



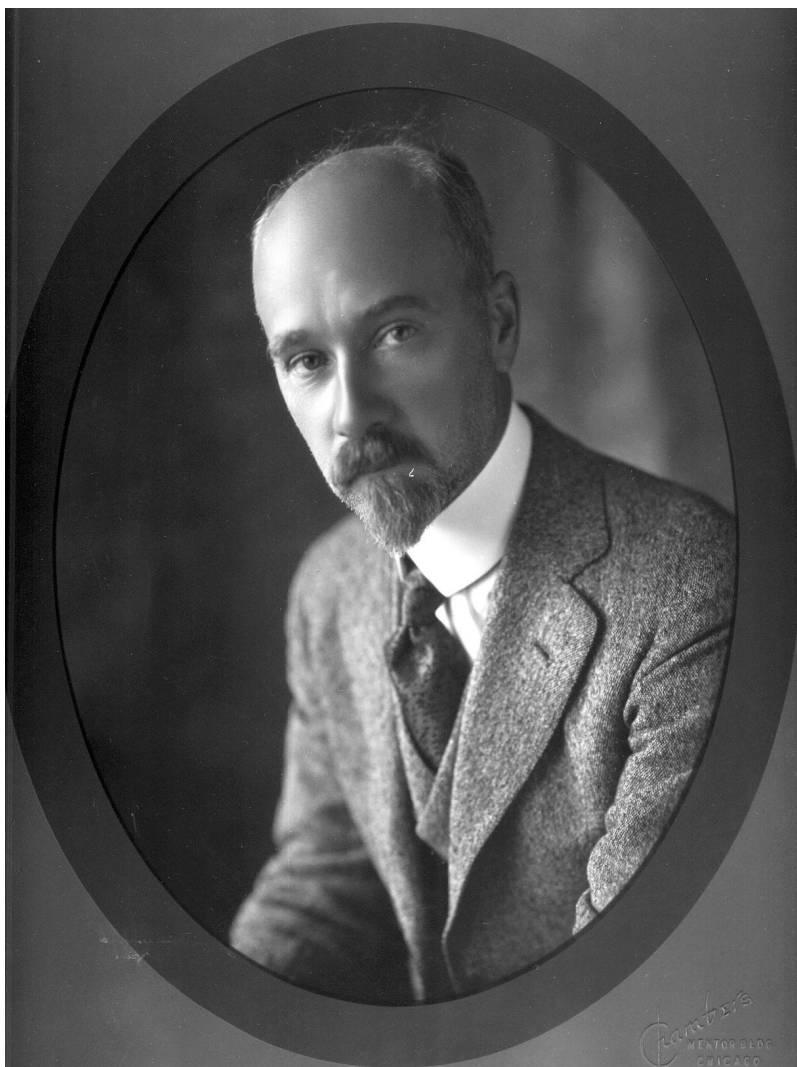
# Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos

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**Hillsboro Historical Society**

August 2017

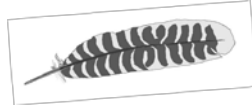
**Edward Tittmann—Reminisces about Hillsboro**



**Museum News**

**Bobbie Ostler—More Childhood Memories**

## President's Message



Greetings, it is hard to believe that summer is winding down, the days getting cooler, and the monsoons bringing their welcome moisture.

We did not get everything done we had planned for this summer, but we made some progress. Harley Shaw coordinated the building survey and assessment and we await the final report from historical architect, Jean Fulton. Garland Bills and Steve Dobrott cleaned out the museum room destined for the Ranching Display and uncovered some remarkable architectural history in the process. Sandy Ficklin with assistance from Garland and Harley completed the revision of our bylaws... yeah! Joe Ficklin was able to convince the County to recognize our nonprofit status and relieve us of the the property tax bills on the museum and park, saving us considerable funds for the future. Barbara Lovell and Ray Reid cleaned and painted the shop area and built some super screen doors for the museum.

