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Taos Pueblo. Photo courtesy of Taos Historic Museums.
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I met Arturo Garrido, an architect from Mexico City, in September 2015. He was attending the Three Trails Conference in Santa Fe, which focused on the convergence in Santa Fe of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, the Santa Fe Trail and the Old Spanish Trail. We conversed about the origins of the trails, and he shared his observations about the global connections of ancient peoples — those of Central America, the Hopis, the Anasazi and the Tewa cultures. Most of the routes were established for trade and exchange, and there were no borders or barriers other than natural geography.

In the land now known as New Mexico, indigenous peoples connected with one another for trade and ceremony, exchanging precious materials such as turquoise for copper bells, feathers, chocolate and other valuable resources from what is now Mexico. The tierra adentro, the interior, was visited often, and trails and networks were forged over time, connecting indigenous peoples of North and Central America. Trail networks connecting ancient settlements fanned out across the land, permitting travel over long distances.

The royal highway connecting Mexico to New Mexico, evolved from these ancient pathways. In 1598 Juan de Oñate traveled along these paths for more than 1,100 miles, trekking from Zacatecas to the lands at the confluence of the Río Chama and the Río Grande (now Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo near Española).

The consequences of the colonization are recorded in oral stories and written records kept through the centuries. Abuses by the colonists led to a revolt by the Pueblo peoples and expulsion of the Spaniards in 1680. The Spaniards fled south from Santa Fe, settling in San Isidro (El Paso) and farther south in Chihuahua. Some of the settlers returned to Santa Fe with Diego de Vargas 12 years later, but many chose to remain in their new homelands. The resettlement of the northern lands would require recruitment of new colonists.
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Just north of Mexico City, a **convocatoria** was established. This was an encampment where people wishing to make the journey north could settle for several months, gathering supplies and livestock, without imposition of taxes. At this encampment, in the Colonia San Simon, a monument was created in honor of Santiago Peregrino (St. James the Pilgrim), marking the beginning of the **camino**. The monument is simple, created of native stone, but it anchors a line first forged by indigenous peoples, linking the heart of Mexico to the lands of the Northern Río Grande National Heritage Area.

In his research of the Camino Real Arturo Garrido uncovered this early monument, which had been isolated and lost over the last three centuries, the portion of the Camino Real that lies within Mexico has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Along the Camino’s route lie many archaeological sites, some only recently discovered. At the northernmost tip of an extension of the route sits Taos Pueblo, which also has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In these tracks of our ancestors there is a continuum of memory and a sense of connection that is unbroken by imposed divisions of borders or society. We may not know it intimately, but it is in our blood.

In the stories of our parents, _somos mejicanos_ ("we are Mexicans") was an oft-repeated phrase, designating shared connection. _Es mejicano_ signified a personal acceptance of an individual. Yet separation from our shared ethnic ancestry was enforced under Spanish rule. Separation was furthered with the conquest of New Mexico by the United States in 1846 and by policy during the territorial period and the period following statehood. It continues to this day.

It is appropriate to celebrate the work of Arturo Garrido in identifying the anchor point of the Camino Real. At the other end of the Camino, Dr. Ana Malinalli x Gutierrez Síneros has introduced a resolution to the Española City Council. It would establish July 12 (the date Oñate reached Ohkay Owingeh) as Doña Isabel de Tolosa Day, to be observed during the annual Española Fiestas celebration.

Isabel de Tolosa Cortes Mote-cuhzoma (or Montezuma) was the wife of Juan de Oñate and the mother of Cristobal, their son, who succeeded Juan de Oñate as the first elected governor of Nuevo Mejico. Isabel was a granddaughter of Hernán Cortés and a great-granddaughter of Mote-cuhzona II. Although Isabel de Tolosa never visited the northern domains, the commemoration would honor the role of women in the framing of our history and the mingling of the cultures that compose Northern New Mexico.

This year the National Park Service celebrates the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act. This year also marks 420 years since the arrival of the first Spanish settlers in Northern New Mexico under Juan de Oñate, and thus the 420th anniversary of the Camino Real. The camino contains the tracks of our ancestors, connecting communities and Native settlements. It represents the joining of the honorable civilizations of the Aztec/Mexica, Tewa, Tano, Keres, Athabascan and Genízaro peoples and the mingling in of Iberian roots — including Basque, Moorish, Jewish, and Roman — to create the uniquely New Mexican Indo-Iberian cocktail that has enabled us to survive and to thrive. ¡Salud!

Thomas A. Romero is executive director of the Northern Río Grande Natural Heritage Area. Descended from early-17th-century Spanish settlers, he was born in Santa Rosa and raised in Santa Fe. He resides today in Tesuque. He has worked as a management consultant throughout the United States and in Latin America, has been on the board of El Museo Cultural since 1998 and has worked with numerous community planning and service organizations.
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If you give a man a loaf of Pueblo bread, he eats for a day. If you teach a man to make Pueblo bread, he eats for life — or at least as long as he’s in the vicinity of an horno. Here in New Mexico, hornos — traditional outdoor adobe ovens — are in increasingly short supply, but if you’re lucky, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo member and Native cooking maestro Norma Naranjo might let you borrow hers for a day.

Naranjo runs hands-on Native cooking classes out of her home at Ohkay Owingeh under the name The Feasting Place, where she typically teaches the foods prepared for Pueblo feast days. Feast days are the result of Catholic conversion; each pueblo was named after a saint, and Ohkay Owingeh, formerly known as San Juan Pueblo, celebrates the feast of John the Baptist every June 24. Classes are about four and a half hours long, admit no more than 15 people, cost $100 per person and are mostly hands-on, no matter people’s level of cooking prowess. While participants chop, stir and knead, Naranjo talks about the history of Pueblo cuisine, explaining how the Native diet changed after the Spanish arrived. Classes typically begin with empanadas, Spanish hand pies that for feast days are often made with prunes.

“I often wondered why prune pies were so popular,” says Naranjo. “It was because when women were taught how to bake in quantities and get ready for feast days, the only fruit that grew wild along the ditches was plums.”

The majority of the class is focused on cooking in the horno. Beehive-shaped hornos are found across New Mexico, especially at pueblos. And while they are traditional, they are not, as Naranjo points out, actually indigenous.

“When the Spaniards came, our diet changed because we never were bakers,” Naranjo explains. “The horno is not Native American. It’s Moorish.” Clay brick ovens, called hornos morunos in Spanish, are still used in Morocco and are similar to the wood-fired pizza ovens used in Italy. To heat up an horno, a wood fire is started inside and reduced to ashes, which are then swept out. The oven is allowed to slowly cool from about 700 or 800 degrees Fahrenheit (Naranjo admits that she’s burned her eyelashes before) to the desired cooking temperature. The whole process takes about two hours.

CONTINUES PAGE 12
Gateway to the Enchanted Circle

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“I demonstrate how the horno gets cleaned out if you’re going to be baking,” she says. “You scrape out all the ashes, and then I test it with newspapers — that’s my temperature gauge. I put it in there for five seconds, and when it comes out a certain color, I know it’s the right temperature. It’s an art really.”

Cooking in an horno requires nuance. For meat, explains Naranjo, you put the fire on the edges of the oven and place the meat in the middle, but bread requires that the oven be heated evenly and then carefully swept out, or even wet-mopped if it’s too hot. “I have a special mop that I use,” laughs Naranjo. “Husbands give their wives jewelry — my husband gives me mops and brooms.”

Though Naranjo is now the culinary doyenne of Ohkay Owingeh, working as both a caterer and an educator, her background is in public service. “I was a social worker for the U.S. government,” she says. “I worked nationally. I worked statewide. When I worked nationally, we worked a lot with Indian Country, setting up child protective teams and educating tribal leaders about child abuse and neglect — a lot of our leaders were in denial that this ever happened in their community.”

After she retired, a chance gig catering a friend’s wedding turned into another gig, and then another. “It just took off,” she says.

Now she teaches classes out of her home, a HUD home that she and her husband have lovingly renovated, including the sprawling kitchen where she teaches and two gigantic hornos in the backyard — one is big enough to hold 30 loaves of Pueblo bread; the other is twice that size. Many of the ingredients for classes, including squash, white and blue corn and fresh chiles, come from Naranjo’s own family farm in nearby Santa Clara. Recipes change class to class. Sometimes Naranjo teaches how to make fry bread and Indian tacos; sometimes enchiladas. She’ll often make dishes — such as green chile or red chile stew — ahead of time to fill out the meal and give people a broad sense of the local cuisine. By the end of class, participants will have filled up her massive clay ovens with their creations, which they get to both feast on afterward and take home to share.

It gives people an understanding of how things changed 500 years ago and how we’re still doing things,” Naranjo says.

Not everything prepared during Naranjo’s classes could be called traditional — much of it is very much otherwise. She often makes what she calls Pizza, Rez-Style, which is essentially pizza topped to each participant’s liking and baked in the horno, or the similar Crostini, Rez-Style, made with slices of Pueblo bread baked according to Naranjo’s old family recipe. But students also roast vegetables and meats, scorch chiles in the ashes, prepare green chile stew and make blue corn chile rellenos.

“When the oven is ready, then the whole class brings everything they’ve made, their empanadas, the pizza, the bread, the squash and everything will go in there to cook at once,” she says. Things come out one by one, and when everything is ready, no matter what day it is, they feast.

Tantri Wija is a writer and filmmaker from Bali, Indonesia, and Santa Fe. She currently writes the “Taste” column for the Santa Fe New Mexican and food articles for its many annual magazines.
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Since Land Water People Time launched in 2014, more than 20 individual artists (including those featured here) have been profiled in the Art Characters series, providing a glimpse into the creative worlds of some of New Mexico’s most gifted artists. From work in paint and prints to clay, wood and music, this year’s selection of Characters once again represents the extraordinary talent that abounds here.

See pages 18, 26, 31 and 40.

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miguel m. chavez

Traditional New Mexico furniture maker and wood carver Miguel Chavez with one of his children's chairs. Photo by Melanie Metz.
MIGUEL M. CHAVEZ was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and began his art-making journey under the mentorship of his father and grandfather, “BUILDING, REMODELING AND REPAIRING THINGS AROUND THE HOUSE AND FOR OTHER PEOPLE.”

Those childhood lessons eventually inspired a full-time commitment to a career in the arts. “I was 18 or 19 when I decided to become a woodworker,” explained the artist in a recent interview.

Using traditional carving tools to transform native New Mexico woods into objects of useful and lasting beauty, Chavez works in one of the oldest Spanish colonial art forms, one that has been part of the Land of Enchantment’s creative legacy for more than five centuries. Through astutely observed, time-honored practices, ordinary household items such as chairs, tables and doors are elevated to the extraordinary. The artist’s gift for working in the centuries-old genre — selecting the best kind of wood for the project, carving delicate arches and angles into the chosen variety, hand-finishing the surface to heirloom-quality perfection — produces one-of-a-kind works of art.

In 1992 Chavez was one of 15 New Mexico furniture makers selected to build “art furniture” for the Capitol Building’s permanent collection. Each of his pieces was designed, constructed and hand-finished in the New Mexican/Spanish colonial style, with bold patterns and delicate rosettes carved into naturally colored or richly stained wood. His other projects include restoration of the doors and trim that grace the Professor J.A. Wood House, a historic property in Santa Fe. He also served 12 years as a city council member and county commissioner, striving to develop the city’s arts, culture and tourism attractions.

