

El Cronicón

Official Quarterly Publication of the
SANDOVAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President: Bill Sapien

Editor: Roy C. Skeens

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March Meeting *Sunday, March 14th, 2pm*



Bill Sapien
will talk on the life
and times of the
Mexican Revolutionary leader



Pancho Villa

Artist of the month will be Betty Tsosie who will be showing her high quality silk screened Totes, T's and Aprons, which will be for sale.

Saludos Del Presidente

Hola, Mis Amigos (Hello My Friends) to live, to enjoy, to spend a winter in Sandoval County is the best of all possible worlds. To experience, first and foremost, the diversity of the people; the comfortable days; the colder than cool nights; to view the snow-covered Sandia's; to partake of the red or green chile edibles; as well as the good old USA Standard, the cheeseburger along with a cup of hot chocolate. All of our cares and worries evaporate. Added to this, is the freedoms we enjoy. This is the history of life that Sandoval County Historical Society is undertaking to conserve and preserve...

I hope that all the members of our Society accept that it is incumbent upon all of us to be steadfast in defending and promoting the Society. We ask for your energy in increasing the membership of the Society. We have scheduled a great program for this year and hope that you will attend and bring a guest and potential member.

In the January 2009 edition of *El Cronicón* which introduced me as incoming Presidente, I stated we would embark on a new journey. At that time, I shared an old Spanish proverb that states "*De paso en paso se anda lejos*"; "Step by step we travel a long way"! I can report today that goals and projects were established and fruition has taken place with the cooperation of a lot of members. I want to express my gratitude.

This year we staged a White Elephant Sale spearheaded by Jewel Paschke. It was successful beyond imagination. Bolstered by her leadership and numerous members who assisted in the process. Our members and guests shopped and purchased to the tune of \$400. Let's do it again next year! Thank you Jewel and Society!!

We had again, at press time contacted the Town of Bernalillo about the continuing situation regarding the traffic on Edmund Road and the Santa Ana Warrior Station. We will continue to monitor the request by encouraging the town administration to correct a potentially dangerous situation.

Let us look forward to our year of outstanding programs. I again make two important requests – your ideas and your support of the Society.

!! Mil Gracias!!

Bill Sapien

REUBEN J. MONTOYA 1918-2010



Reuben, who died January 17, 2010 at 91, was President of the Sandoval County Historical Society in 1998. Born in Peña Blanca to José Manuel Montoya and Maria Rita C de Baca, two old pioneer families. His wife, Lucy, survives him and is a member. He is survived by his children; Rita, Barbara, Annette and Danny, 10 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. He graduated from Pena Blanca High School in 1936 and was a veteran of World War II serving in the U.S. Air Force. After the war he was employed by the Sandoval County clerk's office and later owned a general store in Bernalillo. In 1951 he joined Sandia National Labs retiring after 30 years in 1981. Reuben was active in the Bernalillo community, serving 12 years on the school board with two years as President. He was a longtime member of the Soil and Water Conservation District serving as Chairman of the Board. He had a strong interest in Sandoval County history contributing many articles to El Cronicón and was very involved in local politics as a result of contact with his cousin: Senator Joe Montoya. He enjoyed working his ancestral farm in Peña Blanca.

ML

JANUARY 10th MEETING

Genealogist/Historian Ronald Miera was our featured speaker. He gave an interesting Power Point presentation on the life and accomplishments of the 18th century Spanish born cartographer/artist Bernado de Miera y Pacheco who became New Mexico's greatest map maker. He drew the earliest comprehensive maps of the region at the time.



The Rio Abajo Coalition was formed in 2009 by the Corrales Historical Society and our Society to identify and get acquainted with historically oriented organizations in the central New Mexico area. We have located over 50 such groups and made a comprehensive list of them. We have met at each other's facilities to get acquainted with their staff and what they have to offer. This grass roots movement has been noted by the New Mexico Historical Society who have asked us to be a part of their organization.

