

# El Cronicón

The official publication of the Sandoval County Historical Society

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December, 2019

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## WORDS OF WISDOM - In loving memory of Roy Skeens

When I think about the 25 years of concerted effort and volunteer time Roy Skeens gave as Editor in Chief to keep the historical society going with his many talents and contributions, I blink a little and a tear flows. In turn, he embraced many friendships and his time spent became a source of purpose for him and also provided an enjoyment of things along the way that worked well for him over those years. The quote below reminded me of Roy:

*"In the blink of an eye, something happens by chance - when you least expect it - sets you on a course that you never planned, into a future you never imagine."* Nickolas Sparks



Photo credit: Virginia R. Ortiz

The following poems - one original and the others taken from "The National Library of Poetry - Fields of Gold" were read at Roy's memorial. Each spoke to me about Roy. I hope you enjoy them in his memory.

### A Tribute to Roy Skeens

by Nasario García

Roy was a veritable gentleman,  
the Don Quijote  
of our historical society.  
His lance was the pen with which  
he adorned all the tidbits  
of information in *El Cronicón*.

Never one to skip a beat  
with the task at hand  
he could be serious  
but down deep in his soul  
he was a kid at heart.  
He always found levity  
to evoke a laugh or two  
to make your day a joyful one.

I will miss Roy  
for we became good friends.  
Had I been  
short and pudgy,  
I would have offered  
to be his erstwhile Sancho Panza  
even without a donkey to ride.

### The Wine by Dawn E. Diggins

Like the fruit upon a vine  
Our love stands intertwined,  
Forever it will grow  
Like freshly fallen snow.

And when our time has come to pass  
Like the grapes, our seed will last.  
In that seed, our love remains  
Forevermore, our hearts are stained.

### Free As a Bird by Ryan Martin

Soaring through air free as a bird  
singing a song so I can be heard  
by all who watch me as I fly  
They couldn't do this, as hard as they try

I'd explore the world, and never stop  
I'd keep going and going until I drop  
Oh, the freedom of flying where I want to go  
Absolutely no rules. Go fast or go slow

What a lovely sight to fly through a cloud  
To see such a thing. I'd feel so proud  
Still singing my song that can be heard  
Oh what a life, free as a bird.

**"Let the New Year's resolution for 2020 be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word"-- Goran Persson**

**"In the blink of an eye everything can change. So forgive often and love with all your heart. You many not have that chance again"-- Zig Zigler**

Lorraine Dominguez Stubblefield, President

## **PAST MEETINGS:**

### **SEPT 8**      *Casa de Gallegos, Gallegos Family History, El Llanito* by David C de Baca

The presentation began with a credit to Albert Gallegos, a long time SCHS member and Honorary Consul in Santa Fe for the Spanish Embassy, as well as the many Gallegos descendants in attendance. The presentation outlined the Old and New World history of the family, emphasizing their military service to crown, colony, and the United States of America.

Photo credit: Virginia R. Ortiz



Of special note was the finding that the family descend from Melia of Wessex, the 1st Princess of England, daughter of Eckbert the Great, the 1st King of England and 18th Saxon Bretwalda in England (grandfather of Alfred the Great), as well as the earliest Spanish kings of the Reconquista, with deep roots in Galicia. Arriving in Nueva Espana with Cortez, Pedro Gallego would marry the last Aztec Princess and Empress Tecuichpotzin aka Isabel Montezuma. Their son Juan Gallego Montezuma would participate in Coronado's expedition into the American Southwest, and later be ennobled as the Count of Miravalle, gifted a coat of armor and knighted by Emperor Carlos V. The family line would exist as the "Royal House" of Mexico until the 1930s.

The talk then focused on the family's Sandoval County connections, and their roots in Llanito and Cuba. Aerial photos of the original homestead in Llanito were crowd pleasing, as well as many interesting side notes regarding Golden Gloves boxing and other notable stories. This included the remarkable story of the Venerable Bishop Alphonse Gallegos, born in Albuquerque, and his path to sainthood for his many works in the barrios of California.

