Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos

Vol. 12 No. 2 Hillsboro Historical Society May 2019



REPORT ON ANNUAL MEETING

WRAP-UP ON MINING HISTORY
EARLY DAYS OF THE COURTHOUSE
MEMORIES OF THE BLACK RANGE MUSEUM
THE THURMONDS OF KINGSTON

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I address our readers of the progress that the Hillsboro Historical Society has made since my last message to you. I am pleased to report that upon embarking on two huge projects, the Society continues to accomplish great strides in the preservation of the history of Hillsboro and surrounding area.

The Courthouse and Jail Property is evolving into an intriguing and wonderful site for outdoor gatherings and historical interpretation, thanks to Nichole Trushell, Steve Morgan and Gary Gritzbaugh. Our Annual Members Meeting on April 27th was a huge success that informed the attending members of the progress we have made on making the site a safer and more interesting place to visit. We proposed a protective pavilion for the Jail and a ramada for the Sullivan House. The day concluded with a tour of the Black Range Museum (BRM) to see the ongoing reconstruction of the facility, an important revelation to all.

Thanks to Black Range Construction and New Mexico Water and Electric Company, the Museum continues to progress with the completion of a new roof, insulation, electrical upgrade, new ceilings and plastering of walls. During the Annual Meeting, I explained that our efforts to "restore" the building is taking on the form of "reconstruction" due to the need for stabilization, safety and practicality. I am pleased with the balance that the Building Committee has attained in this regard and am confident that we will soon have a wonderful museum that the Society will be proud of. It will contribute greatly to the community by attracting visitors from abroad. We are striving for a grand opening in June.

These projects would have not been possible without the generous donations of time and money that members and non-members alike have contributed. Thank you for your support. Special thanks to Nichole Trushell for the idea of selling window and door sponsorships at the BRM. Thanks to the Exhibit Committee for its hard at work planning opening and future exhibits.

I thank the Board of Directors for its thoughtful and enthusiastic guidance. It is a pleasure to work with such an inspiring group of dedicated and talented individuals who understand our mission and are willing to give of their time and expertise in making our efforts successful. I am proud of our accomplishments and look forward to the amazing results of our collaborative efforts.

Steve Dobrott



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

Hillsboro Historical Society

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

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

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Publications: Harley Shaw, Robert Barnes, and Garland Bills.

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

Museum exhibits: Robbin Tuttle, Barbara Lovell, Garland Bills, Leah Tookey

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

Hillsboro Historical Society News

Site Cleanup and Fencing





Fencing around the jail and cleanup of the site and the adobe house were accomplished this month; we got this done before the annual meeting. Steve Dobrott, Garland Bills, Steve Morgan, Linda King, Steve Elam and Nichole Trushell worked on the posts, rock removal, fence hanging, adobe and site cleanup. Above, Steve Dobrott and Steve Morgan dig out one of the original window frames from the courthouse that had been buried in the wash on the west boundary of the property. Below, the fencing crew at work.







HHS Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held April 27 at the HHS Courthouse-Jail Site. The event drew approximately 30 members; this number includes board members.

Steve Dobrott welcomed members and gave organizational updates, Garland Bills spoke about the Black Range Museum remodel, Harley Shaw showed members HHS publications including the 10-year anthology of our newsletter articles and the new book on Sadie Orchard. Nichole Trushell highlighted accomplishments at the Courthouse-Jail Site; she created a slideshow of the Black Range Museum remodel and of progress at the Courthouse-Jail Site over 2018-2019. This show was available to members for viewing during the meeting.

Nichole also showed drawings of the proposed jail protective roof structure and of the shade structure for the east side of the adobe building that stands on site. The jail roof drawing was created by Steve Dobrott. Nichole noted that Brian O'Dell estimated \$10,000 for materials and construction of this protective structure. The drawing of the shade structure for outside the adobe building was created by Steve Morgan; he approximated cost on the shade structure at \$6500 including labor. This project would go out to bid, or possibly be built by volunteers, which would reduce costs tremendously.

Our local pickers provided entertainment for the event --- we thank them for the music! Sitting in the shade of the canopy which Steve Dobrott arranged for us, listening to music and enjoying snacks and beverages, members seemed to appreciate the day. The day culminated with a Museum tour for members by Garland Bills. Thank you to all board members for providing snacks. The event was successful and cost the HHS nothing!

Thank you to Harley and Penny for photography at work days and at the event.





