

## The Late Great Embree Harlow Hale, Jr.

1936 – 2020

Jan Haley

Em, Embree, Sonny. He was known by all these names. What we each called him depended on when we met him. When I met him in the spring of 1994, he was introduced to me as Em, and while I often call him Embree or Sonny when speaking of him to others, I still think of him as Em. He pops into my mind frequently every day, and when I think of him it's usually in the form of a photo.



I'm guessing Em was one of the most photographed people in this county. He was a photographer's dream. He was handsome, guileless, and unselfconscious. He "ate" the camera, as they say, and I've never seen a bad photo of him.

Of the photographs I took of Em, my favorite images are these. In the first, he is dancing with Helen Evans, another Hillsboro icon, on her back patio. He is nothing short of ecstatic. His eyes are almost closed, his smile wide with laughter. You can only see the back of Helen's head but you can tell she's smiling back with love and delight.

In another, Em sits with his identical twin cousins, old Ladder Ranch cowboys Emmett and Emory Faulkner. They are on the bench in front of the Hillsboro General Store,

his second home. The cousins are dressed identically in dark Levis, white shirts, light tan hats and brown boots. Em sits between them. I call this photo Em and Em and Em.

Then there is the other photo, also taken on that bench, where Em sits with his head down, hands folded, lost in thought, looking pensive. The right leg of his jeans is stuffed into his boot, as it almost always was in those days.

One photo that still delights me was taken in my living room at least 15 years ago. Em had come by to visit, as he did every few days. I was on the phone when he came, and I told him to sit down in the living room while I finished the call. The call took longer than I thought. So I peeked around the



*Continued on page 3 ...*

## President's Message

February 2021

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank you for responding to our appeal for your membership renewal and generous donations. Your positive response affirms your desire to sustain HHS and its mission and shows your confidence in the job we are doing to fulfill your expectations. It is encouragement in a time when encouragement is needed and appreciated! It gives us, the Board, renewed energy and resolve that with your help we can weather our current circumstances and emerge with hope and resolve to accomplish great things in 2021.

In turn, I would like to report encouraging news to you regarding the direction HHS has taken, in spite of being restricted by the pandemic. The board has continued to work diligently to put your donations to good use by investing in our museum. We have completed needed additions like gutters and metal facia for weather protection. I am also pleased to report that the museum is now wheelchair accessible, inside and out.



*The Black Range Museum, showing newly installed gutters and facia, fresh paint, and handicapped accessibility ramps.*

We have designed and purchased new signage for the museum and courthouse properties. Although we have had to put the courthouse and jail on the back burner, we anticipate the development of additional interpretive signage and a self-guided tour pathway.

Other protective measures will be considered for the historic jail and courthouse ruins. We will be continuing to improve the outdoor exhibits and landscaping thanks to Nichole Trushell and Steve Morgan.

Thanks to Garland Bills, we have complete digitized files of historic photos and documents for the Research Room in the museum. Thanks to Joe Britton, we have continued the publication of this newsletter, which remains an important vehicle for disseminating society information and preserving historical record.

We would also like to hear of your historic connections and stories about our area and encourage the submission of written contributions to be included in this newsletter.

Last year's officers have been re-elected to serve again in 2021—and, we have a new board member: welcome Kathleen Blair!

There is much to be thankful for going into 2021. Thanks to you and your votes of confidence, we continue to have a great Board of Directors dedicated to serving the membership, the society and its mission.

Here is wishing you a more prosperous new year filled with hope and good health for you and yours.

Thank you!  
Steve Dobrott



*Embree Hale ... continued from page 1*

corner to tell him I'd be with him soon, and all I saw was his hat and the top of his reading glasses above the latest *New Yorker* magazine cover, which he was holding right up to his face. I grabbed my camera and while I was still on the phone, I managed to capture the scene. The incongruity of this image made me laugh. When I got off the phone, and joined him, he looked at me and said, "You know what, Jan? This is a pretty good magazine!" I started giving him my old *New Yorkers*, which had been handed down to me, and he would tell me about articles he read that he found interesting.

Back in 1996 when Gary and I were building our house, Em did some backhoe work for us. I have a picture of him driving his backhoe around our barren yard with Helen sitting in the bucket, holding a large sunflower. They are both laughing with delight at their own antics. There were many more photos taken during those years. He was so photogenic that I just couldn't help myself. I've taken a lot of photographs in my life, and while portraits are not my specialty, I've captured many people in candid shots. I

never cared much for posed photographs. I was always fascinated that while most of the pictures I have taken of Em show him looking right at the camera, they never seem posed. He is just there, present, his face naked, his eyes pure.

The last pictures I took of Em were shot when he was in Hillsboro to have lunch at the General Store after he went to live at the VA home in TorC. I would occasionally bring him here for lunch so he could eat the food he loved best in the world (huevos rancheros, red). On this particular visit, after we ate we walked across the street to the house currently owned by Ike and Mary Wilton, and formerly owned by his dear friend, Helen Evans. He had lived there off and on for years, in one or another of the apartments. Later he lived in what is now the Black Range Winery. Here is where he took loving care of Helen in her last days in Hillsboro before she was taken to a nursing home in Albuquerque. That day, two years ago, I knew that seeing the house was a bittersweet experience for him because it had been the site of so much joy, and happiness, as well as profound sorrow.

