

Hermosa



Panoramic view of Hermosa. Photo Charles Doran, November 2021.

“A few miles travel [from the Las Animas River] brings one to a flourishing mining camp on the Rio Palomas. The name of the town signifies ‘beautiful,’ and as applied to its scenic location is emphatically correct. Romantically situated in a small park, surrounded by lofty mountains of bold and majestic outlines, with its umbrageous trees, stately pines and flowing streams, Hermosa is to the visitor a vivid picture of ideal mountain scenery.”

From George E. Robin’s World’s Fair Pamphlet on Sierra County Mines, 1893,
reprinted in the *Sierra County Advocate*, June 23, 1893.

ED J. DORAN: A Hermosa Story

By Charles Doran

The lure of gold and silver led thousands of potential prospectors to the Western states and territories in the late 1800s. One area in particular was the Black Range mountains, in southwestern New Mexico. The *New York Times*, in a 1910 article, stated that “The silver mines at Lake Valley, Kingston, Hermosa, Chloride, and other places in the Black Range have produced millions of the precious metals ... The ore in some of these silver mines was so rich that they had to saw it out, picks and drills making no headway in the solid metal.”¹

Perhaps it was this “lure” that led Ed Doran to Hermosa.

Edward (sometimes spelled “Edmond”) John Doran – my great-grandfather – was born in 1852 in Detroit, Michigan to an Irish-immigrant father and Irish-American mother. He was the third of eight children. His father, Michael, was listed as a “carpenter,” “laborer” and “farmer” on various censuses. The 1880 census registers Ed as a “laborer.”²

¹ “The Lost Mines of Sierra.” *New York Times*, 4 September 1910, p. 42.

² United States Federal Census. (1880). *Michigan: Wayne: Taylor*: 266.

It is not known exactly how Ed came to Hermosa. The area of land which became known as Hermosa had been discovered in early 1881 by two prospectors from Arizona, Edward Johnson and John Roach. After camping in a location near the Palomas falls, the men took a sample of the ore they found and headed to Chloride where they hoped to induce others back to this area. The group of men that came back to Hermosa became known as “the Long Nine,” due to the fact that they resembled “a veritable crew of Norse Vikings ... unusually tall and fair in complexion.”³ Ed Doran was not among these nine.

As this remote area of land was considered Apache country, the risk of settling was not without peril. As James McKenna noted in his colorful *Black Range Tales* book:

The Mountains of the Southwest were filled ... with all kinds of danger from Indians, wild beasts, horse thieves, and outlaws The pioneer prospector in the Southwest not only had to put up with a bleak and desolate country ... he had to be on the watch for the savage Apache...and he was never safe from thieves or renegades Many were the hardships of these early prospectors in the Southwest!⁴

The “Long Nine” and other prospectors continued to work this land despite its distance from more settled townships and the possibility of confrontations with the Apache. The campsite was slowly becoming a town. In 1883 J.C. Plemmons and James Dalglish built the first mercantile store. The March 2, 1883 edition of the *Black Range* newspaper noted for the first time that “timber has been cut ... and this week the building of cabins will be begun for the accommodation of the miners.”⁵

A few weeks later Ed Doran is first referenced in connection with Hermosa. The March 23 edition of the *Black Range* lists Ed at a meeting held “... in the Palomas cabin for the purpose of forming a town company and the locating of a town site ... the name adopted for the town was Hermosa.”⁶



Hermosa in 1883. Photo *History of Sierra County*, Sierra County Historical Society, 1979.

A different source noted that the meeting convened was to create a “company town” complete with a president, secretary, and treasurer. The *Sierra Advocate’s* multi-part “History of Hermosa” series of articles (written by Richard Mansfield White, one of the original “Long Nine” members) lists “EJ Doran” as an appointed member of a committee formed for the purpose of obtaining “quit-claim” deeds of any mining claims that may be in dispute with the Hermosa townsite. [For more about White and his “History of Hermosa,” see the article on page 10. -Ed.] It then goes on to state that at the meeting:

... the demons of cupidity and rapacity entered the minds of [J.T.] Thorne and Doran. These two ... started to jump the townsite going around with their Winchesters in their hands, running “blazers” on the community and trying to intimidate the newcomers from Grafton and the northern towns of the county. They did not succeed; for ... the “long nine” quietly told them to put up their guns, stop their stale bluffs, and behave themselves. Thorne and Doran, after some vain bluster, posing as “bad men,” concluded this was the only alternative conducive to their welfare; so the advice of the “long nine” was heeded by them.⁷

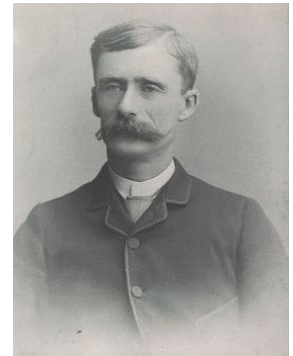
³ Richard Mansfield White, “History of Hermosa,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 24 May 1907, p. 1.

⁴ James A. McKenna, *Black Range Tales* (Glorieta: Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1936), 11.

⁵ “Hermosa: Big Bonanza on the Palomas,” *The Black Range*, 2 March 1883, p. 3.

⁶ “Hermosa,” *The Black Range*, 23 March 1883, p. 3.

⁷ White, “History of Hermosa,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 28 June 1907.



Edward John Doran,
1852-1909.

Despite this anti-social start, Ed Doran established himself as one of the chief members of the Hermosa community. He is listed in 1884 as co-owner of the Palomas Chief mine, described as, “the dandy mine of the district at the present time.”⁸

In general, silver mining was going quite well for this barely-formed town, with the *Black Range* noting that “an assay of native silver with some rock attached, from the Palomas Chief, gave 23,624 ounces.”⁹ This was a promising start for Hermosa, as the United States had adopted the Bland–Allison Act of 1878, requiring “the US Treasury to purchase between \$2 million to \$4 million silver each month from western mines.”¹⁰ While this act did not fully satisfy radical “free silver” backers who wanted nothing less than the “free and unlimited coinage of silver,” its actions did provide assistance to mining operations like the ones at Hermosa.

As a community, Hermosa was slowly growing into a “young city of promise.”¹¹ In addition to Plemmons’ mercantile store, it now boasted of a hotel, saloons, blacksmith shop, meat market, livery stables, post office, schoolhouse, a church, a twice-weekly stage – even a literary society.¹²



The Post Office cabin, one of the few original structures remaining today. Photo Charles Doran.



Hermosa Hotel, c. 1883. Photo Black Range Museum.

At some point Ed’s brother William made the journey to Hermosa from Michigan. An 1887 *Black Range* article noted that the “Doran Bros. are still working the ‘L’ and taking out good ore.” The paper also mentions that Hermosa’s miners “are full of courage and happy at the outlook of their camp.”¹³



Lena Worcester Duran, 1866-1912, in 1886.

The Doran fortunes rose again as thirty-six-year-old Ed married twenty-two-year-old Lena Worcester, a former schoolteacher from Illinois, born of German-immigrant parents, on August 6, 1888. The ceremony was held in the town of Fairview (now Winston). The new Mrs. Doran was described as “... an estimable, intelligent young lady, full of life and energy and will fill Ed’s once gloomy bachelor home full of happiness and joy.”¹⁴

In researching this article on Ed Doran’s history, I could find very little information on the town of Hermosa that wasn’t contained in online newspaper databases. Most books that mention ghost towns in New Mexico bypass Hermosa entirely or give scant information on it. F. Stanley’s “The Hermosa Story” is a twenty-page booklet, comprised almost entirely of the same newspaper accounts one could find online. First person accounts of life in Hermosa, if they exist, might only be available to researchers in university libraries.

⁸ “Local News,” *The Black Range*, 22 August 1884, p. 3.

⁹ “Hermosa,” *The Black Range*, 23 March 1883, p. 3.

¹⁰ Bland-Allison Act (n.d.). In www.u-s-history.com. Retrieved December 11, 2021, from <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h718.html>

¹¹ “Hermosa,” *The Black Range*, 30 March 1883, p. 3.

¹² J.E. and B.H. Sherman, *Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 110.

¹³ “Hermosa,” *The Black Range*, 1 April 1887, p. 3.

