



Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos

Vol. 12 No. 3 Hillsboro Historical Society August 2019



**CROSSING THE BLACK RANGE
THROUGH THE CENTURIES**

BASEBALL IN HILLSBORO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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

Hillsboro Historical Society

P. O. Box 461, Hillsboro, New Mexico, 88042

hillsboronmhistory.info

The mission of Hillsboro Historical Society 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.

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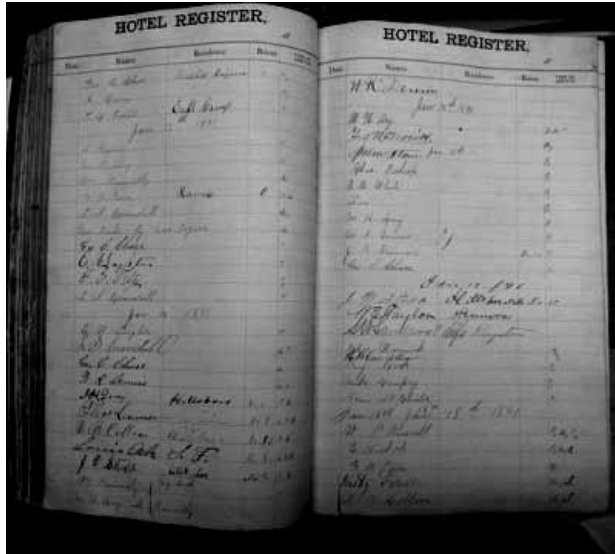
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Anyone who might want to serve on one of the committees, please contact any of our board members.

Hillsboro Historical Society News



Ledger from Hermosa Hotel. An exciting addition to the HHS collections came unexpectedly from the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson. An email from Patricia Norman of that Society said that among artifacts in their collection was an old hotel ledger from Hermosa covering 1888-1898. This did not represent their area of interest, and wondered HHS would like to have it. The answer was a resounding yes, and we arranged for like New York. Lisa Haynes, a new land owner in Hillsboro to pick it up and deliver it. We've barely had time to browse rapidly through it, but it contains records that might keep a researcher busy for years.

One Man's Trash. . . Recently, while installing the new windows at the Black Range Museum, workers discovered a plethora of old papers that had been stufed in the walls years ago, undoubtedly for insulation. Members of the historical society were excited to know what types of documents were included in the "collection", so I spent a few hours sorthing through the crumbling and dirty papers. It was clear from the start that the papers were all from the fall of 1883, so we know that the original windows were installed sometime in late 1883 or early 1884 because the documents were not something that would have been saved more than a short time. Many of the items were simply old newspapers that were twisted and stuffed into the space. There was only one local paper; most of them were from eastern cities like New York. Many of them were too dirty and decayed to be readable. There were sevrsl old envelopes for registered mail, but they were empty. There were envelopes that did contain documents. Severa interesting items for me wre the personal notes that were both loose and in envelopes. There was a large poster that was in very good condition that advertised several publications.

There were a couple small full-color magazines, one of which was in good enough condition to save. There wee also several post cards, but most of them were nearly illegible. Most of the items that were removed from the walls, because they had been there for more than 130 years, were beyond saving. The thing that stries me about this "collection" is that to us history buffs in the 21st Century, the items were exciting, mysterious, and "collectable," but to the folks ho stuffed them into the walls so many years ago, they were just trash. Leah F. Tookey, HHS Board Member and Curator of History, New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum.