As we approached the front of the house, Chester Carrara, his old friend, mining buddy, and another of Hillsboro's icons, was walking toward us. I recognize a photo op when I see it, so I just stood back and waited for those two old friends to show up in my viewfinder. They walked toward each other and shook hands, and then stood side by side, looking old, frail, but unmistakably themselves. Chet died within 6 months of that encounter. The photo evokes the bittersweet, late-in-life, meeting of old friends whose history is entwined and rich.

For every photo I took of Em, I have a dozen images in my mind that didn't make it to my camera. I loved him like a brother and we both felt a kinship that we attributed to the fact that our grandmothers went to school in Carlsbad at about the same time, and that meant they had to have known each other. He gave me an old photo of his maternal grandmother on a float filled with women from the Carlsbad area who were holding signs for women's suffrage. One of the women on the float is possibly my grandmother. It's hard to tell because the photo is dark, but I so want to believe that our grandmothers were friends back then; feisty young women demanding their right to vote, never suspecting that their future grandchildren would become dear friends.





Em, Embree, Sonny ... you are gone from this plane, but you will live on in vibrant color, as long as there is someone alive who knew you when you walked the desert, hills and mountains of Sierra County. They will tell your stories, as they heard them from you, and when the last one who knew you is gone, they will be read by others in your exact words.

## Embree's Life in His Own Words

*Susan Roebuck, another of Em's dearest friends, has taken on the Herculean task of transcribing dozens of hours of cassette tapes that he recorded over a period of several years. In collaboration with the Hillsboro Historical Society, Susan is publishing these stories, accompanied by photos of Em, his family and friends, as well as some of his own best photographs. The book will be out by the beginning of April and will be sold by the Hillsboro Historical Society (see the pre-order form on the back cover), which will receive the majority of the proceeds. The following is Susan's preface to the forthcoming book.*



Sonny Embree Hale the Reading Cowboy, Catherine Lucas / Stockimo / Alamy Stock Photo, Image ID S0YR90. Lucas is a free-lance photographer working from Las Cruces, NM.

People who knew Em or met him said, "You should record your life story!" In the years 2001 through 2006, Em recorded seven cassette tapes of his life story. When he began recording, he was living next to his mill at one of his mining claims. To get to his homesite, one traveled miles along a rough road that sometimes followed an arroyo bottom. His home was a 1980s 5<sup>th</sup>-wheel travel trailer located off a dirt track known as Cold Springs Road. Outside he had his fire, cast-iron cook pans, a recliner, dining table and chair, comfortable seating for visitors, a braided rug, and his bed. He finished recording the final tape when he lived near Berrenda Creek, in the same travel trailer with the same furniture arranged outside, with the added luxury of a water well and a windmill. He heated with a propane stove and had no electricity. Em had a natural gratitude for all of this, for his many friendships, for his family, for the "beautiful, beautiful pines," for rainbows, and stars. Billions of stars spanned his sky view at night as he settled down to sleep.

Em lived his life almost entirely outside. He recorded inside only once, and that's when it was too windy to record outside, so he sat in his pickup truck. I have kept his words exactly as spoken.

Everyone will remember Em's red pick-up trucks with stove wood in the holes in the truck bed. He also had a dandy gold Jeep that is featured in the film about him, "In Place Out of Time,"<sup>1</sup> and a big dump truck from the '30s that was a landmark in the Percha Creek flood plain for many years.

Em grew up all over Sierra County: Monticello, Kingston, Hillsboro, Hatch, Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences), and in the mountains where he and his dad spent summers camping while they built

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<sup>1</sup> *In Place Out of Time*, dir. Erin Hudson Schalk, Rotation Films, 2008, [www.rotationfilms.com/work](http://www.rotationfilms.com/work). "In Place Out of Time is a poetic portrait of a fourth generation New Mexican who sold his backhoe and picked up a camera in pursuit of a photographic quest. At the age of 65, Embree 'Sonny' Hale had a spark of inspiration and started a quixotic journey to take a picture of every petroglyph and pictograph in New Mexico. This film illustrates Hale's day-to-day triumphs, challenges and survival strategies as he pursues his passion to capture and preserve the memory of ancient inscriptions on rock. A true-life Western, *In Place Out of Time* is set in the stunning landscapes of New Mexico and captures the grit and gumption of a man who follows his heart and pursues his true life's work. Ultimately, this film takes a gentle and multi-layered look at an individual's eternal connection to community, landscape, and memory." Partially funded by the New Mexico Filmmaker New Visions New Mexico Award, 45 min. Also available at <https://vimeo.com/162893378>. -Ed.

ranch and mining roads, cleaned out stock ponds, and, in the summer of 1951, fought a forest fire when Em was 15.

As a grown man, Em earned his fame and acclaim far and wide in Sierra County and beyond, in part because his dad, who was also named Embree Harlow Hale, was already a legend in the county. Em grew up as “Sonny,” and most people knew him as Sonny his whole life. In his prime, he became known for his good looks, charm, and good humor, and for his work in mining, operating a backhoe, and for being a “powder man.” As a powder man he helped build trails in the Gila National Forest, prepare site foundations for cell towers atop of the Caballo Mountains, and blasted out graves in the Kingston graveyard, where bedrock makes digging a grave impossible in some locations of the graveyard. Many stories came out of these endeavors.

