CHAPARRAL GUIDE • APRIL 2017 • PAGE C1

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INDIAN ROCKS

Sierra County Historical Treasure

Indian Rocks - A cultural archive



VIEW FROM THE ROCKS – Ted Cooley sits next to one of the grinding holes in Indian Rocks in the early 1950s. COURTESY photo/LaRena Miller



Outstanding food & service in a pleasantly different atmosphere. Cocktail Lounge Drive-In Package Store

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By Betsy Phillips HERALD Reporter

A large outcropping of rocks in Ralph Edwards Park in Truth or Consequences is probably the oldest archive of how Native Americans used the area near the Rio Grande.

As interest in Native American culture has grown throughout the world, more and more visitors seek out such sites as they tour the southwest. The site is well worth our continuing preservation -- truly a treasure that gives everyone who visits it a window back in time.

According to the sign at the entrance to the park:

In this unlikely spot in the middle of downtown Truth or Consequences, a Native American campsite from the past still endures.

There are numerous deep grinding holes and blackened rocks that testify to the use of these rocks as a sheltered campsite over a long period of time.

There have been shards and remains of early Mimbres-Mogollon pottery found near here, so it is likely that these rocks were used by prehistoric Native Americans in their daily routine.

The Apaches came here to camp and bathe in the nearby healing mineral waters and to soothe their battle wounds. At that time, the mineral water area was a large swampy land with several hot springs seeping out of the ground. It was filled with reeds and large grass, and made a good hiding place during the bathing.

Local oral history tells of the Apaches from Mescalero making pilgrimages here to bathe in the waters through the 1940s.

They would camp near the rocks where Ralph Edwards Park is now, as it was on the outskirts of the town. Groups of Apaches would set up teepees and stay to bathe in the waters, as they

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It was a period of rejuvenation and revitalization of their spirit to soak in the soothing mineral waters.

Continued from Page C2 had for generations.

ROCKS

During the 1940s and 1950s the city baseball park was located where Ralph Edwards Park is now, and the Apaches were allowed to camp in the baseball park after it was built.

However, as the town grew it encroached too much upon the location, and the Apaches stopped making their pilgrimages.

Local historians believe the Apaches used the area beginning in the 1300s, so for several hundred years this area was used off and on as an encampment.

The smooth, round holes were made from possibly centuries of grinding grain. The food grinding places are known as "metate". Other holes carved out of the side of the rocks were used for fires, possibly for cooking. At least one has a chimney carved from the surface into the fire area.

According to one account, there were several groups of Apaches that the Army labeled as Chiricahua. The Nedni lived in the mountains of New Mexico, the Bedonkoe resided in what is now western New Mexico and eastern Arizona and the Chihenne or Red Paint People settled along the Mimbres Valley and east across the Black Range to the Rio Grande.

The Chihenne were also known as the Warm Springs (Ojo Caliente) Apaches, Mimbreno or Gila Apaches.

Although the battles between the Army and the Native American populations in New Mew Mexico are well documented, less has been written about friendships between Hispanic people living in the area and the Apache.

There is a traditional story told that a community west of Cuchillo, today known as Chiz, was named in honor the Apache chief Cochise.

Cochise is said to have camped there on occasion and Hispanics referred to the chief as Cheis or Chiz. The original settlers were said to have had a good relationship with the apaches, hence the name of community.

Indian Rocks, located as it is in a large city park, is a great place for travelers to take a break, share a meal stretch your legs and enjoy the park and the Rio Grande, which runs alongside the park. If you have children along – there is a fishing pond, a skateboard park, room to run and playground equipment for them to enjoy.

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GRINDING HOLES - The two photos above show holes worn in the rocks from use by early Native Americans. **HERALD** photos/Betsy Phillips

Entire Truth or Consequences Valley Once Covered by Water

or Consequences is located was covered by a great body of water.

