

El Cronicón

Official Quarterly Publication of the
SANDOVAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Lorraine Dominguez-Stubblefield

Editor: Roy C. Skeens

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SEPTEMBER MEETING

Sunday September 10th 2pm



LOLITA P. CHRISTOBAL
Santa Ana Traditionalist

The Pueblo Women have earned a much deserved place in the history of the Southwest and will be remembered through the eyes of Lolita P. Christobal, Traditionalist age 95, from Santa Ana Pueblo. A pioneer who blended her life with Mother Earth based on a foundation of core values will be honored by her son Manu Rainbird, family and friends. He will share her achievements and hardships. He will share how she has made their lives better and the many changes that she has experienced in her lifetime, while still maintaining the cultural traditions passed on by her ancestors. Her strength has been one that can be compared to her warrior husband who together blazed many trails or her brother who was a POW (Purple Heart Recipient) and hero. Juan Bartolo Peña, Pvt., U. S. Army served with the Headquarters Battery 200 Post Artillery during the Bataan Memorial Death March and was murdered by Japanese guards during the March. He will also be remembered by the family. The resiliency of the Santa Ana's dates back to at least the late 1500s and many pueblo families continue to strive to keep Mother Earth blooming in peace and harmony.

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President's Letter

As previously reported on May 30, 2016, the Sandoval County Historical Society and the Sandoval County Commission dedicated the placement of a Veteran's Pictorial Memorial at the Sandoval County Administrative Building. The memorial features more than 5,700 names and 1,500 photos of Sandoval County Veterans who served from the Civil War through the Vietnam era.

Sandoval County has made a proposal to locate a new Veterans National Cemetery to Sandoval County. On March 16, 2017, a letter was sent from the Congress of the United States to the Honorable David J. Shulkin, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in support of Sandoval County's proposal. We are pleased that the Veterans Pictorial Project that was done by the Sandoval County Historical Society was also referenced to make their case in justifying locating the Veteran's Cemetery to Sandoval County. Some of the photos are accompanied by stories of particularly heroic acts carried out by some of these brave individuals. One story of great historical significance is that of Mexicana Chiquito and Muchacha, two Native American women who in 1886 served openly in the U.S. Army Scouts, thus becoming American's first G.I. Janes.

On April 6, 2017, Colonel David C'deBaca and I made a presentation to the Sandoval County Commission to ask for their support by a Resolution to the Veterans Administration and our Congressional Delegation to seriously consider the Sandoval County Historical efforts to name the proposed Veterans Cemetery site Nal-Kai, after the two Native American women from the area of Torreon and Ojo Encino, who in 1886 were enlisted and served openly in the U.S. Army Scouts (Special Forces). The Sandoval Commission agreed to submit a Resolution to Congress and to the Veterans Affairs in support our efforts to name the cemetery after the Scouts.

If this cemetery is located to Sandoval County and if it is named Nal-Kai, we feel it would also be a tribute to all women serving in the military and would also be the first cemetery in the nation named after a woman. This cemetery would be the ultimate resting place for ordinary men and women veterans who sacrificed and gave so much for our freedom.

At that same meeting, we requested funding to produce CD's to distribute to all the pueblos, municipalities and school districts to be shared within their communities. Don Chapman, Chairman of the Sandoval Commission agreed to appropriate funds from within his District to make certain this can be done. In the meantime, we have also met with the General Manager from KNME and are soliciting their support to help us edit the CD and refine them before it is produced for distribution. They have agreed and we are also hopeful that they will consider airing some or part of it to reach a higher viewing audience.

Lorraine Dominguez Stubblefield

MAY MEETING

Andrew & Margaret Mora



Andrew Mora, Our Lady of Sorrows Spanish Choir Director for the past 42 years and his wife Margaret were honored on May 21, for all their contributions they have made through music. In attendance to help honor them were the choir members from Our Lady of Sorrows, Willie Arriola, Uncle and well known musician from Placitas, Gilbert Jaramillo, nephew and musician from Bernalillo who plays in the band Str8 Shot.

Andrew and Margaret and family

There was plenty of music, singing and food to be shared. The Mora's commitment to play for Sunday masses, Weddings, fiestas and funerals has spanned over those 42 years in Bernalillo and other communities. Andrew also directed the choir, whose Comanches music was recorded for Smithsonian Folkways in 1992. Andrew and Margaret were also instrumental in the Posadas and in teaching the youth from the parish to dance the "Indita" for Posadas de Los Comanchitos in Bernalillo. These reenactments symbolized the spiritual aspect of their faith, as