BLACK RANGE MUSEUM UPDATE

The Black Range Museum has been closed and undergoing extensive renovations since last August, renovations made possible thanks to the tremendous financial support of the HHS membership.

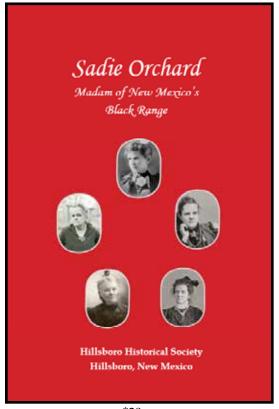
As you know, the building has a new metal roof, a couple of rebuilt walls, and solid bond beams on top of all walls that stabilize the entire structure. We now have a fully insulated attic and new tongue-and-groove board ceilings in five rooms as well as a demonstration room with a historic viga and latilla ceiling (but without the twelve inches of mud insulation that used to filter through).

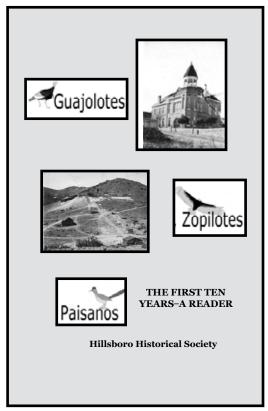
Moreover, with the complete electrical rewiring we will have new lighting in each room appropriate to a museum and exterior lighting for security. Brand new heating and cooling systems have been installed that will provide not only comfort for our staff and visitors but also protection for the artifacts displayed.

In addition, the walls of all eight rooms are at this moment being repaired and re-plastered and will have a lovely Navajo white finish. All four exterior doors are now functional and the three most vulnerable are protected with iron security doors. And finally, we have pledges from HHS members for door repairs and the five new windows that are being built and will be installed soon.

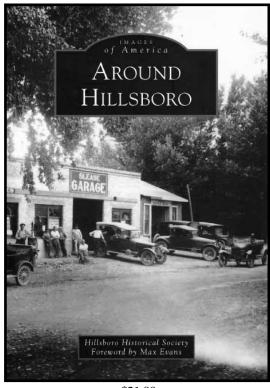
Also, our Exhibits Committee is meeting regularly to plan the layout of each room and what will be displayed. We hope to re-open the museum soon, but there will be lots of cleaning, moving, and preparation to be done. Many hours of volunteer effort are needed. Please join us!

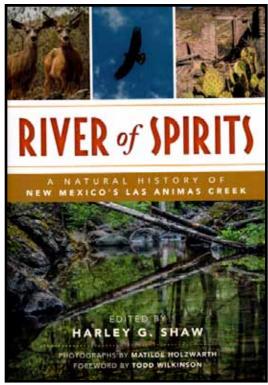
PUBLICATIONS





\$20 \$20





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HHS, P. O. Box 486, Hillsboro, NM 88042. hgshaw@windstream.net Member Discounts apply

MINING HISTORY--A WRAPUP

In the previous two newsletters, we've viewed the importance of mining to the settlement and growth of the tri-town region of Kingston, Hillsboro, and Lake Valley. Mining here, as in much of the western United States, was a boom and bust phenomenon. Although gold and silver stimulated settlement of our three towns, the economic importance of mining was short-lived. Kingston peaked and declined quickly as the mines played out; Lake Valley persisted somewhat longer due to discovery of a major silver lode; Hillsboro thrived until 1938, but mainly due to its status as the Sierra County Seat. The region surrounding the three communities became ranching land, and ranching as an economic force has outlived mining in the area for a century. Thus the direct economic impact of mining was modest, even though all three towns are known even today as mining towns.

However, according to a 1932 historical assessment by T. A. Rickard* a major impact of early mining on our region was its role in creating and sustaining confrontations with the local Apaches and the resulting involvement of U. S. Army troops to force what amounted to a final solution for the natives.

Rickard, a mining engineer by vocation, notes:

"Despite Indian oppositions, which obviously was legitimate, the prospectors in the Southwest persisted in going upon their lands to dig for ore. After the Civil War every military expedition was also a prospecting tour, because the soldiers were on the lookout for possible mines, but the reverse is also true, that every prospecting party had to be a military expedition, on account of probable attacks by the Apaches. The removal of the Indian menace greatly facilitated prospecting in the Southwest. It was not practicable to prospect and to watch the Indians at the same time: to hold a pick in one hand and a rifle in the other might be deemed heroic, but it was incompatible with profitable industry (p 267)."