When Em was in his mid-sixties, he devoted the rest of his life to finding and photographing petroglyphs, and he became well-known for this work. Many met Em in his later years at the General Store Café, where he sold his petroglyph photographs.<sup>2</sup> It seems no one ever forgot meeting this man, in his well-worn jeans, boots, Western shirt and vest, and an old hat, his thick white hair, a kerchief ’round his neck. It was Em’s eyes that got to people, and something behind those eyes, something we all wish we had even if we don’t know we wish it. Innocence, openness, hard-won wisdom, ability to wonder and feel awe.

Em was a man who if something was funny, he’d laugh ’til he practically fell down. If he really got to laughing hard, he’d stand wide-legged, arms out, slapping his thighs, and sometimes he’d be staggering. He’d take his hat off and put it back on several times. He’d start over laughing before he was done with the first round because the sound of laughter reminded him how funny the thing was that was just said. In serious conversation, he’d step close and pay attention. And if he broke into a smile, you’d be dazzled. Em was a listener, a conveyer, an observer. He’d hear your every word, as he looked deep into your eyes and into your heart and soul. His eyes reflected back to you his feelings as you spoke. Someone once said about Em, “He feels things deeply.”

Because Em laughed at some of his stories as he recorded, I’ve kept that laughter in [the book] with this symbol: (L). I know all of you who knew Em will hear him laugh or chuckle when you see that. And I know you will hear him speaking, the way he spoke, as you read his words. I’m happy to give this gift to everyone who is related to Em, to everyone who knew him in his youth, who ever met and fell in love with him, who knew him over all the years. As Em would say, “Thank you. Thank you.”

Thank you, Embree.

*A memorial service for  
Embree Harlow Hale, Jr.*

*will be held*

*Saturday, April 17  
at two o’clock in the afternoon*

*Kingston Cemetery*

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<sup>2</sup> Embree published a collection of his petroglyph photographs under the title, *One Man’s Quest*, 2009. -Ed.

# The Worden Family in Hillsboro

## Part Two: Robert “Bob” Martin

Susan Frances Worden

The first article about the Worden family in Hillsboro was about William James Worden and his Irish bride, Lizzie Heslin Worden, who came to southern New Mexico in 1878.<sup>3</sup> Their son Frank Worden married Margaret Martin, sister of Bob Martin; Bob came to northern New Mexico in 1888, before moving to Sierra County. In addition to Margaret, four other of Bob Martin’s siblings followed him to southern New Mexico: Finis, William, Ralph, and Mary.

Frank Worden and Bob Martin were lifelong friends, and at times business partners. It was Bob who introduced his good friend to Margaret, and they were married in 1910. They named their son Bob Worden for Bob Martin.



Robert A. Martin.

Bob was the second of ten children born to Richard Martin and Margaret Inglis Martin. He was born in 1873 in Corinne, Utah, where his father worked as a butcher. By 1874 the family was living in Bingham Canyon, Utah, and

his father owned a dry goods, clothing, and notions store. His father was going blind, and by 1880 the family was living in Fort Herriman, in Southwest Utah, farming. In 1882 his family moved east to western Massachusetts because they hoped to find a cure for Richard’s blindness, and wanted to be near relatives.

When Bob came to New Mexico at the age of 15, he went to work on the Bell Ranch near Las Vegas, owned by his first cousin once removed, Wilson

Waddingham, a well-known cattle baron. Both Martin and Waddingham were descendants of William Waddingham (1785-1856) of Yorkshire, England, who died in 1856 in Kingston, Frontenac, Ontario. At first Wilson gave his young cousin a job at his bank in Kansas City, but Bob quickly talked Wilson into sending him to the ranch where he was the only kid among the seasoned cowboys. He worked at the Bell Ranch for about three years. While there, he and other cowboys drove 3,000 steers from the Bell Ranch to Amarillo, the last 80 miles without water.

He then took a job at the Bar Cross Ranch near Engle where he met and became good friends with Eugene Manlove Rhodes, the Western writer. Frank Worden was himself riding for the Bar Cross Ranch at this time and became lifelong friends with both Gene Rhodes and Bob Martin.

By 1900, Bob Martin and his younger brother Bill were boarders in the home of Addy Litton in Engle. In 1902 he purchased the stage line that ran between Engle and Chloride. The headquarters of the stage line, known as Black Range Stage Line, was at Cuchillo, then the hub of Sierra County. He also operated a mercantile establishment at Cuchillo.



Engle Ferry (Bob Martin 2nd from R) c. 1908

From *Sierra County Historical Society, History of Sierra County, New Mexico, 1979.*

<sup>3</sup> See “The Worden Family in Hillsboro, Part One: William and Lizzie Worden,” *Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos* 13/4 (November 2020).

During the time Bob was owner of the stage line, there were many hazards, such as crossing the Rio Grande on the Engle Ferry, which was operated by a cable. The ferry was large enough to carry two wagons and six horses. It would often get hung on a sand bar and be stranded for several hours. The channel of the riverbed was always changing, making it difficult to navigate. The stage traveled 52 miles between Engle and Chloride, daily, both ways.



*Photo from March 15, 1912: Bob Martin is in the black hat, his sister Rebecca (visiting from Massachusetts) is in white, and the woman in black is Bob's mother-in-law, Nancy Ann Hilliard.*

During 1907, when the Elephant Butte Dam was under construction, the stage hauled freight from Engle to the Dam. Bob served as an agent for the various freighting businesses at Cuchillo. He sold the stage business in 1913, as private transportation was becoming more common with the advent of the automobile.

Bob Martin was active in the Republican Party, and served as State Representative from Sierra County in 1907 and 1908. He also served on the Cattle Sanitary Board for four years and on the State Highway Commission for two years.