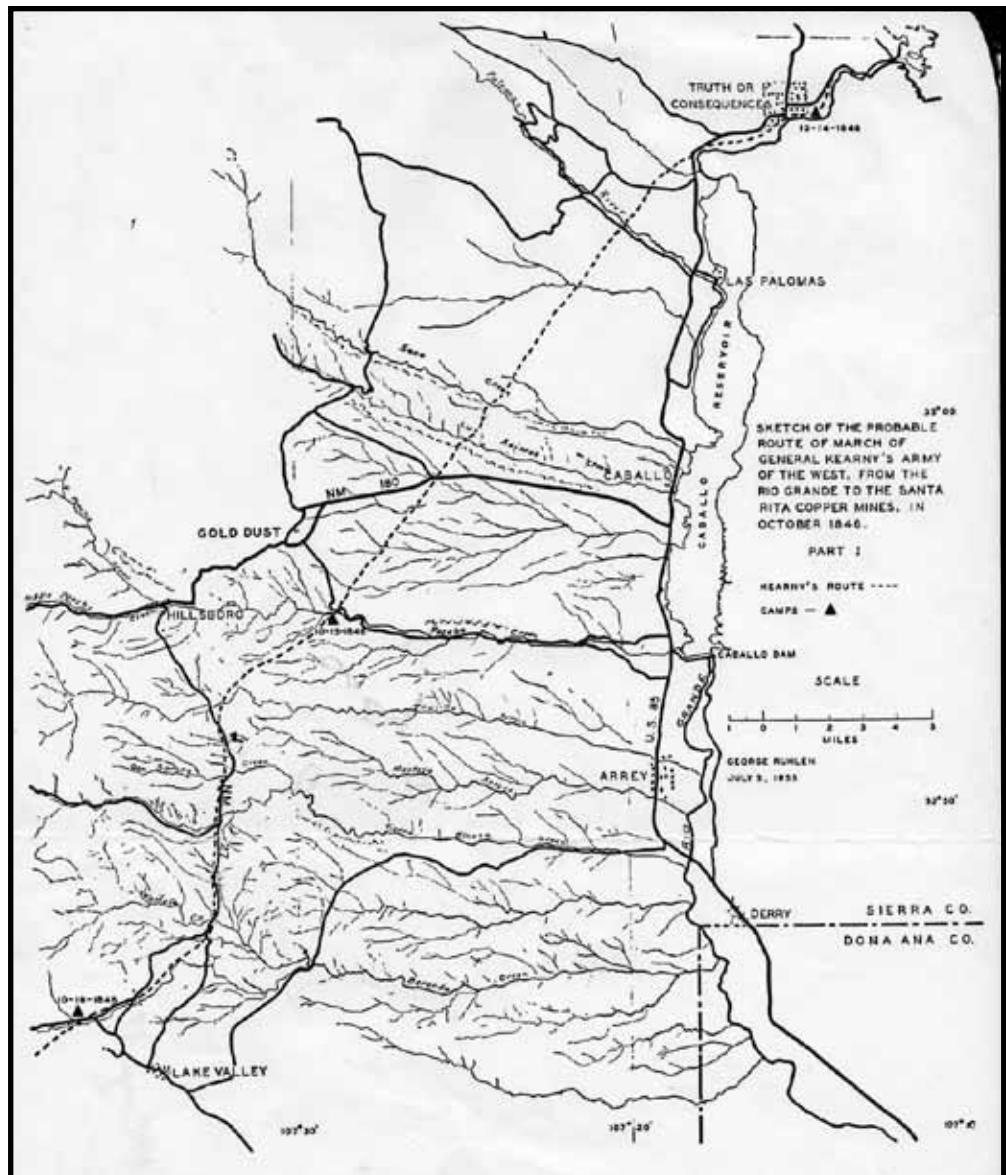
Crossing the Southern Black Range through the Centuries

Harley Shaw

Leaving the Rio Grande and crossing the south end of the Black Range isn't easy, even today. In a modern sedan, you have only one shot—State Highway 152 over so-called Emory Pass. As noted in an earlier article in this newsletter, even Emory didn't go that way, nor did hardly anyone else until 1935, when motorized earth moving equipment pushed a two-lane dirt road over, connecting Hot Springs with Silver City via Hillsboro and Kingston. Before that, most wheeled vehicles—wagons, stagecoaches, and early autos—went around the south end of Cooke's Peak, as did the railroad. And today, in spite of the well-maintained paved road through the pass, most folks choose to go around the south end of the mountain when weather is bad. In a modern car on pavement, this might add a half hour to the trip from Hot Springs (T or C) to Silver City, so nobody complains.

Prior to World War One, horseback or foot travelers had limited options, unless they lived and worked on the mountain and knew unmarked trails. No doubt, the Apaches knew faint trails that crossed in many places, but the Apaches were, in themselves, a factor that made travelers choosy about routes. Thick brush and deep canyons were great ambush sites. Known and usable thoroughfares were no more abundant than they are today, and passing from the Rio Grande to the Mimbres was probably a multi-day endeavor, regardless of

the route you chose. The big factor, one we forget nowadays, was water. Horses and humans needed to drink, and you couldn't carry enough along to quench a pack string or a company of troops, much less both. Once you left the Rio Grande, your route was constrained by the location of ephemeral streams or springs, preferably big ones, which were scarce in the Southwest. Today, I-25 zaps south criss-crossing the Rio Grande, State Highway 26 connects Hatch and Deming at 65 mph, so looping

