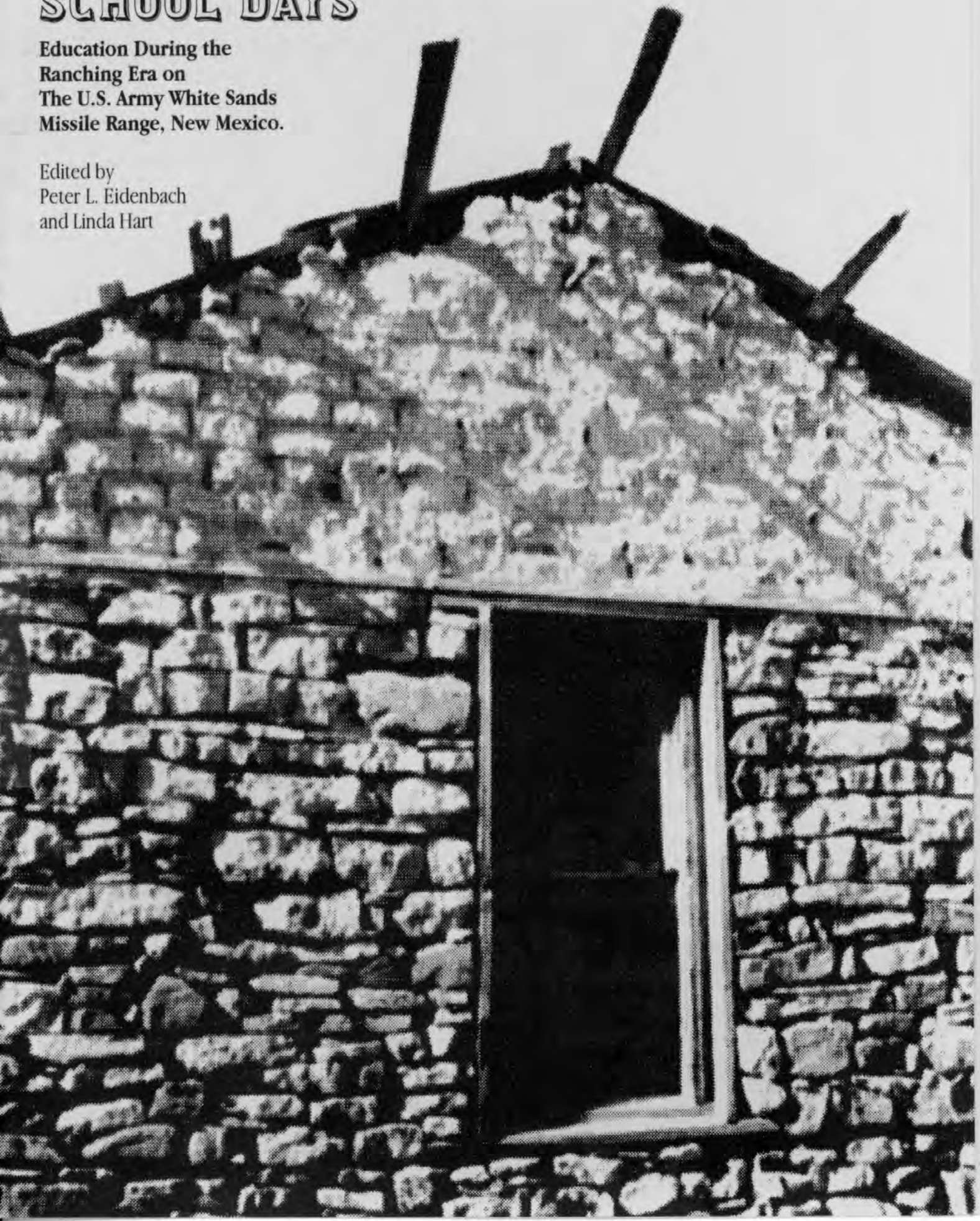
SCHOOL DAYS

Education During the Ranching Era on The U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.

Edited by
Peter L. Eidenbach
and Linda Hart



SCHOOL DAYS

EDUCATION DURING THE RANCHING ERA ON THE U.S. ARMY WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, NEW MEXICO

Department of Defense
Legacy Resource Management Program
Ranching Heritage Oral History Project

Edited by Peter L. Eidenbach and Linda Hart

Based on interviews by Mark Carter, Beth Morgan, Janie O'Cain, Michelle Nawrocki, and Linda Hart

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June 1997

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The views, opinions, and findings contained in this report are those of the editors and contributors and should not be construed as official Department of the Army positions, policies, or decisions, unless so designated by other documentation.

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Cover: Adapted by Peter Eidenbach
from original photograph by Tim Blevins
of rock and adobe barn, Bruton Ranch,
White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico.

Tularosa, New Mexico

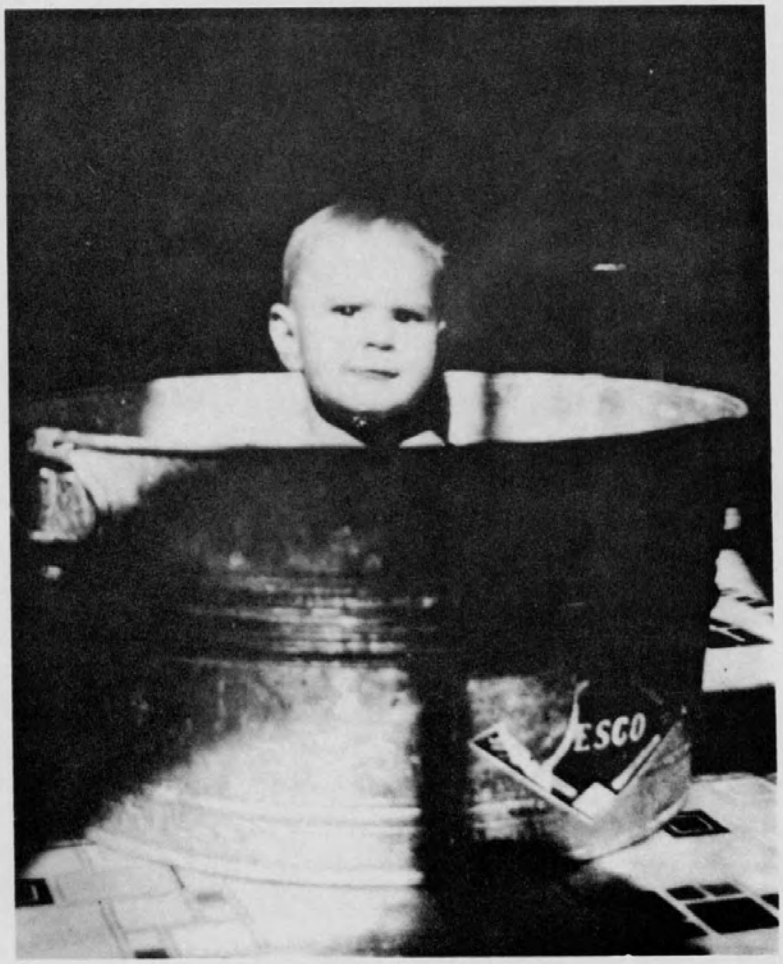

Figure 1. Everett Miller, son of J.D. Miller, ca. 1941.

DEDICATED TO OUR PIONEER RANCHING FAMILIES—

THE BOOKS WE WRITE ARE AGE-LONG ROADS, THE SONGS WE MAKE ARE STONE,
WE BUILD OUR DREAMS TO DAM AND DITCH WHERE THE BARE BROWN DESERTS MOAN;

DUST AND BLOOD AND FIRE AND SMOKE, WHERE THE DIM FORGOTTEN FOLK
MADE A HOME AND REARED A BROOD IN THE WASTELAND OR THE WOOD...

EUGENE MANLOVE RHODES
THE LITTLE PEOPLE, 1929

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As always, this is as much their project as ours.

INTRODUCTION

School Days presents the second set of the recollections, stories, and photographs from local ranching families during the Legacy Resource Management Ranching Oral History Project on the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), New Mexico. These families homesteaded New Mexico's last frontier—the barren deserts and rugged mountains of the Tularosa Basin and Jornada del Muerto.

White Sands Missile Range is rich in rural ranches dating from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century. WSMR's testing and evaluation mission ensures an unparalleled degree of preservation and protection for these sites. More than 200 of these locations exist in backwater canyons and hidden valleys throughout the range. Today, these sites are protected by the unique combination of WSMR's vast land area, high security, and low-impact land use.

During the past five years, WSMR has been engaged in the process of recording the rural homesteads, isolated windmills, Angora goat sheds, and other physical remains that dot the landscape. The crown jewel of WSMR's unique collection is the George McDonald Ranch House—assembly site for the first atomic weapon tested at nearby Trinity Site National Historic Landmark on July 16, 1945. These ranches are closely linked to the history of space and missile development, and their acquisition represented a major patriotic contribution by local ranching families, most of whom still reside in the region.

Recording the architecture and archaeology helped preserve history but did little to illuminate it. More was needed to establish the context of these remains, to remember and interpret what transpired in the past.

Major parts of that history are in danger of being lost within the next several years. The ranches themselves can be preserved under the stewardship of the Department of the Army, but their context—the everyday details of the life they represent—will pass away forever with the ranching families who lived and worked here. Detailed oral, photographic, and documentary history is an immediate need. To meet that need, the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program provided funding for a rigorous program of oral recording to preserve WSMR's ranching history for the benefit of future generations.

Human Systems Research, Inc., the New Mexico State University Center for Anthropological Research and Rio Grande Historical Collections, and the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum Foundation joined in a Legacy partnership with WSMR to develop the procedures and protocols for recording ranching oral histories; duplicating and archiving historic photographs, historic documents, and personal papers; and developing training materials to allow independent continuation of the project in the future. The results of this effort—over 100 hours of taped interviews, 3,200 pages of transcript, and several hundred archivally copied photographs—will be preserved for posterity

by the Legacy partners. But more importantly, a unique heritage has been remembered, a process that has promoted a new level of good will and mutual respect in the region.

Words often fail in this bleak, white land—mystery and enchantment echo in the gritty wind. Photography, not narrative, is the favorite modern medium for capturing this land's fascination. Few know the land with an intimacy that allows vivid, accurate description. Few remember the bold, persistent efforts required to wrest a living from such a threatening region. Few can say, "It was almost like living in paradise." Names, places, and events are nearly forgotten. What little remains in memory reminds us of our own past and opens a unique window onto a cheerful land despite its grim appearance.

Today, the Tularosa Basin remains doubly mysterious—hidden and empty, vast and silently forbidding. The basin forms the heart of the U.S. Army's White Sands Missile Range, its 4,000 square miles being larger than Delaware and Rhode Island combined. The Spanish never ventured beyond the rugged mountains—not one word was written about this place. The region remained hidden until the 1880s, when U.S. Army Topographical Engineers finally penetrated the burning white sands, which had been labeled "unexplored" for more than two centuries.

Adversity and abandonment are characteristic here. Early Jornada Mogollon farmers deserted their fragile corn fields 500 years ago. The Apache arrived 200 years later and remained unchallenged in their mountain strongholds until nearly the turn of the last century. The frantic cattle boom of the 1880s collapsed in the face of drought. Only a few of the dauntless remained to subdue the land with perseverance and imagination. These early families came from Texas, the Old South, Europe, and the Southwest. A few witnessed the last bloody engagements that pitted Geronimo, Victorio, and Nana's Apaches against the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the Brave Rifles of the 3rd Cavalry. Descendants of these fierce Apache still live in their sacred mountains. The Third Cavalry is posted at Fort Bliss, guarding Paseo del Norte, and the sons and daughters of this land's first ranch families are WSMR's neighbors and employees. Memories run deep and strong, buttressed by sacrifice and adversity.

This land demands sacrifice, a sacrifice doubly paid by many families. New Mexico's 200th and 515th Coast Artillery, our nation's oldest militia, were the first to fire and last to lay down their arms in the defense of Bataan. Their ordeal on the Death March is well remembered, a memory physically present in a stark white cross that crowns the arid Godfrey Hills overlooking the east boundary of the Missile Range.

But few remember the second sacrifice. The same fierce patriotism led many of those families to abandon the efforts of two generations and make way for U.S. Army Air Corps bomber training, the Trinity atomic test, and Operation Paperclip, the beginning of the Army's modern missile program.

