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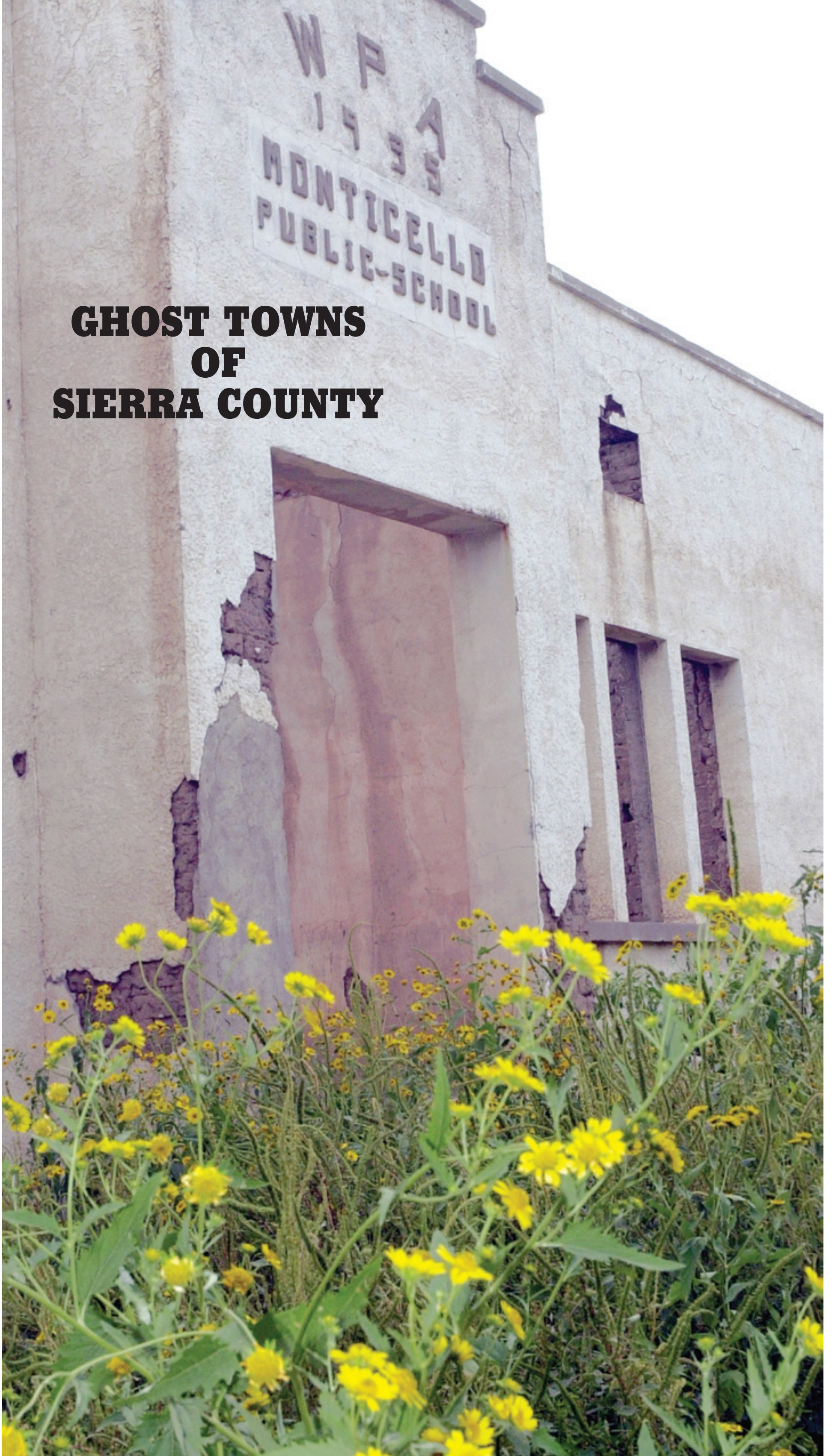


CHAPARRAL GUIDE

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GHOST TOWNS OF SIERRA COUNTY



History and Ghost Towns of Sierra County

In the name of the King of Spain, Captain Francisco Sanchez took possession of the area in 1581, naming it the Province of San Felipe. Little settlement took place until after the Mexican War in 1846 and the annexation of New Mexico Territory by the U.S. government. Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny claimed the territory when he rode into Santa Fe on Aug. 18, 1846. It became official with the Gadsden Purchase of 1853.

