

CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH/APRIL 2015

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Join now to come to
the members only events!

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 6 — Blum/Fischer Ranch (Members Only)

July 10 — Bob Roland Ranch (Members Only)

August 8—Jerry/Don Thompson



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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2015 CCHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Sally Blum, 575-772-2539

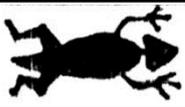
VICE PRESIDENT: Lisa Blessing, 575-773-4633

SECRETARY: Becky Bratten • TREASURER: Helen Cress

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Shannon Donnelly • sdonnellyNM@gmail.com

DIRECTORS:

Barb Adams, Doris Clymo, Nettie
Carrejo, Bonnie Armstrong,
Wayne Ashby



FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was thinking about our organization the other day and I realized that CCHS is unique and diverse. By diverse I mean we cover the personal stories and history of Catron County, but we also cover the story of prehistoric Indian cultures in Catron County. We go on outings to homesteader cabins, have cowboy BBQs, view ancient petroglyphs and prehistoric Indian Kivas and ruins, and our programs cover these same diverse topics. With such diversity, CCHS has a lot to offer people not only in Catron County but within the state. That is reflective of the diverse membership we have.

CALENDARS Ann Leonard has been working on calendars for CCHS and Becky will be supplying the pictures. We will obtain pricing and look for a printer. If the cost is competitive, these calendars will be for sale. We are also looking at having T-shirts and/or baseball caps made and these will also be for sale if they are cost effective.

COMPUTER ACCOUNTING PROGRAM Helen Cress and Barb Adams are pursuing a program to make our accounting easier and more efficient. This will help with the budgeting process. The budget is being worked on and will be sent to all members shortly.

LISA BLESSING Our remarkable and talented Lisa Blessing has not been available for the last two weeks to do the Helen Cress write-up. I pasted together original promotion she did in desperation. We all look forward to her next articles. What a gifted writer.

MARCH 28 Our very own Helen Cress talked about her famous mother, a true pioneer in many unexpected ways. An inductee in the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, Pennsylvania born Eleanor Williams was by turns a Ringling Brothers circus performer, Madison Square Garden rodeo star and trick rider, New York trained artist, local homesteader and rancher who even found time to run for the New Mexico State Senate. There was only one Eleanor Williams, but any one of her many diverse talents, accomplishments, and adventures would have been a lifetime achievement for the rest of us. This was story telling at its finest, yet it was all true. Helen also talked about the personal side of her mother's marriages and her strong personality. If you missed this talk, you missed an extremely interesting presentation. We do have this talk on video and it is for sale. (Photos on p.2 by LaLuz Photography)



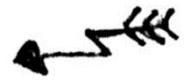
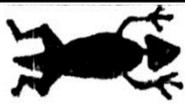
APRIL 17 Annual Meeting at the Quemado Senior Center. Becky Bratten announced the new officers: President-Sally Blum, Vice-President-Lisa Blessing, Secretary-Becky Bratten, Treasurer-Helen Cress, Directors-Barb Adams, Wayne Ashby, Nettie Carrejo, Doris Clymo, Bonnie Armstrong. One ballot had Becky Bratten for all offices on the ballot form. I agree she could do all the positions, but she would die trying to keep up. We want her to stay around as she is invaluable so she stayed with Secretary.

We also had the silent auction at the Community Center next door. We want to thank all the people who donated the gifts and thank all the bidders who purchased the items. We made more than \$600.00 which will help fund the restoration of the museum.



Our speaker was Ron Barber. He is a mechanical engineer by trade, toiling at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore, but he's an adventurer at heart and experience fascinated by lost civilizations. Using his engineering background, Ron has developed a systematic approach to surveying petroglyphs that might provide insights into early astronomical knowledge. Ron shared his knowledge of stone "calendars" and had a fantastic slide show that showed some preliminary results of his Stone Calendar Project, "a hobby that somehow got out of hand."