¹⁴ “Local News,” *The Black Range*, 10 August 1888, p. 3.

Fortunately, a letter dated April 21, 1889 from William Doran to his sister, Katherine (aka “Kittie”), who was still living in Michigan, was found in my father’s belongings. William tries to convince his apparently ill sister to come to Hermosa, stating that:

I know if you was out hear [*sic*] for five or six months you would get strong, you could ride horseback and climb those mountains you would not know yourself in one month you don’t know the difference there is in the climate the air in the morning makes a person feel like eating something then after breakfast climb about two thousand feet of mountain and ride ten or twelve miles on horseback they will feel like eating dinner.¹⁵

In describing some of Hermosa’s residents, William claims that he and Ed “have lots of fun with those old fellows around here. There is some of the biggest lyers [*sic*] I ever heard. They think I believe everything they say but I just have many a good laugh with Ed about them.”¹⁶ He also states about Ed’s wife, “Lena is a nice woman and is well liked ... she is just the finest lady I ever met. They all think Ed and Lena are all right.”¹⁷ He signs off, “I remain yours with Love, WW Doran, Hermosa, NM.”

The year 1889 also brought about the birth of Ed and Lena’s first child, also named Ed (my grandfather), born on May 30th. Unfortunately, less than a month later, a tragedy of epic proportions would strike Hermosa. On the afternoon of Sunday, June 23, heavy rains, lightning, and thunder came over the Black Range. Aside from the “occasional glance at the extraordinary coloring of the moving clouds coming directly toward the town,”¹⁸ the citizens did not have any idea of the disaster which was about to occur. As night came about the town was faced with the sudden:

... roar of surging water, flowing through the streets and houses, carrying everything before it in its main current, and passing on to leave that part of the town in broken ruins ... the store of JC Plemmons, the Hermosa Hotel and all the saloons were thoroughly inundated¹⁹

Fortunately, no lives were lost. Eventual losses were estimated at \$15,000 for Hermosa and \$8,000 in Fairview.²⁰

The damage to Hermosa, while extensive, did not stop the town from celebrating the 4th of July, less than two weeks later. Despite the flooding of the hotel, owner H. A. Robinson “commenced to decorate his place with bunting, flags, and evergreens and in very short time ... the little town that the flood had left was looking like some grand city in the East.”²¹ Burro, pony and sack races commenced on this day as well as a wrestling match, fireworks, and finally, a dance which left everyone in good spirits, with the exception of “a couple of the boys who had rather more bug juice than they could balance.”²²

Hermosa appeared to bounce back from this mishap, relatively unscathed, and by at least one account, better than ever. By June of the following year a glowing article was published by the *Daily New Mexican*, espousing the great virtues of Hermosa, calling it “undoubtedly one of the most substantial and best paying camps in all of New Mexico.” Ed Doran was mentioned as one of the operators of the Palomas Chief mine – described as “looking splendidly.” He is mentioned again as one of Hermosa’s “substantial and good citizens”:

to develop its immense and rich mineral resources, with its delightful and healthy climate and with its steady and hard working population, Hermosa and the surrounding mining section cannot fail of success and will become one of the largest and richest mining towns not only in New Mexico, but in the southwest, and for that matter on this continent.²³

¹⁵ William Doran, letter to Katherine Doran, 21 April 1889.

¹⁶ Doran, letter to Doran.

¹⁷ Doran, letter to Doran.

¹⁸ “A Fearful Flood,” *The Sierra County Advocate*, 28 June 1889, p. 2.

¹⁹ “Fearful Flood,” p. 2.

²⁰ “Mining Matters,” *Western Liberal*, 5 July 1889, p. 2.

²¹ “Hermosa Letter,” *The Sierra County Advocate*, 12 July 1889, p. 2.

²² “Hermosa Letter,” p. 2.

²³ “Humming Hermosa,” *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican*, 24 June 1890, p. 2.

Despite the overly-positive descriptions of Hermosa, an interesting notation elsewhere in the article unwittingly spelled the inevitable downside for this mining town as it informs the reader that, “The ore taken from the mines, and that alone, is the foundation of the camp, and the only means of its support.”²⁴ While other mining towns such as nearby Hillsboro had agricultural and mercantile interests, Hermosa had virtually no other business pursuits unrelated to its mining investments.

My family history has it that famous oil man Ed Doheny, who got his start in New Mexico mining interests, was partners at one point with Ed Doran. While Doheny is on record as working the “Comstock claim” with “Long Nine” member John Roach, his activities in the Black Range primarily consisted of operating mines in the Kingston and Lake Valley areas.²⁵ According to family legend – which has not been corroborated by anything in print – Doheny asked Doran to follow him to California but was turned down. Ed Doran believed that New Mexico mines would be more lucrative!²⁶

The Sherman Silver Act of 1890, which forced the US government to purchase more silver than what was required by the 1878 Bland-Allison Act (4,500,000 ounces at market price),²⁷ may have led to a feeling of optimism for Ed and the other miners. In an editorial, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* confidently predicted that “Congress will ... enact a law providing for the free coinage of all silver produced by American mines and if does, [President] Harrison will approve it.”²⁸

Such confidence in the future may have also led to the expansion of the Doran family. In 1892, Lena gave birth to another son, Frank. In the same year, Ed was chosen, along with three other “Hermosa Democrats,” to represent the town to:

select delegates to the Territorial Convention ... they are in it for the white metal ... and no hope of reward or future glory can bribe the quartette away from the sole purpose of their trip, namely, to help select only men who will stand by silver at Chicago.²⁹

Unfortunately, this did not work out. 1893 was a turning point for silver mining operators throughout the country. With over 500 banks closing and mercantile failures totaling liabilities of \$169,000,000 throughout the United States, newly elected US president Grover Cleveland called a special session in Congress on June 30 to repeal the Sherman Act in a desperate attempt to turn the country’s fortunes around.³⁰

Overnight the prices of silver dropped “to 73 cents and were expected to go even lower.”³¹ The *Sierra County Advocate* reported in July of 1893 that all the silver mines in Hermosa had closed “and only about half a dozen leasers were at work.” Miners in nearby Hillsboro, also affected by the drop in prices, were advised to “accept the situation and continue to work, hoping for better times.”³² Mining eventually resumed – but the boom was effectively over.

In March of 1894, Hillsboro’s Dr. Given was called to the Doran household in an emergency attempt to assist Lena who was giving birth to twins. A baby girl, Lenore, survived, however the baby boy was “returned to mother earth.”³³

Despite the silver miners’ change in fortune, the local newspapers continued to extol the virtues of Hermosa’s mining efforts. The *Black Range* reported in September of 1894 that “Messers. Doran and Stephens have taken out some of the finest ore the camp has ever produced, it will run between one and two thousand ounces silver to the ton and high in lead.”³⁴ Mining continued in Hermosa and surrounding areas in Sierra County for the next

²⁴ “Humming Hermosa,” p. 2.

²⁵ Martin Ansell, “Such is Luck: The Mining Career of Edward L. Doheny in New Mexico, 1880–1891.” *New Mexico Historical Review* 70/1 (1995), p. 53.

²⁶ Jalien Hollister, email message to Charles Doran, 26 November 2021.

²⁷ Samuel E. Forman, *A History of the United States for Schools* (New York: Century Company, 1920), 395.

²⁸ “The Outlook for Silver,” *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 9 November 1891, p. 2.

²⁹ “Hermosa News,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 22 April 1892, p. 3.

³⁰ Lawrence W. Reed, “The Silver Panic,” <https://fee.org/articles/the-silver-panic/>. Accessed 26 December 2021.

³¹ K. M. (Kralick) Bean, “Settlement Stages and Frontier Systems: The Historic American Settlement of New Mexico’s Black Range Region” (Unpublished doctoral thesis, 1996). State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY, 124.

³² “Local Jottings,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 7 July 1893, p. 3.

³³ “Hermosa News,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 30 March 1894, p. 3.

³⁴ “Hermosa,” *The Black Range*, 14 September 1894, p. 2.

few years, but the low prices of return slowly reduced the populations of these towns as people were forced to find different sources of revenue.

