

Guajalotes, Zopilotes, y Paisanos



Turkey



Vulture



Roadrunner

Hillsboro Historical Society

August 2016. Volume 9 Number 3



Update on purchase of Black Range Museum and plans for reopening

Formation of Hillsboro and the history of the museum building.

Hillsboro Timeline (continued)

Rattlesnakes in town

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From the President

Wow! What a difference a couple of months can make. Thanks to the generous contributions of our membership we are debt free. With that milestone we are just beginning to fully appreciate the work ahead of us. Since taking possession of the Black Range Museum, the Inventory Crew (Garland Bills, Barb Lovell, Patti Nunn, Matilde Holzwarth, Jody Manzara, Marilyn Poitras, Claire Avallone, Judy Majoras, and Patty Woodruff) have cleaned, photographed and inventoried over one thousand items and there may be four or five thousand more left to inventory. We have also paid our mortgage loan off in full. With the generous donation of some used roofing by Steve Dobrott, Bruce Cospers and I temporarily repaired the roof to at least get us through our somewhat sporadic monsoon. Most of the property of the previous tenant has been removed, and we will be scheduling a general clean-up day before the Labor Day weekend festivities. The Antiques Festival is on track; however, due to the extreme heat of late and scarcity of volunteers, the Historic Home Tour has been rescheduled for next spring.

Some of you may have already received another fund-raising letter. The funds we are currently soliciting will be used for inventory equipment and general repairs to the museum: the roof, water, electrical and security. We are working to prioritize those needs and break them into feasible chunks of work and expenses.

On August 15 and 16, HHS will be moving from our present location to the Black Range Museum and will be open during the Labor Day Festivities. Black Range Winery will be moving into our old location and offering their and other NM wines.

The Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department historic fire truck is complete and will be moved to the Black Range Museum as soon as the site is cleared.

The HHS board has been working long hours with the absence due to illness of key members, Sonja Rutledge and Steve Elam. Both are improving and look forward to returning to action. The board is in serious need of a person to take the minutes, if anyone would like to help. I've been filling in for this task and seem to have trouble writing and talking at the same time.

Even with all that we have accomplished, much remains undone. We need to develop a vision for the Black Range Museum—What do we showcase? What makes us unique? Which artifacts are unique enough and important enough to keep and display? How do we store the many items and alternate exhibits? How do we intertwine the history of the local area and the Black Range Region's most unique history? What about the courthouse and jail property? How can we acquire, preserve, and interpret it for future generations?

So many questions, challenges and opportunities. . . . we are always looking for help, ideas, participation. Drop us a line, write on email, or just come by the museum for a visit. We want to hear from you.

Until then, best always,

Larry

Hillsboro History and the Black Range Museum

By HHS Research Group¹

The recent purchase of the Black Range Museum has set a group of local scholars scurrying to fill gaps in our knowledge. A desire to get the building on the National Register of Historic Places provides one major motivation. We need to delineate the significance of the property as related to local and regional history. Similarly, grant applications require a detailed history of the building and its importance to the community. We're finding that many "facts" are either subject to question or unknown.

To quote a trite cliché, history is but a myth agreed upon. Seemingly, if a "fact" is repeated often and questioned little, it becomes part of accepted wisdom, whether or not it is true. This phenomenon is bad enough in itself, however, it creates another phenomenon that also interferes with honest scholarship: once glib facts become accepted, further research on a subject may cease. History, like science, is best practiced by dedicated skeptics who assume that just about nothing you hear or read is true to the nth degree. Something is almost always left out or misstated, leaving room for additional scrutiny. Such seems to be the case with much of the history of Hillsboro and our museum building.

The area where Hillsboro sits was occupied some 1000 years ago by Mimbrenos. We know, because remains of their pithouses still exist on points overlooking town. These sites haven't been excavated by archaeologists, so we know little about their true extent or actual dates of occupation. The Mimbrenos obviously had an understanding of the Black Range and how its drainages behave, because they built their dwellings on points overlooking the valley, far above the reach of even the worst of floods. Anglos who settled the town after 1877 weren't as bright, and destruction by recurring floods has become part of the town's more sensational history.

We find no evidence of settlement of the townsite or any nearby area after the Mimbrenos and before the discovery of gold in 1877. The Apaches did not reside permanently in the Percha Valley, although they may have periodically camped along it. So settlement irrupted rather quickly in 1877.

Perhaps the closest we have to first hand documentation of Hillsboro's settlement comes from *New Mexico Mines and Minerals* by Fayette Alexander Jones, published in 1904. Jones was a civil engineer, having earned a degree from the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy in 1882. His book was commissioned by the Territorial Board of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition Managers. In his introduction, Jones notes, "Every effort was exerted to secure and include only that which is authentic and whenever possible, verified by living representatives of the 'early days,' who were on the ground in person. It should be observed then, that the sources of much information thus obtained, was not through mere hearsay or by second hand evidence. Such evidence as was gotten can be gathered at this time with more accuracy than would be possible so to do a decade hence." That pretty well sums it up. Jones' sources were the people who were present when events happened.