(Continued on page 3)



UPCOMING EVENTS

June 6 will be our annual BBQ at the Blum/Fischer ranch. This year we will have Harald Keith to entertain us with poetry, and he may do some ballads for us to enjoy while eating BBQ ribs, chicken, and pork prepared by BBQ chef, Tom Sanford. As usual the membership is encouraged to bring side dishes. The event will begin at 3:00 PM.

July 10 is an outing to Bob Roland's ranch which is the old Bibo Ranch near Grants on Highway 117. Last time we visited Bob's home and ranch, we toured the Petroglyphs a short walk from the house. This year we will view his Indian ruins that are currently being excavated and have lunch on the porch of the house, which is spectacular. Please bring your own lunch. CCHS will supply drinks and dessert. More details will follow.

August 8 our speaker will be Jerry/Don Thompson who is an alumni of QHS. This program will be in conjunction with the QHS reunion. We are planning on his talk on Saturday during lunch at QHS. We may have a BBQ Saturday evening before the dance sponsored by alumni. The dance will be in our new museum. This is still in the planning

(Continued from page 2)

MAY 2 Kelly Gatlin offered a hike for members in Datil and information on early settlers, the Cleavelands and the Morleys. You may also enjoy four books about the Cleavelands/Morleys: *The Morleys: Young Upstarts on the Southwest Frontier* by Norman Cleaveland with George Fitzpatrick, *Satan's Paradise* by Agnes Morley Cleveland, *Open*

HOMESTEADING: LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME PART 2

by John Larson (First appeared in El Defensor Chieftain's Cowboy Country section, June 2014)

The Fites established their ranch in Socorro County in 1937, adjacent to the area which four years later would become the site of the first atomic explosion, the Trinity Site.

"We took those cattle across that bombing range and it was top secret, and we crossed the highway twice and nobody saw us," Fite said. "And you can tell when cattle cross a road, you know they drag weeds and make tracks, and pee and potty. They never saw us."

Since the Fite ranch was near Alamogordo Bombing and Gunnery Range, now White Sands Missile Range, the locals were naturally curious about the blast the morning of August 6, 1945, and Evelyn has her own story surrounding the Trinity Site.

"All the kids, all the boys around the ranch that rode horseback, went over there to see what went on, and those kids all gathered that green glass, you know, that melted, and had it in their pockets and took it home, put it on the mantle. Now this supposed to 've been radioactive and kill you and make you sterile—they all managed to raise families."

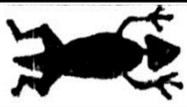
"People homesteaded that country in the '30s. And they homesteaded that country around Bingham at the same time," Fite said. "They came west where they *drouthed* out and everything—starved out. Moved, came there and tried to make it—there was no water, you know. The story of those homesteaders is pretty grim."

But there were happier moments, especially on Saturday nights.

"They had an old dance hall/dairy up by Magdalena, and they would clear the barn out and have dances on Saturday nights," Fite said. "That's the only place we could come to dance, and people from all around, and that's where I met my first cowboys. That's where I first met Dean."

"We called it the Cow Chip Ballroom. It's all just ruins now," she said. "Oh, it was wild. This one lady had a whorehouse out on the hillside and the cowboys would go out there, and Dean's dad was—it would make him so mad when the cowboys would go out there, he just thought that was terrible. I never even really knew where it was. It wasn't my time."

The complete oral histories, with photographs, are on file at the BLM Socorro Filed Office, 901 S. Highway 85. ◀▶



BUSINESS SPONSORS: HIGH COUNTRY ALPACA RANCH

We have several new business sponsors. Each business sponsor is encouraged to tell us about their business. This issue of the newsletter features our new business sponsor High Country Alpaca Ranch. This is their story, written by Carolyn Fifield.

High Country Alpaca Ranch is located at the intersection of NM Hwy 36 and NM Hwy 117. It is a full time alpaca live-stock operation that also offers facilities for your relaxation and enjoyment. Established in 2009 by John and Carolyn Fifield, High Country Alpaca Ranch prides itself as a super clean, well maintained ranch where one can easily commune with nature and animals alike. The barn, pastures and paddocks were well thought out and constructed in a manner that is conducive to excellent animal husbandry and human interaction. Our alpacas, Great Pyrenees live-stock guardian dogs, house dogs, house cat, barn cat and free range chickens are all friendly with each other as well as visitors. Alpacas are for sale year round. Livestock guardian dogs are bred and sold on an as needed basis.

