

# CATRON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 5, 2019

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**Don't miss Judith Avila  
Navajo Code Talkers**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, October 2—1:00 PM** Quemado museum: Dr. Doug Wolfe, geologist: Dinosaur Species Discovered Near NM/AZ

**November:** No scheduled program, because we will be planning for the Christmas program.

**Saturday December 7—Doors Open 4PM** Annual Christmas party, location to be announced. Meet-and-greet time from 4:30 to 5:30, dinner at 5:30, and visiting until we adjourn. (More information will follow as we approach the time.)

### 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

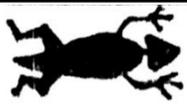
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## 2018-2019 CCHS OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President Helen Cress (575)773-4177 helenwcress@hotmail.com; Vice-president Chris Hill;  
Treasurer Barb Adams (575)773-4694 badamssr603@yahoo.com; Secretary Maggie Hubbell (575)4770 hubbell@wildblue.net. Advisors: Doris Clymo, Nettie Carrejo, Bonnie Maldonado, Rhonda List.

[www.CatronHistory.Org](http://www.CatronHistory.Org)



**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

I will begin my greeting by saying how sorry I am that my computer was hacked right after I had sent out a group e-mail to remind all of you about the Pie Festival. It was a very unpleasant experience all the way around, but I am happy that none of you, as far as I can tell, believed that I was in Istanbul in Turkey in dire need of A LOT of cash! I can tell you, when I do get to a point where I feel the need to request large sums of money from my friends, it will not be generated from Turkey! I sincerely hope all of you who were approached in this way have changed your passwords, because I have no idea what information the hacker still has.

Not all news is bad. People can also be very good. I have some friends from Deming who recently visited, bearing gifts from the wonderful Diaz Farms of Deming, and they have expressed a desire to be involved with the Historical Society and perhaps to obtain memberships, just because they feel the need to preserve the local history. There were three sisters in the group, and many years ago my mother painted a portrait of their grandfather, who was from Aragon and was employed at the time as a sheepherder for the Hubbell Ranch. One sister, Mary Lou, had had a long, ongoing search for that portrait, knowing only that the artist was a Mrs. Williams. After my husband and I arrived in the area and had built our house, she finally reached me by phone, maybe by contacting my brother, Jim. She and her husband and teenage son came up to see the picture, and we were very touched by their enthusiasm, and we became friends. They are very special people who treasure friends and family, and really feel a strong need to preserve their family history, as well as the history of the area.

We have recently lucked out again by getting Mike Ritter to do some long-needed repair work in the museum, in a room with damage to an adobe wall in a former bathroom that we desperately need. We had tried several options for such a job, and nothing had materialized, and we were getting discouraged. Many times the name "Mike Ritter" had come up, and someone always said, "Oh, he's WAY too busy to do that." Which just goes to show, you can sabotage yourself by making assumptions. One evening I called Mike, and he agreed to look at the project, and he worked it in to his very busy schedule, and his work is always done well. What a great bit of luck!

August has been a busy month for the historical society. We had a bake sale on August 3<sup>rd</sup> that brought in \$110. And we bought each other's creations, but still had enough good sweet treats for other shoppers. On August 16<sup>th</sup> we had Judith Avila present her wonderful program about the Navajo code talkers from World War II. We also, in August, had a booth at the County Fair on Saturday the 24<sup>th</sup>.

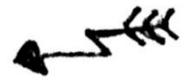
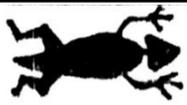
We hope to provide many good programs in the future. We are open to suggestions from you in the membership, and also to any fundraising suggestions you might have. We would welcome any donations of items to put in a silent auction.



**RECENT CCHS EVENTS**

On August 16<sup>th</sup>, we coordinated with the New Mexico Humanities to bring to the membership an outstanding presentation by Judith Avila of Tijeras, NM, about the Navajo Code Talkers from World War II. She had, some years back, extensively interviewed a Navajo man by the name of Chester Nez, who was the last living Navajo Code Talker, and was a wonderful resource. The Code Talkers were not allowed to discuss what they had done as Marines until 1968, when that information was declassified. Until they were brought into the military arena, the Allies had not been able to create any code that the Japanese could not

*(Continued on page 3)*



UPCOMING EVENTS

The presentation by Dr. Doug Wolfe will be a Power-Point program at 1:00 PM at the museum in Quemado. It will consist of a lecture for the first hour, followed by a period for questions. You are invited to bring specimens or artifacts you have found for Dr. Wolfe to identify. Dr. Wolfe and his team have discovered and excavated two dinosaur skeletons that belong to a brand-new species. We have an exhibit in the museum that depicts the first find; the Zuniceratops.