According to Jones, David Stitzel and Dan Dugan had crossed to the east side of the Black Range from a mill site in the Mimbres Valley. Stitzel was a Civil War veteran and was 41 years of age. He lived out his life, or most of it, in Hillsboro. He died in July, 1914 at the age of 78. Dugan also remained in Hillsboro and parlayed his mining investments into a cattle ranch, as well as a bank account of \$150,000. He died on June, 1884 at the age of 50, making him about 43 when the mines were discovered.

In *Leading Facts of New Mexico*, Twitchell notes that the millsite in the Mimbres was Georgetown: "Founded in 1877 the success and prosperity of the town [Hillsborough] were only obtained after years of persistent effort. The camp is in an off shoot of Georgetown, Grant County. In 1876 David Stitzel and Daniel Dugan left that place on a prospecting tour and in May 1877 discovered gold in the present Hillsboro camp."

Apparently the prospectors exploring the Black Range were mainly individuals exploring outward from mining settlements around Silver City.

According to Twitchell, Stitzel and Dugan had been away from Georgetown for several months before they located the Opportunity and Ready Pay mines. At the time they decided to explore the east side of the Black Range, On April 20, 1877, while crossing the site of what is now the Opportunity Mine, Stitzel pocketed a few small pieces of rock. Back at the Mimbres Mill a assay of the rocks indicated that they carried \$160 worth of

¹ Informal bunch including in no particular order: Garland Bills, Barbara Lovell, Patty Woodruff, Harley Shaw, Patti Nunn, Karl Laumbach, Craig Springer, Don Avery, Susan Binneweg, Matti Harrison, Lynn (Titmann) Mullins, John Tittmann, Ted Caluwe, Robert Barnes, Joe Ficklin, and Mark Thompson. All have contributed to this brief summary.

gold per ton. Considering that the prospectors would have to use picks and shovels to dig out a ton of rock, \$160 shared by two men or more doesn't sound like good pay on today's market. But Stitzel and Dugan, along with friend Joe Yankie decided to mine the site. On May 13th they were back posting the markings to legalize their claim. Over the next few months, they hauled five tons to the Mimbres Mill, netting \$400. Considering they were carrying the ore across the rugged Black Range with pack animals, undoubtedly requiring several trips, \$400 seems a meager take.

We can only wonder what Stitzel and Dugan were thinking when they left Georgetown in the Spring of 1877. A lull existed in Apache attacks. Most of the Warm Springs Apaches, including Geronimo, were gathered at Ojo Caliente or on the Mescalero Reservation, hoping they would be left alone in their homeland. But on the very day that the prospectors discovered the handful of stones that set off a gold rush to the Percha, Indian Agent John Clum was headed for Ojo Caliente with plans to round up Geronimo and his band and take them as prisoners to San Carlos. Amazingly he pulled this off without a shot being fired, but his plans to prosecute Geronimo were thwarted, the chief escaped San Carlos, and the Apache wars continued for another nine years. Even so, a sense of optimism prevailed that the Apaches would be subdued. Also, by 1877, the railroad was working its way toward El Paso and Silver City, perhaps giving hope that ore might be transported more easily.

Most likely, the two prospectors from Georgetown had taken the pack trail across the Black Range, which according to Lundwell², "... was well known in the 1820s, when it was used by fur trappers as a route to the beaver grounds of the Gila River. From the Mimbres Valley the trail followed Gavilan Creek and Dry Gavilan across the mountains via Parks Pass and along Pollock's Creek into the Berenda Valley." Lundwell cites Ailman's note that the trail hit the Rio Grande near Las Palomas, some seven miles downstream from the eventual site of Truth or Consequences. Kearny's Army of the West had taken the same trail heading for California in 1846.

Hillsboro apparently was not the first mining settlement in the area. Edward Tittmann, in an unpublished manuscript noted: "The first town in this part of what is now Sierra County was located at the placers some six miles north-easterly of this village [Hillsboro]. There was quite a settlement there in the seventies and Dr. Crews, who was probably the first physician in this neighborhood stopped initially at the placers. Later, after the discovery of the Snake mine by David Stitzel and others, Dr. Crews moved to what is now Hillsboro and built one of the first houses in the town. This house still stands." Six miles northeasterly of Hillsboro would place the placer encampment in the vicinity of the present Copper Flats Mine, an area that was extensively placered. We hypothesize that a settlement of miners existed in the vicinity of Gold Dust or Anthony for several months before Hillsboro was established. This would have been about 14 miles southwest of Las Palomas, which had been settled in 1856. A trade route of sorts was present in the Rio Grande Valley, so the area already had a modest human presence. Stitzel and Dugan were probably not the only prospectors pushing into the Black Range foothills in 1877.

