

AYER Y HOY en TAOS

Yesterday and Today in Taos County and Northern New Mexico

Summer 2026

Issue #60

“QUE VIVA EL TIO VIVO”

by
Carmen Almira
Martinez-Lieurance



REMARKABLE JOSEFA

by JonnaLynn K.
Mandelbaum

HOW I FOUND MORE FAMILY:

A HISTORICAL SURPRISE

by Dave Cordova



NEW MEXICO IN 1776

by F.R. Bob Romero



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Taos County Historical Society's publication, Ayer y Hoy en Taos - Taos County and Northern New Mexico, is published semi-annually by the Historical Society.

We invite articles of a scholarly nature, as well as book reviews of recent publications pertinent to the Taos and northern New Mexico area. We are open to publishing occasional reminiscences, folklore, oral history and poetry that are of historical interest.

The Taos County Historical Society endeavors to maintain high standards of quality in AYER Y HOY, and we seek to make improvements as we go along. Readers' comments and suggestions are welcome.

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AYER Y HOY is distributed to all members of the Taos County Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

Editor

Dave Cordova

The Taos County Historical Society is a New Mexico non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of the historical resources of Taos County and Northern New Mexico. Membership is open to any interested person, regardless of residence.

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A Message from the TCHS President Ernestina Cordova

We are very pleased with our accomplishments during the past year. We are grateful for the opportunity to work together toward building a stronger community through the society, producing several excellent presentations throughout the year to engage our membership. At our annual meeting, we elected Maxine Thomas to the Board of Directors and Ron Stoner graciously accepted to continue to serve as Treasurer.



Our programs this year included: “Growing Up In Taos” presented by Carlos Arguello in February; “History of Pot Creek and Early People of Taos” presented by John Ulebaker in March; and “New Mexico Citizenship Test” presented by Roger Martinez in April.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the completion of the restoration of the Old Courthouse in downtown Taos. We anxiously await its opening and are especially proud to be among the organizations that will occupy the upstairs portion of the building. As we move forward, we look forward to opening a museum space that will include a library, reading room, archival room, and an exhibition space. This exhibition area will be shared with other museums and individuals, with displays rotating every three months.

This year's Honoree, a long-time supporter and contributor, is Larry Torres. Professor Emeritus, writer, actor, linguist, and Deacon. Joining Deacon Larry at the Honoree Luncheon, brother Andy Torres, M.A., presenting on the history of Arroyo Seco.

The TCHS remains a vital force in preserving the rich history of Taos County and Northern New Mexico. Through collaboration with the Taos County Board of Commissioners, our efforts to preserve and share this history will continue to benefit generations of Taoseños and visitors alike.

I am very proud of our board members and committee members who continue to work together as a team for the success of our Society. Thank you to all members who participate in and support our activities.

*Wishing you all a happy and enjoyable
summer in everything you do.*

With Warmest Regards,

*Ernestina Cordova, President
Taos County Historical Society*

¡QUE VIVA EL TIO VIVO!

by Carmen Almira Martinez Lieurance

I am delighted to share the story of my father, Ernesto Jose Martinez, and his involvement with Tio Vivo (Lively Uncle) carousel. My father was born on April 24, 1913 in Corrupma, New Mexico. His parents were Antonio Jose Martinez and Dulcinea Serna. He had six siblings. His father's work brought them to Taos, when he was a young man, where he lived the rest of his life, until his death on January 16, 1999.

Mr. Martinez was hired as the manager of the Taos Water and Sewer Department by the Taos Board of Public Utilities in 1935, retiring after 34 years. He was president of the Rocky Mountain section of the American Waterworks Association and co-founder of the New Mexico Water and Sewer Schools.

His love of community service included being a member of the Taos Lions Club for 52 years, the Taos Fiesta Council for 18 years, director of the County March of Dimes from 1949-1955 and president of the Taos Parent Teacher Association in 1952, member of the Taos Volunteer Fire Department and member of the Taos Art Association.

Perhaps his most remembered service was the result of his personal involvement in the purchase and restoration of the historic "Tio Vivo", merry-go-round which is set up annually at the Fiestas de Santiago y Santa Anna each summer.

When my father was in his 30s he and my mother Rose Lovato Martinez were visiting her parents in Penasco, New Mexico, during their annual fiestas in August. They were talking about the good old days and how she used to ride the Tio Vivo. That led to the question, "Whatever happened to it?"

They began asking people in the Penasco community about the Tio Vivo and in 1938 it was found in a barn in Penasco. The ponies were covered with manure. My father was a wood carver, so I am sure he appreciated the carving of each pony. Being a member of the Taos Lions Club he presented the possibility of it being purchased by the club. They consented and he paid \$90.00 for this historic treasure.

Repairs started immediately. Mr. Carlos Barela fixed the broken legs and restored the carousel to working order. I remember seeing the ponies in my father's workshop as he checked them carefully. Over time the 16 ponies were repainted by Taos artists



such as O.E. Blumenenschein, Bert Phillips, Oscar Berninhaus, E.Martin Hemmings, Andrew Dasburg, Emil Bisttram, Joseph Fleck and Ila MacAfee.

I am so proud of my father's vision of seeing what Tio Vivo might mean to children. Since then thousands have grown up riding Tio Vivo. He loved being one of the Taos Lions club members to sell tickets to children who saved money to ride it. Eventually the Lions Club did not charge so he enjoyed being close by to greet the children and help get on the ponies.

My father's mother passed away at a young age. I am sure she was a tremendous influence in his life, because he was such a kind and thoughtful man, who smiled and helped people in so many ways.

Many people who retire devote their time to civic service because they have nothing else to do. That was not so with my father. One of his sayings to us as his family was, ' God has been good to me. It is the people that make work enjoyable and I have so many friends.'