The Bunkhouse, secluded next door, is available for renting on a short-term basis year round. It is a fully furnished 16' x 70' prefab home, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms. It is stocked with towels, washcloths, bedding, paper goods, dinnerware and cooking utensils. Additional amenities include a washer/dryer (detergents provided), satellite internet, satellite TV, books, games, gas and charcoal/wood grills, and fire pit. (Farm fresh eggs are provided when available.) Pets are welcome and horse facilities are provided. Rates are \$75 per night or \$350 per week. Remote camping and RV sites are also available.

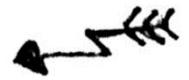
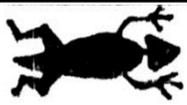
A Mercantile (gift shop) is also onsite for your shopping enjoyment. It is stocked with a variety of alpaca garments and accessories, yarn, books, tee shirts, hats, bath/body items, jewelry, toys, gently used items, and assorted specialty items handmade by family, friends and local artisans. For bird enthusiasts, we make and sell bird nesting balls using alpaca fiber from our animals. Large quantities of raw alpaca fiber are also available for spinners and weavers.

Alpaca manure is sold year round by the truckload or in 50 pound bags. Smaller bags are available in the Mercantile for brewing into a 'tea' solution for your indoor plants and new seedlings. Alpaca manure is one of the best organic plant food and soil conditioners on the market. Because it is lower in organic matter than cow or horse manure, it can be spread directly onto plants without a fear of burning them or a need to ferment or compost it. The 'beans' (often referred to as 'Black Gold') are a great recyclable product, odorless, harmless to pets, and can be used for lawns, trees, vegetable gardens, flower gardens and house plants.

High Country Alpaca Ranch also provides a venue for group events. We routinely invite senior and children groups to the ranch for day outings. We are dedicated to serving families with children having developmental disabilities, including those on the Autism spectrum. Past experience has proven to be an extraordinary pleasant time for both visitors and owners. We are also available to provide the venue for your group events—such as weddings, church retreats, parties, and family reunions.

If you are looking to purchase alpacas or livestock guardian dogs, a perfect getaway, a unique shopping experience or an event venue, contact us at 505-788-2236, or email: hcar2009@wildblue.net or visit our website at highcountryalpacaranch.com.





BOOK REVIEWS

New Mexico and the Civil War by Dr. Walter Earl Pittman—Reviewed by Laura Brush



There wasn't a lot of Civil War action in New Mexico compared to, say, Virginia, so it's not surprising that this is a short book. The US Army redeployed many of its forces from the Southwest to the East at the beginning of the War. This freed the Apaches and others to step up their raids on ranchers, miners, and other settlers in the area. The two armies—especially the Union—spent as much time fighting Indians as each other.

Most of the Rebel forces came from Texas, headed by General H. H. Sibley, who had been stationed in New Mexico before he left the US Army to join the Confederacy. The Union forces were led by General E. R. S. Canby, "who would succeed in destroying a Confederate army without winning a battle." He was greatly aided by terrain and weather, as well as the unrealistic nature of Sibley's invasion plans.

The Rebel army receives the primary focus of the book. This is not surprising, since they were by far more active than Canby's forces. The book follows their trek from Texas to Mesilla, north along the Rio Grande to Santa Fe, east into the mountains, back south along the Rio Grande (including a grueling week through the San Mateo mountains well west of the Rio to evade the

following Union forces), and then back to Texas. The major battles of Valverde (on the Rio Grande south of Socorro, which included the only know charge by lancers in the Civil War) and Glorieta (in the mountains east of Santa Fe) are described in detail but clearly—actions, rationales, effects.

Twelve maps are provided, although they are not as useful as they could be; two historical sketches and sixteen photos, both historical and contemporary, show some of the major sites and players involved. There are also an index and a bibliography for further reading. The book is a good overview of this period of New Mexico's history.