After 50 years, the debt cannot be repaid—no compensation can recognize the magnitude of such sacrifice. But, in some small way, we can preserve the memory, moderate the loss, and pay tribute to these pioneers.

Eugene Manlove Rhodes fondly called these families *the little people*. Their lives were devoted to land and family, not notoriety and fame. Even then, Rhodes recognized the significance of the small, everyday events that made up the lives of those who inhabited the "ancient days" during "the springtime of the world."

> ...you want to remember that in a thousand years, or some such, historians will publicly offer their right eye to know what you can see now, at first hand; just as they puzzle and stew and guess about Harold, the Saxon, nowadays. Ain't people funny?...Here you are,...with a priceless chance to get the low-down on how we scramble through with a certain cheerfulness and something not far removed from decency, and make merry with small cause....stick around...and watch our ways and means...
>
> *The Trusty Knaves* (Rhodes 1933)

Despite that admonition, their history is largely forgotten. Faded photographs, tattered records, dim memories captured by spinning tape—this is the legacy that remains. Preserving this history is the mission of the WSMR Ranching Oral History Project.

Figure 2. Marjorie Potter, Mellie and Uel "Potsy" Potter's daughter, ca. 1933.

RANCHER BIOGRAPHIES

Nearly 100 families owned property in the chunk of New Mexico that eventually became the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range. The individuals interviewed during the WSMR Ranching Heritage Oral History Project represent only a fraction of those families. Many of the families and their descendants have scattered since leaving their ranches, and many have passed away. Biographies of those who provided insight on the topic of how ranching families secured an education for their children are presented below.

Holm O. Bursum III

Holm Olaf Bursum III is a third-generation WSMR rancher. During his childhood, he lived at Ozanne, a former stage stop on the sprawling 200,000-acre ranch his grandfather amassed by buying up area homesteads, beginning in the 1890s. The ranch was approximately 32 miles long from east to west and 10 miles wide from north to south. It was roughly bisected east-west by U.S. Highway 380.

Holm went to live with his grandmother in Roswell when he was ready to start school. But his mother, trained as a school teacher, taught Holm's younger brother at home through a correspondence school until he started attending public school in third grade.

Lewis D. Cain, Jr.

Lewis Douglas Cain, Jr., was born on November 12, 1915, in Parsons, Lincoln County, New Mexico, to Louis D. Cain and Lola Greer Cain. His parents, both natives of Texas, had grown up on neighboring ranches in the Lava Gap area on present-day WSMR. When Lewis was a boy, his family acquired the Buckhorn Ranch in the San Andres Mountains, where they ran cattle.

Lewis attended numerous schools as his parents moved around. As a sophomore in high school, he went to Ritch School, a ranch school near his home in the San Andres. Normally, grades beyond eighth were not taught at Ritch; but while Mr. C. C. Sitze and his wife Ethel taught there, Mr. Sitze offered the upper-level classes. Lewis finished high school in Truth or Consequences and later earned a bachelor's degree in Biology at New Mexico State University.

Natalia (Nellie) Lucero DiMatteo

Natalia (Nellie) Lucero DiMatteo was born into the politically prominent Lucero family in 1920. Her grandfather, José R. Lucero, and her great uncle, Felipe Lucero, took turns serving as Doña Ana County sheriff. Both men also operated ranches on present-day WSMR—José near Lake Lucero and Felipe near Ash Canyon.

Nellie and her sisters and brother had a happy childhood on the ranch. Swimming in the stock tank, enjoying family rodeos, and making jerky were

among the family's country pastimes that Nellie recalls with fondness. One of Nellie's memories centers on her sister and the classic, old-time school infraction of dipping a little girl's pigtails in the inkwell. The family was very proud that five of the children were able to acquire a university education.

Anna Lee Bruton Gaume

Anna Lee Gaume was born to Jack and Ella Fite Bruton on October 9, 1912, in Magdalena, New Mexico. Her family lived in the Magdalena Mountains at the L-Slash-S Ranch and then moved to the O-Bar Ranch in the Hembrillo Basin.

Anna Lee attended schools in Cutter and Engle while boarding with family members, and in Las Cruces at Loretto Academy. She became a school teacher and taught all along the Rio Grande during her career. She married Paul Gaume in 1942 and had one daughter, Jackie, in 1943. Anna Lee and Paul are retired and live in Deming.

Betsy Biel Lucero

Betsy Lucero was born in 1927 to a farming couple, Aloys and Aurora Biel, of Mesilla, New Mexico. At 19, she married Joe R. (Raymond) Lucero, whose father, José B. Lucero, died while Joe was still in school. They moved to the ranch to run it for Joe's mother and stayed until 1950.

Joe Lucero and his bride lived in the same house that Joe and his sisters had lived in as children. They came to the ranch at an interesting time in the history of the area. White Sands Missile Range had yet to settle the transfer of all properties that today make up the range. Limited testing was taking place, however, and when experiments were scheduled, families would be evacuated. Joe Lucero died in an explosion in 1953.

Betsy relates how Joe's mother was rarely at the family ranch in the San Andres, because she was living in town with the children so they could attend school.

Verena Andregg Mahaney

Verena Andregg Mahaney was born to Alfred Clay Andregg and the former Eunice Riddle on April Fool's Day, 1931, in Alamogordo. For a short time, Verena's father ran a Texaco gas station and auto-repair shop in Alamogordo. When it did not work out, he moved his family and took work in Arizona. Verena's family eventually returned to New Mexico, where her father helped her Uncle Frank with his goat-ranching operation in the San Andres. Much of Verena's childhood was spent alternately at her grandmother Alice Andregg's place and at her Uncle Frank's, which was considered the headquarters, 4 miles up the canyon.

Verena's Uncle Frank would bring books and assignments from Alameda School in Las Cruces, and she would do her school work at the ranch each day under her mother's supervision. Frank would return everything she had finished on his next trip to town and come back with another batch of assignments.

Florence Martin

Florence Martin was born on April 19, 1912, to Frank and Rose Dalley Wesner, in Las Vegas, New Mexico. She grew up in a Las Vegas ranching family and then worked as a school teacher in the Alamogordo area. She loved to dance and met her husband, Frank Martin, at just such an event.

Because she married, Florence was required to retire from school teaching. At that time, only single women could work as teachers in New Mexico. Upon her marriage, she lived and worked on the Martin Ranch in the Jornada del Muerto, the only woman of the household. Later, when regulations changed, she returned to teaching in the Socorro area, received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Education, and served as an elementary school principal.

Eloise (Dolly) Helms Onsrud

Dolly was born Eloise Coslett in Lamar, Oklahoma, a small community about 150 miles southeast of Oklahoma City, on October 16, 1920. Her mother and stepfather moved to New Mexico in 1935 because times were hard around Oklahoma City. The family's planned destination was Taos, but when they visited relatives in Carrizozo, Dolly's stepfather was able to find work in the nearby gold and zinc mines.

In November 1936, Dolly met A. D. (Art) Helms (now deceased) of Nogal, New Mexico, and after what Dolly describes as a "whirlwind courtship," they married on December 24, 1936. Dolly first saw the Tularosa Basin as the 16-year-old bride of a rancher. Art died in 1985. In 1987, Dolly married Lee Onsrud, and they have a small ranch near Oscura, New Mexico. She has few regrets regarding her choice of becoming a rancher's wife. She says, "I wouldn't have traded it for nothing."

Dolly's recollections illustrate the role of the country schoolhouse as a community building, not just a place to learn readin', writin', and 'rithmetic.

Mellie Crawford Potter

Mellie Crawford Potter was born on April 24, 1910, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Sarah and Thomas Calvin Crawford. The Crawfords moved to Aho, Arizona when Mellie was a young girl. Following the death of her mother when she was 13, Mellie returned to New Mexico. She lived with her maternal aunt and uncle, Myrtle and Finus Henderson, on their cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains. Mellie attended Bear Den School and remembers the wonderful community dances held there.

Mellie Crawford and Uel "Potsy" Potter were married in 1925. Mellie moved to the Potter Ranch, where her husband, brother-in-law, and father-in-law owned and operated a goat ranch. Potsy and Mellie Potter had three children—Thomas, Marjorie, and Jimmy. The children attended Ritch School, traveling 23 miles each way in the school bus (a truck or car used to carry all the kids) over a two-track dirt road. Mellie tells of how Thomas and Marjorie

attended high school in Tularosa, boarding for a short time, until the family purchased a house in town and Mellie stayed with them during the school year.

Alice Gililland Smith

Alice Gililland Smith was born on July 5, 1912, in Alamogordo, New Mexico, to Richard Gililland and Ginevra Wood Gililland. She was raised on her parents' cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

Alice attended Bear Den and Ritch Schools and remembers how, in 1926, before Ritch School was built, classes were held in her family's living room. She went to high school in Hot Springs (Truth or Consequences) and recalls not knowing how to use the library, having had no such experience in those one-room school houses.

In 1932, Alice married Clay Smith. The first two years of their married life, her husband worked as a cowboy for ranchers in the area. Clay and Alice obtained their own ranch in 1934, when the Richard Gililland ranch was divided between Alice, Dixie, and Sam Gililland. The Smith's portion of the ranch was the Sweetwater. They raised Angora goats on their ranch until 1942, when they moved to Alamogordo.

Dixie Gililland Tucker

Dixie Gililland Tucker was born on June 30, 1917, in Hot Springs (Truth or Consequences), New Mexico, to Richard Gililland and Ginevra Wood Gililland. She, her sisters Alice and Lola, and her brothers Sam, Joe Pete, and Jess, were raised on her parents' cattle ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

Dixie started school at Bear Den. Because of the distance between the school and the ranch, her grandparents built a house near the school where the Gililland children and Ginevra would stay during the school year. After Bear Den School burned, classes were held for one year in Dixie's parents' house. In 1927, Ritch School was built across the canyon from the Gililland Ranch and Dixie finished elementary school there. She attended high school in Tularosa, boarding part of the time with her aunt.

In 1934, Dixie married Roy Tucker. They raised goats on a portion of the Richard Gililland Ranch until 1942, when they moved to Tularosa.

Irving Virgil (Pat) Withers

Irving Virgil "Pat" Withers was born on June 8, 1909, in Sweetwater, Texas, to R.C. and Estella George Withers. When he was 2 years old, the family moved to southeastern New Mexico and settled near the little community of Jal. In 1924, the family moved to Artesia, in Eddy County, where Pat graduated from high school in 1930.

After graduation, Pat attended Hardin-Simmons College near Abilene, Texas. While he was away at school his first semester, in 1931, "A guy came

along peddling beans, and he said something about having a ranch up here in this mountain, and he wanted to know if anybody would be interested in it, and Dad and Mother come and looked at it." As a result, Pat quit college and joined his parents and two brothers in forming the R.C. Withers Ranch near the Oscura Mountains. Pat has spent over six decades as a rancher, bronc buster, and cattleman in the Tularosa Basin of south central New Mexico. He has no regrets concerning his life as a cowboy, and "Wouldn't live in town for nobody."

Joe Pete Wood, Sr.

Joe Pete Wood was born in Edwards County, Texas, on September 16, 1896, to John Henry Wood and Alice Johnson Wood. In 1902, Joe Pete and his family moved from Texas to New Mexico in a covered wagon. His father initially homesteaded in the Caballero Canyon area but later obtained a ranch near Bear Den Canyon in the San Andres Mountains. Joe Pete Wood was raised on this ranch and attended the Bear Den School. The Bear Den teachers often boarded with the Wood family.

Joe Pete married Nina Chiado and they lived in Albuquerque until 1935, when Joe Pete took over the Wood Ranch from his father. During their years on the ranch, they raised goats, sheep, horses, and mules. Joe Pete and Nina Wood had five children—Joe Pete, Jr., Katherine Yvonne, Ralph, Henry, and James.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr.

Joe Pete Wood, Jr. was born on May 28, 1928, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Joe Pete Wood, Sr., and Nina Chiado Wood. He was raised in Albuquerque until 1935, when he moved with his parents to the John Henry Wood Ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

Joe Pete, Jr. attended grade school at the Ritch School. He graduated from Socorro High School and attended college at the New Mexico School of Mines in Socorro. His last year in high school his father needed him at the ranch, so he took his exams in March and graduated early.