In 1910 he married Anna Baldwin. He owned an interest in the First National Bank of Hot Springs, and served as President from 1918 until 1927. According to the census in both 1930 and 1940, Bob and his wife Anna owned a horse farm near Newport Beach in Orange County, California. He also owned the Alamosa Ranch on Elephant Butte Lake.

Anna died in 1941, and in 1943 Bob married Alma Cox Pelfrey. He sold the ranch in 1958 and

retired with Alma to Hillsboro in 1960. At that time, he was interviewed by the Pioneers of New Mexico Foundation, and his interview is part of the Oral History Collection of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque (see the following page).



*First National Bank Building. Robert Martin in Car.*

*Bob Martin in front of the First National Bank, Hot Springs. From Sierra County Historical Society, History of Sierra County, New Mexico, 1979.*

Robert Martin died in 1965 and is buried in the Hillsboro Community Cemetery.



*Today, you can take the Martin Ranch Road east off of Interstate 25 (Exit 89), to reach the Alamosa Ranch in the Cañada Alamosa, northwest of Elephant Butte Reservoir. The ranch house and blacksmith shop on Old Ranch House Road, shown above, have been on the New Mexico register of historical places since 1984. Photo Joseph Britton.*

## Bob Martin's Memoires

*Below are excerpts from a transcript of Bob Martin's interview in Hillsboro on April 3, 1960.<sup>4</sup> This interview was part of an Oral History Project conducted by the New Mexico Pioneers Foundation. The grammatical errors and colloquial expressions have not been altered.*

### **Life as a cowpuncher**

I landed in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1888. I came from Adams, Massachusetts. I landed there a 15-year-old boy, and I went from there down to the Bell Ranch. I was there three years, the old Montoya Grant in San Miguel County. There was 656,000 acres in it. They branded 10 or 12 thousand calves in a year. They estimated they had something like 40 or 50 thousand cattle there. They ran three [chuck] wagons, ordinarily in the summertime. That was a pretty good outfit. The regular employment there was about 30 men, and during the roundups they would have 20 more men, probably around 50 men. I was there a year or two before I ever saw a white woman on the ranch. There was two or three native settlements along the Canadian River there, where just a handful of people lived.

When I left there, I really think I was a seasoned cowpuncher. I tried to make a hand. I got along fairly good with everybody, and all those sort of things, and I think most of the older men tried to make it easier on the kid. I was the only kid on the ranch. I never saw but one, what you might call, a fight. I saw one man knock another one down with a wooden tent pin one day. They got into a personal argument.

Cattle buyers that came into the country, if you couldn't put up a train load of cattle, they wouldn't talk to you. They were ordinarily buyers that came from Wyoming and the Dakotas and Montana, that summer grass country, and ship them up there and summer them through the country, and then when they got fat in the fall they went to the Chicago markets, or went east

somewhere. We was 80 miles from the railroad there. We took them in a herd [to the railroad].

I remember this, I was with an outfit that went from the Bell Ranch to a point out north of Amarillo, and they had in that herd of cattle—there was about 3,000 head of steers, two year olds and up, and they made one drive with that herd of cattle 80 miles without water.

There was one spot on the road with a windmill, a little place they called Granada, and water for the horses there, and I remember this about it. We was out on them plains as flat as a board, and you could look back and see where you ate your breakfast, you know. You could see the spot, maybe there was a little pile of cow chips left there. I remember this, the boss after the first night, he said to the fellas, "Now see here, you keep the cattle, don't attempt to drive them, just keep their heads turned that way, and when they want to walk, let them walk, and when they want to step off of the trail and graze, let them do that. If they want to lay down and sleep, why you stay with them, but keep their heads that way." And they told the cook, "This morning you drive up ahead of the cattle a mile or two, or two or three miles, and when these fellas come by, the cattle will be strung out for miles, when these fellas come by, you feed 'em, and you stay there until the herd all goes by, and then when you've fed the last man, you pick up your outfit and go to the lead cattle again, and do the same thing over."

I don't know how long it [the line of cattle] was, but I do know this. I was a kid and was up with the lead cattle, and they were naturally the big strong steers in the bunch. Them big steers headed in first, you know. The last four or five miles, it was all you could do to ride in front of 'em. They could smell that water I guess, [and you had to] hold 'em back as best you could. At the Palo Duro Draw [Ranch] there was just a sequence of big holes in the canyon, a few cottonwood trees. Them cattle hit them water holes, you know, and just jumped in 'em. That was about 10 o'clock in the morning, and at midnight

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<sup>4</sup> The interview is available on CD from the Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of

New Mexico, MSS 123 BC, Pioneers Foundation (New Mexico), Oral History Collection, Reel # 204.



that night the drags got there. They were strung out that far.

I don't remember that there was any particular loss. I think they might have, an animal might have gotten so sore footed it couldn't travel or something of that kind, and they left him. I don't believe there was any kind of material loss in that drive, and you know, to drive 80 miles, a herd of cattle without water. The last four or five miles before they got to that water, they was just trottin' you know. A few would try to get ahead of you, and try to push you out of the way, you know. They was goin'!!

There was two wagons, the cook and the swamper, and the horse wrangler. I'd say there was about 20 men besides that. That was through the XIT [Ranch] territory. Some English syndicate owned that. They got three million acres of that plains land up there for building the Texas Capitol.

