

Barbara Wilken's "History of Hillsboro"

A long-time resident of Kingston and Hillsboro, Barbara Jean Wilken (1926-2007) left behind a type-written, 72-page memoir titled "History of Hillsboro," dated March 12, 2004, full of vivid depictions of life in the Black Range. In a sense, the memoir's title is misleading, for she records life as she and her neighbors lived it in the mid-twentieth century in both of these two communities—not just in Hillsboro.



Lefty and Barbara Wilken, in an image on their tombstone in the Hillsboro Cemetery. Photo Joe Britton.

She and her husband, Charles "Lefty" Wilken (1920-2008), had a family of four children who became known throughout the rodeo world for their roping. The children (Don, Donna, Carl and John) had a contract act called "The Wilken Youngsters." As Carl remembers, "We were trick ropers. It's just what we did. It was our way of life. Our mom (Barbara) made our costumes, right down to every rhinestone. We camped out all summer, and my older brother and I stayed in hammocks in the back of the horse trailer."¹

Lefty himself was not only a prize-winning team roper, but was also much sought after as a pick-up man. He was inducted into the Professional Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1999, where he was celebrated as the pick-up man cowboys most asked for when they wanted the very best.² Married in 1946, Lefty and Barbara died only a few weeks apart (Barbara on November 18, 2007 and Lefty on February 14, 2008); they are buried in the Hillsboro Cemetery. Their son Carl "Wolfy" Wilken went on to become well-known in his own right as a team roper.

The original manuscript of Barbara's memoir is in the Schoolhouse Museum in Kingston, but copies including copied photographs are available at the Hillsboro Community Library and Black Range Museum (where it is labeled "Barbara Wilken Story"). What follows is an excerpt about Barbara's childhood days—the first of several installments to be published here—which were mainly spent with her parents and grandparents in Kingston, where they operated the Victorio Hotel, derisively named for the famed leader of the Warm Springs Apache tribe since it supposedly sheltered townsfolk during raids. The text is reproduced as she wrote it—full of energy, humor, enthusiasm, and a brutal honesty. (Published by permission of Carl Wilken.)



The Wilken Youngsters, with their mother Barbara (on the left). A photocopied picture included in "History of Hillsboro."

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¹ For an interview with Carl Wilken, see the *Team Roping Journal* at: <https://teamropingjournal.com/roper-stories/just-a-little-wolfy-carl-wilken>

² For a short biography and video about Lefty Wilken, see the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame website at: <https://www.prorodeohalloffame.com/inductees/notableslifetime-achievement/charles-lefty-wilken/>

President's Message

Great news! We have been honored by receiving a prestigious award from the Historical Society of New Mexico. The following is an excerpt from the recent announcement by the awards committee:

"The Hillsboro Historical Society has just been named winner of the Historical Society of New Mexico's Edgar Lee Hewett Award. This award is given annually to recognize outstanding service to the people of New Mexico, as related to New Mexico history. The awards committee was very impressed with the work the Hillsboro Historical Society has performed to preserve the history and cultural heritage of Hillsboro, Kingston and the surrounding Black Range region. New Mexico's history lives in every corner of our state and it often is the work of local historical societies that keeps the history alive and relevant. We commend and appreciate your efforts to preserve historic structures in Hillsboro, such as the Sierra County courthouse, to establish and operate the Black Range Museum, and to publish your informative newsletter Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos. Congratulations on all your successes."

This award came at the very best time. It certainly gave me and our Board of Directors a lift! After months of being closed to all public gatherings by the Health Department of New Mexico, and wondering still when we can safely and fully reopen the Black Range Museum, this is truly a feel good thing for all of us. It is great to be recognized by HSNM and we are grateful for the award. We can all be proud of the work that we are accomplishing in spite of Covid lockdowns and the efforts of our team to continue improving our abilities to meet our goals and mission. I am extremely grateful to our membership for its continued support and confidence in our work during this difficult time for all.

Out of an abundance of caution, we still do not know when we can re-open our museum. Meanwhile, thanks to Jan Richmond and Kathleen Blair, we have been able to sell books and other items at an outside venue at the local Saturday outdoor market. The new book by Susan Roebuck about the late Embree Hale has been a great success. Susan has graciously donated a portion of the sales to HHS. We will continue to promote

and sell this marvelous book at our gift shop at the museum, once it is again open.

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter. The editor continues to surprise us with wonderful and informative articles about historic places and people of our area. Thanks again for your support.

-- Steve Dobrott



The HSNM Award Medal

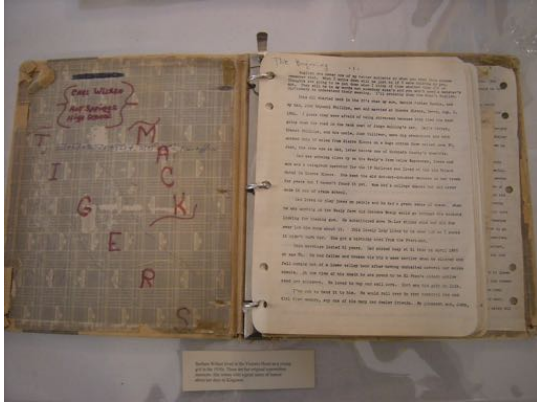
Text on back:
Hillsboro Historical Society
Edgar Lee Hewett
Award
2021

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BARBARA WILKEN'S "HISTORY OF HILLSBORO"

The Beginning

English was never one of my better subjects so when you read this please remember that. What I write down will be just as if I were talking to you. Thoughts are going to be put down when I think of them whether they fit or not. They will be in my words not somebody else's and you won't need a Webster's Dictionary to understand their meaning. I'll probably slay the King's English.