In 1950, Joe Pete married Ruth Harris and they moved to the Wood Ranch and raised cattle. After leaving the ranch, the Woods moved to Tularosa, New Mexico. Joe Pete has a keen interest in the history of the Tularosa Basin.

Hazel Potter Johnson

Hazel Potter Johnson was born in 1929 in Tularosa, New Mexico, to Pleasant Ernest Potter and Bessie May Henderson Potter. She was raised on the family ranch, near the junction of Rhodes and Bear Den Canyons, only a few miles from her mother's birthplace and childhood home in the San Andres Mountains. Hazel attended Ritch School for first through sixth grades. The "bus" took two hours to cover the 23 miles between their ranch and the school. When Ritch School closed in 1941, followed by the acquisition of the area by the U.S. Army, Hazel moved to Hot Springs (now Truth or Consequences) and attended Hot Springs High School for seventh through twelfth grades. Hazel remembers her

experiences at the "ranch" school fondly. She enjoyed her studies and the opportunity to play with other children in the area.

Throughout the interview, Hazel stressed the value ranch families placed on getting a good education for their children and the sacrifices they made to see that it was obtained. Hazel married Wayne Johnson a year before she graduated from high school. Her father gave his consent for the marriage on the condition that Hazel agree to finish school, and he *was* there to check on her the first day of her senior year!

Leonard B. Cain

Leonard B. Cain was born August 11, 1918, in Tularosa, New Mexico, to Louis Douglas Cain and Lola Greer Cain. His father homesteaded near Hobbs ca. 1907, married Lola Greer in 1915, and after numerous moves, settled at the Buckhorn Ranch in the San Andres Mountains in 1929.

Before coming to the San Andres, Leonard attended school in Carthage, San Marcial, Bonita, Capitan, Nogal, and Carrizozo. While at the Buckhorn, he went to Ritch School. It was about 6 miles from the ranch—about 30 minutes on horseback at a lope. He was able to go to Ritch School for a year of high school while Mr. C. C. Sitze was teaching. He recalls how hard he and Sam Gililland worked on their Algebra assignments in an attempt to complete them before Mr. Sitze was finished, the subject being somewhat foreign to him as well. For the rest of high school, Leonard lived in Hot Springs and stayed with his mother in a house the family purchased as a place to live during the school year. Leonard then worked with his father on the Buckhorn, and after a hitch in the Army during World War II, he married Elma Lois Hardin, whose family had moved to the San Andres Mountains in 1934.

Elma Hardin Cain

Elma Lois Hardin was born in Hope, New Mexico, on May 17, 1925. Her parents, Charles W. and Lois Watts Hardin, lived in the Sacramento Mountains. Elma attended school in Hope and Artesia until 1934, when the family moved to the San Andres Mountains. At that point, her parents opted to send her to Loretto Academy in Las Cruces. She graduated from Loretto in 1942. Elma's vivid recollections of life at Loretto Academy provide a strong contrast to experiences related by those who attended the one-room schools out in the ranch communities.

In 1943, after attending Loretto Heights Academy in Denver for a year, Elma married Leonard Cain. They settled on the family ranch, the Buckhorn, in the San Andres, where they began their family and raised cattle until 1949, when they moved their ranching operation northeast, to a spot near Amistad.

Dorothy Wood Miller

Dorothy Wood was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on May 25, 1921, to John H. Wood, Jr., and Eva Henderson Wood. Her grandfather, John Henry

Wood, Sr., settled in the San Andres Mountains in 1905. Her parents raised goats on their ranch in the San Andres.

Dorothy attended Ritch School through tenth grade, although she recalls a time when her cousin came to teach the Wood children at home, because there were too few students to keep the school going. Dorothy also remembers having problems adjusting, when she and one of her sisters were going to school in Albuquerque for a short time while her mother was staying with relatives for the birth of another child. After tenth grade, Dorothy boarded in Tularosa to go to high school. Later, she received the janitor contract for Ritch School, while her husband, J.D., was driving the school bus.

J. D. Miller

J. D. Miller was born in Hope, New Mexico, on July 26, 1916, to Lealon O. and Agnes Hardin Miller. He attended school in Hope through the fifth grade, while his father ranched and hauled freight. When J. D. was 10 years old, the family moved to a ranch in Arizona. The rancher's wife was a school teacher and taught J. D. at the ranch until his mother moved into town so he and his sister could attend school. For one year, J. D. and his sister stayed in Deming, New Mexico, with relatives; then they returned to Arizona, where J. D. graduated from eighth grade.

In 1933, when J. D. was 17, his family relocated to the San Andres Mountains. In July of 1938, J. D. married Dorothy Wood. He was awarded the contract to drive the bus for the Ritch School from 1938 to 1940, picking up and dropping off children along a 23-mile route that took roughly two hours to traverse.

George Dean

George Dean was born August 15, 1930, in Lovington, New Mexico, to Robert H. Dean and Sally Ruth Lumpkin Dean. Robert Dean raised cattle, ran a general store, and was postmaster at Bingham, New Mexico, for roughly 40 years.

George attended school at Bingham through the sixth grade. Beginning in the seventh grade, he went to school in Carrizozo. George remembers that his father used to rent out one-room cabins to the teachers at Bingham School, who would board there during the week and return to their friends and families in town on weekends.

Eda Anderson Baird

Eda Anderson Baird was born to James E. Anderson and Mary Hism Anderson in Tularosa, New Mexico, on July 27, 1917. Eda attended school in Tularosa, where her family had a farm. Among her classmates were the younger brothers of her future husband, James A. Baird.

Eda recalls that the Baird boys did not spend much time on their ranch because the family wanted them attending school in town. Eda also relates how

some of the students were irregular in their attendance because they were needed on the ranches. They would study at home for a year or more, then come in and work their way through the assignments and exams for two or even three grades during the time regularly allotted for only one. Then they would be gone again for a period of time.

Louise Crockett

Louise Crockett was born on September 3, 1912, to Dick and Edna Roach Alexander, in Eunice, New Mexico. As a child, she lived in Eunice, Hope, and Piñon. Louise graduated from high school in the then-thriving farming community of Hope. She married Lloyd Crockett in 1932 and they began a sheep ranching operation near Piñon but moved to a ranch in the Rhodes Canyon area in 1938. Louise and the Crockett children moved from the ranch into town during the school year. The kids attended school in Las Cruces for four years and in Hatch for five years. Finally, the family moved to Hatch.

Cora Cox Fribley

Cora Cox was born May 20, 1904, to George W. and Julia Beach Cox, in Hope, New Mexico. The family moved to the San Andres Mountains around 1916.

There was no school near the Cox Ranch, so the family also purchased a house in Tularosa in order to have a place for Cora and her brothers and sisters to live with their mother while they were attending school. Cora remembers being the best seamstress in her Home Economics class and how they had a difficult time with the cooking exercises because there was no food provided by the school.

Ria Lee Sidwell

Ria Lee Gaines was born in Texas on December 11, 1911, to James T. and Annie Sims Gaines. The family moved to New Mexico in 1915 and settled along the Arroyo Seco, north of the Capitan Mountains, where Ria Lee's father worked on a ranch. Ria Lee attended Bethel School, a one-room ranch school on the Sidwell homestead that the father of her second husband, Ewell, helped build. She remembers riding the 3 1/2 miles to school on horseback or burros. In 1928, Ria Lee's family purchased a ranch north of Bingham shortly before her graduation from high school in Carrizozo.

Ria Lee describes the old rock schoolhouse at Bingham that her sister attended when it was a thriving institution with four rooms and four teachers.

Ewell Sidwell

Ewell Sidwell was born in Ovaldo, Texas, to John Wylie and Rosie Lee Cutbirth Sidwell on January 5, 1909. Ewell's parents met and married in New Mexico but moved to Texas to farm. In 1915, they returned to New Mexico and homesteaded near Wylie's father, north of the Capitan Mountains.

Because there was no school close to them, Ewell's father built one on the homestead and Ewell went there several years. He also attended Spindle School for two years, stopping when he finished the seventh grade. After Ewell's grandfather passed away in 1925, the Sidwells moved into Roswell for a couple of years, then returned to the mountains above Tularosa. Ewell married Ria Lee in 1955. Since then, they have run dairies and ranched. They currently live in Carrizozo.

Figure 3. Hazel Potter with cousins Jimmie and Marjorie Potter at the Uel (Potsy) Potter Ranch, ca. 1941.

The One-Room Rural Schoolhouse –

Bear Den and Ritch Schools

Hazel Potter Johnson

I was born in Tularosa, but my parents had a ranch that's on the Missile Range now. I grew up in the mountains on the Potter place in Bosque Canyon. I went to the Ritch School. It was a public school, about 23 miles away by country road, just a little bit northeast of Dick Gililland's ranch.

In September of 1935, when I was five, I started first grade. All the ones that were old enough went to school. At one time there were three younger kids out there that weren't able to go because they weren't old enough. Once they got to five years old, they could go to school. I turned six in November after school started. Velma Ruth Wood and I were in the first grade together. She didn't pass, so for the next five years, I was the smartest in the class. And the dumbest, too, because I was the only one. Second through the sixth I was the only one.

...I was the only one.

My brothers Richard and Thomas and sister Margie had gone to school in Tularosa the year before, and I went to some kindergarten the year Richard went to first grade in Tularosa. Then we got a chance to be bussed to the Ritch School.

There was some older kids in higher grades before we started there, but I don't remember that much about it. The older kids were in the eighth grade when the school shut down in '41. March—I think around the 22nd, or something like that, of 1941. After March of '41, we studied at home until May. We just took books home from the school and we studied the rest of the books. My understanding is that Socorro didn't have enough money to pay the teacher the last two months. Then the Army took over the land out there, and there was no place for the school. Everybody that was out there, they had to move to Tularosa or Hot Springs or somewhere else to go to school.

I went to Hot Springs High School. At that time it was the seventh through the twelfth grade. I think Richard went to high school about two years, but he had the same teacher again and he didn't like her, so he quit when he was about a sophomore. My uncle—Finus Henderson's youngest son, Luther—he was a senior the year that I was starting to school at Hot Springs High School, in 1936. My grandfather was sick, so they went to Hot Springs for Grandpa's health. My uncle was the youngest of the Henderson family.

Daddy always said he got up at four o'clock year round, but I know better. My *mother* got up at four o'clock. She started putting wood fire in the stoves and cooking breakfast, and Daddy got up after Mother did. We had to get up so we could get dressed and eat breakfast and get our lunch together and go. School was from nine 'til four.

The night before, if we had apples or oranges or something, we'd cut them up and put them in Jello. They'd be ready in the morning for our lunch. And potted meat sandwiches! I don't like potted meat. It was in biscuits. Unless Daddy had been to town, we didn't have light bread; it was biscuits. If we had meat, mother would fry meat when she was fixing breakfast. We'd have some type of meat in our biscuit and Richard and I'd split a can of pork and beans, and then we'd split the pint of Jello.

...potted meat sandwiches!

If it was nice outside, we'd go and eat outside. There was one year, after they added on to the schoolhouse—they added where the teachers stayed—Annie Wood come and we had hot lunches that one year. This was the mother of one of the kids; she'd come and fix the hot lunches. She was a rancher, so she cooked good lunches.

It took at least two hours or so to go from our house to Ritch school. We'd leave to go to school before daylight in the winter time, and a lot of times it'd be getting dark by the time we got home. We didn't have no electricity. We had some homework; we had something to do with the lamplight at night at the kitchen table.

One year Wilbur Sitze had a pickup with a wooden box on the back and used two, I guess one-by-twelves, on each side, which was set in on the back. But most of the time it was just a car, and the little ones would sit on the bigger ones' laps.

Our ranch was 23 miles from school, and the others we picked up on the way. We were the first on and the last off. Wilbur and his mother, must have been my second grade, they lived in the Bosque House up above us, up the canyon from us. They'd just come pick us up and take us.

Later, Dorothy and J.D. Miller lived in the Bosque House maybe two years while they were driving the bus. They purchased the bus to have to take the kids to school. It was their vehicle that they bought. They got a salary to drive it. And then after J.D. and Dorothy got married, she got paid to be the janitor. With that, they'd make their payment on the car they used for a bus. Prior to that, I guess Wilbur and his mother had cleaned the schoolhouse and all.