The now placid Rio Grande, which meanders along the southeastern fringe of the city, was once called by early Conquistadors "El Rio Bravo del Norte," (the fierce or savage river of the north). Barricaded from its onward rush by Carrie Tingley Mesa and the foothills of the Caballo Mountains, the mighty waters eventually eroded a channel through which the river now flows. As the turbulent river deepened the channel, the level of the waters fell. Seepage, evaporation and a minimum of rainfall have combined to make the natural footing where the city now has been built. Vapors rising on the northern shore of the lake where the city now lies, during the colder season of the year, caught the attention of hunters who bathed in the warm waters and found them beneficial to the relief of many ailments. The exact date when primitive man first began to utilize the hot springs will probably never be determined; however, deep mortar holes in the boulders north of Main Street, and fire scarred rocks in the same area, indicate that the springs were visited by aborigines. In 1605, Santa Fe was chosen as the seat of the Spanish government. At this time the route from the new capitol to Paso del Norte (El Paso, Texas) leading over the Jornada del Muerto (the journey of death), was designated as the Camino Real (King's Highway). The government was over-thrown in 1680, and it was not until 1692 that the Spaniards succeeded in re-conquering the territory. It was during this period that the Santa Rita copper deposits were exploited and the ingots transported by mule and burro pack-trains through Palomas Gap, seven miles south of Truth or Consequences, where they met the main caravans to Mexico City and Vera Cruz. This pass had been used for ages by the Indians in their annual migration to the buffalo hunting grounds of the prairie.

Centuries ago the entire valley in which Truth provide shelter and protection for the men and animals of the pack trains when they were unable to ford the Rio Grande during flood stage. Often the trains would be forced to wait for weeks.

The houses were built around a large plaza,



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The mission of Las Palomas was established to

SIERRA COUNTY ARTS DIRECTORY

Rio Bravo Fine Art Gallery Don Pepe's Gift Shop 110 North Broadway Truth or Consequences, NM 87901 Phone (575) 894-0572 E-mail: riobravofa@gmail.com Featuring Artists from the Southwest www.riobravofineartgallery.com

as it was then known, eventually became an important trading post. Passing this trading post, and on through Palomas Gap, went caravans on their way to Mexico, taking sheep, hides, pelts, ores and other native products. On their return, the caravans were laden with supplies and provisions for the missions, settlers, and garrisons. The trips were fraught with danger, both from lack of water and numerous Indian attacks. It was for that reason that the road came to be called "the journey of death," Jornada del Muerto.

Mineral Springs to treat their wounds as they hid in the marshy banks of the river. It is said that what is now Water Tank Hill was once used as a frequent look-out post by the Indians to spot a foe or a victim.

the territory from Mexico in 1846, progress

Truth or Consequences / Sierra County Restaurant & Dining Guide





WATER

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made rapid strides. However, the trepidations committed by hostile Apaches in the southwestern section hampered progress in this area.

Records of the War Department are filled with accounts of bloody engagements and battles. One particularly bloody battle was fought on March 30, 1854, on upper Animas Canyon. The troops had been besieged by bands of hostile Indians for several days prior to a pitched battle which was held at the head of the canyon. Traces of stone barricades and breastworks are still visible where the soldiers took their battle positions. During the battle it was reported that 22 soldiers were killed. The number of Apaches slain is unknown.

Nearly every mining camp or town of any importance had its own volunteer regiment to cope with the Indian outrages. Several forts were constructed by the government, mainly as bases of operation: Fort McRae, now covered over by waters of Elephant Butte Lake, and Fort Ojo Caliente is at the head of what is now known as principle strongholds to protect this area. The post office at this fort was called Cherryville, and it was here that Indian agent, John P. Glum, captured Geronimo. Geronimo was soon released to again go on the warpath killing many more people in the territory.

During the early part of 1877, rich floats of gold ore were found along the Percha Creek. Twelve men placed twelve names in a hat to choose the name of the town where the miners and prospectors were flocking. "Hillsboro" was the first name drawn, and this town 32 miles west of Truth or Consequences, colorful in mining history, still bears the name and was once the county seat of Sierra County.

In the 1880's, Sierra County was a part of Socorro County. This was during the days of mining booms. Travel by horseback or buggy was slow. In the small communities in which mines and claims changed hands almost daily for fabulous prices, a clamor for a separate county arose. It required trips of several days for the miners to visit the county clerk's office in the county seat in Socorro. On petition of the citizens, the legislature in 1884 created Sierra County from parts of Socorro, Dona Ana and Grant counties.