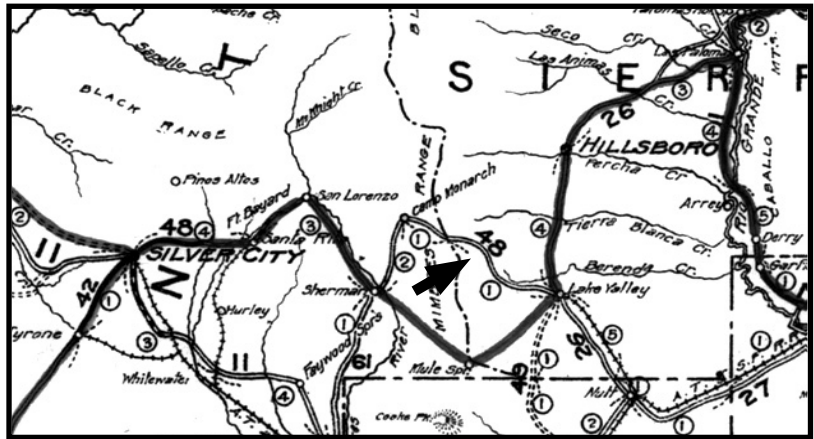


Probable route of eastern section of Gila Cutoff (Ruhlen, G. 1957 Kearny's route from the Rio Grande to the Gila River. N. M. Hist. Review 32 (3):213-230).

south around the mountain is no big deal. I-10 makes a fairly straight shot across seemingly flat desert from El Paso to Deming to Tucson, but trying such a route by horse or foot, even in the winter, courted death for livestock and men. And what now feels flat in a 300 horsepower vehicle was laborious and tedious afoot or horseback, crossing hundreds of sandy desert washes and ridges.

Historians studying the pre-1900 trails describe two early routes from the Rio Grande through New Mexico Territory (which then included Arizona) to California: the South Trail; and The Gila Cutoff. Anyone headed south from Santa Fe or Albuquerque had two approaches to the South Trail: they could leave the Rio Grande at Paraje, some 50 miles south of Socorro and make the risky crossing of the Jornada del Muerto to Rincon, then turn west; or they could continue down the river, struggling with canyons, crossings, and quick sand, to a point near current day Hatch, then swing SW to Cooke's Spring to join the old trail from El Paso. The river route was impassable for wagons, making the Jornada the only practicable wagon road. But it involved a loop to the east that added at least two days before travelers by wagon could turn west.

Horseback or Shank's mare travelers could take the rougher and obscure Gila Cutoff. Those coming from the north could leave the Rio Grande near the present-day site of Truth or Consequences and pass southwest across the lower reaches of Palomas, Seco, Animas, and Percha Creeks. They would hit Berrenda Creek in the vicinity of the point Highway 27 now crosses it and turn up that creek for several miles, leaving it before entering the steeper slopes of the mountain, crossing Macho Creek and passing up Pollock Creek to cross the low pass near the head of a tributary of Gavilan. From that point, they passed by the Copper Mines and headed down the Gila River. This route was probably used by the early Mimbrenos, by Spanish troops riding from Janos in search of Apaches, and by Fremont, Kearny and Emory, and Goulding, as well as Stitzel and Dugan when they wandered over the mountain in 1879 to discover the Bountiful and Rattlesnake mines, essentially creating Hillsboro. Of these, Goulding* noted that the trail had the appearance of an being ancient and well-worn. For early Anglos headed to California, it by-passed Tucson and went

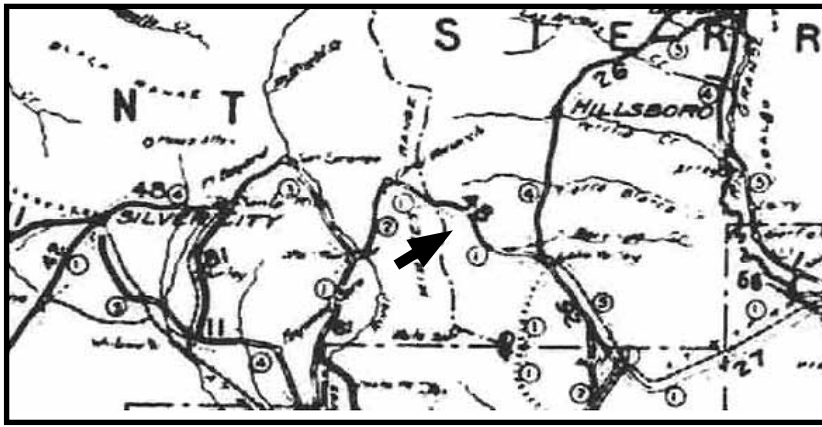


Section of 1918 State Highway Engineer showing the old state road 48 (arrow) connecting Lake Valley with the Mimbres Valley via Berrenda Creek and what is now the Royal John Mine Road.

