

El Cronicón

Official Quarterly Publication of the
SANDOVAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Ken Kloepfel

Editor: Roy C. Skeens

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JUNE MEETING

Sunday JUNE 9th 1.30 & 2pm

At 1:30 , Prior to, and after the the regular program **DIRK VAN HART** will sell and sign his new book “ Old Forty Four” . If you enjoyed his lecture you will enjoy his book even more . it is packed with fascinating details and history about the old highway.

AT 2PM

Lt Col. Ret. David C. de Baca will give the first of a two part presentation, the result of 35 years of research , on the history of the C de Baca family, beginning in Spain in the year 512 and highlighting family members whose patriotism and sacrifice helped shape the history of the Kingdom of Castile, the Americas and the settlement of New Mexico and Sandoval County.

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President's Message

Hola amigos,

As the summer months move rapidly to a reality, we are constantly reminded of our current three year drought cycle that has no signs of waning.

In the 1930s a long drought and poor dry land farming methods created an agricultural disaster that lasted for years. The DUST BOWL or DIRTY THIRTIES was a period of severe dust storms that ruined millions of acres in the middle of our country.

This spring, top soil from Arizona, Gallup, Grants, Chaco Canyon, and the Rio Puerco Valley have blown through Sandoval County on a trip somewhere to the east.

My hope is that rain and moisture will soon return to our beautiful state. It will take a very wet summer to end our drought. In the mean time, please be careful with your use of our precious resource. Use water wisely, don't waste and make everyone around you aware that they can do their part to ease our concerns.

Don't miss the June 9th mtg . on the C de Baca family . We shall fill the hall with Bacas and C de Bacas and all their primos Have a wonderful July and August, see you in September for Antonio Manzanares.

Sincerely, Ken Kloeppel

www.sandovalhistory.org

Check out our **web site** that Ben Blackwell puts together for all current information on the Society:

MARCH MEETING

A Geological and Historical Excursion along Old New Mexico Route 44 (today the southern segment of US-550):

A PowerPoint presentation by Dirk Van Hart, geologist

This presentation revealed some of the geology along the 152-mile-long “Old New Mexico Route 44” (a.k.a. Old 44), which connects Bernalillo in the central Rio Grande Valley with Bloomfield in the San Juan River Valley to the northwest. Once referred to as the “killer road” due to its deadly narrow stretches, in 2000 Old 44 was reconstructed as a modern four-lane thoroughfare and redesignated as the southern leg of US-550. Old 44 no longer exists, except in memory.

I designed this talk for the non-geologist, and employed a minimum of technical language. Emphasis was placed on abundant illustrations and less on oratory. Most members of the Sandoval County Historical Society have traveled this route many times

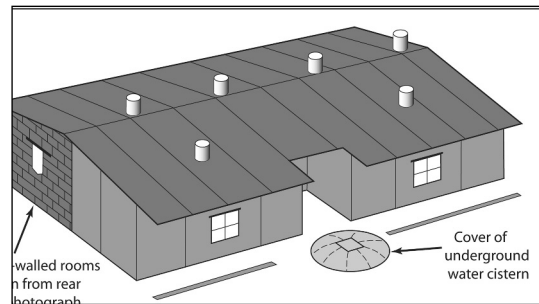


Gibbons family dugout, west of Cuba

in the past, so this was familiar ground.

Some of the vignettes about the route’s almost-forgotten history and the human characters included the tragic, ruined farmlands of the Middle Rio Puerco Valley, the trading-post operators Jim and Ann Counselor of the 1930s, the “lost” Civilian Conservation Corps camp SCS-8-N of the late 1930s, and the Cuba-area kid Euell Gibbons, health-food nut of the 1960s and early 1970s.

Hopefully, this unusual blend of geology and history resonated with the Society members. Perhaps it will provide them a new and interesting lens thru which to perceive this fascinating road.



Reconstruction of ruins of Haynes Trading Post, north of Counselor.

APRIL MEETING

THE LIVESTOCK OF EARLY NEW MEXICO.

Bill W. Dunmire

Bill presented much information and a slideshow, some of which was illustrated by his wife Angie. Bill graduated from the Univ. of California at Berkley with a degree in Wildlife management and Zoology. He has worked at Yosemite, Yellowstone, and our Carlsbad Caverns. In his spare time he has also worked for the National Conservancy in New Mexico. We do appreciate that he is also an Historical society member here..

New Mexico is unique due to the early colonization, the native peoples, and the many cultures that co-exist here. Chaco Canyon had many crops including corn, beans, squash, and cotton, but only turkeys for early livestock. In 1493 Columbus returned to the New World and brought 117 ships with him, which carried cattle, sheep, mares, asses, and chickens. Hogs had been taken to the Carribean for use on the sugar mills grinding the sugar cane.

Coronado brought about 5,000 sheep to NM



in 1540 which were left at Pecos Pueblo. In 1598 Onate brought 7,000 livestock as well as soldiers and missionaries to Isabella, and they were later taken to Santa Fe. He also brought tools-including hoes and a simple wooden plow. The livestock included burros, mules, horses, cattle, and sheep (the Churro sheep, which was good for weaving). Spain had the merino sheep, but those were being kept in Spain, and the Churro sheep survived very well in NM. Churro have been brought back near Tierra Amarilla and a weaving COOP exists there as well as herds for food.