“NEW MEXICO IN 1776”

by F.R. Bob Romero

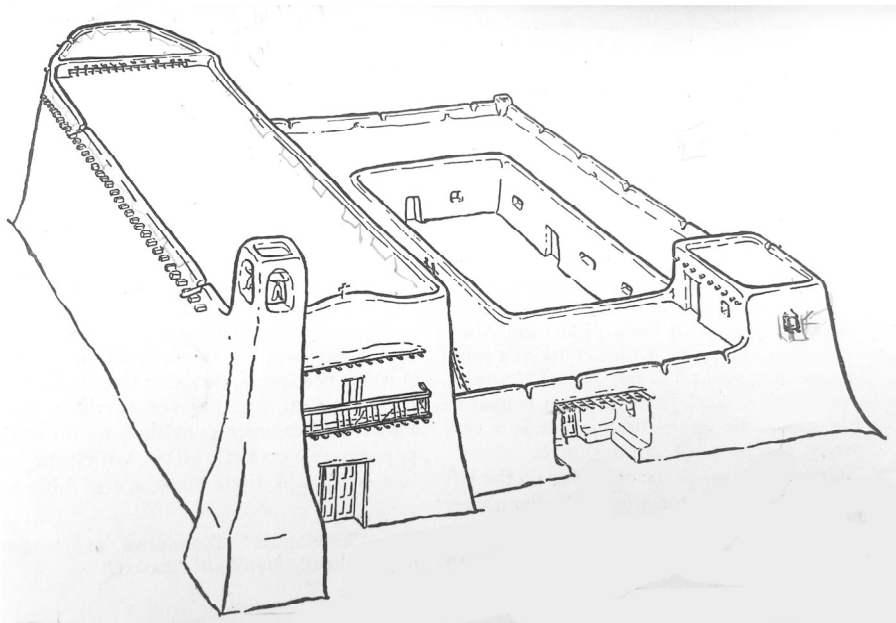
On July 4, 1776, 250 years ago, the thirteen colonies on the eastern seaboard declared their independence in their efforts to throw off the yoke of British imperialism. In that same year in New Mexico, in today's Southwestern part of the United States of America, much human activity was taking place which was well documented.

In 1776, Juan Bautista de Anza was the military commander of the Presidio of San Francisco, California; as such he is recognized as the Spanish founder of San Francisco. In 1778 Anza was reassigned and transferred to New Mexico as Governor. (1) New Mexico had been referred to as Nuevo Mexico since the Rodriguez/Chamuscado Expedition in 1581, and then the place name was formalized when New Mexico was colonized by Don Juan De Onate in 1598. (2)

After the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the completion of the “Reconquista” led by Don Diego de Vargas in 1696, The Spanish colony of New Mexico was in a high state of development throughout the 1700s. The blended Spanish settlers returned to New Mexico with the intention to work the land and develop an agrarian society based on faith, shared family values, and community. They constructed placitas, churches, and plazas or town squares, for example Ranchos Plaza in 1779 and Taos Plaza in 1796. They continued to build the acequia irrigation systems and to develop, through settlement and cultivation, the land grants being issued by the Spanish government.

Large adobe mission churches were built in numerous communities and pueblos. The Catholic faith was very important and religious processions and fiestas for each church or chapel were regular occurrences. The Spanish Colonists survived by utilizing the methods of regenerative agriculture. Fields were planted and irrigated yearly. To plant a seed and let water onto the grounds were venerable acts of faith. They cared for their domestic animals –horses, mules, cattle, pigs, and sheep – that had been transported from Spain, and that were essential for survival.

The enormity of the task of building a society of survival through subsistence agriculture and barter was difficult enough, but the



San Jeronimo Mission Church, built 1706-1726, destroyed 1847

Spanish settlers as well as the Pueblo people were under a relentless siege during the eighteenth century by the nomadic tribes that included the Navajo, Ute, Apache, and Comanche nations. In 1776 the northernmost Spanish colony of New Mexico was truly hanging on by a thread. (3)

It fell upon “a perfect oak of a man”, Governor Juan Bautista de Anza, to save New Mexico. When Anza arrived in New Mexico as governor he

assessed the situation and in 1779 he organized a military campaign into present day Colorado, and decisively defeated Cuerno Verde, the Comanche chief and his warriors. He then used diplomacy to enter into a peace treaty with the Comanche Nation in 1786. (4) This event reduced tensions between the nomadic tribes and Nuevo Mexicanos for about one hundred years. It wasn't the beginning of a new nation but it was the dawn of a period of relative peace and progress.

Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez had arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico on March 22, 1776. The instructions he received from his superiors were to “make a complete detailed report on both the spiritual and economic status of the New Mexico missions, and this entailed the gathering of much geographical and ethnological data”. (5) Dominguez in his report described “the wretched panic stricken state in which the nomadic Indian attacks had reduced the settlements and missions of New Mexico.” (6) Generally, he described in detail the conditions he found in New Mexico in 1776. He recorded the “utter poverty and loneliness” the Hispanic folk who for generations had survived among perils and hardships that might have driven other people to desertion, if not extinction.” (7) Father Dominguez in his Visitor Report also made a valuable detailed description of the Taos Pueblo and the second San Jeronimo mission church at Taos Pueblo, built between 1706 and 1726. Today only the ruins remain of this structure that was destroyed by the United States Army in the Taos Revolt/Resistance of 1847. (8)

In addition, during his visit Father Dominguez teamed up with Father Velez de Escalante for the purpose of leading an expedition to find a new route to Monterey California. The Domiguez/ Escalante Expedition departed Santa Fe on July 29, 1776 and explored throughout the Western Slope of Colorado and into

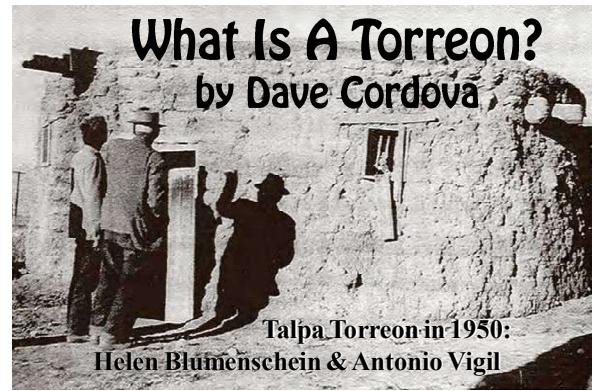
Utah and Arizona but failed to reach California. They blazed a new trail for over a thousand miles in unexplored and uncharted wilderness and documented geographical information and the topography of the area and the existence of other tribes such as the Yutas. (9)



Father Dominguez's lengthy 1776 Report was filed away and then discovered in 1928 by Dr. Frances V. Scholes in the National Library of Mexico among unsorted papers from the past. It was a "meticulous record of the most common place appurtenances of everyday life" in New Mexico in the 1700s. (10) So while the "Second Continental Congress was drafting at Philadelphia" the Declaration of Independence that marked the birth of a new nation, the Spanish Empire and its colonists were busy living, surviving, and documenting a historical treasure trove of information about life and "society in eighteenth century New Mexico." (11) In hindsight we should acknowledge and be grateful to our historians of the past that recorded what was happening 250 years ago in the Eastern United States and in New Mexico.