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well as celebrations that honored relations of war and peace with the Comanches. The Mora's continue to be active at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church. Michelle Padilla shared the following about her dad. My dad has worked many different jobs from working for Pepsi, to retiring from Yellow Freight. He even owned his own Paint and Body shop in Bernalillo for several years. One of my fondest childhood memories was getting off the school bus at my dad's shop and him walking me across the street for an after school treat of fresh sopapilla's from La Casita. He has always been a hard worker and had made a good living for his family. My dad enjoys many things, including traveling with my mom, us daughters and their friends, restoring classic cars and of course, music. Some of our earliest memories included going to mass at Our Lady of Sorrows and listening to my parents play the mass with the Adult Choir. The people in the choir became like family to us, as we grew up playing with their children during choir practice and other fun choir and church activities. They often organized and participated in very traditional Catholic events around the community. These included things like the Posadas and Comanchitos tradition prior to Christmas and our beloved San Lorenzo and OLOS Fiestas. My dad's musical talent has brought much joy to so many in our community. My mom also plays the guitar and has been a member of the choir right along with my dad for the past 42 years. They have been a wonderful example to all our family and are the

most loving, supportive and doting parents and grandparents. Our family is appreciative of the SCHS and all who turned out to honor and acknowledge the contributions of our parents.

Reported By Lorraine Stubblefield & Michelle Padilla

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

October 8th

**Angioma Aliance
Hispanic GenievMutation-
Baca family Project**

November 12th

**Documentary - Taming
New Mexico** -The History,
Issues and Human Drama that shaped
New Mexico's Federal Judicial System

December 10th

Christmas pot-luck

www.sandovalhistory.org

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

JUNE MEETING

MANUEL L. ARAGÓN AND IDA M. MILLER

By M. Roanie Aragón



The Aragon family



On Sunday, June 11, 2017, Manuel L. Aragón and Ida M. Miller were featured in a presentation sponsored by the Sandoval

County Historical

Society. They were both natives and life long residents of Sandoval County. Manuel was born in Cuba, NM in 1914 and Ida in Pines, NM (in Cochiti Canyon) in 1915. Manuel's parents were Jose Jeronimo Aragón and Eutimia Lucero. Ida's parents were Robert Henry Miller and Minnie Sofia Minchey. Like many people of that time, they had humble

beginnings and strength of character, which led to their accomplishments.

Ida's educational beginnings were in Peña Blanca, Cerrillos and Bernalillo, NM, where she graduated from high school in May 1932. After twenty years of summer, evening and weekend classes, Ida graduated from St. Josephs College in Albuquerque, NM in May of 1952. However, because of the need for teachers, she was able to begin teaching right after graduating from high school. Her first assignment was in Mesa Portales which is west of Cuba, NM. She boarded with a family who lived approximately two miles from the small one room school building where she taught

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grades 1 through 8 and rode to school on horseback. Her next assignment was at Porter Landing in the Jemez Mountains at the confluence of the Rio de Las Vacas and the Cebolla river. It is approximately eight miles up the Guadalupe River from Cañon, which is about half way between Jemez Pueblo and Jemez Springs. After a couple of years there, she taught one year at Corrales elementary school. She was then assigned to Bernalillo where she taught at the Catholic Elementary School, and from there she taught the rest of her forty-three year career at Roosevelt elementary school in Bernalillo.

My dad was very supportive of my mom through all the years that she continued her college education and I remember, at the age of twelve, attending her college graduation ceremony at the Kimo Theater in downtown Albuquerque. I should mention that there were many local teachers who did the same. In the late 1930's my parents had met again in Bernalillo where they both then worked. They were married in 1938 and their first residence was an upstairs apartment in the Porter Mercantile Building which was located next to the New Mexico Timber Offices. At that time, the entrance was what is now the entrance to the soccer and little league fields. When I was born we lived on Bernalillo's main street south of the downtown area. In 1941 we moved to the house on Montoya street where my parents raised a family of five, myself (Roanie),

Sandra, Arbie, Kiki and Skip.

My mother was the 2nd child of Robert Henry Miller and Minnie Sophia Minchey. Her grandfather, Benjamin Minchey, and a partner, owned a lumber mill in Cochiti Canyon. Her older sister Mary was born in Peña Blanca, NM in 1913. She married Amarante Sandoval from Cerrillos. Her younger sister, Ethel, born in 1921 in Alamitos, NM, which is between Santa Fe and Cerrillos, married Abel Lopez. The youngest sibling, Benjamin Miller, born in Hagan, NM, which was east of the San Felipe Pueblo Casino, married Evangeline Wiggins. My great-grandparents, Benjamin Minchey and Marcelina Velarde, were from Utah. In the late 1800's they traveled south through Arizona by horse and wagon, then east to Silver City, NM. After a short stay there they continued north through NM. One of their children was born in Mogollon, the next, my grandmother Minnie Sophia, was born in Magdalena, NM in 1896. They settled in what is now Sandoval County and my grandmother attended the school in Peña Blanca when it first opened in 1908.