Before the CCC's [Civilian Conservation Corps] built the road from where Tom Wood's place was to Pete's, up on the hillside, we used to go up the draw, and one time we was gonna pull out one place, and Wilbur got stuck. He says, "Yes, and I was trying and trying to make it out and I'd dig and dig and I'd get in and try. So Hazel's standing there and she says, 'Wilbur, your tires are turning.'" J.D. Miller remembers the first day of school one year—I don't know which year, he didn't say—but it had rained a lot, and there used to be a big dike between the school and John Wood's place, and we got stuck and slid off the dike. We never did get to school that day!

...Wilbur got stuck.

We went ahead and went to school when it snowed. I remember one time we started home and we met Charlie and Lois Harden coming up Rhodes Canyon, and they had been down and they said the road was too bad for us going down—that we were to stay at their house that night.

The two Gililland boys, they walked. My fifth grade is when Ben Cain went that one year, and he'd ride a horse some—there was a log corral down on the corner that he'd put his horse in for the day. A lot of times, his mother would bring him in a car, and if he caught up with the Gililland boys, he'd walk on to school with the Gililands. A lot of times she'd bring his bicycle and he'd ride his bicycle from a point on to school. But the others, well, after Emma and Manny moved to Thoroughgood, they brought the kids to a point, and we picked them up at a different place than where we had before. But when she cooked the hot lunches, she brought them right on down to school.

In the morning, we would play ball before nine o'clock and then we

would go in and do stuff. We had recess in the morning and then we ate and then we had recess before school was out. We'd play different games and whatever. We'd play Annie Over. That was throwing a ball over the schoolhouse and we caught it. We played Kick the Can, Hide and Seek, Wolf Over the Ridge, and, how did it go?, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send somebody over," and we'd be standing with our hands together and they come running from the other side and they'd try to break through. If they couldn't break through, they'd have to get on our side. But if they broke through, they got to take one to the other side. We played hopscotch, too, and baseball. I remember I was pitcher one time and J.D. was up to bat and he hit it. I had my arm up, and he hit me. Boy that hurt. So he made me go sit down by the schoolhouse and he wouldn't let me play for a while.

We'd play Annie Over.

Figure 4. Students at Ritch School, Easter, 1940.

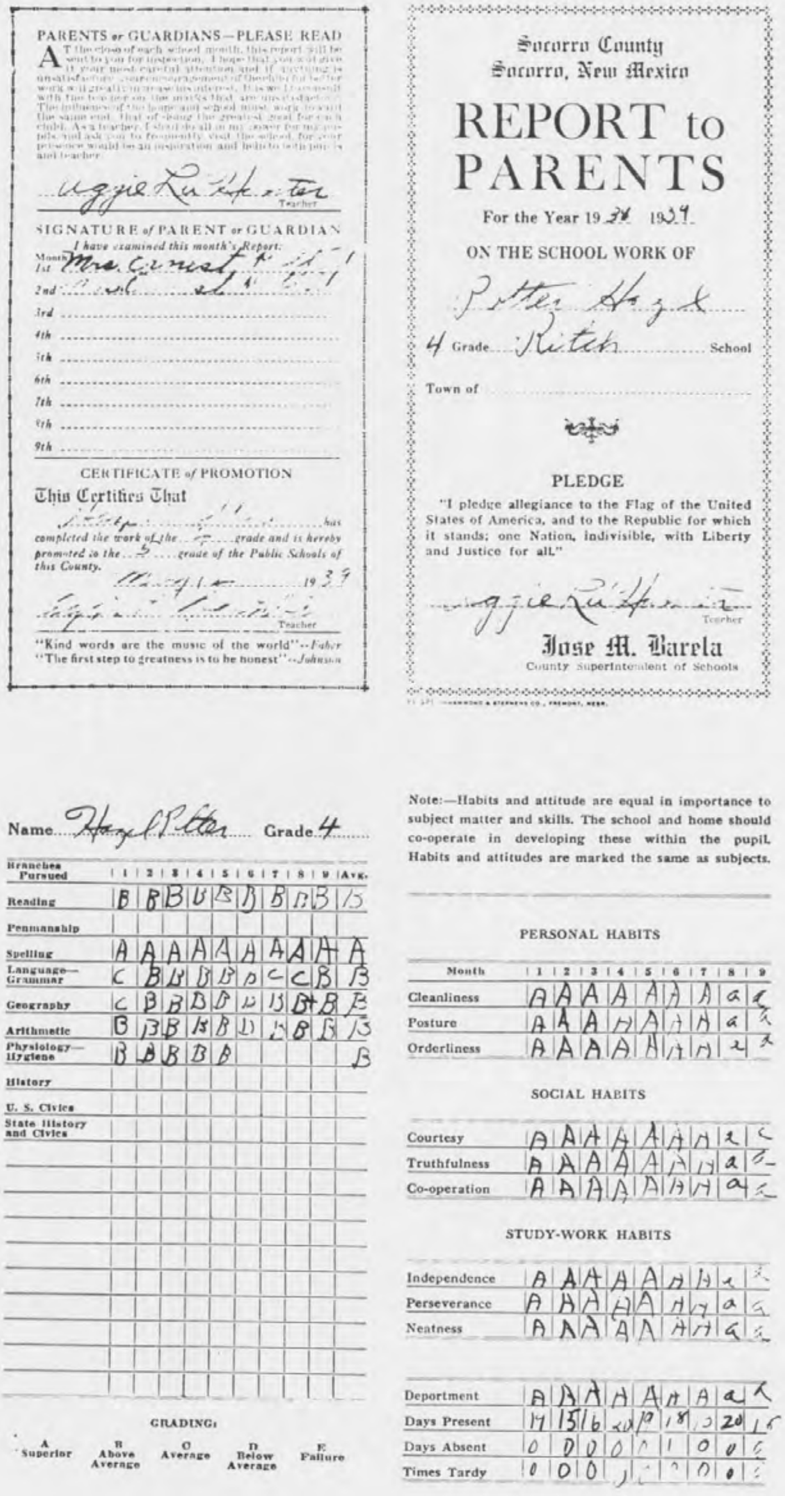
The girls usually wore dresses to school. We used to have long stockings we had to use. The thing that holds up the stockings, it was underneath your clothes. There was a strap here [across the upper torso] and a strap on the back and up on the shoulders, and it had like garter fasteners that held our socks up. The boys wore Levi jeans. Sometimes the girls wore pants, Levi jeans, but if you wore a dress, you wore these big, long socks that come way up here [mid thigh].

The teacher had different books for each grade. Now there was one year—I don't remember if it was the fourth or fifth grade—they didn't even send a History book down. I didn't have a History book; the teacher didn't even have a book. We didn't have History books, so we didn't study history that year.

Figure 5. Parents at Ritch School, Easter, 1940.

We had Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and we had Geography and was supposed to have History, and we got to draw in our Big Chief tablets. She used to have cards—flashcards. We'd have contests—the younger ones to the older ones—in Arithmetic, or to see who could find stuff in the dictionary quicker, and some with spelling for the whole group. There wasn't anybody else with me my age, so I had spelling bees with the other kids. I remember we had a blackboard. We used to write on the blackboard. We had pencils and pens with inkwells, I think, and we got to draw in our Big Chief tablets. There were regular desks with a seat to them, best I remember.

...Big Chief tablets.



PARENTS or GUARDIANS—PLEASE READ

Uggie Lu ... Teacher

SIGNATURE of PARENT or GUARDIAN

I have examined this month's Report:

Month	
1st	Mrs. Ernest ...
2nd	...
3rd	
4th	
5th	
6th	
7th	
8th	
9th	

CERTIFICATE of PROMOTION

This Certifies That

.... has completed the work of the ...... grade and is hereby promoted to the ...... grade of the Public Schools of this County.

.... 1939

.... Teacher

"Kind words are the music of the world"—*Faber*
"The first step to greatness is to be honest"—*Johnson*

Socorro County
Socorro, New Mexico

REPORT to PARENTS

For the Year 1938 1939

ON THE SCHOOL WORK OF

Potter Hazel

4 Grade Kitch School

Town of ....

PLEDGE

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands; one Nation, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all."

Uggie Lu ... Teacher

Jose M. Barela
County Superintendent of Schools

Name Hazel Potter Grade 4

Branches Pursued	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Avg.
Reading	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Penmanship										
Spelling	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Language—Grammar	C	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	B	B
Geography	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	B+	B	B
Arithmetic	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Physiology—Hygiene	B	B	B	B	B					B
History										
U. S. Civics										
State History and Civics										

GRADING:
A Superior · B Above Average · C Average · D Below Average · E Failure

Note:—Habits and attitude are equal in importance to subject matter and skills. The school and home should co-operate in developing these within the pupil. Habits and attitudes are marked the same as subjects.

PERSONAL HABITS

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cleanliness	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	a
Posture	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	a
Orderliness	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	a

SOCIAL HABITS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Courtesy	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]
Truthfulness	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]
Co-operation	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]

STUDY-WORK HABITS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Independence	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]
Perseverance	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]
Neatness	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Deportment	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	a	[illegible]
Days Present	14	15	16	20	19	18	[illegible]	20	15
Days Absent	0	0	0	0	[illegible]	1	0	0	[illegible]
Times Tardy	0	0	0	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	0	0	[illegible]

Figure 6. Hazel Potter's fourth grade report card.

I don't remember having class outside, but I know we went on a—I guess you'd call it field trip—on a mountain 'way back in behind the Gililland's house. There had been a plane crash up there years ago, and we took our picnic lunches and we walked up there where the plane had crashed and then back before it was time to go home that day. That's the only field trip I remember—getting to go see where the airplane crashed.

We had to have tests for grades, but I don't remember how often. Up over here in town, they give tests about once a week. I don't remember if we did up there or not. I was only 11 when I went to school there.

I remember mother talking about when she went to the old Bear Den school. This brother of hers was younger. They'd give them these words for spelling, and every time that he had to do it, she'd start with this one, so he knew the order. That's the only words that he studied. And the teacher started with a different one the next time, and he didn't know how to spell any words except for what he thought he was going to get!

Velma Ruth didn't pass the first grade, but I did, maybe because I had gone to kindergarten the year before. Maybe that had helped me. But she had a brother and sister that could have helped her, but she didn't pass that first grade. Joe Pete, now, he was a smart kid. He should have been just one year ahead of me, but he got promoted on. He was two years ahead of me instead of one, because he got promoted to another grade. He was one of the smarter kids. I don't remember what grades he was passed from, or if he made the two grades in one year, or whatever.

They weren't rowdy like they are nowadays. It was quiet in the classrooms. It seems like they threw spit wads once in a while; they'd probably just have to stand in the corner or something. In fact, years ago I remember Jess, he'd go up to Mrs. Sitze in his first grade. He was kind of tongue tied. "Mrs. Sitze, me go home, me hungry."

They weren't rowdy...

I know there was windows on the east—or that's what I call the east side. There was probably some on the west side. When they added on for the teachers' room, they probably just made a doorway where one window was. Mrs. Posey—I think her husband was the one that dug and made a cellar for storage—I think he came out and stayed one time. At that time, he worked for the railroad, and he had a few days off, and I think he's the one that fixed the cellar that was there.

I remember there was a door on the north end and the south end. They were about in the middle of the building. The big rectangular wood stove was in the middle of the building.

We did have a school bell. It was mounted on the south end by the door, and I think there was just something metal there that rang it. It was stuck out so far from the wall.

We had a cistern for water. There was a cistern built—it was on the north end of the building—and then the gutters from the building, the water went into the cistern. Evidently, that wasn't enough, because J.D., I think, is the one that dug another hole and plastered it up and made a second cistern. In the later years, we had two cisterns. I don't know if the water lasted the whole nine months, or if somebody had barrels so they could come dump it in if we run out. We did have water the whole nine months, but I don't know if it was from the rainwater or if somebody supplemented it. It was drawn out by bucket. They'd take a bucket and set it inside, and we each had a cup that we'd get water with. We all knew whose cup was whose.

...we each had a cup...

We'd usually go to the outhouse during recess, but we had to raise our hand if we had to go otherwise. They had a piece of wood on the outside and there was a screen door hook inside that you could pull it shut inside.

I remember one time when there had been a rattlesnake underneath, so we couldn't go to that outhouse until they got rid of the snake. Some of the kids went to the outhouse and heard it, I think. They moved the outhouse north of the schoolhouse. There used to be a lot of snow. I don't remember if J.D. or Wilbur walked down and then we could walk in their tracks or something. I don't remember them shoveling it, but if anybody shoveled it, Wilbur or J.D. did.