The *Black Range*, in 1896, wrote an impassioned editorial lamenting the current situation:

It is a common cause ... in behalf of the plain people of this country who are being morally and financially ruined by the grasping money changers who seek to overthrow the already fast decaying happiness and prosperity of the common people ... Every person that dwells in the Black Range Country, no matter of what occupation, depends directly upon the production of our mines for his living or income³⁵



Hermosa, c. 1900. Photo *History of Sierra County*, Sierra County Historical Society, 1979.

Disaster again struck the town in the year 1898 – and unlike the decade previous, Hermosa was not able to recover fully. In early July torrential rains hit the town, flooding the houses in the upper camp, and completely washing away “the residences of Ed. Young, John Kendall and Ed. Doran ... the families barely escaping with their lives.”³⁶

At some point this year, possibly because of the town’s misfortune, the Dorans spent time in Colorado, where Ed’s final son, William, was born. While I could not find any newspaper accounts of the Dorans during their sojourn in Colorado, my father had some information in his (unpublished) autobiography, stating that the family “had to move ... to Denver, where they were forced to take in boarders.”³⁷ One can only assume that this situation was temporary as the family are again listed in the 1900 Hermosa census.

The *Sierra County Advocate*, perhaps trying to salvage the realities of the dim economic situation enveloping its county, ran the exact same article in many weekly issues, praising Black Range mines – and mentioning Hermosa in particular, as having shipped over two million dollars in silver “and as yet has hardly reached its prime. Free coinage would make it probably one of the most prosperous mining camps in the West.”³⁸

Ed Doran is noted by the *Advocate* in 1899 as “taking out a large quantity of very rich ore on the Eagle,”³⁹ and later that year the same paper praises him as “the prosperous Hermosa mining man”⁴⁰

Regardless of how “prosperous” Ed or the mining town were claimed to be, the end was near. The 1900 Hermosa census lists a scant sixty-six people living in the area – down from the 206 in the 1890 census. Overall, the entire population of Sierra County shrank from 13,630 in 1890 to a mere 3,158 ten years later.⁴¹ Despite the glowing claims from the *Advocate*, the bottom had truly dropped out.

The census also revealed that another one of Ed’s brothers from Michigan, Mike, was living in the Doran household. He would end up staying in Hermosa for over two more decades. Family history revealed that William (Ed Sr.’s brother who wrote the letter to Katherine in 1889), contracted tuberculosis at some point and was headed to recuperate in Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences) but died along the way and was buried “beside the wagon trail.”⁴² There was no death certificate ever listed.

In August of 1900, Ed Doran and his family left Hermosa for good. They stayed at the Sturges European Hotel in Albuquerque for the winter, and by the following February, the *Albuquerque Citizen* noted that Ed paid \$1,500

³⁵ “The Silver Fund,” *The Black Range*, 4 September 1896, p. 2.

³⁶ “Local Items,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 8 July 1898, p. 1.

³⁷ Matt H. Doran, “My Life.” (Unpublished manuscript, 2004).

³⁸ “Great Chances for Profitable Investments,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 29 July 1898, p. 3.

³⁹ “Hermosa,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 11 August 1899, p. 1.

⁴⁰ “Personal Mention,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 27 October 1899, p. 1.

⁴¹ United States Census Bureau, *Statistics of Populations: Table 5: Population of States and Territories by Minor Civil Divisions, 1890 and 1900*, page 274, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/volume-1/volume-1-p7.pdf>.

⁴² Jalien Hollister, letter to Charles Doran, 1 August 2005.

for “lots 11 and 12 in block 19 in original townsite of Albuquerque”⁴³ There is little mention of Ed Doran after this.

In 1904 a “Sheriff’s Sale” of several Hermosa mines commenced. The Albatross, Pelican, Eagle, and Vulture mines – operations that had been listed as big money makers by the *Advocate* just a few short years earlier – were now being auctioned off. Also listed as being sold “to the highest bidder for cash” were several “personal” items of Ed Doran’s: a hoist, pump, engine and boiler, two mining cars, and 250 ore sacks.⁴⁴

The 1907 *Albuquerque Citizen’s* “City Directory” lists the Doran family living at 524 W. Railroad (now Central) Avenue. Ed’s occupation simply states: “miner.” One can only assume that the family’s fortunes were on the wane as that same paper, in 1908, listed ads for “nicely furnished rooms” for rent – and to apply to “Mrs. Doran” at the same address.⁴⁵

On Christmas Day, 1909, Ed Doran, age 57, died. The cause of death was listed as “organic heart disease complicated by nephritis” – and related to “occupation.”⁴⁶ *The Sierra County Advocate*, quoting the *Albuquerque Citizen-Journal*, had this to say:

E.J. Doran, for nine years a resident of Albuquerque, died suddenly Saturday night at his residence 524 West Central Avenue. Mr. Doran had been ill for some time with heart trouble. He had not been confined to his bed, however, and his death came with a suddenness startling to his family and many friends. Mr. Doran was interested in southwestern mining. He is survived by a widow and four children ... Mr. Doran was for many years a well-known resident of Hermosa and many old time citizens will regret to hear of his death.⁴⁷

Lena continued to take in boarders to make ends meet and the children carried on with their schooling. Ed, the son, was enrolled at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, where he was noted as an excellent scholar and star basketball player. At some point he met and became lifelong friends with Taos artist Joseph Imhoff, who achieved fame with his lithographs of Native Americans in the area.

Tragedy struck the family once more. On October 23, 1912, Lena, who had apparently been suffering a short time from inflammatory rheumatism, died suddenly from “cardiac complications.”⁴⁸ *The Albuquerque Journal* noted that her death was “quite unexpected ... Mrs. Doran had a host of friends in Albuquerque and elsewhere in the state, all of whom will be shocked to learn the sad news of her sudden demise.”⁴⁹ She was forty-six years old.



Ed Worcester Doran,
1929, age 40.

The three Doran men – Ed, Frank, and William – opted to stay in New Mexico. Lenore went to live with her aunt, Katherine Doran, who had moved from Michigan to California in the early 1900s and was now set up as the owner of a private hospital in Hanford, California. Lenore finished high school in Hanford then went on to graduate from UC Berkeley. She went to Nursing School, married, and had three daughters. She died in Fresno, California in 1982 at the age of eighty-five.

Ed went on to graduate with honors from UNM, then enlisted in the army along with his brothers when World War I broke out. Ed “received his [Lieutenant] commission at the first officers training school after the declaration of war.”⁵⁰ After the war he received his master’s degree in English from Columbia University in New York City, then in 1920 married Marie Higgins, his girlfriend from UNM. They eventually moved to Los Angeles where he became Professor and Chair of the Speech and Debate Department at Los Angeles City College for twenty-nine years. He and Marie had two children, Matt (my father), and Judith. A hard-working and staunch

⁴³ “Real Estate Transfers,” *Albuquerque Citizen*, 15 February 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁴ “Notice of Sheriff’s Sale,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 24 June 1904, p. 2.

⁴⁵ “For Rent,” *Albuquerque Citizen*, 6 November 1908, p. 7.

⁴⁶ ‘EJ Doran.’ Certificate and Record of Death of EJ Doran, 26 December 1909 (number of certificate: 2873). City of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

⁴⁷ “Local News,” *Sierra County Advocate*, 31 December 1909, p. 2.

⁴⁸ ‘Mrs. Lena Doran.’ Certificate and Record of Death of Mrs. Lena Doran, 23 October 1912 (number of certificate: 3993). City of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

⁴⁹ “Old Resident Goes to Answer Call of Grim Reaper,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 24 October 1912, p. 8.

⁵⁰ “Local Items,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 14 July 1918, p. 8.

anti-communist, Ed lived in a pleasant, middle-class, suburban neighborhood of Los Angeles, far removed from his humble beginnings in Hermosa. He never looked back on his early years in this silver-mining town and barely mentioned it to his family. On a 1950s road trip to New Mexico, Ed made one half-hearted attempt to visit Hermosa with Matt, but gave up looking for it because he couldn't recall how to get there! Ed, Jr. never mentioned the Doran relatives in Michigan to his family and made no attempts to contact them. His wife, Marie, passed away in 1970 and Ed died at the age of eighty-four, in 1974.