FOOTNOTES

1. Carlos R. Herrera, Juan Bautista de Anza; The Kings Governor in New Mexico (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 2015, p. 72.
2. John L. Kessel, Spain in the Southwest (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press) 2002, p.97. Also refer to Marc, Simmons, New Mexico, An Interpretive History (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press) 1988, p. 30.
3. F.R. Bob Romero, Roots of Enchantment, (Taos: Nighthawk Press) 2018, p 19.
4. Ibid. p. 19-20.
5. Eleanor B. Adams, Fray Angelico Chavez, The Missions of New Mexico 1776 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press) 1956, p. xv.
6. Ibid. p. xv.
7. Ibid. p. xviii.
8. Ibid. p. 101-113.
9. Ibid. p. xvi. Also refer to Ted J. Warner, ed., The Dominguez-Escalante Expedition Journal, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press) 1995, pp. 3-4 and Herbert E. Bolton, Pageant in the Wilderness (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society) 1950, p. 10.
10. Ibid. p. xviii.
11. Ibid. p. xii.



Three *Torreones* have been featured in Ayer Y Hoy articles in recent years. There was the Los Cordovas Torreon in the Village of Los Cordovas along the Rio Pueblo. Then we covered the rebuilding of the Talpa Torreon, accompanied by a photo from the 1950s of the same building. In the last issue, we had an article about the rebuilding of the Vigil Torreon by Gail Wendorf. These articles generated questions about the *Torreones*. What are they, why were they built and how were they used.

Torreon is the Spanish word for tower. A *torreón* was a small round building for defense from invading Indians, particularly in northern New Mexico. The thick walls were made of adobe and rock and could be several stories high. When a warning cry was heard, the pioneering inhabitants would take refuge in the *torreón*. Initially, these *torreones* did not have doors or windows at ground level, but were accessed by ladders which would be drawn up to keep the invaders from hurting or kidnapping the inhabitants. The inhabitants would leave some grains and, perhaps, a lamb so that the invaders took their booty and leave the inhabitants without injuries.

After the threat of invasion was appeased, it would appear that these structures continued to serve the community as storage sheds called "*dispensas*." Sometimes they served as cold rooms, due to the lack of windows, for storing vegetables, fruits and for hanging their meat.

From the "*El Rancho de las Golondrinas*" website, I found one of the earliest articles about a *torreón*, when a party of Comanche warriors attacked the Spanish Settlement of *La Cienega* (the marsh) in June of 1776. The Spanish men were working the fields a distance away from the refuge of the village *torreón* and nine men were summarily killed as they ran for the safety of village refuge. Several children and women were also taken.

The article does not go into any detail about the lapse in watchfulness or warning. Since these structures were high enough to survey the valley on all sides, they were perfect watchtowers... but perhaps someone got complacent or fallen asleep while on duty. A warning could have averted the tragedy that followed.

Every community built and maintained a *torreón* for the protection of their inhabitants. In the Taos Valley, there were many such *torreones* that served to protect the pioneering families. The Taos Pueblo is said to have not had doors and windows in the ground level story and perhaps the second, for the very purpose of providing a defense from invaders. The iconic wooden ladders, now more of a decoration, were the only means of accessing the upper stories of the historic buildings.

“REMARKABLE JOSEFA”

Written by **JonnaLynn K. Mandelbaum (New TCHS Member)**

Learning about Josefa Jaramillo Carson from a 21st Century perspective prompts many questions. The assumptions and societal norms in the 1800s were far different from our views today. Women were routinely kept in the shadows sometimes left unnamed and their work infrequently identified or credited to a man. When they were included in publications, an author's preconceived notions about women tended to further skew information about their involvement in events of those times. All this means that gleaning information about Josefa is a fragmented search involving many books and articles often about Kit, not her.

Customs in the West had a strong effect on women's opportunities, including property ownership, public activities and work. While they were more independent than women back East, they also dealt with different cultural expectations. With four or five men for each available woman, there could be serious competition to acquire a wife which was sometimes involved fights and other times more subtle maneuvers. Fourteen was the courting age for young women with the expectation that they would be married or betrothed by fifteen. Passing this age and still unwed implied that there was a question of her marriageability. This practice seems scandalous to us now. Additionally, it was quite common for men to be significantly older than their wives. Another characteristic of marriage commitment was that common-law arrangements were frequent and viewed on par with formal weddings. In some circumstances, there was no available clergy or magistrate to officiate at a marriage ceremony, so the couple simply chose to live together. All these factors were common knowledge for Josefa.

How did 14-year-old Josefa meet Kit, who was eighteen years older? Josefa was said to be the most beautiful of the Jaramillo daughters. She matched and possibly was slightly taller than Kit who was bow-legged. Some references indicate that she met him at a party given by her brother-in-law and future Governor Charles Bent. It's also possible that they encountered each other more frequently whenever Josefa stayed with her older sister Ignacia who was Charles Bent's common-law wife. Kit was a frequent visitor to the house since he had business contracts with Charles and his brother George to transport goods from St. Louis for their mercantile establishments in Taos and Santa Fe. In whatever way their relationship unfolded, it was known to be a love match.