straight to the villages of the friendly Pima Indians. From there, it joined the South Trail, following the lower Gila River to the Colorado. The leg of the Gila Cutoff that crossed the Black Range also gave horsemen coming from the north a shorter option to reach the South Trail; they needed only to turn southwest when they hit the Mimbres and catch the trail, probably near present day Lordsburg. The Gila Cutoff, throughout most of its length, was too rough for wheeled vehicles.

As early as 1918, official highway maps were showing another route across the crest of the Black Range. This one followed the main tributary of Berrenda Creek to the summit, then descended past the Monarch Mine, later to be known as the Royal John Mine. The history of this road is unclear and worthy of additional research. On the 1900 State Highway Engineer's map, it appears in red, seemingly overlaying the actual printed map and possibly having been drawn in at some later time. On our digitized copy of the State Engineer's map for 1912, the road is missing. On the 1918, and 1920 maps, the road is definitely present. It is an ungraded earth highway. A line drawn in on this map loops south and apparently represents one of the proposed routes for the Dam to Dam highway. On the 1923, it shows as an improved road, although the various classes are difficult to distinguish. It also shows on a 1925 tourist map. By 1927, it has disappeared from the State Engineer's map and the beginnings of pushing a highway through Emory Pass to Kingston and Hillsboro show instead. The road is also missing on the 1930 map, and the progress of the push toward Emory Pass again shown. In all the literature we've read, we find no definite story of anyone crossing it, although one source suggests that the Monarch Mine (now Royal John) received its mail via the Lake Valley postof-

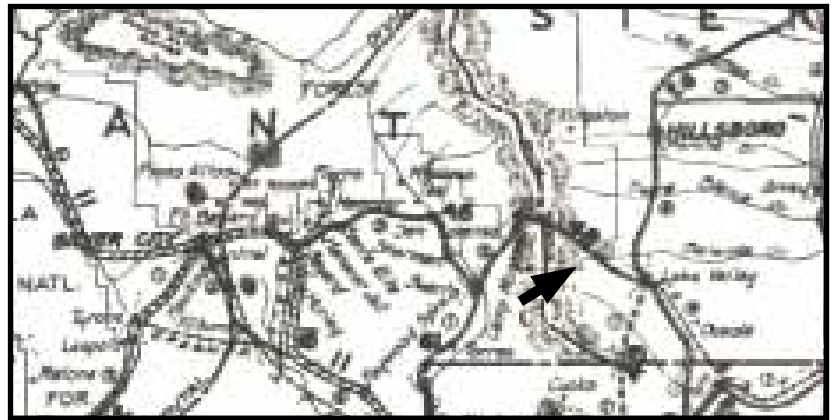
* Goulding, W. R. 2009. *California Odyssey: and overland journey on the Southern Trails, 1849*. Univ. Okla. Press, Norman.



