole and other essentials of

nuevomexicano cuisine in the fall and winter. For dessert we have biscochitos (spiced cookies) and natillas (custard).

A beloved autumn tradition of our region is El Dia de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead on November 1. Practiced in many different ways in the greater Southwestern United States and Mexico. Dia de los Muertos is the devoted welcoming the return of those who have departed us here on Earth.

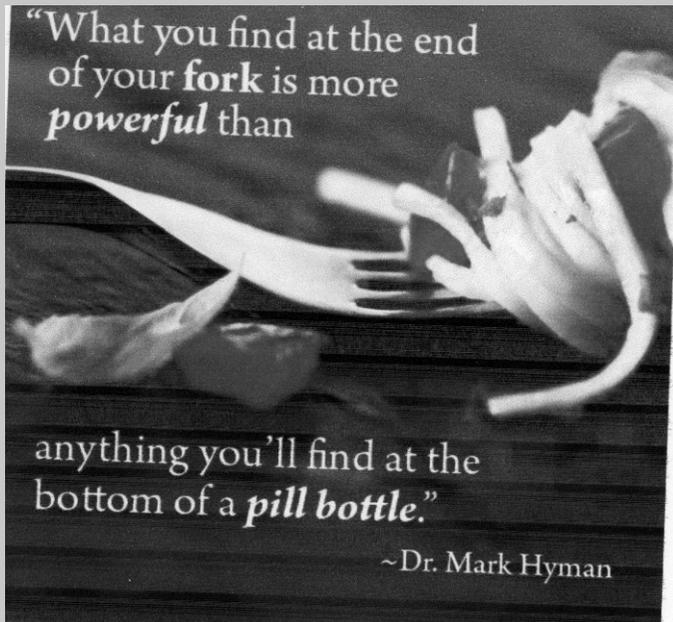
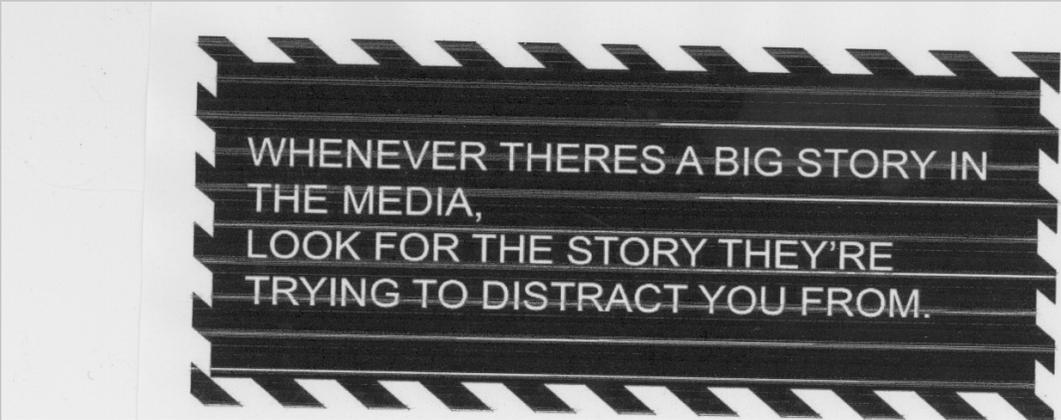
: As I arrive at my parent's house, I can't help but pause. This home, una casa de adobe, was constructed by my great-grandparents. A small American flag placed in a flower pot adjacent to the front door wafts through the crisp, cool air. I walk in and greet my parents. "What's for dinner?" I ask.

To my heart's content, my mother responds, "Posole and red chile."

Joseph A.J. Moreno is a PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico focusing on nuevomexicano language and cultural revitalization. He is also a dancer in Bernalillo's Matachines dance tradition.

This article appeared first in the Smithsonian Institution's Folk Life Magazine

The Lighter Side



The Lighter Side

*A tip of the editor's hat to
our contributors*



one of the nice things about life is the way we must stop whatever we are doing and devote our attention to eating.

Pavarotti



Sandoval County Historical Society
PO box 692, Bernalillo, NM 87004

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