Josefa's father Francisco Jaramillo had very specific expectations about the men his three daughters would marry. Having migrated from Spain to Mexico, Francisco wanted his girls to marry a Spaniard or Mexican, certainly not an Anglo. The suitor should be educated, fluent in Spanish and a Catholic with financial promise. His first daughter Ignacia's suitor met all the

qualifications, but he died young leaving her a widow raising a child alone. Perhaps, Francisco realized that finding another husband for her who met his criteria was unlikely. Charles Bent was educated and financially secure, but not a Catholic nor able to speak Spanish. It is not known how Francisco felt about their common-law arrangement. To Charles's credit, he adopted Ignacia's daughter Rumalda Luna. Francisco's second daughter's suitor met all the qualifications. Josefa was his youngest and last daughter to be married.

Kit wanted a proper wedding and chose to meet all Francisco's expectations as best he could. Once he and Josefa decided to marry, Kit took Catholic instruction from Padre Martinez and was baptized into the Church. This was a notable indication of Kit's commitment to Josefa since he had been raised a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian. Although illiterate, from childhood, he demonstrated a remarkable gift with languages and spoke Spanish, French and several Indian languages.

The meeting between Francisco Jaramillo and Kit when he asked for permission to marry Josefa must have been a remarkable event. One might imagine that Kit's fluency in Spanish and his sensitivity to expected cultural courtesies overrode any objection Francisco may have had. His consent was given.

The wedding officiated by Padre Martinez occurred just prior to Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent while Josefa was still fourteen since her birthday occurred a couple weeks later and would have meant a more muted ceremony. It is not clear whether the Carson House was given to the couple by her father as a dowry or if Kit purchased it. Through the years of their marriage, Kit expanded their home and bought additional property to accommodate their family's needs and provide him with an office when he served as Indian Agent in Taos.

The time together at the beginning of their married life was brief as Kit had a previous commitment to accompany a wagon train and hunt for their needs only a couple months after their wedding. Josefa knew about the contract and realized that this was an important source of their family's income. Through the years, Kit seemed to be constantly on the move whether through private contracts or more often through U.S. government orders. Josefa's life with Kit reveals a lot about the life of married women whose spouses were not involved with local business, farming or cattle ranches but had to conduct hunts for other, drive herds to other regions or work on northern ranches for the entire warm season. She would have found congenial support from local women as they talked about the long absences of their husbands. The main difference from other women was that Kit sent letters to her that he had dictated. They were unpredictable in frequency but always a source of comfort. His communication

revealed his nickname for her, Chipeta the Ute term for white singing bird. The choice of this word was deliberate rather than the common Chepita an affectionate Spanish diminutive for Josefa. His use of this name acknowledged her musical gifts as a singer and guitar player. She was known to entertain family and friends with her music after dinner, sometimes in a duet with Ignacia or others.

Josefa had a reputation as a fine seamstress. No doubt, she was able to assist other women with their sewing needs. When Kit gave her the first Singer treadle sewing machine in Taos, those requests may have increased.

Josefa lived through the harrowing events of the Taos Revolt. She was staying with Ignacia when Governor Bent returned to Taos. The noise of the angry mob woke the household and Governor Bent met them at his doorstep thinking he could calm them only to be shot with arrows several times. The women tunneled through the wall to the next building with Charles trailing them once they were through, only to be followed by several men from the mob. Josefa, Ignacia and Rumalda witnessed them kill and mutilate Bent. Some of the rioters wanted to kill the women too but were stopped by other members of the mob. All three women testified during the trial and identified the men who killed the governor. They may have witnessed the hangings in front of the courthouse which followed the judgement.

In addition to being flexible with Kit's frequent travels, Josefa survived the Taos riot, the unpredictability of the Civil War and joined Kit with their children whenever his orders permitted him to have the family with him as fort commander. The limited salary of military officers made money a constant worry. Even when Kit worked from home as Indian Agent, funds were an issue because he was expected to provide refreshments and meals for the guests. Any allowance provided for his work was inadequate for the demands. Despite these concerns, Josefa was known for her gracious hospitality. They customarily spoke Spanish at home unless guests used only English.

Limited information is known about the health problems that both Josefa and Kit faced. Women were expected to manage childbirth and quickly resume household routines. Infant and childcare posed a time of significant risk and demands on the mother. From infancy to five years was a time of unpredictable child survival. Men sustained significant injuries and healed with little or no medical care. (Medical care did not expand into a full profession until 1910 with the publication of the Flexner Report.) Whether recovering from her own illness and childbearing, caring for her children or supporting Kit as he healed from old injuries, Josefa experienced all these life challenges and was known to be mature and steady in the way she handled each situation.

What a remarkable woman!

Another Look at the “Remarkable Women of Taos” by Dave Cordova

A book published in 2013, honoring Outstanding Taoseñas, entitled “Remarkable Women of Taos” featured many women from our historical past. Compiled and edited by Elizabeth Cunningham, the book is a compendium of biographical articles written by several authors who contributed to the “Web Project.” Published by Taos's Nighthawk Press with design and layout by Janet Webb & Burrell Brenneman of Webb Design. Unfortunately, Elizabeth, Janet and Burrell have since passed.

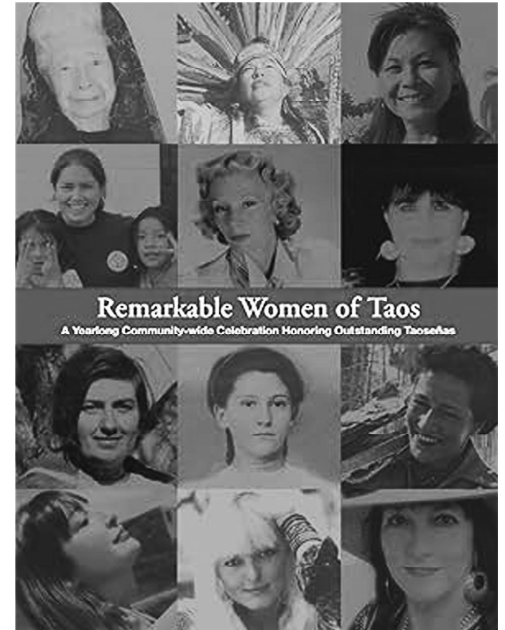
This book offers brief biographies of well-known women, such as Josefa Jaramillo Carson, Ignacia Jaramillo Bent, Corina Santistevan, Ernestina Cordova, Millicent Rogers and many others, but there were many other women nominated and mentioned in the book that did not have an article.