According to records, this period of Sierra County's mining camps reads like a page out of the Arabian Nights. About one fourth of the 12x12 foot boulder of mallable silver ore, found in the Bridal Chamber Mine of Lake Valley, netted 70,000 ounces of pure silver. Lake Valley's smelter melted over eight million dollars worth of silver for shipment to the Denver, Colo. Mint. A railroad spur was built from Nutt Station to Lake Valley to transport all the treasure.

Two years after the railroad first entered the Territory approximately 800 miles of travel was providedby38 different stage lines, largely serving the mining centers that were then flourishing. A visitor to Kingston paid \$5.50 for a round trip in the "Mountain Pride" operated by L. W. Orchard from the Santa Fe railhead at Lake Valley. He was allowed 50 pounds of baggage, but paid ten cents a pound for extra weight. The rails reached Lake Valley from Rincon in 1884 and ventured no farther.

The Percha District, extended about 10 miles across the headwaters of the Percha in the Black Range, opened when the first strike was made in 1881. The Solitaire Mine marked the northern boundary with the outcrop assaying sixty percent silver. One specimen of solid silver was found that weighed over 100 pounds.

The Bullion was one of the rich mines near where the town of Kingston blossomed forth in 1883. At a depth of 166 feet, a rich vein was struck in the Bullion which yielded \$5,000 in less than 24 hours.

Favorable to the prosperity of the county was the Sherman Act of 1890 fixing the amount of silver to be purchased by the treasury at four million dollars per month.

Then came the crash of 1893, the repeal of the Sherman Silver Act. Banks, mercantile houses, mining companies, hotels and all other enterprises went down in a heap. Merchants closed their doors. The fires in the smelters ceased to burn. No longer could the throbbing of the stamps in the mills be heard.

The bonanza was ended. Today in Hillsboro, Lake Valley, Kingston and in the Caballo mountains, traces of the great strike still remain as skeletons of the golden gas light era of Sierra County.

A Recreational Paradise

Sierra County truly is a "recreational paradise" where thousands enjoy unparalleled boating, fishing and camping facilities at two state parks. Here, the lakes are among the largest bodies of water in the Southwest. Boat launching ramps, picnic shelters, and camping sites with water, rest rooms and electric hookups are available at both Elephant Butte Lake and Caballo Lake state parks.

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Rejuvenate Your Spirits In Scenic Sierra County Lakes, Rivers, Hot Springs, Ghost Towns & So Much More

By Carlos Padilla

Elephant Butte Lake State Park is the perfect setting for camping, hiking, fishing for bass, stripers and walleye, and for enjoying an assortment of water sports - such as jet-boating, water-skiing, sailing, swimming and jet-skiing. Lake visitors enjoy the ever-changing lake scenery, letting the breathtaking sunrises and sunsets rejuvenate their spirits.

The lake got its name from the volcanic-formed island that towers over Elephant Butte Dam, the Dam Site Restaurant and Marina, and the Rock Canvon Marina. The island resembles an elephant with its trunk lowered, as if to drink from the waters of the lake.

Elephant Butte Lake State Park's main entrance (Lower Ridge Road) is located along NM Highway 195. Lower Ridge Road is just five miles from Truth or Consequences, and is just down the road from the city of Elephant Butte. The park can be accessed through a number of entrances located along NM Highway 51, NM Highway 195 and Rock Canyon Road.

For more information, or to contact Elephant Butte Lake State Park, log on to www.nmparks.com or call the visitor's center at (575) 744-5421.

Truth or Consequences is a city in hot water – that is, part of the city sits atop a 110-degree hot spring aquifer. Thought to possess enchanting and mystical healing properties by generations of Native American Apaches and other tribes, as Hillsboro to Elephant Butte, Monticello to

well as current day spa patrons, has resulted in the term 'enchanted waters' to be used by some bathers to describe the hot springs.

For more information on the hot springs, contact the Truth or Consequences/Sierra County Chamber of Commerce at (575) 894-3536.

Geronimo Springs Museum exhibits the abundant history of Sierra County -from prehistoric to present day- including displays of Native American pottery and early Hispanic culture, ranching and mining, and fossils, like that of a Mastodon –an elephant-like animal that roamed with the dinosaurs- found near Elephant Butte Lake.

