

CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH/APRIL 2014

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Save the dates in May!
More Events Coming.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17 Carroll Vaughn's Talk on Sawmills ,
Quemado Senior Center CANCELLED

May 24 Group Tour to Acoma Pueblo—Meet at
Acoma Museum Cultural center at 12-12:30

May 31 Members only Blum/Fischer Ranch
Tour and BBQ

HOW TO RENEW, OR JOIN THE CCHS



Send a check or money order to:

CCHS, PO Box 263
Quemado NM 87829

Individual Membership \$20/year

Family Membership \$30/year

CCHS Business Membership \$50/year

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2013/2014 CCHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Sally Blum, 575-772-2539

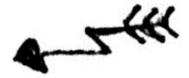
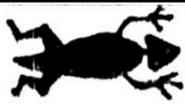
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Clymo, Nettie Carrejo,
Bonnie Armstrong



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is definitely in the air. My tulips which I planted last year are blooming, my irises are beautiful, the horses are starting to shed, and my little hairy dog is now hairless (he went to the groomer). CCHS has been busy planning new programs and outings for 2014. Our program for March featured Don Bullis, a New Mexico Historian, as our speaker at the Pie Town Community Center. Don has numerous awards, and we were fortunate to have such an accomplished author and speaker. Don presented material from his newest book, *Unsolved: New Mexico's American Valley Ranch Murders and Other Mysteries*. The audience participated and contributed to the information. Read Laura Brush's excellent review of Don's book in this newsletter.

Our annual business meeting was held on April 26 at the Datil Community Center. Our speaker, Bryan Turo, gave his presentation to the group with enthusiasm. He was informative, well prepared, and very knowledgeable on the subject of Thomas B. Catron. Lisa Blessing has written about the meeting in this newsletter. Becky Bratten had counted the ballots and informed the membership that the officers and board remain the same except that Helen Cress is now our new treasurer. We are fortunate to have Helen as our new treasurer. She works well with the CCHS board and we appreciate her help and support. We also had our annual Silent Auction and we want to thank all those that donated to our auction. We added over \$651.00 to CCHS. The budget was presented for 2014. If you would like a copy of the budget please contact Becky Bratten at beckylbratten@gmail.com and she will email you a copy. As of April 26 the total membership is 85. The major expenses for 2014 were filing the 501(c)(3) and the purchase of a projector.

Last August we had a fantastic outing to Ethel Major's home and garden. Many participants, including me, wanted a list and information about the plants and flowers she showcased in her garden. After thinking about this, Ethel is of the opinion that people who were really interested in the flowers and plants that she had in her garden could contact her directly and she would share the information one on one, this way the information would be more customized to each amateur gardener. For those that are interested please call Ethel directly.

LOG CABIN PROJECT—Now that the weather is (getting) better and no snow is on the ground, don't forget to get pictures of cabins/homesteads to send in to Becky Bratten (beckylbratten@gmail.com). I would like to have as many as possible by the first of July; however, this is an involved project that may take time to "finish". We may divide up territory among members to try to get some of this information on in to us. If you are willing to canvass your area for pictures and get a description of the cabins/homesteads, please let me know.



CCHS ANNUAL MEETING

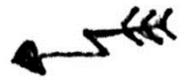
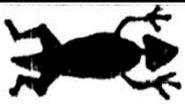
By Lisa Blessing

Saturday April 26 was the annual membership meeting of the CCHS held at the Community Center in Datil. Most members enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Eagle Guest Ranch before heading over to the Community Center to peruse tables of silent auction items and have coffee and dessert. Our guest speaker was Bryan Turo who is finishing his PhD dissertation on Thomas Benton Catron for University of New Mexico and so has been living and breathing Catron's life for the last few years.



Brimming with energy, Bryan took us down the torturous path that was Thomas Catron's life, leaving it up to the audience to decide if he had been demonized by his political opponents or quite deserved some of the opprobrium visited upon him. Thomas Catron was born in Lexington, Missouri in 1840, and read the law at the University of Missouri with his best friend Stephen Elkins, who later became his brother-in-law. When the Civil War erupted, Catron enlisted in the Confederate Army and Elkins in the Union. Catron was in the Confederate Army for four years, twice captured, and eventually released upon his parole that he would not rejoin the Confederates, a promise he never intended to keep. He saw some of the war's worst action, and after it was over he and Elkins decided to move to New Mexico together where they were original founders of the Santa Fe Ring, a powerful circle of overlapping political and business interests. Elkins went on to become Secretary of War un-

(Continued on page 6)



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 17—Carroll Vaughn’s talk on Sawmills, Quemado Sr Center. Dinner at 4 PM, Talk at 4:30. CANCELLED

May 24—Pueblo of Acoma group tour. Meet at the Acoma Museum Cultural Center at 12 with Dutch treat lunch at 12:30. For those who would like to car pool from Hwy 117 and/or Hwy 40, or if you would like a map, call Becky Bratten, 575-773-4790.