1920

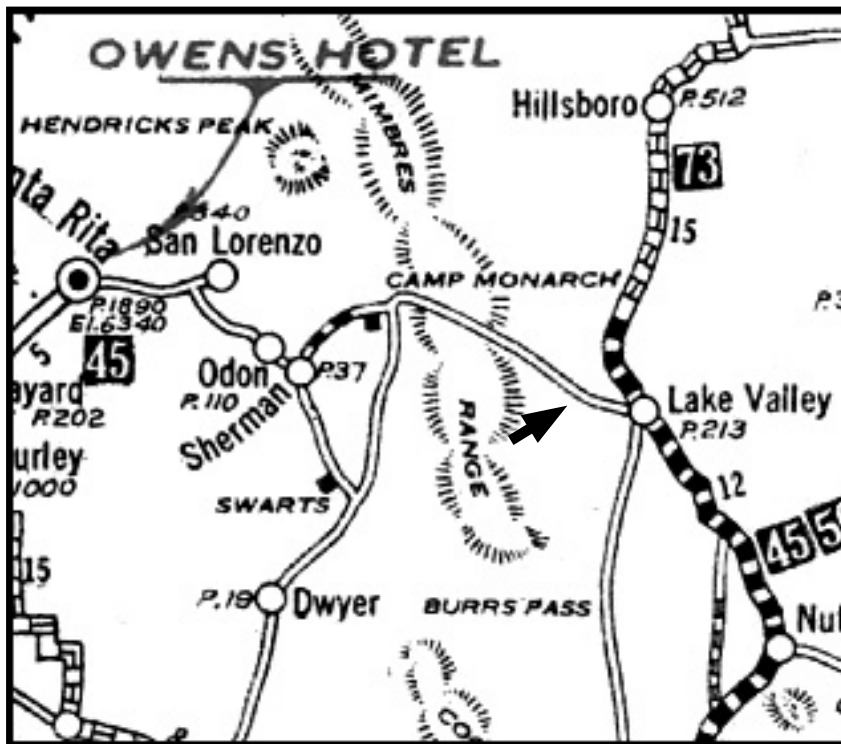
1920. Hillsboro resident Lonnie Rubio says his father remembered the road and that the two of them tried to drive it with an ATV in 1973. By then it was so washed out and grown over that they couldn't follow it up Berrenda Creek and across the summit. Lonnie's father also told him that when he hauled a wagon load of produce from Caballo to the Mimbres Valley, he headed southwest and picked up a wagon road that went south of the Black Range. This was probably the Butterfield Trail that passed by Cooke's Spring.

Shortly after World War I, two developments apparently led boosters to



1923

dream of a third route across the south Black Range. First, Elephant Butte and Roosevelt Dams had been completed. Such engineering feats are taken for granted in our times, but they were marvels of accomplishment in 1920. Second, by 1920, the automobile was becoming reliable enough for more adventurous souls to indulge a new hobby—touring. The Indians had been subdued for 30 years and the auto rendered travel available to individuals, independent of railroads or without the need of horses. With a can of extra gas and a couple jugs of water auto routes increased the daily range of trav-



1925

elers and allowed direct routes between towns, independent of springs. Boosters in places like Hot Springs and Silver City saw an opportunity to attract new dollars.

I don't know who proposed the idea or came up with the phrase, but for a short time around 1921, the concept of a Dam to Dam Highway—a tourist route between Elephant Butte Dam in New Mexico and Roosevelt Dam in Arizona caught on.

The idea advanced to the point that a large highway dedication ceremony happened somewhere on Berrenda Creek on July 4, 1921, we're not sure where, but a panoramic photo of the gathering exists. The planned route, insofar as we've determined, ran southwest out of Hot Springs, probably more or less following the old Gila Cutoff route across Palomas, Seco, and Animas Creeks. It diverted westward to Hillsboro, which was



1927

then in its heyday as the Sierra County Seat; and businessmen in Hillsboro were almost certainly among the main proponents of the route. An over-nighter in Hillsboro and stocking up on gas, water, and food was potentially in the travelers' plans. The highway then headed south, more or less along the route of current Highway 27. At this point the route, and its purpose, become uncertain, even confusing. For some time, in researching the highway, I had assumed it probably followed the old Gila Cutoff across the Black Range. However, the roughness of this route made it no more suitable for automobiles, perhaps even less so, than it had been for wagons. It was a horse trail. The road went elsewhere. An early State Highway Engineer's report noted that the route might go by way of Mule Springs. Mule Springs lies near the first low saddle north of Cooke's Peak, near the old mining townsite of Cooke. This is shown on the 1925 map as Burr's Pass, but no road is apparent. Why this route was promoted, rather than the better-known Butterfield trail through

Cooke's Spring is unknown. Another option was certainly the rough road up Berrenda Creek down the west side through Camp Monarch, ergo over what is now the Royal John Mine road. Perhaps both the Berrenda and Mule Springs routes were considered.

Both routes spurned Deming, which would have seemed a natural place for a stopover. They did cut some miles off of the road distance between Elephant Butte and Silver City, and certainly passed fine scenery and at least one point of interest in the form of the town of Cooke, but both had to be rougher than the road around the south end of the range might have been. A lot of room for research remains.

Stories vary regarding why the idea died. One says that a serious thunderstorm eradicated the road through the pass at Mule Springs or the Berrenda Road, or both, shortly after the dedication, so it was never used. Another thought is that the average driver decided that the route around the south end of the mountain, perhaps with a stop in Deming made more sense, so the route just faded from misuse. Whatever the case, the idea of the Dam to Dam Highway apparently didn't take. If races or other such booster



1930

events were planned, we've found no record so far of their happening. Seemingly, the idea was just a splash that didn't catch the tourist's fancy. The concept faded. By 1927, road builders were headed for Emory Pass. If the Dam to Dam moniker was ever applied to this newer route, we've yet to find it in print.