My grandfather, Robert Henry Miller was born in 1871 in Mason County, Texas. He met my grandmother when he was driving his cattle from Clayton, NM to Prescott, AZ.

Thanks to Fra Angelico Chavez' "Origins of New Mexico Families," we know the origins of the Aragón name in New Mexico back to 1640

June, 2017

when Francisco Lopez de Aragón was among the soldiers escorting the wagon-train from Mexico City to Santa Fe. Only one of Francisco's descendants survived the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, a daughter, Ana, married to Francisco Campusano. No male Aragón's are mentioned in the roll call of the survivors taken at Isleta Pueblo and later at El Paso, TX. Almost all baptism and marriage records were destroyed during the revolt. The next mention of the Aragón surname was in the reconquest of 1693 when Ignacio de Aragón brought his family to Santa Fe. When his first wife, Sebastiana Ortiz died, he married Luisa Baca and settled in Bernalillo, NM about 1710. He had a two sons, Nicolas and Salvador Manuel. A Felix Aragón, from a different family, also came in 1693 and may have settled in the Rio Arriba area.

We were able to trace my father's family back to the late 1700's. Antonio Aragón and his wife, Juana Paula Lucero are listed in the 1850 census of Santa Ana County, living with their son Francisco Estevan and wife Manuela Gutierrez. Antonio is listed as age 80 (b. ca 1770) and Juana Paula as age 75 (b. ca 1775). Francisco Estevan was age 50 and Manuela Gutierrez age 35. One of Francisco's sons, Teodoro was born in 1828 and had married Florentina Lucero in 1848. Teodoro died before 1856 and the only child we have found, Manuel, was born about 1850. We believe they were living in Nacimiento at the time of his

birth. Manuel married Carlota Ortiz from Costilla, NM, about 1871. They resided in Nacimiento (Cuba), NM and had at least eight children. Their second son was Jose Jeronimo, born in 1878. Jose Jeronimo married Eutimia Lucero about 1900 and they had four daughters and two sons. Jose Jeronimo died in the Spanish Influenza epidemic in 1918 and a baby son died a few months later. My father, Manuel, was the only surviving son. The four daughters were Casimira who married Don. R. Hammond; Donaciana who married Tomas Nieto; Antonia who married Jorge Sanchez; and Lucia who married Eliseo Salazar. When his father died, my dad was sent to live with his mother's brother, Tio Benjamin Lucero and his wife Tia Carlota. They lived outside of Cuba on a small farm and goat ranch. His responsibility was to care for their large herd of goats along with two dogs. At age eight he was taken to the Catholic boarding school in Cuba, NM where he earned his keep by tending the animals, winter and summer. He completed first through eighth grade in 5 years and then went to Placitas where his mother lived with her second husband, Augustine Lucero. Soon after, his brother-in-law, Don Hammond got him a job at Porter Landing in the Jemez Mountains where he first met my mother who was teaching there. His job was to care for the bunkhouse where the New Mexico Timber Co. loggers lived. He

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washed large cooking pots and pans and kept the building clean and livable.

He worked his way up to manager of the NM Timber retail outlet called The Lumber Bin, which was located on Bernalillo's main street where the Bernalillo City Hall now sits. In the late 1940's Manuel went to work for Lopez Lumber Co. in Albuquerque on Bridge St. where the National Hispanic Cultural Center now sits. He commuted to work for about 20 years and in the 1960's he and my uncle Abel Lopez started the A & L Lumber Co. in Bernalillo. Later he ran the yard by himself. My father was very civic minded and it was during this time he was elected the third mayor of Bernalillo from 1951 - 1953. He was also involved with the Lion's Club as well as the Rotary Club where he served as president of both. My father passed away in 1997 and my mother a year later in 1998.

I would like to thank the Sandoval County Historical Society for keeping the history and heritage of our County alive. It represents those of us who are proud of our community. It allows us the opportunity to keep our culture, which was afforded to us by those who came before us, alive. The Historical Society is a jewel of our community and I am forever grateful to the hard working individuals who keep it running.

THE VILLAGE OF ALGODONES

by SAM McILHANEY

The Village of Algodones is a loosely scattering of homes and a few businesses located north about 7 miles from Bernalillo (NM). The two-lane-highway which runs through part of the village was originally number Highway 85. Before the 1960's, when the interstate highway system got going, 85 was the ONLY way to drive to Santa Fe and on to Denver. The village is split in two halves, divided by the railroad which came smack-dab through the middle of the village in 1880. The beautiful Sandia Mountains look down at the village on the east and the Rio Grande flows quietly by on the west. The Indians. When the first white men saw this valley (the Spaniards) they liked what they saw and eventually settlers came in. The first Europeans was an army led by Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, with 336 soldiers, 559 horses, several hundred Mexican Indians. They were looking for a legend: The Seven Cities of C!bola (Gold). They got to this valley in

1540, moved in with some of the pueblo Indians, and after two years of looking, even all the way to present-day Kansas, they went back south.