By the 1620's there were 30 missions in NM and they introduced the Pueblo people to livestock. The livestock were used to thresh wheat among other things. The missions were instrumental in teaching the Pueblo people about the livestock- care, uses, husbandry, etc. Carts were also introduced to the Pueblos.

By the 1820's sheep were king in NM— records show 62,000 sheep and 1450 cattle. This trend remained until the early 1900's. The Navajo described the sheep as most important and used them for weaving as well as food. The Navajo were sent to Bosque Redondo in 1863, on the Long Walk, from

Canyon de Chelly, and there they learned to raise and tend angora goats. Years later, their tribe decimated from disease, they would return to the Canyon.

Cattle were raised on the eastern plains, and also at Fort Union near Las Vegas and in Silver city, in southern NM. The vaqueros from Spain brought their wooden saddle horns and stirrups as well as ear cropping and branding. By th1870's the Lincoln County War occurred over livestock and ranges, and the politician Catron would accumulate and/or manage more than 3 million acres of land in NM—the largest ranch in US history. New breeds of cattle were coming to NM, including the Hereford, Angus, and Holstein milk cows, and the face of livestock was beginning to change.

Frank Bond was a member of the Santa Fe ring of politicians, along with Catron, and operated a partido system for sheep in NM. Frank Hubbell, also one of the “ring” had a large sheep herd on the plains of San Agustin near Quemado. He would be the first to shear sheep by gas powered machines in the early 1900's. Wagon Mound may have been the earliest Rodeo in NM, and in 1847 it was reported that a rodeo included “roping, throwing cattle, branding, whiskey, and dancing in the streets after dark”. Soon, the first State Fair would be held in NM in 1881, and shortly horse racing. Dude Ranches became popular in NM (at one time as many as 6), and 4H clubs, Cattle drives, and the Metanza were all traditions that were firmly established by the many cultures in NM.

Bill reported that from his perspective the impact of livestock on the land in NM was not very positive, and many have reported that sheep in the Rio Puerco made it the largest “ditch” in the U.S. and destroyed the “Breadbasket of NM”. Overgrazing often leads to the invasive spread of Juniper—which my allergies tell me is BAD.... Wooten also reported that the overstocking led to runoff of valuable water and the destruction of the land. In short Bill left us with the words:

KEEP OFF *Reported by Karen Lermuseaux*

**A TRIBUTE TO
M, HELEN SANDOVAL
1933-2013**



Child of the Rio Puerco

Tough and resilient as one had to be to survive

A Natural politician

A realist who called a spade a spade

That rare bird: an honest public servant

We are richer for having had her among us

She will be missed

Martha Liebert

MAY MEETING

A Magical afternoon of history, music and song

On Sunday we were treated to a very special program – International singing star **Consuelo Luz** recounted to a packed house her personal journey from a Cuban- Chilean Catholic background to discovering her Jewish roots in New Mexico.

She left Peru, where she grew up to come to America at age 18. She told how she did not like living in New York or San Francisco so she took off in her little '48 bread truck but didn't feel relaxed until she reached New Mexico. There she found the Woman's Center in Albuquerque where a woman whispered to her "You have to go to Taos".

In Taos she found a hippie commune and promptly became a hippie.

Moving around Northern New Mexico she settled in Trampas, marrying a Jewish man lead to her researching the hidden Jewish traditions, and stories of the "Conversos" and also discovering her own roots.

As she talked she emphasized different points with her soulful singing and guitar playing.

Altogether it was a magical afternoon.

RS/CA



BOOK REVIEW *by* JOHN J. HUNT

Hispanic Albuquerque 1706-1846

Marc Simmons

UNM Press 1982

Paperback 2003

If you are doing research on our state's past, invariably the work of Marc Simmons pops into view. The Society's library holds a few of his books, and this one, donated by Joe and Martha Liebert, is a fascinating account of the development of our big neighbor to the south from its founding to the American takeover in 1846.

Of course the Hispanic period begins with the arrival of Coronado in 1540. Simmons tries to get at the character of these first conquistadores, as he calls them "restless, undisciplined, prideful," but with a great enthusiasm for adventure. The first contact with the Tiwa pueblos in this area was made by one of Coronado's men, Hernando de Alvarado. The Spaniards were always on the alert for precious metals, but the areas of the Rio Grande were to prove barren of treasure. The more they explored, the more the great wealth they expected to find appeared as myth. In the end, the weather, the hostilities of the Indians, and the lack of riches forced Coronado to retreat back to Mexico. Except for a few names on the map, his expedition failed. Simmons finds it extremely ironic that the largest shopping mall in New Mexico has his name attached. "Albuquerque's multimillion-

dollar Coronado Center commemorates the region's first entrepreneur, a man who went broke."

While leading up to the founding of Duke City, including the Oñate story and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, Simmons touches on the beginnings of Bernalillo, named after the Bernal family, and the confusion regarding its status. Various accounts call it a real—a mining town—a villa or a puesto, in Spanish literally "a place." Established by Governor Vargas in 1695, "...Bernalillo was the first regular community developed in the Middle Valley, and the focal point of Spanish activity there during the final five years of the 17th century..."