The original manuscript of "History of Hillsboro," placed in a school binder with Carl Wilken's name written on the inside cover. Kingston Schoolhouse Museum. Photo Joe Britton.

This all started back in the '20s when my mom, Hattie Adrian Durdin, and my dad, John Haywood Phillips, met and married at Sierra Blanca, Texas, Aug. 2, 1924. I guess they were afraid of being chivareed³ because they tied the knot going down the road in the back seat of Judge Walling's car. Dad's father, Ernest Phillips, and his uncle, Josh Tolliver, were big pranksters and both worked only 10 miles from Sierra Blanca on a huge cotton

farm called Camp 90. Josh, the same age as dad, later became one of Hudspeth County's sheriffs.

Dad was working close by on the Neely's farm below Esperanza, Texas and mom was a telegraph operator for the TP [Texas & Pacific] Railroad and lived at the old Palace Hotel in Sierra Blanca. She kept the old dot-dot-dot-dash machine in her trunk for years but I haven't found it yet. Mom had a college degree but dad never made it out of grade school.

Dad loved to play jokes on people and he had a great sense of humor. When he was working on the Neely farm old Grandma Neely would go through his pockets looking for chewing gum. He substituted some Ex-Lax sticks once and did she ever let him know about it. This lovely lady lived to be over 100 so I guess it didn't hurt her. She got a birthday card from the President.

This marriage lasted 61 years. Dad passed away at El Paso in April 1985 at age 84. He had fallen and broken his hip a week earlier when he slipped and fell coming out of a lower valley bank after having deposited several car sales checks. At the time of his death he was proud to be El Paso's oldest active used car salesman. He loved to buy and sell cars. That was his gift in life.

I've got to hand it to him. He would roll over in that hospital bed and dial from memory, any one of the many car dealer friends. My youngest son, John, has inherited this gift. I can remember a number hardly long enough to get from the telephone book to the telephone. Somebody's face, that's different.

Mother lived alone afterwards for a time at their lower valley home until her mind started failing and she became victim of a supposed-to-be friend who bilked her out of many hard earned dollars. I then went and got her and brought her to my Hillsboro home where, I, myself, cared for her until her death in 1996 and age 92.

This is as it should be. Children are supposed to take care of their parents when they no longer can care for themselves. Not the government. We always had some older family member living with us. I never had a room of my own until I married. What did I need one for? My few belongings would fit in a cardboard box.

In 1925 they moved to Continental, Arizona, just below Tucson where dad opened up a section of virgin land and planted cotton for a group of Tornillo, Texas farmers, Ivey-Dale-Owen. Dad had lots of farming experience and spoke Spanish like a native. He worked Indians here, however, he said they were tough. Jack rabbits were eating the young cotton plants at night so he'd shoot them by the light of a vehicle. These dead rabbits would lay there all night and day sometimes before the Indians would find and eat them, the meat already turned green. He said he never once saw a sick Indian.

I was born at home October 28, 1926, aided in delivery by a woman my mother said was of "ill repute." In those days caesarean operations were unheard of and mother, of very small stature, was never

³ Chivaree: a noisy mock serenade (made by banging pans and kettles) to a newly married couple. -Ed.

able to have any other children. Later years I told her she didn't need to have had any more. I was all she could handle.

Later on dad was injured from a fall on a rock and got blood poisoning in his arm and felt he needed to come back to Texas. In the meantime his dad, whom we all called, Don Felipe, was renting a farm near Mesilla Park, NM and found a farm for sale near Anthony. He thought we could make a living there so we moved back and lived there 1927-1928-1929 until the stock market crashed and we lost everything.

While we were in Anthony dad was showing a 30-30 rifle to someone. He shot and the bullet hit a rock, ricocheted, hit a tractor wheel, and in the meantime I had toddled out to the truck and as I lifted my foot to step onto the running board, the bullet went in the bottom of my left foot and came out in the middle of my ankle joint outside, breaking all the bones.

There had been recent front-page news in an El Paso newspaper of a sawmill accident and the victim had been successfully treated by a Dr. Vance in El Paso. That's where they took me. After the doctor put all the bones together and sewed my foot up, I was sent home with instructions for mother to grease my foot every day with castor oil.

I never had any trouble with it until in the '70s, after being on my feet a lot in the beauty shop or café,⁴ it would get a cramp the minute I'd start to get up after sitting down, and let me tell you, I didn't go anywhere 'til it relaxed.

I had the unexpected pleasure in my café in 1987 to have a customer, Mr. Colquitt, from Anthony, NM, who once had been a friend of Dr. Vance, now deceased. He said they used to go quail hunting together. His was the first time I had heard of him [Dr. Vance] since my accident. He was a fine doctor.

About this time granddad's wife, Nannie, had received a letter from a long-time Mesilla Valley friend, Mrs. Henderson, a widow, who earlier had sold her farm and moved to Kingston and bought a hotel there, having gotten wind of a road going to be built over the Black Range Mountains and rooms would be needed for construction workers. Another hotel with a large kitchen was for sale if she was interested.