For Chavez, who takes influence from the decorative persuasions of early New Mexico, making things the old way by hand, one at a time, is not up for compromise. “I have a small studio in my backyard where I produce a limited production of handmade doors and furniture,” he concludes. “I hope those will get passed down to the next generation.”

Chavez is represented by Chavez Wood Works, in Santa Fe. For details, contact miguelmchavez1@gmail.com.

A matching pair of chairs and coffee table by Miguel Chavez. Photo by Melanie Metz.
“New Mexico is to be felt” is a common refrain on this exploration of north-central New Mexico. Magnificent views, serene valleys, Native culture (and native trout), hidden villages and vibrant celebrations capture one’s heart and soul in a journey around the Enchanted Circle and adjoining terrain.

For most travelers, this tour will begin and end in Taos, but it can be done from other starting points. It can be done just in part, partially in a single day, all of it over multiple days or as a series of day journeys.

This region showcases a spectacular combination of mountains, valleys and volcanoes. It is nestled in and around the Sangre de Cristo range and the vast Taos Plateau to the west.

CONTINUES PAGE 22
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Photo by Marjorie. Model: Gwendolyn Peiper
More than two billion years of complex geology has formed unique and dramatic scenery. The Río Grande Rift, a separation of the earth’s crust that began about 29 million years ago, created the Río Grande Gorge, through which the Río Grande flows. Volcanic eruptions, lava flows and the uplifting of mountains have left a dramatic terrain. Visitors can feel this raw beauty simply by driving through. For a more personal experience, there are many trails into the gorge, and nearby mountains offer hiking, fishing, hunting and camping opportunities. Wildlife abounds in this vast ecosystem of grasslands and forests of piñon, juniper, ponderosa, Douglas fir, spruce and other pines. Elk, mule deer, bears, bighorn sheep, eagles, hawks, coyotes, trout and numerous other species claim this area as their natural home. Much of the high country is within the Carson National Forest, spanning 1.2 million acres.

New Mexico’s rich multicultural tradition also thrives in this northern realm. A Native American heritage reaches back a thousand years or more, with Pueblo, Apache, Comanche and other groups having visited, traded in and lived in the area. Taos Pueblo provides our modern connection to this ancient past. Spanish explorers and settlers also left their indelible mark on our lifeways, cuisine and structures. Artists, writers and other creative persons continue to develop and share their rich expressions of life in a myriad of styles. Activists for ecology, politics and numerous other causes find a home for their passionate expression here. A hallmark of New Mexican tradition is our respectful manner. The ethic is captured in the phrase “It is how you are that matters most” — how you are with your family, friends, community, nature and animals.

Renowned fishing guide Taylor Streit of Taos brings a small trout to hand in 2008 in the Red River.

The Río Grande threads its way through its deep canyon in the Wild Rivers Recreation Area, a portion of the larger Río Grande del Norte National Monument just north of Taos.
TO VALLE VIDAL:
THE FAR SIDE

Travel north from the Taos Plaza on NM 64, passing immediately through El Prado with its numerous restaurants and craft shops. At the intersection with US 64, continue north on NM 522 toward Arroyo Hondo (Deep Creek). This historic village strings out along a creek and a side road, NM 577, to the John Dunn Bridge, crossing the Río Grande to a small hot spring. White-water enthusiasts put in here, and it’s popular for rock climbing and trout fishing in the Taos Box.

Next optional stop is the D.H. Lawrence Ranch (dhlawrenceranch.unm.edu/, 505-277-1109). About 3 miles north of Arroyo Hondo, turn east off NM 522 onto San Cristobal Road for a climbing drive to the main gate of San Cristobal Ranch, which was home to famed author D.H. Lawrence and his wife, Frieda. It is overseen today by the University of New Mexico and is open for tours by reservation.

Back on NM 522 you soon come to Questa (visitquesta.com/, 575-586-2258). The “Gateway to the Río Grande Del Norte National Monument” is another historic village, once on the “Kiowa Trail” that connected Taos Pueblo with Plains Indian cultures. Settled in the early 1800s by Spanish farmers, this is a true frontier community. Visit the San Antonio de Padua Church, the pride of the community, which was recently restored and reconsecrated.

Just west of Questa via NM 378 (Cerro exit) is a paved route to a portion of the newly formed Río Grande del Norte National Monument (blm.gov/visit/wild-rivers-recreation-area, 575-586-1150). Here, at the Wild Rivers Recreation Area, you can hike, camp, picnic and enjoy the spectacular scenery overlooking the juncture of Red River Canyon and the Río Grande Gorge. You might spot some of the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep that live here. If you’re willing to hike down some 800 vertical feet to the water itself, there’s excellent fishing.

Returning to NM 522, drive north along the foot of the spiky, impressive Latir Peak and the Sangre de Cristos running into Colorado. This brings you to the small town of Costilla (riocostillaart.com/map/, riocostillapark.com). The well-watered Río Costilla Valley was a winter hunting ground of Utes and Apaches. In the mid-1800s, settlers laid out as many as seven defensive plazas in the area for protection from occasional raids. Several of these are still in use as community centers for the ranchers, farmers and artists who call this quaint area home.

Turn east onto NM 196 and head up the beautiful valley to Amalia (amalianm.com), a small village serving isolated ranches. About 2 miles southeast of Amalia, veer off NM 196 onto Forest Road 1950 to reach the seldom-visited and transcendent Valle Vidal. The route, partially on a gravel road, should not be attempted in winter! If prepared, enter this area tucked up against the Colorado border among a handful of summits topping 11,000 feet, including Big Costilla at 12,739 feet. Part of the Carson National Forest, the lush mountains and meadows provide extraordinary camping, fishing, hiking, biking, hunting and wildlife viewing — including large elk herds. The trout include the rare native Río Grande cutthroat (fourcornergoagetourism.com/content/valle-vidal-unit-carson-national-forest). The drive to just the center of Valle Vidal, at the Shuree Ponds and Cimarron Campground, is about 20 slow miles, and the full route across the preserve to come out at the town of Cimarron on US 64 is another 30 miles, so give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination before dark. Cell service out here is nonexistent.

CONTINUES PAGE 24
THE ENCHANTED CIRCLE SCENIC BYWAY
(enchantedcircle.org)

Another option for exploring the northern realm, which can be combined with the trip above for a multiple-day tour, is the Enchanted Circle.

Questa is one entry point for this loop trip. From here, head east on NM 38 into the Sangre de Cristo range to enjoy year-around activities for visitors of all ages and interests. The spirit of the Old and New West live on in the lively mountain town of Red River, with lots of places to eat and lodge. The town holds many annual festivals and has some great C&W honky-tonks. There are also horseback rides, activities on the ski slopes year-round (including a zipline and summer chairlift rides), golf, disk golf, hiking, fishing and even hot air ballooning (redriver skiing.com, redriver.org, 575-754-2223).

Continue your journey on NM 38 by driving over Bobcat Pass (elevation 9,820 feet) while stopping to enjoy the high mountain views. Entering the green enclave of the lovely Moreno Valley, passing the gold-mining ghost town of Elizabethtown, you arrive in Eagle Nest (eaglenestchamber.org, 575-377-2420) and US 64. A small community with a lively past, Eagle Nest provides a quiet, peaceful respite. The town is named for the golden eagles that inhabit the surrounding mountains. Flocks of geese, ducks, pelicans, herons and ospreys migrate through the valley. A large elk herd also inhabits the area, and Eagle Nest Lake beckons those fishing for record-size trout, perch and kokanee salmon.

The Moreno Valley also shelters Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park (vietnamveteransmemorial.org, 575-377-6900), just south of Eagle Nest on US 64. Created in 1971, this was the first major memorial to veterans of the Vietnam War. The inspiring site offers free admission and includes a chapel, visitor center and memorial walkway.

Also south of Eagle Nest is Angel Fire (angelfirefun.com, 575-377-6555 or 866-668-7787), on the spur road, NM 434. A year-round resort community with an alpine lifestyle, Angel Fire has a world-class mountain bike course, downhill and cross country skiing, a beautiful golf course, lake and stream fishing, hiking and excellent birding. It is also home to the highly regarded Music from Angel Fire series, held every summer, which marks its 35th year in 2018 (musicfromangelfire.org, 575-377-3233).

For a good local hike, try Elliot Barker Trail #1 (alltrails.com/trail/us/newmexico/elliot-barker-trail). Located west of Angel Fire off NM 64, the scenic mountain trail offers a nice opportunity for a short hike or a longer, 7.6-mile moderate hike.

To return to Taos, take US 64 west over Palo Flechado Pass (9,101 feet), descending through Taos Canyon, filled with golden cottonwoods in the fall. The whole drive can be done leisurely in eight hours or broken into a few days. 

Top left: The annual Red River motorcycle rally attracts all types, including Governor Bill Richardson at the 2006 event. Photo by Megan Bowers.

Top center: A young ice fishing enthusiast, Adam Vigil of Taos, in 2008 at Eagle Nest—the state’s premier venue for winter fishing. Photo by Karl Moffat.

Top right: The lovely and tranquil Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial between Eagle Nest and Angel Fire is open year round. Courtesy Michael Turri.

TAOS VISITOR INFORMATION: TAOS.ORG, 800-732-8267

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Tom Gallegos, a native of Taos, provides tours throughout New Mexico. Contact him at nmtourguide@gmail.com or truenewmexico.com.
Discover the projects of the Questa Creative Council; celebrating and supporting the arts in this historic village.

**QUESTA HISTORY & COMMUNITY TRAIL**

The new Questa History & Community Trail connects downtown to the historic plaza and its restored San Antonio de Padua church; presenting a microcosm of northern New Mexican history. This half-mile route and its related website highlight ancient settlements, rare geologic features, multicultural origins, frontier religious devotion, acequias and the arts.

A collaboration with LEAP is creating a Community Memory Project of oral histories, images, and local stories. QuestaStories.org

www.QuestaTrail.org

“We are proud to work with Taos Community Foundation in honoring the legacy of our parents, Beatrice and Virgil Gutierrez. They taught us the value of education, family and community. We are thankful to be able to honor those values through our partnership with Taos Community Foundation”.

- Gutierrez Family
anamaria samaniego
PAINTER, PRINTMAKER

_Hogar en Questa_ by AnaMaria Samaniego, Oil base monotype & pastel, 35 1/2” x 21 1/4”

_Rio Grande_ by AnaMaria Samaniego, Oil base monotype & pastel, 23 1/2” x 19 1/2”
Whether incising delicate grooves into the surface of shiny copper plates or pulling prints by hand to create one-of-a-kind etchings, collagraphs, linocuts and monotypes, award-winning landscape artist AnaMaria Samaniego "had no idea I would pursue art as a career until my last year in high school," she explained in a recent interview. That encouragement came from a favorite teacher, Lupe Casillas, who introduced the young artist to an array of genres. "She had us experimenting with as many mediums as possible," Samaniego recalls fondly.