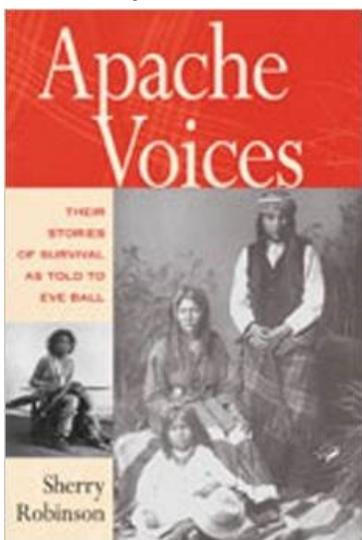
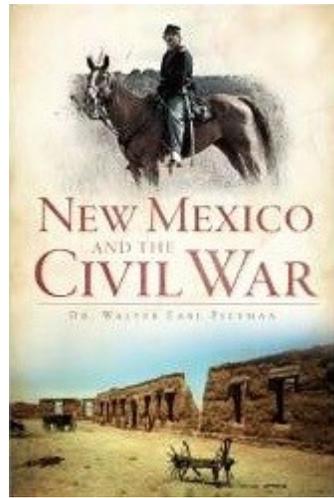
Apache Voices: Their Stories of Survival as Told to Eve Ball by Sherry Robinson—Reviewed by Laura Brush

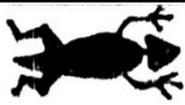
In the 1940's Eve Ball bought some land in Ruidoso and built a house about a mile from the Mescalero Apache Reservation. Over the next couple of decades she came to know and be trusted by many of the Apaches who came by her house. She talked to them, asked questions, interviewed them, and copied their stories verbatim in shorthand. Some stories of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century were told firsthand by those who had been there, while others were repeated by the children and grandchildren who had heard the stories from those who had participated. She had much difficulty publishing books based on this, as oral histories were not well-regarded by the establishment, especially since these stories generally didn't agree with the versions told by existing "official" reports.

In 1995 journalist and freelance writer Sherry Robinson began to sort through the seventeen boxes of transcripts and other materials which Ms. Ball had left. From that sorting comes this book. Much of it is direct quotes from various Apaches, with explanatory and bridging material provided as needed. As with any human recollections, sometimes there are divergent memories of how things happened; these are included. For the most part this is not cheery reading, as the dealings between the Apaches and the soldiers, settlers, and miners moving into what became southern New Mexico and Arizona did not go well for the Apaches.

What I found most interesting was the section entitled "The Apache Way"—how they found and prepared animals and plants for food, medicine, and tools from a land that to the uninitiated seemed devoid of such materials. In addition there is a bit of anthropology in discussing medicine men and women, religion (both traditional and Christian), running, warfare customs, and some animal stories.

There are twelve pages of index, five pages of bibliography, thirty-three pages of notes, twenty-three photos, and one map. This is a valuable addition to the history of the Southwest, drawn as it is for the most part from primary sources.





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TREASURER'S REPORT

Previous Balance December 31, 2014..... \$11,890.57
 Expenses Christmas Party..... 350.95
 Income..... 0.00
 Balance January 31, 2015\$11,539.62

Previous Balance.....\$11,539.62
 Expenses Insurance 1,205.13
 Income Membership 800.00
 Income Sale CD's..... 30.00
 Balance February 28, 2015\$11,164.49



FROM THE EDITOR

Back in May of 1880, Catron County had more excitement than most folks really wanted at Fort Tularosa, which once existed in Catron County in what is now Aragon, off Hwy 12. Named for the Tularosa creek, the fort was located on the east bank of the creek and established on April 30, 1872, the fort was meant to protect the Apache Warm Spring Reservation and Agency. The fort was really mostly log huts, however, the officer's quarters were made of adobe. The fort was abandoned in 1874 with the removal of the Apache to Ojo Caliente, Arizona. The abandoned fort and the town of Aragon were later attacked by the Apache under Victorio in May 1880. Buffalo Soldiers were sent to protect the settlers under the command of Sergeant George Jorgan, and from May 14 to 15 successfully held off attacks until reinforcements arrived.



CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY 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.