I think my first grade there was probably two teachers—Mr. and Mrs. Sitze, but after that, there was just one with all classes. First and second grade I had Ethel Sitze; she was there the one year without Mr. Sitze. Then Wilbur came and drove the bus, and then he taught after his mother left. So he was the teacher for everybody. Third grade was Wilbur Sitze, fourth was Aggie Lu Hunter, fifth grade was Opal Posey, and sixth grade was Winnie Ritch. I don't know how come we had a different teacher every year.

I know Mother said, even when she went to school, she didn't have that many teachers, but she had different ones. I think mother had mostly women when she went to Bear Den. There was two of them that had been Daddy's cousins that were teachers out there, but it was usually younger women that would come out for maybe, say a year, and then they'd leave. Back when mother was going to school, they had families that'd just come in so they'd have enough kids for a school.

I don't really know where the Sitzes lived when it was him and her, but I know when it was just Mrs. Sitze, in second grade, her and Wilbur stayed at the Bosque House. I guess Wilbur did, too. Aggie Lu lived at Pete Wood's when she was a teacher. Then, the next year they added the addition onto the schoolhouse so that Mrs. Posey could live there. I heard Dorothy say one time that her daddy, John Wood, and Uncle Dick Gililland had helped build it. I guess somebody else helped, too, but I don't know.

The kids would take the erasers out and beat them on something outside. I don't know if the teacher cleaned the black boards or if Dorothy and J.D. did when they were living there. Dorothy and J.D. cleaned the school building They both would. That would have been for three years. I don't know who else did it. Wilbur had to the year he taught. Probably him and his mother the first two years I went. I don't know if Mrs. Posey, when she lived there, went ahead and built a fire to warm us in the winter, or if J.D. built it after we got there. The room was about this wide [the width of Hazel's mobile home—roughly 16 feet]. It was maybe 30 to 40 foot long. It was a pretty good size building with a hip roof on it. They had the gutters to catch the rain water.

We started school the Tuesday after Labor Day, and then I think we had Armistice Day off—is what they used to call it. Then we had off for Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter. They didn't have all these teachers' conferences that they have now. They have Spring Break and then they go back for three or four days and then they have Easter. I liked school. We got to play at recess with the other kids. Otherwise, it was just us, unless we walked the mile over the hill to play with our cousins.

During the summer, we played in the goat pens, because we still had the little kids. We played with rocks, with our cars. Then, after they got all turned loose, we'd have to help gather the goats in so we could take the nannies off and then come back and we'd take the kids to water. Daddy

used to have ropes and he'd put tin cans with rocks on them. We could throw the rope out and the tin can'd scare the babies, until they got to where they'd go, and where they liked water; and then they'd go in without much trouble.

We didn't go anywhere on a family vacation. It was a big thing to just go to Tularosa or once in a while to Hot Springs. Daddy, I don't remember ever going with him, but he used to go to Roswell and buy from James A. Dick Company. It was a wholesale grocer. He'd go and buy a whole bunch of groceries at one time so we didn't have to go to town that often. Sometimes in the summertime, we'd go and stay with Grandma and Grandpa Henderson. They had the ranch out there before the ranches were taken. We'd go to Bear Den, or to Tip Top. Tip Top is just off from where those masks are on that rock down at the other end of Rhodes Canyon. I went several times in the summer to stay with Grandpa and Grandma, but Richard didn't go to Bear Den.

...where those masks are...

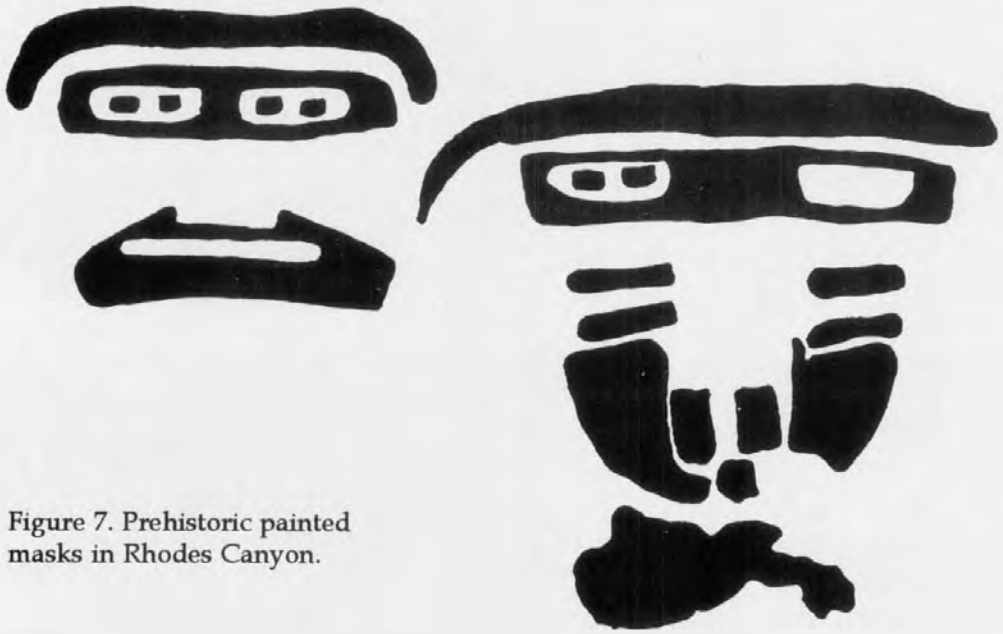


Figure 7. Prehistoric painted masks in Rhodes Canyon.

We had dances, community dances, at the schoolhouse. As chaperon, it was the adults. Everybody that heard about the dance at the schoolhouse from all over would come. We used to have big crowds. We got to dance, and everybody would take food, and we had a midnight snack. Then they danced some more.

One year we had a school play. She had comedy—cartoon stuff from the Katzenjammer Kids. We all dressed up like those kids and we gave this little play before the dance. It must have been about Halloween time, because hunting season started the next day. Any hunters that come, they were already up there, so they could go hunting the next morning.

...Katzenjammer Kids.

Elections were held there. They had to come to Engle to pick up the box and bring it back to Engle, and put it on the train to send it back to Socorro. That would be a day that we got out of school—election day. We didn't go to school on election day. We'd have to go and be there, but there was no school; Mother and Daddy were on the voter board. We would have to go, because there was nobody to watch us at home. They worked the election polls.

Figure 8. Hazel and Richard Potter in front of original ranch home at the Potter Ranch, ca. 1930.

The Bear Den school was down just above Grandma and Grandpa Henderson's house. It was about 2 miles Mother said they had to walk. Approximately 2 miles on up the canyon is what Mother always said. Years and years ago there was a wagon road from Grandpa's on up to the Wood's. I think it was on the west side of the canyon. I know one time Uncle Finus—my grandpa's name was Finus and my uncle was Finus, too—he come with Clay and Alice Smith. They would come up through their place out by Salinas Peak and out and around. He said in that old Jeep, "We just bounce along down, and come on down Bear Den Canyon, and there was the old school there."

I never did hear Mother say what happened to the school. After it wasn't in use, they didn't go clear down to the other school, because they went to Tularosa. Grandma'd go to town and stay. She went in when Uncle Luke was born in 1918. She was the only one in town with kids then in school.

I've seen pictures of Uncle Luke when he went to Bear Den. He was the youngest of the family and Mother was the oldest. Uncle George Henderson—he lived over in White Rock and he lost his wife in 1915—his kids would stay with Grandpa and Grandma, I think, and go to school. Then the Woods had a bunch of younger kids that grew up and went to Bear Den School.

I have a report card from my first grade; Ethel Sitze was my teacher in the 1935-1936 school year. And I have a report card of my fourth grade—the fourth grade would have been '38 and '39—with Aggie Lu Hunter as the teacher. I have Richard's seventh-grade report card with Winnie Ritch as a teacher—1940 to '41 school year. I have a little paper showing that I had been examined, that I needed my teeth checked.

I have a report card...

I have a picture taken at Easter time of all the kids that went to school. There were 14 of us there when I was in the fifth grade. And one with the teacher's sister-in-law, and some of the parents had come that day. Standing by the car is the teacher's sister-in-law, Margie Posey, and Dorothy Miller and Aunt Jen and Lola Gililland and Lorena and Eva and Bonnie Wood and Uncle Lum Wood and Lola and Doug Cane. They had all came for the Easter egg hunt, the Easter egg party, that day at school. That would have been in my fifth grade, when Opal Posey was teacher there. I have a picture that was taken in 1993, at a funeral in Tularosa.

Most of the kids that were living there are in the picture; Jess Gililland and Eileen Wood and Elmer McDonald weren't there. There's a picture that shows me and J.D. Miller and Joe Pete Wood and Richard Potter, Margie Potter, Vinnie Cane, Thomas Potter, Billy Pete Gililland, and our teacher, Opal Posey. And Fred Wood was in this one. He wasn't in the other.

Recently, Dorothy and J.D. sent me a picture. She didn't put the year, so I don't know what year it was taken. It appears to have been at the Ritch School. In the background it shows Sam Gililland and Leonard Cain and Frank Martin. Mr. C.C. Sitze was the teacher at the time. He's in the picture. Then there's Mona and Vera Martin and Ethel Sitze, the teacher, and Beth Sitze, their daughter, and Bonnie Cain and Dixie Gililland and Dorothy Wood, Ben Cain, Lorena Wood, Lola Gililland, and Billy Pete Gililland and Howard Wood.

The 21st of September I went to Alamogordo, to Opal Posey's 90th birthday party. Jess Gililland brought her an apple.

Jess Gililland brought her an apple.

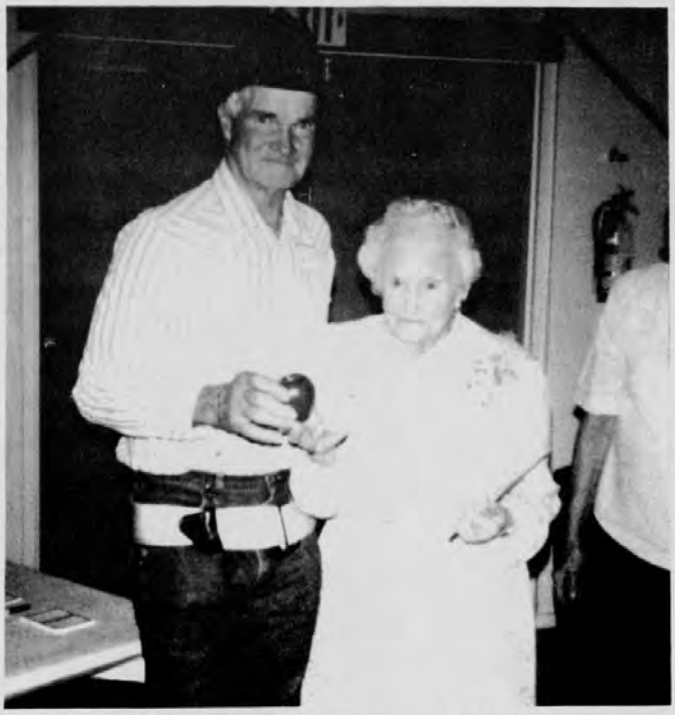


Figure 9. Jess Gililland presents Opal Posey with an apple on her 90th birthday.

Figure 10. Students and teachers at Ritch School, 1933. Back row: Sam Gililland, Leonard Cain, Frank Martin. Next Row: Mr. C C. Sitze (teacher). Middle row: Mona Martin (partially hidden), Vera Martin, Mrs. Ethel Sitze (teacher), Beth Sitze, Bonnie Cain, Dixie Gililland (partially hidden), Dorothy Wood. Front row: Ben Cain, Lorena Wood, Lola Gililland, Pete Gililland, Howard Wood.

LEONARD CAIN

Just me and Sam [Gililland] were the only two in high school at Ritch School, I think; in the same grade, best I remember. It was in '34. Just that one year was the only time they had any high school out there. We had to get it okayed through the school in Hot Springs [T or C].