But the Dam to Dam highway became real, if unnamed. With a minor, and much more sensational, exception, the route as planned exists today, though nobody that I know specifically plans a Dam to Dam drive. The big change in the original route is present Highway 152 through Hillsboro and Kingston and across the Black Range to the Copper Mines and Silver City. Pushing a road over Emory Pass was probably hard to imagine before 1921, but became feasible by 1934. Considering that only 13 years had passed, perhaps the ghost of Dam to Dam nudged the construction of this route—infinately more scenic than the rough road by way of Mule Spring.

Whatever the case, once travelers heading into Silver City pass the junction of Highways 152 and

61, they are on the proposed Dam to Dam route. In concept, it crossed the Gila River and headed north to Mule Creek Pass, thence past Clifton, to Safford, across the San Carlos Reservation, turning northerly at Globe and down the long hill to the Salt River and Roosevelt Dam.

Roosevelt Dam has been heightened since its original construction, and a striking new bridge crosses the lake just above the dam, replacing the old narrow passageway that crossed atop the dam itself. Patty and I drive parts of the Dam to Dam highway on most of our trips to see family, either in Chino Valley to the north or to the town of Oracle. We prefer its scenery and lack of traffic to the flat terrain crossed by I-10 and the heavy traffic of Tucson and Phoenix.

I spent a chunk of my career working near Roosevelt Dam and frequently drove back and forth along the old highway crossing Roosevelt Dam. For various reasons, I've driven segments of that old "Dam to Dam" highway much of my life, oblivious to name or the dreams of those early boosters.



A high-quality print of this photograph, some 4 feet in length, is in the archives of the Black Range Museum. It is labeled "Picnic, Celebrating opening of Black Range Dam to Dam Scenic Highway, Barendra [sic] Canyon, N.M>, July 4th, 1921." It was created by the Almeron Newman photograph company in Deming, N. M. A very rough "quick and dirty" count came up with 205 people in the photo. Interestingly, Deming newspapers articles of the time strongly opposed the road, because as conceived, it would bypass Deming.

Hillsboro Historical Society board meetings are on the second Sunday of each month at 2PM at the Hillsboro Community Center Conference Room. HHS members are encouraged to attend.

Baseball and Civil Law in early Hillsboro—Judge, Jury, and Umpire

Lynn Tittmann Mullins



Postcard labeled Sierra Browns about 1909

Growing up in Hillsboro, New Mexico, my father, John Tittmann, began his lifelong love of baseball. That didn't happen as it does for most boys (and girls) today--joining a Little League team with uniforms, a coach, practices, and frequently mowed grassy fields. To begin with there was no grass in Hillsboro, so those interested in playing baseball had to find some level rangeland, clear away the rocks and other debris, chase off the cows, and set up their "field." Truly sandlot baseball—with the sand blowing by! But Hillsboro had an adult team as early as 1909—the Browns, later the Grays—so Dad was exposed to the game as a child. Perhaps his interest in playing began as he watched "his" hometown team.

In 1921, when my Dad entered the 9th grade, his parents sent him to join his brother at Storm King School in upstate New York. The school was in the hills above the west bank of the Hudson River, just north of West Point. This new environment must have been quite a shock to a boy from the arid Southwest. Dad had never seen such trees; in the fall, the colors were many and beautiful. And the baseball field had **grass!** His brother later confessed how embarrassed he was when he found Dad with his

shoes and socks off, walking barefoot on the grass. But for a boy who had never seen a grassy athletic field, what a wonderful new experience.