Ed, Jr.'s brother, Frank, became co-owner of a grocery store at 508 W. Central Avenue in Albuquerque in 1914.⁵¹ He operated it until his enlistment in the army at the start of World War I. Frank died at a New Jersey army camp during the 1918 influenza epidemic. He is buried in the Doran family gravesite at Fairview Cemetery in Albuquerque. He was twenty-six years old.



Doran family gravesite, Fairview Cemetery, Albuquerque. Photo Charles Doran.



William Doran, 1920.

William became a Corporal in the army and was honorably discharged in 1922. There was reportedly a monetary dispute over Lena's will, which did not get executed until 1920. William cut off all communication with Ed over this legal matter and simply "disappeared" – he never made any attempt to contact family members over the years. Research indicated that he died – with no spouse or children – in a VA Hospital in Yountville, California in 1975 at the age of seventy-six.⁵²

Mike Doran stayed in what was left of Hermosa until 1922. By this time the mining companies had all shut down. The 1920 census indicates only forty people living in the area, all but three of them working as "placer" miners.⁵³ A Mining "Location Notice" claim dated March 4, 1922, has Mike's signature;⁵⁴ however he must not have lingered long in Hermosa after this. A death certificate was issued for Mike, age sixty-six, only nine months later back in his hometown of Detroit. The cause of death was listed as "carcinoma of the stomach."⁵⁵

The 1930 census listed only twenty-three people living in Hermosa – and twelve of them were from the same family. One curious new addition to the 1930 census was a designation for "value of home, if owned, or monthly rental, if rented." Most of the people listed on this Hermosa census were registered as "rent free" citizens. It can be speculated that they were lodging in homes that were abandoned previously. Only three people listed "mining" as an occupation, the rest were "stock farm laborers."⁵⁶



Hermosa in 1939. Photo Black Range Museum.

By 1940 there was no census for Hermosa. By then, the abandoned townsite had been acquired by the 168,000-acre Ladder Ranch. In 1960, oil executive R. O. Anderson purchased the Ladder, and, to his surprise, ran across the remains of the Hermosa Hotel. [Anderson was founder of the Atlantic Richfield Company, and the business school at UNM is now named for him. -Ed.] Anderson had his employees restore the hotel, dubbing it "The Hermosa Hilton," with one of his workers casually remarking that it looked like "an old-fashioned house like they built back in the early part of the century ... this had to be built around 1910 or somewhere along in there ..."⁵⁷

⁵¹ "T. Linville Sells Grocery Store; New Owners Take Charge," *Albuquerque Journal*, 18 January 1914, p. 12.

⁵² 'William Winfield Doran.' State of California, Certificate of Death, 27 July 1975 (certificate number: 635). Yountville, California.

⁵³ United States Federal Census (1920). *Precinct 9: Hermosa, New Mexico, February 14, 1920*.

⁵⁴ Location Notice (1922). Palomas Mining District, County of Sierra. March 4, 1922.

⁵⁵ 'Michael Doran.' Certificate of Death of Michael Doran, 13 December 1922 (number of certificate: 11621). City of Detroit, Michigan.

⁵⁶ United States Federal Census (1930). *Precinct 9: Hermosa, New Mexico, April 2-6, 1930*.

⁵⁷ Mark S. Fuller, *Never a Dull Moment, The Life of John Liggett Meigs* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2015), 134.

The Hermosa “townsite” as it exists now is gated, and can only be accessed by special permission. R. O. Anderson reconstructed J. C. Plemmons’ mercantile store, but, aside from the Hermosa Hotel and the small post office cabin, there are no other “original” structures left standing. The property is used every other year by Furman University biology students who lodge in the “Hermosa Hilton” for several weeks and conduct environmental assessments in the Black Range area. [See the article on page 18. -Ed.]



Jailen Hollister on the steps of the “Hermosa Hilton” during a 1977 visit.

Prior to conducting this research, the only vague genealogic information I had from my family was that my grandfather “was born in a ghost town called Hermosa.” The names of his parents were not known, nor was there any information on my great-grandfather’s birthplace. By downloading censuses, I was able to find the birthplace of Ed Sr., eventually coming into e-mail contact with a distant Doran cousin in Michigan on an ancestry website who was able to give me a wealth of photographs and background information. My father then recalled that one of Lenore’s daughters – his first cousin, Jailen Hollister – had taken a trip to Hermosa in the mid-1970s. Jailen was kind enough to provide some Doran-historical information as well as photographs of her trip – including a visit to the “Hermosa Hilton.” She also contributed the only information we have about Ed and Lena’s personalities, saying her mother, “often remarked about having an Irish father and German mother being somewhat difficult. I wonder if their being Methodists influenced their views on child rearing.”⁵⁸

The intertwined histories of Hermosa – and Ed Doran – have been largely forgotten to time. Newspaper accounts of Hermosa after 1930 were all but non-existent. In 1965, author F. Stanley, who wrote exclusively about towns in America’s Southwest for many years, exclaimed in astonishment, in the forward to his “Hermosa, New Mexico Story” booklet, that not only had he *never heard* of Hermosa but he couldn’t find **any** research books that mentioned it – at one point he even entertained doubts that the town had *ever existed!* “The Story of Mining in New Mexico” – a comprehensive, historical survey published in 1974, cursorily mentions the Black Range district “being small” and having a “brief life”⁵⁹ – with not one word about Hermosa itself.



The author, Charles Doran, with his son Miles on a visit to Hermosa in November 2021.

It is my hope that the research I have discovered on both Hermosa and Ed Doran has partially alleviated the dearth of information on both parties. To quote F. Stanley:



Telling the student about Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos isn’t telling all the history of New Mexico. Hermosa was as much New Mexico as any of these.⁶⁰

The Hermosa cemetery, November 2021.
Photo Charles Doran.

⁵⁸ Hollister, email message to Charles Doran, 26 November 2021.

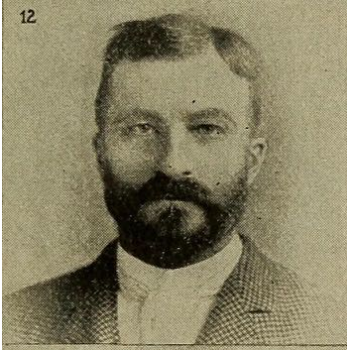
⁵⁹ Paige W. Christiansen, *The Story of Mining in New Mexico* (New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources, 1974), 73.

⁶⁰ F. Stanley, *The Hermosa New Mexico Story* (Publisher not listed, 1965), 3.

RICHARD MANSFIELD WHITE

The Older Brother

By Joe Britton



Richard Mansfield White, taken from The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition Commission, 1893, published before White's removal. Photo Wikimedia Commons.

Among the original "Long Nine" prospectors who first began to mine in the Hermosa area, Richard Mansfield White was surely one of the most intriguing and colorful. He was the older brother of Stanford White, one of the principal partners of McKim, Mead & White, the celebrated New York Beaux-Arts architectural firm that designed many landmark buildings, including the Columbia University campus and famed Pennsylvania Station (now demolished). Both brothers were born into a patrician family in New York (Richard in 1851 and Stanford in 1853), sons of Richard Grant White and Alexina Black Mease. Their father was a well-known literary critic and Shakespearean scholar, and editor of the first edition of the iconic *Riverside Shakespeare*. Stanford was schooled at Harvard College and the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, and went on to apprentice with the American Romanesque architect Henry Hobson Richardson. But Richard headed west to seek his fortune, "when it was wild and woolly and hard to curry and became a 'Rough



Richard Grant White, father of Richard and Stanford White. Photo by Matthew Brady, c. 1865. Wikimedia Commons.

Rider of the Rockies' when Roosevelt was a 'tenderfoot.'"¹

Richard Mansfield White ended up in the Black Range settlement of Chloride sometime around 1880, where he was recruited to join a new mining venture by two prospectors from Arizona, Edward C. Johnson and John H. Roach, who had just discovered promising silver deposits near Palomas Creek. A group of nine miners soon set off to what would

become Hermosa, the so-called "Long Nine."



The header for the first installment of Richard Mansfield White's "History of Hermosa" *Sierra County Advocate*, May 24, 1907, https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sc_advocate_news/2150.