THE BERNALILLO TREASURE

VICENTE RAMIREZ'S STORY

My experience with ghosts took place about 34 years ago. My family moved into a house on a ranch that we had bought in the city named Bernalillo, north of Albuquerque. The property was in real need of care. Apparently, the family that had previously owned it had stopped caring for the numerous fruit trees and rose bushes that had been planted throughout the property, because it looked like it had been years since they had been pruned and fertilized. On the six-acre property was a barn, a small shed, and our three-bedroom house. During the real-estate transaction, the realtor informed us that the property had belonged to a family of Anglos with three children, including an infant girl. The realtor also informed us that this family had relocated to somewhere in Utah.

I guess my parents had the keen foresight to see beyond the neglect of the buildings, because it only took us a little more than a year to turn our six acres of neglected land into a property that the neighbors marveled at. My father began to prune and water the apricot, apple, and pear trees that fall, so that by spring the next year they were all in a carpet of blossoms. Most of the roses, however, were

beyond help and had to be removed. My father attached a chain to the back of his pick-up and pulled them out roots and all. My mother did yard work and turned a patch of ground, which the weeds had claimed, into a flower bed of zinnias and sunflowers. She was very proud of her hard labor and glowed with pride when the women from the neighboring properties visited and commented how beautiful her flowers looked. My father took all the dead and diseased trees and rose bushes into the pasture and placed them in a large pile where they remained for a week. We all went to the pasture at the end of that week to watch as my father lit a fire at the base of the monstrous pile of branches and roots. The mountain of rubbish was soon flaring high into the evening



sky. My mother's *comadre* (friend), who lived a few properties away, came by to witness the event as did other neighbors. Being a young boy, I was fascinated by the flames.

The simply constructed barn and shed on our property were in need of replastering, so my father got about 10 men together one weekend, and the re-plastering work was begun and finished in that weekend. There was much work to do in order to get our

Continued

property looking civilized. The first year proved to be the most difficult, but when it was done, there was no doubt about it, we had a farm we were very proud of.

One day, I was out in the front yard playing with my younger brother, Antonio. Antonio spotted a small dog that had wandered close to our fence, and called to it. The dog immediately crawled under the wire fence and came running to him. Since that day we adopted the dog as a family pet. We named her “Chamisa,” after the native New-Mexican plant that grows wild in the state. We assumed she had escaped from her owners because of the muddy rope around her neck, which looked as if she had chewed through it to escape.

One night, at about 10 p.m. Chamisa began to bark over and over. She was tied to an apricot tree in our backyard. I went outside when my father asked me to investigate. Chamisa was pulling on her chain and wanted to be set free. As far as I could tell, she wanted to run in the direction of the shed. Perhaps, I thought, she had seen a skunk or opossum that had caught her attention. I ran back into the house and located a flashlight. When my mother asked me what all the commotion was about, I told her that there was an animal out back by the shed. She warned me about staying far away from any skunks. With that warning I ran out the door, with flashlight in hand, and returned to Chamisa. I let her loose from her chain, and she immediately darted away into the darkness towards the shed. I called to her as I took up the chase. I picked up a stick, thinking I could use the stick to fend off any skunk we might encounter. Before I had made another move, Chamisa returned to my side and began to bark uncontrollably at the shed. At that point my mother opened the back door