So Bernalillo can claim to be 318 years old. On April 23, 1706, seventy years before the American Revolution, Governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdés of New Mexico sat at a writing table in the dimly lit halls of his mud palace on the Santa Fe plaza." This is how Simmons begins his chapter on the founding of the city named after the Duke of Albuquerque (the extra r was later dropped), in a letter the governor was writing to the viceroy in Mexico City.

According to the royal code, there needed to be 30 families, and they brought their herds of sheep and goats; also, ten soldiers, with their families, led by Captain Martin Hurtado, were assigned. These troops were necessary as the settlements were under constant threat from marauding bands of Navajos and Apaches. This threat kept the lands of the mid-Rio Grande sparsely populated.

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We learn about the governor's stretching of the truth when it came to his official reports; also, we find that in Spain, the town of Albuquerque, which dates from Roman times, was derived from Latin *albus quercus*, meaning "white oak." There is also an interesting story of how San Felipe Neri became the town's official patron. This, and Governor Cuervo's fall from power, close out the first phase of development of the place we affectionately call the Duke City.

The coming of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, who had helped found the city of San Francisco two years before, assumed the governorship in 1778, as an old military man brought new tactics to the Indian battles, and he carried the fight to the Comanches in Southern Colorado, leading to a general peace. This led to new settlements in the Middle Valley.

However, the 18th century saw a long struggle to repopulate the lands surrounding Albuquerque. The stories of Sandia and Isleta Pueblos, the areas known as the Ranchos de Albuquerque and the Elena Gallegos grant; the establishment of the communities of Los Montoyas, Los Poblanos, Los Griegos and Corrales add to our understanding of the origins of the Valley before the coming of the Americans.

"Boundary squabbles, leading to bitter family feuds and endless litigation, irritated Albuquerque's early social life like recurring canker sores," Simmons comments acidly. And there was constant trouble with the Natives, as well as periodic droughts. Stories around these

travails add to our picture of the not always quiet and peaceful view we may have of the Hispanic period. As the author says, "...the waters beneath the seemingly placid surface of Albuquerque's social life were fraught with discord."

The Winds of Change he calls it when the trade barriers imposed by Spain on its colonies began to crumble. But it was Lieutenant Zebulon Pike who "represented the vanguard of an American wave that... would storm the fortress of Hispanic culture on the Rio Grande." Pike reached Albuquerque in March of 1807. These stories are fascinating and give us a good picture of what life was like in the political and social milieu of the times.

How political upheavals in Spain and New Spain affected New Mexico is well researched and sharply drawn. The 1818 Navajo war, the 2-way traffic in slaves (both sides engaged), the upper crust of the Rio Abajo, the Armijo family (his profile of Manuel Armijo is worth every dime), taking us up to the arrival of General Kearny, who on his way down river stopped at the Perea house in Bernalillo.

Summing up the development of the city of Albuquerque, he writes, "The growth of the Santa Fe trade and Kearny's conquest of 1846 marked the beginnings of the Americanization of Albuquerque. That process, developing slowly at first, would not come full circle to completion until 1949 when the Old Town, centering on the plaza of colonial days, would finally be annexed and absorbed by the New Town, the twentieth-cen-

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tury metropolis that sprang from the railroad boom of the 1880s.”

Simmons says his book is “intended for the general reader,” and is written in a direct and easy style, not meant for the academic world. He does include an Index and a helpful list of Suggested Readings. Sprinkled with photos, paintings and maps, the 154-page book is certainly one of the most compact and understandably enjoyable histories of the city that is now 307-years-old and has grown to be the largest in the state.

NOTE: [I mentioned this book was donated by the Lieberts. The library needs to expand its collection, needs more donations, we need books that focus on New Mexico history, and of course local history references, whether print or graphic arts; photographs are always welcome. Contact Martha or Dirk.]

MEMBERSHIP

You can check your membership status from the date on your Cronicon's address label .If you are not current ,you may not receive the newsletter. Also make sure we have your mailing address if the PO does not deliver to your street address.and your E-Mail address correctly

*Rusty Van Hart, Membership chair.
293-2073*

The Lieberts: a town treasure

BY KAREN LERMUSEAUX



I grew up in a small house in Bernalillo just down the street from Joe and Martha Liebert—a married couple who helped define life in Bernalillo to many residents. My parents, Gene and Faye, were close friends with them, and so our two families shared in the experience of watching Bernalillo grow from the 1930s to the present. I recently had the pleasure to talk with the Lieberts about their past over tea and Joe's oatmeal cookies.

Joe Liebert was born in 1924 in La Jara, Colorado. His maternal parents, originally from Denmark, came to America as Mormon leaders and settled in the San Luis Valley of Colorado to become farmers. His paternal relatives—the Ledoux—were French trappers. Joe

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grew up in Taos where his family lived until his parents divorced when he was fourteen.

He and his mother Jenny then moved to Bernalillo where she was assigned to a Works Project Administration (WPA) job teaching sewing and later cooking for the district schools. Joe recalls a brief period of adjustment with the locals, but his proficiency in Spanish helped quite a lot. Joe told me that my grandfather, Victor Lermuseaux, was a father figure to him during that time and ever since.