Based on White's adventures with the prospecting party, he later wrote down a short "History of Hermosa" (as mentioned in the preceding Doran article). White's history of the founding and first few years of Hermosa was initially presented to the Black Range Pioneer Association at its regular meeting in Hillsboro on October 3, 1895, and then published in installments

twelve years later in the *Sierra County Advocate* each week from May 24 to June 28, 1907.² Introducing the series, the paper's editor remarked, "With this issue we commence the publication of a brief history of Hermosa by Richard Mansfield White While the history of that once famous camp only covers a period of about three years, it will be interesting reading to all old times of Sierra county. We are indebted to Thos. Murphy for the history which was read at an old timer's meeting ..." (Murphy was the well-known first sheriff of Sierra County, and lived in Hillsboro.)

In his history, White says of the "Long Nine" that they were "no tenderfeet. All were experienced prospectors and frontiersmen, all rocky mountaineers of experience." In the first few days, they endured heavy snow, Indian attacks, and disappointing meals (the salt and baking powder for flapjacks having been forgotten in the rush to begin prospecting). A meeting for the formation of a mining district was held March 31, 1881, and at that meeting the district was designated the Palomas Mining District, named for the creek flowing through it, and at the suggestion of John Roach, the town was given the name Hermosa, "for the beauty of the park in which it is situated." White was elected secretary of the district. As the claims developed, White became general manager of the Baron von Humbolt, Palomas Chief, and Embolite group of mines.

In his history, White describes the quick arrival of other prospectors, investors, and business owners. "The fame of the richness of the ores at Hermosa being widespread throughout the newspapers," White writes, "the camp was visited by parties desirous of purchasing or leasing and bonding the properties."

¹ "Some Arctics," *Tacoma Daily Ledger*, 9 November 1907, p. 8.

² Richard Mansfield White, "History of Hermosa," *Sierra County Advocate*, 24 May – 28 June 1907.



Stanford White. Photo by George Cox, c. 1892, the year of his visit to Hermosa. Wikimedia Commons.

Among the visitors to the Palomas District in 1882 — was none other than White's younger brother, Stanford! He was traveling through the Southwest and toward Mexico with Charles Tatham of the Tatham brothers lead manufacturing company in New York and Philadelphia. Richard writes that during Stanford's visit to Hermosa, "News came over the range that the Indians were out; so Charles Tatham and Stanford White made the return trip that night, that they might continue their journey to Old Mexico. They afterward just escaped the savages on the warpath, the stage just ahead of them being attacked and all the occupants slain." Interestingly, perhaps because of his visit to the Southwest, Stanford White completed one project in New Mexico: a drawing for the Ramona Industrial School for Indian Girls in Santa Fe, though the building was never built.³

Over time, Richard became a public figure in New Mexico. He was, for instance, a sought-after speaker in the territory. As *The Black Range* reported from Fairview (Winston) in July 1896, "Richard Mansfield White of Hermosa, who was our orator on the 4th, addressed a large and appreciative audience in the town hall. Our patriotism was aroused, and our loyalty to silver strengthened, and we hope to have the pleasure of hearing Mr. White again at no distant day."⁴

A member of the territorial Republican Central Committee, Richard was also a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention in 1890, serving on the Elective Franchise and Mining and Water Rights committees. *The Santa Fe New Mexican* commented that "Richard Mansfield White can always be counted on to be on time whenever duty calls."⁵ Yet he was also apparently a rather abrasive man. When he was appointed by the governor to represent New Mexico on the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition Commission in 1893, he somehow managed to offend the chair of the Commission to such an extent, that the chair proceeded to remove him and replaced him with John M. Webster. (One of the early residents of Kingston, Webster was a mining operator and the first clerk of the probate court of Sierra County.) Years later in Seattle, where Richard eventually settled, he was similarly expelled from the Commercial Club for making offensive, racist remarks in the presence of visiting "Hawaiian maidens," and the *Seattle Star* observed that "He has been a more or less active member of the Commercial Club since its organization, and as such has made himself generally obnoxious to many of its members."⁶

Richard Mansfield White left Hermosa in 1898 following the silver crash, going to Alaska to explore the Klondike gold fields. He went as far north as Skagway, where he became a prominent member of the Artic Brotherhood. When President William Howard Taft visited the Alaska building at the Alaska-Yukon Exposition



Stanford White, drawing for the Ramona Indian School for Girls, Santa Fe, c. 1892. The drawing was published in *King's Handbook of the United States*, ed. Moses King, text by M. R. Sweetser (Buffalo: Moses King Corporation, 1891), p. 573. Photo Wikimedia Commons.

³ Sara E. Bush, "Architectural History of the Art Museum," *Record of the Art Museum: Princeton University* 55 1/2 (1996), 82. The Ramona School was founded in the early 1890s in Santa Fe by the Congregational minister Horatio Ladd, who contracted with the military to send Indigenous students there, mostly Apaches, many with parents held prisoner by the U.S. Army at Fort Union – at first only girls, but later boys also. The school was intended as a memorial to Helen Hunt Jackson, the writer, poet, and activist who advocated for better treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government. Her novel *Ramona* (1884), depicting the life of an orphan Indian girl in Southern California, inspired much sympathy for her cause. The Ramona School operated independently until 1895, when it was taken over by the Bureau of Indian Affairs before being closed. It was located near what is now Don Gaspar Avenue and Coronado Road, though now there is no sign remaining of the school's existence.

⁴ "Local News," *The Black Range*, 10 July 1896, p. 3.

⁵ "Reassembled," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 18 August 1890, p. 4.

⁶ "Club to Act," *Seattle Star*, 14 Jan 1908, p. 1.

in Seattle in 1909, White was “instrumental” in initiating him into the Alaskan story.⁷ White eventually settled in Seattle, where he worked as a mining consultant and engineer, becoming a successful capitalist and investor.

Over the years, Richard remained close to his younger brother, so he was devastated when Stanford was murdered in June of 1906. The newspapers reported that the brothers were “chums,” with weekly letters passing between them. One article stated that “Mr. White’s room here [in Seattle] is adorned with a dozen photographs of his brother Stanford White and pictures of numerous buildings he designed.”⁸ Upon receiving word of his brother’s death, Richard hastily traveled to New York, saying “I am hurrying to New York to see that my brother’s memory is not besmirched and that his murderer meets the punishment his crime deserves.”⁹



Evelyn Nesbit, Stanford White’s mistress, and wife of Harry Thaw. Photo Wikimedia Commons.

Stanford was shot by Harry Thaw during a theatrical performance at the Madison Square Theater. Thaw was from Pittsburgh, the mentally unstable heir of a coal and railroad fortune. He committed the murder because of jealousy over a relationship White had with Thaw’s wife, the actress and chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit (who was performing in the show that night), an affair that allegedly began before her marriage to Thaw when she was only 16. Richard White was reported to have threatened to “take the law into his own hands if the district attorney did not have Thaw punished,” although he later insisted he had said no such thing.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Richard was pushed into the public eye for his active defense of his brother’s reputation. Unfortunately, the resulting “Trial of the Century” confirmed Thaw’s accusations, despite Richard’s protestations, and Thaw was found not guilty by reason of insanity. Pictures of Thaw dining in his jail cell on white linen with silver service do give pause over the details of the whole sordid episode, but papers all across the country followed the trial and resulting verdict avidly.

Richard himself died in Seattle some years later of heart failure on February 13, 1925, age 71. He never married, and his brother’s son, Lawrence Grant White, was his only heir. Ironically, a short obituary in the Spokane *Spokesman-Review* was entitled, “Brother of Thaw’s Victim [Dies],” as though Richard’s main accomplishment in life was to have been Stanford’s older brother.¹¹ Those who knew him as one of Hermosa’s legendary “Long Nine,” however, might have held a contrary opinion.

John C. Plemmons

As the owner of the first mercantile store in Hermosa, J. C. Plemmons exerted a significant influence on its development. This biographical sketch appeared in George B. Anderson, History of New Mexico, Its Resources and People, Vol. II (Los Angeles, Chicago and New York: Pacific States Publishing Co., 1907).



John C. Plemmons.
Photo Black Range Museum.