When all is said and done I am very proud of all that was accomplished. if you will indulge me in a baseball analogy, we all look for and celebrate the home run, the grand slam...but it is the base hits that consistently win games. I should also mention that three of the Board Member's terms are expiring this year, mine (Larry), Steve Elam, and Sonja Franklin. Please consider throwing your name in the hat, if interested please contact Barbara. The new bylaws state that board members will be elected by the membership through a mail ballot so everyone will have the opportunity to participate and vote. Until next time...

*Larry Cosper*



*Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos* is the quarterly newsletter of the:

**Hillsboro Historical Society**

P. O. Box 461

Hillsboro, New Mexico, 88042

The mission of Hillsboro Historical Society's is to preserve, collect, and protect the history of Hillsboro, Kingston and the surrounding area. We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

### **Board of Directors**

President: Larry Cosper

Vice President: Barbara Lovell

Treasurer: Joe Ficklin

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Other members: Sonja Rutledge, Garland Bills, Steve Dobrott, Steve Elam, Harley Shaw

Advisors: Karl Laumbach, Chris Adams, Craig Springer, R. D. Brinkley, Patricia Woodruff, Penny McCauley, Mark Thompson, John Tittmann, Lynn Mullins, Don Avery, Margie Gibson

### **Newsletter Editor:**

**Harley Shaw** hgshaw@windstream.net

The title for this newsletter is inspired by the association of Hillsboro and Kingston with Percha Creek. The name Percha may derive from the fact that turkeys "perch" or roost along it. Perhaps there were more historically than there are now. Of course, Hillsboro and Kingston both have their own seasonal vulture (zopilote) roosts, so the term remains appropriate. Paisanos are countrymen or friends, a term that applies to us humans who also "roost" here. In our small towns, we are extremely diverse in roots, religion, and politics, yet we remain countrymen. In keeping with the avian title motif, in the Southwest roadrunners, which also live within the Percha Creek watershed, are called paisanos.

## Black Range Museum News

We received a grant of \$1,200.00 from Steve Morgan and Nichole Truschell for future work on landscaping. Steve and Nichole had earlier provided HHS with a landscaping plan as a pro bono contribution of their business: **Landscapes for Life** (<http://landscapesforlifellc.com>).

Dr. Travis Perry has now set up his blacksmithing demonstration at the museum on three weekends. This has been a popular display, drawing many observers. Sales of items created by Travis have generated \$ 775 for HHS.

The Sadie Orchard-Tom Ying room that opened in the museum in April has received very favorable comments and many small bills in the donation jar.

Our plans to open a Ranching room by Labor Day weekend have encountered an exciting reason for delay. When we removed a 3 by 6 foot piece of plastic from the ceiling, we discovered that underlying the false ceiling was a traditional ceiling of vigas and latillas topped with adobe mud. Jean Fulton, an architectural historian who reviewed the building for us advised us to remove the false ceiling as well as the particle board that are covering two walls and preventing the adobe walls from “breathing” appropriately. Removing those pieces revealed features of the construction we never suspected. For one thing, the north half of the building originally had a pitched roof while the south half, which appears to be an addition, had a flat roof. We are awaiting a return visit from our consultant to figure out how to deal with the situation. The only thing that’s clear is that it will take money to make the room accurately reflect its history.

Correspondence with Dr. Richard Melcher of UNM and Jean Fulton have confirmed what some of us suspected--that the round adobe water tower behind the museum is a one-of-a-kind structure. Tom and Satomi Lander provided a detailed assessment of work needed to stabilize and restore the structure. They recommend that the water tank and its platform be removed while the adobe portion of the tower is being restored. Once that is finished, the platform needs rebuilding and it and the tank repositioned. While we have no plans to use the structure to store water, it will remain a unique amenity of our historic museum property. Robin Tuttle has corresponded with Cornerstones, a not-for-profit organization that restores historic adobe structures. We are awaiting Jean Fulton’s structural assessment before proceeding with restoration. In the meantime, Garland, Barb, Patti Nunn, and Harley have been seeking information on the tower’s history. Insofar as we can determine, it was built about 1930, apparently to provide a stable, gravity-fed, water supply for Tom Ying’s restaurant. We have no knowledge of who the craftsman might have been who built it.

The board is seeking information on a security camera system inside the building. We have many valuable artifacts, and the museum is usually manned by only one person. Sadly, we anticipate that pilfering of items could become a problem. We welcome help from anyone who has experience with these systems.