Times were hard, farming even harder, and they all had to live and eat. Don Felipe had developed a heart condition and wasn't able to do hard work any longer, and Nannie, who had many years of cooking experience behind her, thought this sounded like a good opportunity.

Besides themselves they had their son, Ernest Leroy (Skeeter) and her father, Grandpa Tolliver, to care for. Grandpa had lived with them off and on since his wife had died from Bright's disease⁵ at their Belen, NM farm in November 1920. Skeeter had been injured at his birth in 1904 by the doctor's use of hand tongs. His body grew but his mind was that of a 7-year old. He required every day care same as a child and could only perform simple chores.

The Hotel

Grandpa had money from when he sold his farm so he helped them buy the old Victorio Hotel [in Kingston]. Now, here we are in Anthony, broke, no place to call home, so daddy loaded up what few belongings we had left in an old stake-body truck and we went to Kingston, too. This old stone hotel was built in the 1880s by stone mason, Oliver Wilson. People still don't know where the rocks came from that were used and how in the world with the simple tools and machinery of that day he built such a marvelous



The original Victorio Hotel, Kingston, c. 1890. Photo courtesy of the Black Range Museum.

⁴ Barbara later ran the Percha Villa Café on the west side of Hillsboro in a building still standing in the open field. – Ed.

⁵ Bright's disease is a form of kidney ailment. – Ed.



The Victorio Hotel, Kingston as it would have appeared in Barbara's childhood. Chisholm photo. Courtesy of Black Range Museum.



Detail of the Victorio Hotel stonework. Photo www.oldhousedreams.com.

structure. Originally it had three floors, a balcony, and a covered front porch. The foundation had a ledge about 2" wider than the rest of the building and I loved to walk around on it holding on with my fingers wedged in the small cracks and crevices between the rocks.⁶

Mr. Wilson's son, Clarence, and wife Esther, along with their only child, Joliver, sometimes came to Kingston to visit. They had a ranch at Lake Valley and drove a fancy car that had fringe on the curtains. I can remember Joliver poking his head out under those curtains to see what was going on.

Esther was a wonderful piano player and played for the school plays, Church services and funerals. She also used to drive the school bus from Lake Valley to Truth or Consequences and take the 7th graders and up from the Kingston-Hillsboro-Lake Valley areas.

She outlived her husband and son and was nearly 100 when she died in a rest home in Truth or Consequences in 1998. Memorial services were held for her at the Lake Valley School house.

We moved into two rooms at the west end of the third floor. Our furniture was mainly a bed for mom and dad, a cot for me, a kitchen table with four chairs and two stoves. Maybe a trunk. I know we didn't have a couch and extra sitting chairs like people have today. It was common practice for people to just sit on the bed or a lard can, if you had one, when they came to visit you.

Grandpa and Skeeter had rooms on this floor also.

We heated with wood. You carried the wood in and the ashes out. I can remember sitting by the stove warming my feet and eating macaroni and cheese, one of my favorite dishes. Mom had a 2-burner kerosene table-top stove to cook on with a small portable oven you could put on top of a burner when needed. This stove was real good at smoking everything up and it sure wasn't any fun cleaning up after it. I keep one of these old ovens today on top of my butane stove. It looks like the devil but it sure cooks in a hurry and I don't have to heat the big stove oven.

Somebody told me it didn't matter how far a cat fell, it would always land on its feet. It didn't look too far down from the 3rd floor where we lived to the roof of the kitchen so I tried it. I don't know what happened to the cat but I got the whipping of my life.

Grandma's room was on the first floor behind the lobby. She had a bed and a dresser with a nice mirror you could see yourself in. Here is where she brushed and braided her long, dark, red hair and pinned it around her head. It was so long, when unbraided, that she could sit on it. Other than a plain gold wedding band she had no precious jewels, but in the dresser drawers were the prettiest crepe and chiffon handkerchiefs and colorful strands of dime-store beads you ever saw. I loved to put them around my neck, look in the mirror and pretend I was Dolores del Rio or some other movie star of that era. Grandma would scold me for getting into her "things." This was probably the closest I ever got to liking girl things until later when boys came along.

Grandma didn't get much in the way of extras, none of us did, but if somebody gave her a box of chocolates she might keep them until they faded yellow with age. Punch boards were real popular then and daddy was born lucky. He'd punch out the winning name many times and bring us all a box of chocolate-covered cherries.

⁶ What remains of the Victorio Hotel still stands on Kingston's Main Street, and is now a private residence. – Ed.

We didn't know we were poor because everybody else was too. I, once in later life, wrote my mom and dad and thanked them for giving me the happiest years of my life in Kingston. My mother kept every letter anybody ever wrote her but I have yet to find this one.

All the rooms had wood floors which you had to sweep regularly. Each room had an iron bedstead with a pretty painted design on the head and foot boards, a wash stand for a pitcher of water and wash basin, and a compartment underneath to stow the "slop jar." Along the side there was a rod to hang towels and wash rags on. All rooms had a kerosene lamp on a small table. Some had a wooden closet for clothes while most just had a wire strung across the wall in a corner or a good strong nail drove in the door. Some of the fancier rooms had a small rag rug by the bed. Few people had more than one pair of shoes so they just put them under the bed when they took them off. They might want to make a fast get away.

All the rooms, except the kitchen, were covered with wall paper printed with pretty flowers. The roof leaked and the ceiling had water marks on it. A pan was kept handy if it went to raining to catch the water in. On some places the plaster had fallen off the lathes.



