

CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY/JUNE 2014

PAGE 1

Save the dates in May!
More Events Coming.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 26—Hispanic Heritage Robert Torrez

August—Adams Family with Barb Adams

September 13—Pie Town Pie Festival (visit the CCHS booth at the festival!)

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

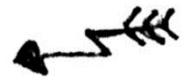
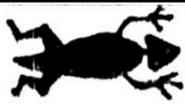
IN THIS ISSUE

From the President..... Page 2
CCHS Tour..... Page 2
Upcoming Events Page 3
The BBQ Story..... Page 3
Tour Photos..... Page 4
Book Reviews Page 5

2013/2014 CCHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Sally Blum, 575-772-2539
VICE PRESIDENT: Lisa Blessing, 575-773-4633
SECRETARY: Becky Bratten • **TREASURER:** Helen Cress
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Shannon Donnelly • sdonnellyNM@gmail.com

DIRECTORS:
Barb Adams, Bob Roland, Doris
Clymo, Nettie Carrejo,
Bonnie Armstrong



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our garden is thriving, plants are growing, flowers are blooming, but the drought is troubling. We must use so much water since our water storage tanks are not being replenished and the rain will not come. The new grass we usually see is not there and the pastures look barren of grass. The horses are fed hay every day. In the past we had to round them up so we could ride them. We had so much grass that the horses would not come into the corrals. We see storm clouds coming and we call all the neighbors to see if they received any rain. Same answer every time, "No." When I think of the homesteaders that relied so heavily on the rains for their very existence and think what no rain meant to them. They did much dry farming and the rain was critical. If you were on the tour of the Whitley/Black cabin, you can see why the cistern was essential. The Brown cabin also had a cistern which we filled in to avoid animals from falling in the deep cisterns. I think about the Anasazi Indians and wonder how they coped with no metal storage tanks or cisterns.

The tour to the Fischer/Blum ranch was successful and we have the write-up from the speakers on their particular subject. I want to thank Ken Fischer, Doug Fischer, and my husband, Gary Blum, for the tour, talk, and write ups. Becky Bratten also contributed to the write up. The BBQ was fantastic and I asked Tom Sanford and LynnDee Hannigan for a story about their BBQ business. Their story is included in this newsletter. Many have said that the meat was the best they have ever tasted and I agree. Thank you to our master BBQ cooks.

ACOMA TOUR-

I do not know how many CCHS members attended the tour, but Lisa Blessing said the food and the tour were great. We may schedule this tour again when more members can attend. The Cibola Historical Society did a write up of the tour: The activity with the CCHS and the Cibola Historical Society at Acoma/Sky City was truly a great success. We could always have more people attend, but we appreciate CCHS. Also, the hospitality the Acoma/Sky City people afforded us was very very nice. Thanks to them. The green chile stew and the stuffed squash was great. Thanks goes to Melvin for being our guide. Our appointed Vice President, Sonny Marquez and I have worked to bring a fund raiser to our historical organization. Thanks to Kathy Stephens, Sign Fx has been a great help and support for the cap project. You will be hearing more at a later date. ◆◆◆

CCHS TOUR

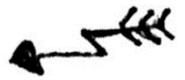
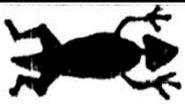
Cchs toured the Veteado Peak Ranch and Fischer Ranch on May 31. Gary Blum, Ken Fischer, and Jim Bratten showed up early at the meeting place on Highway 36. To their surprise cars were already waiting and ready to view the Whitley Cabin, the Kiva Site, the Lava Wall, and the remains of Sunny Slope School. By 9:15 the caravan included 16 vehicles and 34 visitors. After passing the ruins of the "616" archeology site, the caravan entered Fischer Ranch. A couple of miles into the ranch they arrived at the Whitley Cabin.

WHITLEY CABIN-Gary Blum

Gary Blum provided the background of the Whitley family. Fred Black migrated from Decatur City, Iowa, to north of Quemado met and eventually married Billie Whitley, whose family originally homesteaded part of the Fischer Ranch and Veteado Peak Ranch in the early 1920s. The Blacks moved into the Bob Sage homestead located approximately one mile north of the entrance to the Fischer Ranch. Billie passed at age 53 and Fred at age 99. Both are interned in the Quemado Cemetery. Billie Whitley's parents were Charles and Anna Sarah "Ma" Whitley, originally from El Paso, Texas. In the 1920s the Whitleys built an elaborate cabin by the standards of the day. The log cabin was constructed of exceptionally large logs and had a large stone fireplace, large picture windows, cistern, and root cellar. Charles Whitley was born in 1871 and died in 1932. Ma Whitley was born in 1871 and died in 1965. They both now rest in Sunny Slope Cemetery on the south side of the Fischer Ranch.