Settlers and a permanent government will not happen until 1598. The capital, Santa Fe, was established in 1610; Bernalillo, 1690's; Albuquerque, 1706. All under Spain's control. Coronado made sure that careful records were kept of his 4000 mile trip. He had three chroniclers with him: Pedro de Castañeda, Juan Jaramillo and Pedro Mendez de Sotomayor. My Dad always said the best all-around climate to park yourself is right where I write this — at the foot of the Sandia Mountains. Of course, he was talking about New Mexico only . . . north, the winters are too cold; south, the summers are too hot.

Sure enough, the puebloños knew exactly the best place to live — just as my Dad always said. Coronado's chroniclers wrote that when they arrived in this valley, there were six pueblos on one side of the river and six on the other side, strung out from today's Algodones south to present-day

Los Lunas one ruin is preserved at Bernalillo.

The Indians of the pueblo villages were farmers and were basically peaceful — but they could fight if they had to, as the Spanish found out. The Spanish settlers who became neighbors to the Puebloños were usually poor, humble folks. The settlers farmed what the Indians farmed, ate what they ate and built adobe houses like their neighbors. Outside of this valley were tribes which were nomadic and raiders. In fact, to some tribes, raiding your neighbor was very much part of their culture. The enemies of the pueblo people naturally became the enemies of the early settlers. From the east, and from the south, came the Apaches. From the north, the Utes and from the west, the Navajo. What were these raiders looking for? Food, especially in the fall when the crops were harvested; there was plenty to steal: squash, corn, beans and pueblo girls as wives and slaves. They would not expect to find horses at the pueblos until the late 1600's or early 1700's. Prior to that time, the Spanish

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would not allow the Pueblenos to have horses — but, of course, the settlers had horses and mules and donkeys. However, only the wealthy had horses. The poor farmers usually had a donkey.

In 1680, the pueblos joined together. Prior to this time, they never did much of anything jointly. Matter of fact, before the Spanish arrived, the pueblos made war against each other from time to time. Upon the arrival of the Spanish, they put a stop to that. In 1680, the history books call it the Great Pueblo Revolt, the pueblos jointly rose up, and killing as many men, women and children as they could find, took over the capital, Santa Fe. Many Indians and settlers died during the revolt. A great many, however, fled to safety at El Paso. About 400 settlers were killed, including 22 priests, about 1500 got to El Paso.

After several attempts, the Spanish finally reconquered the Province of New Mexico under the leadership of Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de León y Contreras, Marquez de la Nava Braziñas. Yes, all of that is one gentleman ... The Spanish

were back in control beginning in 1692

Santa Fe has a grand fiesta every September. You probably have heard of it or you may have even gone to it a time or two. Most people think it's just a time to party or maybe celebrate harvest time from "the old days." The whole thing is on TV showing the burning of "oldman gloom." Even the TV folks usually don't say what the REAL reason is for the fiesta. It is to celebrate the Reconquest of New Mexico in 1692 by De Vargas. Within a handful of years after that, the fiesta was started and has been going on each fall ever since.

I told you all about De Vargas so that you would much more appreciate what I am going to explain now. In 1704, an Apache raiding party was harassing the tiny communities of Bernalillo and Algodones. De Vargas had plenty of experience fighting both pueblo Indians and raiders. Off and on after he got control of Santa Fe, for several years, he had to put down resistance among several pueblos including Zuni, Hopi, Jemez, Taos, Acoma and others and- problems with Apaches and Utes.

Consequently, De Vargas did not

hesitate — he would take some soldiers and lead a military campaign against these Apaches — personally. While in the Sandia Mountains, looking for the Apaches, he and his men took time to eat from their saddlebags. De Vargas ate some hardboiled eggs. Soon after, he became very sick. His men brought him out of the mountains to the home of the alcalde of Bernalillo. An alcalde, usually the most important man in a community, was what we would consider as a combination mayor/judge. Soon afterwards, De Vargas died at that home in Bernalillo: April 4th, 1704. He was buried in Santa Fe. However, history is strange. One of the most important men in the history of New Mexico - the exact spot of his grave in downtown Santa Fe has been lost. . . . one of the most important governors New Mexico ever had ...

Beginning in the 1700's, the Spanish and Puebloños lived peacefully side by side as neighbors, going to each others fiestas and sometimes intermarrying. Even after 70 years, however, both were still having trouble with raiding parties such as Apaches and Navajo.

Algodones, Bernalillo, Alameda, communities such as these, still were getting hit by raiders.