Joe's friends included a group of kids from Corrales who went to school in Bernalillo. Joe said, "I liked driving my friends around in the 1933 Ford sedan with the suicide doors (doors that opened backwards) that my mother bought me. We had a lot of fun."

Joe graduated in 1943 from Bernalillo High School as salutatorian of his senior class. He remembers: "I had no thoughts of going to college at that time. In fact, the military had already taken us to Santa Fe for our physicals. So, in less than one week after my graduation, we were headed to the Fort Bliss Army Post in El Paso." In January 1944, he was shipped overseas and eventually was assigned to the medical unit.

In June, Joe's Second Division landed on Omaha Beach and marched into France. He said, "I don't really recall my thoughts about those wounded soldiers. I was just busy trying to get them off the battlefield and stay in one piece at the same time."

Later that year, Joe was sent to the front line

of the Battle of the Bulge in which his division was victorious in the most decisive campaign of the war. He had served more than two years in the army.

Joe happily returned to New Mexico and Fort Bayard where his mother was working. He worked as a maintenance man for a housing project, and then at the Santa Rita Mines helping to drill holes for explosives.

Joe returned to Bernalillo and lived with my grandparents' family, as well as the Robert Esparza family at various times. He worked for the Seligmans in the local hardware store as he tried to decide the path his life would take. Joe and his mother also started and ran a small restaurant called Liebert's Café for about two years, in Anastacio Baca's building.

Joe attended the University of New Mexico (UNM) on the G. I. Bill, graduated in 1955, and became an industrial arts teacher. He received his Master's Degree in 1960. It was during that time that Joe met his future wife, Martha Barr.

"I started talking with Martha and realized that she was the one for me," he said. "So, later, I took all the fixin's for tacos over to her apartment and made dinner for her and her roommate." Martha laughed, "We ate so many, we were almost sick, but they were the best." Maybe it was Joe's good cooking that won over Martha, because, soon after, in 1957, they were married.

Martha grew up in North Dakota and graduated from Grand Forks High School. She went on to receive her Bachelor's Degree from the

University of North Dakota. She then traveled to New Mexico to attend UNM for her Master's Degree, which she received in 1957. She married Joe, and they returned to his family home in Bernalillo. She remembers, "I have loved history ever since my grandfather told me the history of the Mandan Indians." She said, "He had been the State Historian in North Dakota." Martha loved hearing those stories, and to this day still loves to listen and talk about local history—especially that of Bernalillo and Sandoval County. Martha was active in the Sandoval County Historical Society beginning in 1980, serving as president as well as acquiring several grants to maintain the Society, which moved to the Edmond J. DeLavy house in 1990.

Martha raised three boys with Joe, Paul, Thor and Mark and took an active role in community life. She began with other young mothers trying to create a town library to serve the area. She remembers collecting books from the old New Mexico State Library and from friends, including our current county commissioner Orlando Lucero who was a student at a college that was closing. She scoured garage sales and collected books from members of the Bernalillo Women's Club, as well as from other people and businesses.

In 1965, H.J. Torres, mayor of Bernalillo at the time, offered her the north end of the new Bernalillo Town Hall for the library. My mother Faye told me, "I remember the many wonderful story hours, and taking the younger chil-

dren to see the snakes and animals that Martha arranged to have brought to the library. She also organized great painting classes there."

Eventually, the library's collection of books was moved to the original Roosevelt Elementary School and named the Martha Liebert Public Library in honor of her hard work and foresight.

Joe taught drafting and woodworking classes at Valley High School in Albuquerque for 28 years until he retired in 1981. He had always kept a garden behind their house, and now he has expanded it. He told me, "My 'Fun To-Do List' and my 'Work To-Do List' are one and the same." T&T Supermarket in Bernalillo carried Joe's excellent garlic for many years.

Joe kept busy with the local Rotary Club and was a charter member, along with H.J. Torres, Swede Hill, and Al Briley. They attended conventions and were instrumental in developing scholarship funds for local youth. They named the streets of Bernalillo. Joe was also busy with the Westerner's Club—a group in Albuquerque that presented historical programs.

The Liebert family has been an important part of my life as well as to many others in Bernalillo—from his mother Jenny's cooking and sewing, to Joe's woodworking and farming, to Martha's cooking and creating the library, to playing with their children when we were young.

Today, Joe and Martha Liebert still live in

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Joe's childhood home—the old Seligman house on main street Bernalillo. Joe remembers fondly all his friends and neighbors—with the Esparza family, the Romero family next door, Ramon Salazar, and Nene Navarro. Joe and Martha are active in the community, keep up with local politics and community news, and continue to be a pleasure to their many friends and neighbors. How lucky am I that my family and the Lieberts became intertwined in this little town we share.

This article was reprinted from the April 2013 Sandoval Signpost newspaper (www.sandoval-signpost.com).