An opportunity for comments and questions followed Gary's presentation. Billy Green, who helped Fred gather his cows, stated he does not remember Fred Black riding horses, but instead herded his cattle by pickup truck. Some suggested Fred did not have any previous experience in ranching. Bonnie Armstrong offered more detailed information about the Whitleys and remembered the nearby Bob Sage Saw Mill. The tour proceeded to the Kiva Site.

(Continued on page 3)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Our July 26 meeting is designed to encourage our important Hispanic families to contribute their stories and preserve the Hispanic influence in Catron County. The speaker, Robert Torrez, is well aware of the problems with the preservation of the Hispanic influence in New Mexico. We are committed in our organization to reach out to our important families so that we do not lose the history of their contributions to this area. We will be recording and preserving this history at the Quemado Senior Center on the 26th. Please come and bring pictures and stories. Let Bonnie Armstrong (575-773-4527 or 505-220-2638) know if you intend to speak so we can set aside a time for you.

In August we will have our very own Barb Adams to talk about her family. She has many pictures and wonderful stories of her family. We will have this presentation at the Quemado Senior Center. The exact date and time will be determined.

September 13 is the Pie Town Pie Festival, the second Saturday as always. This year CCHS will try and be there with our membership table. Last year the rain hindered our participation. Also in September we will have our very own Bob Roland give a power point presentation on the history of the Apache raid on Placida Romero. The exact time and place has not been determined. You will not want to miss this. ◆◆◆

(Continued from page 2)

KIVA SITE-Doug Fischer

Doug Fischer gave a talk on his work at the Kiva Site he is currently excavating which is situated in a late P-III or early P-IV (A.D. 1200-1300) Ancestral Pueblo ruin located within the pinon-juniper forest zone. The walls of the rooms in this site are made of sandstone and the rooms number approximately 500. There are about 7 kivas. Kivas were usually built below the surface of the ground and had ceremonial significance for the Ancestral Pueblo people. These kivas can be located by looking at depressions on the surface of the ground. Kivas generally fall into 3 types: key hole, square or d-shaped. Doug explained that the kiva he was excavating is a d-shape kiva. His excavation work started in May 2013, and was substantially finished in May 2014. The whole excavation was done by hand using a trowel, rock pick, and a shovel. The excavated dirt was shoveled into a back-hoe bucket and lifted out of the excavation.

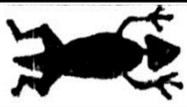
The walls of the kiva are lined with masonry. The floor is paved with huge stone slabs carried by hand by the Pueblo Indians from an unknown location off-site. The depth of the kiva from the top surface to the floor is 10-11 feet. There are benches along the walls to accommodate participants during ceremonies. In each of the two corners of the kiva Doug found 2 small ollas, or ceramic pots intended for carrying water, built into the wall as offerings. One is a St. Johns polychrome and the other a Reserve black-on-white. Among the mysteries still to be unraveled is the presence of a large tunnel or ventilator shaft. If a tunnel, it could lead to a room next door where the medicine man would enter and leave the kiva during ceremonies. Excavation work continues on this feature in the kiva.

LAVA WALL-Ken Fischer

The Lava Wall, 10'-12' high in places, winds its way along the Continental Divide for a considerable distance on the east side of the Fischer Ranch. Although the wall appears to a casual observer as a man-made structure, Ken Fischer confirmed in his talk to the tour group that it is in fact a natural feature. The Lava Wall was created by magma from the earth's crust intruding in a fissure in the older sedimentary rock above it. As it cooled the lava acquired the shape and thickness of the fissure. When the softer sedimentary rock on either side of the lava rock weathered away, the hard basalt lava rock that had been within the fissure assumed the appearance of a "wall."