John C. Plemmons, county treasurer of Sierra County and a resident of Hillsboro, has made his home in the Territory since 1876, and has been identified with ranching and mining operations, two of the important sources of income of this part of the country. He was born in Dalton, Georgia, on the 25th of November, 1859, and on account of conditions brought about by the Civil War he received no educational privileges save those afforded by the school of experience. He was left an orphan when only nine years of age, and in his youth was employed as a cabin boy on a Mississippi steamboat for two years. He afterward spent a year as a scout in the employ of the United States government, being with the troops stationed on the frontier to suppress the uprisings of the Apache Indians. He came to New Mexico in 1876, located on the Dry Cimarron and became a cowboy in the employ of Hall Brothers, with whom he continued about five years. In 1880 he went to what has since become known as Chloride, and was with the first outfit that went into the Black Range. Becoming connected with mining interests, he located the Colossal mine, which he

⁷ “R. M. White Is Dead, Seattle,” *The Alaska Daily Empire* (Juneau), 16 February 1925, p. 8.

⁸ “Stanford Did Not Wrong Thaw’s Wife,” *The Washington Times*, 27 June 1906.

⁹ “Thaw Witnesses Implicate Well-Known New Yorkers,” *The Brooklyn Citizen*, June 30 1906, p. 1.

¹⁰ “White not Sanguinary,” *The Evening Statesman* (Walla Walla, WA), 28 February 1907, p. 5.

¹¹ “Brother of Thaw’s Victim” (obituary), *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane), 15 February 1925, p. 2

afterward sold. Later he built the first house at Hermosa and established a mercantile enterprise at that point, which he conducted from 1883 until 1900, successfully carrying on business for a period of seventeen years. At the same time he was interested in the cattle business and yet owns a cattle ranch at that place. He has continued to own mining properties, having claims at Hermosa, and is producing ore from Polomas [sic] Chief Mine, carrying copper, silver and a small quantity of gold. The business has been incorporated under the name of Polomas Chief Mining Company and the mine is now being profitably worked.



The J. C. Plemmons mercantile in Hermosa, c. 1890. Plemmons is fifth from left, leaning against the post. Photo Black Range Museum.

In 1900 Mr. Plemmons was elected treasurer of Sierra County and is now serving for the third term, having been three times chosen to the office as the candidate of the Democratic Party. Watchful of opportunities, he has promoted his business interests along lines leading to success, and he is also a representative of that class of citizen who, while promoting individual prosperity, also advance general progress and improvement. He is a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen, belonging to Hillsboro Lodge No. 12. He is a master Mason of Kingston Lodge No 16, A. F. & A. M., and belongs to the Lodge of Perfection at Santa Fe, the Denver consistory, in which he has attained the thirty-second degree, and Albuquerque temple of the Mystic Shrine. He was married in May, 1898, to Miss Edith Curtis, a native of New Mexico, and they have three children: Lillian G., Alice M., and Sylvie.

John Calhoun Plemmons died October 9, 1940 in Santa Rita, New Mexico, and is buried in the Masonic Cemetery, Silver City. – Ed.



THE ARGONAUTS OF YESTERDAY

Excerpts from *Sierra County: The Argonauts of Yesterday*

By Phyllis Graves Glines

Privately Published, Truth or Consequences, 1982

Used by permission of the author.

ARGONAUT

“An adventurer or traveler engaged in a particular quest; also one of those who went to California in 1849 in search of gold.”

From Encyclopedia Britannica

PREFACE

I believe it was Thomas Wolfe in ‘Homeward Angel’ who said “you can’t go home again”.

I had to learn this anew when I came home to Sierra County in 1979 after an absence of 25 years. But I soon became fascinated by the rich history of my home county, wondering how I had missed so much in my earlier years.

My father and grandfather had come to New Mexico in the early forties and we first lived in Chloride, then Hot Springs (T or C) and Hillsboro, where my brother and I went to school. In Hillsboro, my father built an ore mill on the site of the first 10-stamp mill, built in the late 1870’s. He milled gold ores from the Garfield and other mines near Hillsboro.

My mother, Lucy Crosswhite Graves, recently showed me an article on great-grandfather Williams, who left Massachusetts in 1857, went to New York City and followed the trail of the gold seeker; boarding a steamer for

the Isthmus of Panama, crossing to the Pacific side, and embarking again for San Francisco and the California gold fields. He then worked his way back, homesteading in Oregon and Colorado.

I believe many of our forefathers in New Mexico came from the West; civil war veterans, the trappers before them, and argonauts such as my great-grandfather.

HERMOSA, NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque Tribune editor George Carmack, writing in December, 1872, saw romance in the names of the Hermosa mines ... the Albatross, the Eagle, the Embolite, the Yankey Girl, Protector, Happy Anna, Columbia, American Flag, Expectation, Saratoga ... and on and on.

He described his travels for 20 miles or so over a winding dirt road through a vast land of pinon and juniper, of deep canyons with straight-up and down rock walls, and sandy creek beds sometimes used as roads, winding down into a canyon, fording a creek, and journeying over a ridge to discover a broad valley called Hermosa (Spanish for the beautiful), with Palomas Creek winding down out of this valley and into a deep canyon known as Palomas Camp in the busy mining years of the 1880s and 1890s.

Spanish artifacts dating back to the conquest lead one to believe that the 'Conquistadores' knew of Hermosa's silver wealth long before the first prospector filed his claim in 1879. The American Flag was one of the first claims in the upper camp of Hermosa; and the Palomas Chief, which was to produce almost one-half of the production in the lower Palomas Camp, was located by a Leadville, Colorado man. Each camp is credited with almost equal amounts of silver production, totaling some 1 and ½ million ounces of silver. Palomas Camp was the most active of the two camps. The mines here were cut into the sides of the canyon wall, where a deep gorge has cut through the canyon, leaving bare millions of years of geological structures.

Palomas Camp was not without its problems, and the Black Range newspaper reported in 1885 that, "W. S. Sherrard is a fraud and a deadbeat because the slippery cuss dropped everything at the Palomas Chief mine and skipped, leaving his creditors to mourn." Then on December 21, 1888, the same paper reported, "The Palomas Chief mine is suffering from a harmful cessation of work brought about by the lawsuit and complications resulting from the failure of the leases and grantees to take up the deed which was in escrow Lawsuits and idleness do not pay dividends."

By 1885, a building boom had begun in Hermosa, with a hotel being built, and by 1887, a boarding house and restaurant had been built at the Embolite mine in Palomas Camp. Hermosa continued to grow and prosper, and by the late 1880's boasted another hotel, The Grand Central. The Hermosa Hotel advertised as the "best house on the stage coach route between Hillsboro and Magdalena [*sic*]." There was a schoolhouse with forty pupils, a church, and the Hermosa Literary Society.

The Apache Indians, led by Chief Victorio, were an ever-present source of aggravation for the prospectors. Once, during a last-ditch effort by the Apaches to drive out the white man, they surrounded the mines and held the miners at bay for eleven days. Mrs. D. C. Rogers, the only white woman to live in Hermosa at that time, found refuge in a mine tunnel. The rugged miners stood their ground and finally forced the Apaches to leave.

The Black Range of June 5, 1885 reported: "The Palomas Chief camp, on the creek below Hermosa, is one of the best defended positions in the country. With a watch on the Nana dump, another on the Palomas Chief, and a third on the Eagle, the camp was fully covered with the Pelican tunnel as a further protection for Ma Miller and the girl. There are a dozen well armed and determined men there, who with the advantage of their position, could stand off many times their number of hostiles."

On September 19, 1885, the miners had a skirmish with the Apaches, and was described in the Black Range as follows:



“The scene of the Parker battle which occurred in the spring of 1880, at the box canyon on Palomas creek some two miles distant from where the mining camp of Hermosa now stands, was repeated last Saturday evening. The following are the facts of the fight as near as can be gathered by the Range. Last Saturday afternoon about five o’clock word reached the boys living on Palomas creek, who are working the various mines there, that the soldiers had cut a fresh Indian trail between that place and Mr. Peers’ ranch, and that the soldiers had run the Indians away from a steer they had slain and left two horses, a number of blankets and various other articles in their hasty retreat, that the flesh of the steer was still quivering when the troops found it, which however proved to be a fact.