### **OCT 13**      *Honoring Henry and Karin Vallo*

**Family** - the Sandoval County Historical Society, Heidi Roibal, family and friends honored Henry and Karin Vallo life-long members of the Sandoval County Historical Society for their contributions to Sandoval County and the State of New Mexico. They recently celebrated 52 years of marriage. [text provided by Heidi S. Roibal]

Photo credit: Virginia R. Ortiz



**NOV 10**      **Genetic Genealogy - DNA** by Henrietta Martinez Christmas - a native New Mexican, a well-known genealogical and historical researcher; descendent from eleven of the soldiers that came with Oñate in 1598.

Genetic Genealogy involves taking a swab, mailing it in and waiting for your results. While you are waiting, do some genealogy and make sure your paper trail for what you are DNA testing for is correct. You might have someone check it too. New Mexicans with deep roots more than 6 generations will be a mixture of many diverse peoples, so don't be surprised. Like DNA, Genealogy is a connection of a paper trail from you to your parents. DNA will also do that, so if your parent tested they will be a very close match to you. DNA can help when your genealogy paper trail has hit a roadblock or there are missing records. DNA can also help you link with new found cousins. It also has a down side, finding out your adopted and were never told. Finding close siblings who you never knew about. DNA is fun, but go into it with an open mind, research what you want to find out, Dad's or Mom's straight line or the admixture of all of you.



Photo credit: Virginia R. Ortiz

She has written several books which related to New Mexico's small towns and history and over 160 articles about New Mexico's Colonial Families. Her latest award-winning book *The Genealogy Checklist* won two awards in 2017.

### **In Recognition of Veterans Day - by Ernie Jaskolski**

“During the four years that the United States took part in World War II, nearly 50,000 New Mexico men volunteered or were drafted. New Mexico had the highest volunteer rate and the highest casualty rate of the forty-eight states. Two Jemez Springs men who made the ultimate sacrifice are Renaldo Saiz and Pedro T. Garcia.” [excerpt from *Two Jemez Springs Men Remembered on Veteran's Day* by Ernie Jaskolski; photos courtesy of Ernie Jaskolski]

**Private Renaldo Saiz** - Jemez Springs WWII veteran [200th Coast Artillery, Battery C], survivor of the Bataan Death March, the hell of Camp O'Donnel died August 31, 1942 in the Cabanatuan Prison of War Camp in the Philippines



**Private First Class Pedro T. Garcia** - Jemez Springs WWII veteran [105th Infantry, 27th Infantry Division] who died April 15, 1945 from injuries sustained in action on Tsugen Jima near Okinawa; he was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart

DEC 8

Christmas Potluck



Photo credit: Virginia R. Ortiz

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**NEXT SCHS PROGRAM:**  
**JAN 12 - TIMELESS TRAVEL by Ed Romero,**  
**Ambassador to Spain**

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**UPCOMING 2020 SCHS PROGRAMS:**

[held on second Sundays, 2 PM, Delavy House]

- FEB 9** "Conflict Along NM's Frontier, A Constant State of War by Robert Torrez
- MAR 8** "Between A River & A Hard Place," Bernalillo History by Martha Liebert
- APR 12** A History of Crypto Jews In New Spain and New Mexico by Stefanie Beninato
- MAY 3** Mysterious Explorers by Ronald Stewart
- JUN 14** Ladona Tules by Van An Moore
- JUL - AUG** Summer break
- SEP 13** Spain & United States Independence by Thomas Chavez
- OCT 11** Whose History Is It, Anyway? New Mexico & El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro 1598-1848 by Dr. Joseph Sanchez
- NOV 8** Mulatos of Cochiti: Caste in Spanish NM - Rob Martinez
- DEC 13** Christmas Potluck

## UPCOMING FRIENDS OF CORONADO HISTORIC SITE (FCHS)

### 2020 "YEAR OF THE WOMAN" Lecture Series

(held on third Sundays, 2 PM, Bernalillo Town Hall; members free, non-members \$5)