Anyone who has grown up or lived in Taos a while should

be able to identify and relate to our Taoseñas, women who have made tremendous contributions to our history and society. My mother Rose Cordova did not get an article, but was nominated along with Ila McAfee, Feloniz Trujillo, and Debbie Friday-Jagers. My wife's grandmother Sophie Varos Graves and her sister Frances Varos Graves were nominees, these two women are well-known for their “Colcha Stitching,” recalling the pioneer art of the late 19th and 20th Centuries. Other nominees included Eya Fechin, Ann St. John Hawley, Allegra and Ann Huston, Helen Blumenschein, Leonila Serna and many, many others.

I can think of many other women that did not receive a nomination, but that I remember as having a place in the history of Taos. As I read through the names, I am fondly reminded of women I have known or that have influenced my life. Some women that come to mind: Barbara Machcinski, Rose Marie Packard, Wanna Weaver, Theresa Singleton, Betty Sutton, Shelley Bahr, Mercy Struck, Mary Gillespie, and many others of my family, neighbors and friends.

If you have grown up in or lived in Taos for a few decades, I would recommend reading the book. There are copies for sale at The Carson House & Museum. Nighthawk Press also has copies available. This book is real history.



“HOW I FOUND MORE FAMILY: A HISTORICAL SURPRISE”

by Dave Cordova

History can be complicated, but the adjective I liken to history is, “Surprising.” I have been going through life with blinders on, not interested in learning about what and who is responsible for who I am and what my life has come to now. I find that what I need to do is to keep my eyes, ears and mind open for the information trying to reach me. To that end, I have an interesting story to share.

A few years ago, I met a man, recently moved to Taos, who was hired by the same company I was employed by and we became fast friends. This man was a Texan from

head to toe. He spoke with such a strong Texan slang, that I, sometimes, had a hard time understanding him. To say that he was “A Texan” was obvious. We worked together and eventually started socializing outside of work. One day, he calls and invites my wife and I to a barbeque dinner at his home. The barbeque was also attended by his mother and father, who live in Abiquiu.

Conversation was lively, and one thing led to another and before the evening was over... we found common ancestors and that we were distantly related. The friendship extended beyond my co-worker friend to include the entire family.

Now for the revelation! My co-worker lived most of his life in Hereford, TX, but spent many of his younger years in Abiquiu with his grandparents. The grandparents? Martin and Tillie Bode. Anyone who’s been to or through Abiquiu is familiar with the name “Bode.” Martin John Bode (1890-1976) was a German immigrant who ended up in Abiquiu in 1917. In Abiquiu he met Cleotilde “Tillie” Gonzales (1899-1991) whose family had a farm there, and whose parent’s main residence was in Taos. Tillie’s father, Enrique Gonzales (1867-1944), was a politician and community leader who was the first Mayor of the newly incorporated Town of Taos in 1934. Enrique married Maria Elisa Salazar (1867-?) and together they raised their children in Taos and Abiquiu.

Mayor Enrique was also descended from the Martin-Serrano family with connections in Abiquiu, so there are many branches in his ancestral tree. The Martinez connection is where I have a relationship with Charlotte Paetzold, the youngest of Martin & Tillie Bode’s children and the mother of my co-worker friend Kenneth Paetzold. Charlotte and Corky Paetzold live in the Bode house that Martin Bode bought in 1928, located up the hill overlooking the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church on the Abiquiu plaza.



The Bode Siblings with the Matriarch.

Pictured left to right, Karl, Gertrude, Josephine, Mother Tillie, Elizabeth and Charlotte in 1989.

As I said earlier, I got to meet all the Bode children, four daughters and a son. The eldest is Elizabeth Bode Allred, followed by the only son Karl Bode. The rest of the children, all daughters, were Gertrude Bode Valles, Josephine Bode Merten, and Charlotte Bode Paetzold. Unfortunately, Karl and Gertrude have passed since. The surviving siblings still carry on the Bode-Gonzales legacy.

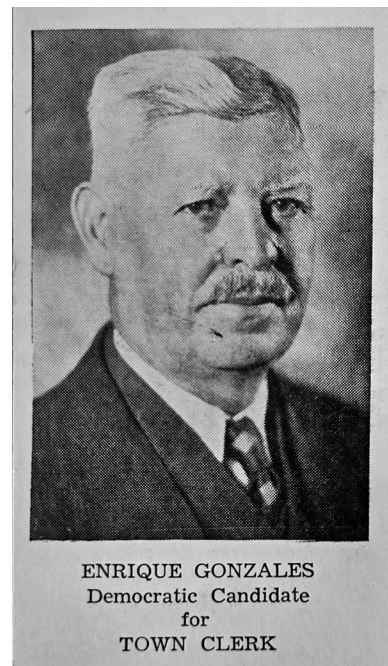
Before Karl’s passing, we had discussed a collaboration on a book about his Gonzales family history and his recollections of his time visiting his grandparents

in Taos and growing up in Abiquiu. One story he related to me was that of a six-year-old Karl on a walk through the streets of Taos, hand in hand with his grandfather when they met up with Long John Dunn. He didn’t remember the conversation between the two men but remembered the smell of aromatic pipe smoke emanating from Long John Dunn. I had been looking forward to the stories he would share, and heartbroken when he passed unexpectedly in late 2019.

During my conversations with Karl, he would switch, effortlessly, from English to Spanish and each language was delivered flawlessly. It was obvious that Karl had good schooling and never stopped learning.

After Karl’s passing, Charlotte found a campaign card (pictured here) of her grandfather Enrique from 1940, four years before his passing. The card solicited votes for his campaign for Town Clerk. The Town of Taos was in its infancy and it is still thriving almost 100 years later. She also shared

a photo of the five sibling with the matriarch, Cleotilde “Tillie” Gonzales-Bode included with this article.