Tittmann notes that the first house in Hillsboro was built in August, 1877. It may have been the house built by Dr. Crews. The region around Hillsboro still experienced Apache raids, but the town continued growing as other mines were discovered, including major silver lodes in Lake Valley and near Kingston. In August, 1877, Nicholas Galles, W. H. Weeks, H. H. Elliot, and Joe Yankie vied for the right to name the new town. The story goes that Joe Yankie won the draw and named the town Hillsborough after his hometown in Ohio. From 1877 to 1884, Hillsborough was a growing mining camp. Structures were built on lands that were still owned by the General Land Office, and settlers had no title. Outside of the townsite, structures were erected on mining claims, some of which were later patented. The earliest town plat we have found is dated 1884. This was apparently associated with a patent issued by the General Land Office to the Hillsboro Townsite Company, which then claimed ownership of 140 subdivided acres.³ Karl Laumbach has been tried unsuccessfully to find the original documents for this transaction in the General Land Office records. Also, we have yet to determine who made up this company, but a quit-claim deed for the school house hill property dated April 3, 1885, from Fuller, Perrault, Galles and Gentz and their wives to John Donahoe, suggests that these worthies made up the townsite company. Galles and Perrault became pioneer businessmen in town. Fuller appears below as a mine superintendent.

A later patent covering the same 140 acres was issued by the General Land Office to John Donohue, Probate Judge, "in trust for the use and benefit of the several occupants of the townsite of Hillsborough ... according

² Lundwell, H. J., Editor 1983. *Pioneering in Territorial Silver City—H. B. Ailman's Recollections of Silver City and the Southwest, 1871-1892*. University of New Mexico Press. P. 145. Lundwell cites Ruhlen, G. 1957. Kearny's route from the Rio Grande to the Gila River, *New Mexico Historical Review* 32:213-230.

³Abstract of the McDonald Tract as recorded in Warranty Deed book 44, page 209, September, 1979.

to their respective interests.” This would suggest that the 1884 assignment of the townsite was not valid or was never executed, and that the allocation from public to private lands happened five years later. By this time, the Hillsborough Townsite Company either no longer existed or was not considered to be a legitimate land-holding entity and that ownership of any lots that had been developed since 1877 was apparently still in limbo.

Whatever the case, this illuminates the potential mechanisms provided for transferring land from the public domain to private lots. The original plat was surveyed and drawn December 24, 1884 by William Harris, G. and M. E., and recorded on July 3rd A. D., 1885 by J. M. Webster, County Recorder. This map shows streets and lots, with blocks and lot nos. It appears to be an idealized plat that broke the townsite into uniform 50’ X 100’ lots. Except for showing an area of approximately 400’ X 500’ reserved for the B. G. and Company’s Mill site, and a 100’ X 100’ square lot reserved for the courthouse, the map does not indicate land use or ownership, nor does it take into consideration drainage or topography. The area allocated for the courthouse lies between blocks 6 and 7, in the middle of Broadway (now Hwy 27). This site was not used for the courthouse, which eventually took up most of block 4. The map also lays out roads in straight lines that do not represent reality. Main Street, for example, runs directly east and west across Percha Creek and through Happy Flat. Mattie Avenue and Elenora St. do the same. No ownership or actual structures are delineated in this map.

A second plat of the town was recorded in 1887, once again by J. M. Webster. However this time Webster gives his title as probate clerk, which leads us to wonder if some kind of litigation had caused this new map to be drawn. No doubt an effort was being made to legitimize the properties occupied by squatters before the Hillsborough townside had been transferred from public domain. This second map is more realistic than the original plat, showing drainages and general terrain features and apparently displaying lot sizes and shapes as they had evolved through use since 1877. Also, the roads, especially Main Street, meander in crossing Percha Creek. With the exception of allocations for a school and a mill site, land ownership or usage does not appear on this map.

Land ownership was apparently settled by 1893, because the next two maps of Hillsboro were produced by Sanborn-Perris Map Company in 1893 and 1898 to satisfy insurance requirements. A third insurance map was created by the Sanborn Map Company in 1930. These maps show structures and, in some cases, ownership or usage of the properties. Another detailed map was created in 1977 by the School of Architecture at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. This map is highly detailed, showing structures, terrain, and trees. It was created in conjunction with an effort to classify Hillsboro as a colonia. This effort was voted down by town citizens.