and said, “What’s going on with that dog? Why is she acting so crazy?” I answered, “There’s something back there that’s scaring her.” My mother said, “Let’s go see what all the concern is about. Bring the flashlight.” As my mother and I went around the side yard and approached the shed, we spotted a woman standing as still as could be, dressed in a long black dress, her face completely covered with a black cloth. I shined the light beam on her body as my mother asked her in Spanish, “*Quien esta?*” (“Who’s there?”) The woman did not answer. My mother asked, “*¿Necesitas algo?*” (“Do you need something?”) Then the woman made a movement. She slowly began to raise her arm, which had been against her side. She pointed directly to the area of ground beside the stump of a dead tree. As she pointed, we noticed the woman was wearing a white glove. My mother asked once more, “*Senora, que necesitas? Diga me:*” (“Lady, what do you want? Tell me:”) The woman did not answer, but continued to point with her gloved hand at the spot by the tree. Then my mother took the flashlight away from me and shined the light at the spot by the tree as we took a few steps closer to this woman. We saw only a few weeds and nothing more. Then my mother moved the light towards the woman’s hand. What we had assumed was a gloved hand was instead a skeleton arm with out-stretched bone fingers. Quickly, my mother moved the light up to the woman’s face and, although her face was covered in a long black lace veil, we both could see unmistakably the white outline of a skull and the dark circles of the empty eye sockets! My mother let out a scream, and threw the flashlight at the ghost. Grabbing my left forearm, she and I ran like the wind into the house. To say that we were scared would be

an understatement! My arm developed bruises from my mother's finger marks. My father was unable to control my mother's crying, so he phoned her *comadre* who soon showed up with her husband. We both related in detail what had happened and my mother's *comadre* and husband spent the night with us in our small house. I couldn't stop shaking and asked everyone to not mention the ghost anymore. We soon decided to pray instead of talk about what we had seen.

My father opened a drawer and brought out two candles. One candle we lit for Santo Nino de Atocha (baby Jesus) and placed his statue in our living room. The other candle we lit for San Miguel (St. Michael the Archangel) and placed his picture outside our back door. During the night, whenever we would hear Chamisa barking, we would all make the sign of the cross over our chests. Eventually, we got to bed and fell asleep. My father was at a loss about what else to do and simply announced to us all, "*Dios esta con nosotros. No debemos de tener miedo.*" ("God is with us. There is no need to have fear.")

The following morning we all greeted the comforting light of the sun. After gathering our emotional strength, my mother took my father and her *comadre* to the spot behind the shed where we had seen the ghost. Not far beyond was the flashlight lying on the ground.

Searching for an answer to the ghost's appearance, my father said that perhaps it was attempting to relay a message to us. My mother's *comadre* stated, "Perhaps there's a *tesoro* (treasure) buried there where the ghosts was pointing!" We all agreed that perhaps there was a buried can of money or jewelry. Wasting no time, my father went to the barn and quickly returned with a shovel. He said, "I'll find

whatever is here, even if it takes all day." Both he and *la comadre's* husband went to work, taking turns digging. Very soon they had a hole three- feet deep. Deciding to take a short break among the twisted roots of the tree, they began to discuss the wondrous treasure that lay beneath them. Taking up the shovel once again, it was not long before my father cried out, "*Aqui, aqui hay algo!*" ("Here, there's something here!"). Sure enough, he had uncovered a flat stone about three feet long and two feet wide.

My mother was uneasy about what was happening before her eyes. Was this the right thing? What if the treasure brought bad luck to the family? She was voicing her thoughts to everyone. But soon everyone decided that it would be best to continue. Directing their energies towards enlarging the hole and uncovering the stone slab from the dirt, they soon accomplished their task. Carefully, they lifted the stone, which appeared to be about two inches thick. When they removed the stone slab and placed it on the grass, we could all see that underneath the stone were the remains of a wooden box. My mother's *comadre* said, "There it is. You're rich! It's the treasure!"

Using the point of the shovel my father began to remove the decaying planks of wood and place them to the side. Within the small oblong box was a thick layer of mud. Reaching his hand into the soft, moist mud my father felt for coins or jewelry. Then he yelled, "I've got something!" My mother responded, "*Eliseo, cuidars!*" ("Eliseo, be careful!") He drew back his arm and, we all could clearly see, he held in his hand a round ball of mud. Quickly, someone brought a bucket to him, and he carefully placed the small round object into it.