Rickard later notes (p 268):

"In May, 1860, a party of Californians led by Colonel Snively discovered gold in Rich gulch, near the site of Pinos Altos Unfortunatley, the Apaches made several raids and seized the horses of the miners. On September 27, 1861, a band of Indians 500 strong, was driven off after a severe fight, but Thomas Mastin, who commanded a company of volunteers,

was killed, as well as several others.... Virgil Mastin persisted in remaining. He could not do much however, on account of Indian depredations, untill 1866, when he organized the Pinos Altos Mining Company... A Mill of 15 stamps, each weighing 700 pounds, was erected, but it did not operate continuously, treating only about a thousand tons per annum for a yield of \$35,000 during 1867 and 1868."

The Santa Rita Mines and those at Pinos Altos became the jumping off point for prospectors who worked their way over the Black Range to the area around Hillsboro. Many of these were young men who had arrived with army troops and stayed after they mustered out. Rickard notes (p 270):

"General James H. Carleton encouraged mining, when he was stationed in New Mexico during 1863. Many of his soldiers had mined in California and were keen to discover gold while serving with him."

Carleton was known for his harsh treatment of the Indians and his willingness to exterminate them. In 1864, Carleton wrote Congress, "Would it not be wise for Congress to take early action . . . to open roads to give force to subjugate the Indians, to give mail facilities, to claim rights of seigniorage in the precious metals, which will help us to pay our debts?"

Rickard records (p 265):

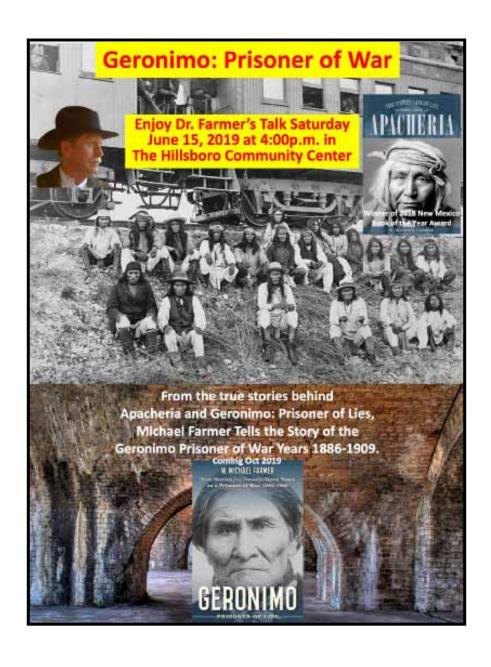
"The law of invasion was put into polite words by Captain A. T. Mahan . . . 'The claim of an inidgenous population to retain indefinitely control of territory depends not upon a natural [birth] right but upon . . . developing it in such a manner as to insure the natural right of the world at large that resources should not be left idle but be utilized for the general good.' Rickard comments. . . As to the exploitation of natural resources, one might put in a word for posterity, whose 'rights' are ignored by a too previous use of them."

Certainly such words written by a mining engineer in 1932 were both prescient and striking. Thus it was the combined force of prospectors, many of them military or ex military, challenging the Indians for ownership of the land and demanding support from the Army, that prolonged the conflicts with the Natives. Dugan and Stitzel, who found the ore that brought about settlement of Hillsboro were both ex Army. They wandered over the Black Range from Georgetown, one of the mining towns associated with the Santa Rita/Pinos Altos mining complex.

^{*}Rickard, T. A. 1932. A History of American Mining. McGraw Hill Company, NY.

Founding of Hillsboro and Kingston came near the end of the Apache conflicts, but miners and associated settlers of the region briefly bore the brunt of Apache anger, and periodically formed their own Militia to fight. Considering the short life of mining, you have to wonder if it was worth it.

Today, many residents seeking a quiet lifestyle feel threatened by mining and can relate to the attitudes of the Apaches. No longer are "natives" confronting soldiers and prospectors with gunplay. The miners of our time are large corporations backed by money enough to hire lawyers and wear down resistance in court. The current equivalent of the cavalry is the BLM, forced to deal with their own conflicting regulations—the outdated mining laws which give power to mining interests, and more recent environmental regulations designed to regulate that power. While minerals are still the excuse in seeking permits, the mining laws are now used as means of capturing the more basic resources of space and water. With big business and big government collaborating we still need to hopefully "put in a word for posterity."