That's what it was. There's no embellishment put upon that statement, that's true!! From the beef pasture in the Bell Ranch where they started from, I'd say it [the entire drive] was pretty close to 200 miles, probably a little less. You couldn't get a bunch of men together that would know how to do that today (even if there were no fences and the land was open). The old-time cowpuncher's gone. He's a thing of the past, he's like the buggy. There's a few of us old fellas might have seen that, but there's no new ones comin' on, you know. All of the cattle outfits today, and all of the cow country, it's all fenced up now, and people ride the fences in a jeep. A lot of our ranchers haven't hardly got a horse.

[After the Bell ranch] I came to Engle, New Mexico. I went from Kansas City to Midland, Texas, and the outfit there was ready to come to New Mexico. I came across the country from Midland, Texas, with about 50 head of saddle horses. There was three of us. They had a chuck wagon. We came across the country with those horses and landed in Engle on the 8th day of May, 1892. That was 500 miles easy. I remember we came across the Sacramento Mountains there, I don't know how we done it. I know that we went down some hills that were so darn steep we cut

trees down and tied them to the back of the wagon, the axle, to keep it from tippin' over forward [laughs]. We finally got down to Dog Canyon, and after Dog Canyon, we had a road all the way to Engle, such as it was, a wagon road you could get over.

### ***The Fountain Trial***

*Interviewer:* Were you in the country when Col. Fountain and his son were killed [in 1896]?

*Bob Martin:* Yes, I was here, and I attended that trial [in Hillsboro in 1899]. Here's what Gov. Curry told me. I'm inclined to think that he probably knew as much about it as any living man, except the participants. I think that Oliver Lee and Jim Gilliland, they were the principals, and there was another fella, Billy McNew. I think he went kind of cuckoo. They were the fellas that was on the inside if there was any inside to it. I think in the trial and all those kind of things, they knew more about that than ever came out in the trial. There was something hidden about it that never did come out, but George Curry told me this. There was a bad Mexican that lived in Tularosa, and he disappeared at the same time that the Fountain murder was committed. He left Tularosa, and nobody ever saw him again. Now you can make your own deductions. It was Curry's idea that he was the man that really done the job. He might have done it for hire. Col. Fountain and the little boy left Tularosa and started to Cruces and got around the point of the White sands there somewhere. Somebody held 'em up there, and the boy and Fountain disappeared. They never could trail 'em, never found out anything about 'em. That was the end of it.

Oliver Lee and Jim Gilliland were indicted and tried for it. I attended part of the trial at Hillsboro. The one thing that I do remember [about the trial] that stuck clearly in my mind. Tom Tucker was on the stand and testifying about a certain horse that Oliver Lee had ridden, and about the great endurance of the horse, and all those sort of things, and in his testimony he said that the horse's hind feet was bigger than his front feet. The prosecution seized upon that to impeach his testimony, and called three or four witnesses, a

horse shoer there in Hillsboro, and other people familiar with horses. Thomas B. Capburn, he was the prosecuting attorney, and Harry Dougherty of Socorro was aiding him, and on the other side there was Judge Fall and H. B. Ferguson. After these questions had been asked of these people that were familiar with horses, Judge Fall, he got up with a very nice little talk, and he said to the jury, "We will say that that was just a slip of the tongue of Mr. Tucker, that he had intended to say that the horse's front feet were larger than his hind feet," and he looked around at Mr. Capburn, and he said, "My friend here, Mr. Capburn, is always looking for cruel motives in other people." And Capburn looked at him with those big blue eyes and said, "Judge, I have good reason for doing so, by reason of my association." Now, I remember that. They were acquitted.

### ***Friendship with Eugene Manlove Rhodes***

One of the things I remember, you've heard of Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Well, I expect I knew him as well as any man. I associated with him, went around with him for days at a time, weeks at a time on roundups and all those kind of things over a period of more than ten years. I knew him, he was quite a character. He could do the darndest things, you know. He was one of those kinds of fellas; he was just as unpredictable as the wind. You never knew what he was gonna do next, you know.

I remember one day we'd been over across the tracks to Engle, we had a camp there. Of course if we'd eat at the Hotel it'd cost 50 cents. It didn't cost anything to go back to camp and cook your dinner, so we went back there, and as we went through the door, the poker table sittin' there, there was an old abandoned store building. That's what we had for a ranch house. There was three or four posts, logs upright, went up through the center of the building, they were pine trees that had been adzed down, smooth on two sides. They were probably about six inches thick. They were probably about ten, twelve feet high. They went up as roof supports, supported the roof. He picked up this gun and he said, "Bob, I'll go around on the other side of one of those posts, and you shoot at me." "What for?" "I want to get the sensation of how it feels to be shot at." What

a darn silly thing that was to do! Why would I shoot on a level with his head, but I did. That bullet went in half-way through that post, you know. You could write a book about that fella.

Rhodes was the kind of a fella, he didn't care anything about food, and he didn't care anything about clothes. I don't think he knew what he ate half the time and he didn't care. He liked to smoke cigarettes and drink black coffee and play poker; he was a poor poker player though. One of the things about him, why he never had any money. If he could find a poker game, why in he'd go.



The Saturday Evening Post, 20 August 1910, illustration for the Western fiction serial, "The Line of Least Resistance," by Eugene Manlove Rhodes. Illustrator, N. C. Wyeth. Public domain, via WikiCommons.