These raiding bands wouldn't consider coming into places such as Santa Fe or even Albuquerque — even though they knew that's where they would find horses. Soldiers were stationed in Santa Fe and there was a soldiers' barracks right next to the church on the plaza in Albuquerque. They preferred small communities, such as Algodones, where the men were humble and poor farmers, and would have a heck of a time protecting themselves and their property.

As the governor of the province of New Mexico had done in 1704, another governor decided to try to curb these raids. In 1778, the governor, also under the Spanish flag, was Lt. Col. Don Juan Bautista de Anza an officer in a branch of the Spanish military, and governor from 1718 to 1788. In his first year in the office, he issued a proclamation.

From the Palace of the Governors, on the plaza in Santa Fe, his proclamation said that every family,

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every household, must keep, at all times in their house, at least one lance and at least one set of bow and arrows. The penalty for noncompliance was a fine and possible time in the Santa Fe calabozo.

By the way, the Palace of the Governors is still there today and is a museum. Regarding no mention of guns in the proclamation. Any kind of gun was scarce in the Kingdom of New Mexico. Only the soldiers would have what few there were and possibly a wealthy haciendado might have one or two in his big house. By this time, the 1770's, Algodones was more than 50 years old.

The name: Algodones. The history of Spain is like a layer-cake. Over the centuries, invaders would come into the Iberian Peninsula, the home of Portugal and Spain, and over several centuries, would spread their culture over the area, such as architecture, traditions, and words and names from their language. — After the Roman empire began to fall apart, the Iberian Peninsula became “up for grabs.” The Germanic tribes came in and eventually, from north Africa, came

the Muslim Arabs.

In Spain, they were called Moors. They came in and controlled everything for 700 years, from about 700 AD until the late 1400's. The word algodon is an Arabic word and means “cotton.” The settlement and community. First, I want to point out two threats which the folks at Algodones had to live with. First, as I explained, were the hostile Indian raiders. The second threat was ‘the Rio Grande. The village, and the farms ,.were located on the floodplain of the river. When the railroad came through in 1980 it blocked off the river so that it stayed put . However , before that , the river moved back and forth across the valley. The place to plant was on the floodplain because the soil was rich and was replenished from time to time by the river and it was easy to irrigate to some extent. Of course, in a very wet year, your house and your crops could be destroyed if the river decided to change its course.

Just the same, Spanish documents say the village was on the floodplain. The documents say cotton was planted as early as the early 1700's. By

the way, the pueblos had cotton garments but their cotton was wild cotton. Some of the old records state cotton seeds were brought all the way from the cotton of Egypt, from the Nile Valley. That is probably not true — however, for certain, cotton was, indeed planted on the floodplain at Algodones. just the same, that is probably NOT the reason for the name ... It is more likely the place was given the name “Cottontown” because of the massive amounts of cotton released each season by the giant cottonwood trees along the river. One last thing. I mentioned the village was split by the railroad. In recent years, the village has grown and is split once more. The original town is still down on the old floodplain next to the railroad. A newer part has grown up east of Interstate 25 which is up above the old floodplain.

Note: none of this narrative was taken from the INTERNET. All of the information here comes from my own personal knowledge, from my own personal library, and from friends.

Bernalillo celebrates new uses for venerable buildings

by Signpost staff

The transformation of a deteriorating school campus into a vibrant community asset leapt forward in July with the move of Bernalillo’s public library and the opening of a law-enforcement training center. A July 22 ribbon cutting at the Roosevelt Complex dedicated **the Martha Liebert Public Library** in the 84-year old, two-story adobe building that was once the town’s public school. In addition to adult and children’s spaces, the recent renovation created crafts, computer, and study rooms, plus a space for community meetings.

“This is really the crown jewel of the campus for us,” Mayor Jack Torres said. “Our former library was beautiful, but it was packed.”

Among those attending were past Roosevelt Elementary School teachers, students, and former Mayor Charles Aguilar who was principal of the school that closed six years ago. Town Councilor Dale Prairie said he began attending Roosevelt as a first grader in 1959 and would help the custodian shovel coal to heat the building.

Torres credited a historical consultant, several businesses, craftspeople, and town staff for completing the renovation using \$300,000 from state library bonds and \$175,000 from the town general fund. He drew applause when he said the

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Martha Liebert

project was accomplished without issuing local bonds or raising taxes.

Martha Liebert opened the library in 1965 in a part of town hall, and its last move in 2006 took it from the adobe building across the driveway to a renovated home next to the Bernalillo Fire Department.

“We’ve moved eight times, and I hope this is it,” Liebert said.

Librarian Kathy Banks said she and her four-person staff have plans to increase the collection, expand hours, and bring in more programs.