DIGGING THE SUFFERING PLACE

*By Matthew J. Barbour and
Donald E. Tatum*

Fort Sumner was established in 1862 as a long-term solution for confining dissident Indian populations at the newly minted Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation. Situated along the Pecos River, it was to Bosque Redondo that Colonel Christopher “Kit” Carson brought approximately 400 Mescalero Apaches and 7,000 Navajos. There the Apache and Navajo were kept under guard and forced to practice agriculture, a pursuit for which their former chosen ways of life were ill suited. Crop failure due to drought and insect infestation quickly followed and the reservation became increasingly reliant on extremely limited and substandard provisions provided by the U.S. Government. Disease was rampant. Over the course of four years, pneumonia and dysentery resulted in the death of nearly 2,000 Native Americans —roughly a quarter of the total Bosque Redondo population. In early November of 1865, the Mescalero fled the reservation under cover of darkness. The Navajo remained until permitted to return home from the place they had come to call “Hweeldi”, or Land of Suffering, under the terms of the Treaty of Bosque Redondo in June, 1868. Deemed an absolute failure, the post was abandoned by the U.S. Army in 1869.

Between September 17 and 21, 2012, archaeologist conducted investigations in preparation of ground disturbing activities at Fort Sumner / Bosque Redondo State Monument in De Baca County, New Mexico. State Monuments planned irrigation improvements and the introduction of a small herd of

Churro sheep on a vacant lot within the monument grounds. The area considered for agriculture was known historically to have housed three structures associated with the Fort Sumner military installation: the fort stables, the Indian commissary, and one of fort's four corn cribs. However, the area in which the structures once stood was subjected to flooding from the Pecos River and intensive farming during the mid-twentieth century. It was unclear whether any physical evidence of the structures remained.

The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to determine if cultural deposits and features remained in the area proposed for development. To accomplish this task, OAS conducted a survey of the field and excavated four 4-by-0.5 m test trenches in areas in which the structures once stood. Nearly 900 surface artifacts were found during the survey of the field. Many artifacts were diagnostic to the period of the Fort Sumner occupation and appeared to be concentrated in areas directly associated with the former locations of military post auxiliary buildings. Artifacts included fragments of native ceramics, hand-forged horse shoes and harness hardware, U.S. military buttons, and lead bullets. One of the trenches uncovered packed earth, or puddled adobe, foundations associated with the Fort Sumner stables. While the plowing of the field and flooding of the Pecos had a visible impact on cultural resources, portions of the Fort appeared to be preserved under the current ground surface. More importantly, the artifacts and features associated with Fort Sumner and the Bosque Redondo

Indian Reservation could offer important insight into the daily lives of both the soldiers and Indians residing at the post.

Two examples of how these investigations are reshaping our knowledge of the past are the presence of the packed earth foundations and the fauna assemblage recovered from the test trenches. Packed earth foundations are atypical of U.S. military construction practices. Other contemporaneous installations throughout the territory utilized quarried limestone or sandstone blocks for their subsurface support. The use of packed earth or puddled adobe building practices was an Indian building style and the presence of these foundations could reflect the use of Indian labor when constructing the military post.

In the case of the faunal remains, animal bone recovered from the test trenches suggested the consumption of beef, lamb, and buffalo. Beef was supplied to the U.S. Army by cattle barons such as John Chisum, Charles Goodnight, and Oliver Loving; sheep were raised by the Navajo on the reservation. However, the presence of buffalo came as somewhat of a surprise. It presumably reflects foraging expeditions onto the eastern plains and encroachment into areas controlled by the Comanche.

The presence of intact subsurface structural features along with hundreds of artifacts was both unanticipated and exciting. It proves that there is always the potential for adding to our understanding of history through archaeological investigation and demonstrates the need to protect New Mexico's historic places.

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LIBRARY NEWS from our new Librarian

The Sandoval County Historical Society has an excellent reference library as well as a lending library. The reference library books may be used only at the Historical Society and cannot be checked out. If You need to use it,

please contact me, Katherine Pomonis, and I will be glad to open the library for you to do research needed.

The lending library books may be checked out during one of the lectures and the books may be kept out or one month, if needed longer, please let me know and I will be glad to extend your time.

There are numerous books that have been borrowed from the reference library without being checked out, and according to the inventory I have been conducting, there are many books missing. Please return them for others to use.

Thank you,
Katherine Pomonis, librarian



FOOD

Don't forget We ask you to bring along a little something.

Joy Barclay at 867-9769 will help coordinate

GUNTHER *a short story* by Sam McIlhane

Gunther Wiemann really didn't have much against factory-made cigarettes. They just cost too much and they never gave the taste of roll-your-owns. He had decided that a long time ago. He could roll one in thirty seconds flat if he had to, but he only did that on a bet and usually preferred to take his time and make each one a work of art. After all, he had rolled them for forty years at least. It was old habit for one of the pockets on the pale shirt with the snap buttons which he always wore.

It wasn't that he had but one shirt. All of his shirts had snap buttons and were pale in color and gave the impression they were one and the same unless one carefully studied the faint patterns in the material. Hanging on a string and dangling outside the flap of the left pocket was always the same small piece of paper with the words "Bull Durham" on it. He felt like changing something, but not the Bull Durham. He made a smoke, touched a lighted wooden kitchen match to it, and inhaled.

He lay down on his back on the cot he had bought years ago at the army surplus store in Raton. The ceiling of the room was just like the ceiling in the other room. The paint was peeling and the plywood sections were curled in some of the corners by moisture which had leaked in from the roof. The two rooms had once been single room cabins for railroad track gangs and had been moved to the ranch. The two cabins had been joined together

which afforded one room for cooking on a cast-iron wood-burning stove and the other room for sleeping.