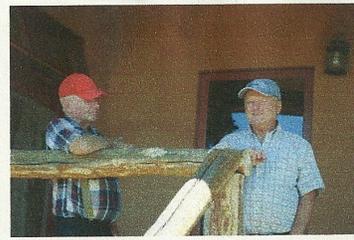
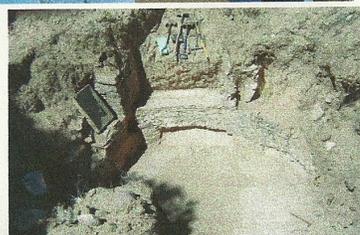
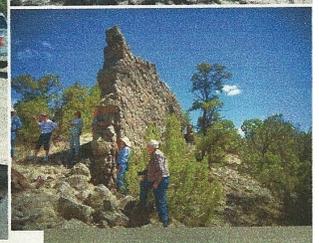
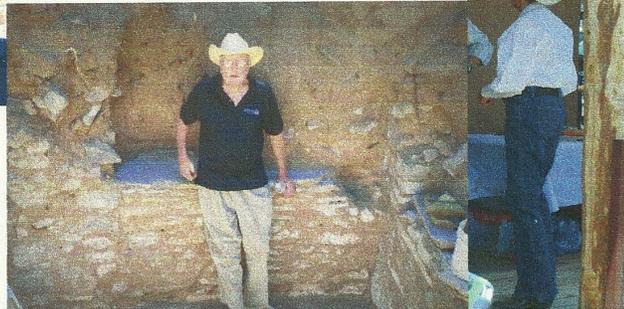
Geologists call igneous intrusions into older pre-existing rock "plutons" from the Greco-Roman god, Pluto, god of the underworld. Plutons can be massive globular intrusions such as batholiths or laccoliths hundreds of feet thick and a thousand miles long. Plutons can find their way into narrow fissures, as was the case here, and upon cooling would be labeled either a "sill" if the pluton parallels the layering of the pre-existing rock or a "dike" if it cuts across the layering of existing rock. Because the pluton here was intruded vertically through horizontal layers of pre-existing sedimentary rock, the Lava Wall pluton is considered a dike. Ken stated the Malpais was recent, a surface flow only 8,000 to 10,000 years old. He suggested the Lava Wall is likely 100,000 years old or older.

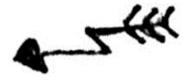
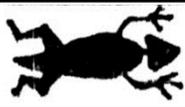
(Continued on page 6)



Blum/Fischer Ranch Tour

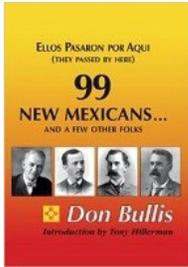
Cabins, Lava Wall, Kiva, & BBQ





BOOK REVIEWS

99 *New Mexicans...and a Few Other Folks: Ellos Pasaron por Aqui (They Passed by here)*, by Don Bullis —Reviewed by Laura Brush



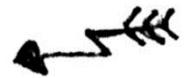
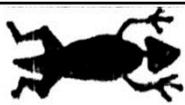
Don Bullis has written three historical biography compilations. His largest, *New Mexico Historical Biographies* (reviewed in May/June 2012 Newsletter) contains 1500 entries. This one has, as the title promises, about 99 entries; it is both less and more expansive. The less is obvious; the more is because entries are longer. The larger book has two or three entries per page; most entries in this one are two or three pages, some much longer.

Two chapters in this book about people not covered in the larger book. *The Legend of the Hummer: A Navajo Returned Spirit* details the apparent death on several occasions (sometimes including burial) and subsequent reappearance of a man known only as the Hummer. *Eva Poe Newkirk and the Blizzard of 1957* quotes from a letter written by Mrs. Newkirk during a horrendous blizzard in northeastern New Mexico (winds of 80 mph and drifts of 30 feet). Many of the chapters were originally newspaper columns, most written for the Rio Rancho *Observer*. Some came from the author's earlier book, *New Mexico's Finest*, on lawmen. One stated goal for these pieces was to present divergent points of view, often given in footnotes. An unstated goal seemed to be to present a general view of life in historical New Mexico rather than to focus on key players. For example, the chapter *New Mexico's Jewish Merchants: A Peaceful Revolution* discusses the influence of various Jewish immigrants and their effect on commerce in late 19th and early 20th century. The book contains nine pages of sources, thirteen photos, and an Introduction by Tony Hillerman. Most of the chapters deal with lawmen and gunmen. I found more interesting the ones on topics such as the Army's experiment with camels, establishing the borders of New Mexico, the discovery of dinosaur bones, and Sally Rooke's heroism in the flood of 1908. ◆◆◆