An insight came from photographer David Scheinbaum, with whom she studied. "Work on what you know," he professed. "I chose to work from who I am. My upbringing had a lot to do with the agricultural land around me, and that led me to painting landscape." The artist describes her work as "peaceful, serene, meditative and honest, inspired by the landscape in all its forms: light, growth, the seasons, birds, animals, culture. Life!" Inspiration also lies in the work of Degas, Monet, Rothko and Van Gogh, in the canvases of many fellow New Mexico artists, including Tony Abeyta, Sergio Moyano and the late Janet Lippincott.

Samaniego's preference for working late into the night, "when all the day's disturbances are out of the way," is married with her skill at taking "optic snapshots" while driving, then translating those visual memories to the canvas. "These are quick impressions," she explains, "and are the start to actual work."

Standing in the middle of Samaniego's booth at a recent local art fair, surrounded by hand-finished prints of bright yellow chamisa (Amalia), wide, winding rivers (Rio Grande) and snow-dusted evergreens (Azucarado), it is evident that her eidetic approach is working. Just one more step toward the canvas and the doors of El Santuario de Chimayó will surely open (Criatura de Dios); the shadow of a passing cloud will bring a momentary coolness as we trek toward a still-summery mountain tree line (Armonia); the scent of pine will envelop us near the forest's edge (Hogar de Verano).

Plump, ripe vegetables wait to be picked in Samaniego's Salsa Collection, a series of etchings that pays homage to her family's history as migrant farmworkers in her hometown of Mesquite, in southern New Mexico near Las Cruces. The quartet of rectangular panels is popular with Samaniego's booth traffic. Visitors comment on the artist's mastery of line and light, and the way she so lovingly captures the intricate details of the fruits of the field.

Samaniego is a member of the Santa Fe Society of Artists, and her work is part of the New Mexico State Capitol's permanent collection. She has twice been the official poster artist for Santa Fe's Contemporary Hispanic Market, where she won a blue ribbon for her hand-pulled prints. Gallery representation includes Giacobbe-Fritz Fine Art in Santa Fe and Fyre Gallery in Braidwood, New South Wales, Australia.

For more information, contact artistasamaniego@aol.com.

*Americana* by AnaMaria Samaniego, Oil base monotype & pastel pastel, 24 1/2" x 25 1/2"
Our natural resources are our treasure in the North. For 28 years I have served as a commissioner on the Acequia del Rincon and actively cultivated the sustainability and continuity of our land and water. We need strong leaders to stand up to special interest groups who would deplete our environment for corporate gain.

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lone piñon

ACOUSTIC CONJUNTO BAND

Lone Pinon’s Jordan Wax. Photo by Cody Edison.

Lone Pinon’s Leticia Gonzales. Photo by Wendy Johnson.
Summer in New Mexico has always been a time for celebrating its many musical traditions. As the high desert days stretch into warm, lingering evenings and cool, starlit nights, the best musicians and vocalists in the state take to the stages and sometimes to the smooth, poured-concrete floors of Santa Fe’s favorite Railyard pub, as was the case on a recent Friday evening.

With songs like “Al Cortar Una Gardenia,” “Bernalillo Boogie” and “Valse Chimayó,” Lone Piñon’s lyrical tapestry is woven in English, Nahuatl, Purépecha and Spanish. The signature sound of Lone Piñon — comprised of Santa Fe’s own Leticia Gonzales, Albuquerque-born and -raised Noah Martinez and Missouri/New Mexico-bred Jordan Wax — is fed by the mastery of their respective instruments and by their deep reverence for New Mexico’s most time-honored musical histories, including canciones and rancheras norteñas, orquesta tejana, huapangos, huastecos and New Mexican and Mexican swing.

That kind of commitment “always takes collaboration,” explains Wax. “Traditional music takes a community. Each instrument has a role to play and fits into the whole in a particular way. Learning to work well as a trio is a process of finding that place for each instrument, getting comfortable with it and learning how to [retain] freedom and creativity within the boundaries of what makes the tradition strong.” For Wax, finding that place is accompanied by his work on accordion, violin and vocals.

Gonzales — mandolist, percussionist and fellow violinist to Wax — elaborates on the importance of finding that balance between adherence to tradition and self-expression. “There’s a wealth of space and diversity and flexibility within each of these ‘fixed’ roles. If I’m struggling with my part, I have to change how I’m listening: pay more attention to Noah’s moving parts or hear only the bigger beats and listen for Jordan’s phrasing. The most important part of being committed to a fruitful music-making process is remembering that it is a process, and change is inevitable.”

Noah Martinez, Lone Piñon’s master of bajo sexto, guitarrón, quinta huapanguera, toloche, and vihuela, rounds out the group’s shared sentiments on collaboration. “Once you find the people that play what you like, you gravitate toward them. You share the research and inspirations you’ve had with each other. When you play music together, you are responding to each other as in a good conversation.

Lone Piñon has recorded two CDs, Trio Nuevomexicano and Dias Felices. Their third compilation, Dalé Vuelo, is set for release in summer 2018. Catch them playing at venues in Northern New Mexico.

For more information, contact lonepinon@gmail.com.

It’s about respect. You’re finding what works and what doesn’t. You’re listening equally. That’s when it comes to life.”

Lone Piñon’s Noah Martinez. Photo by Cody Edison.
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If you’re lucky enough to live in north-central New Mexico, you’re probably already a fan of the great outdoors. Wouldn’t you like to add a new layer to your appreciation of nature and learn to recognize delicious, wild edible plants the next time you’re out hiking, backpacking or simply walking around the neighborhood?

Foraging for wild edibles is a great way to relate to your surroundings. It gets you outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine, it’s good exercise and it introduces you to the delicious flavors that make where you live unique. And the food is free!

So what wild delicacies are out there, just waiting to be harvested? You probably already know that piñon nuts, wild asparagus and some species of wild mushrooms are edible, but here are a few lesser-known wild foods that are easy to find in Northern New Mexico.

VERDOLAGAS (aka purslane; scientific name Portulaca oleracea) grows best in hot, sunny, dry places. Look for it in the cracks of sidewalks, as a garden weed and along gravel roads and sunny trails. Verdolagas has small, succulent leaves and yellow flowers. It grows flat and low to the ground, but with plentiful water and good soil, it can grow to be 6 inches tall.

When eaten raw, this plant is crunchy and tart, and its young leaves make a great addition to sandwiches and salads. Older purslane (with thicker stems) is better when cooked and is tasty in egg dishes, stir-fries and casseroles. It’s high in iron, vitamins A and C, antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids. Try to harvest before the plant flowers, when it’s most succulent and flavorful. Depending on the growing conditions, this may be anywhere between June and September.
EL MUSEO IS:

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• Objects of Art/Antique American Indian Art: Expositions, August 9-12/14-17/ 2018
• CENTER – Photo exhibit, featured Joel-Peter Witkin, October 2018
• Currents New Media Festival – June 2019

COMMUNITY, CULTURE & HISTORY:
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Several different greens go by the name **QUELITE**. They include lamb’s-quarter (aka wild spinach or *Chenopodium album*). Lamb’s-quarter is considered a weed in North America, but in other parts of the world it’s cultivated as a vegetable. Its flavor is mild, and both the leaves and stems are edible. Like spinach, lamb’s-quarter contains oxalic acid. In large quantities, oxalic acid can aggravate certain medical conditions, such as gout and kidney stones. Fortunately, cooking breaks down oxalic acid and makes the plant safe to eat.

Lamb’s-quarter may grow to be 6 feet tall. Its foliage is diamond shaped, and the undersides of the leaves are white. Look for it in June and July, in sunny fields and as a yard or garden weed. Strip the leaves off the stems and use them any way you’d use spinach. (Like spinach, it reduces in volume when cooked.) The top 6 to 8 inches of stem can be steamed and eaten as a stem vegetable, similar to asparagus.

**PRICKLY PEARS** (aka *nopales*; species of the genus *Opuntia*) are common in both cultivated and wild landscapes in north-central New Mexico. They grow in hot, dry conditions and in poor, sandy soils. Multiple species grow in New Mexico, and both the paddles and fruit are edible. Prickly pears are covered with spines and glochids. Never heard of glochids? They are the small, silky-looking hairs that cluster at the base of each spine. Do not be fooled. They are barbed and difficult to remove once they get under your skin!

To cook with nopales, look for young, large paddles with the fewest spines. Use a knife or vegetable peeler to remove the spines and glochids. Then slice up the pads and add them to egg dishes or stir-fries. You’ll find the ripened fruits of the prickly pear, also known as *tunas*, from August through October. Use prickly pear juice to make jellies, marinades, syrups, cocktails and sorbet.

In many parts of the country, **CHOKECHERRIES** (scientific name *Prunus virginiana*) are considered pest plants. But in the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains, chokecherries are appreciated for their abundant, tart fruit. Don’t harvest when the fruit is still red. At this stage it is unpleasantly astringent. Wait until the fruit has turned a dark purple; that’s when it’s at its best. Make no mistake, this is still a tart fruit, and most people sweeten anything they make with chokecherries.

Chokecherries are an adaptable plant. They’ll grow in rich or poor soil, along roadsides, in ravines, and on the edges of streams and woods. You’ll often find clumps of them growing along fence lines where birds and other animals have stopped to eat (and to eliminate seeds!). Chokecherries may grow as small trees or multi-stemmed shrubs and are easy to spot in spring, when they’re covered with bottlebrush plumes of small white flowers. In Northern New Mexico, the trees usually flower in May, and fruit is best harvested in late July or August. Chokecherry seeds contain small amounts of a cyanide compound (as do regular cherry, plum and peach pits). Juicing the fruit gets rid of the seeds and leaves you with a richly colored, tasty liquid you can use for jelly, syrup, fruit leather and wine.

You’ll find three types of **SUMAC** growing in Northern New Mexico: staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*), smooth sumac (*R. glabra*) and three-leaf sumac (*R. trilobata*). All three produce red berries with a tart, lemony flavor.
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and the fruit can be used fresh or dried. Before I go any further, let me assure you that you will never confuse these edible sumacs for poison sumac, if you pay attention! Poison sumac is a wetland plant that produces white berries in clusters that dangle between the leaves. The USDA does not report it as growing in New Mexico. The three edible sumacs listed above are drought-tolerant plants that bear upright clusters of red fruit. Since you will be touching this plant only when the fruit is present, and since red and white are easy to differentiate, don’t let fear of poison sumac keep you from enjoying the flavor of red sumac berries.

Sumac gets its tartness from the acids (malic, citric, tartaric, ascorbic) that coat the berries. These acids are washed away by rain, so the lemony flavor will be strongest after a dry spell. Look for ripe fruit in August. Infuse the berries in water to make sumac-ade or in gin for a bright red, tart cocktail. Or dry and grind the fruit (removing the seeds) to make a pretty spice that adds tartness to meats, vegetables and grains. All three sumacs grow best in full sun. They are popular landscape plants and can also be found as feral plants in the wild.

Spices, fruits and greens are just a few of the wonderful wild foods you can harvest in north-central New Mexico. And since many of them are considered weeds (some are actually classified as invasive), you won’t harm the environment by harvesting these found flavors to enjoy in your kitchen.

In addition to the foods featured here, locally you can also forage for acorns, asparagus, crab apples, curly dock, musk mustard, piñon nuts, rosehips, stinging nettles, watercress and whitetop mustard, among other foods. So now get out there and do some wild shopping!

