

# CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 2, 2018

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**Good-bye Charlie McCarty  
We will miss you!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May**—CCHS Museum Open on Fridays 10-2

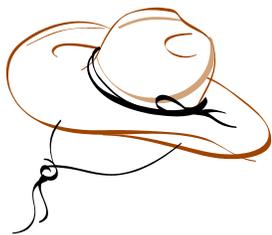
**May 19**—Kathryn Roberts, Pie Town Post Office

**May 26**—Kiva Dig Outing led by Wayne Ashby

**June 9**—Annual CCHS Barbecue in  
Jackson Park, Pie Town (Please RSVP!)

**July 4<sup>th</sup>**—Table or Booth at the CCHS Museum

### 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

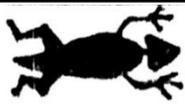
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### 2018-2019 CCHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Helen Cress, president 575-773-4177; Bonnie DeFoor, vice president; Maggie Hubbell, secretary;  
Barb Adams, treasurer.

Advisors are: Nettie Carrejo, Wayne Ashby, Shannon Donnelly, Doris Clymo.



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

This is my first message as president of CCHS. I am looking forward to continuing to work with a great bunch of people to hopefully provide lots of local history in Catron County.

We at CCHS have a common goal to bring members accurate histories on some of the people who settled the area, and to go to all the different towns in the area to find people who can tell those invaluable stories. Unfortunately, many old timers are gone and no one is left behind to tell their history. We plead with all residents and family members, wherever you may reside, to direct us to people who can provide such information. We are open to suggestions and welcome your input. And you don't have to report on only the settlers, but also their descendants who have lived here since. You may call any of us on the CCHS Board with your requests. My phone number is 575-773-4177, or you may call or email the Catron Courier and the publishers will pass on your ideas. One thing of real import is that we record our presentations and make DVD's that we can sell, and this is a way to preserve our history.

We are very aggrieved over the loss of our former board member, Charlie McCarty, who was from an old family in Reserve and a walking history book. We will miss him immeasurably. He almost always attended our board meetings and helped out as he was able, and I know that it was not easy for him to make the trip to Quemado, but he did it.

I will look forward to working among you all!



**GAIL ARMSTRONG TALK**

By Helen Cress

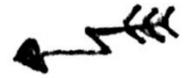
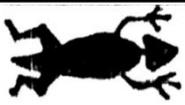
Gail and her family lived a number of years in the regions between Datil and Magdalena. They ranched there, in more than one area nearby over the years; first at the old Preacher Green ranch and later in about 1980, in Swingle Canyon, in a house where Gail's grandparents had lived, except for three years they spent in Artesia and Gail went to an underground school. She said it was "AWFUL!" Mrs. Gallaher was the carpenter, and a very exacting one, and she remodeled the house at the Preacher Green place, and added on to it. While she did this, Gail's father was out selling cars, airplanes, house, real estate, and, she said, everything but the children! The Preacher Green place was 15 miles out on a dirt road and Gail described a circuitous route they had to take to get to school, 110 miles each way! All the children of this pair were born in Socorro and raised not far away. The children all helped with ranch work; breaking ice, feeding and checking on cattle. They hauled panels out to where the cattle were to brand the calves, roping them and dragging them to where they needed to be.

Gail's mother was from Albuquerque and her father from Texas. She could read and write and speak Spanish. At some point she won the sportsman's award. After Gail had left home, her parents had a hunting business and her brother was a guide. I believe there were 4 children. Her program included some wonderful pictures on the ranches where they'd lived.

The children attended school in Datil, and, when they were ready for high school, were bussed to Quemado. There, Gail, who was known to most of us as Missy, met and fell in love with Dale Armstrong, and they were married soon after they graduated. Just a short while before his senior year, Dale had lost both parents in an automobile accident. They now own the state-wide business called TLC and have over 700 employees, and pride themselves on recruiting young help from small towns around the state.

Gail stressed the need for all of us to always be grateful for and proud of where we grew up; for all the good and bad experiences that made us who we are. We feel very honored that this busy lady, our state representative, would come out here and give her time to being our speaker at the annual meeting of the CCHS.





### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Starting in May** the CCHS Museum will be open on Fridays, from 10 AM to 2 PM. We need one volunteer every Friday to be at the Museum. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Helen Cress at 575-773-4177.

**May 19<sup>th</sup>** program is scheduled to take place in the Pie Town Community Center at 1:00 PM. Kathryn Roberts Roberts will be speaking about the Pie Town Post Office.

**May 26<sup>th</sup>** Wayne Ashby will guide an outing to Steve Nash's Kiva Dig. Meet at Touriette Lake turnoff from Hwy 12.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>** we will have our annual barbecue at Jackson Park in Pie Town. We are having the event catered this year by Ben Kendal of Milan. Therefore, if you want to eat, you MUST RSVP by NO later than May 24<sup>th</sup> so we can let the barbecue preparers know how much food to bring. We welcome members and non-members alike, but we must know you will be there if you want a plate. The charge will be \$12.00 a plate. Earl Gleason, who will have his tapes with him for purchase, if you want them, and we'll "pass the hat" for donations for him, as he has agreed not to charge us a fee.