- Jan 19**      **Tales From The Land of Enchantment: Historical Stories and Captivating Folk Tales** presented by Cynthia Dobson
- Feb 16**      **Ladies of the Canyons** presented by Leslie Poling-Kemps
- Mar 15**      **Chasing the Cure in New Mexico** presented by Dr. Nancy Lewis
- Apr ?**        to be announced
- May 17**      **La Nina Otera-Warren** presented by Deb Blanche
- Jun 16**      **Drinking Practice and Politics in Chaco Canyon** presented by Dr. Patricia Crown

*Editor's note: Additional info. can be found at <https://www.kuaua.org/presentations>*

## PLACITAS COMMUNITY LIBRARY (PCL) - 2020 ADULT PROGRAM

(held at 2 PM, PCL; free to the public)

- Jan 11**      **The Holocaust: Path to Genocide** by Susan Bapty of the Holocaust & Intolerance Museum of New Mexico
- Feb 2 & 9**    **Songwriting, a two-day workshop** (more details at the website cited below)
- Feb 15**      **Threats to our Dark Skies** by Charlie Christmann, who writes the Night Sky monthly column in the Sandoval Signpost
- Feb 22**      **Chester Nez - Navajo Code Talkers** (made available through the NM Humanities Council)
- Mar 14**      **Toxic Tour** - a film about oil & gas destructiveness in the Aztec, NM area.
- Apr 4**        **Hispanic Weavers of NM** - a prominent northern NM weaving family will talk about their history and weavings

*Editor's note: Additional info. can be found at <https://placitaslibrary.com/programs/adult-programs/>*



### SCHS Notices

Contact Rusty VanHart, Membership Chair if you have questions regarding your current membership status - (505) 293.2073 or [dirkvanhart@yahoo.com](mailto:dirkvanhart@yahoo.com)

Historical Society archives and library are open every Thursday from 9 AM til noon, except during the month of July, Thanksgiving and around Christmas when it is closed. The archives/library will re-open from the 2019 holidays on Thursday, Jan 2, 2020. Questions? Contact Martha Liebert (505) 867.2755.

Receiving *El Cronicón* via email: We've had some takers, so please let us know if you'd like to receive your future editions of *El Cronicón* in **COLOR** via email!! Just send an email to [dawnfoster84@comcast.net](mailto:dawnfoster84@comcast.net) using the email address from which you'd like to receive *El Cronicón*. Thank you for helping the Historical Society reduce the cost of printing and mailing a paper edition....not to mention the number of trees we'll save!!

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF URBAN TREES IN NEW MEXICO

January 15, 2018 (Final Report)

by Karen Van Citters of Van Citters: Historic Preservation, LLC in cooperation with Groundwork Studio

Prepared for State of New Mexico, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Dept., Forestry Div., and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Significant Events

Prior to Spanish and Mexican settlement and development of the land that is now New Mexico, native trees lined the rivers and dotted the mountains. Piñon, cottonwood, oak, and fir were plentiful. Other native species that we know today as urban trees were in the region, such as New Mexico locusts (*Robinia neomexicana*), Rocky Mountain maples (*Acer glabrum*), Arizona sycamores (*Platanus wrightii*), honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), netleaf hackberries (*Celtis laevigata* var. *reticulata*) and Arizona ash (*Fraxinus velutina*).

Imported trees first came to New Mexico with Spanish colonists. From 1598 until 1848, through the Spanish and Mexican periods, more than 100 fruit tree cultivars were brought into the area along the Camino Real. During that time, the colonists kept to the Rio Grande valley region for safety from the plains Indians, and used the trees they found there for fuel and shelter, but overused and severely denuded the riparian forests. By the time American settlers came to Santa Fe along the Santa Fe Trail in the 1820s, both the fruit trees and native shade trees were largely gone. These settlers started transplanting native cottonwoods and other riparian species in the area for shade.