It was good that mama had died after the winter had passed. He knew she would have hated to have been buried during a storm. The weather had been nice that day. He suddenly realized he needn't sleep on the cot any longer. He would take the bed with him. He couldn't see any use in giving it to old lady McNabb. Mama was gone and he might as well use it. That was all there had ever been: the two of them. He couldn't remember when it had been different. Mama slept on the big bed and he slept on a cot. He imagined the bed would still be in pretty fair shape even though before she died mama hit over four hundred pounds on the scales over at Doc Bell's office Mountainair.

He raised his right hand and examined the index finger. He could see a slight cut, not wide at all, but it had penetrated deeply through the calloused skin and it hurt. He looked over both hands carefully. He thought they surely did not look like an educated man's hands. An educated man he was not. He had made it through the fifth grade. No, they aren't an educated man's hands; they're a workingman's hands, he thought. They were heavily calloused and chapped with small cuts here and there. Dirt and grease could be seen under the fingernails and some of the nails were partially missing from old accidents. They aren't pretty, he thought, but they get the job done.

He sat up on the cot and looked around the room. He didn't care for having to constantly move. It had always been a matter of a job.

Angus McNabb had said the job on his ranch would only last through the winter and he had meant just that. That very morning, Angus had paid Gunther the remainder of his wages: \$400. It was time to move on.

Gunther Wiemann knew he was one of the best carpenters around. By the time he was twenty years of age, his mentor had acknowledged that as fact. Old man Lange had come off the boat from Bremerhaven, Germany, straight to Wagon Mound, New Mexico. The old man had given up everything back in the old country including his shop, which over a period of thirty years had become famous for handcrafted wooden furniture. He had come to Wagon Mound to live with his brother and his family on their ranch because they were the only living relatives he had left in the world. The old man had developed a strong affection for the skinny neighbor boy who lived down the road. In the old man's little shop in his brother's barn, he had taught Gunther his skills with wood. And through the years, working with the old man on projects around the community, the boy had learned the building trade. Gunther had learned fast and Mama Wiemann would say to her son, "Gunny, you will always be able to feed us with what you learn from that old man. Keep learning good. Get all you can get."

Gunther blew smoke from his nostrils

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and tried to think about his dad. He tried but he had no memories of him for he had died before he could remember. Mama Wiemann had used hired men and neighbors to work the land on the homestead but all their efforts had proved useless. Dry farming with years of no moisture and land taxes which could not be paid created the life of moving for Gunther and his mother. They lost the homestead. Mama Wiemann had been right about Gunther's ability to feed them with his skills. But moving from one construction site to another and from one ranch to another was a habit he had decided to try and change.

He put everything into cardboard boxes except his tools. He had special metal boxes for them, even for his circular power saw. He placed the boxes containing Mama Wiemann's dresses and other assorted garments on the flatbed of the one-ton International and drove to the McNabb ranch house. His dog Karl went along. Old lady McNabb seemed glad to get the clothes. He didn't see how she could wear any of the dresses because she looked about one hundred pounds short of filling them out. He and Karl drove back to the shack. Karl always rode on the flat-bed rather than inside the truck cab because the right door of the cab was invariably difficult to open after Gunther clipped it on a fence post once upon a time.

Inside the shack, Gunther found a clean set of clothes the McNabb woman had ironed for him the week before. He gathered up the clothes, some clean underwear, and a towel and went outdoors to the water tank behind the shack. The slight breeze was moving the

rotors of the windmill and water was pumping cold and clear into the open metal tank. He took off his clothes, climbed the makeshift stile on the side of the tank and jumped into the water. He thought nothing of bathing in the nude. There wasn't a neighbor within a half-mile. Seeing a man in the nude wouldn't be anything new for any of the neighbors he knew around there anyway. The air wasn't very warm and the water was ice-cold. He swam three laps across the tank and climbed out to dry. He felt clean enough.

Gunther had been lean and lanky since he was a kid. It wasn't that Mama Wiemann hadn't fed him well as a boy. Mama had said he was always "skinny as a bean pole." One thing was certain, there was no fat anywhere on his six foot, one inch frame. He slipped on the pair of khaki trousers.

It wasn't that he had anything against Levis or slacks, or bib-overalls. He just liked khaki pants. They were comfortable and that was all that mattered to him. No one could remember seeing him in any other type of trousers. For Christmas one year, mama had given him a pair of J.C. Penney jeans. He found them when he was packing her clothes for old lady McNabb. The store tags were still on them. He looked at himself in a jagged piece of mirror which was wrapped in a section of baling wire and was hanging from a crossbrace of the windmill. He rubbed his hand over the two-day growth of graying hair on his face and decided against shaving.

Shaving was a lot of trouble. It wasn't that he didn't feel good about the whole thing after

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he did shave, rather it was getting around to it that was a pain in the ass. Besides that, working construction, or on an isolated ranch repairing a barn, or in some small town making kitchen cabinets for someone did not ignite much incentive in Gunther to look clean and fresh. Mama Wiemann had never objected one way or another. Now she was gone. He had only himself to please and that was exactly what he intended to do: damn well as he pleased. Perhaps he should have taken a wife. His first concern had always been for mama. Oh yes, he had courted a girl a time or two but nothing had developed from all the effort. Maybe he should have given more to the effort. It was too late to worry about that now.