HISTORY OF SIERRA COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL--A BEGINNING

Now that HHS owns the Sierra County Courthouse and Jail site, we feel an obligation to begin to dig deeper into the history of the buildings. Up until now, about the only historical event played out in that venerable building that has made print is the Fountain Trial. Certainly that event and the mystery that surrounds it deserves the attention it has received. But when one looks at the many photographs taken of the fine old brick

edifice, vou can't help but wonder about the other dramas that played out there between 1884 and 1938--some 55 years that enclosed the end of the Apache wars, World War I, the 1918 flu epidemic. and the prelude to World War II. It began when local travel was by foot, horseback, buggy, or stagecoach and ended with the beginnings of national travel by twoengined aircraft. If I



remember correctly, in 1939, someone watched the first flickering images on a primitive TV screen. Yet little is known about the trials--both criminal and domestic--that occurred in the courtroom and what life-changing deeds and contracts were recorded in the courthouse ledger.

And much of that ledger still exists, saved and stored by Geronimo Springs Museum. A detailed history of the first 55 years of Sierra County, when Hillsborough was the County Seat is yet to be written.

However, in the February, 2012 Chaparral Guide, published by the T or C Herald, Charles Kreher gave us a beginning. The Editor's note introducing Kreher's article notes:

"Charles Kreher, former Editor of the Herald researched... Volume A of the commissioners records of Sierra County, which chronicles the actual founding of the county April 26-27, 1884, and runs until Dec. 21, 1914. The complete records were kept in flowing, Spencerian handwiting through Jan. 14, 1905. Beginning with April 3, 1905, the minutes were typewritten. the Herald article is too long to reproduce here, but here are some key quotes from the records pertinent to the courthouse and jail:

April 25-26, 1884. "Voted that the chairman of the board be instructed to rent the building of two rooms adjoining the Hydraulic Co.'s office of F. W. Parker for

the temporary use of the county officials."

This brief paragraph might occupy a local historian for a month or more. Based upon our best information, the Hydraulic Co.'s office was none other than the building that is now the Black Range Museum--HHS's other possession. That building once had an additional room (maybe two) that connected it with what is now Sue's Antiques. Most likely the first county govern-

ment resided in that now-missing portion of the museum.

And, of course, F. W. Parker was a young attorney who eventually became the judge who presided over the Fountain trial.

Further down in the same minutes, we find: "Voted to let contract to Lockhart Hopper Bros. & Co., Kingston to build a temporary jail or lockup for \$375 in county warrants said

jail to be built of 2X6 lumber spiked together in the form of a box with grated window 1012 inches and up and shed roof, same to be erected within 20 days."

So the nice old rock structure we now own was not the first Sierra County hoosegow. One suspects this was not a comfortable place to be incarcerated on the best of days. I doubt that the heating and cooling system considered the comfort of the prisoners.

On May 19, 1884, the board "voted that the chairman provide three bull rings for the county jail." One wonders if the first breakout had already occurred and a more reliable way to secure prisoners was needed. Being chained to a bull ring definitely didn't improve comfort conditions.

Then on June 16: "A special meeting was called . . . at which an order was placed for three chilled iron jail cells from Lockhart, Hopper Bros, and Co., agreeing to furnish and set up cells in the building at Hillsborough for \$2,300 to be delivered within 30 days. It was also voted to accept the plans of the architect, J. R. Randall of Albuerque, along with his latest suggestion that the jail occupy the basement of the courthouse."

This leaves us wondering if Mr. Randall's plans were a first cut at designing a new courthouse. I doubt that the offices at the Hydraulic Mining company building had a basement.

Subsequent meetings also deal with housing or

transporting prisoners, a subject that seemed to take up a lot of time in county meetings. You have to wonder what criminal events were keeping them so busy.

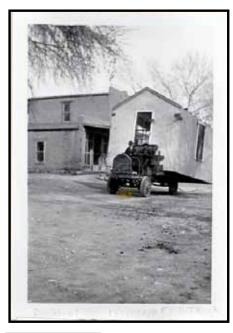
Planning of the new courthouse appears in 1892, when "... the county had progressed to the point where a new courthouse and jail could be built. In the Jan. 6 meeting, it was ordered that a call for plans and bids for a courthouse, cost not to exceed \$8,000, be published." At the Feb 15 meeting, bids were received and examined and on April 12, "... Mr. Matsolf, the low bidder having failed to furnish a bond, it was ordered that the contract be and is hereby let to the next lowest bidder Gus Reingart for \$9840... whereupon the said Reingart presented a bond for the faithful performance of a courthouse as per plans and specifications furnished by Buchanan and Carmer, architects."