Barbara (Phillips) Wilken as a young girl. Photocopied photo included in "History of Hillsboro."

After a guest left, one of my jobs was to empty the slop jar and refill the lamps. I learned early on I had to do a job whether I liked it or not. There were consequences if I didn't. You went down two or three flights of stairs and out the back door quite a ways to the outhouses. There was a men's and a women's each with two regular sized holes and one smaller one. The paper was usually a mail order catalog or yesterday's newspaper. Cobwebs were real thick and I was told that if you got a bad cut you could stop the bleeding by mashing them into the wound. I never had to try this to see if it worked or not.

You sure didn't need one of these vent pipes you see on toilets today. We had plenty of ventilation. You'd nearly freeze to death in the winter from the cold air coming through the cracks. You didn't stay any longer than you had to.

Sometimes, Mrs. Stowe, a widow who lived in a log house at the lower end of town, who, I might add was a bit lazy, would come and help grandma clean. She would just barely sweep the floor with real light swipes. I asked why and she said she didn't want to stir up the dirt. I went after it whole-hog when I swept.

She had a crush on a cowboy, Johnny Kinney, who later was killed from a horse accident on the mountain. As far as I know he's the only person who died in that area because they couldn't get to a doctor soon enough. Many more have lost their lives since due to carelessness and speed with the fine cars and good roads we have today.

The hotel had room and boarders of all descriptions. Forest Service workers, miners, a school teacher now and then, writers, painters, road construction employees, maybe an outlaw or two.

In the lobby guests would sign a large register. I'd give anything to know what happened to it. Grandma stored many things across the street over at the Drummond's place after they sold the hotel and stuff disappeared before she got a place built to put it. It would not have had any value to anyone other than my family and I don't know why they would have picked it up. Curious, I guess. I would still have it and I'll bet they don't.

Daddy did, however get a large wooden crate with cast iron skillet and lids in it. I still use them in the café. I've had café guests tell me a breakfast at my place would be the best on their entire trip from wherever they came from. I told them it was because of the iron skillet and I believe it.

There was also a leather coach and matching chair plus a player piano in the lobby that disappeared. I could then, and still can, pick out nearly any song I hear and play it by ear on the piano.



An RCA Victrola, presumably from the Victorio Hotel. Photocopied photo included in "History of Hillsboro."

In the dining room there was an old RCA Victrola hand-cranked phonograph. It played real thick records and required changing the needle ever so often so's not to scratch the records. The few records I remember were "She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain" and "Red River Valley." Wanda said she remembered "La Golondrina," "Mexicali Rose," and "My Little Buckaroo." I'd stand and listen by the hour. I've always loved music.

There was a basement. We stored apples there in the winter. Grandma stored fruits, jellies, preserves and green beans in it. She was death on green beans. You knew there was going to be a family operation when you'd see her come in the back door with baskets of fresh green beans. We all had to help find and wash jars, string and snap beans. Once her canner blew up and scattered green beans all over the ceiling and half-way to China. This basement was always dark, damp, smelly and had spiders. I never had much business in it.

Water for the hotel came from a spring up the canyon behind the hotel and [by] gravity [it] flowed through a pipe into a barrel behind the kitchen. When you needed water you just grabbed a bucket, went out and dipped some out. It didn't take much water for dishes and clothes. You wore a set of clothes 'til they were good 'n dirty and the little bit of water used to fill a wash tub for the weekly family bath was used to mop the floor with when you got through.

A work table ran up and down the length of the kitchen with a rail on top to hang pots and pans on. A pantry to store dishes and groceries was between the kitchen and dining room. This area, kitchen and pantry, had been added onto the back of the original rock building.

Most of our groceries and supplies came from Hibler's store in Derry, NM. It isn't there any more. I saw them tear it down about five years ago for the current owners to put up a big storage barn on the property. A few swipes with a front-end loader wiped out many nice memories.

Grandma owned a car and once I went with mother to get the groceries. Coming back out on the flats, I was eating Cheeze-Its and green grapes when the door suddenly flew open. I reached over and grabbed the steering wheel putting us in the ditch. It scared the wits out of me but we weren't hurt. Stirred the dirt up and I lost a few grapes was all. Luckily I didn't fall out and get run over.

'Til this day I can't stand speed and am a terrible backseat driver. Ask any of my family. If I ever was in a bad wreck I'd most likely never set foot in a car again. I always did wish I had lived 50 years earlier when everybody had to go horseback or in a wagon to get some place.

In the kitchen grandma had a big oval-shaped basket she'd literally stuff with things sprinkled to be ironed. Besides the regular clothes, all sheets, pillow cases, dish towels, handkerchiefs, underwear and dish rags, had to be ironed. She was stickler for this. They'd prop me up on a wooden box so's I could reach the ironing board. There was a baby-blue tank about the size of a grapefruit on top of this iron that you filled with gasoline, unscrewed something, and pumped air in it. Then it was ready to light. It got hot real quick and stayed that way better than the old sad irons I had to use when there was a hot fire in the cook stove.

I learned early on how to fold a heavy towel and put it under the sheets and pillow cases to make the embroidery stand out when ironed. Friends through the years had given her many beautiful hand-embroidered sets and she used them regularly in the hotel rooms. Other than my daughter, Donna, I don't know anyone who can do this beautiful embroidery today like those sets were done. 'Til this day I'd much rather iron than wash.