The board is also investigating the possibility of installing solar panels for electricity. We need to keep our costs for lighting and temperature control as low as possible

As with any volunteer organization the amount we can accomplish is limited by time and energies of our board, availability of other volunteers from the community, and availability of adequate funds to pay for specific tasks. Below is a list of tasks that need addressing. We welcome volunteer help from the membership or the community on any of them. And, of course, donations for specific projects are always welcome.

- Stabilization and restoration of structures, including windows and doors.
- Interior security cameras.
- Install solar panels.
- Removal of unwanted trees.
- Landscaping and backyard cleanup.
- Fundraising and grant writing.
- Database management for museum fundraising and outreach.
- Volunteer coordinator.
- Program and event coordinator.

*We have used a couple of other articles by Edward D. Tittmann in past issues of our newsletter (Diary of the Hunt, Feb., 2012; New Mexico Constitutional Convention, May, 2012). Edward D. Tittmann came to Hillsboro in 1908 to look into the operation of the Opportunity Mine, which was faltering at the time. Whatever his intent, he stayed and became a major figure in Hillsboro, Sierra County, and New Mexico business and politics.*

*After closing the mine, Tittmann ran the Sierra Free Press for three years. He was a prolific writer, publishing several articles in the New Mexico Historical Review. He also left a large collection of unpublished articles yet to be gleaned. Two recent novels have been loosely based upon his arrival in Hillsboro: This is How I'd Love You by Hazel Wood, and Silver Hill by Jal Mora. Hazel Wood, by the way, is Edward Tittmann's greatgranddaughter.*

## HILLSBORO

Edward D. Tittmann

It is not known with exactness when the town of Hillsboro was first established. Its location is a natural and picturesque one, and because there is living water available for irrigation the present town was the site of an ancient Pueblo Indian village. The Indians never built their houses where floods could reach them and the ruins of the Pueblo<sup>1</sup> village at Hillsboro are on the first bench a hundred feet above flood waters. The pueblo village was probably abandoned during the great drouth to which not only tree cuttings but ancient tradition refers. It was probably in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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. There was quite a settlement there in the seventies and Dr. Crews, who was probably the first physician in this neighborhood, lived at first at the placers. He later, after the discovery of the Snake mine by David Stitzel and others, moved to what is now Hillsboro and built one of the first houses in the town. This house still stands.

In the beginning the town's name was spelled "Hillsborough", perhaps due to the fact that it was founded by English and Cornish men. The act creating Sierra County, passed in 1884, uses the spelling mentioned above. Just when the "ugh" was dropped is uncertain, but by 1892 official documents spell the name "Hillsboro".

The discovery of the rich gold mines known as the Snake, Opportunity, Bonanza, Ready Pay, Wicks Gulch, and many others brought an influx of prospectors of the hard rock variety, as distinguished from placer miners, and the town soon grew and became a prosperous center for mining, cattle raising, and later goat raising, Mrs. Armer's famous strain of Angoras having become a world standard. Among prominent early residents was Col. Willard S. Hopewell, who started the Las Animas Land and Cattle Company with scores of the best water-holes and thousands of head of cattle grazing over large portions of the county. The most noted firm of promoters was Hopper and Bigelow, consisting of Parson-like Bob Hopper and Julia Howe Bigelow who had once been secretary to a U. S. Senator from Maine. The largest mercantile firm was Keller, Miller, & Company, who had warehouses full of grain, flour, saddles, salt, hams and bacon, hardware, and a powder-storage house two miles out of town. In the back room of the big store was a small bar without any bar. Beer was served in bottles only, whiskey kegs were the supports against which one leaned and on the wall was a sign which read: "If drinking interferes with business, give up business."



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<sup>1</sup> Later excavations have proven these to be remains of an earlier Mimbres culture rather than Pueblo.