Ellen Zachos is a professional forager, writer and speaker who teaches foraging and cooking classes across the United States. She is a regular contributor to Edible Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, and her website, backyardforager.com, is all about how to harvest and cook with wild edible plants and mushrooms. She has just released her first online mini foraging course for beginners. See backyard-forager.thinkific.com.

**SAFETY TIPS**

BECAUSE FORAGING IS ONLY FUN WHEN IT’S SAFE, THERE ARE A FEW RULES TO FOLLOW:

- **Never eat** anything if you’re not 100 percent sure of its identity.
- **Always get permission** before harvesting from someone else’s land. Some national and state parks allow limited amounts of foraging of certain plants and plant parts.
- **Don’t forage alongside busy roads** or parking lots. Particles of heavy metals can settle out of automobile exhaust and be absorbed by plant roots.
- **Always start** with a small amount of any new food, whether it’s harvested from the wild or from the produce aisle of your local market. That way, if you have an allergic reaction, it will be manageable.
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jason garcia
CERAMIC ARTIST/POTTER, GRAPHIC ARTIST
Born into a family of acclaimed Santa Clara Pueblo potters, Jason Garcia was introduced to clay early in his childhood. He soon mastered the traditional techniques necessary to pursue a full-time career as an artist, and, as noted in his biography, “I really don’t know much else.”

Garcia’s earliest influences naturally came from this artistic familial environment, where ancient sources of creativity were part of daily life. Gathering raw materials from nearby hillsides to make clay; shaping jars and vases by hand from smooth, moist coils; burnishing dry vessels to glasslike finishes with stones passed down from generation to generation; firing outdoors in accordance with the ancient ways; it was all in a day’s work for the young, learning Garcia.

Growing up on the reservation during the contemporary Indian art movement’s formative years Garcia also took inspiration from over-the-top 1970s superhero cartoons and comic books and color-saturated 1980s video games. Likewise, the pulpy deluge of graphic novels in the late 1990s poured fresh creative ingredients into the artist’s already rich mix of self-expression. From this elemental fusion, Garcia’s now instantly recognizable style emerged: flat clay tablets made with traditional clays, mineral paints and firing techniques but reading like comic book pages.

“Jason has changed the perceptions of a simple clay and made it his canvas,” says pottery aficionado Charles King. “His painted surfaces tell modern stories of the Pueblos and give voice to the untold history of the Pueblo Revolt. On a personal level, they also tell the story of his life as an artist.” His work ranges from elegant, cylindrical vases and steady, bold jars to smooth-edged tiles to detail-rich drawn and painted images that provide a Lichtenstein-esque “pow!” but never drown out the Pueblo conversation.

Garcia’s accolades include top awards at the Santa Fe Indian Market and the Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market in Phoenix. His work has been collected by the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. He is represented by King Galleries in Santa Fe and Scottsdale, Arizona.

For further information, visit okuupin.com.
Acequias: Lifeblood of the Rural North

By Arnold Vigil
Ask any Northern New Mexico parciantes — an owner of a derecho (water right) that allows them to divert water onto their land through a compuerta (headgate) from an acequia (ditch) — if irrigating the traditional way is easy. The answer is going to be resoundingly clear, and most likely in Spanish — not only “no” but “$#*@ NO!!!”

So why do they do it? Very few parciantes in the north make a comfortable living off the fruits of their acequia-fed lands; most use the centuries-old irrigation systems to help feed their families and to supplement other sources of income. All the while, they must sweat and toil in the dirt, weeds and mud along their sections of the acequia throughout the year, profit or no profit. They handle shovels, pitchforks, rakes, saws and many other land-working tools, using muscle and backbone to tame sudden and intermittent water releases that can quickly cause more damage than growth.

Oftentimes, parciantes must burn the midnight oil to usher in this purposeful onslaught of rushing, powerful water.

And come rain, wind or shine, the water must be welcomed in, lest they forfeit their turn on the acequia schedule, which might not come again for days or perhaps weeks — especially in extremely dry years such as this one.

For Joe Ciddio, a 73-year-old parciantes who's been tapping into the Acequia Sancochada in Cañoncito near Dixon for more than half a century, the spiritual and emotional benefits of stewarding a personal acequia far outweigh the hard work, expense and year-to-year unpredictability associated with owning and utilizing water rights.

“It’s like a form of meditation,” Ciddio says of the Zen-like feeling he gets when he diverts water onto his 10 irrigated acres and witnesses it slowly permeating deep into the dry areas where he wants it to go. “Sometimes it’s just like play, like playing with water. I feel so blessed that I’ve been able to do that.”

Ciddio, a former counselor who became director of the Río Grande Treatment Center as well as the Oñate Monument and Visitors
He is a parciantie of the El Llano community ditch association and has a deep understanding of the pressures facing the acequias - water transfers, changing land use, and aging infrastructure.

Carlos is a champion of the traditional

He supports improvement of small dams and reservoirs and backs legislation for acequias.

He has been instrumental in acquiring $15 million in statewide capital outlay funds for dredging and raising the elevation.
Senator Carlos R. Cisneros is fighting for Northern New Mexico acequia organizations in the state.

of Santa Cruz Dam and obtained $7.5 million for renovation and restoration of Cabresto Dam.

Carlos also helped win $4.2 million in funding for UNM Taos and funding for the Veterans Cemetery.

Photo courtesy of Petree Nursery & Greenhouses

Political advertisement paid for by committee to reelect Carlos R. Cisneros
Center in Alcalde, married his wife, Ursula, in his late teens. They lived for a time in Denver, California, and Vail. But after becoming fascinated by his father’s and other elders’ stories of the joys and rigors of rural Northern New Mexico living, and influenced by the ’60s counterculture ethic of living off the land, the couple gave up their wanderlust and bought a small piece of land near Ursula’s Dixon-area roots to make a go at farming.

“I was fortunate to get involved with the acequia and the wife’s familia in the area, and I learned from them and the neighbors,” Ciddio says of his initial efforts at making rushing water go where he wanted. The Ciddios eventually raised four children to adulthood on the farm, and grandkids often come visit the empty-nesters.

“They [my children] still have interest, and they come out here to help when they can,” Ciddio says. “They developed a master plan to care for the property [after we’re gone]. They don’t want to sell.” In the meantime, Ciddio perched atop his tractor is still a familiar sight in Cañoncito. However, he laments, “I’m planting less and less because it’s getting harder and harder.”

Maintaining and preserving the traditional ways of the acequia has driven Mario Romero of Pojoaque since he was 14, when he was taken under the wing of his neighbor, the late Guadalupe Jiron; his dad’s cousin Longino Vigil, a WW II combat veteran who owns a Nambe-apple orchard that boasted more than 3,000 trees at the time; and the late Pablo Roybal, who operated a nearby dairy and farm, Rancho de las Lagunas, which for decades delivered fresh milk early every morning to area homes and businesses.

Working on the acequia makes me feel strong and to appreciate my health and that I’m strong enough to do it.

“There’s nothing more therapeutic than a No. 2 shovel!”

says the 54-year-old Romero, a former ditch commissioner and current par- ciante of the Acequia de las Joyas in Pojoaque, which he claims is the oldest ditch in the Pojoaque Valley. “A person can live a life without stress with the [acequia] lifestyle. I get satisfaction to see that a place looks healthy and green and that someone appreciates the land. Water is life! Like my Grandpa Liberato used to say, ‘This land is not for you to cash in your chips and sell. It’s for you to enjoy, relieve stress and pass along.’”

Romero says that he learned many modern irrigating techniques from Longino Vigil, including under- and above-ground water delivery systems with PVC pipe as well as concrete-lined acequia paths. “Longino always praised the efficiency of the systems and he used to say, ‘A gallon goes in and a gallon comes out.’”

While most of his mentors have passed away or are now retired from irrigat- ing, Romero has evolved into one of the go-to experts in the Pojoaque Valley, sought out by elderly landowners who aren’t able to work the land anymore, other ditch experts who need his farming skills or novices who just need to learn.

“It takes a lot of work to get water to a person’s land. It just doesn’t get there like a faucet,” Romero says. “It’s a year-to-year process to tame water, but once you do it right, you can go out there and irrigate a field in your slippers!”

NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION

New Mexico has an estimated 800 acequia systems, some of which have existed since Spanish colonistas settled here in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to the Office of the State Engineer, acequias are recognized under New Mexico state law as political subdivisions. Their respective associations have the power of eminent domain but cannot tax, although they are able to exact dues from members and borrow money.

The perseverance of centuries-old water law under several different national governments is complicat- ed, as are the hardships faced by acequia traditions. An invaluable ally is the New Mexico Acequia Asso- ciation, which offers workshops, information and events dedicated to the acequia lifestyle.

NMAA was founded in 1989 to help keep individual water rights from being transferred mostly to the state and to keep them in agriculture, says Serafina Lombardi, NMAA’s director of education and out- reach. In the early 2000s, NMAA worked for passage of a state law that gives acequia associations more power to approve or deny transfers of water rights out of irrigation districts, she says.

Lombardi says the NMAA also helps water users rejuvenate old acequia organizations that have been inactive, helps associations modernize and improve their infrastructure, and helps them acquire grants and funding. “We will hold their hands from the bottom up,” she says.

A mission statement on the NMAA website reads, “The New Mexico ACEQUIA Association strives to protect water and our acequias, grow healthy food for our families and communities, and to honor our cultural heritage.”

For more information, visit lasacequias.org.

Arnold Vigil is a former Albuquerque Journal reporter and columnist, New Mexico Magazine editor and New Mexico state historical archivist. He is currently rejuvenating his family’s small acequia-fed farm. After many frustrating years, he is finally winning the battle, but not the war, against invasive Siberian elms. He fights them with both backhoe and backbone, both of which are notorious for being temperamental at the most inopportune times.

An acequia in La Cienega flanked by coyote willow. Photo by Kitty Leaken.
Your Northern New Mexico Education Foundation

For over 20 years, the LANL Foundation has been investing in learning and human potential. As the only nonprofit solely dedicated to education in Northern New Mexico, our innovative programs, community collaborations, and advocacy support our vision that all New Mexicans have the skills and confidence they need to be self-sufficient, lifelong learners who are engaged in their community.

$70 million has been invested by the LANL Foundation in districts, schools, nonprofits, and individuals through education programs, grants, and scholarships during 1997–2017.

$6.45 million has been invested and leveraged by LANL Foundation for early childhood programs including home visiting since 2006.

Pueblo Outreach Project, guided by LANL Foundation in partnership with Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, is developing an asset map and culturally relevant plan for each of the eight northern Pueblos to increase awareness and build capacity for family support systems in their community.

More than $350,000 will be invested this year in K-12 Program grants that provide socio-emotional support for students and teachers, build STEM initiatives, encourage and grow the education profession, and promote advocacy for learning at all levels.

$15.5 million has been invested in STEM education through the LANL Foundation's Inquiry Science Education Consortium (ISEC).

11,000 students & 570 teachers in 44 elementary schools across 8 districts & 2 pueblos in Northern New Mexico receive free curriculum, experiential learning materials, and educator professional development.

Since 1999, more than $6.8 million in scholarships have made a positive impact on the lives of 1,400+ students in Northern New Mexico.

In 2018, 142 students will receive $712,950 in scholarships that highlight many diverse qualifications and accomplishments.