Agricultural communities (including Placita, founded in the 1840s; Monticello and Cuchillo, both founded in the 1850s) flourished. Mining boom towns such as Chloride, Winston, Kingston, Lake Valley and Hillsboro produced millions in silver and gold beginning in 1877.

In the 1880s, the federal government built several forts in the area, including Fort McRae, Fort Craig and Camp Ojo Caliente, to protect settlers and travelers. Most were abandoned by the 1890s.

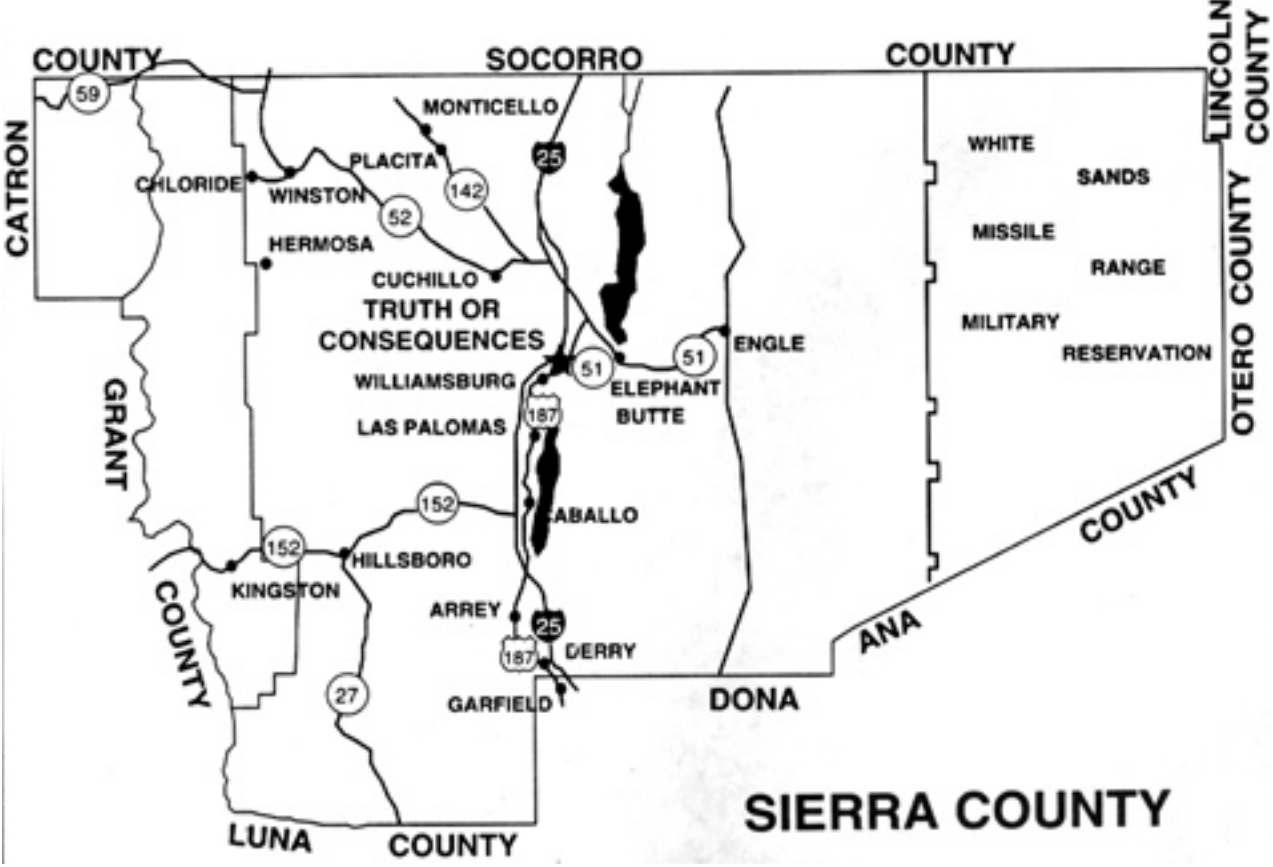
Sierra County was created by the New Mexico Territorial Legislature in April 1884. It was carved from Dona Ana, Grant and Socorro counties. The county's name comes from the nearby Sierra de los Caballos ("Mountain of the Horses") range. Hillsboro was the first county seat.