Today's inspectors would have had a field day in the kitchen. They wouldn't have had enough paper to list all the infractions. No chlorine in the water, wood floors, unpasteurized milk, eggs picked out of a nest on the ground, worms in the apples, no plumbing. Nobody died from what they ate that I remember of. Death usually came as a result of a gunshot wound for jumping a miner's claim, stealing a cow or horse, or simply, old age.

Grandma was a real good cook and all her meals were served family style. Eat until you couldn't hold any more. Her Sunday dinners meant fried chicken, tender roasts, or juicy hams, with all the trimmings, cooked to perfection on an old wood-burning Kalamazoo stove which had water reservoirs at both ends and a nice warming oven over the top. People would come from what was considered a long way in those days, Hatch, Hot Springs, Deming, to eat.

Scraps were never a problem. There weren't any.

Grandma's name may not be found in history books but she will always be remembered by those of us who knew her as the "Fannie Farmer" cook of the area during those years.

To be continued ...

TWO MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS IN THE BLACK RANGE

Stephen Siegfried

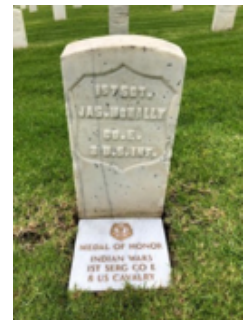
An earlier version of this article appeared in the Silver City Daily Press where Steve Siegfried was a staff writer. It followed ceremonies in October 1999, dedicating cenotaphs placed by the National Congressional Medal of Honor Society for two medal recipients, one at the Kingston cemetery and one in Hillsboro. We are grateful to Steve for resurrecting and sharing this piece. Since the first writing, the internet has made accessible some new facts which cast some elements of the story in a somewhat different light. The text has been edited to reflect that more recent information. -Ed.

After the late summer rains, as is usual this time of year [fall], the cemeteries in the Black Range communities of Kingston and Hillsboro have gone to flowers. Somewhere amid the wild asters, daisies and sunflowers, beneath one mound of rocks or another, lie the remains of the last of New Mexico's Medal of Honor recipients to be honored in a public ceremony.

The actual graves of James McNally and Eben Stanley have not been located—McNally in Kingston, Stanley in Hillsboro—nor is it likely they will ever be found. Nevertheless, McNally and Stanley were honored by the Medal of Honor Society in special ceremonies on Saturday, October 16, 1999 — a final connection for two men who lived parallel, but in other ways, very different lives.

Brig. Gen. Michael Cody, state project coordinator of America Discovers Her Hometown Medal of Honor Heroes, spent 12 years trying to locate the missing graves. It was a search that Cody didn't undertake alone.

Students in Western New Mexico University professor Dale Giese's Southwestern history classes looked through Sierra County archives for any reference to Stanley or McNally — a task made all the more difficult because of a courthouse fire that destroyed county records. In the sketchy records, students were able to identify the cemeteries where the two men were buried. But in the graveyards of old crosses and headstones, some destroyed by fire, others made illegible by the elements and the passage of time, no one has found the actual burial sites of Stanley and McNally. [As it turns out, McNally's grave is actually in Los Angeles, not in Kingston. Not long before his death, he was transferred from Kingston to the Sawtelle Veterans Home in Los Angeles, where he died and was buried in the Los Angeles National Cemetery.⁷]



McNally's tombstone in Los Angeles. The inscription reads:

1ST. Sgt.
Jas. McNally
CO. E.
3 U.S. INF.
And the stone below:
MEDAL OF HONOR
INDIAN WARS
1ST. Sgt. CO. E.
8 U.S. CAVALRY

⁷ https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/wm114V1_James_McNally_Los_Angeles_CA. The Veterans Administration has also confirmed that McNally is buried in Los Angeles: see Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States updates, <https://www.mohhsus.com/updates>.

With the placement of the 5-foot-tall limestone monuments that traditionally mark the graves of Medal of Honor recipients, Cody and Giese said, their search for the graves ended. During his research, Cody was first struck by the parallels in the lives of the two men — then, later, by the contrasts.

Each man, at one time, served in the 3rd U. S. Cavalry Regiment. Each was awarded the Medal of Honor, one for “gallantry,” the other for “bravery.” Each, in November 1904, and not 15 miles apart, died within five days of the other: Stanley on November 19 and McNally on November 26 [except as to the location, see the new information reported above]. And, of course, and as the final thread, there is the matter of the unmarked graves and the ceremonies that took place on the same day in the Black Range sister communities of Hillsboro and Kingston. But, as Cody discovered during his research, McNally and Stanley were two very different men.



The monument for Eben Stanley in the southeast corner of the Hillsboro Cemetery. Photo Joe Britton.

1873, while serving with Company A, 5th U.S. Cavalry, in action at Turret Mountain, Arizona Territory.”⁹ Cody explained, “Turret Mountain was a decisive battle that ended the Indian Wars in Arizona.” The battle was won after Indian scouts and cavalrymen at night scaled what had been regarded as an impregnable Apache stronghold. Giese has a letter Stanley wrote May 18, 1875, from Fort Apache, acknowledging receipt of the medal.

Later, while facing 11 indictments in the Arizona territory for alleged depredations while riding with the Clanton Gang, Stanley had good reason to look for a new place to settle, which is how he ended up in Hillsboro. “(The Arizona courts) weren’t sure they could get convictions. They gave him 30 days to get out of the territory,” Cody said.