The town bought the 7.7-acre campus including the 1950s main office and classroom building in 2015, paying the Bernalillo Public Schools \$1.2 million for the property. The site sits between town hall and Camino Don Tomas with Rotary Park, the town recreation center, and the county senior center now under construction just to the west.

The goal has been to convert the schools buildings to public uses with rents discounted for tenants who cover renovations costs. The non-profit home-rehab organization Rebuilding Together Sandoval County leased one of the portable classrooms last year, and two others house training facilities for the town police and fire departments.

The gym and cafeteria building is being used for a children’s summer recreation program. And, the town recently announced Bernalillo-based Rescue Tactics and Training has leased part of the administration and classroom building that faces

Camino Don Tomas. Founded nearly three years ago by firefighter-paramedic Dan Barela, the company trains first responders in a variety of rescue techniques from trench collapses to wilderness incidents and also sells technical and tactical gear.

Barela said, during the first of three training sessions held earlier this year, that he discovered the school building and the town’s hopes for it. His reaction: “What an amazing place for a training facility.”

The training also will add to the local economy as first responders from in and out of New Mexico, and abroad, come to Bernalillo for multiday sessions, he said. After remodeling part of the building, the company plans to expand in two phases to occupy the entire structure.

At that point, the company could cycle around one thousand first responders a year through its programs, Barela said. A grand opening with a nontraditional ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for August 26.

Bernalillo Community Development Director Mike Kloepfel told the *Signpost*, “He’s going to do a lot for the community,” speaking of Barela. Kloepfel said he has other deals pending for a portable classroom and for a separate classroom building that faces the campus courtyard from the north. That would leave two portables that are somewhat limited as they lack easy parking, he added.

This story is reprinted with permission from the August, 2017, edition of the Sandoval Signpost.

Max C de Baca and Betty Baros Garcia
a Bernalillo Romance
by Christine Tade

They met in 1957 and 57 years later they had their second date. Max C de Baca and Betty Baros were classmates at Our Lady of Sorrows High School in Bernalillo, where each day began with Mass, the nuns were strict, the students wore uniforms, and everyone knew everyone else. The beautiful Betty was not allowed to date by her strict mother, but was chosen prom queen her junior year and needed an escort to the dance. Max, although a dashing, dark-haired basketball player, thought Betty “was out of his league” but took a chance and asked her to the prom. She said yes. The nuns insisted that the girls wear white dresses, but Betty couldn’t afford one. She borrowed a lovely lace wedding dress from her sister-in-law, Max pinned a white orchid corsage to her shoulder, and they posed for their portrait in front of the convent. They went with another couple to the prom at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Albuquerque and it seemed that first dance would be their last.

In the fall of her senior year, Betty got married and left high school, moved to Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, had two sons, began a career as a beautician and business owner and has lived for 55 years in the adobe home her husband built for them. Max, meanwhile, finished high school in

Bernalillo and attended TV repair school in Albuquerque. By the time he was 21 he also was married and had moved to California. In addition to raising a family, Max worked as an electrician on aircraft for McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach and then for a printing company in Los Angeles. After 35 years, tired of the big-city rat race, he moved back to Bernalillo where he still had family.

And there the story begins again. Max gradually reconnected with some of his old classmates from Our Lady of Sorrows. There was a high school reunion at The Range which Max couldn’t attend, but a friend filled him in on the news., mentioning that Betty Baros (Garcia) had been there, was now widowed, and was still very attractive. A spark of curiosity ignited in Max and he tracked down Betty’s phone number. It was not an especially promising start, for when Max introduced himself as her prom escort, Betty thought she had gone with someone else, now deceased. After that confusion was cleared up, they agreed to meet for lunch at Sadie’s in Santa Ana Casino (next door to the Delavy House, a propitious sign).

It wasn’t quite love at first sight, since they didn’t immediately recognize each other, but that lunch lasted three hours. Max and Betty looked through old yearbooks, reminisced about friends and school life, and marveled at their unlikely reunion.

It’s been more than a year now since that momentous second date, and Max and Betty radiate happiness when they talk about each other and how their lives have come together.

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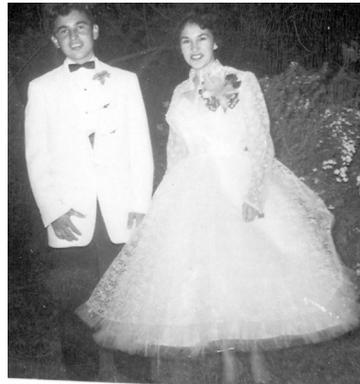
When I ask them what was most important to them back in 1959 and what is most important to them now, their answers are strikingly similar. Max says, "Back then, I wanted to graduate so I could get a job, make money, and buy things." What matters most to him now? - Betty and his family. Betty, too, wanted to finish with school and move out on her own. Now? Max and her family are what make her happy.