That was the year I picked Algebra. Mr. Sitze, he didn't know Algebra. He had worked a half a day on a problem, and there was me and old Sam Gililland, and we would work our tails off trying to beat him. I learned more Algebra that year than I ever learned where we really had a good teacher, because we tried to beat our teacher. He'd work a dang problem sometimes half a day 'fore he'd get it. I don't remember just for sure how long Mr. Sitze was there. He taught the upper grades; she [Mrs. Sitze] taught the first, second, and third; up a ways, I don't remember. They divided it up that way.

...we would work our tails off...

We went to school there from the Buckhorn Ranch; it was 6 miles. We'd get on the horses and we'd hit a high lope about 8 o'clock in the morning to get over there by 8:30. We had our own horses; rode in the corral there and we tied them up to the fence in the corral. We built the picket corral, post corral, just enough to hold our horses. They just put posts in and tied posts across the bottom of it. A couple of 'em is all you need. They'd dig two posts and then tie it across. I can't remember, but it seemed to me that was the way the thing was built. It was just enough to hold a good, gentle horse.

And Dad had the old Model-T that he brought out from Carrizozo. When we got where we could drive that thing, we'd go in it. Lewis [Cain] was driving one day and he went over there, got out and opened the gate, and when he drove through, he hit a big rock or something with the hind wheels. My sister Bonnie was sitting in the back of the old pickup, on the floor, and it bounced her out over the side and she hit the ground. It didn't hurt her though.

...it bounced her out...

There's the Gililland kids: Sam, Alice, Dixie, Pete, and Jess. And then there's the four of us, and the Woods: Dorothy, Baby Ruth, Howard, and Lorena. And there's the Martins: Frank, Vera, and Mona. They come up from their home place. They drove in a car and they rode horseback, too. One horse bucked old Frank off and broke both of his wrists.

Frank had this old, I think it was an uncle. He drove the car up there and then he'd sit in the car all day and wait for school to be out to drive the kids home. Eva Wood's younger brother, Hodges, Hodges Henderson—me and him was about the same age. I remember me and Hodges, we was out there at recess, and this old uncle was sitting there in the car asleep. He had his head laid back a-snoring with his mouth open, so we got a little bit of sand and dribbled down his mouth, and he sure did get mad. But we could outrun him. I think away back then a buck sheep hit Hodges in the belly. He had vomited up blood and that's what killed him, eventually.

...he'd sit in the car all day...

And now Bonnie, she was the youngest. I don't guess she went while I was there. I think that's when Wilbur Sitze was teaching there; he was staying at the Hardin's and drove the bus. I'd already left. Wilbur and my brother, Lewis, graduated together, and then he went to college, to 'Cruces there, and got his teaching certificate and then come out there and taught.

Figure 11. Leonard and Elma Cain, 1943.

A Dialogue—LEONARD AND ELMA HARDIN CAIN

Elma:

Wilbur Sitze lived with us and drove the bus and picked kids up. Wilbur's dad and mother taught down at the Ritch School. I was a teenager, probably, whenever Wilbur lived with the folks. He taught at Ritch School and drove and picked up the kids as he went.

Leonard:

Whenever we got up pretty good size, my mom moved to town. We had a home over there in Truth or Consequences and she sent us to school. I went to town for my junior year. I had to take a test to be qualified. That was '35. ***...to get an education.*** Ma sure wasn't gonna let us go over there by ourselves, so they bought the house there in town. She stayed there in town. I think the main purpose was to get an education.

It was a little later, but it wasn't all that much later, when I went to Hot Springs. The first year [of high school], I went over there [Ritch]—I guess it was the eighth grade—and Mr. Sitze taught me there.

One year [1926-27] Dick Gililland tried to keep the school, so he got the Inman kids from Beaver Head, in the Black Range. He got Nellie Inman and Dee Inman and ***...he shot a lawman.*** what is his name? The oldest Inman, he got in trouble years later and kind of got off his rocker. He had a stand off with the law up in the Black Range. I think he shot a lawman.

Elma: They sent him to the pen.

Leonard: Yeah, and he finally wound up in an asylum, I think.

Elma: Douglas. Douglas Inman.

Leonard:

Douglas Inman was his name. And Dee Inman, he finally moved up to Fort Sumner and he just died here a year or two ago. Douglas died several years back.

Dad worked for the railroad. He was on this pipeline job for a year or two, maybe, and then drifted on towards Carrizozo. I guess we'd move partly 'cause of the school problems, but we'd just make little short moves. At Bonita City we had to walk about 3 miles to school. We moved to the mesa country between Carrizozo and Capitan, and it was about five miles to school. Then we moved close to Nogal and went to Capitan School, then to the Nogal School. We were close to school. And from there to Carrizozo for high school. In '28 we moved to Carrizozo and I went my freshman year in Carrizozo. The sophomore year's when we moved back out here to the Buckhorn. We moved from Lincoln County to the Buckhorn in '29. I was 12 or 14, I guess. I'd gone to school in Carrizozo the year before. They had a country school about 5 miles east of the Buckhorn.

I was a sophomore in high school, and the younger kids, we all went to Ritch School. One teacher taught two of us in high school, and the rest of it was all grade school. I guess it was just the one year that they had this teacher, Mr. Sitze, that taught the high school subjects. His wife, Mrs. Sitze, taught the younger kids.

I was a sophomore, I believe, and Alice Gililland was a freshman. Two high school students was all; the rest of 'em were grade school. He didn't spend all his time with the two of us in high school. He probably taught the seventh and eighth grade or something like that. She took the kids, the little kids.

Day after Labor Day was the first school day. I'm trying to think of the size of the schoolhouse. Seemed like it was about the size of this trailer house. This is 20 by 40 and the Ritch School was about like that, with a partition that went a quarter of it, cut off as a living quarters for the school teacher. The benches and blackboard and everything was in the big part of it.

...about the size of this trailer house.

We didn't miss school very often. If they'd get in tight of some kind, one of us may have to stay out a day or something like that, but, oh, as a rule, we'd make every school day, I guess. Try to make the whole year without missing a day, if we could.

They'd have their little community dances at the Ritch School. They'd move the benches up next to the wall, and it was big enough for several to dance in there. There weren't too many dances. Maybe twice a year or something like it—maybe at the Fourth of July, and they'd probably have a dance after the Christmas program. It would just be the close neighbors that would come to 'em, and they had a fiddle and guitar and a French harp for the music.

...a fiddle and guitar and a French harp...

Most anytime, there would be a calf-roping or goat-roping, unless it was snowing or something like that; more'n likely, through the summer when school wasn't going on. Somebody would have a stopwatch, and maybe they'd entered for a quarter apiece, and whoever made the best time would get the jackpot—maybe four or five dollars, depending on how many got into it. Oh, it would be the younger kids, mostly. The girls didn't participate.

I went one high school year there, my sophomore year. My junior year, we moved to T or C for school. I finished high school there, then I stayed at the ranch 2 years before deciding to go to school at the university in Las Cruces.

Figure 12. Lewis D. Cain with his mother, Lola Greer Cain, 1916.

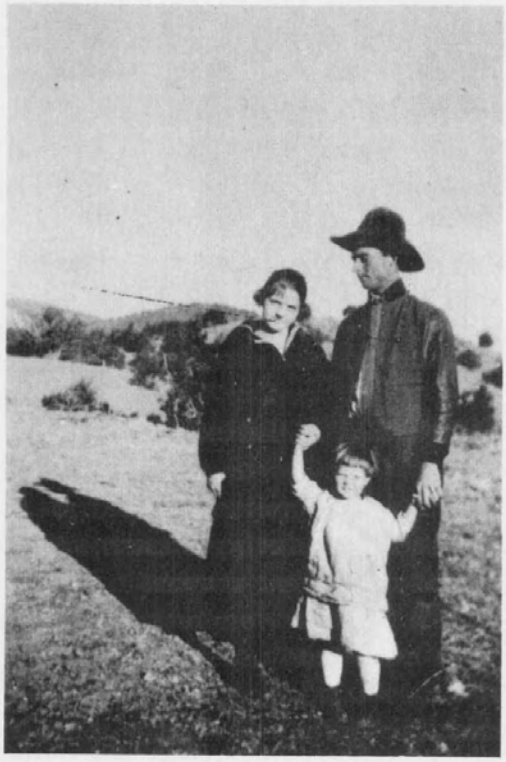


Figure 13. Bear Den School teacher Cleo Browning, H.A. (Amnon) Wood, and Dixie Gililland, 1920.

When I started school, we went to Grandpa Wood's first and stayed all night. My granddad's house was pine log, piñon logs, and adobe. And the next day we went on down to Bear Den and stopped. My daddy was goin' to see where to put a house, of course, to live in; a two-room lumber house. I was bashful. I was really bashful. And I thought, boy, this is fine! Here's the schoolteacher and two boys—that's gonna' be the school. The next mornin' Sam and I got real anxious, and it's 2 miles down there; so we run on down there, ahead of my daddy and them to school, and pretty quick here came the whole bunch of kids up the road, talking.

I was bashful.

The teacher at that time, she lived in the back of the school. It wasn't a very big house; but, anyway, they got by, living in the back of the schoolhouse. My daddy built this other plank house. From then on, the schoolteacher lived with Sam and I; was more or less our mother. Cleo Browning was teachin' school there, and she stayed with Sam and I. She was our teacher by day and babysitter or whatever of a night. Mama stayed at home. That was the one year that Cleo Browning taught out there, and we stayed there with her. Oh, I was homesick. I mean, even bein' that far, you know, close to home and all. Well, it'd just be somethin' to get to go back up to the ranch. Usually we didn't get to go home on the weekends, because we didn't have our horses down there, you see. If we'd had our horses, we could, but we didn't have any place to keep 'em. We did have a milk cow, dogie calves, and some milk-pen calves in the corral, but we didn't have any place to keep horses. Grandpa had some burros that we'd get in that corral once in awhile and ride. And, those old burros 'd down their heads and throw us off.

I was homesick.

Cleo thought a lot of Uncle Pete. And if she seen blood, she'd faint. She'd holler for Uncle Pete. So, Mama and a bunch of 'em was gone out pickin' piñons when Cleo fainted there one day. All of us kids, we just like went wild, you know. We didn't know what to do. We didn't know how to get hold of anybody or anything, and she was cryin' for Uncle Pete. Well, usually you wore corsets and all, I guess; and first thing they'd start doin' was loosenin' her clothes and everything like that, and then she'd finally come to. But, it would just scare us to death, for her to faint. Just as sure as she'd see blood, she'd faint. We had no one to run to, you know.

When Mama was goin' to school, the Bear Den School burned down. They figured Mrs. Makinson started it, because she said that lightning struck it. But she lived close enough. Mama said that the kids that she liked, those that didn't pick on her kids, their books was out under the tree, but the rest of 'em burned up. The second one must have been built by 1919, because I don't hear of any school in between.

Usually, we'd have Easter vacation and Christmas and somethin' like that. When Christmas vacation came, of course, I'd had to leave my horse and saddle and everything home, and it'd be scattered whenever I got back down there. I had three horses that I claimed for my own. The first was Tommy, and the next one was, let me think now, what his name was, Geronimo. And then Old Toughie. But, my daddy never did give me any of 'em; I just claimed 'em. They 'as my horses.

I had three horses that I claimed...

When we were down at Bear Den going to school, my daddy would try to have something for Christmas. Papa did most of the buying; Mama never bothered about buying or anything.

One year we had the Netherlands out there. Mrs. Anderson taught that year. And she stayed with the Netherlands on Rosebud Ranch. She had to ride horseback to school, to the Bear Den School, 'cause the Netherlands kids rode over there.

We didn't get up too awfully early, except when we had to go to school, naturally. I had cows to milk and everything before we'd go to school. Then, whenever I got out of school, I would have to go round them up, bring them in, and we milked; I milked them twice a day. My daddy, he'd get out there and go to milking them and they'd go to fighting. I didn't like for 'im to fight 'em; it didn't do any good to fight 'em. 'Course it wasn't nothin' for us to run to get some milk, and all that. Well, one time, Grandma fed us some tomatoes and milk, and Dixie got pretty sick before we got back down to Bear Den. But I made her come along anyway. I always pushed Dixie.

I had cows to milk...