The CCHS will have a table or booth in front of the museum on the Fourth of July at parade time, and will be selling t-shirts, DVD's. and whatever else we have for sale. (Sorry, no moonshine whiskey.) Board members will be happy to show what we have done in the museum so far.

Doris Clymo has a program scheduled also for latter in July.



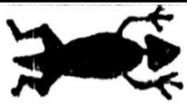
### **WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CATRON COUNTY?**

By Shannon Donnelly

**S**ome facts you may or may not already know about Catron County:

- Up until 1821, New Spain controlled land that later would become New Mexico, including Catron County. This means some of the records of early settlers may have been sent to an archives in Seville, Spain, or to archives in Mexico City.
- From 1821 until 1846, Mexico had jurisdiction over this same land so records of this period may have been sent to archives in Mexico City.
- United States forces occupied the New Mexico area starting in 1846 during the Mexican-American War.
- In 1848, the area that would become Catron County formally became a part of the United States when the Mexican War ended with ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- On February 25, 1921 Catron County was officially created, moving it apart from Socorro County. Records for this area filed prior to 1921 exist mostly in Socorro County.
- Catron County ranks second, next to Grant County, in the production of gold in New Mexico; up to 1959 it had yielded about 362,225 ounces of gold.
- From 1904 to 1942 about 40% of all the silver and 25% of all the gold produced in New Mexico came from this area, all from mines in the Mogollon area.
- A sergeant named James C. Cooney, who was stationed at Fort Bayard, staked the first claims in the Mogollon area in 1875, but hostile Apache Indians prevented the shipment of ore until 1879.
- Intermittent Indian raids continued to harass miners and settlers until after Geronimo's capture in 1885.

*(Continued on page 6)*



## **ELEANOR WILLIAMS—A CATRON CELEBRITY**

In the 1930s, Eleanor McClintock Williams was a champion trick and bronc rider, traveling in Wild West shows and performing on the high trapeze for Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus.

She was inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 1986 because of her contributions to rodeo and Western life.

Williams, the daughter of wealthy parents, spent her childhood in Pittsburgh. She met her first husband, a rodeo cowboy named Walter, after watching him compete at Madison Square Garden in 1928. They eloped two weeks later and joined a Wild West show heading for Chile. The show had a short run because the manager ran off with the gate money. They had to return to the U.S. on a Japanese cargo ship.

The couple had dreams of owning a ranch and in the 1930s they bought 300 acres in New Mexico, for \$2 an acre. They established their ranch headquarters and named their spread the Rising Sun Ranch. The ranch served as a dude ranch for a number of years and in the 1940s was re-named the Williams Ranch.

Her first marriage ended after six years in 1934. They had one child together. Williams refused to rely on her wealthy parents and paid off the ranch without their help.

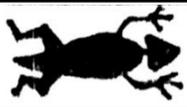
In 1938 she wrote in a letter, "This year has been a nightmare of financial worry. I finally got desperate this spring and took a job on a big Wild West show that opened in Chicago in April, riding bucking horses. The show is headed by Col. Tim McCoy, who made a minor name for himself in moving pictures and whom I worked under on the Ringling Show."

By the mid-1930s, women's relay racing was gone from most rodeos. Trick riding had become a contract event for entertainment instead of competition.

The Madison Square Garden Rodeo was the first to cut women's bronc riding, and financial problems during the Great Depression made it hard for the event to continue in smaller rodeos throughout the country. Bronc riding for women has never returned to the traditional rodeo circuit.

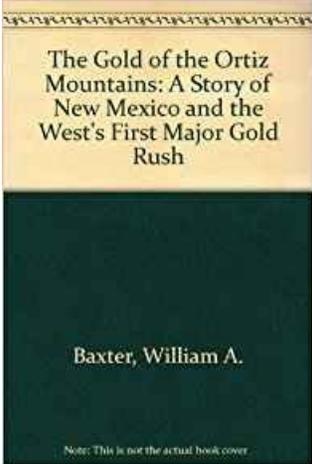
In 1940, Eleanor married Frank Williams. They raised a family of four more children, and ranched together until their deaths in the 1970s. Eleanor went on to run for the New Mexico Senate, became a published author and a recognized artist.