As they look back on their teenage years in Bernalillo and compare them to today, they see big changes: it was a much closer-knit community where everyone knew each other (their class at Our Lady of Sorrows had 22 students, only 8 of them girls). They come from big families - Betty had 8 sisters and brothers, Max 12 - and they were expected to work hard. Max earned four

dollars a day doing farm work in Peña Blanca and Betty traveled miles by bus and foot into Albuquerque to work for one dollar an hour house cleaning and baby-sitting. Girls especially tended to be supervised closely by their parents, although Betty was a cheerleader, while boys like Max had more freedom: it felt safer then, and even though there was some drug use by the rougher crowd, Max and Betty avoided trouble, although Max was known once or twice to get home at dawn as his father was just starting his day. Max remembers when Bernalillo had one policeman, who patrolled a two-lane road; Betty had a summer job selling license plates at Sheriff Dick Montoya's office, even though she didn't have a

license herself, and broke the law driving herself to work.

Betty says that Max rescued her from the loneliness of widowhood and retirement, and she talks of his wonderful willingness to sweep her away on trips around New Mexico and Nevada. Max obviously delights in the way Betty teases and charms him. They love to talk about old friends and the Bernalillo of their youth, and they share their knowledge and generosity with the rest of us as hard-working members of the Sandoval Historical Society



Prom April 1959



Christmas party December 2016

The Nine Lives of Elfego Baca

By Shannon Wagers

Every year at around this time I gather up my 1099s and W-2s and head over to my accountant's office at Third Street and Constitution to get my taxes done. I sit across from him at his desk while he reviews my documents and prepares my return. Nothing remarkable about that—except that the room we're sitting in is the room where Elfego Baca died.

Baca was a colorful character who loomed large in New Mexico affairs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, operating sometimes as an officer of the law and at other times slightly outside of it. Readers may recall that he was also the subject of a Disney TV series called "The Nine Lives of Elfego Baca" back in the late 1950s.

Baca was born in Socorro but as an infant moved with his family to Topeka, Kan., where his father worked as a contractor. Consequently he grew up speaking little Spanish. He didn't become fluent in the language until he was in his 20s, after the family had returned to Socorro.

At the age of 19, as a newly appointed (some say self-appointed) deputy sheriff, he held off a gang of Texas cowboys during a 33-hour siege in the village of Upper San Francisco Plaza (now Reserve). By the time he emerged from the bullet-riddled *jacal* adobe house

where he had holed up, two of the cowboys were dead and another wounded. But Baca was unscathed, despite some 400 rounds of ammunition being discharged in his direction. Some attributed his seemingly miraculous survival to divine intervention, but it likely had more to do with the fact that the dirt floor of the flimsy structure was some 18 inches below ground level, providing him with cover. The story of the standoff at Upper Frisco grew with each retelling and established his reputation as a fearless gunfighter. It was an image that stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Capitalizing on his reputation, he went into politics. He held a number of elected offices in Socorro, including county clerk, school superintendent, sheriff and mayor. Although he had little formal education, he "read law" in the office of a local attorney while serving as county clerk and was admitted to the bar in 1894. He later served as district attorney for Socorro and Sierra counties. He was a Republican most of his life but always identified with the progressive wing of the party. About 1907, Baca moved to Albuquerque, where he set up shop as a lawyer and private detective.

Over the course of his checkered career, Baca found himself in court frequently, usually as an attorney, but sometimes as a defendant. He was tried for murder three times and three times acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. The first two cases arose out of the

Continued

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shootout at Upper Frisco. The third murder charge was for shooting a man in El Paso, Texas, who, Baca alleged, was attempting to kill him.

The incident in El Paso grew out of another case Baca was involved in. In 1914, during the Mexican Revolution, Gen. José Ynez Salazar, a commander in the army of President Victoriano Huerta, fled north across the Texas border after a defeat by rebel forces under Pancho Villa. He was arrested and charged with violating U.S. neutrality laws and other offenses. Baca was retained to defend him, for which he was paid the princely sum of \$30,000 by unnamed associates of Salazar in Washington. The trial was scheduled for November 30 in federal court in Albuquerque. Salazar was housed in the Bernalillo County jail, then located at the southwest corner of Central and Rio Grande near Old Town.

On the night of November 20, a local judge and a deputy U.S. marshal, men of unimpeachable character, were standing on a downtown street corner when Baca approached them and, taking out his pocket watch, asked if they had the time. Both men checked their watches. "Nine-thirty," they replied. Baca adjusted his own watch, thanked them, and walked away.