In November, we will forego a program because we will be planning for the Christmas party. December 7th, a Saturday, we will have our annual Christmas party, location to be announced. As in previous years, we will open the door at 4:00 PM, will have meet-and-greet time from 4:30 to 5:30 PM, will provide the Christmas feast at 5:30 PM, and will visit until we tire of it. We are hoping to have a silent auction, and are discussing possible entertainment. ♦♦♦

break. The Navajos went behind closed doors and invented the code themselves, using a combination of the English and Navajo languages, which they practiced among themselves prodigiously, and this code was never broken. There was at the time no written Navajo language, thus no way to study what was heard. It was a wonderful plan, and was perfectly executed, and went a very long way toward helping the Allies win the war. Judith is an absolutely gifted storyteller, and held all of us spellbound as she talked. She pointed out some traits of the Navajo culture that allowed the plan to be carried out so successfully, such as the cooperation of the Navajos collectively, a characteristic of their culture necessitated by the way they lived, with all family members cooperating as they made their living, the togetherness of family working together, and the absence of competition or desire of some to take the glory while others were overlooked. They were used to hard work and were in good physical shape because of their lifestyles. Many herded sheep and followed their herds all day in the mountain pastures.

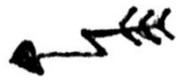
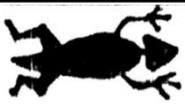
Accompanying Judith was a grandson of Chester Nez by the name of Latham Nez. He added to the program by answering questions about his family and his lifestyle. He autographed a photo of himself in a family photo in the book that Judith has written, titled "Code Talker: The first and Only Memoir by One

of the Code Talkers of World WarII." Judith sold her books and autographed them for us. I very soon read my book and thoroughly enjoyed it. It held my interest from the first page until the last.

I was so impressed with the story that I visited the school and talked to the new principal, recommending to her Judith's program for school children. I told her that I believed it could be presented to as young as fourth graders, and all the way up through the high school years, because she is such a captivating storyteller. I told her that we, the historical society, were able to get it for only \$100, because we have non-profit status, but that it is available to schools for a mere \$50. With less history being taught in school nowadays, this would be a valuable addition to school curriculum.

A	WOL-LA-CHEE	ANT
B	SHUSH	BEAR
C	MOASI	CAT
D	BE	DEER
E	DZEH	ELK
F	MA-E	FOX
G	KLIZZIE	GOAT
H	LIN	HORSE
I	TKIN	ICE
J	TKELE-CHO-GI	JACKASS
K	KLIZZIE-YAZZIE	KID
L	DIBEH-YAZZIE	LAMB
M	NA-AS-TSO-SI	MOUSE
N	NESH-CHEE	NUT
O	NE-AHS-JAH	OWL
P	BI-SO-DIH	PIG
Q	CA-YEILTH	QUIVER
R	GAH	RABBIT
S	DIBEH	SHEEP
T	THAN-ZIE	TURKEY
U	NO-DA-IH	UTE
V	A-KEH-DI-GLINI	VICTOR
W	GLOE-IH	WEASEL
X	AL-NA-AS-DZOH	CROSS
Y	TSAH-AS-ZIH	YUCCA
Z	BESH-DO-TLIZ	ZINC

(Continued on page 5)



## VICTORIO AT FOX MOUNTAIN IN THE MID 1880S

Written by Eliseo Baca, age 95, as told to him since childhood.

Toward the end of the period when the U.S. Cavalry was rounding up the Indians and placing them on reservations, there were some intrepid people who chose isolated spots to make their home, confident the Indian troubles were over.

One was the Zamora family, who built their cabin at one of the three springs that now belong to Eddie Chavez, located on the foothills northeast of Fox Mountain. The family consisted of Zamora and his wife, both getting up in years, their daughter (some have said her name was Rosa), her young husband, Demetrio (apparently Armijo) and their little boy four or five years old. The family, it is said, lived happily there, but one morning Rosa stepped out to the spring by the house to get water. She looked up and saw some Indians and she ran to the cabin shouting, "Indios, Indios!" The young Demetrio grabbed the rifle and as he reached the door a shot rang out and he fell mortally wounded. He was close enough to the door that he could be dragged inside together with his rifle.

The elderly Zamora fired a few shots at the Indians but then either ran out of ammunition or could not find any more if there was any. Soon the Indians realized that it was safe to approach the cabin and set it on fire, forcing the occupants out to be massacred; the occupants were sure of that. However, by this time, Victorio, the well-known Indian chief, had arrived and he did not let the "mocetones", as he called the young bucks, kill the helpless family.

Victorio, though, did take the little boy by one arm and announced that he was keeping him. Then the mother started crying, screaming and begging Victorio not to take her little boy. Victorio turned the little boy around, tapped his rear with the quirt and told him, "*Vete con tu nana*" (go with your mama).

But he told the family they had to leave at once and the "mocetones" would not kill them if the group found refuge by noon the next day. The nearest help was Rito Quemado (where Myrtle Cox lives now) about twenty-five miles away. They had to leave Demetrio unconscious to breathe his last alone. Rosa got a small bucket hanging outside the burning building. It had a good handle and lid, she filled it with water and away they went.