All of the maps are much too big to recreate in this article, but the section showing Block 24 and the museum building are provided below. The three insurance maps provide a partial history of our building. It is present on the 1893 map, and classified as suitable for a domicile or a store. Two large rooms are present on the west end of the building that have since disappeared, and by 1898, a third room tied the museum building to the building that is now Sue’s Antiques. We’ve found no record of their removal, but by 1930, one of these had disappeared and the other two had been incorporated into the larger building to the west (Sue’s). Conceivably the missing room may have been damaged during the 1914 flood and removed, but this remains conjecture. All of the rooms, including the one now missing, were classified as mason construction, ergo, adobe.

So far, the first ownership of the property holding the museum appears in November, 1884, when title to the lots was awarded to Hillsboro Hydraulic Mining Company, with G. M. Fuller shown as Superintendent. Apparently by this time, at least some individuals were referring to the town as Hillsboro, rather than Hillsborough. We suspect that our building was constructed initially for use by the Hillsboro Hydraulic Mining Company, but we have no evidence as yet supporting this. In early 1886, lots 3 and 4 (at least) were warrantied to George Perrault and Harriett Galles by Nathan Grayson. Nathan Grayson shows up in the 1885 Territorial Census as 49 years of age and a cattle grower living in Las Palomas. He was involved early-on with Willard Hopewell and others in the John Cross Ranch. He later moved to California.

Insofar as we can determine, Hillsboro was never incorporated as a town and has never adopted a town charter. According Jones in *New Mexico Mines and Minerals*, the town was designated the county seat of the newly formed Sierra County in April, 1884. Prior to that, for a period we’ve yet to determine, the townsite and land two miles around it were considered to be part of Dona Ana County. The remainder of the area that became Sierra County was parceled out to Socorro and Grant Counties.⁴ Why an island of Dona Ana County was created within Socorro County is unknown and would be a fascinating bit of research. During the entire time

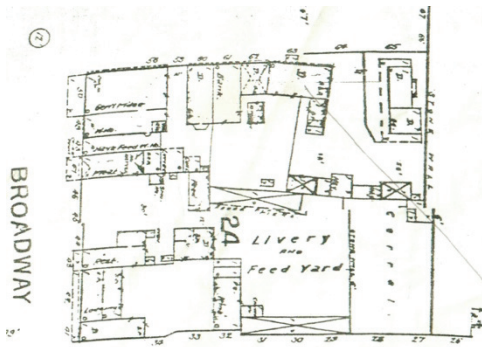
⁴ Jones, F. A. 1904. *New Mexico Mines and Minerals*. The New Mexican Printing Company. Santa Fe.

of its existence, Hillsboro has never had a town government. All official functions have been performed at the county level.

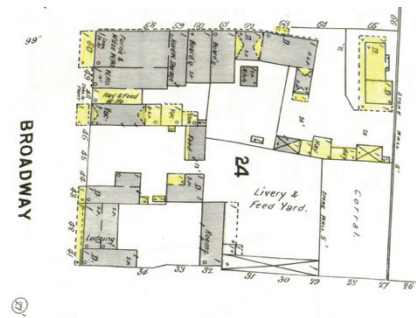
So far, we've found little regarding the ownership or use of the property before 1919, when Sadie Orchard claimed ownership. She may have opened the Ocean Grove hotel at this time and, perhaps, also became involved with Tom Ying as restaurant operator. By November, 1923, however, Tom Ying was claiming ownership of the property and refuting claims by Orchard.

In 1952, Marie Dissinger picked up the property for paying Tom Ying's lapsed taxes. By this time, Sadie was dead, and apparently Ying's claim had held. In July, 1968, Lydia Key purchased the property from Marie Dissinger's estate. Dissinger had drowned a few years earlier in Tank Canyon during a flash flood. Ownership then passed to June Anders in 1992.

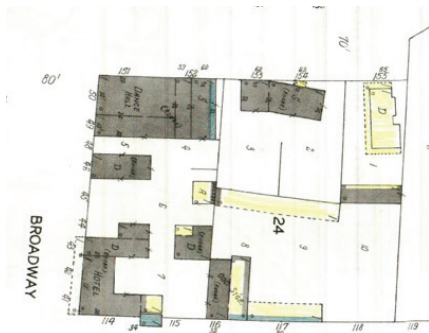
So this is where we are regarding the history of the property. We have a lot of gaps and a lot of questions. The extent to which Sadie Orchard and her purported brothel has overshadowed all other history of use of the property is fascinating. Conceivably, she was present in the building as few as five years, and her ownership may have been tenuous.