May 31—Members Only Blum/Fischer Ranch Tour of Kiva, Lava basalt dike, original Site of Sunnyslope School, Whitley homestead, and BBQ at the headquarters. Doug Fischer will explain the Kiva and what he has uncovered, and Ken Fischer will give the participants a talk about how the lava dike was formed. Lunch will be prepared by Tom Sanford with BBQ beef and pork. Members are encouraged to bring side dishes. Drinks will be furnished. The audience will participate in stories of by-gone times while feasting on BBQ, Dutch Oven posole, and exciting sides furnished by members. MEET AT 9 AM—at the gate on Hwy 36 mile marker 16. The sign on the cattle guard post says HORSE CAMP PASTURE. You will be met by Gary Blum. You can leave your vehicle there and car pool for the tour or you can drive. High clearance vehicles are recommended. Gary will guide you on the back roads of the ranch to the first stop which will be the Kiva. You will continue on to the Whitley Homestead, lava dike, and the Sunnyslope school site, and then on to the headquarters where the meal will be served. For the BBQ and audience participation only, drive to the headquarters by entering the green gate on south side on Hwy 117 between mile marker 5 and 6. Road is excellent unless it rains.

June—One of the new tools in an archeologist’s kit is of all things, a drone. Able to be directed from the ground over areas that can’t be seen from above, drones with thermal imaging are having great success in finding outlines from the sky of long buried sites. First used recently in New Mexico in the Chaco Canyon area the drone’s imaging revealed an ancient settlement called Blue J and contains nearly sixty ancestral Puebloan houses. Dr. Andrew Duff who has been directing digs in the Quemado area for over ten years is hoping to have access to a drone this season to use rather than the more invasive process of digging. We’re hoping he’ll be able to come share with us what he is finding and how the drone works.

July 26—Old timer’s celebration with speaker Robert Torrez at the Quemado Senior Center.



THE MANGAS VILLAGE

**Provided by Ana B. Vigil from an article written by her father
(CCHS anticipates having a tour of the town of Mangas sometime soon.)**

In 1873 some families living at Rito Colorado (southeast of Laguna, NM) came to what they called Rito Quemado to start a new settlement. Not long afterwards seven of the families moved to Mangas (named after the famous Apache Mangas Coloradas). Among them were the families of Pablo Pino, Jose M. Madrid, Pedro Baca, and Silberio Padilla.

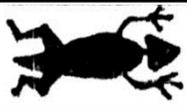
The government had not yet surveyed the land but as soon as it was, the squatters filed for the homesteads and soon after got their patents.

The part of the land that could be cultivated and irrigated was cut up into many strips. There was not enough for all to make a living so more and more of them went into the sheep business.

In the days of the open range sheep brought more money than cattle into the area. This brought more people into Mangas and the village grew. At one time, the village had forty large families and, also up and down the valley there were clusters of homes on the 160-acre patents. Mangas had a very large church, one well-stocked store, and for a while two saloons; and school terms were started. It seems to have been the “metropolis” because the 1900 Mangas census lists people from other areas that are now northwestern Catron.

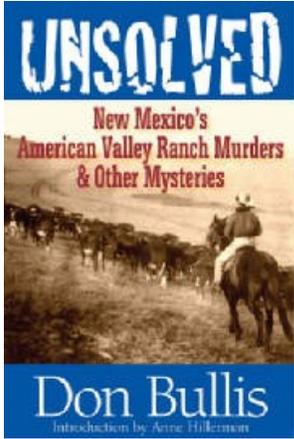
Fortunately for the land, the 640-acre law and the BLM brought an end to the open range. As the number of sheep dwindled so did the population of Mangas. There are a few people living nearby but where the village stood there is one family living now. And contrary to what some have written, neither the village of Mangas nor the village of Rito Quemado were ever attacked by Indians.





BOOK REVIEWS

Unsolved: *New Mexico's American Valley Ranch Murders and Other Mysteries*, by Don Bullis
—Reviewed by Laura Brush



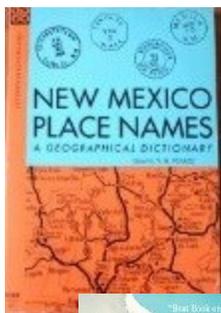
There is no agreement today on where the American Valley is. There is agreement that the American Valley Ranch was huge. By one report it consisted of 12,000 acres of patented land controlling water (streams, springs, etc.) and two to three million acres of rangeland. Since the ranch headquarters was in or near Quemado, it seems safe to assume that at least some of the ranch was in what is now Catron County. The ranch owners (who may or may not have included Thomas B. Catron) employed threats and acts of violence to gain control of all that rangeland. This presumably was the motive for the murders in the title story of this book, of two homesteaders who had declined to sell their land. No one was ever convicted in the deaths.