I think '24 was the last year we got to go to Bear Den. Then we had to go to San Marcial for mother to have this baby. And the school 'as about to play out, because the Hendersons was gettin' old enough that they

were goin' off to school, and it was just gettin' to where we didn't have enough kids to go to school out there. So we moved to San Marcial and Mama had pneumonia and lost her baby. I was ten, and we went to Albuquerque with Mama and I thought we'd never get back out to the ranch.

That was the noisiest town. There 'as horns honkin', streetcars runnin', paperboys hollerin' "Albuquerque Journal," and all that kind of stuff. I wasn't used to all that. Sam and I both was redheaded. They all teased him so much about being redheaded. We had to stay with Grandma until Mama got out of the hospital. She didn't have any trouble keepin' us in the house. We stayed in the house.

...horns honkin'...paperboys hollerin'...

I guess I wasn't up to it, but Aunt Dolly—she still lives in Albuquerque—she was worse than some old maid or somethin'. She'd write notes to the teacher about my report card and this, that, and the other. I wouldn't read 'em. I'd take 'em to the teacher. She taught me my Arithmetic and I guess she helped me a lot in school. I guess probably I was really behind. But, I do know that she worked. And, you know, I couldn't say Geography, I couldn't say Lennox, I couldn't say vinegar, or anything like that. And she got me to say my words right. She really worked with me. But, she was worse than a mother about writin' these notes to the teacher.

Figure 14. Alice Gililland.

Cains went to school there in our building, in our living room, and they went to Ritch School there after we built it and we'd been moved over there. In 1927 they built the Ritch School. I'll tell you what, it wasn't the best there was, because, when I went to high school, I'd never heard of a library. I went over to Hot Springs [Truth or Consequences] to go to school. The first thing that the English teacher brought out was for me to go to the library and look up somethin'. Well, I went and looked in there, and they wasn't nothin' like they are now. There was books in there, and I just didn't know how you would go find anything in the library. So, I went back to her and told her, and she said, "You're supposed to already know that."

I'd never heard of a library.

So I had to go find a friend, a girl that had been by the ranch, and they'd stayed all night and ate with us and all. I went and hunted her up and asked her, "How do you find anything in the library?" She had to help me. So really, the schoolin' out there was just Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, Geography, and History—the basic thing. But it wasn't the best if you went on to high school. There with the first grade to the eighth grade, we just read our Geography and I don't know how we got Arithmetic. I thought, now this History and this Geography is not goin' to do me any good bein' out here all my life. When it came to the 1800s, well, forget it.

Figure 15. Bear Den School group, ca. 1920–1921.

DIXIE GILILLAND TUCKER

First year I went to school was in '23, and I started school in San Marcial. Then Mama got sick and we had to go to Albuquerque. I went a little while up there; then I had lice and Grandma doctored them. When we lived at Albuquerque, when Mama was in the hospital, we had the measles and she never did send me back after that, so I failed the first year. I missed so much, of course, when they wouldn't let me go to school. They wouldn't let Sam and Alice go to school; they quarantined them. It was the county health nurse. But Mama's sisters could go. They was, I guess, maybe eighth grade or on up. They said they was old enough that they wouldn't carry it. I can't see that, myself. So, they got to go. When Alice and Sam went back to school, why, this principal said, "You all haven't been here for a month. What're you doin', just playin' out and then comin' back?" And I said, "Well, we've had the measles." She wasn't goin' to let 'em come back to school.

Then we went to school in Bear Den. It was just 2 miles south of Grandpa Wood's place. Grandma and Grandpa built a house down there for us to stay in, and we lived right across the canyon from the schoolhouse. We'd move down there in the wintertime, just Mama and us kids. 'Course, they'd started doin' that before I started to go to school. One year, before I started school, I'd stay with them a week, and then I'd go home and stay with Mama a week. She'd make all that trip horseback—get me, take me down there, and then back again. When we lived at Bear Den, the teachers generally lived with us. We had a good-sized kitchen, we had a bed in the kitchen, we had the front room, maybe two bedrooms. 'Course, we didn't have any bathrooms.

Grandpa built that schoolhouse outta' logs. It 'as just a one-room house and had one door in it. The last part of '25 is when I started to school there. And the Hendersons was goin' to school there. They lived south of there and they'd walk up to the school. It's tore down now. I don't know whether they tore it down and hauled off the lumber to make somethin' else. I have an idea they did.

Grandpa built that schoolhouse...

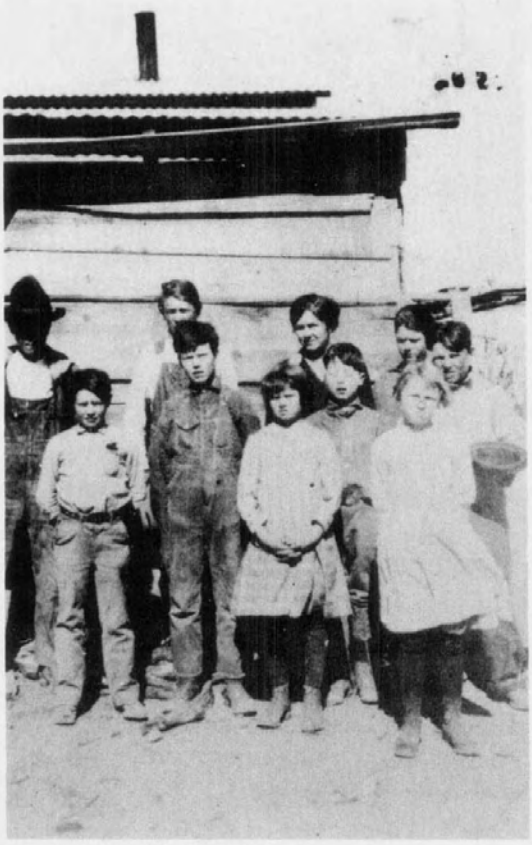


Figure 16. Students attending school at the Gililland Ranch, 1926-1927.

It 'as '26, we had a school in our house, in our front room. They decided to have a school up there in our living room so the Cains and the Martins could come. The teacher, she lived over with the Cains and rode horseback over 5 miles every day, and back 5 miles. Then in '27 they built the Ritch school right across the ridge from our place, and we went to school there.

We just went 9 months. We'd start in September and end in May. Had a big school play in May. We had Christmas trees at the schoolhouse and 'bout everything. That was the biggest place to gather. We'd have big dances 'bout maybe once a month or somethin' like that and everybody'd get together, just, by word of mouth. And my aunt, my Aunt Eva, Uncle John's wife, gave a lot a picnics on their place. They had goats, and they'd rope goats and have a good time.

We didn't have invitations...

If somebody had somethin', a dinner or somethin', and you didn't come, it was your own fault. We didn't have invitations, and that was hard to get used to, having to be invited someplace. You'd just come and have a good time. We'd bake a cake and carry it horseback in a flour sack maybe 20 miles and have cake and coffee and visit. One time my dad plum carried his fiddle on the horse. It was around, pretty close to 20 miles, and it was real rough country, just the horse could go, and we had to go single file. And we carried our cake and he carried his fiddle. And he played all night long.

I forget what year they discontinued Ritch School. Then they moved the school down in Rhodes Canyon, to the Millers, and had it there for one or two years. They just kind of moved it where the kids were.

You had to move off to go to school, whenever they all got in high school. They had no high school, so some of 'em moved to T or C and some of 'em moved here to Tularosa. I went to school here. I graduated from the eighth grade here. Then I went part of the year in the ninth grade, and went back out there. Mama moved in. She was in here the year that I graduated from eighth grade. And then I tried to stay with my aunt, and we had a cuss fight every mornin'. So it didn't work. I knew it wouldn't, but she 'as havin' a baby and Mama wanted me to help her, so I helped her, but I didn't try too much.

...we had a cuss fight every mornin'.

Alice went over to Hot Springs [T or C] and stayed with the Cains and went to school for a month or two. Mama paid Mrs. Cain $13 for keepin' her, and she took it. Mrs. Cain went to town and she bought her a waterless cooker, a gasoline lamp, and there was something else that she bought for that $13. She said, "I took it because I knew you wouldn't go to town and buy anything for yourself, so I just took that to buy that for you."

Lewis Cain's mother, she was the one that took care of Mama up at San Marcial when she had a miscarry with that baby. Mama was started to Albuquerque, and for some reason—they'd known Mr. and Mrs. Cain forever, since before Mr. and Mrs. Cain was married—they stopped there to see them, and Mrs. Cain said, "Ginevra, if you'll just stay here," there was a house right there, "If you'll just rent that house and stay here, I'll take care of you. I'll do everything." Mama said, "You can't beat that."

Figure 17. School group at Gililland Ranch, 1926–1927. Back row, left to right: unidentified, Miss Leftwich (teacher), Alice Gililland holding sister Lola, Emmett Henderson, Andy Henderson, Sam Gililland, Hodges Henderson, and Frank Martin. Front row, left to right: Dixie Gililland, Vera Martin, and unidentified.

JOE PETE WOOD, JR. AND SR.

Joe Pete, Jr.:

They moved to San Andres when Dad was eight years old, and that's when he and his brother started herding the goats. There were becoming enough children out there at that time where they started a school there at Bear Den. They had a little schoolhouse there at Bear Den, 1906 or '07, probably. They burned it down twice, rebuilt it twice, south of our ranch headquarters, down in the canyon down there. If you imagine a clapboard shack and potbellied stove, and it's sitting in the corner, probably not too far from the wood; and it gets cold and you start shoveling in the wood, and when it starts getting red hot, pretty soon something has to start smoking. Then in '33 or '34, they moved it down to the Ritch site. Ritch site is about 10 or 11 miles north of Bear Den.

They burned it down twice...

Most of the time the teacher lived with my granddad. There were several teachers that came out there and lived with him. I think there was one or two that lived down in Bear Den School all the time. There was a teacher by the name of Funk, a man teacher by the name of Funk, that I never recall hearing say where he lived. He could have possibly lived there at the school itself. Then there were several young lady teachers that would definitely live there with my grandparents or someone. They were in the log cabin still, or back in the tent even. Yeah, they would've had them during the time when they still had that tent. The log house, it wasn't too big. I can't remember the number of bedrooms, but I don't think it was over three. They had 11 children.

Well, during the school year we always saw all the kids every day. But, in the summertime, maybe once every two or three days, maybe once a week at the most. That doesn't mean that there wasn't someone there almost everyday. People were traveling back and forth, so that if they came in anywhere, we'll say, 10:00 or 10:30 on through about 1:00 or 2:00, they'd stop and eat lunch. And if it was later on in evening, why, they'd probably stop and eat supper with us. And some of them would stay all night, depending on what was going on or whatever. We had company and they did too. One or some of us might be going to their house or going past their house to go somewhere. It was an automatic thing. If you got into a place late in the evening, most generally, they'd put you up for

the night, if you felt like staying. And, of course, you most generally knew your neighbors well enough to know whether you wanted to stay or not. But, you know, we were kin to most of them out there.

Of the kids that went to school almost all the way through, from the time I went there in the second grade through the time I completed the eighth grade, there were only four that were with us all through that weren't kin to me. Now, two of them were kin to some of my cousins. So, there were only two that weren't kin to anybody but their own cousins. That was the Potters. The rest of us were all cousins or brothers and sisters. The Gilillands, the Woods, and, of course, Howard Wood's mother was a Henderson; so, therefore, he and Velma Ruth and Bonnie were all kin to the one group of Potter kids, but, not the other group.

...only two...weren't kin...

Figure 18. Students at Ritch School, 1940–1941. Back row, left to right: Tom Potter (in black hat), Joe Pete Wood, Elmer McDonald, J.D. Miller (bus driver), Richard Potter (face obscured), Marjorie Potter, and Hazel Potter. Second row, left to right: Velma Ruth Wood, Howard Wood, and Ailene Wood. Front row: left to right: Charles H. Wood, Ben Cain, Pete Gililland (facing sideways), and Fred Wood. Foreground: Jess Gililland.

This is a school picture at Ritch School about 1940. This is our bus driver, J.D. Miller, who married my cousin. This is Elmer McDonald. This one here, that you can't see the face of, is Richard Potter. They lived in that area out there. Thomas Potter, Marjie Potter, Hazel Potter, Allene Wood, Howard Wood, Velma Ruth Wood, Charles H. (or Sonny) Wood, Ben Cain, Pete Gililland, Fred Wood, and that's me, and that was the school group. We ranged in age from probably, let's see, in 1940 I was 12, and Fred and Jess was the youngest—no Allene was the youngest in that group and she was 9, I believe.