I know a fellow that told this story about him. He was going down to Silver City one day with him. He got into a poker game down there. Fella seen him in there gamin'. "Gene, why don't you get out of that game? The darn fellas are just robbin' you." "Well," he says, "I know it, but it's the only poker game here." That's the kind of a geek he was, but he was a man of broad knowledge too, and he was a fella that read everything he laid his hands on. He was the kind of a fella that led what you might call a strenuous life, never was idle. He was doin' something every wakin' minute of the day. He was the kind of fella, if he came along and you was cleanin' out the well, why he'd want you to come out of the well, and he would go down and do it. No matter what you were doin', putting up a windmill or anything else, why by golly, he made a hand, and he didn't care how hard the

work was, the harder it was, the better he liked it, dig ditches or anything else. At the same time, I think he was particularly adapted to writing. He told me at that day and time there were many plots he had in his head about stories he was gonna write, you know. Eventually he did do that. Well, you know when a fella gets his story on the front page of the *Saturday Evening Post*, it means he is recognized as having literary ability, don't it, and he had many of them.

I remember one time I went down to see him. We lived about 80 miles apart in California at one time. I went down there and got the *Post* that week, and there was a story of his in three parts. I forgot the name of it. I said, "Eugene, what'd you get for a story like that?" "Oh," he said, "by golly, I'm ashamed to tell you. I never knew money was so easy to get." He said, "I got \$7,500 for that." I said, "How long it'd take you to write it?" He said, "Oh, maybe I was monkeying with that thing three or four months. I'd done many other things in the same time." He said, "Maybe I'd write a chapter of that thing. If it didn't suit me, I'd tear it up." He said, "When you write you have to be in the mood to do it. You have days when your mind don't work just right."

He was quite a remarkable fella. I remember one little episode that happened up here at Cuchillo one time. I had that store up there, been there a long time. I had a stage line that run from Engle to Chloride, 52 miles both ways, and I had a farm to look after. I was pretty busy. I got word by the grapevine that I was goin' to have two very distinguished visitors over the line the next day. They were Jerome K. Jerome. He was the prosecutin' attorney of the City of New York, ... and the other fella was William Kent. He was President of the Municipal League of Chicago. I guess that was the first League that was formed there to clean up the Burroughs of Chicago. They were both big fellas. I was kind of a country boy, a cowpuncher fella. I didn't know if I could talk to them. If they wanted to know anything about this country I could tell 'em. If they got into politics, I didn't know if I was well enough informed to talk back to 'em. That morning I was kinda bothered about that, kinda worried about it, how I was goin' to get rid of them fellas, and by golly, I looked around there and here come Eugene

Rhodes from some place, as if from nowhere, ridin' an old half broke horse, half give out. I knew right then my troubles were all over.

The stage finally came. These two big men came in the back door. There was kind of a raised office, four or five chairs, desk and things. "Well gentlemen, just make yourselves comfortable," I said. "Maybe you'd enjoy a drink after that long, rough ride." They'd come 45 miles in a bolted buckboard, and they said they believed they would. "Well," I said, "just follow me."

Rhodes was already in the saloon. His head was buried in a book or a paper or something he had there. I knew where he was. They got in the saloon and I asked them what'd they take, and they said they believed they'd take a drink of whiskey, so I got out the regular whiskey we had there, good whiskey, the same kind of whiskey they served at the El Dorado Bar, the Elks Club and things like that in Albuquerque, only kind of whiskey we had. Bought in barrels, cost two and a half a gallon in the barrel, and they poured out liberal drinks. Jerome drank his whiskey, looked around and said, "By golly I have drunk worse whiskey than that, but not often." Well, I wanted to say something in defense of my whiskey. I couldn't make up my mind just what it was. I didn't want to be impertinent, and about that time while I was trying to think of something, when Jerome landed this one: "I don't see what in hell you fellas want with statehood down here. When the President of the United States could appoint you better men to your offices than you could elect to save your lives."

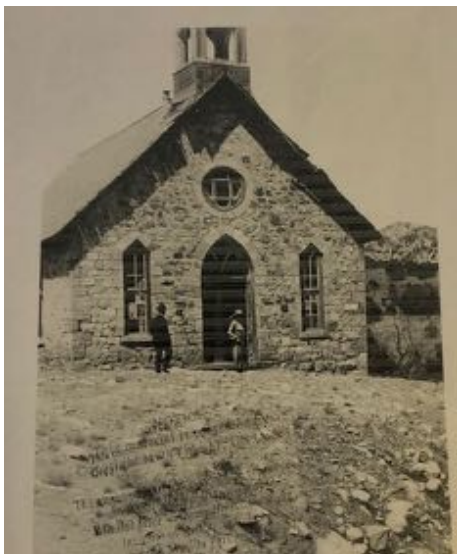
Rhodes, he laid down his paper and looked at him, and he said something like this: "I'll grant you that that could be true, but at the same time we're not a damn bit worse off than a lot of the older states," and then he recited something that had been almost a national scandal where a United States grand jury had been indicted for something they done. I don't remember what it was, but they were indicted, and it was spread on the headlines of the paper. He recited that to them, to Jerome, and said among other things, "I doubt whether this state would ever be so degrading as to get into a mess of that kind," or something like that. And then Kent put some

chips in the pot. I don't know what he said ... mentioned Chicago, a vile city, the cradle of anarchy. It hadn't been too long since they had that notorious Pullman strike there .... The Governor [and] Teddy Roosevelt had sent the army in there to quell it at that time. I had to go and prepare some food for 'em. Rhodes was still talkin' to 'em. The three of 'em ate together. Rhodes was keepin' 'em busy, and after they ate, I didn't see anything more of 'em that day until the stage was ready to leave. I called all aboard and Rhodes came around and said, "Say, Bob, can you send my horse over by a freighter? I want to get on the stage and ride over ..."