BOOK REVIEWS

*The Gold of the Ortiz Mountains: A Story of New Mexico and the West's Firsts Major Gold Rush*, by William Baxter, Lone Bute Press (2004) reviewed by Laura Brush

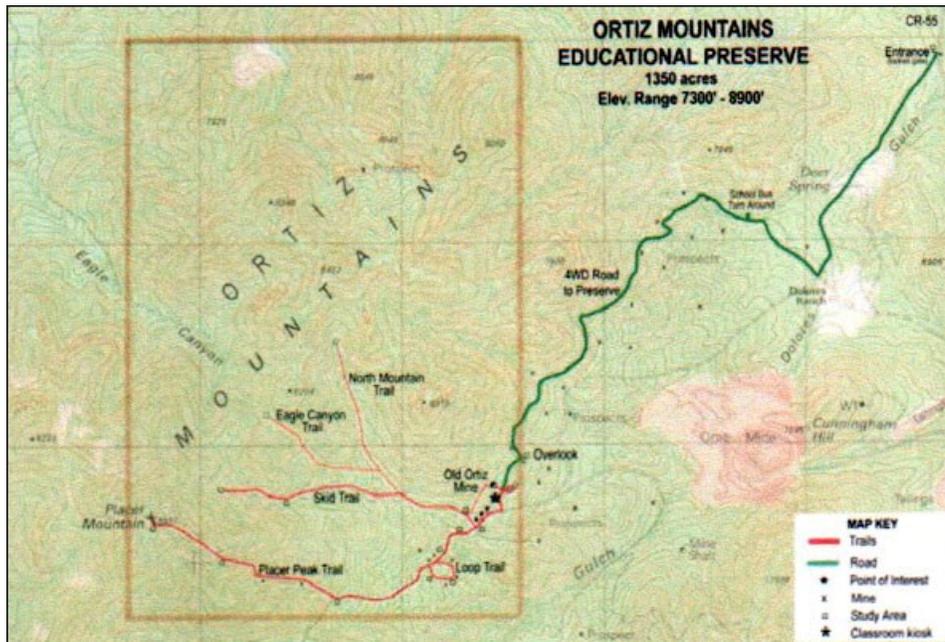


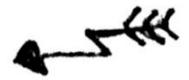
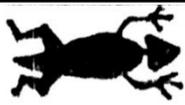
This story of gold mining in the Ortiz Mountains southwest of Santa Fe starts, as the gold did, with geology. There is a brief discussion of mining in pre-historic, Spanish Colonial, and Mexican eras. The big activity blossomed in U.S. Territorial days. Production mostly petered out in the Twentieth Century and even small-time placer mining by individual miners ended during World War II. Later, modern processes allowed mining to be profitably resumed. The 1980s alone produced almost half of the gold removed from the Ortiz Mountains over the last 160 years. Activity in the area now is focused on reclamation and remediation. The Ortiz Mountain Education Preserve, under the auspices of the Santa Fe Botanical Gardens, has completed mine hazard abatement and opened the area to the public.

There are a number of firsts involved in the Ortiz mines. La Mina del Santo Nino is the oldest documented lode gold mine (1831) in the Western U.S.. The first steam-powered stamp mill in the Rocky Mountains was operational in the area in 1857, and the first steam-powered arrastra (another ore crushing technique) in 1862. To feed the steam engines, coal was mined for industrial use for the first time in New Mexico in 1859. The first railroad in the Rocky Mountains was built to haul ore a mile and a half down the mountain, from the mine to the mill.

Many of the well-known wheeler dealers of Territorial days were involved in Ortiz Mountain mining, primary among them Stephen B. Elkins and Thomas B. Catron. As usual, many more people lost money on these investments than made any. One investor who had high hopes of success in making money with his new ore separation process was Thomas Edison. He didn't.

The book is clearly written and footnoted without being tedious. It contains 34 illustrations (photographs, maps, drawings), bibliography, and index. It is a brief survey of an important part of New Mexico's history.





### 2018 SPONSORS

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SSS

### TREASURER'S REPORT

by Barb Adams

BEGINNING BALANCE 2-28-18 .....	\$6,928.36
Expenses Accountant.....	187.83
Expenses Utilities.....	26.42
Expenses Museum .....	48.00
Expenses Annual Meeting.....	20.96
Income.....	35.00
BEGINNING BALANCE 3-31-18 .....	\$6,680.15
Expenses Utilities.....	26.24
Expenses Office Supplies .....	21.99
Income.....	145.00
ENDING BALANCE 4-12-18.....	\$6,776.74



(Continued from page 3)

- By 1924 many of the original mines in Mogollon, including the Cooney, were closed because of depletion of the surface ores; most properties were consolidated under the Mogollon Mines Co.
- The district was moderately active through 1946, but it was virtually idle from 1947 through 1959. The entire gold production of Catron County through 1959 came from the Mogollon district.
- From 1928 to 1958 Apache Creek had its own post office.
- The story of "How Apache Creek Got its Name" can be found in the book, *Stories from Hispano New Mexico: A New Mexico Federal Writers' Project Book* edited by Ann Lacy, Anne Valley Fox and centers on an attack from a band of Geronimo's Apaches.
- During the Alma Massacre on April 28, 1880, Chiricahua Apache led by Victorio attacked the Mogollon mines and then raided settlers' homes around Alma, killing over 40 people.



### 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. } } }