The Rio Grande runs north to south, dividing the county in half. The county also contains the Black Range Mountains, the Continental Divide and parts of the Gila and Cibola national forests. White Sands Missile Range covers much of the eastern half of the county, which has no population centers.

Sierra County's population was 13,270, according to the 2000 census. That's a 33.9 percent increase over 1990. The county contains 4,219 square miles, equal to the size of the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. Its elevation ranges from 4,260 to 9,850 feet.

The county's average high temperature is 74 degrees. The average low is 46 degrees. The average rainfall in the area is eight to 10 inches per year. The average humidity is 10-15 percent. There are 350+ days of sunshine a year in Sierra County.

El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road to the Interior) crosses Sierra County, just east of the Rio Grande. This 1,800-mile travel and trade route reached from Veracruz on the east coast of Mexico all the way to Santa Fe in the Provincia de Nuevo Mexico. From El Paso north to Santa Fe, it fairly closely followed the



Rio Grande. History records that the trail was used as a major trade route by Native Americans of North America long before the arrival of the Spanish. First traveled by Coronado in 1581 and Onate in 1598, it continued to be used until the advent of the railroad in the 1880s. El Camino Real International Heritage Center is completed, but because of budget constraints, it is temporarily closed. It is located on I-25, south of the San Marcial exit.

Jornada del Muerto ("Journey of the Dead Man") is a desolate and dangerous 90-mile stretch of El Camino Real that passes through Dona Ana, Sierra and Socorro counties. This shortcut cut nearly a day off of travel time, but many travelers paid the price. The route was very desolate, with water holes spaced about 10 miles apart (about a day's ride) and often dried up. Under ideal conditions, it took more than a week to cross the Jornada, and travelers were vulnerable to hostile attack. According to Robert Julyan in his book "The Place Names of New Mexico," the individual to whom the journey of the dead man refers is Bernardo Gruber, a German trader who fled across the route in 1670. "From the discovery of his sundried corpse at a place later called El Aleman, ("the German"), the name Jornada del Muerto is believed to have evolved," Julyan writes. A ranch by the name of Aleman still exists today.

Rio Grande ("The Big River"), at 1,760 miles in length, it is the fifth longest river in North America and the 20th longest in the world. Originating in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado and rising as a clear, snow-fed mountain stream more than 12,000 feet above sea level, it pours through the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and descends across steppes and deserts as it winds its way to the Gulf of Mexico.



CHLORIDE

An Englishman named Harry Pye, a mule skinner and prospector, was delivering freight for the U.S. Army in 1879 when he discovered silver floating in the canyon where Chloride is now located. After completing his freighting contract, he and two others returned to the area in 1881 and staked a claim. A tent city grew up nearby and then a town, originally called Pyetown, then Bromide. The name "Chloride" was finally selected, after the high-grade silver ore found there. It became the center for all mining activity in the area, known as the Apache Mining District.

During the 1880s, Chloride had 100 homes, 3,000 people, eight saloons, three general stores, restaurants, butcher shops, a candy store, a lawyer's office, a doctor, boarding houses, an assay office, a stage line, a Chinese laundry and a hotel. Residents hoped the town would become the county seat. The "Black Range" newspaper operated from 1883 until 1897. Apaches attacked the Chloride store on Jan. 18, 1881, killing two and injuring one. Harry Pye was killed by Apaches a few months later.

About \$600,000 in silver and other ore was mined in the district, from about 480 prospector holes and at least 12 producing mines. The richest mine was the Silver Monument, about 10 miles west of town at the head of Chloride Creek. It produced about \$100,000 by 1893. Other mines in the area included the Grey Eagle, the White Eagle, the U.S. Treasury, the Mayflower, the St. Cloud, the Colossal, the Midnight, the Mountain King, the Wall Street, the White Mountain and the New Era. Chloride and the surrounding area began to decline with the silver panic of 1893, when the country went on the gold standard and silver prices dropped about 90 percent. Area mines continued producing ore -- mostly copper, lead and zinc --from the turn of the century until about 1931. The post office was open until 1956.