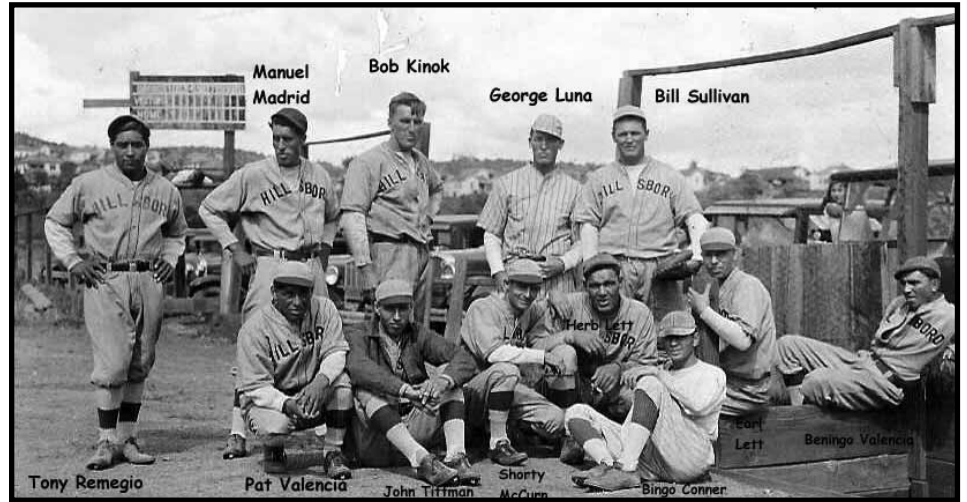
While at boarding school, Dad discovered his athletic abilities. He participated in every sport he could: football, where his front teeth were loosened, much to the concern of his parents; ice hockey, for which he had to learn to ice skate; tennis; and, of course, baseball. Dad did not neglect his studies and in 1925 graduated with honors. On his final report card the headmaster wrote the following testament:

"Graduated at the head of his class, head boy of the upper school; winner of the Storm King cup: voted by boys and masters as the boy who has represented most nearly the ideals of the school; tennis champion; and winner of the cup to the boy who has contributed most to the success of the baseball team. (the best team we've had in ten years). One of the finest boys that the school has graduated in years."

Not bad for a boy from Hillsboro!

A poem, "Ave," in Dad's commencement book recognizes his athletic talents and also shows how much he was liked by his classmate.

Hail, Johnno Tittmann,
 Tennis and mittman,
 Likewise punditman
 Wit man
 Fit man
 You never quit, man
 You had the grit, man
 You made the hit, man
 You are the it, man
 You, every bit man,
 Old Johnno Tittmann.



Hillsboro baseball team about 1931.

In college, Dad became the star player on the varsity baseball team. He returned to Hillsboro each summer, and I imagine him organizing baseball games with his friends and sharing the skills he had honed. The town's residents might have supposed that Dad was on his way to a career in baseball, and I believe he would have loved that. But a few months after he graduated from college, in 1929, the economy crashed. He had earned an academic scholarship to Harvard Law School; and his father, Edward, was a second-generation lawyer; given the times, that path seemed the best one to pursue.

There were no sports at law school, so Dad spent his summers in Hillsboro, playing baseball with the local team. Many of the young men on the team were childhood friends. They had grown up playing baseball together; what could be better than to continue doing something that was so much fun?

At the time, Hillsboro's baseball field was on the mesa to the south of the town, in area that was as level

and free of rocks as the players could manage. Remains of the old backstop still stand up there, and you can find large piles of rocks around the periphery of the field, undoubtedly carried there by the players trying to develop a smooth playing surface. I suspect that even at its best, the surface of that field caused many a wayward hop of grounders. There were no stands, so many spectators parked their cars around the field and sat in them to watch the games.

Though baseball was one of Dad's great passions, he had discovered that the law was intellectually challenging. Perhaps his class with Felix Frankfurter, the future Supreme Court justice who became his mentor in law school, made him realize he had the mind to become a competent attorney. Baseball and the law became his two great passions. At least once in Hillsboro the two came together. After completing law school, Dad returned home and rejoined the town baseball team, serving as catcher and manager. One day my grandfather asked Dad to represent him and file a suit on his behalf to collect a debt. This would give his son a bit of courtroom experience; and probably my grandfather also wanted him to think about finding a job.



Hillsboro baseball team, date unknown. John Tittmann is in back row, wearing manager's jacket.

The court case was a minor one—a dispute about a debt of \$50. The defendant, a Hispanic attorney from El Paso, requested a jury trial, feeling sure that any jury in Hillsboro would be mostly Hispanics. The plaintiff was my grandfather, an Anglo. Then as now, people played on ethnic differences and the El Paso attorney was sure that the jury of his peers could be convinced to take his

side in the dispute. Nonetheless, Dad was as ready as he could be on the day of the trial.