He was going to find a permanent job even if it meant going to the big city. He and mama had always avoided Albuquerque or places such as Santa Fe or Clovis and yet he found himself thinking of actually living in such a place. If that was what it took to get a permanent job, that was what he would do. He put on the western style shirt with the pattern of tiny blue flowers on it and walked barefooted back into the shack. He put on the scratched and faded pair of Justin boots and noticed Karl curled up in the corner of the room. He should have thrown him in the water for a bath.

He lifted the sweat-stained gray Stetson from the nail on the wall and placed it carelessly on his thick crop of silver-streaked hair. Karl watched him load the cardboard boxes, the mattresses and boxspring, and sundry pieces of furniture onto the one-ton. When he had finished, he looked through the two rooms

again and into the cookstove, whistled at Karl, walked outside and got into the truck. When the truck began to move Karl jumped onto the flatbed amid the boxes and furniture and sawhorses.

The early March wind blew dust across the ruts in the road ahead of the truck, and far across the Estancia Valley, Gunther could see a dust-devil as it sucked a column of dust skyward. Karl had difficulty remaining on all four feet because of the roughness of the road and he continually bounced against a low side-board one minute and against a tall sawhorse the next.

Upon reaching the pavement, Gunther headed the International toward Estancia and at the edge of town he turned into the cemetery grounds. He and Karl walked over to the grave. It had only been three days, but the flowers were faded and dry. Gunther held the Stetson by the brim with both hands and looked down at the freshly turned earth. "I'm gonna go look for work in Albuquerque, mama, so don't look for me back here for a spell." He suddenly felt a slight mist in his eyes. They re-boarded the truck and drove toward Moriarity as the sun began to paint the horizon with shades of orange and red above the Manzano Mountains.

The parking lot of Tranquilino's Bar was already full. He parked in the back and went inside. The room was thick with people and smoke and he gently maneuvered his way towards a table at the far end of the room. One of the three men seated at the table recognized him and smiled. "Hey Gunny, what are you

Continued

El Cronicón

doing here this time of day?iComo /e ha ido? The man's large belly rubbed against the table when he reached up and shook Gunther's hand. "Sit down. What'll you have, primo?"

Gunther sat without saying much. He sipped on the Coors and listened to Tranquilino and his two friends. After a few minutes, he was ready to say what was on his mind. "Tunky, I've been thinking about what you said. You remember the job your cuñado said might be for me over in Albuquerque? Well, I'm about decided to quit this half-ass stuff and get something like that. I told you back then, when you told me about it, that I didn't want to go to town. I didn't think I wanted anything permanent. But I've about changed my mind. I want something permanent and something that pays halfway decent too."

Tranquilino Barela was relighting the almost banana-size cigar in his mouth. "Bueno, primo. I don't know if there's still an opening. I don't know, maybe the sisters have already given it to somebody else but I'll sure find out." He glanced at his wristwatch. "That cuñado of mine should be home from work by now, unless he stopped off for a short one. I'll call him right now. Hang on." He got up and walked around behind the bar, placed a telephone on the counter and began dialing. Gunther had no idea what he would do from here if hay job was gone. He thought about what he had told himself: he had only himself to please now . He had a check for four hundred dollars and he had a pair of skilled hands. He wasn't hurting. He would just see what happened.

Tranquilano coughed all the way back to the table,sat down and took a dip of Wild Turkey. He relighted his cigar,turning it slowly for the flame of the match to burn. evenly. Julio says" get your ass over there as soon as you can. The sisters are about to give it to somebody else but they haven't made up their minds yet. He says you still got a chance, primo. So get going."

"I'll drive over in the morning, I guess, and check it out." There was still some beer in the bottle but it was half-warm. He let it sit there, Tranquilino emphasized his point. "Julio says he'll call the sisters and even if you get there late this evening, he'll see that they talk to you. He's got some pull with them sisters, no?" Gunther looked up as he rolled a cigarette. "You mean go now?" "Damn right. Get going!" Tranquilino grinned and began a five-minute coughing spell. One of the men at the table gave Gunther directions on how to find the potential job. Tranquilino's friends bade him luck, Tranquilino raised a feeble hand in farewell, and Gunther left the bar.

He drove into Albuquerque just in time to be welcomed by an evening sand storm. Karl had his mouth open and looked as though he was smiling all the way through town. His tail never did stop wagging. In an older part of the city, the International pulled into a paved drive which was guarded by massive wrought-iron gates. Darkness had settled over the Rio Grande Valley and the sand storm raged on. Gunther parked the truck and climbed the steps to the main doors of Saint Theresa Academy. Karl curled up between two card-

board boxes on the flatbed. The limbs of huge Chinese elms moved back and forth over his head.

Sister Maria Antoinette talked with Gunther for at least an hour before Karl saw him come back down the steps of the three-story building. Gunther told Karl it was time they found something to eat. After they had eaten four Lata' Burgers between them, Gunther carried the cardboard boxes and furniture into a small house behind the main complex of buildings. Karl went to sleep on the floor and Gunther slept on Mama Wiemann's bare boxspring and mattress using an old army field jacket as covering.