See GHOST TOWNS on Page C4

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GHOST TOWNS

Continued from Page C2

CUCHILLO

The town of Cuchillo was founded by ranchers and farmers in the 1850s. It was named for nearby Cuchillo Negro (“Black Knife”) Creek, which took its name from a local Apache chief. When stage and freight lines ran from the railroad station at Engle to the silver mines at Winston, Chloride and Hermosa in the 1880s and 90s, Cuchillo was a natural choice for the stage stop because it was mid-way between the two and was a thriving agricultural community with plenty of supplies for men and horses. The end of the mining boom, plus a series of devastating floods on the Cuchillo Negro Creek, changed Cuchillo. Today, it is a small village with some ranching and farming.



ENGL E

Engle was built in 1879 as a station on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

It probably was named for R.L. Engle, a railroad construction engineer. It became a thriving cattle town and shipping point for ore and supplies. Construction of Elephant Butte Dam (1911-16) brought new jobs to Engle, which reached a population of about 500. However, the town declined after the dam was completed. It had 200 residents in 1919 and 75 in 1926. The area east of town was restricted by the U.S. government when it created White Sands Missile Range in 1945, and that spelled the end. The post office, opened in 1881, was closed in 1955. A few people still live in Engle, and a few original buildings still stand, including the old schoolhouse, where church services continue to be held. Headquarters for the Armendaris Ranch, now owned by Ted Turner, is in Engle. Trains still pass through town.



HILLSBORO

Although not a ghost town (about 150 people live there), Hillsboro has a rich history dating back more than 100 years.

The town was founded in April, 1877, when two prospectors discovered gold on the east side of the Black Range Mountains along Percha Creek. Dan Dugan and Dave Stitzel staked out the Opportunity and the Ready Pay mines. The Rattlesnake and the Bonanza came soon after. Reportedly, one chunk of gold from an area mine weighed 240 pounds. The first house, a log cabin, was built in August 1877, but the town wasn't named until December. Each prospector put his suggestion for the name into a hat. "Hillsborough" (later shortened) was drawn. (Another story says miner Joe Yankie got the honor of naming the town because of his especially big gold strike. He choose "Hillsborough" for his home town in Ohio.)

Despite fierce Indian attacks, the town grew. The post office opened in 1879 and never closed, and Hillsboro became the county seat in 1884. It grew to about 1,200 people by 1907. Area mines produced about \$6 million in gold and silver. A slowdown occurred, however, and Hillsboro lost the county seat to T or C in 1938. The remains of the old county courthouse, built in 1892, still stand. It was here that the three alleged killers of Col. Albert Fountain were tried for (and acquitted of) his 1896 murder.

Hillsboro today is home to restaurants, gift shops and galleries, a museum, a garage and grocery, a bed and breakfast, a saloon, a library, and a post office.

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KINGSTON

Kingston was founded in August 1882 when miner Jack Sheddon discovered a rich lode of silver ore at what would be one of the Southwest's most famous mines: the Solitaire. The town was named for another area mine: the Iron King. Other area mines: Calamity Jane, Black Colt, Caledonia, and Little Jimmy.

Kingston was home to about 1,800 people in 1882. It peaked at more than 7,000. Some \$7 million in silver was mined in the Black Range Mining District in the 1880-90s. One of the wildest towns in the Wild West, Kingston had 22 saloons, 14 groceries and general stores, gambling halls, a brewery, three newspapers, hotels, restaurants and a theater where actress Lillian Russell performed.

Albert Fall, later infamous in the Teapot Dome Scandal when he was secretary of the Interior, was once a Kingston miner. Other famous visitors: Mark Twain, Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid and outlaw Black Jack Ketchum. Sadie Orchard, who spoke with a cockney accent and claimed to be a native of London, England, operated a brothel in Kingston (on Virtue Street) and later in Hillsboro.

Kingston declined when silver prices dropped and deposits ran out. The post office closed in 1957. The Victorio Hotel, Percha Bank (now a museum) and other old buildings still stand.