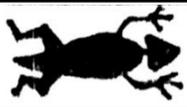
The elderly couple was not weak and for a while they walked well. Then they began to get tired; their rest stops became more frequent. As for the little boy, walking very long was out of the question. Therefore, the responsibility of getting the survivors to safety fell on Rosa. She may not have felt up to the task, but there was no alternative; her choice was to try.

Rosa would help her father get up and start moving ahead. She would then walk back and bring the little boy to catch up with his grandpa. She would return to meet her mother who was tottering along to join the others. That procedure with some variations, Rosa repeated countless times that afternoon, throughout the moonlit summer night and part of the next morning, all the time with the nerve wracking feeling that they were being closely followed by the "mocetones."

Presumably the group left the burning cabin and headed toward Mesitas Blancas, where today the road from Reserve comes into the Largo Creek. They probably followed the creek for miles to the lake that existed right south of present day Quemado, then east along the Rito Creek the rest of the way. It is not known just where darkness overtook the four or where daylight greeted them but sometime before noon of the second day, thanks to the indefatigable Rosa, they arrived at the village of Rito Quemado; they arrived grief stricken, hungry, exhausted but safe from the young Apaches. Under the circumstances the group was able to average no more than one mile per hour.

Demetrio, two days later, was buried about on half mile south of where Ms. Eleanor Williams lived in later years.





BOOK REVIEWS

*Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman's Travels in the Southwest: The 1897 Letters & Photographs of Amelia Hollenback*, edited and annotated by Mary J. Straw Cook, reviewed by Laura Brush



In the summer of 1897 Amelia Hollenback and her sister Josephine, sisters in a prominent Pennsylvania family, set out for a tour of the Southwest. They traveled by train and wagon, horse and mule and burro. They stayed in hotels, tents, private residences, and camp sites along the road. Few women of that era traveled expressly to camp out, but it was necessary in order for the women to visit the places they wanted to see. Amelia was so taken with the area that she made several additional trips out here and later built a house in Santa Fe.

The book consists primarily of letters written by both women to friends and family. Much of this tour was spent in Arizona. They used Flagstaff as a base for trips to various sites, particularly including the Grand Canyon and a Hopi village to view the Snake Dance. They did visit Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni; Amelia was strongly attracted to Acoma. She said that of everything she saw in the whole thousands of square miles, "the most wonderful of all are the Grand Canyon and Acoma."

The sisters make light of the difficulties of travel, carrying with them cameras, tripod, glass plates, telescope, plus the large amount of clothing and other supplies required by even independent-minded Victorian women. They enjoyed traveling and took advantage of every opportunity to see all they could. Their lack of complaint and condescension is refreshing.

The book includes many photographs (some unfortunately not captioned), notes, bibliography, and index. A worthwhile addition to the annals of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Southwest. ◆◆◆

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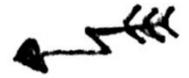
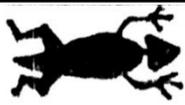
September 14<sup>th</sup> was the Pie Festival in Pie Town and, as we have in the past, we had a booth there. And, true to New Mexico in the past, the weather decided to provide a spectacular side show. In the early afternoon, I looked to the north and noted a huge gray mass of a cloud, which, in short order, reached Pie Town and proceeded to demonstrate the power of the angry gods! It rained very



hard, then hailed, and just soaked everything. Folks were madly gathering up all their sale items, and we were forced to salvage what we could and leave. The storm would have been welcomed a month or two ago! But the event was very well-attended and enjoyable until then!

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### JULY

Expenses ..... 296.95  
 Income ..... 137.00  
 (Books, Memberships & T-shirts)  
 BALANCE 7-31-2019 ..... \$9,234.10

#### AUGUST

Expenses ..... 104.13  
 Income ..... 375.75  
 (Bake Sale, Books, Donation, Memberships, Calendars, & T-Shirts)  
 BALANCE 8-31-19..... \$9,487.72

#### SEPTEMBER (to 9-16)

Expenses ..... 83.49  
 Income ..... 340.00  
 (Books, Cabinet Sale, Ceramics, T-Shirts)  
 BALANCE 9-16-19..... \$9,744.23

### A QUICK HISTORY OF VICTORIO

Born around 1825, Victorio belonged to the Warm Springs band of the Tchihendeh (or Chihenne, or Mimbreno) Apache. It is thought he had Navajo kinship ties and was known among the Navajo as "he who checks his horse". Victorio's sister was the famous woman warrior Lozen, or the "Dextrous Horse Thief". From 1870 to 1880, Victorio and the Tchihende were moved to and then left at least three different reservations, some more than once. Despite their bands' request to live on traditional lands, they kept being shuffled around. Fed up with broken promises and poor treatment, Victorio went to war in 1879. He was known for brilliant guerrilla tactics. In October 1880, while moving along the Rio Grande in north-eastern Chihuahua, Victorio and a few warriors were surrounded and killed by soldiers of the Mexican Army under Colonel Joaquin Terrazas in the Battle of Tres Castillos.



### 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. **Learn more at [CatronHistory.org](http://CatronHistory.org).** \$\$\$