Small education & community outreach grants totaling $225,000 will be awarded this year to support public education needs such as curriculum, literacy, experiential learning, dropout prevention, teacher training, early childhood programs, adult learning, and community events.
anita rodríguez stirs the pot of life

By Rick Romancito

“If I were to go outside and stuff the dirt from this place in my mouth, it would be sweet,” says Anita Otilia Rodríguez. The enjarradora (master mud plasterer), author, painter and stirrer of pots — both political and of delicious sustenance — is right. The land that has nourished her and her long line of relatives is so rich with nutrients that its taste is a surprise in more than a metaphorical sense. That’s probably because it won’t grow just anything, and it will break you if you aren’t mindful. Yet, when the time is right, it can hold you in a motherly embrace.

Like this land of contradictions, Rodríguez is at 77 a steely-eyed critic and yet a fawning celebrant of all that has given her bounty. Both attitudes are entwined in her latest book, Coyota in the Kitchen (University of New Mexico Press), a multi-award-winning collection of stories, recipes and commentary on life as a woman growing up in Taos. “I was shocked,” she says when learning that the book was the recent recipient of many accolades.

Coyota is categorized as simply a cookbook, but it is much more than that, with passages revealing the rich life she led growing up in the region.

“I feel full of stories,” she says. “I have had such a disparate and diverse life that it was hard to find some way to connect all the stories together into one book. I feel like all these stories are like actors that are all rushing to get out of a burning theater, all crowded at the door.”

The link she found was through the universal binder of family and friends — food. “I was very inspired by Günther Grass’s book The Flounder. I went into it in a little more detail than he did, but he talked about food and women and the development of civilization. It is women who’ve always been the cooks, and we’ve always been the stationary population because we get pregnant and we have babies. So we are the ones to stay in the same place and built the first architecture, and planted the first crops, and began to identify plants, and so on. With women and their cooking, we keep together the family.”

In her book, Rodríguez writes about the women in her family who were great cooks, the ones who hated cooking and those who could make chile you could sell to the Pentagon as a nuclear weapon. She also delves into the history of food in the southwestern United States, how it was influenced by the confluence of various languages, cultures, religion and political intrigue. Of the latter, Rodríguez is still a firebrand.

An activist since her youth, Rodríguez continues to make her case for humanity and justice. “I love this land, and I really love my community,” she says. You can see it in her art. A painting she spoke about at a recent roundtable discussion to wrap up an exhibition titled Work by Women at the Harwood Museum of Art in Taos provided an illustration of her views. It was titled Nuestra Señora de los Remedios (Our Lady of Remedies). This figure, she said, exists to heal the wounds of the conquest.

The “historical trauma” caused by the collision of culture and beliefs when the Spanish arrived to colonize New Mexico in 1598, then later when Anglo-Americans invaded this land in the mid-19th century, remains
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Papa told stories on those Sunday drives — stories that ignited my imagination and nourished my slowly emerging sense of who I was and where I came from. Brimming with anticipation, I would wait for him to shift into his storytelling voice. That’s when the enchantment would begin.

“Tu abuelo, Juan Antonio Ramírez, had vacas. He won ‘em in a card game. Every year part of the herd had to be taken over the mountains to the matanza to be butchered. Those mountains way over there.” Pointing, Papa veered sharply to the right, fusing the image in my mind’s eye with the terror of barely missing a horse.

“In those days there was no roads . . .”

“Were no roads, Tony,” my mother interjected.

“There was no roads across the Picuris Mountains to the matanza, where we had our busher chop...”

“...busher shop, Tony. And it’s shop — not chop.”

In those days there was no roads . . . “

Her stories were the color of her grim mood and meant to terrify us cousins into submission. After putting her numerous grandchildren into the huge, sagging bed like so many sardines, alternating us head-to-toe and toe-to-head under layers of heavy Navajo and Chimayó blankets — not to warm us but to pin us down — she would tell us stories of witches who turned into owls and dogs, and of curses that twisted the lives of ungrateful, disobedient children into grotesque tragedies.

I cannot, in good conscience, include any recipes from my paternal grandmother because Hipólita was a terrible cook. So instead I will tell a few stories about the woman who definitely did not fit the stereotype of the benign grandmother with a halo of white hair who lulls children to sleep with peaceful bedtime stories.

Anita Rodríguez: Coyota in the Kitchen

From Coyota in the Kitchen by Anita Rodríguez.
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Coyota in the Kitchen
A Memoir of New and Old Mexico

Anita Rodríguez

Rick Romancito is an award-winning Native American journalist, artist, filmmaker and former motion picture actor. He is editor of Tempo, the arts and entertainment magazine of The Taos News, and shares his time in Taos with his wife Melody, daughter Ella and grandchild Layla, plus three dogs and a cat.
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Names of the Northern Realm

By Roberto H. Valdez | Photographs by Chris Dahl-Bredine

When my inquisitive ancestors asked the Pueblo people about the geography of Taos, responses in the Tiwa and Tewa languages described a high country, or la sierra as we say it in New Mexico's Spanish dialect. This high and isolated country fostered a way of life associated with hunting, and for centuries the wardrobe of its people mostly consisted of the skins of animals. Access to timber, excellent summer and winter grazing lands and mineral wealth later drew in Anglo people with the necessary technology to develop these resources.

The place-names found along the Enchanted Circle auto tour, which this article roughly parallels, includes the highest mountain in the state, Cerro de Taos, at 13,161 feet above sea level, incorporating the common Spanish word for mountain, cerro. However, modern maps use a different name: Wheeler Peak, which commemorates Major George M. Wheeler of the U.S. Army, who was in charge of land surveys performed during the 1870s.

The Tiwa word Taos may be related to Tua-thaa, meaning "Down at the Village." However, the Spanish learned a similar-sounding name, Thaa-wi'i ("To Live at the Gap"), from Tewa neighbors 40 miles downstream. The Spanish pluralized the word by adding a gentle s. Taos Pueblo was likely established during the 1400s, consolidated from earlier villages in the region. The Spanish introduced Roman Catholicism through Franciscan friars, such as Fray Francisco de Zamora, who served from 1610 to 1617. A church named San Geronimo de Taos was begun around 1619, its name coming from St. Jerome.

A trip northbound from Taos reveals a landscape with several forested extinct volcanoes surrounded by an expansive sage and grassland plateau. Taos County is set within a rift valley, where earth's crust has pulled apart, forming shield volcanoes — mountains with peculiar round pot shapes — from relatively gentle eruptions. Among these are Cerro del la Olla ("Mountain of the Pot") and Cerro del Yutah ("Ute Mountain"). The latter is named for its association with a nomadic tribe that ranged in today's Valle San Luis of Colorado, just north of Taos, and farther west. The name was learned by the Spanish from the Tewa and gave rise to the place-name Utah.
Up the Río Colorado, today’s Red River, is the town of Red River, which was called Red River City up until the 1930s. The canyon it sits in was examined by miners from nearby Elizabethtown perhaps around 1870. By 1882 the Aztec and California Placer Companies were operating sawmills just downriver. Three brothers — Sylvester, Orin and Jerome Mallette from Fort Garland, Colorado — homesteaded at today’s town site in 1892. They were bought out by an entrepreneur named E. I. Jones from Colorado Springs two years later. He organized what would become today’s town, which attracts tourists looking for a convenient immersion into the Old West, winter skiing and a respite from summer heat.

Climbing over Bobcat Pass, one enters the Moreno Valley. Some locals suspect that the name needs a tilde (Valle Moreño) but agree that the valley was named after the inhabitants of Mora, to the southeast, who used this vast grassy mountain valley to pasture sheep. Some 8 miles to the north is Valle Vidal, a beautiful 4½-mile-long high country meadow filled with wildlife. The name, found here and there in the region, derives from an unknown Hispanic New Mexican. Some sources erroneously translate the name as “Valley of Abundant Life.” The valley drains into Comanche Creek, which runs through another lovely grassy valley before joining the Río de la Costilla (“River of the Rib”), so named for a broad curve near the end of its course. During the 18th century, the Comanches staged large and deadly raids throughout the region. But eventually a peace treaty was made and the Comanches became regular trading partners with Hispanic and Pueblo inhabitants.

Elizabethtown was laid out on paper in 1868 and became the first incorporated town in New Mexico and the first seat of Colfax County. The boomtown’s name was initially Virginia City, after the Nevada mining town, but one town founder, John W. Moore, eventually applied his daughter’s name to it and it stuck. Gold was extracted from deposits...
of gravel in almost every nearby creek. Some of it was unearthed with water from the remarkable 41-mile-long Big Ditch, diverted from the Red River and sprayed on the gravelly hillsides using large high-pressure hoses. By 1875, “E-town” was in decline as the gold played out. Later, a new way to dredge gold briefly renewed life here, but a 1903 fire sealed its decline.

Returning to Taos requires a climb out of the Moreno Valley through Puerto del Palo Flechado, or “Pass of the Arrow-Pierced Wood.” Although this gap in the chain of mountains was the easiest thoroughfare through them, it nevertheless was a steep and difficult route. Its name is said to have arisen when travelers chanced upon a rotten log shot full of Apache arrows. Below the pass is the Valle Escondido (“Hidden Valley”). A narrow canyon called Cañón Fernando de Taos channels the traveler along the Río Fernando de Taos and below the mountain chain of Sierra Don Fernando.

This brings us to an explanation of the repeated local use of the name Fernando. During the late 1600s, the Spanish established a few farms and ranches in the vicinity of Taos, on what was then the extreme northern settlement of the inland Spanish Empire. Among the settlers was Don Fernando de Chávez. During an insurrection of the Pueblo people, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, Chávez and his family were killed. But the Spanish and Pueblo peoples reestablished neighborly relations after 1696, and Taos was resettled. Chávez was remembered when Cristóbal de la Serna petitioned in 1710 for a grant of land and with his entourage developed the village known as Don Fernando de Taos, using the respectful title don.

Initially, members of the Spanish community lived within Taos Pueblo itself because of their common need of defense against the Comanches, and in 1795 there were still some Spanish residents in Taos Pueblo. But eventually the Hispanic colonists moved just outside the pueblo and established the town of Taos. The rich soil so abundant in the Taos area lends itself to corn, beans and squash, despite a short growing season of about 140 days. A shared interest in agriculture, village life, trade, protection from enemies and adaptation to the environment has kept the communities of the area’s Hispanics and Pueblo Indians close and unified, yet separate and distinct, ever since.

Roberto H. Valdez is a native New Mexican whose ancestors settled here in 1598. He holds a master’s degree in geography, with an emphasis on human-environment interaction, from the University of New Mexico and is currently a history and geography instructor at Northern New Mexico College in Española.
I’m proud to represent the people, cultures, history and natural resources that make our neck of the woods so unique. As New Mexico State Representative for District 42, I work hard to ensure the protection of all these valuable cultural and natural resources.

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ancient and modern churches reflect enduring faith

By Rick Hendricks

No public spaces in Northern New Mexico are more reflective of local customs, the skills of homegrown artisans and particular traditions than are churches. In our ongoing look at various means and methods of religious faith in the area, in this issue we visit three iconic churches: San Gerónimo of Taos Pueblo, San Francisco de Asis in Ranchos de Taos and San Cristobal del Rey in Santa Fe.