At that very moment—for which Baca had just established a rock-solid alibi—two masked men entered the jail, overpowered the lone guard on duty and released Salazar. When next heard from

he was safely back in Mexico. Several months later, Baca and five other men were indicted for aiding his escape. An alleged co-conspirator, Celestino Otero, was also named in the indictment but not charged, because he was dead. He was the man killed by Baca in El Paso two months earlier. Testimony at the trial revealed that Otero had been talking rather too freely about his role in the jail-break, with the implication that that had led to his demise. Nevertheless, all six defendants were acquitted.

For many years Baca and his wife occupied a combination home and law office at the northeast corner of Sixth Street and Gold Avenue, now the site of a nondescript federal office building. As he grew older, his fortunes and his health declined. He grew portly and he began to drink more heavily, but he remained a minor celebrity and raconteur, well-known in downtown Albuquerque.

In 1944, strapped for cash, he sold that building and moved into the little house on North Third Street, where the last of his nine lives ran out Aug. 27, 1945. His remarkable life had stretched from the closing months of the Civil War to the dawn of the Atomic Age.

*This article originally appeared in the February 2010 issue of **Prime Time magazine** and is reproduced with permission*

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The Lighter Side

Life is like a bicycle to keep your balance you have to keep moving
Einstein

Clem Kaddelhopper says
“My wife is very superstitious she won’t do any cleaning if the week has a Friday in it
Red Skelton

You know you are getting old - when your kids start collecting Social Security.
Anon

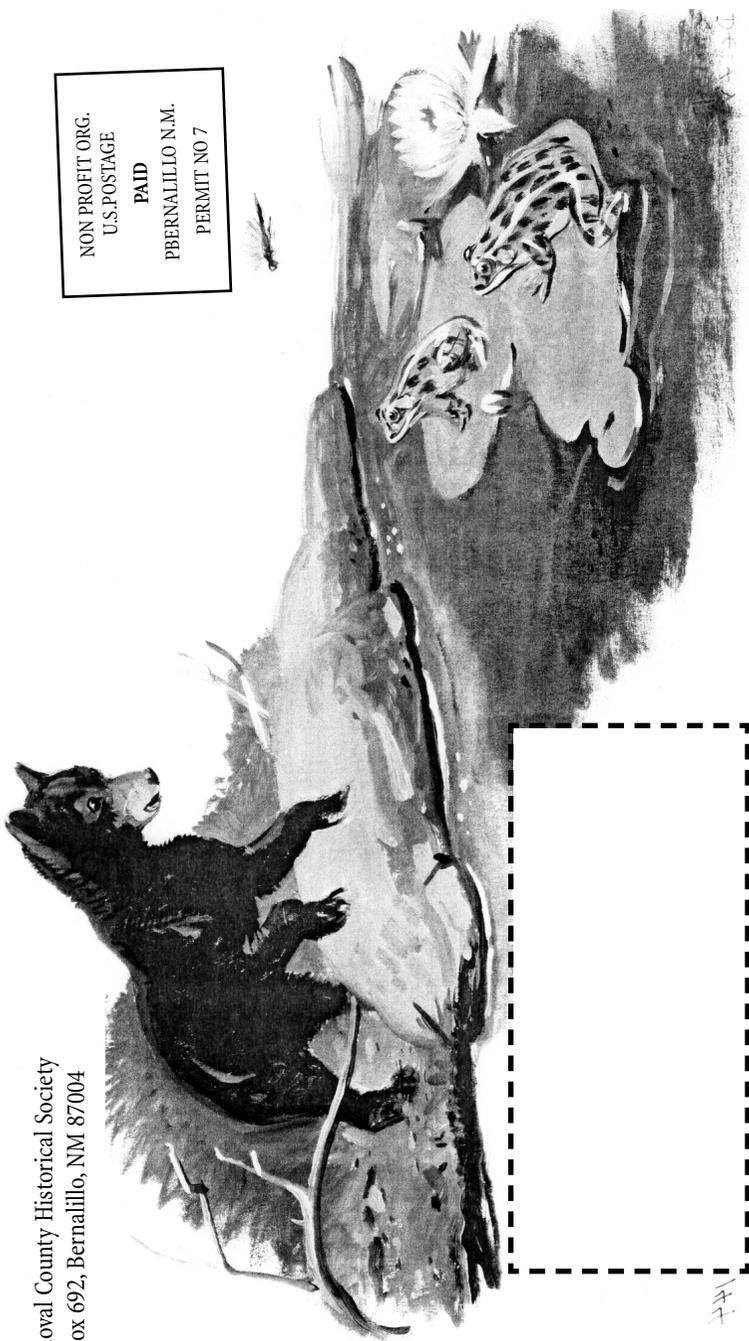
A woman is sitting on the deck with her husband and she says” I love you” .he asks”Is that the wine or you talking?” She replies”, It’s me ... talking to the wine”.



You bet I'm comfy

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