## CORRECTING KINGSTON MYTHS

### The Union Church

*Barbara Lovell, of the Kingston School House Museum, writes that she is using their Facebook page to "debunk some of the rumors about Kingston and to provide a bit of historical info." Here's one example of her efforts: the true story of the construction of Kingston's Union Church.*



*Photo courtesy of Barbara Lovell*

We've heard the story over and over that the people of Kingston decided, in 1892, that they needed a church. They passed the hat in the saloons and gambling halls and, in one night, collected \$1,500—enough to build a church. However, the real story is a little bit different.

Kingston was founded in 1882. While we don't know the actual date, it wasn't too long before church services were being held in people's homes and local businesses. There were several ministers — Reverends Hardenbrook, Choat, Thornton and Chase. Reverend Harwood was the Superintendent of the New Mexico [Methodist] mission. In 1887 they had established a 3-member board of trustees, with a treasurer, building committee, stone mason and carpenter to plan for the construction of a church. The total cost estimate to build the church was \$2,500, of which they had \$1,000 from donations and \$500 from the church mission.

However, Kingston was a wild town and not everyone agreed that church services were necessary. In 1888, Rev. Chase wrote a letter detailing the progress being made toward raising funds to build a church. He also quoted a comment made to him by a local: "I'd rather let my house to a prostitute than a minister." But that didn't deter him.

After the two public school buildings burned in the fire of 1890, the school board decided to sell the property and the church trustees bought it. The Kingston church was not completed until 1892. Maybe they did pass the hat and raise \$1,500 in one night. It seems possible since they had been trying to raise the money for some time. We'll never know for sure if that part of the story is true. But we do know that Kingston finally got its church which remained standing until 1938 when it was dismantled for building materials. Our museum has a kneeling bench from the church, all that remains of its history.



*Photo courtesy of Black Range Museum*



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

**The Hillsboro Historical Society**

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

[www.hillsboronmhistory.info](http://www.hillsboronmhistory.info)

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[hillsboronmhistory.info/membership-subscription](http://hillsboronmhistory.info/membership-subscription),  
or fill out and return the form in this newsletter.

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

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



*Editor's Note*

In this first issue of what is now the fourteenth  
volume of *Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos*, we  
introduce what I hope will become a regular  
feature of the newsletter: a tribute to one of the  
many iconic figures of our area who in his or her  
life played a significant role in the communities of  
Hillsboro and Kingston.

Appropriately enough, the first installment of this  
series is a memoir of Embree “Sonny” Hale,  
written by one of his many close friends, Jan  
Haley. When Embree died last November at age  
84, his obituary noted that:

*The most important thing about Sonny Hale is that  
he had no known enemies. He accepted everyone  
he met. He did not care what someone looked like,  
who they loved, or their political affiliation. He  
simply saw people as fellow humans who deserved  
to be treated kindly and with respect. Because of  
his remarkable attitude, he was admired and  
cherished by all who knew him. (articobits.com)*

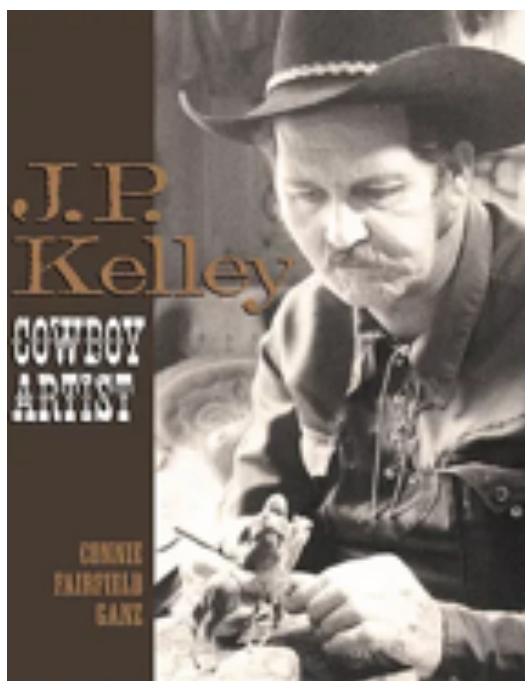
In that regard, Embree is exemplary of one of the  
most distinctive characteristics that lies at the heart  
of the Hillsboro and Kingston communities: a  
respect and acceptance of all the sorts and  
conditions of people who pass this way.

As I walk around these two towns, I’m struck by  
the strong sense one gets of just how much living  
has been done in these places, and by so many  
different people—some who have spent their  
whole life here, some who settled here in later life,  
some who have come and gone, some who just  
passed through briefly. But each has found a place.

So this Editor’s Note comes as an invitation to  
anyone who would like to pay tribute to another of  
our friends and companions who were historically  
part of making this community such a distinctive  
and kindly place, to do so in a short memoir. We  
could fill many volumes with a multitude of  
colorful and *simpatico* stories!