*I discovered family and I think I am the richer for it.
History is surprising.*

“FILIGREE JEWELRY & THE LUNA FAMILY IN TAOS”

by E. Jane Burns, Research Fellow, Couse-Sharp Historic Site

Two gravestones in the Kit Carson Cemetery help tell the story of the Luna family in Taos. One marks the grave of Emiliana Luna (1842-1908), granddaughter of the man who built the Luna Chapel in 1835 on what is now Kit Carson Road. Although a letter from Padre Martinez dated 1852 describes the builder of this small family chapel as Juan de Luna, we have discovered more recently that his full name was Juan Nepomuceno



Luna (b. 1795). One of Juan's ten siblings, Pedro Antonio Luna (b. 1812), built the house adjoining the chapel between 1837 and 1839. That house has been called the Couse House for many years because of the painter, E.I. Couse, who purchased the property in 1909 and lived there until his death in 1936.

Long before Couse arrived, the house was occupied by a colorful cast of characters over a sixty-year period. It was purchased for the first time in 1851 by a wealthy lawyer and land speculator, Adam Santiago Quinn, who sold it to a neighboring couple: Benigna Trujillo and Manuel Gomez. They in turn sold the house to a French Priest, a protégé of Bishop Lamy in Santa Fe. At one point the priest, named Gabriel Ussel, used the house and adjoining chapel to run a Catholic school for boys that didn't last more than a few years. Eventually, the priest sold the house to a Civil War Veteran and casket maker who in turn willed it to Filomena Martinez, a local woman who had been married to a European carriage painter living in Taos. It was Filomena Martinez who, after much haggling with both E.I. Couse and his agent friend, Bert Phillips, sold the house to Virginia W. Couse in 1909. A series of deeds, beginning in 1851, records the repeated transfer of the property.

And what of the second Luna gravestone in the Kit Carson Cemetery? It belongs to Antonio Jose Luna (1863-1899) who forms part of a later branch of the Luna family. This branch has the distinction of fostering a long line of filigree jewelers in Taos beginning with Jose Rafael Luna (b. 1829)¹ and his son Antonio Jose, whose gravestone appears in the Kit Carson Cemetery. Antonio Jose taught the craft of filigree jewelry to his sister, Hilaria (b.1861), who continued to make filigree pieces in Taos until 1921 when she was 60 years old. Antonio Jose's own son, Antonio "Adonais" (b. 1899) represents the third generation of Luna filigree jewelers in Taos. He was the brother of Max Luna (1896-1964), famed Taos cabinet maker.²

And there are other Lunas jewelers. Jose Rafael's brother Jesus Luna, his daughter-in-law, Manuelita Martinez Luna (married to Antonio Jose) and his grandson Felipe Guttman y Luna all practiced the craft.

The earliest filigree jeweler from the Luna family, Jose Rafael, appears in the U.S. Census records of 1860 and 1870 as a "silversmith." His brother, Jesus Luna (b. 1830) is listed similarly in that year's census as a "silversmith."

The term is the English equivalent of the Spanish *platero* which meant at this time, anyone working in either gold or silver.

Some Mexican and New Mexican *plateros* in the mid-nineteenth century were making stamped and engraved cast silver pieces as ornaments for men's clothing and riding equipment. Others, like the Lunas, were making delicate, labor intensive filigree jewelry, principally for women. This Victorian-style of intricate gold and silver wire jewelry was used for earrings, necklaces, brooches, rings, hairpins and rosaries. It was originally brought to Santa Fe from Mexico with the result that sellers often referred to as "Mexican filigree jewelry" or simply "Mexican jewelry."³

Key among Taos jewelers is Felipe Guttman who does not appear at first glance to be a Luna. But an ad in the *Revista de Taos* from 1906 names him as Felipe W. Guttman y Luna, suggesting that his mother was a Luna. Indeed, she was Petra Luna, sister of the man whose gravestone we've been discussing.

The ad in the *Revista de Taos* makes clear that Felipe followed in the footsteps of his uncle, Antonio Jose Luna, and his grandfather,



Jose Rafael Luna, to become a filigree jeweler himself. The brief notice for Felipe's business reads: "Felipe W. Guttman y Luna: manufacturero de toda clase de joyas de filigrana de oro y plata" ("maker of all types of gold and silver filigree jewelry").

For the Lunas, making and selling filigree jewelry was a family business, as it was for the Abeytia Brothers in Socorro, the Ortiz brothers in Santa Fe and the Mondragon family in Colorado.



¹ A range of dates have been given for Jose Rafael's birth. This one seems the most accurate to me.

² New evidence has allowed me to amplify and refine previous scholarly assessments of the Luna jewelers in Taos.

³ William Wroth, "Jewelry in Spanish New Mexico: Some Thoughts on the Arts of the Platero," in *Hispanic Arts of the Southwest*, ed. William Wroth (Colorado Springs, Co: Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1977), 64. My findings concerning familial lines between Luna family jewelers differ from Wroth's and those of Carmen Espinosa and E. Boyd whom he cites.

“DELICATE LIKE A ROSE”

A Story by Paulette Atencio

Once upon a time there was a man and his wife. They were getting on in age. The only thing they ever wanted in life was to have a child but so far they had no luck. But soon, they were blessed with a beautiful little girl they named Rose. She was truly a God sent child. They were overjoyed. They could not do enough for their precious baby. They waited on her hand and foot. Both parents would say, “Oh, she is delicate like a rose.” And so, “Rose” became her name.

The months turned into years and the young girl was not allowed to do anything for fear that she would get tired or hurt herself. They did not want her out in the sun for fear this could damage her peaches-and-cream complexion. Rose was not allowed to read because this could damage her emerald colored eyes. They did not let her sweep, wash dishes or floors, because this would make her tired or even worse, make her hands rough. Rose did not know how to cook or bake. She had never been allowed to help in the kitchen for fear that she might cut herself or get burned. Her parents protected her and kept her looking like a porcelain doll. Her mother combed her hair and bought her the most beautiful dresses and shoes. According to the story, even her hats matched her outfits.