SAN GERÓNIMO DE TAOS

Taos Pueblo was the site of the northernmost Franciscan mission in the Spanish colonial period. The original 17th-century San Gerónimo Church did not survive the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. The replacement, begun around 1706, was destroyed by the U.S. military in 1847. A third church stands here today, offering testimony in muted tones to the endurance of a people’s faith.

San Gerónimo de Taos sits just off the pueblo’s plaza, adjacent to the iconic, multistoried north house block. The diminutive single-nave church has two large buttresses in the back. Today it is painted white and the color of earth, although over the years it has worn other color schemes. The front of the structure features a surrounding retaining wall enclosing a tiny flagstone-paved camposanto (cemetary), which visitors enter through a portal of stair-step design. On a recent visit, I went in the church and found myself quite alone, the perfect occasion for a moment’s contemplation of the confluence of cultures that was immediately apparent. Rather than wearing the traditional Eastertide liturgical colors, the Virgin Mary, who dominates the altar, was attired in delicate pink, because Taos faithful dress her according to the seasons: pink for spring, green for summer, yellow/gold for fall and white for winter. However, the colors have changed over the years, varying according to the wishes of the priest and the women who care for the church’s holy figures.

The church was completed about 1850, with its facade undergoing alteration several times since. In the late 19th century, the church looked like a typical Northern New Mexico village church. Photographs from the turn of the 20th century indicate that it had a single wooden bell tower. By the late 1920s or early 1930s, the church had a single bell tower of stepped adobe. In the 1950s the facade gained an exterior balcony, and two large bell towers at the corners of the façade, with a stepped wall between them, replaced the single central bell tower.

A Franciscan priest, Fray Andrés García — who was also a talented santero (a maker of carved and
photographed and painted religious structure in the Southwest, and perhaps in America, is the sculptural-like adobe form of the church of San Francisco de Asís in Ranchos de Taos. Every major classical photographer of the region—from Ansel Adams and Paul Strand to Edward Weston—and countless living photographers, as well as painters as famous as Georgia O’Keeffe, have tried their hand at capturing the structure in imagery. Here is a thriving Roman Catholic parish, and when I visited the church on Cinco de Mayo, worshippers thronged it and spilled into the camposanto (cemetery).

Official documents granting permission to Fray José Benito Pereyro to erect the church were completed in 1813, and the structure was ready in 1815. Such a massive edifice could not have been built in such a short time, and tree-ring dating of vigas hints that construction began around 1806, before the paperwork was finalized. Vugas span the 32 feet of the nave of the thick-walled cruciform adobe church and the 25 feet of the transept. In addition to these beams—transported from a great distance—building the church required more than 100,000 adobes. The structure features a transverse clerestory window, the most characteristic element of Spanish colonial New Mexico church architecture. Above the facade and roofline rise two small bell towers. Out front is a walled camposanto, and in the rear—the portion most often depicted by artists—are massive adobe buttresses built to support the thick walls, giving the structure an organic form that constantly seems to shift as the sun passes overhead.

Father Pereyro and Ignacio Durán funded and built the large reredo (altar screen). San Francisco occupies the center niche of the reredo, which holds eight paintings on canvas, the work of an unknown artist. They may have come from outside New Mexico, although noted scholar E. Boyd reckoned them as early work of Antonio Molleno, a shadowy but prolific figure in the colonial art world of New Mexico. Painted swags (carved ornaments), spiral pillars and carved wooden moldings attached to the panels of the reredo separate the images. Among the images surrounding the central niche are El Cristo de la Columna, Nuestro Padre Jesús Esquipulas Nazareno, Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, San Lorenzo, San Francisco de Asís, San Antonio de Padua and the patriarch San José.

The church sits at 60 St. Francis Plaza, just off NM 68 at the blinking light on the south side of Taos in Ranchos de Taos. Masses are offered in Spanish and English on most days at various times. Parish offices can be reached at 575-758-2754. For details visit san-francisco-de-asis.org/.

SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS
RANCHOS DE TAOS

Photo by Daniel Gibson.

I recently visited Cristo Rey Church in Santa Fe, which captures the grandeur of a bygone era with a modern interpretation of ancient mission architecture. On a Saturday before 4:30 Mass, the church was all but empty, and the afternoon light filtering through the clerestory window showed off to great effect the magnificent reredo, without question the most spectacular work of art from New Mexico’s colonial past.

On Easter Sunday 1939, Archbishop Rudolph Aloysius Gerken announced plans for the construction of a new church in Santa Fe in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Spaniards in New Mexico. Renowned architect John Gaw Meem and his associate Hugo Zehner designed the building. The plans incorporated many of the elements of the Pueblo revival style for which Meem became famous, drawing on New Mexico mission churches for such features as the exterior balcony, the low tower, the portal and the transverse clerestory.

After a ground-breaking on April 26, 1939, the church was blessed on June 27, 1940. Local men labored on the project, making adobes on site; they used around 180,000 in the church’s construction. The walls are from 2 to 9 feet thick. The structure had to be very solid to house the stone reredo, which measures 18 feet wide and 25 feet high. Colonial New Mexico renaissance man Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco had originally carved the wood for La Castrense, a military chapel formerly located on the south side of the Santa Fe Plaza. Governor Francisco Marín del Valle (1754-1760) and his wealthy wife, Doña María Ignacia Martínez de Ugarte, were the patrons of the chapel and Miera’s artwork. The beautiful white stone came from a quarry north of Santa Fe near Nambe Pueblo.

In the middle of the first of three sections of the reredo is an oil painting of Nuestra Señora de la Luz, which Governor Marín had brought from Mexico City. Another image of particular note is San Ignacio de Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order. His unexpected presence in Franciscan New Mexico reflects the devotion of the governor’s wife to the Jesuits. All the images of the saints are carved in high relief.

Cristo Rey is located at 1120 Canyon Road in Santa Fe. Visitors are welcome when the church is in service, when confessions are heard and by prior arrangement with the church office at 505- 983-8528. Masses are Sundays at 10 a.m., Saturdays at 4:30 p.m. and Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 12:10 p.m. For more information, visit cristoreyparish.org/.

Rick Hendricks is the New Mexico state historian. He researches, writes about and lectures on the history of the people of New Mexico and Mexico, especially on matters related to religion and land. This is his second piece for Land Water People Time.
Most Sundays, when the weather is good, I take a drive with my mother to Chimayó, our querencia (home ground), the place of origin for so much of who we are. In our conversation as we travel, we find ourselves recalling stories of people and events from our many decades of experience in that small, sheltered valley, a place laden with legends, not only for Chimayosos like us but for people from afar.

As we wind through the magnificent landscape, our platica (conversation) includes a wide circle of family and friends who have a shared history with us in this place. And on these journeys, we often find ourselves recalling dichos, old folk sayings in Spanish, finding again and again that these compact aphorisms evoke the character of Chimayó succinctly and also cleverly capture foibles of human nature. The dichos are just as fitting today as when they originated, many of them centuries ago.

Amid a discussion of a primo (cousin) whom we recently overheard criticizing his father for being stubborn, we recall the dicho “Es como el burro hablando de orejas!” That’s like a donkey talking about ears! The son, too, is infamous for his stubborn ways.

As we pass the turnoff to Santa Cruz Lake, my mother recalls a boating accident that left a childhood friend dead. “Poor Rafelito,” she says. “He drowned — and so young!”

No sabemos ni el día ni la hora.

We don’t know the day or the hour,” I say, recalling a dicho that my grandmother used often when reflecting on the seeming caprice of la muerte.

CONTINUES PAGE 62
"Power for the People by the People"

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A moment of silence ensues, as if Rafelito had died yesterday (he actually met his demise in the 1940s), and then conversation turns to a friend who barely survived a vicious attack by her own dogs. Shaking her head, Mom comments, “Escapó la gallina, más que sea sin plumas. The chicken escaped even though it lost its feathers,” a dicho humorously appropriate for anyone suffering a close brush with death.

My mother and I sometimes slip into chisme (gossipy conversation) and remark on the weakness of character in people we know, which brings up an ancient dicho derived from a biblical passage:

In the old days, any situation could be a teaching moment that might be driven home with a dicho. When a friendship turned treacherous, you could enjoin, “Dios, cuidame de mis enemigos que de mis amigos yo me cuidaré. Lord, protect me from my enemies and I’ll protect myself from my friends.” Or, when pondering the conceit of a newly minted political leader or other haughty character: “De más alto se han visto caer. From greater heights people have been known to fall.”

It seems that dichos serve foremost as guideposts to cultivating good moral character. Among the virtues most encouraged is humility, as suggested by the dicho “Hacen más unos callando que otros gritando. There are those who accomplish more being quiet than others who are shouting.” Or “Más altas están las nubes y el aire las desbarata. The clouds are much higher, and the wind still scatters them.” (No matter how high a position you reach in life, you can fall.)

The landscape sweeps by the car windows as we drive through fields and past houses that evoke memories. At the old plaza in Chimayó, Plaza del Cerro, Mom comments on the brilliant yellow rosas de castilla (Castillian roses) at the casita where her tía Bonefacia lived. Tía Bone, a spinster, was responsible — along with her brother Reyes, my great-grandfather — for passing on much of the folklore that we remember today, including the dichos. It was the stern Bonefacia who used the folk sayings to instill moral character in her numerous sobrinos and sobrinas (nephews and nieces).
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Looking at the roses, my mom can hear Bonefacia, who died in 1953, invoking through the sharp lens of the dichos her own sensibilities about right and wrong. In the same way, memories of my grandma are shaped through recalling the sayings she told and retold. With each utterance of a dicho, we are part of a chain of voices, of hearts and souls touching over generations.

In reciting these old sayings, we are also practicing a tradition that is common to Spanish-speakers the world over. Every culture has its own suite of axioms, but it seems that inheritors of the Spanish tongue have a particular affinity for sayings like these. I’ve found that they’re familiar and well understood throughout Latin America and Spain. Recounting a dicho or two quickly establishes a bond that bridges time and cultures.

Over the centuries, dichos have been perpetuated mostly through the spoken word, but now, with the publication of dichos in collections like ours (and there are many others in print), the transmission to future generations has leaped to the written form. Putting the words to paper commits them to an eternal state of “preservation,” but printed words don’t stick to the heart like those spoken. Nor do they work as well without the context of the people, the houses, the rugged hills, the weathered gravestones of the camposanto (cemetery).

So, as we take the winding road home from Chimayó, I try to savor the moment and hang on each word, committing to memory as many dichos as I can. And each journey through the landscape, memory and language, chasing dichos through Chimayó, ends with a satisfying sense that the chain of memory remains unbroken.
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The trading post — designated a national and state historic landmark in 1992 — opened its doors in 1921. The store’s origins date to the late 1880s, when Gavino and Ursulita DeAgüero Trujillo opened a trading post and mercantile in Chimayó. In 1917 their son Esquipula DeAgüero (E.D.) Trujillo and his wife, Romanita Ortega Martínez, purchased the business and started a cottage industry for local weavers. They relocated to Española in 1921 to take advantage of the tourist traffic between Santa Fe and Taos, and the trading post became a regular stop for Fred Harvey Indian tours. In its heyday, it boasted the Ramona hotel and restaurant, a gas station and a photography studio. “So it was like Española’s first strip mall,” jokes fourth-generation owner Patrick Trujillo.