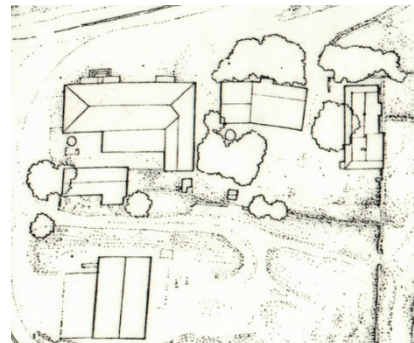
1893



1898



1930



1977

Changes in the Black Range Museum building between 1893 and 1977. The configuration of the buildings remains the same since 1977. The two westerly rooms of the building that were present in 1898 are now part of the building housing Sue's Antiques. A third room is missing, creating an open lane between the two buildings.

HILLSBORO TIMELINE

Harley Shaw

As noted in the previous issue of *Guajalotes, Zopilotes, y Paisanos*, we can make a pretty good guess regarding vegetation changes in the eastern Black Range during the past 15,000 years, based on extrapolations from studies in other areas. Such extrapolations are more difficult, perhaps impossible, for faunal changes. The limited information available for vertebrates from that period are nearly all from large prehistoric lakebeds or prairies further east, and extrapolation of findings to the rugged terrain of the mountain would be an excessive leap.

Documentation of human presence during the past 15,000 years is somewhat better. Archaeologists Margaret Nelson and Michelle Hegmon comment:

“People have lived in southwestern New Mexico for millennia. Archaeologists find evidence of people they call Paleoindians dating as early as 9500 BC, and of the mobile, Archaic-period hunter-gatherers who succeeded them.”¹

Earlier, Laumbach and Kirkpatrick² had noted:

“Paleo-Indian artifactual materials are almost non-existent in the current records for western Sierra County. . . . Current data simply indicate that western Sierra County was not heavily utilized during the late Pleistocene. The grasslands of the neighboring valleys and basins were apparently more attractive to nomadic hunting cultures than the slopes of the Black Range.”

The Paleo Indian period would have covered from about 15,000 years ago to 8000 years ago.

“The Archaic is only slightly better represented than the Paleo-Indian. Current laboratory of Anthropology records list . . . only four in the western portion [of Sierra County]. All four were . . . near Palomas Creek. . . . the sites were in the upland canyons of the pinyon-juniper zones. . . . Archaic use of the area seems to be limited to seasonal usage of the Pinyon-Juniper uplands.”

Archaic remains represent humans in the area between 8000 years ago to 2000 years ago.

So far as I know, none of the Paleo-Indian or Archaic evidence has been found in the Percha Watershed, but hunters from both groups undoubtedly ranged onto the Black Range, including Percha Creek on hunting forays. Insofar as anyone knows, these were hunting and gathering cultures and probably nomadic. They probably moved through our region in small numbers, but did not settle.

From 2000 years ago to the present, the available evidence of human presence and study of successive cultures changes, and a large body of literature has accumulated on the various stages of Mimbres culture. By 1983, Laumbach and Kirkpatrick² were able to state:

“Based on the survey record data, we argue that the entirety of western Sierra County was extensively occupied by a Mimbres population until at least ca. A. D. 1150.”

More recently, Nelson and Hegman¹ developed a chronology of our region that refines the resolution of our more general timeline for the Mimbres periods. These are more detailed than space allows here, and anyone interested should acquire a copy of *Mimbres Lives and Landscapes* cited below. According to their classification, five Mimbres periods ranging from Early Pithouse to Post-Classic began some 1800 years ago and ended about 550 years ago. Margaret Nelson summarized the history of the Mimbres³:

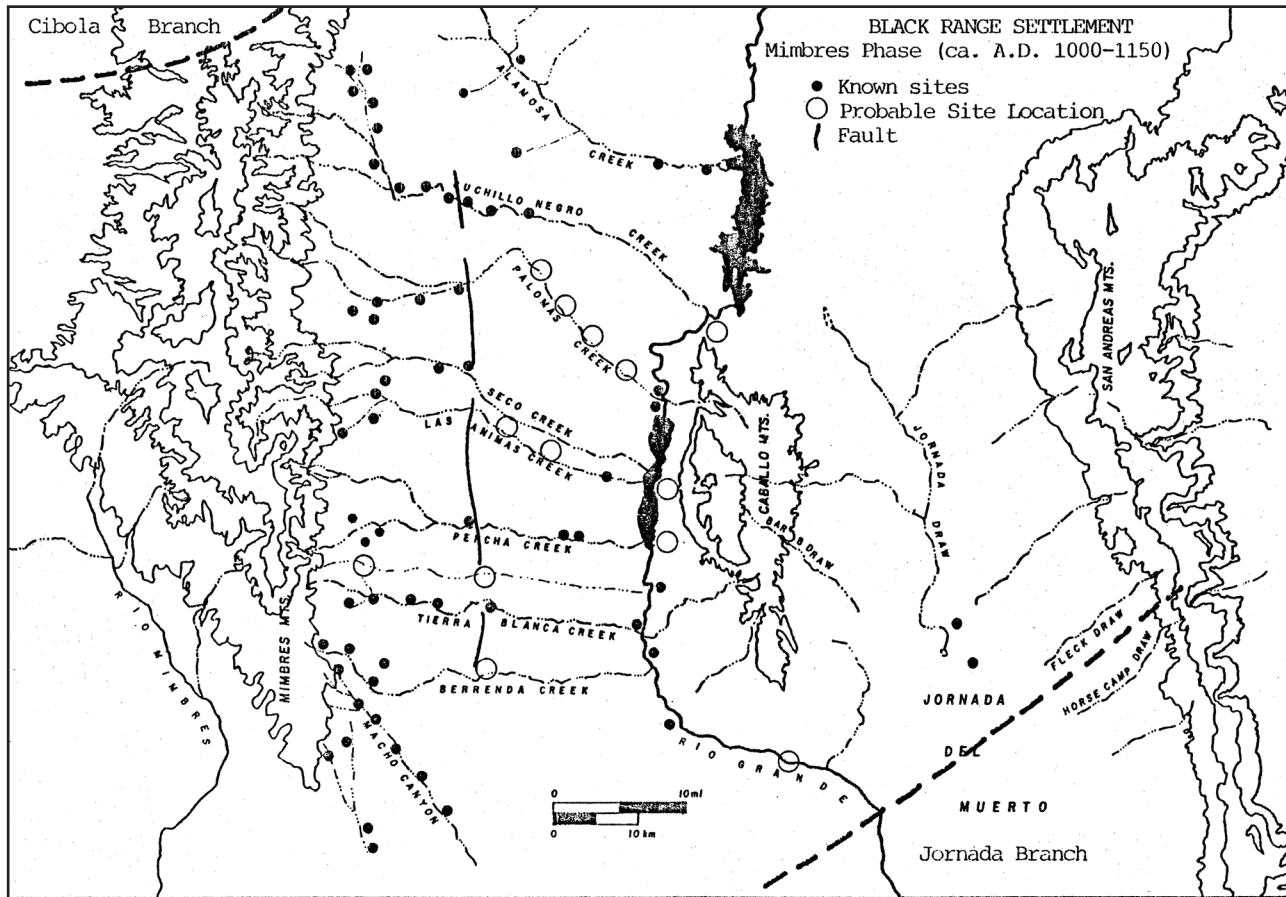
“For centuries, people farmed the rich floodplain soils along the Mimbres River, the upper Gila River, and nearby tributaries of the Rio Grande. By the 11th century, fields were widespread, not only in the floodplains but also on alluvial fans, in upland parks and on the artificial terraces on hill slopes adjacent to the rivers and creeks. . . . Upland field produced more under drier conditions, and lowland fields were best when temperatures dropped. In wet years, downstream fields in wide floodplains might have flooded, but those in small patches on side streams might have survived.”

¹Nelson, M. C. and M. Hegman 2010. *Mimbres Lives and Landscapes*. School for Advanced Research Press. Santa Fe, NM. page 3.

²Laumbach, K. W. and D. T. Kirkpatrick 1983. *The Black Range Survey--a 2% archaeological sample of state lands in western Sierra County, New Mexico*. Report prepared for the Historic Preservation Bureau of the State of New Mexico by Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology. N. M. State University.

³Nelson, M. C. 2010. *Mimbres, the mystery?* in *Mimbres Lives and Landscapes*. School for Advanced Research Press. Santa Fe, N. M. 99-103.

Nelson suggests that depletion of soils near villages over centuries of use, along with social stresses in larger villages, punctuated by drying climate and reduced rainfall around 1150 forced a change in the Mimbres social structure. They dispersed into smaller upland villages. By the early 1200s, they had once again gathered into larger villages. By the mid-1400s, the Mimbres had left our region or, perhaps, been absorbed into other groups moving into the area. A lot of ink has been expended expounding theories about the demise of the Mimbres cultures. The arrival of the more nomadic and warlike Apaches may have been a primary cause, as well as environmental factors. Most likely many forces combined, some as yet unknown, brought about the end of the Mimbres.



General distribution of Mimbres period structural sites (Laumbach and Kirkpatrick 1983).

Hillsboro Historical Society Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the Hillsboro Community Center. 6:30 PM. Everyone invited.