Crawling out of the hole, he called for someone to bring him another buck- *Continued*

et filled with water. When this was done, he slowly poured the clean water into the bucket that contained the “round treasure.” As the water rolled over the muddy object, we recognized that it was a child’s skull. My father dropped the skull into the bucket of water and quickly washed his hands. He asked, “God, what does this all mean?” We were speechless. My mother was crying and said, “What was the woman in black trying to tell us?” Perhaps, the ghost was the mother of the child, wishing for her baby to be given a decent burial. Or, as my mother’s *comadre* said, “The baby was murdered and the ghost wanted to make this known to everyone.” My mother collapsed into the arms of my father. The only other things I remember were the uniforms of the police when they arrived at our house.

The coroner, who arrived with the police, dug out the remaining bones. No one dared mention the woman in black who had prompted the digging. My father just said he was attempting to remove the old tree stump when he came upon the tragic scene. The police drove off and began their investigation. They returned the next day and asked the neighbors questions about the previous family, who had occupied our property. The results of their investigation were never shared with us, and as far as we know, they have never been made public. When the police drove off with the baby’s bones in a cardboard box that day, they also drove away with any answers we might have had. A couple of weeks after the police had left our home, my father made a small wooden cross, which I painted white. We placed it at the base of the tree and said a few prayers.

If the woman in black wanted to inform us about the child in the grave, I guess she

accomplished her task. We never saw her after that night. I like to think that the dead do not rest until their loved ones are at peace. Well, that’s what I believe.



battle with the Devil,;

THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

The Archangel Michael is distinguished in three of the major religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. His place in heaven is in the center, before the throne of God, armored and golden-winged. Michael is such a mighty power that he has the ability to rescue souls from Hell. In his right hand he holds the sword of divine wrath; in his left he carries the prominent scales of divine judgment where souls are to be weighed at the final Day of Judgment. In the Last Days of the World, Michael is destined to do battle with the Devil, and to banish Satan deep down into the bottomless pit of Hell.

Reprinted from New Mexico Ghost Stories by Antonio Garcez, with permission.

Christmas Party



Virginia Ortiz captured the spirit of the evening with her photos of these partygoers

Christmas Party



Christmas Party



Christmas Party



“Rattling Chains”

by **Nasario Garcia**

(An excerpt from “Rattling Chains and Other Stories for Children” (“Ruido de cadenas y otros cuentos para niños”), Arte Público Press, 2009.)

“Grandpa Lolo, what’s the name of the story you’re going to tell me?”

“Who knows?” he said with a smile. “This is the story about a man named Juan Algodones. That wasn’t his real surname. People called him Algodones because he was born in a little place south of Santa Fe with that name. He moved to this valley where we now live, a long time ago with his family. He lived in a tiny place called Santa Clara not far from Ojo del Padre.

“One night, on his way home from Los Altos, where he had gone to visit a friend, he and his burro Achaque ...”

“Acha ... what?” I asked.

The word *achaque* means excuse. Juan Algodones named him that to show that his donkey always had an excuse for not moving swiftly. Anyway, it was already late at night, but not past midnight. The summer night was cool and crisp, and the stars were blinking and dancing in the sky. Juan could see the Big Dipper staring down at him as he looked up at the dark blue sky with thousands of sparkling stars. Juan was fascinated with nature. A full moon added to his joy.

“As he was approaching El Coruco, he noticed a star moving rapidly across the sky. At first he thought it was a shooting star. He had seen shooting stars before, but they moved much quicker and usually faded as they got close to the earth. This star was traveling at a much slower pace.”

“You mean like a plane?” I asked.

No, *hijito*. There were no planes back then. Anyway, Juan Algodones saw the light across the Rio Puerco where Don Natividad had lived. You remember Natividad, don’t you?” asked Grandpa.

“Yes, he lived on top of a hill.”

“That’s right. Remember that Natividad crossed the river that night when the fireball was chasing him. Well, this is the same spot where the light crossed to this side of the Rio Puerco.