The townspeople began to gossip and whisper about the couple’s young daughter. Rose and her parents mostly kept to themselves, but on some occasions, they would attend church service or community events. Of course, this didn’t happen too often, as the parents were afraid that Rose might be contaminated with germs, and the last thing they wanted was to see their Rose sick.

Rose was extremely sheltered, and yet, when she did go out with her parents, people young and old lined the streets just to get a glimpse of the beautiful young lady. And, of course, many young gentlemen would soon be interested in asking for her hand in marriage. However, they would be disappointed when they realized that she would have to be waited on hand and foot for the rest of her life. They sadly walked away, already with a broken heart.

This continued for a few years as men came from far and near. They were mesmerized once they saw her. How beautiful she was! The message from her parents was the same, “Oh, but she is delicate like a rose. She doesn’t know the first thing about hard work. We don’t tire of looking at her. We have raised her just to sit and look pretty.” Again and again, the eager and hopeful young men had their hearts broken

One day, a young gentleman came to ask for her hand in marriage. He explained that his parents owned hundreds of acres of land with herds of cattle and sheep that grazed on the green meadows. He further explained that they owned a huge house with elegant furnishings. He was prepared to give her the best of everything. He felt it would be just fine if she just sat and looked beautiful. He was certain he would never tire of her presence. Rose’s parents decided he would be the perfect husband for their beloved Rose.

And so, the couple married and Rose was at first overjoyed about how everything had transpired. Her days were spent just like when she lived with her parents. The young man and his parents went out to work the farm just before the sun came up and returned just before the dark of night. They were always exhausted and hungry since they still had chores to complete!

They yearned for the chores of the house to be done and a hot meal served on the table. Unfortunately, that would not happen, since all Rose did was sit on her velvet chair and wait for her supper to be prepared. She had not dressed herself nor had she combed. Rose’s

husband and parents would come home from a long days’ work with the added burden of having to prepare the supper, wash the dishes, sweep, bring in the pails of water and wash the floors. Only then could they obtain some rest.

This went on for a while. Finally, they all decided that things were going to change in the house. When the meals were prepared, Rose was not invited to partake in them. She was told that if she wanted to eat, she had to make the meals herself. She could smell the aroma of the food cooking or the bread baking, but she knew it was not meant for her.

She thought about it and began doing small things. Little by little, she began to complete simple tasks and with time, learned to undertake more difficult ones. Finally, the day arrived when her husband and in-laws came home from working very hard, and they were all taken by surprise. Smoke was coming out of the chimney, the dogs were happily eating and the aroma of the food and bread could be smelled. The cows had been milked and clothes were hanging on the clothes line. They could not believe their eyes! For sure, someone else must have come to help Rose comply with all the work.

Once they opened the door, they received a bigger surprise! The house was clean and supper was prepared. The bread looked wonderful. She had made fresh butter and cheese, and the table was set with a flower arrangement in the center. They were all in shock! Did a fairy Godmother appear and make such an impressive feast? Soon they realized that delicate Rose looked very tired but still had a beautiful smile on her face.

“I hope you enjoy my food preparations. After all this time, I realize just how selfish I have been. If I am going to live here and be the wife my husband deserves, it is only right that I help out. Yes, my beloved husband. I can be delicate like a Rose, but I can also undertake the duties that come with being a good wife.”

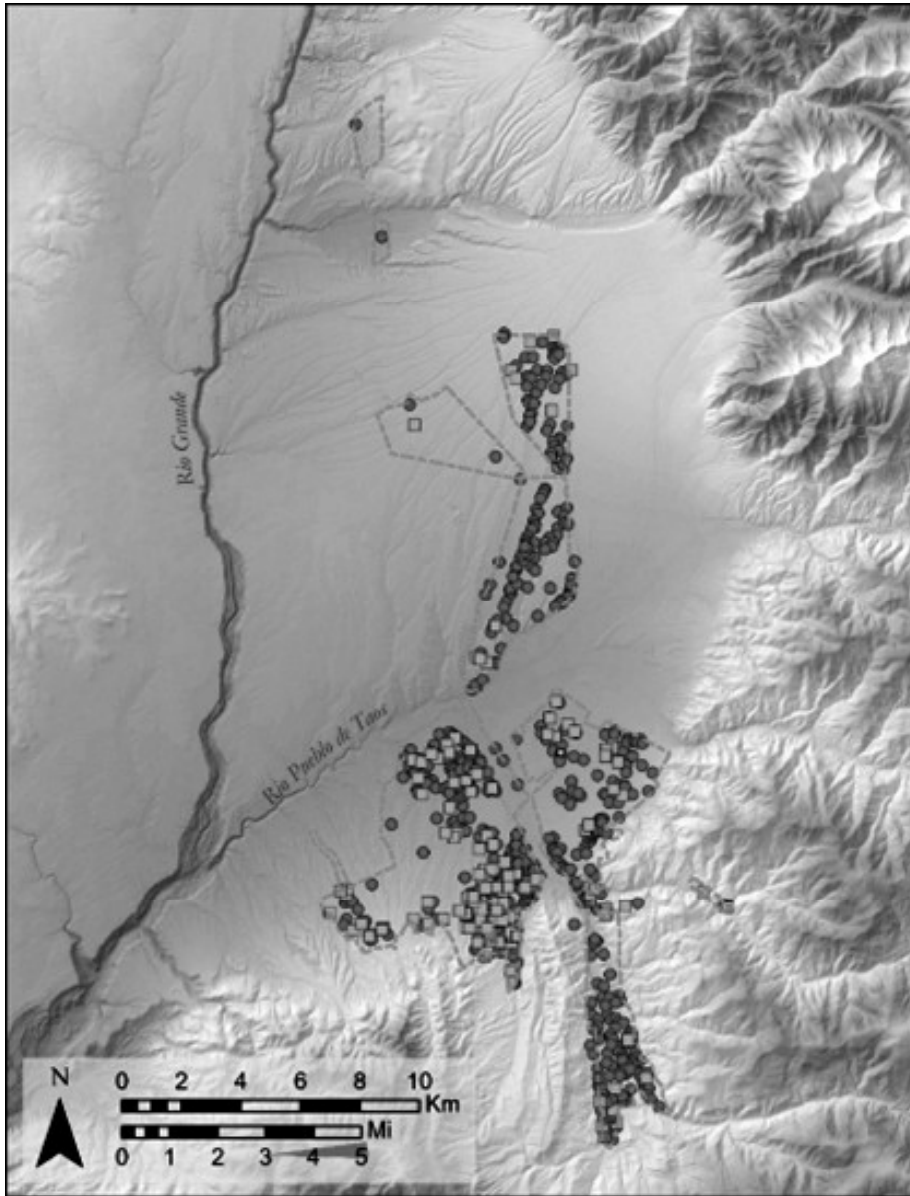
They all sat at the table, bowed their heads and said grace. “Thank you dear God for the food we eat. Thank you for the birds that sing. Thank you God for our precious Rose. Thank you God for everything. Amen.”