PERCHA WATERSHED TIMELINE

1877-Present	Rise and fall of mining. Finite histories of Hillsboro and Kingston.
Early 1877- August 1877	Stitzel and Dugan discover gold N. of Percha Creek. Other prospectors move to area, town formed. Galles, Weeks, Eliot, and Yankie draw straws for privilege of naming town. Yankie wins, calls it Hillsborough;; after his home town, Hillsborough, Ohio.
1863	About 1863, Union Soldiers of the California Column patrolled Cienega de Los Apaches, which is today called Trujillo Creek, 5 miles south of Hillsboro.
Fall, 1862	Joseph Walker leads party of prospectors headed for Arizona along east front of Black Range and around south end. No real descriptions, but Apaches kept them from crossing mountain.
Spring 1862	Sibley defeated at Glorieta Pass. Stragglings groups of Confederate soldiers crossed Percha en route back to Texas.
February, 1862	Sibley's Confederate troops cross mouth of Percha en route to battle at Fort Craig.
1854	Fort Craig garrisoned. U. S. Troops begin to make excursions into Black Range, including Percha Creek.
February 2, 1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Official transfer of ownership of territory.
October 15, 1846	General Kearny and Army of the West camped on Percha Creek near location of present Percha Ranch en route to California.
August 15, 1846	Territory of New Mexico claimed by General Kearny for U. S. A.
August 24, 1821	End of Spanish rule of Territory of Mexico. Some incursions of American and French trappers through Southwest.
1809	Zebulon Pike crossed near mouth of Percha Creek while a prisoner of Spanish Army. He noted Apache sign and sign of Spanish pursuers in the general vicinity.
Sept. 25th, 1779	Commandant General Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola, with 250 troops pursued Apaches into head of Las Animas Creek. Could have also entered Percha Watershed.
1583	Espejo, traveled northward for 15 days from the location of current El Paso, Probably crossed Percha Creek. Described the region as empty of humans and having vegetation made up of mesquite groves and prickly pears in the lower elevations, pine, pinyon, "sabines", and cedars. Sabines were probably alligator juniper.
1581	Rodriguez-Chamusco expedition crossed mouth of Percha Creek. Notes that area is unsettled.
400—200 years ago	Moderate use of Percha Creek by Apaches. Ongoing conflict with Spanish. Possible appearance of French trapper/traders.
500—400 years ago	Arrival of Athapascans and Spanish.
1800—800 years ago	Various stages of eastern Mimbres culture present. Formation of pithouses on points along Percha Creek. Vegetation and fauna generally as at present.
15,000—1800 years ago	Continued warming. Most geological activity surficial—continued canyon formation, rearrangement of surface layers, landslides, stream aggradation. Vegetation generally shifted downward from present distributions. Mixed conifer (spruce-fire) forest probably reaching downhill perhaps to 5000 feet (elevation of Hillsboro); pinyon-juniper woodlands in sparse patches, if at all. Ponderosa pine missing. Flat lands toward river covered with big sagebrush and grasses.
130,000-15,000 years ago	Continued warming. Disappearance of many large Pleistocene mammals. Most geological activity surficial—continued canyon formation, rearrangement of surface layers, landslides, stream aggradation. Vegetation generally shifted downward from present distributions. Mixed conifer (spruce-fire) forest probably reaching downhill perhaps to 5000 feet (elevation of Hillsboro); pinyon-juniper woodlands extending into plains. Ponderosa pine zone very limited or missing.
2.5 million —130,000 years ago	Final period of massive sedimentary outflows. Canyons on east face of Black Range well established in approximate current formations.

A Little Natural History

We live in snake country, and rattlesnakes seem especially present this summer. At least two pets have been bitten in people's yards in Hillsboro, and I personally have already stepped closer than I like to three diamondbacks. I recently met Alex Heindl, a Tucson native now living in Nevada who, specializes in rattlesnake biology. He has kindly given us permission to print a handout he gives to people going on tours or listening to his presentations. The information seems timely. It applies to both people and pets.



SNAKEBITE!

Alex L. Heindl ©2010
Desert WalkAbouts, Inc.

Recommended actions – and some to avoid.....

Venomous snakebite is a relatively uncommon event in the United States. Though no systematic, nation-wide compilation of annual bite statistics exists, it appears that, on average, about eight thousand bites are reported each year. Viewed alone this figure seems large. Considered in terms of our 300 million-plus-population the problem takes on a more realistic perspective.

Common or not, venomous snakebite's potentially life threatening nature makes it a condition to be taken seriously. Properly treated, most bite victims easily survive with little more than a

few unpleasant memories to remind them of the incident. In the U.S., only about 0.15% – a bit more than just one in a thousand – of bites are fatal. Within the bitten population, fatalities are more likely to occur among young children (because of their small body mass) and elderly adults – particularly those with heart or lung ailments – because of their generally less robust health.

Just four groups of dangerously venomous snakes occur in North America: coral snakes, copperheads, cottonmouths (water moccasins) and rattlesnakes. Nevada hosts only the rattlesnake, six varieties of which are found here.¹

Recent statistics show that most snakebite victims are men between the ages of twenty and forty, and that most bites are on hands and feet. Alcohol is typically involved in behavior leading to a bite and the victim is commonly attempting to impress friends when the bite occurs. Truly accidental bites are considerably less frequent. But regardless of contributing circumstances, what course of action is best when a bite does occur?