In the early 1980s, the trading post passed to E.D. and Romanita’s son Leopoldo Trujillo, who operated it until his death in 2017. Leopoldo’s nephew Patrick now operates it with the help of his sister Roberta Trujillo Diaz.

The store retains its characteristic trading post atmosphere. Trujillo educates visitors about the Navajo and Puebloan jewelry and pottery on display. The walls are filled with paintings by local artists and Navajo and Río Grande weavings. Antique furniture and chandeliers share the space with local crafts, such as handmade body care products. Curios and collectibles hover in odd corners.

An array of Santa Clara pottery is front and center. “Santa Clara’s kind of my favorite,” Trujillo says. “San Ildefonso’s beautiful too. Then I have storytellers from Jemez. I have micaceous from Picuris, I have pottery from Santo Domingo, Laguna, Acoma — from all over the place.”

Trujillo willingly demonstrates his family’s weaving tradition on a loom next to the door. Photos documenting the trading post’s history and portraits of E.D. and Romanita displayed on a marble-topped vanity speak to his pride in his heritage.

Trujillo initiates a new tradition this year. After months of remodeling, the attached family home will host artist-in-residence events. In the warm atmosphere of the adobe living room, local potters, weavers, painters and other craftspeople will sell their wares directly to customers. Trujillo hopes to launch this new service by midsummer.
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FINDING NEW MEXICO
WOMEN’S HISTORY

By Patricia Marina Trujillo

“Watch out for the snake!”

The students initially scatter but then calmly walk around the rock hosting a coiled bull snake. Some of the braver students sneak a closer look, but they quickly keep moving on the vertical rocky trail at the Wells Petroglyph Preserve on Mesa Prieta in Lyden, New Mexico. As a professor in Northern New Mexico, I am blessed to work in a living classroom, with layers of stories stacked and scattered all over the land. A wonderful feature of Northern New Mexico College, where I work, is that students and faculty can take trips in or own backyards to listen to the voices of the past.

Dr. Matthew Martinez of Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, a professor of Pueblo Indian studies at NNMC, often accompanies me and my students to give tours of the petroglyphs, with the permission of preserve owner Katherine Wells. During a walking tour of a petroglyph trail, Martinez describes the time periods represented in the images carved on the rocks — Archaic, Ancestral Puebloan, and colonial/modern — and posits possible explanations of the designs. For, as the Mesa Prieta website states, “No one really knows why the ancients created petroglyphs or what they intended to communicate.”

During each visit, Martinez encourages students to consider the layers of context, culture, resources and stories that the images hold. Often he shares the story of one petroglyph in particular, an image of a woman giving birth. He explains to students that the petroglyph images reflect significant events in the daily lives of our ancestors. Birth, of course, was one of them.

The ancient image never fails to fascinate me. The birth scene carved on the rock centuries ago allows me to imagine history in New Mexico starting from a much different place than what I learned in school — an indigenous woman’s body. As we typically navigate New Mexico history, we are bombarded with historical narratives that start in 1598, with the arrival of Spanish conquistadores into the region, and follow the trajectory of war and colonial development by first Spain and then the United States. We talk of Oñate and De Vargas, of hosts of territorial governors and politicians, of Padre Martinez and Kearny. I crave the stories of women and birth.

When my students and I discuss the possibilities of the birth petroglyph with Matthew Martinez, we inevitably weave a web of stories about traditional birth practices, about imagining how and where women gave birth and how birth begs the question of relationship. How are the people of New Mexico related to each other? Was this rock the designated place to give birth? These questions always bring wonder and connection into our conversations about those humans emerging from this place through a woman’s body. We do not definitively know the answers, but the mere insinuation of a fecund origin inspires us to understand our place in the world from a different perspective. That is precisely what we need to do.

CONTINUES PAGE 72
What a great time to be a girl!

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At many of New Mexico’s historic sites, Nuevomexicana history has been relegated to what Vicki Ruiz, Chicana historian and former president of the American Historical Society, calls “landscape roles.” The visitor may have a “vague awareness of the presence of women, but only as scenery, not as actors.” Or women’s histories are framed as *historias escondidas*, hidden histories that we must learn to discern in the shadows of dominant narratives. The reality is that we can see the contributions of women everywhere when we broaden our scope of history beyond the ‘great man/great event’ narrative and ask: Where did New Mexican women’s history occur?

In her text *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (1998), Ruiz reflects, “When I was a child, I learned two types of history — the one at home and the one at school. My mother and grandmother would regale me with tales of their Colorado girlhoods, stories of village life, coal mines, strikes, discrimination and family lore. At school, scattered references were made to Coronado, Ponce de León, the Alamo and Pancho Villa. That was the extent of Latino history. Bridging the memories told at the table with printed historical narratives fueled my decision to become a historian.”

Much as Ruiz describes, the history of New Mexico women often bridges these in-between spaces of the formal and informal. When looking for women’s history, we have to look in places other than the formal archives of established history.

So much of what I know about women’s history in New Mexico comes from stories told around the kitchen table, personal correspondence, recipe books, Bibles and even textile work. Sites once relegated as ahistorical or having little historical significance, such as women’s kitchens, clotheslines and family gardens, create the lived-in spaces where stories are shared, and it is in the process of story sharing where much of women’s perspective and agency lies. Rituals such as peeling chile and baking bread brought women together to work but also to participate in the important business of sharing knowledge.

In her 2017 book, *Archives of Dispossession: Recovering the Testimonios of Mexican American Herederas, 1848-1960*, Karen R. Roybal discusses how Anglo territorial expansion in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands relied upon the denial of property rights to Mexican landowners. Roybal recenters the focus of dispossession on women, arguing that gender, sometimes more than race, dictated legal concepts of property ownership and individual autonomy.

Roybal locates voices of Mexican American women in the Southwest to show how they fought against the erasure of their rights, both as women and as landowners. Woven throughout her analysis are these women’s testimonies, their stories focusing on inheritance, property rights and shifts in power.

Roybal invites us to look through broader lenses that engender the retelling of history from women’s perspectives. Women-centered history requires us to think differently about women’s functions in communities, which have largely been considered peripheral or supportive, and it encourages us to center women’s experiences as worthy of account. Women’s perspectives — herstory — also emphasize details that women considered important and that were not often or accurately included in male narratives. Herstory would have us living in a state where instead of contesting conquistadores, we raise statues to the homes, art, writing, schools, institutions, food, gardens, water and seeds that women are in relationships with on a daily basis. Grandmothers would be on pedestals.

This idea impacts New Mexicans of all genders equally because we know that representation matters. The fullest rendering of New Mexico history should include all stories and should force us to think about our relationships to these events, to these histories and to the full spectrum of our lives. Seeing and hearing women in New Mexico history is a labor of love, but it is one etched in stone if we choose to see it.

Patricia Marina Trujillo, PhD, is the director of equity and diversity and an associate professor of English and Chicana/o studies at Northern New Mexico College. Trujillo is the creative writing editor of *Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social*. She is also a faculty adviser to the Santangeli Farm and serves on the boards of the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area, NewMexicoWomen.org and Tewa Women United.
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New Mexico is a land of trails. High in the mountains are the game trails of elk and deer. At the middle altitudes are the paths that rabbits take and trails left by turkeys in the mud of riverbanks. At the lower elevations are trails of lizard tails dragging in the sand, of coyotes on the prowl. These are the first trails, the original trails, the trails of animals.

The first people to settle in the Americas, Pleistocene hunter-gathers, followed the game trails. In the Southwest, the Pueblo peoples made their own paths, building hundreds of miles of roads radiating outward from Chaco Canyon and forging trade routes southward to the Indians of Mexico.

Then came the trails of European colonists, first the Spanish and then the Anglo-Americans. We are a land of trails still; they crisscross this realm from high to low. Along them walk the past, the present and the future.

The U.S. National Park Service oversees 19 national historic trails, three of them in New Mexico. Here’s a brief look at their history and their role in shaping the American Southwest.

**El Camino Real del Tierra Adentro**

El Camino Real del Tierra Adentro — the Royal Road of the Interior Lands — is the oldest trade route in the United States. Juan de Oñate blazed it in 1598 when he founded San Gabriel, one of the first European colonies in what would become the United States, at today’s Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. Following in part prehistoric Indian trails, it ran 1,600 miles from Mexico City to San Gabriel. The New Mexico portion, some 400 miles, mostly followed the Río Grande, which provided a natural, watered pathway north and south.

Oxen-driven wooden-wheeled carretas (carts) traveled slowly on the camino, taking three to six months to make the entire trip. While a difficult, even deadly journey, the route did allow for manufactured goods, rare foods, apparel and even a few books to make their way northward into the region. It also provided for the export of raw wool, wool products such as blankets, live sheep, animal hides, tallow and other natural resources, as well as a flow of soldiers, priests and government officials. The trail was in use for almost 300 years.

Designated a national historic trail by Congress in 2001, it is jointly administered by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. These agencies maintain and promote the trail in close partnership with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association, government agencies, private landowners, and nonprofit heritage conservation groups. For additional details, visit nps.gov/elca/index.htm or caminorealcarta.org.
OLD SPANISH TRAIL

The Old Spanish Trail once linked Los Angeles and Santa Fe, crossing six states on an exhausting 2,700-mile course. Blazed in 1829 by New Mexicans seeking to open a trade route to the West Coast, it was labeled “the longest, crookedest, most arduous pack mule route in the history of America” by trail historians LeRoy and Ann Hafen. During the winter of 1829-1830, Antonio Armijo led a caravan of 60 men and 100 pack mules from New Mexico to Mission San Gabriel in California, east of Los Angeles, crossing huge canyons of the Colorado River and the deserts of Nevada and southern California. It took his party three months to get there and six weeks to return, but others soon followed.

Variations of the route soon developed. One led northward from Santa Fe to Taos and Gunnison, Colorado, and then turned northwest and west. Another went up the Chama River to present-day Durango, Colorado, and then northwest. Another struck the San Juan River and ran west across southern Utah. All converged near present-day Las Vegas, Nevada, and then diverged into subroutes for the final leg into southern California. In his report on his 1844 journey to California, general and explorer John C. Fremont labeled the route the Spanish Trail.

New land and sea routes to the West Coast reduced traffic on the trail substantially, and in 1869 the completion of the first railway from the Midwest to San Francisco spelled the end of the trail. It was designated a national historic trail in 2002 and is overseen by the NPS and the BLM, in conjunction with the Old Spanish Trail Association. For details visit nps.gov/olsp or oldspanishtrail.org.

SANTA FE TRAIL

The Santa Fe Trail, the “Great Prairie Highway,” spanned 1,200 miles and crossed portions of five modern states: Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico.

The trail transformed New Mexico and the Southwest. Spain had forbidden trade between New Mexico and the United States, so only the Camino Real provided a link to the outside world. When Mexico broke away from Spain in 1821, it immediately okayed trade with the U.S. The first “prairie schooners” rumbled into the Santa Fe Plaza later that year.

In New Mexico there were three primary routes: the Mountain Route (over Raton Pass), the Cimarron Cutoff Route (past present-day Clayton) and the Fort Union Granada Route (approximately between the two main trails). They converged around Fort Union and Las Vegas and then ran along today’s I-25 corridor into Santa Fe and the Plaza.