-- Joe Britton

## BOOKS OF LOCAL INTEREST



### **J. P. Kelley: Cowboy Artist**

Connie Fairfield Ganz  
(Published privately, 2020)

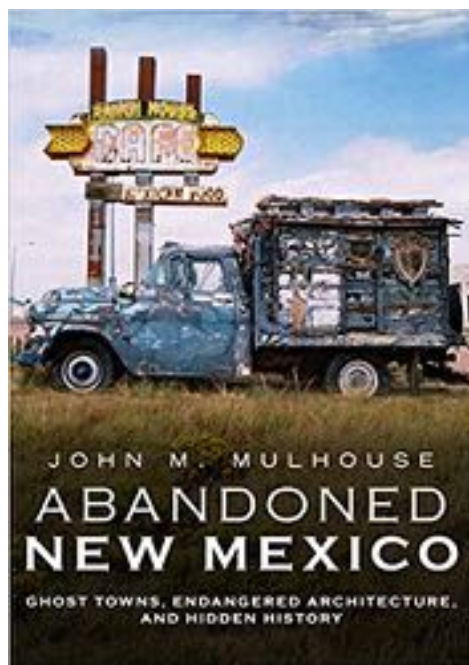
John Philip “J.P.” Kelley (1927-2005) was descended from Andrew Kelley, who started out in the Cañada Alamosa area of Sierra County, became a sutler at the Ojo Caliente reservation, spoke Apache and was well respected by the Warm Spring Apaches, had a general merchandise store, became a rancher in the Las Palomas area, moved to Kingston and then Hillsboro, and when he died was buried in the Kingston cemetery.

Growing up in Arizona, J.P. himself rode the range as a cowboy before developing an active career as a Western artist. Moving to the Flathead Valley in Montana, he flourished as a cast bronze sculptor. After retiring to Oregon, he focused on pen and ink drawings of cowboy life.

In this new, privately published book, Connie Fairfield Ganz offers a retrospective look at his life and work. It is available for

viewing at the Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences, and through the Hillsboro Historical Society. For more information, see [www.jpkelleyart.com](http://www.jpkelleyart.com).

*Connie Fairfield Ganz, who was a close family friend of Kelley, is currently preparing an article on Andrew Kelley for this newsletter.*



### **Abandoned New Mexico: Ghost Towns, Endangered Architecture, and Hidden History**

John M. Mulhouse  
(America through Time, 2020), \$24

This book encompasses huge swathes of time and space. As rural populations decline and young people move to ever-larger cities, much of our past is left behind. Out on the plains or along now-quiet highways, changes in modes of livelihood and transportation have moved only in one direction. Stately homes and hand-built schools, churches and bars—these are not just the stuff of individual lives, but of an entire culture. New Mexico, among the least-dense states in the country, was crossed by both the Spanish and Route 66; the railroad stretched toward every hopeful mine; and outlaws died in its arms. Its pueblos are among the oldest human habitations in the U.S., and the first atomic bomb was detonated nearly dead in its center. John Mulhouse spent almost a decade documenting the forgotten corners of a state like no other through his popular City of Dust project. From the sunbaked Chihuahuan Desert to the snow-capped Moreno Valley,

you can travel through John's words and pictures across the legendary Land of Enchantment—including, of particular local interest, to the remains of Lake Valley, the legendary silver mining town.



## KEEP THE LIGHTS ON!

### 2021 Membership Application/Renewal

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.

**Yes! I want to help HHS to “keep the lights on” as well as to grow and maintain its historic sites. I will become a member/renew my membership by annual payment or by the new monthly-giving program as follows:**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### ONE-TIME ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021: \$25.00

Additional contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gift membership(s) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(Please provide name, address, and email for each person on a separate sheet)

Total 2021 annual contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Payment information below)

**MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM:** As an alternative to a one-time annual membership, the monthly program requires a \$15 minimum pledge per month payable by credit card (Visa or MasterCard only). Please choose your monthly giving amount:

\$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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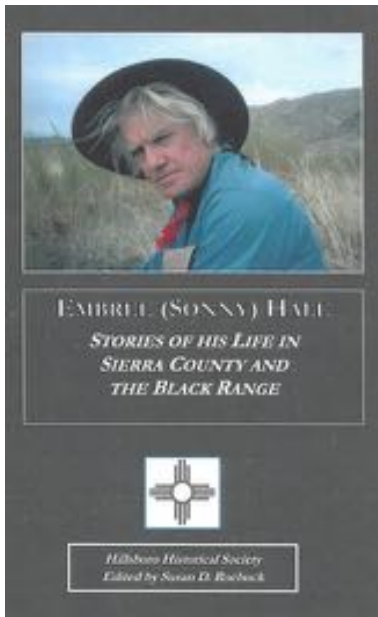
Hillsboro Historical Society

P. O. Box 461

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**THANK YOU!**

# HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS



We are very pleased to announce the publication of *Embree (Sonny) Hale: Stories of His Life in Sierra County and the Black Range*. This transcription of Embree's own recorded memories is edited by Susan Roebuck, and is the latest volume to be published by the Hillsboro Historical Society. The book is expected to be available by April 1 at a cost of \$20.00. However, to celebrate this new publication, pre-ordered copies are offered to current HHS members at \$15.00 each.

We are also happy to extend this special member discount price of \$15 to our other HHS publications: *Around Hillsboro* (2011), *River of Spirits* (2017), *Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos: The First Ten Years* (2018), and *Sadie Orchard* (2019).

Any questions about this discount offer may be addressed to [gbills@unm.edu](mailto:gbills@unm.edu). The Black Range Museum handles all sales, but since it is closed during the pandemic, you may direct telephone inquiries if essential to Garland Bills, 575-297-0186.

## HHS Publications Member Discount Order Form

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