The Museum is located at 211 Main Street in TorC, and may be reached by calling (575) 894-6600.

Veterans' Memorial Park and Museum is the ever-growing jewel of New Mexico's tributes to veterans, and is comprised of The Walk of Education, featuring memorials for each of the 16 wars that engaged the United States. Dubbed 'The Wall That Heals', the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Wall is a 'must-see' if traveling to or through Sierra County. Once known as 'The Traveling Vietnam Wall', the monument has come to rest at Veterans' Memorial Park and Museum.

Come enjoy the flourishing art communities in Sierra County, named one of the Top 100 in the country. From Truth or Consequences to Winston,



GERINOMO SPRINGS MUSEUM • 211 MAIN • DOWNTOWN TORC

Kingston, Williamsburg and Cuchillo – discover our land, rich with treasures that beckon the artist's eye.

The Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway meanders through spectacular scenery of the Southwest – from high desert to mountain forests- and ghost towns in between. The Geronimo Trail Visitors Center, on Broadway in TorC.

For more information, contact the Sierra County/Truth or Consequences Chamber of Commerce at (575) 894-3536 (www.truthor consequencesnm.net), or the Elephant Butte Chamber of Commerce at (575) 744-4708 (www .elephantbuttecoc.com).







Cathy Vickers



Rachel Woodard



106 N Silver: 2 Bedroom 1 bath, large lot. Close to Downtown T or C Shopping and Hot Mineral Baths. MLS # 20170181 Priced at \$29,000 Call Rachel 575-740-0012



0000 Turtleback Ave: 3.33 Acre lot on the Rio Grande River. Build your dream home. Just Minutes from Downtown T or C, and Elephant Butte State Park. MLS# 20170406 Priced at \$45,000 Call Rachel 575-740-0012



523 Catfish: 2 Bedroom 2 Bath, Large .49 acre lot with beautiful Lake Views. Large 2 car garage, covered front deck. MLS# 20170212 Priced at \$119,000 Call Rachel



1205 Skyline Dr: 3 Bedroom 3 Bath. Beautiful unobstructed lake views. Covered front deck, 3 car garage and carport, plenty of room for all the lake toys. MLS# 20170160 Priced at \$150,000 call Rachel



104 Superior EB - 3 Bed 2 bath 1872 Sq ft, 2 Car + Carport .50 Acre lot. \$157,900. MLS 20163144. Call Jeanette 575-740-0339



120 San Mateo EB - 3 Bed 2 bath 1701 Sq ft, 2 Car Garage .50 acre lot. \$142,500 MLS 20151127. Call Jeanette 575-740-0339.



605 Sierra Vista Dr T or C - 4 bed 2 bath 2031 Sq ft, 2 Car Garage .27 acre lot. \$132,900 MLS 20160721. Call Jeanette 575-740-0339



Quail Run Lane Placitas - 4 bed 2 bath 2016 Sq ft., 3.954 acre ot. \$118,000. MLS 20161136. Call Jeanette 575-740-0399



3 Underwood Ct at the lake. Stunning SW Pueblo style home with beautiful vegas, beams, tongue and groove ceiling in living room. Fantastic master suite with walk in closet. Numerous windows throughout home to enjoy lake views. Over 1870 sq ft, 3BR, 2BA, 2.47 acre lot. Priced at \$269,000.00. Call Cathy at 575-740-0003



207 Lakeshore Dr at the lake. A two owner home in immaculate condition. Over 1780 sq ft of open living area, lots of windows for natural light. 3 car garage, and an inground pool in the back yard. MLS 20170228. Priced at \$199,000.00 Call Cathy at 575 740-0003



502 Pike Rd. A great property with Elephant Butte as your neighbor! A 3BR, 2BA lake home with rustic, country charm. Also located on the property are 2 garages - one measures 20 X 20 and the other is 30 X 40 with oversized doors. Plenty of room on this .6 ac lot for all toys. MLS 20170542, Call Cathy 575-740-0003



108 Cholla. A cute weekender or permanent home. 16 X 80 Mfg home with 2 or 3 BR, 2BA, eat in kitchen, metal roof. Two car garage, corner lot that is completely fenced. MLS 20170661. Call Cathy @ 575-740-0003