The eastern terminus of the trail originally was Franklin, Missouri, on the Missouri River. This was the starting point for the first commercial venture, led by William Becknell in 1821. Over the coming decades, the eastern end moved progressively westward, to Independence and Westport, Missouri, and Council Grove, Kansas.

Established as a national historic trail in 1987, it is overseen by the NPS, with many partner organizations, including the Santa Fe Trail Association. For details visit nps.gov/safe/index.htm or santafetrail.org.

In addition to the three national historic trails in New Mexico, two other trails warrant attention. One leg of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail bisects the state north to south, including a segment running from the Colorado border to Lake Abiquiú. It offers hikers, bikers and horseback riders tremendous opportunities for isolation among beautiful high-country pine and aspen forests, lowland slick rock canyons and desertlike terrain. Portions are still being completed. For details see continentaldividetrail.org.

Another trail-in-the making is the state-run Río Grande Trail. Eventually it will run some 500 miles north and south, along the length of the Río Grande. It will link four national wildlife refuges, six national monuments, one national heritage area and six state parks, touching nearly 10 counties and more than 22 cities and towns. Only short stretches of the trail currently are in operation. For details visit riograndetrailnm.com/.

CONTINUES PAGE 78
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ROLE

Besides the trails noted here, the regional NPS trails office—directed by Aaron Mahr in Santa Fe—manages the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, the Juan Bautista de Anaza Trail (in Arizona and California) and the Camino Real de los Tejas, which once linked Texas with Mexico City.

NPS is considering other routes for congressional designation, including Route 66 and the Butterfield Stage Route across southern New Mexico. “Congress has established very tough criteria and standards for designating these trails,” explains Mahr. “They must hold national significance and provide opportunities for education and public participation.”

Mahr stresses that no private lands are appropriated in trail designations; landowners participate on their own accord. He says, “Heritage tourism is really important for a lot of communities, and we work with them to develop these resources if they seek our help. As Americans, we recognize the value of protecting our historic sites, as they help us understand our national tapestry and ourselves. Historic trails reveal routes of transportation, of discovery, military activity and cultural interchange. Routes like the Camino Real help us understand what it was that made America. And because trails play themselves out over long distances, they also provide the public with the opportunity to get out on very beautiful and significant landscapes. These trails are part of our natural and historical heritage. We see them as especially important for new generations to connect with our past.”

To mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of our national trail system in 1968, the NPS is working with many communities and partner organizations on special events, such as the dedication in June 2018 of a new 6-mile public stretch of the Camino Real, just west of Santa Fe along the Buckman escarpment from the Dead Dog Trailhead. And on Oct. 20, the Fiesta of Cultures at the Coronado Historic Site in Bernalillo will commemorate Trails Day with multiple events.

Daniel Gibson (danielBgibson.com) is the founding editor of this magazine. A native New Mexican, he has written numerous nonfiction books and thousands of newspaper and magazine articles about the region over the past 40 years.
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Río Arriba, Taos and Santa Fe Counties are enlivened year-round with special events spanning a broad spectrum of activities and interests. Here is a summary of major events. For additional details, see the arts and entertainment magazines published every Friday by The Santa Fe New Mexican and The Taos News.

JULY

**JULY 13-15**

**International Folk Art Market** returns to Santa Fe for the largest event of its type in the world, with more than 150 artists from 53 nations offering a bright ray of hope for humanity in a darkening world (folkartalliance.org).

**THROUGH JUNE 28**

**Taos Opera Institute Festival** presents free concerts of emerging and established artists in Taos, Taos Ski Valley, Arroyo Seco, Los Alamos and Santa Fe (TaosOi.org).

**JULY 14-15**

The 34th annual **Taos Pueblo Powwow**, the region's largest outdoor powwow (taospueblopowwow.com).

**MID-JULY**

**Española Valley Fiesta** on the Española Plaza (cityofespanola.org).

**JULY 15-AUG. 20**

46th annual season of the world-class **Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival** (santafechambermusic.com).

**JULY 20-22**

**Fiestas de Taos** (fiestasdetaos.com).

**AUGUST**

**AUG. 18-19**

**Santa Fe Indian Market** sets up shop. It is the world’s largest and most prestigious event of its kind, featuring some 1,000 artists displaying a wide range of work, plus gallery openings, talks, a film festival, a gala dinner, parties and much more (swai.org).

**LABOR DAY WEEKEND**

**Chama Valley Studio Tour** (chamavalleystudiotour.com).

**EARLY SEPTEMBER**

**Rio Costilla Studio Tour** (riocostillaart.com).

**SEPT. 13-16**

44th annual **Red River Bluegrass Festival** (redriver.org).

**SEPT. 15-16**

11th annual **Renaissance Fair** at El Rancho de las Golondrinas (golondrinas.org).

**SEPT. 16-17 & 23-24**

21st annual **High Road Studio Tours** along NM 76 and NM 518 between Nambe and Taos (highroadnewmexico.com or 866-343-5381).

**CONTINUES PAGE 82**
A Vision of Shared Stewardship for the Carson National Forest

The Carson National Forest is integral to the sustenance and the culture of the many communities and peoples who call this area home. The forest has provided for the needs of local communities for generations.

Forest lands provide water for acequias, firewood for heating homes, forage for livestock grazing, herbs, and medicinal plants. Its bountiful natural resources have been utilized by northern New Mexico families for a number of traditional activities.

The Carson National Forest is committed to “showing up differently” to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our treasured public lands in northern New Mexico.

The forest actively engages with land grants, acequia leaders and tribal leadership to develop projects that have mutual benefits.

There is a commitment to engage and involve recreation and conservation partners, local livestock producers, counties, local towns, soil and water conservation districts as well as many other partners.

The forest understands the importance of listening to the public and involving local communities in project planning as well as allowing local community partners to help steward the land.

We are all part of the same community and only by working together can sustain our forests for future generations which give so much to our lives.

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Archaeo Expeditions - Feasts & Dances
October 7-13, 14-19, November 9-11 and December 23-28, 2018

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GHOSTRANCH
SEPT. 21-30
44th annual Taos Fall Arts Festival, the town’s oldest arts festival, with exhibitions, talks, an awards party and more (taosfallarts.com).

SEPT. 14-15
Fifth annual The Paseo, a free and energetic festival on Taos Plaza, featuring performance art, installations, interactive arts, live music and more, from 5 to 11 p.m. (paseoproject.org).

SEPT. 26-30
28th annual Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta, a leading event of its kind nationwide, with wine seminars, chef luncheons, cooking demos, a film festival, auctions and more (santafewineandchile.org).

SEPT. 30
San Geronimo Day at Taos Pueblo is the largest of the pueblos’ annual feast days and public gatherings, with a unique greased pole climb, footraces, dances and art sales (taospueblo.com).

LATE SEPTEMBER
33rd annual Española Valley Arts Festival on the Española Plaza, with a focus on local visual artists (505-901-2599 or 505-927-2077).

SEPT. 29-30
32nd annual El Rito Studio Tour, with more than 30 artists opening their homes and galleries (elritostudiotour.org).

OCTOBER
OCT. 6-7
Harvest Festival at El Rancho de las Golondrinas, just south of Santa Fe in La Cienega, with all the living history museum’s programs and activities in full swing, plus local foods, talks and demonstrations (golondrinas.org).

OCT. 17-21
Santa Fe Independent Film Festival with screenings, panels and parties (santafeindependentfilmfestival.com).

LATE OCTOBER
Closing of numerous high-mountain Santa Fe and Carson National Forest campgrounds in the many districts of the three north-central counties.

NOVEMBER
NOV. 3-4
Dixon Studio Tour, the oldest continuously run event of its kind in the area (dixonarts.org or 505-579-4671).

NOV. 30-DEC. 2
Recycle Santa Fe Art Festival, with Trash Fashion & Costume Contest and some 100 artists displaying their work at the Santa Fe Convention Center (recyclesantafe.org).

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND
Typical opening of regional ski areas, which remain open through Easter (skinewmexico.com).

DECEMBER
DEC. 7
Christmas at the Palace includes free hot cider, live music and a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza (nmhistorymuseum.org).

DEC. 9
Free staging of Las Posadas on the Santa Fe Plaza from 5:30 to 8 p.m. (santafe.org).
Let our coal-fired steam engine take you to another century and beyond. Into an unspoiled West of simplicity, natural beauty, and authenticity. Climb aboard our national historic landmark and you’ll zig zag along the Colorado and New Mexico border through steep mountain canyons, the high desert, and lush meadows. It’s an experience that’s completely at odds with the modern world. And better for it.
CHRISTMAS EVE
Taos Pueblo activities include bonfires, traditional dancing and midnight Mass (taospueblo.com or 575-758-1028).

CHRISTMAS EVE
Farolito Walk in Santa Fe’s Canyon Road neighborhood (santafe.org).

CHRISTMAS DAY
Many regional Indian pueblos host traditional ceremonial dances; see various online calendars for details.

JANUARY 2019
LATE JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY
33rd annual Taos Winter Wine Festival, in town and at Taos Ski Valley (taoswinterwinefest.com).

FEBRUARY 2019
FEB. 13-17
Santa Fe Film Festival, with screenings, workshops, panels and parties (santafefilmfestival.com).

LATE FEBRUARY:
Santa Fe Restaurant Week, with special meals, edible art tours and more over a seven-day run (santafe.restaurantweeknm.com).

APRIL 2019
LATE APRIL
Tierra Wools Spring Harvest Festival in Los Ojos, with demonstration shearing, wool carding, weaving and dyeing, plus music and more (575-588-7231 or handweavers.com).

MAY 2019
THIRD WEEK OF MAY
Taos Lilac Festival (taoslilacfestival.com).

LATE MAY
Annual launch of Cumbres & Toltec Narrow Gauge Railroad operations between Chama and Antonito, Colorado. The train runs through mid-October (cumbrestoltec.com or 888-286-2737).

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
Red River Motorcycle Rally for gearheads nationwide (redriver.org).

MID-MAY
Taos Farmers Market opens on Taos Plaza.

JUNE
JUNE-AUGUST
Santa Fe Railyard presents free weekly concerts, movies and festivals (railyardsantafe.com).

JUNE-AUGUST
Taos Plaza Live, with free shows of local and national bands every Thursday evening on Taos Plaza (taos.org/visit/taos-plaza-live).

MID-JUNE
Peace Prayer Day/Solstice Retreat, hosted near Española by the American Sikh community (3ho.org).

MID TO LATE JUNE
70th annual Rodeo de Santa Fe, the region’s largest rodeo (rodeodesantafe.org).

LATE JUNE/EARLY JULY - LATE AUG.
The popular, free and always engaging Santa Fe Bandstand, with local and touring acts three to five nights a week on the Santa Fe Plaza (SantaFeBandstand.org).

JUNE 28-AUG. 21
Santa Fe Opera presents its world-famous repertory-style theatrics (santafeopera.org).

JULY
JUNE 28-AUG. 21
Santa Fe Opera presents its world-famous repertory-style theatrics (santafeopera.org).

JULY
JULY 4
Chama Fireworks Train & Show (chamavalley.com).

JULY 4
Fireworks over Eagle Nest, plus a parade (eaglenestchamber.org).

JULY 4
Red River Celebrates the Fourth, with a large parade, fireworks and more (redriver.org).
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