**Undated photo labeled Tittmann Law Office. Building at right, now part of house belonging to Richard and Gloria Spellman.**

The beginning of the century saw Dr. Frank Given from Maine as the county's leading and very able physician. He was said never to have lost a fever case. Among the notable characters which survived into Statehood days was Sheriff Tom Murphy, who kept a saloon that refused to sell to those who had had enough; and who was the only person drowned in the great flood of June 10 1914. His body all blue and bruised and stripped of clothing was found on a shelf 100 feet above the creek bottom several miles down the box canyon.

Mrs. Hall, daughter of Lincoln's law partner and who possessed one of the rare original first editions of Herndon's Life of Lincoln, lived here. Frank Worder, late State Land Commissioner, had his boyhood home in Hillsboro. Ed Doheny, who worked in Kingston nine miles up the creek, was a frequent visitor-- but not to attend the saloons, as he never touched liquor. The late Chief Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court, the ablest lawyer to ever grace that tribunal, practiced in Hillsboro<sup>2</sup> and so did A. B. Fall. Silas Alexander, at one time Secretary to the Territory, lived here and practiced law. The yellow frame house which was his home across from the old Courthouse still stands.

The chief hostelry was the Union Hotel which burned down in 1905, and many great parties were pulled off there. Frank Keller told how one night he was visited by Co. Hopewell and a fine crowd of gentlemen who demanded he dress and show his capacity until he finally dressed in his best tails white tie and waistcoat and accompanied the crowd to the Union where only champagne was served.

The first building in which I had a law office still bore the sign: John P. Victory, attorney at Law. He was Attorney General from 1895 to 1897. In 1909, the legislature made an attempt to move the County Seat from Hillsboro to Cutter on the railroad near Engle. (Chap 61 Laws of 1909). The citizens of Hillsboro with some misgivings sent me to Washington to have that law annulled by Congress, saving the county some \$40,000 which it was to have paid to Socorro County for a stretch of land along the San Andres mountains.

Curiously, had Cutter become the county seat, Hot springs would have had to change the existing law, which prohibited the removal



**Edward D. Tittmann, standing on right, on an outing with a group of boys. The two boys standing beside him are his sons, John and Edward M.**

<sup>2</sup> Tittmann apparently refers to Judge Frank Parker.



**Tittmanns at home. Perhaps about the time this article was written.**

They staged the hold-up in broad daylight and rode off without detection and never caught. But some years later the time lock of the bank's vault became stalled and an expert came from El Paso to fix it. He opened the lock and when he stepped into the vault a vicious rattle scared him back. The snake had come in to get mice. It seems the back of the vault was of adobe. The brigands took an unnecessary chance. They could have moved the adobes with a pick in the nighttime and taken all they wanted with out risking anything, not even a snake, as they are supposed to sleep at night.

of a county seat from a town on a railroad to one off the railroad.

Today Hillsboro is about as it was 36 years ago when I first came here. Some of the beautiful trees have died, but others have been planted. The men who were old then have passed on and there is a new crop of both old and young ones.

I have not mentioned Sadie Orchard. She was not a lady of notoriety as was the famous queen of Spain<sup>3</sup>, at the time I came to the territory. But legends have grown up around her, many of which are of her own invention. She knew a lot of history that wasn't so.

Perhaps I should mention the one and only holdup ever pulled in Hillsboro, when the Sierra County bank was raided by some masked men who seemed to know their way around.

<sup>3</sup> Tittmann may be refering to Isabella II who reigned from 1833 to 1868. She was reputed to maintain a scandalous private life.

### **Museum Events**

**We are open Friday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. The Sadie Orchard-Tom Ying display opened April 15.**

**HHS meets on the second Tuesday of each month. 6 pm at the Community Center (or sometimes in the park). Everyone interested in our local heritage is invited. We are always looking for new members and volunteers. Members/Volunteers are the backbone of our society and we welcome your ideas.**

*Every so often, Hillsboro native, Bobbie Ostler sends us a short essay describing Hillsboro when she was a child. Such reminiscences are the hardest kind of history to dig out. For most of us, 1969 doesn't seem that long ago, but the shocking truth is that in a couple years, it will be a half century past. In modern parlance, these are the true "reality shows."*

## LACE CURTAINS

Bobbie Hale Ostler



Another frustrating dream of looking through lace curtains that were on the front door of the old Victorian home on Elenora Street. I'm at the front door trying to look in and I can't see in. The dream shifts to me being on the other side and I am trying to look out, but the sun is shining too bright. I think back as far as my earliest memory can stretch. I don't know what year it was, but with all the moon landing excitement and watching President Richard Nixon, and from reading blips of

history, I would say the summer of 1969 and I would be 2 ½. There are some memories scattered around my mind during a blur of years from 1969 to 1972, when the flood changed everything.