No such offer was tendered to Ike Clanton’s brother, Phin. Indicted 16 times and facing trial, he signed over to his sister Mary — who had become Stanley’s third wife — all of his cattle. In Hillsboro, Eben and Mary Stanley used the money from the sale of the cattle to go into the hotel business. “They must have known each other,” Cody said of Stanley and McNally. “Stanley operated two hotels in Hillsboro, and McNally must have stayed there from time to time.”¹⁰

Stanley was born in Decatur County, Iowa in February 1844. As a soldier, he was charged with kidnapping for running off with the 14-year-old daughter of an Army sergeant. Those charges were later dropped when he agreed to marry the girl.

After his military discharge, Stanley continued to serve as a scout. In an account of Al Sieber, Chief of Scouts during the Apache Wars, it is reported that Stanley became “an outstanding guide and scout,” operating out of Fort Apache.⁸

The Medal of Honor citation given to Stanley, dated April 12, 1875, reads as follows: “The President of the United States of America [Ulysses S. Grant], in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to Private Eben Stanley, United States Army, for gallantry in action on March 25 & 27,

⁸ Dan Thrapp, *Al Sieber, Chief of Scouts* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 153.

⁹ <https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/687>.

¹⁰ In a death notice in the *Sierra County Advocate*, Stanley was remembered as “a pioneer of New Mexico and Arizona during the exciting days of Indian warfare. He was a man of rare intelligence and education and had been a resident of this county for a good many years.” The fact that there is not a similar notice for McNally corroborates his move from Sierra County before his death. *Sierra County Advocate* (November 25, 1904), https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sc_advocate_news/2023.

But while Stanley was somewhat of a womanizer who lived a step ahead of the law, McNally lived a quiet life after his days in the cavalry. Cody found no record that McNally married. “He did a little ranching, but primarily mining. He lived in Kingston from the time he got out of the military until he died,” Cody said.



The monument for James McNally in the southwest corner of the Kingston Cemetery. Photo Joe Britton.

McNally was born in County Monaghan, Ireland, in October 1839 and immigrated to the United States in 1851. He was among the Union cavalry under the command of Col. E. R. S. Canby when they met Confederate troops advancing up the Rio Grande Valley in February 1862 in what became known as the Battle of Valverde, Giese said. The Confederates, commanded by Gen. Henry Hopkins Sibley, tried to go around Fort Craig near Socorro. Sibley’s plan was to cross the Rio Grande at a ford called Valverde. “The Confederates made a dash on a Union battery that was covering the ford and took it in what was the decisive tactical maneuver of the battle,” Giese said.

McNally, seriously wounded in the hip, mustered a group of volunteers in a skirmish line and successfully freed Union troops trapped between the lines. The battle, nonetheless, was a Confederate victory. “As a result of the Confederate advance past Fort Craig, they went on to take Albuquerque and Santa Fe,” Giese said.

It was once thought that McNally’s actions at Valverde resulted in his Medal of Honor, but Cody determined that McNally, like Stanley, was recognized for bravery during the Indian Wars. McNally’s actual citation, which he received September 6, 1869, reads: “The President of the United States of America [Ulysses S. Grant], in the name of Congress, takes pleasure in presenting the Medal of Honor to First Sergeant James McNally, United States Army, for bravery in scouts and actions against Indians during 1868 and 1869, while serving with Company E, 8th U.S. Cavalry, in action at Arizona Territory.”¹¹

The October 1999 ceremony honoring McNally took place at 10 a.m. at the cemetery in Kingston. The ceremony for Stanley was held at 1 p.m. at the graveyard in Hillsboro.

Other Medal of Honor recipients buried in the area are Alonzo Bowman and John Schnitzer, interred at Fort Bayard; and Leonida Lytle, buried at Memory Lane Cemetery in Silver City.

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The bronze plaque on McNally’s cenotaph reads: “Near this spot lie the unidentified remains of a true American hero. Born in Ireland in 1839, James McNally served in the 3rd and 8th US Cavalry from 1858–1883. He was wounded during the Civil War Battle of Valverde, NM 21 February 1862. After his final discharge, James lived in Hatch, Hillsboro and Kingston, NM where he worked several mining claims. He died in Kingston [sic] 24 November 1904. He had no identified survivors. First Sergeant James McNally was presented the nation’s highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, for his bravery in scouts and actions against Indians in 1868 and 1869.”

In the case of Stanley, the plaque reads: “Near this spot lie the unidentified remains of a true American hero, Ebin (Eben) Stanley. Born in Decatur [sic] County, Iowa, Ebin served with the 3rd and 5th US Cavalry from 1861 to 1873. Variously described as a rancher, miner, hotel operator, Indian scout, and

¹¹ <https://valor.militarytimes.com/hero/1493>

outlaw (The Clanton Gang), he died in Cold Springs, New Mexico. He was survived by his wife Mary Elsie (Clanton) and two stepsons Burt and Loe Slinkard. Sgt. Stanley was presented the nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor, for his gallantry in action at the Battle of Turret Mountain Arizona 25-27 March 1873."

Ironically, the confusion about exact details of these two men's lives continued even with the installation of the cenotaphs. Stanley's name, for instance, is spelled on the plaque as both "Ebin" and "Eben," and his birthplace is misspelled as "Decaüter County." Some online photos of the monument identify Stanley as one of the Buffalo Soldiers, although that is almost certainly not the case, since he never served in either the 9th or 10th Cavalries, of which they were members. (There are no known extant photographs of either Stanley or McNally.) And McNally's monument clearly states that he died and is buried in Kingston, though as noted above his grave and military tombstone are in fact in Los Angeles. Perhaps historical ambiguity and confusion are yet another of the points of convergence in the parallel stories of these two valiant soldiers! -Ed.