Most of the forty-some mysteries described here involve unsolved murders or disappearances, ranging over time from the sixteenth century to nearly the twenty-first (1999). Other stories involve possible UFO sightings near Roswell and Socorro, sorting out the reputations of Manuel Armijo (the last Spanish governor of New Mexico) and Kit Carson, the possibly pre-historic inscriptions on the mystery stone of Los Lunas, the cache of Spanish gold perhaps found in Victorio Peak in White Sands, and more.

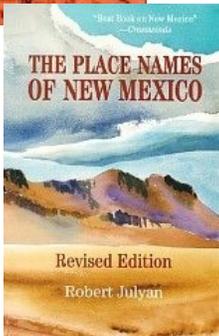
The title story is the longest, at seventeen pages; some are as short as two pages. Most of these names will not be new to those familiar with New Mexico history—Albert and Henry Fountain, “Doc” Noss, Pat Garrett—although there will no doubt be at least bits of new information to be found. Each chapter ends with a list of sources for further research. The author offers alternative reports and interpretations of events, weighing the likelihood or accuracy of each where possible. In addition, the book includes twenty-seven illustrations, an index, and an Introduction by Anne Hillerman. It is a worthwhile addition to the New Mexico history shelf.

New Mexico' *Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary*, edited by TM Pearce ; and *The Place Names of New Mexico*, revised edition, by Robert Julian —Reviewed by Laura Brush



Two books designed to fill the same purpose: record, describe, and explain the history of New Mexico as shown in the names of its physical features including rivers, mountains, lakes, mesas, arroyos, springs, villages, and cities.

Their entries are similar, presented in alphabetical order and starting with the entry's county (or counties, in the case of some larger places such as rivers and mountain ranges) and further identifying the location by distances and directions from other sites. This is followed by the source of the name, which may be a physical description or commemorating an event or person, for example. In the case of human settlements, the entry also briefly sketches the history and gives the years of an active post office there as an indication of current or historical occupancy.

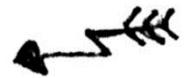
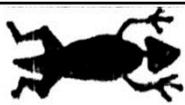


New Mexico Place Names, which advertises over 5,000 individual items, contains a map of the state's counties in the front. Items with similar names are combined into one entry; for example, the entry headed by Largo, a small community in Lincoln County (PO 1883-1927), also includes Largo Canyon and Largo Creek in Catron County, Largo Canyon in Lincoln County, and Largo Creek in Rio Arriba and San Juan counties. The book contains guide words, the ones at the top of the page to indicate the first or last entry on the page, which aid in searching.

The Place Names of New Mexico advertises over 7,000 entries. It contains no maps nor does it employ guide words. Each item has a separate entry. That contributes to the book's greater length, as do its larger print and longer entries, in addition to more entries. For example, *New Mexico Place Names* devotes four or five lines to discuss Thomas Catron in the entry on Catron County; *The Place Names of New Mexico* allows twenty-one lines (some of the difference being the larger font).

Either book will provide the basics in location and background of New Mexico place names, so the main choice is between concise and slightly more expansive information.





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TREASURER'S REPORT 2014

Previous Balance	\$ 8598.44
Expenses (none)	
Income:	
Business Memberships	150.00
Family Memberships	60.00
Balance February 28, 2014	<u>8718.44</u>
Previous Balance	\$ 8718.44
Expenses	
Supplies.....	166.69
IRS 501 (c)(3) Filing	400.00
Postage	106.45
Income:	
Memberships	250.00
Balance March 31, 2014	<u>8295.30</u>



(Continued from page 2)

der President Harrison.

Thomas Catron became active in Republican politics and was elected Mayor of Santa Fe. Some of the buildings around Santa Fe's Plaza were constructed by him, and he had his fingers in many local industries. He understood the Spanish Land Grant process and managed to acquire almost four million acres of land by means that were mostly nefarious. As he and his cronies like Elkins controlled the courts, government, and local businesses there were none to successfully oppose them. The Santa Fe Ring was even accused of having several opponents murdered though no formal charges were ever brought.

On the positive side of the ledger, Thomas Catron tirelessly promoted the cause of statehood for New Mexico and when in 1912 it finally came to pass he was elected as one of the first two senators from this state. Bryan did a marvelous job of unraveling Catron's many complicated business dealings and making them intelligible and entertaining in the retelling, no easy feat. Bryan illustrated his talks with pictures of original documents, buildings and people from Catron's time and by the time he concluded his lively presentation we all felt well introduced to a complicated character of many shades of gray whose name is on New Mexico's largest county.



CCHS MISSION STATEMENT

The Catron County Historical Society was founded in January of 2008 and is an organization whose mission is to preserve, present, educate, and inform...by increasing the knowledge of Catron County history through outings, programs, oral history interviews, and a compilation of books pertaining to Catron County. We have recently become a non-profit corporation, and are in the process of locating a museum and visitor center, continuing with an oral history library and the book library, and constructing a website. The future of the CCHS is in the members and volunteers who help to preserve the history of Catron County.