On January 14, 1893, the commissioners authorized buying suitable furniture and curtains for the courthouse, "such expenditure not to exceed \$500.

By July 5, 1893, the commission was advertising the old courthouse properties for sale, reserving the steel jail cells. By February, 1894, the county was seeking bids for construction of the new jail. On February 6, the Sheriff was instructed to employ all prisoners confined for petty offenses to be employed in excavating the property for the new jail.

The records reported by Mr. Kreher provide many other excerpts regarding county business during those formative years, all raising more questions than they answer.

In 1979, the Sierra County Historical Society published *History of Sierra County*, which focused mainly upon the early residents of the county. A deeper history, warts and all, taken from county files and old newspapers, is yet to be written.



"Moving the jail." This may be the only photo we have of the original Sierra County jail. Undoubtedly taken after the new jail was built and the old building sold for other uses.

A Young Girl's Visits to the Black Range Museum in the 1970s

Bobbie Ostler

Today we have heavy clouds and rain as I sit at my Great Grandmother Margaret Reid-Armer's oak table writing. The rain and clouds are a rare treat for this side of Albuquerque. The rain takes me back to the rare times I slipped away from friends to visit the Black Range Museum. I'd slip away from swimming, bicycles and dirt bikes and step back into the past.

The Black Range Museum, then run by Mrs. Key, was always special to me. I was proud that our village had its own museum and I didn't see any reason to visit any other museum. I liked the wood floors and the overall hush of the old building. My grandpa, Sim Reid ate at the museum when it was a restaurant ran by Tom Ying. As I entered, I tried to imagine Sim ordering his food, maybe drinking coffee. Mom said Sim laughed a loud and hearty laugh. Maybe he would almost chock on his coffee while laughing

Mrs. Key always wore a dress, even if she went out checking her placer claims. I would briefly chat with her on my way into the museum and when I thought it was safe, I would immediately go to the child coffin and sometimes run my hand over it. It was a wooden, off white coffin with a small window in it and was my favorite piece to look at. I would stare into the odd shaped small window at the head of the coffin. I wonder who it belonged to? Why wasn't it ever used? Or just maybe it was used for a viewing.

Next, I would look at my Great Grandmother Reid -Armer's pictures and some of the Angora Goat display pieces. As I stared at Great Grandma's picture, I would hear my mom quoting her, "Better to wear out than rust out". I always felt inadequate comparing myself to this lady known as the Goat Queen of America for developing, breeding and showing grand champion Angora Goats. I often struggled with viral infections and to hear my Mom talk, Margaret Reid Armer was a tireless, healthy powerhouse. Thankfully, before my Mom's sister Gertrude Reid Casev died, she shared the other side of my powerhouse Great Grandma Reid Armer. Aunt Gertrude told me that Grandma Armer had probably suffered more than one heart attack which left her with relentless fatigue. She would often lie in bed even during goat business transactions. That bit of information gives me hope on days when I am not feeling so well.

Sometimes Janna and I would ride bikes over to the museum for a quick visit. Mrs. Key would give us advice on becoming good wives, "Learn to cook, crochet, knit and put up produce." I would take years of Home Economics and did learn some basic sewing. I do cook, but not near as good as my Mom did. And I still haven't made red chile sauce from Hatch chili to put into jars like she did each year.

^{*}Note: This had been on the table for several years. A call for bids had been posted by the Commission as early as July 28, 1888,. At that time, the allocation was \$12000. Garland Bills.

A FAMOUS COUPLE IN THE NIGHTLIFE OF KINGSTON

Barbara Lovell

Kingston had some very interesting characters during its heyday so it seems that everyone would have a story to tell - or not tell. Charlotte and Frank Thurmond are perfect examples.

Charlotte was born in Kentucky of well-to-do parents. She was her fathers favorite and he often took her on business trips with him. Some of these included gambling on the Mississippi River boats. She never gambled but carefully watched everything that went on.

Her father joined the Confederate army during the Civil War. He died during the war leaving Charlotte, her mother and sister with no means of support. In addition, they lost their home and belongings leaving them destitute. That is when Charlotte decided to become a gambler.