It seemed a great mystery as to how Rose had undergone such a wonderful and sudden transformation for they had always felt that she would never change. But hidden in Rose’s thoughts was the knowledge that she had long ago been visited by an entity, a ghost in the form of her long dead godmother. Her godmother’s life had been a very difficult existence, and she did not want Rose to just sit and waste her life away. She visited Rose at her new family’s home and taught her to cook and keep house. If Rose did not cook, she would die of hunger. And so, according to the story, every time her godmother waved her wand, Rose was able to learn something new.

Now, her godmother’s task complete, she could move on and partake of her eternal reward, which she had certainly earned! It was said that from that day on, Rose never let a day pass without making sure that, in her own little way, life would become more pleasant and rewarding for those around her. She invited her parents to come and live with them in their new house. Rose was so proud of the woman she had become. She could not contain herself and wanted to serve her parents in the same caring and loving manner as they had done for her. Perhaps this would ensure that they would spend more time with her and her new family. Let us never forget the beautiful young girl who was delicate as a rose!

What Is The Taos Valley Settlement Survey (TVSS)

- Obtaining More Information About It -



1981-84 Taos Valley Settlement Survey (TVSS) area outlined.
Circular dots are archaeological sites & Squares are isolated artifacts.

Over four years (1981-84) students participating in archaeological field schools sponsored by Southern Methodist University (SMU) completed a walk-over survey of 29 sq. miles within southeastern Taos County during which they recorded 574 archaeological sites (places with more than 12 artifacts or human-made features). Each site was recorded on a 10-page form until the final (1984) year when sites were recorded on a single card.

The location for each site was plotted on USGS 7.5' topographic maps. The field schools were based at what was then the Fort Burgwin Research Center (now the SMU-in Taos campus).

The students observed depressions from pit houses or structures at about 1/5 of the sites. These and other sites also had scatters of potsherds and stone artifacts, and possible water-control features. Mounded refuse and middens (dumps) occurred at many of the

sites with remains of structures. Based on pottery, most of the sites date from the Valdez phase (between A.D. 950-1225). Sites with a pithouse were probable home to a single family of farmers and occupied for only a few decades. Archaeological excavations at some of the pithouses confirm that they are very deep (6 feet or so) and the remains of humans who experienced violent deaths are often scattered across their floors. Most of the TVSS sites are believed to be ancestral homes to the people at Taos and Picuris Pueblos.

The records from the TVSS project were never entered into the New Mexico state-sponsored data base (NMCRIIS). The records were inaccessible until Dr. Matt Boulanger (SMU Anthropology Department) scanned them, and then with the assistance of a dozen or so volunteers converted the written records into digital site forms and maps during the last few years (2022-2025). We also analyzed the information as part of completing a report on the TVSS project.

Most of the sites (80%) are located on privately owned lands, but some (16%) are within the Carson National Forest or on the SMU at Taos campus. By examining the site locations using Google Earth we determined that the surface of about 1/4 of the sites on private lands have been severely damaged by land-use (including land clearing, new homes and roads) since they are recorded in the 1980s. But even though the surface may be disturbed it is important to realize that the lower portions of the pithouses may still remain relatively intact.

We would like to revisit the sites and update the records with the assistance of trained volunteers and the permission of each land owner, and to also share our report with any interested persons. Landowners interested in learning about the sites that might be

on their property can provide us with the location of their property and agree to protect sensitive information from further distribution, will be provided with site records for their property. And if they agree, we can join them in revisiting the sites on their property to both update the records and to develop plans for preserving them.

To obtain a copy of the report, email Bill Fawcett (fawcett.william@yahoo.com) and a digital copy will be provided. Interested landowners within the TVSS area who provide locational information about their property (ideally a map) should indicate if they are agreeable to a site revisit (as described above). Site forms for locations on their property will then be returned via email.

Lectures & Special Events for 2026

June 6th - Field Trip
THE VIGIL TORREON

by Gail Wendorf

July 11th - 2 PM

TAOS PUEBLO "BLUE LAKE"

by Vernon Lujan

August 1st - 2 PM

"HISTORY OF SOMOS & TAOS LITERARIES"

by Jan Smith

September 12th - 2 PM

HISTORY OF "MICHAEL'S KITCHEN"

by Michael Ninneman

October 3rd - 2 PM

FOLKLORE: "LA LLORONA"

by Kiki Siebenaler and Panel

November 7th - 2 PM

"WHITE ELK OF PICURIS PUEBLO"

by Celinda Kaelin

December 6th - 2 PM

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON & AUCTION

"THE ARTS OF TAOS" by Larry & Miguel Martinez

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Membership categories:

Individual \$30

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TAOS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 2447 - TAOS, NM 87571

For more information call (575) 770-0681

or e-mail: cordova@taosnet.com



Taos County Historical Society
PO Box 2447 i Taos, NM 87571

The Taos County Historical Society was formed in 1952 for the purpose of "...preserving the history of the Taos area." This part of New Mexico has a fascinating history, full of people, events, stories and places.

If you are interested, we invite your participation in our field trips or lecture programs, or by supporting the Society by becoming a member.