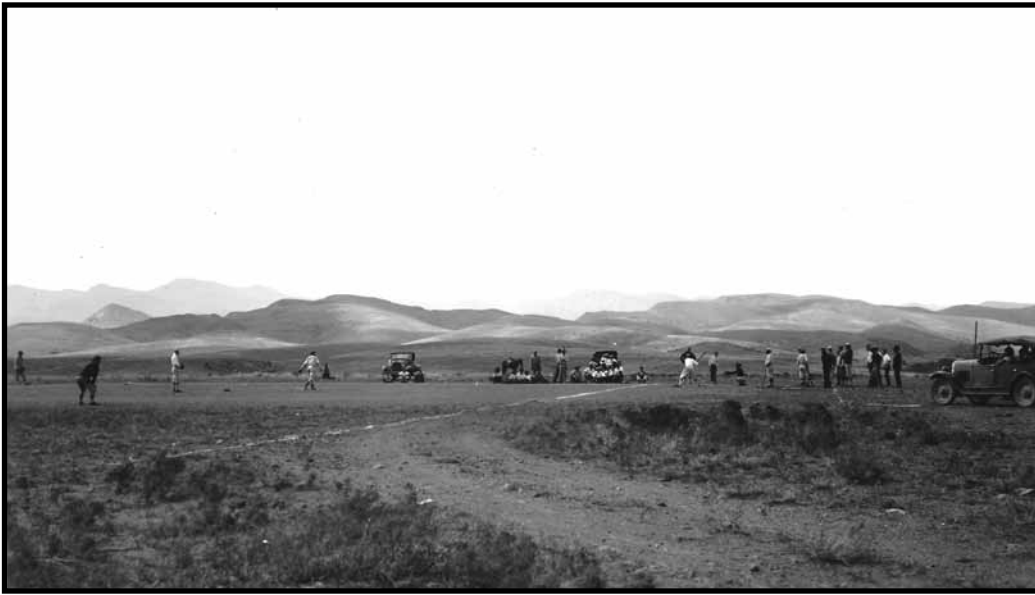
Before court was called to order, the judge asked his bailiff to obtain a jury. At that time, in the very small town of Hillsboro, juries, when needed, were picked up off the street. The bailiff left the courtroom and returned shortly with the designated number of men. Dad presented the best case he could. After the opposing attorney presented his own case, Dad had doubted his chances of success, but when he saw the jury that the judge accepted, he felt more optimistic.

The jury was excused to deliberate. To everyone's surprise, particularly the El Paso Attorney, the jury returned shortly with a unanimous verdict for Dad's client, his own father.

Much later in his law career, Dad revealed what had happened. The judge did not know that his bailiff was the first baseman on the Hillsboro baseball team.

When the bailiff went in search of a jury, he quickly returned with several of the team members. Since they had an important game that afternoon, the bailiff might have felt that this was the best way to finish the proceedings on time. Whatever the bailiff's reasoning, the effect was a quick verdict that neutralized the defendant's advantage due to his ethnicity.

I heard my father use this story frequently in lectures to young lawyers to point out the importance of knowing their jury. He was not advocating packing a jury the way the bailiff had, but trying to help them see that finding the right jury is an important part of preparing a case. In the last 75 years jury selection has become an important skill, and many people make a career of helping lawyers screen potential jurors. If only they could have a baseball team in their corner, the way a young Hillsboro lawyer did in 1932.



Baseball on the mesa south of town. Remains of this old ball diamond are still visible.

Kingston Antiques & Art

Located on Highway 152 at the entrance to Kingston, will host our 1st Anniversary celebration on August 24 from 10 am to 4 pm. The store highlights the works of four local artists, and carries a variety of rare and unusual antiques and unique books on New Mexico History. Throughout the day you will meet local authors who will be signing their books on New Mexico madams and hauntings, enjoy cold refreshments, and discover some special discounts and offers in the store. Come celebrate with us. Mark the date to visit us and enjoy. For more information call 575 895-5501

HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Application

The Hillsboro Historical Society is an all-volunteer 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, collect, and protect the history of the Hillsboro, Kingston, and Lake Valley region. Memberships are on a calendar year basis (January 1 to December 31). Dues are \$25 annually for individual or family. All contributions are tax-deductible.



Name: _____

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(a) Individual or family membership \$25 \$ _____

How would you like to receive our newsletter? ___ email ___ regular mail
(We prefer to send by email.)

(b) Gift membership(s) at \$25 each \$ _____

Please provide name, address, and email address for each person:

(c) Additional donation

For general operations \$ _____

For the Black Range Museum \$ _____

For the Hillsboro courthouse and jail site \$ _____

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION ... \$ _____

Please mail this completed Membership Form along with a check for your Total Contribution made payable to Hillsboro Historical Society to the following address:

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