Charlotte left home, without telling her family what she was going to do, and took her father's last slave, Mary Poindexter, with her. The two traveled the Mississippi for a while withoutmuch success, Mary acting as bodyguard. They headed for East Texas in hopes that things might get better.

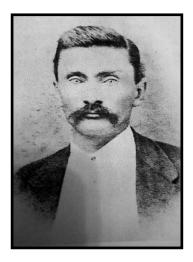
They traveled through many towns before settling in San Antonio. From then on, wherever she went, Charlotte succeeded. However, she always conducted herself like a lady and always had a good reputation. She was able to send some of her earnings home to her family and they never knew how the money was earned.

She first met Frank Thurmand in San Antonio. He and his brothers owned the University Club, a respectable gambling house. There is not much information about their early life together in Texas. They did team up at a later date and continued gambling together. That is until Frank killed a man in a dispute while gambling. He had to disappear for a while and so they separated.

Charlotte had, by now, well earned the name "Lottie Dino" which stands for a lot of money. Her reputation preceded her wherever she went. She decided to move on to Fort Concho and then Fort Griffin, one of the wildest towns in the West. Mary Poindexter had established her own life in San Antonio and decided not to move with her. Fort Griffin was a western town, an army post and an Indian Reservation. Murder, cattle rustling and gambling were all a part of its daily life. It was here that she met up with Frank a few years later.

They traveled around West Texas continuing their life of gambling, but eventually decided that it was time to settle down and give up the life of a gambler. In 1880 they moved to Silver City, NM where they married and made an attempt at settling down. Two years later they were to move to Deming where they spent most of the rest of their lives and became upstanding citizens of the community. They owned a ranch where Frank spent much of his time while Charlotte became a member of several ladies social clubs. No one was aware of their past.

In 1887 the Thurmonds disappeared temporarily from Deming with none of their neighbors knowing



why. The gambling bug must have gotten the best of them, because they moved to Kingston. Frank had received all of the gambling rights in the Monarch and Long Branch Saloons for the paltry sum of \$1.00 for one year. Gambling was big business. So much so that his agreement stated that he could move out the billiard tables if needed more room.

At the same time it is rumored that Charlotte owned a gambling room in the back of a saloon, as one story has it, or in the back of the Victorio Hotel by another.

"One night I saw her clean up a wealthy easterner for \$9,000 in Kingston, where she owned a gambling room in the rear of a saloon that was run by John



Selman, a one-time desperado from Texas. And, I still have a painful recollection of how she trimmed me to the tune of \$65.00 only a few days before this." (George Shakespeare, owner of the Deming Headlight newspaper).

The story of some of their experiences is told in a series of western books written by Alfred Henry Lewis. Frank and Charlotte Thurmond are Cherokee Hall and Faro Nell. The stories are fiction but based on

facts according to their closest friends and associates. The author had been a guest in the Thurmond home in Deming which is where he accumulated his information.

Frank Thurmond died at his home in Deming on June 4, 1908 at the age of 68. Charlotte died on February 9, 1934. She would have been 90 later that year. What a life they had! They lived though some of the wildest times in the west, but were eventually able to settle down and put the gambling years behind them. They were active members of the Episcopal Church which was built partially though their efforts and she

was a member of the Golden Gossip Club and never missed a meeting. They were considered social leaders of the community. But some things never change. Frank "never left the house without his six shooter, a single action Colt, .41 caliber on a .45 frame." (Herman Lindenauer of Deming).

Community Benefit Concert fundraiser for the HHS Saturday, July 20 - 5:30pm - 9pm - at the Black Range Lodge, 50 Kingston Main Street, Kingston, NM.

Potluck supper beginning at 5:30pm. Wine and beer served by Black Range Vineyards.

A silent auction (donations welcome). 6:30 - 9pm.
Enjoy the best of Local

Talented Musicians All proceeds will benefit the HHS and the Black Range Museum



This Bottle wanted

Will purchase at a fair price.

Zang Wood 1612 Camino Rio Farmington, NM 87401

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

HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Application

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



Name:	Date:
Address:	
Phone:	Email:
(a) Individual or family	membership \$25
How would you (We prefer to se	like to receive our newsletter? email regular mail and by email.)
	at \$25 each
(c) Additional donation For general open	rations
For the Black R	ange Museum
For the Hillsbor	o courthouse and jail site
	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION \$

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

Hillsboro Historical Society P. O. Box 461 Hillsboro, NM 88042