There are memories captured in soap bubble reflections taking me back to when soap bubbles were made with dish soap and blown with thread spools. June bugs with tied strings became remote control airplanes. A lifetime ago, when Puff the magic dragon ate my mustard weed salad and my cracked earth brownies. I needed white go-go boots from television shows such as "Laugh-In" and "Sonny and Cher". My sister Kathleen had a purple fringe jacket, and I had to have one for my college years. I plotted and planned a trip to Old El Paso, a town teeming with cowboys and horses just as it was in the Marty Robin's song. Mom sang Wild Thing to me. Our neighbor's name was Wild Thing. Any bump could be cured with a bottled Grape Crush soda. Dog bones were free from the butcher at the stores in Truth or Consequences. Green Stamps were collected from each trip at the grocery stores. Cigarettes were not taboo and I drank coffee since I was nine months old. These were the years before school, which seemed to box me up, set limits to my dreams and interfere with my imaginary worlds.

I remember using my weight to roll my crib across the wooden floors to a dresser, so that I could climb onto the dresser and out to freedom in a world separate from adults. This world in our yard was full of pets, both real and imaginary. I spent most of my waking hours outside. I spent time in my imaginary cave with Puff the Magic dragon. I played with pretend friends under the Spanish broom, entertaining the neighbors. I splashed about in the little stock tank, playing with a boat that Dad bought me.

There was the first aid kit incident in which Mom was looking for missing supplies. Our dog Brownie ran past Mom with both front legs taped top to bottom. I found out that red ants sting when you dig up the den with a butter knife. When forced indoors, I enjoyed drinking Tang, the instant drink made famous by the astronauts. Captain Crunch cereal and Malt-O-Meal were my favorite breakfast, anything I could consume quick to not miss anything outside.

I adored my older brother Reid and sister Kathleen and followed them everywhere I could. They introduced me to bottled sodas from the Schoenradt's Gas Station. Reid was already in college and Kathleen was in high school. I remember her school books stacked on a table near the front door. I would look at each one very carefully keeping them in order. One day, my Nanna Reid appeared from the shadows it seemed. She said to me, "One day you will read books like that and you will learn a lot." I believed her, although I didn't know how to read, I believed I could read and walk on the moon as easy as Neil Armstrong.

The only holiday I can vaguely recall at the old house was Christmas, and honestly, I think the Kodak photos planted the memories of my first bow and arrow set. Mom would tie a plastic red tape, used for mining claim markers, around my head and out I went shooting plastic arrows with suction cups at any wild animals that might be near my cave. I do remember our Christmas tree was in the beautiful bay window.



**LABOR DAY – SATURDAY SEPT 2, 2017**  
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PACKWASHER, RGM REALTY, SHERIFF MURPHY HOUSE BED AND BREAKFAST, SUE'S  
ANTIQUES, THIS OLD HOUSE

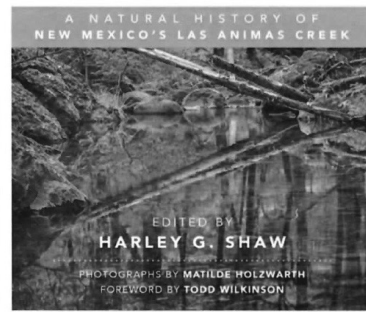
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RECEIVE AFTER NOVEMBER 15 WILL BE CONSIDERED 2018 MEMBERSHIPS VALID  
FROM JANUARY 1, 2018 TO DECEMBER 31, 2019.**

The Hillsboro Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization that preserves and shares the history and artifacts of the Hillsboro, Kingston and Lake Valley. Members may participate in many 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 Form, along with your check made payable to Hillsboro Historical Society, P. O. Box 461, Hillsboro NM 88042.

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