Upon receiving this information, E. C. Johnson started down the creek to warn the Knapp Brothers and Lige Ledford, and also, to look after Sam Foster’s horses which he had charge of. When Johnson had nearly reached the box canyon he saw the horses standing behind some bushes a short distance from the road a little distance ahead of him, when he came up opposite the horses and about thirty yards distant therefrom, he turned toward them, and to his surprise, he was saluted by two rifle shots, which occurred almost simultaneously. Johnson saw two Indians behind the bushes and threw his rifle down on one of them, but his gun only snapped, which reminded him that his rifle only contained an empty shell, and in attempting to pump in a cartridge, it stuck fast; Johnson dropped down upon one knee in the middle of the road without any shelter whatever, and with one eye on the Indians and one on his gun, attempted to adjust the obstinate cartridge, and while in this attitude another shot was fired at him. By this time Johnson began to think it too warm for comfort, and retreated to the bed of the creek about one hundred yards distant, whose embankment afforded him some protection. Here he made another stand, and after exchanging shots with the Indians started to camp to give the alarm, at which place he arrived safely.

It was only a few minutes ere the entire camp turned out, numbering some nine or ten men, who started in pursuit of the hostiles, dividing into two squads, one party taking the ridge between Palomas creek and South Fork and the other taking down Palomas creek. The party that took the ridge between Palomas and South Fork succeeded in heading the Indians off, seven in number, who were making it up the Fork, who then took up a short deep ravine leading to the southeast to Bear Canyon. Here both the Indians and the boys made a stand. The boys got their blood up and stood out openly at first, but the fire from the Indians soon got too warm for them and they took to cover, and a sharp and continuous firing was kept up until darkness settled over the field, which the Indians took advantage of and escaped into Bear canyon. When darkness settled down the boys withdrew from the field after over an hours’ hard skirmishing, during which time they recaptured one of the stolen horses and had more than held their own with the red devils which is no small item of honor to them.

The Indians ran off several head of horses belonging at Hermosa and the day following the fight ran off a number of horses belonging to J. B. Newman, on North Palomas. The troops took the trail and followed it to the east side of the Cuchillo’s where it was lost, the Indians scattering and a recent rain making it impossible to follow them.”

The high grade ore [from Palomas Camp] was necessary to pay for the long distances the ore was transported, by ox-cart or mule train, to distant refineries. And the ore sometimes stayed sacked on the dump, waiting for transportation. The Black Range of May 30, 1890 tells of the great-grandfather of the Padillas [a prominent Truth or Consequences family – Ed.]

“At Hermosa there is a small lad, a son of Donanciano Padilla, of Cuchillo Negro, who by his aptness as a teamster attracts the attention of the balance of the ‘skinners’ of the camp. The lad is twelve years old, weighs seventy pounds, and makes regular trips with a team of animals over a long, rough road to Engle station with ore from that camp, and he also shoes his own animals.”

Before the decade of the 1890’s had passed, Hermosa was on the decline. There appears to be two separate reasons for the decline, neither having to do with the depletion of silver in the region. The first was “The Silver Question” and the second was the national economy as a whole, which began a recessionary trend in the late 1880’s, culminating with the Panic of 1893. Silver prices fell from \$1.07 an ounce in 1885 to below 60 cents in the late 1890’s.

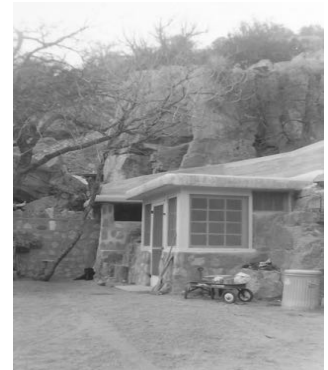
PELICAN CAMP

Taken from the Sierra County Advocate, July 7, 1893

“The news of the long expected blow to our only industry was received here on Thursday morning, the news bringing with it nothing but gloom and despair, and causing great anxiety as to what the future would bring forth. On the arrival of the mail of the 28th, the manager of the Palomas Chief mine received advice stating that silver had dropped to 73 cents, and it was expected it would go still lower; on receipt of the news the Palomas Chief mine immediately closed down and was followed the next day by the Hermosa Milling Company, closing down its works on receiving orders from the smelter that no more ore would be received at any price; thus throwing out of employment every man in the camp working for a day’s pay. How it will effect the leasers on the Pelican Mining Company’s ground can be readily guessed; if they can’t dispose of their product, they must necessarily stop work. The merchants have already begun to entrench to protect their own interests by doing nothing but a strict cash business; as none of them are able to carry the leaser and others over the crisis, as no one can predict correctly the end.”

In *History of Sierra County* (1979), Phyllis Graves Glines’ mother, Lucy Graves, writes in the Graves family entry: “*Our history would not be complete without mentioning Hermosa. Hermosa is our second home. The family has spent many happy days, camping, relaxing and living there Palomas Creek cuts a deep canyon through the heart of Hermosa, with cliffs rising to a height of 1,000 feet or more above the canyon floor, making the canyon entirely different from its outside surroundings. Here one finds complete protection from the world’s turmoil and it is truly without the marks of civilization* (“Don Graves,” p. 146).

My thanks to Harley Shaw for the loan of Phyllis Graves Glines’ booklet on the history of Sierra County mining, from which these excerpts are taken. The Graves family has a long association with Hermosa, and still owns the “Cave House” begun by Phyllis’ father in the early 1950s at the Palomas Chief mine. – Ed.



Graves Cave House, Hermosa, early 1950s. Photo Phyllis Graves Glines.



PLEASE JOIN US SEPTEMBER 3RD FROM 10 - 3 FOR THE HILLSBORO STREET FAIR

THE HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S
BLACK RANGE MUSEUM!

- Learn to weave with Carol Ward, one of our fine Gift Shop Artists!
- Check out our Front Porch Sale – lots of books and other great items!
- Visit the award-winning Black Range Museum and learn about the history of Southern New Mexico!

HERMOSA UNDER STUDY: Archaeology of the Frontier



Although very little has been written about the history of Hermosa, and it is often omitted entirely from books on the ghost towns of New Mexico, a number of archaeological studies have been made that are worth noting. Eleanor M. King, Professor of Anthropology at Howard University, brought groups of students during summers in the early 2000s to engage in archaeological research at Hermosa and various battle sites. In a session at the Society for American Archaeology in 2009 entitled, “Investigations in a Ghost Town: The Archaeology of Hermosa, New Mexico,” the students presented their work as described in this abstract:

In summer 2008 a joint team of students from Howard University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and the Mescalero Apache Reservation investigated the ghost town of Hermosa, NM, and its environs. Published accounts suggested that the town, founded in 1883 during New Mexico’s silver mining boom, was largely abandoned by 1910. Survey and excavations, however, revealed a palimpsest of different occupations in Hermosa and the surrounding valley, from ancient to modern.

King’s work continued with the “Gila Archaeological Project” (GAP), which focused on the Apache Wars, seeking especially to fill in the lacuna created by the fact that “we lack information on the real people who lived, breathed, fought, and died on these slopes and were so critical to the development of the New Mexican frontier.” As the 2011 GAP “Field School Brochure” described:

The focus of our program has been on the Apache Wars of the 1870s and 1880s, which pitted Buffalo Soldiers, the African-American regiments formed after the Civil War, against the Apache. We have been instructing students about this important time in the past and, together, we have been examining how both sides used the landscape, not only for battle but for everyday living. [Texts supplied by Steve Dobrott, former Manager of the Ladder Ranch.]



Similarly, a doctoral dissertation based upon an archaeological study of the Black Range mining district was done by Kolleen M. (Kralick) Bean in 1996 at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Her topic was “Settlement Stages and Frontier Systems: The Historic American Settlement of New Mexico’s Black Range Region.”

The study “presents a model of frontier settlement which allows for an examination of the evolution of the multiple frontiers that existed in the Black Range region [military, farming, mining, ranching, and homesteading]. Through an examination of the settlement structure with each frontier, it is possible to view the system as a whole, and evaluate the interrelationships among the various frontiers in the region.” Kralick is now the Heritage Program Manager for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin. (The dissertation is available at the Truth or Consequences Public Library.