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Lake Valley Stage Coach 1908

LAKE VALLEY

Lake Valley, first called Daly, is named for ancient lake beds nearby. It was founded with the discovery of silver in the area in August 1878 by George Lufkin, who sold out to George Daly.

The town moved twice before settling at its present site in 1882 when the Bridal Chamber Mine (in Lufkin’s original claim) was discovered by blacksmith John Leavitt. The walls of the subterranean mine were lined with silver so pure it was shipped unsmelted to the mint. The strike produced 2.5 million ounces of pure horn silver, including one chunk, featured at the 1882 Denver Exposition, valued at \$7,000 (when silver sold for \$1.11 an ounce). The mine manager was killed by Apaches a few days after the discovery.

A stage stop and railhead, Lake Valley grew to 4,000 residents, with 12 saloons, three churches, two newspapers, a school, stores, hotels, stamp mills and smelters. The 1893 silver panic wiped it out and a fire destroyed Main Street in 1895. The post office closed in 1954.

The Bureau of Land Management watches over the town-site today and has set up a walking tour. The schoolhouse, built in 1904, is open to the public. St. Columbus Episcopal Chapel has been restored, and includes its original Bible and organ. Some old homes, including the house

where Pedro Martinez lived for nearly 90 years, and some railroad buildings still stand.



Ruins of old school house in Monticello

MONTICELLO

Monticello (originally named Canada Alamosa -- “Canyon of the Cottonwoods”) was settled by ranchers and farmers in 1856

It was built in a square to protect residents from attack. Remnants of the adobe walls that once surrounded the square can still be seen. Descendants of the original settlers still live and ranch in the area. The town was headquarters for the Southern Apache Agency before a post was established at nearby Ojo Caliente in 1874. About 500 Apaches lived at Canada Alamosa in 1870. Cochise and his Chiricahuas visited the area in 1871. Most Apaches were gone by 1877. The town was renamed in September 1881 when a post office was established by Aristide Bourguet, the first postmaster. He chose the name Monticello because his best friend and business partner, John Sullivan, was a native of Monticello, New York. The name also could be a form of “Mount Cielo” (Mount of Heaven).

Monticello’s cemetery is on a hill northwest of the plaza. Mass is still celebrated at San Ignacio Catholic Church, which stands on the plaza, along with the old stage stop (now a private residence) and other original buildings.

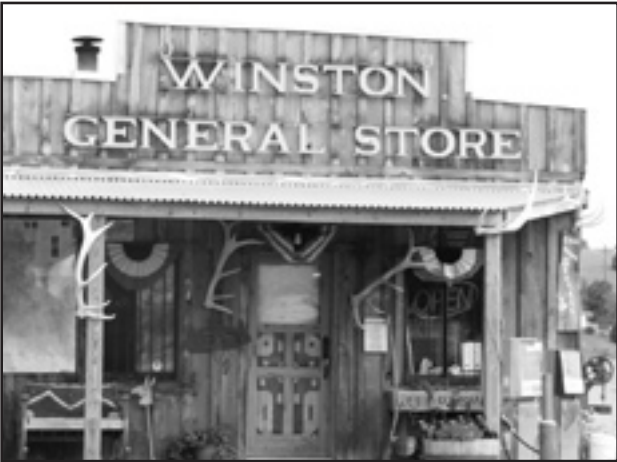
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Old rodeo grounds at Sedillo property

PLACITA

Two miles south of Monticello along the Canada Alamosa River is Placita (“Little Plaza”). San Lorenzo Catholic Church is in Placita. It was settled in the 1840s by the Sedillo family. San Lorenzo Catholic Church, built in 1916, and some of the town’s original buildings, including the schoolhouse, a dance hall and several homes, still stand. More than 1,000 families lived in Monticello Canyon, which contained both Monticello and Placita, during its peak.



WINSTON

Miners who found Chloride “too rowdy” moved a couple of miles north and settled at Fairview in Winston. Bed and Breakfast in the early 1880s. The town grew to 500-

See **Ghost Towns** on Page C6

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GHOST TOWNS

Continued from Page C5

600 people and featured songfests and plays at Cloudman Hall, named for the local butcher. In honor of local miner, businessman and legislator Frank H. Winston, the town changed its name to Winston in 1929. Winston had lent money to townspeople during hard times. He and his wife, who lived to the age of 101, are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Chloride.