First, **REASSURE** the victim. Calm him down. The likelihood that the bite will be lethal is very small. Each year, more people are killed by lightning strikes, attacks by domestic dogs and even bee stings than die from snakebite. Even the ride to the hospital is statistically more hazardous (thousands of people die each year in automobile accidents).

Next, **REMOVE** any overly restrictive clothing, jewelry, etc. from around the bite – particularly objects lying between the bite and the heart. Swelling associated with snakebite can cause such items to seriously restrict circulation, with some potential consequences more troublesome than the bite itself.

¹ At least four species of venomous snakes occur in our area: western diamondback, rock rattler, blacktail, and western rattler. The massasauga, a rattleless species occurs in the Rio Grande valley. Coral snakes are probably present, but I've not found actual records for the area.

To the extent possible, **IMMOBILIZE** the bitten limb and keep it at or below the victim's heart level. Unnecessary motion simply speeds blood flow and spreads venom more quickly.

RINSE the bite area to prevent any venom on the skin from entering the wound.

DO NOT APPLY A TOURNIQUET. Unnecessarily restricted blood flow invites gangrene. A compression band such as an ace bandage may be applied around the wound *so long as it does not overly restrict circulation*. Wrap it as for a sprained ankle, i.e., one or two fingers should easily slide underneath.

DO NOT CUT THE VICTIM for purposes of withdrawing venom. Serious harm can be done by well-intended but ill-applied incisions that damage blood vessels, tendons, ligaments and nerves. Venom extractors are of questionable value unless applied within seconds after the bite is delivered. If you do use an extractor, apply it and leave it in place until the victim is under professional medical care. Continuous removal and reapplication can create a pumping action that aids venom spread.

DO NOT APPLY ICE. Frostbite or freezing may do more damage than the bite itself. Cooling the area around the bite by wrapping it with a cold water-soaked cloth may help by slowing circulation.

DO NOT APPLY ELECTRIC SHOCK. This now disparaged "treatment" does nothing to neutralize venom and may have serious, even lethal, side effects.

OFFER NO STIMULANTS; AVOID GIVING ANYTHING BY MOUTH. Coffee, tea, soft drinks (sucrose sugars and sugar substitutes), alcohol and tobacco all increase heart rate, blood pressure and, thereby, the spread of venom. Sport drinks (Gatorade®, Power Aid®, etc.) should also be avoided because their intake may obscure electrolyte imbalances fostered by the venom and make assessment of the bite's effects more difficult. *A little water is ok if the victim is dehydrated, but avoid giving anything by mouth until it is determined that surgery will not be required as part of treatment.*

TRANSPORT to medical care. If possible, **INFORM** the intended facility you are en-route. Give the victim's sex, age, weight, general health profile (e.g., allergies, health problems, etc.), current status, and anticipated time of arrival. Advise **WHERE** the bite is located (e.g., hand, foot) and **WHEN** it occurred. **MARK** the progression of bite-associated swelling on the bitten limb at 15-minute intervals. If possible, note the species of snake involved – venom toxicity varies greatly between species. If you cannot positively identify the snake, describe it (size, general color, markings, etc.) and the terrain (e.g., creosote desert, pinyon/juniper forest, etc.) where it was found. Do not attempt to collect the snake for purposes of having it identified – one bite at a time is plenty.

If immediate transport is unavailable, call or send for help if you can. Do not leave the bitten person alone and avoid having him walk unless absolutely necessary. In such cases, move slowly and without unnecessary exertion. If swelling or other symptoms (dizziness, nausea, etc.) increase markedly, stop and have the victim lie down until symptoms subside. If they do not, stay where you are and wait for help.

Remember: *Although venomous snakebite clearly warrants timely medical attention, bites from North American species are only rarely, in actuality, life threatening.*



MEMBERSHIP

OUR MEMBERSHIPS ARE ON A FEBRUARY 1 TO JANUARY 31 BASIS. ANY APPLICATIONS WE RECEIVE AFTER NOVEMBER 15 WILL BE CONSIDERED 2015 MEMBERSHIPS VALID FROM FEB 1, 2016 TO JANUARY 31, 2017.

The Hillsboro Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to collect, preserve and share the history and artifacts of the Hillsboro, Kingston and Lake Valley communities of New Mexico. Members may choose to participate in many aspects of the Society's activities, including fundraising, collections and conservation, oral histories, education and interpretation, special events and programs. Member benefits include the quarterly newsletter, priority registration for lectures, programs and field trips. Dues are \$25 annually for individual or family and \$50 for business memberships. Please mail this completed Membership Subscription, along with your check made payable to Hillsboro Historical Society, P. O. Box 461, Hillsboro NM 88042.

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