“Okay. Juan Algodones knew about El Coruco. He had heard countless stories concerning rattling chains, witches, and that sort of stuff, but he had never had an encounter with anything like a light. So he became suspicious and kept a keen eye on the light as it moved through the sky after crossing the river. The light seemed to be slowing down as Juan continued on the only road home. The moon was peering down on El Coruco, lighting up the road for Juan. Right at that moment he decided to take some action.”

What was he going to do, Grandpa Lolo?”
“He was going to catch the light!”

Catch the light? And how was he going to do that?”

Continued

“Ah, hijito. This is the fascinating and fun part of the story. Now, listen carefully. Perk up your ears like a donkey and don't miss a word I say so you can share the story with your schoolmates when school starts.

“You see, being a Juan or a Juana was special, and no single community was ever without a Juan or a Juana. They were born and blessed with unique powers that no one else possessed. One of their powers was the ability to catch witches, and that's what Juan Algodones intended to do. He had a strong feeling that it was a witch in flight who was coming back home. Who knows? Maybe she had been away during the night causing mischief or inflicting harm on some innocent person.

“In any case, after the light crossed the Rio Puerco, and Juan Algodones saw that it was headed for El Coruco, he quickened his pace. When he approached El Coruco he heard a faint noise. He thought he heard rattling chains. However, it had rained the day before and what he heard in the distance was the water from the nearby waterfall.

“Juan promptly got off Achaque. The burro had become a bit skittish as though he knew something was wrong. After tying him to a fence post, Juan Algodones walked a few feet from the road. With the whip, he drew a large cirde in the dirt. Next he proceeded to take off his shirt and his T-shirt. He took the Tshirt, turned it inside out and tossed it in the middle of the cirde. He went back to Achaque, and they both walked to the nearest aban-

doned home away from the cirde. At once, the light reappeared in the sky behind some nearby hills and landed smack in the middle of the cirde. Juan knew right then and there that he had caught himself a witch! The power of being a Juan had worked its magic. As the witch landed and her feet touched the ground, she made a horrible datter. The noise indeed sounded like rattling chains, just like the stories he had heard.”

“What happened next?” I said excitedly, wanting to know the outcome.

“When Juan Algodones walked over to the cirde he found a woman sort of bending over as if scared and shivering. She was dressed in black with a black veil over her head. You could not see her face. But the strangest thing was that she had a chain strapped around her waist like a belt. It dangled down her side and rattled at the slightest movement. Juan Algodones noticed, thanks to the bright moon, the most curious thing he had ever seen in his life.”

“What was that, Grandpa Lolo?”

The chain resembled a huge rosary. The links to the chain looked like the beads to a rosary, but each link had a grotesque human face. At that point Juan Algodones was more than convinced and satisfied that he had caught a witch.”

“What did Juan Algodones do with the witch? Did he turn her loose?”

“You see, hijito, the witch was helpless. Juan Algodones, because of his magical pow-

ers, was able to trap her. She could go nowhere as long as she was inside that cirde. She was Juan's prisoner. His power was too much for her. She begged, almost cried, for him to let her go.

"Please, please, I ask you to turn me loose. I can pay you a ransom. Money is no problem for me. You name the amount and you've got it." "That won't be necessary. I don't need your dirty money," said Juan Algodones. "I'll set you free if you promise to never come back to El Coruco." "The witch agreed and Juan Algodones broke the cirde with his right foot." "But, Grandpa Lolo, why the right foot?"

"Because the right foot in this case symbolized good, a triumph of sorts, whereas the left foot stood for evil. Juan Algodones was too smart. He wasn't about to fall victim to the witch. The moment he broke the cirde, her chains made a rattling sound, like the fluttering of a flock of birds, and off she flew into the sky. Juan then headed home to Santa Clara."

"Boy! That was a really neat story. I can't wait to tell it to my schoolmates when school starts."

"Okay, it's getting late. Go on home," gestured Grandpa with his right hand, "but watch out for the moving lights. They could be witches!" he added with a smile.