Winston flourished until the silver panic of 1893. Today, only a few families remain in the area. Frank Winston's old general store still stands on main street, as do several other buildings he owned and built. Many others were destroyed in a flood in the 1950s. The old schoolhouse, built in 1890, is visible to the east from Main Street.

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Entertainment Lineup Headlines All-Day 4th of July Extravaganza on N.M. Tech Campus

SOCORRO—A spectacular, all-day entertainment lineup to rival that of any Independence Day celebration in New Mexico headlines the 26th annual 4th of July Celebration on the grassy lawns of the New Mexico Tech campus.

New Mexico native Tobias Rene, the popular Spanish music singer to be joined on stage by his all-star band, will be spotlighted as the closing act prior to the fireworks show.

The annual fete, co-hosted by the City of Socorro and New Mexico Tech, dates back generations, with locals flocking to the campus Athletic Field for the fireworks display put on by Tech's explosives research division.

Back in the day, what is now the NMT Swim Center, the only cement pond in town, hosted a dive-for-pennies event for kids, but over time the Independence Day holiday seemed to lag.

Enter a pair of fresh eyes: In 1992, Ronna Kalish, Performing Arts Series (PAS) Director at New Mexico Tech, expanded the event to include all-day entertainment, refreshments, kids' games and a variety of attractions to entice locals to stay home for the 4th of July.

Today, the annual holiday extravaganza attracts families near and far. With free parking, free sunshine (bring your own shade and sunscreen) and free entertainment on a day when freedom reigns.

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“Year after year, the city and college come together to treat everyone to a fantastic holiday

experience,” said Kalish, who continues to coordinate the event under the umbrella of the PAS.

“And, fortunately, the PAS staff and a dedicated group of civic-minded volunteers provide the support an event of this size needs,” she added, from arranging the entertainment schedule to providing portable sanitary facilities.

"For the safety and enjoyment of all, please do not bring any personal fireworks to campus," Kalish said.




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925 W NINTH ST, TorC. This is a great home that is READY TO MOVE INTO. So very well taken care of, features include over 1900 sq ft of living area, 4 BR, 2BA, kitchen opens to a formal dining area, living room w/windows for natural light, separate utility room, pantry, craft/work room. Several coats of fresh paint, beautiful wood laminate flooring, newer appliances (and more!). One car garage, low maintenance 75 x 140 corner lot w/carport and plenty of room for RV/and/or additional vehicles - also specially manicured. Priced at \$134,000. Call Cathy or Jason to view. MLS 20182250.







509 Kopra: This is a must see unique home. 3 bedrooms 1 full bath 2-3/4 baths and a 1/2 bath. Enjoy the gas log fireplace in the family room while listening to the soothing sounds of the water fountain. Don't Miss this one Priced to sell at \$105,000. MLS 20180892



212 Trinity Ave at the Lake. A great weekend or permanent home. A 16 X 80 mfg home offering 3BR, 2BA, kitchen w/eating area, utility room, ref. air, newer carpet, metal roof. Plenty of covered storage outdoors with a 12' tall RV Port, 13 X 52 heated/cooled garage, storage shed. Natural vegetation, completely fenced 85 X 140 lot. PRIDE OF OWNERSHIP. Call Jason. MLS 20182905.



801 Magnolia - TorC. This MFG home has been VERY well take care of, built in 2006 and offers over 1560 sq ft of living area, 3BR, 2BA, office, utility room, spacious kitchen with an island, refrigerated air, fresh paint and new carpet. Low maintenance corner lot. 2 car garage (heat/cool) and carport. Home is assessed as real property with Title de-activated for easier financing. Priced to sell at \$119,000. Call Cathy. MLS 20181694.



213 Black Range, EB: Looking for a 4000 sq ft heated/cooled garage w/10' doors including a BR and BA, room for all your toys???? OH, AND an immaculate 2000 Solitare Mfg home offering 3 B R, 2 B A 1600+ sq ft of living area, tape/textured, ref air, spacious kitchen w/island, large family room, fenced lot (almost 1/2 ac). Completely furnished! Call Cathy 740-0003. \$249,000. MLS 20180961.