In 1850, as the U.S. won the Mexican-American war, the Catholic church established the vicariate apostolic of New Mexico, and named Father John Baptiste Lamy as bishop. Lamy grew up and entered the priesthood in France, during a time when there was a frenzy of European enthusiasm for botany and trees. He served as a missionary in Ohio and Kentucky before coming to Santa Fe, and lived amongst the stately shade trees of the Ohio River Valley. He felt that trees were critical to grace and civilization and was responsible for bringing in new species of shade trees and many fruit trees, in addition to transplanting and cultivating native shade trees in urban landscapes. Notably, he was the first person documented in the research for this report to introduce the elm and horse chestnut genera to New Mexico, that are still part of New Mexico's urban forest today. Lamy personally planted and shared trees throughout the community of Santa Fe, bringing about the shaded town that the railroad saw when it entered the town in 1880. Lamy was finally joined by the first tree nursery in New Mexico, which appeared in Santa Fe in 1868. A nurseryman from Rochester, New York arrived via stagecoach, took orders and coordinated their delivery to Santa Fe. While the nursery primarily traded in fruit trees, they also offered "maple", "mountain ash", and other "ornamental trees".

The railroad brought enormous change to New Mexico in the 1880s and made a lasting impact on the landscape. The railroad brought general economic development, promoted irrigation and the development of agriculture, increased the numbers of fruit trees into the hundreds of thousands, and brought new shade and evergreen tree species to the area. Agents of nurseries back east would travel to New Mexico, take orders, and then deliver the trees in the springtime via rail. Over time, local nurseries began to develop, and for out-of-state purchases, catalogues

became the norm and offered a multitude of exotic tree species and cultivars. Railroad stations, wanting to provide a comforting stop for passengers, built depot parks with trees for shade, and were some of the first parks of New Mexico. The railroads were eventually augmented by a network of engineered roads that were used by automobiles and trucks. This greatly increased mobility and speed, and imported trees began to make their way to smaller communities in New Mexico.

The railroads ushered an influx of not only tree species, but research, and people from other areas of the country that had a deep interest in and ideas for tree planting, species selection, and tree care. Exotic tree species that had been imported and cultivated on America's East Coast in the latter half of the 1800s arrived in New Mexico, native tree species from other areas of the country were introduced, the US government established experimental nurseries and the New Mexico land-grant college, and acres of fruit trees were provided to Deming, the Rio Grande valley, the Pecos valley, and the Four Corners area. In the early 1900s, horticultural and beautification organizations emerged across the state, and advice on selecting tree species and tree care appeared in newsletters and newspapers. The earliest urban forest management efforts of New Mexico emerged to address the growing issues that the cottonwoods presented to urban life, as their cotton created a nuisance and their health suffered as available water decreased.

As New Mexico moved through the mid-1900s, the role of the government in promoting the planting and selection of trees became pronounced. The U.S. Forest Service gave away



hundreds of evergreens to residents, and experimental nurseries run by the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and the Agriculture College sold trees to New Mexico towns and developers. Government recommendations for tree species led to booms statewide in the planting of black locusts (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), only to see them discouraged for planting to instead make way for “Chinese elms” (primarily Siberian elm, *Ulmus pumila*). Clyde Tingley, during his administrations as governor of New Mexico and mayor of Albuquerque, promoted the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees statewide (mostly Siberian elm, *Ulmus pumila*) by taking advantage of Federal New Deal funding programs, and establishing a nursery in Albuquerque that raised and gave away tree seedlings. As part of national Arbor Day celebrations,

many cities in New Mexico handed out thousands of trees to residents. To stay competitive in this age of giveaways, commercial tree nurseries provided trees and planting advice in conjunction with landscape design.

By the late 1950s, tree giveaway programs were on a significant decline. Cities began investing in developing and maintaining their park systems, and the Beautification Act of 1965 provided investment for efforts on public lands. At the same time, the new residential ranch house designs in vogue had landscaping that favored lower-growing plants with fewer shade trees. The Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) was distinguished as a nuisance tree, with no new replacement promoted or provided in its wake. As the interstate highway system was developed, a huge number of new species, cultivars, and varieties traveled throughout the U.S.

**Editors note:** Based on the above summary, if you are thinking about, or are interested in donating a “memorial tree” in the future, please consider working with the Town of Bernalillo to plant a young tree that would aid in species diversity in one of Bernalillo’s parks or other public spaces!



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