The End

This year our programs are featuring the founding families of Sandoval County. If you are a descendant of a family please contact Martha Liebert @ 867-2755 so we can be sure to include your family

We welcome **Nancy Madigan** as our new librarian and say a reluctant farewell to retiring librarian **Pat Harris**. Pat organized the library some years ago and has faithfully tended it ever since. Thank you Pat for all your hard work

www.sandovalhistory.org/

Check out our **web site** that Ben Blackwell puts together, for all current information on the Society: Historical notes, upcoming programs. back issues of El Cronicon. links to other interesting sites and more.

**Elected officers - 2010
Committee chairs**

OFFICERS

Bill Sapien.....	President	867-2804
Mickey Archibeque.....	Vice-President	867-6053
Cynthia Spence.....	Secretary	867-9115
Ernie Jaskolski.....	Treasurer	828-2514

CHAIRS

Dirk Van Hart.....	Archives	293-2073
Martha Liebert.....	Archives	867-2755
Roy Skeens.....	Editor El Cronicón	867-6310
William Last.....	Finance	867-5857
Mollie Andrews.....	Public Relations	898-3417
.....	Membership	792-4851
Connie Aguilar.....	Programs	867-5820
Nancy Madigan.....	Librarian	821-1871
Tom Wilson.....	Grounds	867-5575
Virginia Ortiz.....	Photo Albums	888-4512
Priscilla Taylor.....	Refreshments	
Mollie Andrews.....	Publicity	898-0602
Bertille Baca.....	Greeter	898-3417
Jewell Paschke.....	Art Exhibits	867-8515
Joe Sando.....	Pueblo Consultant	345-5085
Max C de Baca.....	Building Official	857-4994

REMINDER

*If you have not yet sent in your membership renewal. There is no time like the present !
Mucho Gracias.*

Upcoming programs

SUNDAY, APRIL 1th, 2PM

Presenter: Jim Saiz

(a descendant of 17th century local hacienhero Ambrosio)

Remedios de la Gente

(Folk Remedies of the people)

SUNDAY, MAY 16 th, 2PM

Presenter: Robert Torres

**Myth of the Hanging Tree, Crime and Punishment
during New Mexico's "Wild West Period"**

SUNDAY, JUNE 13th, 2PM

Presenters:

**Dr Dan Chavez - Former Director of UNM
Community College speaking on José Leandro Perea
and**

**Descendant Ricardo Gonzales speaking as Capt. Juan
Gonzales, the founder of Corrales**



*Ed DeLavy painting of
the front room of the
Convent of our Lady of
Sorrows*

*Ed's self portrait as a
gambler*



The Lighter Side

We didn't get many votes, but of those the overwhelming majority voted an enthusiastic yes, to continue

A group of 40 year old buddies get together and discuss where they should meet for dinner.

Finally it is agreed that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen restaurant because the waitresses there have low cut blouses.

10 years later, at 50 years of age, the group meets and once again they discuss where they should have dinner. Finally it is agreed that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because the food there is very good and the wine selection is good also.

10 years later at 60 years of age, the group meets and once again they discuss where they should have dinner. Finally it is agreed that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because they can eat there in peace and quiet and the restaurant is smoke free.

10 years later, at 70 years of age, the group meets and once again they discuss where they should have dinner. Finally it is agreed that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because the restaurant is wheel chair accessible and they even have an elevator.

10 years later, at 80 years of age, the group meets and once again they discuss where they should have dinner. Finally it is agreed that they should meet at the Gausthof zum Lowen because that would be a great idea because they have never been there before.

Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick.

-SUSAN SONTAG

If your time hasn't come, not even a doctor can kill you.

MEYER PERLSTEIN

A cough so robust that I tapped into two new seams of phlegm.

BILL BRYSON

My illness is due to my doctors insistence that I drink milk, a whitish fluid they force down helpless babies.

W.C. FIELDS

Suggested remedy for the common cold: A good gulp of whiskey at bedtime it's not very scientific, but it helps.

DR. ALEXANDER FLEMING

Submitted by Max C de Baca

From Forbes Magazine

Sandoval County Historical Society
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