KINGSTON'S EARLY SALOONS AND ITS MINERS

Barbara Lovell

Director of the Kingston Schoolhouse Museum

As you walk the streets of Kingston today, you won't find any saloons, but that certainly wasn't the case at its peak. Early Kingston is purported to have had more saloons than any other type of business establishment. According to the November 16, 1882 edition of *The Silver City Enterprise*, "Today the town contains a population of about 1800 inhabitants ... There are about 40 saloons and almost as large a number of stores in the town, and many new ones are being built." And while we don't know if the numbers are totally accurate, we do know that the saloons were a very important part of life in early mining towns like Kingston, and Kingston certainly had its share.

Work in the mines was hard and the rewards were often minimal. Very few miners actually struck it rich and many never found anything at all. For those who labored tirelessly in hopes of making the next big strike, life was often difficult and lonely. However, when the weekend came around, the miners would come into town. As *The Enterprise* reported, "There were often so many people on the streets of Kingston that it might take you an hour to get from one end of the street to the other." This flood of people into the saloons, brothels, restaurants and stores broke up the monotony of their lives and provided welcome relief in the form of alcohol, companionship, entertainment, laughter, and frequent fighting. Kingston was a different town on the weekends!

The saloons offered their own unique variety of entertainment. The men had access to music, sometimes dancing, poker, billiards, faro games and an endless stream of whiskey and beer. In fact, there were only about 54 million



The California Brewery in Kingston, c. 1890. Photo courtesy of the Kingston Schoolhouse Museum.

people in the country (*Silver City Enterprise*, April 20, 1883) and Americans were consuming in excess of 574 million gallons of alcohol per year (*Morristown Herald*, March 30, 1883). That's a whole lot of alcohol, especially when you consider that women and children would have made up at least half of that number, and they usually weren't drinkers.

All of this drinking may have provided relief and a form of entertainment for the miners, but the combination of alcohol and gambling too often led to heated arguments which sometimes resulted in gun battles and death. There are numerous accounts of fighting in the streets resulting in death among those who drank too much. Mr. Boger, the owner of the Long Branch Saloon, one of the most popular saloons in Kingston, was the subject of one such account. "Sheriff J. W. Allen of Sierra County was shot and instantly killed in Kingston on the 6th inst. [instantly]. He was attempting to disarm O. P. Boger, who had been drinking heavily when the gun was discharged, the ball passing through the groin effecting instant death" (*Silver City Enterprise*, April 9, 1886). Early Kingston was not a place for the faint of heart!

Saloons frequently changed hands as people came and went, or their hopes of building a fortune were dashed. The deeds from these transfers offer an opportunity to imagine what the saloons themselves were like. On December 3, 1883 one such transfer included the following:



The Bullion Saloon, Kingston. Photo N. W. Chase, 1890s. Courtesy of the Kingston Schoolhouse Museum.

and pool table with everything complete, 16 bar fixtures, 2 round tables, 1 faro table, 1 chandelier & lamp, 2 Faney bar lamps, 19 cocktail glasses, 9 wine glasses, 6 lemonade glasses, 10 beer glasses, 10 bar spoons, 10 bar bottles, 5? bottles, 4 decanters, 1 strainer, 1 shaker, 1 lemonade squeezer, 1 lime knife, 9 demijohns, 1 faro layout, 3 water buckets, 2 hat racks, 18 bar room chairs, 1 lg bar room mirror, 1 tray, 2 dusters, 1 oil can, 3 bracket lamps, 1 single chandelier lamp, 2 ollas with stand." These saloons were often simple and relatively small, and they typically had a good amount of entertainment packed into that small space.

While the miners clearly enjoyed the saloons and all that came with them, the other residents of early Kingston didn't always feel the same. Some of the more "upstanding" citizens decided it was time to do something about the rowdiness that occurred each weekend. They formed The Excelsior Society which was "for our mutual improvement, for the entertainment of our friends and for the cultivations of the amenities of social life" (Constitution and Bylaws of The Excelsior Society of Kingston, August 12, 1888). We have the original document of their constitution [at the Schoolhouse Museum], but there is no record of their membership and we don't know how long the club lasted.

But it was clear that the town that was once so wild was becoming more civilized. And later, as silver declined and the town continued to mature, early Kingston's daily realities faded into what are now just the stories of what was once the Wild West.

Guajolotes, Zopilotes y Paisanos
is the quarterly newsletter of:

The Hillsboro Historical Society

P. O. Box 461, Hillsboro, New Mexico 88042
www.hillsborohistoricalsociety.com (coming soon)
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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
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HHS is a member of the
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We are an all-volunteer, non-profit organization.
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Editor's Note

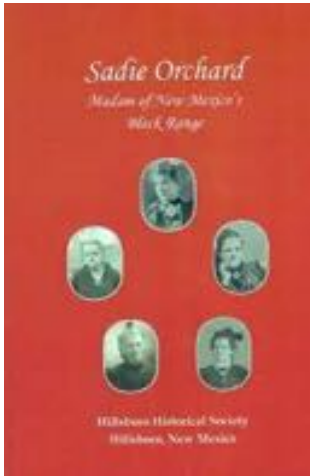
A curious reader wrote to ask how I was able to track down the Martin Ranch House on the Alamosa Ranch, pictured in the article in February's newsletter about Bob Martin. Well, the author of the article (Susan Worden) ended the draft she sent with the cryptic words "Today you can visit the old ranch house and blacksmith shop historical site. PLEASE CONFIRM."