A Special Invitation to HHS Members

On the Labor Day weekends of 2013 and 2014, an original play, “The 1899 Fountain Murder Trial,” was performed in the Hillsboro Community Center.

Two of the performances were filmed and edited by Bob Barnes, who suggests that viewing of the videos now be made available as a benefit to all the members of the Hillsboro Historical Society.

So if you didn’t get to see one of the original performances—or if you’d just like to see it again—we invite you, to view the video at: <https://vimeopro.com/user21669494/the-fountain-murder-trial-of-1899>, using “HHS” as the password.



THE WILD SEMESTER

Every second year since 2005, Dr. Travis Perry, Professor of Biology at Furman University, has taught the Wild Semester at Hermosa. The Wild Semester includes three courses taught at Hermosa (Field Ecology, Field Zoology, and Conservation Biology), followed by a fourth course, African Biodiversity and Conservation, taught in South Africa.



Students with spotting scope searching for bull elk descending the Black Range during the rut.



Students listen attentively to Aldo Leopold (Steve Morgan's Chautauqua) on the edge of the very wilderness named in his honor.



Mule packing is among the many practical wilderness access and stewardship skills students learn at Hermosa.

At Hermosa the emphasis is hands-on learning in public wildlands. Of particular interest to the future of Hermosa, Dr. Perry has created a non-profit organization for conservation research and education called Natural Curiosity. It's first project is to raise the funds necessary to purchase and renovate Hermosa, converting it into a field station for historic preservation and the education of future generations of students. To learn more about this project, watch the video by visiting Natural Curiosity's website at: <https://www.natural-curiosity.org/hermosa>

+ + +

Based on Dr. Perry's program, filmmaker Mike Abernathy and his production partner, Matthew Murray, are currently working on an independent documentary partially set in Hermosa. Abernathy writes: "The working title is 'Wild School of the Gila', and it is intended to be a documentary about the extraordinary field school developed at Hermosa by Dr. Perry. This program is unlike any other that we have seen in that it is highly immersive, situated at the doorstep of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness, and teaching a remarkable combination of academic skills (like biology and statistics) with the kind of practical skills needed to work in the field (like how to pack mules, and how to perform wilderness first aid). This school produces qualified and experienced conservation leaders for the future.

The film is also set in one of the prettiest places in the world – New Mexico's Gila region. Geographically isolated and biologically diverse and unique, the Gila is a key character in our story – along with the students and the faculty of this unusual school. Here in the Gila, puma, deer, bear, elk, javelina, Mexican wolf, and bobcat still roam free. The landscape itself dictates the terms of survival for these species, and also the ways in which those species can be studied.

We have not yet decided on the best streaming platform for the program, but hope to complete the project later this year."

WANTED!

New helpers for the Black Range Museum Volunteer Posse

TERM: 2 or more days a month

DUTIES:

- 1) Gift Shop Sales
- 2) Docent tours of the Black Range Museum
- 3) Advise visitors on local merchants, events, locations, and things to do

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING PART OF THIS ENJOYABLE WORK, PLEASE CONTACT:

Kathleen Blair Bluehare@ctaz.com for further information

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



With the passing of summer, it is time for members of the Hillsboro Historical Society's Board of Directors to start planning for the 2023 year ahead. **One of the items on our "to do" list is consideration of new members for our Board.**

I first joined the Board of the HHS in 2017. I am now serving in my second three-year term. I have participated on other non-profit Boards in the past, and I must say, that I have enjoyed this group more than any I have ever worked with. I was once told, before I joined, that HHS was the "fun Board." I smile when I remember that comment — because it is true. Currently with 10 members, we are truly a working board. Each member finds ways to contribute, our meetings are friendly, focused, and typically under 1.5 hours in length. We accomplish a lot each month, as Board members actually do what they say they will do! Remarkable.

If you have interest in joining us, please contact me at ntrushell@icloud.net to set up a time to discuss the commitments of the Board, and any questions you have. Voting for new Board members by the HHS membership occurs in December, with the beginning of the new Board's term being in January.

I hope to hear from some of you soon!
Nichole Trushell
Board President HHS

Hillsboro Historical Society Volunteer Coordinator Needed!

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 of New Mexico. The Volunteer Coordinator is a volunteer position that reports to the HHS Board of Directors and works closely with the Gift Shop Manager and Museum Director or others appointed by the board to train, organize, and schedule volunteers. Most duties are associated with managing approximately 12 Black Range Museum docents and gift shop volunteers, although occasional workdays for larger groups may be required for other events. For further information please contact Kathleen Blair, Bluehare@ctaz.com or 928-706-6509.

Black Range Museum Gift Shop Manager also Needed!

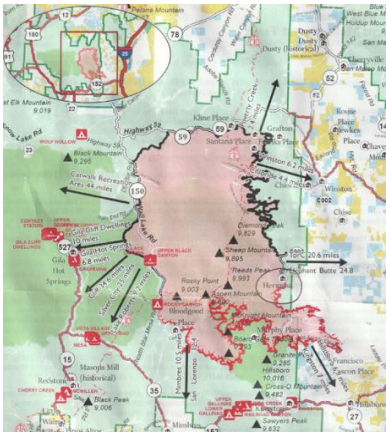
The Museum Gift Shop Manager is a volunteer position that reports to the Board of Directors of the Hillsboro Historical Society. The Gift Shop Manager handles all aspects of the gift shop including the following:

1. Procuring and pricing gift shop inventory.
2. Working with the Volunteer Coordinator to train gift shop volunteers in opening and closing procedures, in handling sales, in transferring monies to the HHS Treasurer, and in maintaining a clean and presentable shop.
3. Promoting the sales of local vendors as much as possible.
4. Serving as the interface with our vendors.
5. Choosing gift items of regional relevance and salability.
6. Operating the gift shop in accordance with the collective desires of the Board of Directors.

Editor's Note

This issue of *GZP* is focused on the development of the former mining camp of Hermosa, and some of its more illustrious citizens. As always, I am amazed by the variety of people who have lived in, come from, or passed through this part of the country! Hermosa is now a ghost town, but also the site of some very rich new educational opportunities through Furman University's "Wild Semester," which is described by its director, Dr. Travis Perry.

We can all be grateful that the recent Black Fire, which came within about a mile of the Hermosa townsite (as shown by the circle on the lower right of the fire map below from June 9), was held at bay by the heroic efforts of a small army of firefighters! The signs displayed around Hillsboro give vivid testimony to the community's appreciation.



Finally, my gratitude to Charles Doran, who stepped forward with an account of his family's history in Hermosa – this month's lead story – and to Phyllis Graves Glines, who generously allowed the publication of excerpts from her 1982 study of Sierra County's mines.

– Joe Britton



Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos (GZP) is the quarterly newsletter of:

The Hillsboro Historical Society

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

www.hillsborohistoricalsociety.com

© 2022, Hillsboro Historical Society

To become a member, please visit:

www.hillsborohistoricalsociety.com/contact/

The mission of the Hillsboro Historical Society is to preserve, collect, and protect the history of Hillsboro, Kingston, and the surrounding area.

HHS is a member of the Historical Society of New Mexico.

We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Board of Directors

President: Nichole Trushell

Vice President: Kathleen Blair

Treasurer: Linda King

Secretary: Robin Tuttle

Directors: Garland Bills, Joseph Britton, Steve Dobrott, Steve Elam, Leah Tookey, Linda Velarde

Advisors: Karl Laumbach, Chris Adams, Craig Springer, Patricia Woodruff, Mark Thompson, John Tittman, Lynn Mullins, Margie Gibson, Sonja Franklin, Robin Tuttle, Larry Cosper, Barbara Lovell, Penny McCauley

Newsletter Editor: Joseph Britton

To offer submissions or comments, please contact:
hillsborohistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Working Committees

Building and Design: Nichole Trushell, Steve Dobrott, Steve Elam, Steve Morgan

Publications: Robert Barnes, Joseph Britton, Garland Bills, Harley Shaw

Program: Harley Shaw and Sandy Ficklin

Courthouse: Nichole Trushell, Steve Elam, Steve Morgan, Steve Dobrott

Exhibits: Leah Tookey, Nichole Trushell

Collections: Leah Tookey, Garland Bills

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