At 8:15 the next morning, Gunther was on the job. Sister Maria told him that she was impressed with what Julio had said about him. She was willing to hire him on the spot, and would provide living quarters for him - and Karl and he would be on maintenance. Gunther knew he could repair or make just about anything she might need and told her so. She assured him that if he proved himself a capable craftsman and was a responsible person, his possible future could be as head of maintenance for the entire academy. But for now, he would begin by building a new door frame in the library. The nun guided him to the site of the project and then introduced him to the academy's small but modern maintenance shop.

By 10:30, Gunther had framed the doorway and was working on duplicating the fancy old-fashioned molding and trim. He was alone in the shop but didn't mind. He preferred to work

alone. The molding wouldn't take hut a minute to cut and shape. This was alright, he thought, being able to use their tools. It would just cut down on the wear and tear on his own equipment.

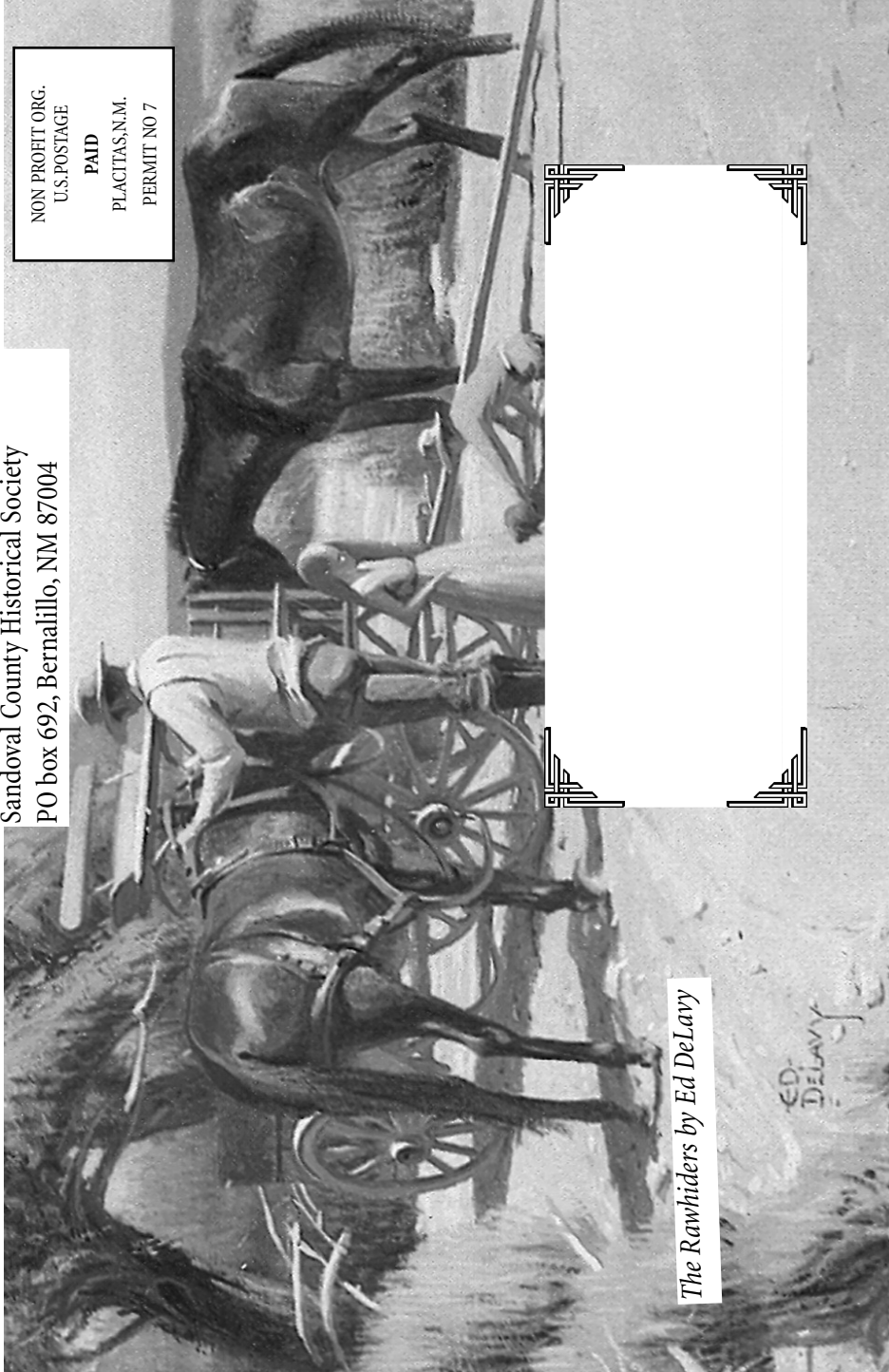
Placing a strip of molding across the bench and onto a sawhorse, he turned on the power saw and steadied it on the pencil mark. The next instant, he turned off the saw, set it down whining on the bench, and stared at his hand. Blood was streaming from two nubs where his index and middle fingers had been. The blood was running down his arm and onto the concrete floor. "**Damn it! Now how am I gonna roll a smoke?**"

The Lighter Side

My mind works like lightning,
one brilliant flash and its gone



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The Rawhiders by Ed DeLavy

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