THE BBQ STORY

By Tom Sanford and LynnDee Hannigan

Tom and I got into the barbecue business when we found out about an old chuck wagon that had been built about 40 years ago, but the people who had it had let it set in a field for a long time. When we went to look at it, it was sooo trashed and filled with dirt limbs. Even Tom had his doubts about restoring it. I remembered the old guy who had it built—Charlie. He used to sit on a street corner in Grand Junction and sell BBQ when I was in high school. He had died and the wagon had been forgotten, even though it was one-of-kind. We acquired the wagon and Tom got busy restoring it. The main structure was steel so that had stayed in good shape. We made a new canvas for the top and Tome re-designed the smoker, and we worked with the health dept. to make sure everything would be acceptable. We left the original name, "Charlie's Chuck Wagon." His son had made the original sign for his dad. It also had a huge dinner bell on the back, well over 100 years old! It basically looked the same as before, just up-dated! I had worked in restaurants for 30 years by then, so I knew we could make it work. Little did we know what we would be in for! We jumped right into the event and festival scene. It was fun, crazy hard work and extremely BUSY! The events we did were mostly food shows, music festivals, horse shows, dog shows, and art festivals, with a few farmer's markets, car shows, home shows thrown in as extra! We also competed in a few BBQ competitions but decided we enjoyed just making and selling good BBQ. We owned and worked it for ten years and all of our original crew that started with us remained with us. We sold it to a buyer in Utah about three years ago and moved to our property in New Mexico. We had mixed feelings about selling it, but the BBQ business is very demanding and we aren't spring chickens anymore! It was fun over the years to meet people in Colorado and Utah and we had many loyal customers. We also met many people who had known or been involved with old Charlie! We mostly stayed in Western Colorado and Utah, but occasionally went as far as Wyoming. We drove it down the road just as it looked at all times—like a huge chuck wagon—and we would get lots of attention. People would tell us that they could smell it for miles down the road, and they would just follow their noses! Forgot to mention that Hank was known as the "Chuckwagon Dog." He had more friends than we did! He came onboard at six weeks old and developed an unusual habit of sitting on the steps with his butt one step higher than his feet and legs. He still sits like that and people laugh about it. He had so many bones he would just give them away to any other dog that showed up, as if to say, "There's plenty more of these!" ◆◆◆



SPONSORS

- Cielito Lindo Ranch, Inc.
- Catron Courier
- Dan Lee Water Drilling
- Jerry Thompson
- Bob and Nelcine Roland
- Mike and Chris Hill
- Molly Thomas/Garda Siocana Kennels
- Jim and Joy Williams
- Medcom Solutions, Inc.
- Crossfire Cattle Company LLD
- Grecco Tax Service
- DJH Energy Consulting
- N.Valley Wellness Center/Alternative Medicine
- The Adobe Café and Bakery
- Williams Windmill Inc
- Western New Mexico Land Company

TREASURER'S REPORT 2014

Previous Balance	\$ 8295.30
Expenses	
Supplies	203.72
Speaker	74.75
Purchase Projector.....	454.24
Income (membership.....)	230.00
Balance April 30, 2014	<u>7792.59</u>
Previous Balance	\$ 7792.59
Expenses (Holt).....	125.00
Income:	
Memberships	280.00
Silent Auction.....	751.70
Balance May 31, 2014	<u>8699.29</u>

(Continued from page 3)

SUNNY SLOPE SCHOOL-Gary Blum

The last stop was a viewing of the site of Sunny Slope School. Gary Blum provided a short history. The site was donated by Bill Hunter, whose cabin was situated about a half mile to the south. Sunny Slope School was erected in 1934 at a cost of \$20.00 and with plenty of volunteer labor from Lon Hayherst, Bob Sage, Cliff Brown, and Mr. Koger. The lumber for the school came from the Sage Saw Mill. Before the school was finished the students convened at Bill Hunter's one-room cabin for classes. They did not have desks at Sunny Slope, but sat on logs. Sunny Slope instructed about 27 students from the area. Jim Hogg was the teacher. Although the school structure was removed years ago, remnants of the foundation, picket fencing, and other debris, including the fender of a depression era car, can be seen. The students walked or rode horses to the school. The tour proceeded on to the BBQ at Veteado Peak Ranch Headquarters. Bonnie Armstrong made a side trip to the homestead cabin of her parents, Lawrence and Bernadyne Brown, and showed several visitors the restored log cabin.

BBQ REPORT-Becky Bratten

They arrived at the Veteado Peak Ranch Headquarters at noon. Many brought side dishes to go with the scrumptious BBQ beef and pork that LynDee and Tom had been smoking. All was ready. The crowd enjoyed socializing with plates full of food. Thanks to the hospitality of Sally and Gary Blum, members were able to enjoy yet another yearly event. People left wondering what next year's event would be, and were already looking forward with anticipation.



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.

}}}