So I went online, and found a map designation for the site, but it was located on a point in what is now Elephant Butte State Park, which didn't sound right. Plus, there was no indication of any historical site open for visiting. The only other mention I could find was a listing in the New Mexico historical sites catalog, which said the ranch house was off of "Martin Ranch Road." So the next time I was driving I25, I got off at Exit 89 onto Martin Ranch Road at Cañada Alamosa, and drove out to the point to have a look. Sure enough, nothing there.



But on the way I noticed a side road marked "Old Ranch Road." Now, since an old ranch house was just what I was looking for, that sounded intriguing. A short drive down that road brought me to the house pictured above, which must be the Martin Ranch House—there isn't much out there! The house and barn fit the description, and the background of one of the pictures of Bob Martin in the article seems to match the hillsides of the Cañada Alamosa. Moreover, Susan later sent another photo of the original adobe house, which had a handwritten note on it that the ranch house "was built around it." That detail fits as well. Finally, I discovered that the property happens to be for sale, and is listed as the old "Alamosa Ranch." So in short—though maybe not conclusive, it seems to add up. -- Joe Britton

HILLSBORO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS



Sadie Orchard: Madam of New Mexico's Black Range (HHS, 2019) was favorably reviewed by Jolane Culhane of Silver City in the most recent *New Mexico Historical Review* (Fall 2020, pp. 462-3). When Garland Bills presented a paper based on the research behind this book at the 2019 annual meeting of the Historical Society of New Mexico in Albuquerque, the session became one of the most popular of all!

See the back cover of this newsletter for ordering details for this and other HHS publications.

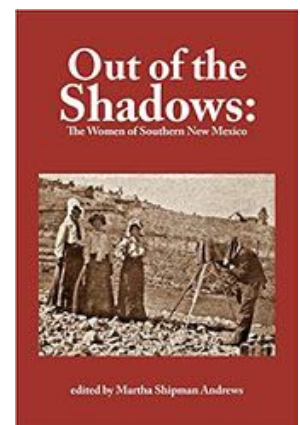
The HHS Board continues to make improvements at the Black Range Museum and the ruins of the courthouse and jail. Among the latest additions are new signs (shown below). The Board is also investigating the most effective way to stabilize the ruins, which are in danger of collapse.



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A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL OUTTAKE

Barbara Wilken, author of this issue's lead article, was included with her mother and grandmother in an essay on the life of settlers in the Black Range by Linda Harris. She described them as examples of women of "ingenuity and ambition" who found opportunities in the grueling work that involved filling multiple roles at once—familial, economic, and communal. See Linda G. Harris, "Bygone Days on the Black Range," excerpted in *Tradicción* 18/2 (July 2013), pp. 77-84, <http://nmsantos.com/archive/TR61.pdf>, and originally published in Martha Shipman Andrews, ed., *Out of the Shadows: The Women of Southern New Mexico* (Rio Grande Books, 2012).





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), and include a subscription to our quarterly newsletter (via email unless requested otherwise). Membership dues are \$25 annually. All contributions are tax-deductible.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

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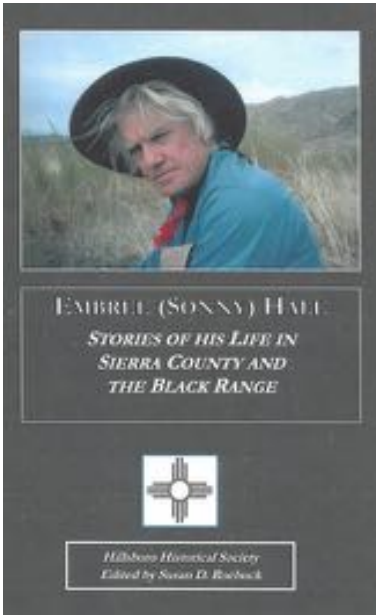
MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM: As an alternative to an annual membership and additional contribution, the monthly program requires a \$15 minimum pledge per month. Monthly giving can be set up at PayPal via our Hillsboro Historical Society website (<https://www.hillsboronmhistory.info>). Access the HHS Monthly Giving tab for additional information and to subscribe. Monthly giving can also be initiated through an automatic check issuing process at your bank if preferred.

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

Hillsboro Historical Society
P. O. Box 461
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THANK YOU!

PUBLICATIONS



We are very pleased to announce that *Embree (Sonny) Hale: Stories of His Life in Sierra County and the Black Range* is now available. 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 can be purchased at a cost of \$20.00. However, to celebrate this new publication, current HHS members may purchase it at \$15.00 each.

We are also happy to extend this special member discount price of \$15 to our other HHS publications, which are also otherwise \$20: *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 gills@unm.edu. The Black Range Museum handles all sales, but since it has been closed during the pandemic, you may direct telephone inquiries if essential to Garland Bills, 575-297-0186. Also look for our bookstand at the Saturday Farmers Market across from the Museum, or visit the Museum Gift Shop when it re-opens!

HHS Publications Member Discount Order Form

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