That particular teacher, I believe would have been Mrs. Ritch. She was part of that ranch bunch, too. If she wasn't Mrs. Ritch, she was Mrs. Posey.

Watson Ritch, Sr., had a pretty good size spread out there. He had three sons that I knew—two of them are dead and I have no idea where Watson Jr. is. He disappeared in the early '40s. The year his wife taught school up there was the last time any of us ever knew anything about him. He disappeared shortly thereafter, and I heard he came back, but nobody has ever confirmed that. His wife, Watson Jr.'s wife, she was out there. They got into some kind of tiff. I don't know anything about what it was about or anything else, but they began to split up and Watson left the country.

He disappeared...

The last year I went to high school, I finished my schooling in March in my home and didn't get to go back again. We had a man and his wife and my father with the main herd. He had his herders but he didn't have time enough to go looking for anyone else to help out. He just told me to tell my teachers that I needed to take my final exams and come home. So, that's what I did. I took my final exams in March and went home.

I was carrying a B average and, well actually, Dad came in. He said, "Let's go see Mr. Stewart." And we went to see my principal and told him what he wanted to do. He finally said, "Well, I think we can probably, within a week's time, get this done." So, he went to see the teachers. I didn't have to go tell them. The principal said, "Can you do this, can you do that?" And they told him what they would do. He said, "Okay, if that's the way you want it, we'll do this and we'll do that." And he came back to me and told me, "Be ready to take your test," if it was English or if it was Algebra or whatever, on a certain day.

Well, we had finished lambing. See, this was during lambing time. And I stayed on through the summer and herded the sheep, then I enrolled in the school the following fall, the fall of 1944. I enrolled in New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, which at that time was the old New Mexico School of Mines in Socorro.

The following summer, I went out and took the sheep down to just north of the Ritch School there, and I hardly been down there two weeks and it was so hot that I burned my feet. And it was a tale that you wouldn't want to hear anyway. But anyway, Dad got a young fellow to come out and take my place. I went back to Socorro and went back to work for Chevron Oil Company that I'd been working for and worked for them for another period of time. And then I went on to work for Conoco and back to school again. Then to the Navy.

...it was so hot...I burned my feet.

Figure 19. Joe Pete Wood, Jr., 1948.

Joe Pete, Sr.:

Well, when we moved to the Bear Den, Uncle George Reeves moved into the Rosebud. About 1910 or '12—think it was about '12. And they built a schoolhouse down in Bear Den. And the rest of school I got, I got right there at Bear Den. Makinson moved in to send the kids to school. That old man burned down the schoolhouse. It was meanness. Those boys were scared to go to school. Later on, his two older boys murdered him and throwed him in the . . . . The old man was so doggone mean. He hit Uncle George Reeves on the lip, but nobody took it up.

It was meanness.

Joe Pete, Jr.:

Didn't that schoolhouse burn again later?

Joe Pete, Sr.:

Top blowed off later. It was built about 1914 or '15, just before World War I. My cousins was herdin' goats to get enough money to go back to Oklahoma, and they lived in that rock house. The schoolteacher boarded with 'em, but she lived in the cutoff room.

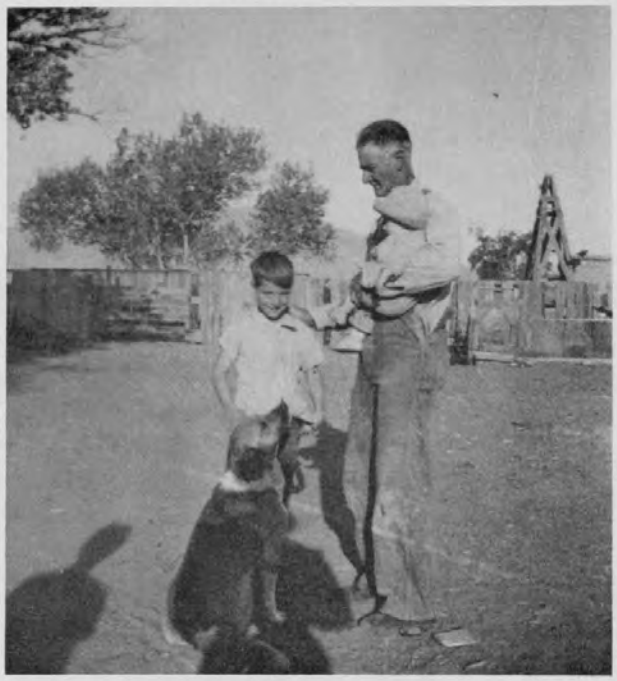


Figure 20. Joe Pete Wood, Sr., with Ralph and Jimmy Wood, 1949.

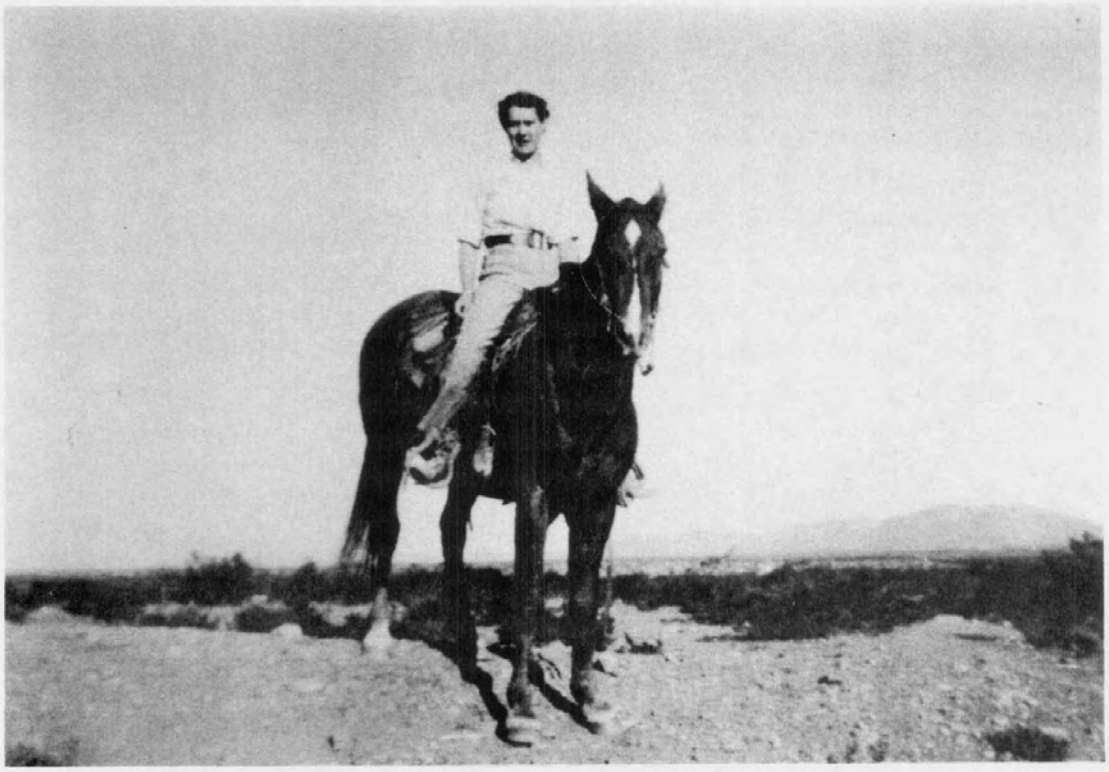


Figure 21. Dorothy Wood Miller, 1939.

J.D. AND DOROTHY WOOD MILLER

Dorothy:

I had trouble when I was small and we moved to Albuquerque to have a baby. I think it was Babe or Velma Ruth. My sister and I started to school up there. We went down to the schoolhouse with a neighbor girl. We decided about recess time that it's time to go home. So we tried to find our way home. We got lost, so we went back to the schoolhouse. That was quite an experience. Albuquerque wasn't too large then, but it was large for us. Well, I guess it was necessary, they thought it was. But we didn't go very long, so, I doubt if it was really too necessary. I don't remember how long we did go, but it wasn't long.

We got lost.

Then I started at Ritch school. Yes, it was a Mrs. Gobal. Elizabeth, not Gobal, Elizabeth Raley, wasn't it? Raley, yep. Gobal was later. Elizabeth Raley. She was the sister to the other Raley. Dick Raley was married to Jesse Johnson, my cousin, my dad's cousin. I don't think she taught but one year, maybe two, maybe my first and second grade. I went through the tenth. In between, Ritch School didn't have enough children to support it, and Mama and Daddy had my cousin, Irene Henderson, come and teach us for a year, I guess, at home. She had a little education towards becoming a teacher; maybe one year, I don't know.

We got up at four. We didn't leave that early, 'cause it didn't take but probably 45 minutes to get to the schoolhouse from where I was at. We'd get down to the schoolhouse and put our horses in the corral. I don't know what was in my grandmother's head, but she didn't think that girls should wear pants to school, so we had to carry along this little bag with dresses to take our pants off and go to the outhouse and change clothes and go to school. So we had to get there a little early.

We got up at four.

We packed a lunch with us. Most of the time it consisted of a biscuit, peanut butter, and baked sweet potato, and a piece of cake, if we had it. It was packed in a brown paper sack that we had saved from somethin', and then it was put in a flour sack.

Monday mornin', I missed school and we washed. Mama needed help. What was a fight for me was in the wintertime, we had to wear long johns

and I hated those things. Roll 'em up about knee high and pull my socks up over. That was somethin' else we had to wear, was cotton socks. They was fastened up at the top with an elastic that was about an inch wide.

I needed some boots one time and Mama ordered some. They were boots to keep your feet warm, snow boots. They were felt inside and covered with rubber. I waited, and waited—I thought they'd never come. When they finally came, they was size 12 man's!

The first day of school, when my sister started—my sister is just two years younger than me—she was ridin' behind a fellow by the name of Douglas, and he was too lazy to get off and open the gate. He was just openin' the gate from the horse, and he pushed her off and the horse stepped on her arm. They had to take her to the doctor. Her arm was broken.

...the horse stepped on her arm.

There was a cistern at Ritch School. They had a cistern dug. I can remember when they dug it, but I don't remember all of it, I just remember they met there and dug it and met there and cemented it.

Mr. and Mrs. Sitze came to Ritch School and he was able to teach me junior high and the tenth grade. I don't know how they got permission to do that, but anyway, they did. I was the only one. You see, Mrs. Sitze, she and her husband and her son—he drove the bus for one year—were all teachers. She was small and frail. She was kinda short, but kinda chubby, too. And they come out there. Beth Sitze, who later married Sam Gililland, she was their daughter, and she was almost my age. They were there how many years, four?

I was the only one.

Then I went to Tularosa to go to high school and we stayed with Mrs. Melton, my sister and I. We went to school until Christmas time, then everybody took the measles and I never went back.

J.D.:

You know, there's quite an interesting thing there. Sam Gililland and Beth Sitze's families opposed it so bad that first they didn't get married. Later, Sam and Ina Ruth, they separated, and Lurky died, and Beth and Sam, after their folks was all passed away, they got together and married.

Then, they wasn't together too long 'til he took, I think a brain tumor, and passed on.

We married in '38. Dorothy went into Tularosa and went to school a while in '37 and then quit. She didn't like it. She was 17, a little over 17 years old when we married.

The weather was a problem, it certainly was, drivin' that school bus, when it would rain I'd slide off the road and get stuck. The first day I drove the school bus, I never made it to the school. That was a rainy day, it was the first day of school and a rainy day. About half way between where Dorothy's folks lived and the schoolhouse, they had what you called a dike, kinda built up. The CCC boys built that up by hand; it was a low place and they built it up. And I slid off. It was real slippery. I spent the whole day there trying to get that bus out of there. That bunch of kids never did arrive. They had fun all day long. I drove the school bus '38, '39, and '40. Done that, and in the summer I would cut posts and fence stays.

The first day...I never made it...

I did anything to make a livin', and this school bus drivin' contract came up and I bid on it. I bid $120 a month. I don't know whether the school board in Socorro was pullin' a fast one on me or not, but they said somebody else had underbid, bid less than $120 and I didn't get it. So they put it up for bid again and I wanted it so bad that I bid $90 on it and got it. And I had to buy a school bus, and I had my expenses and everything else to pay for that school bus. Dorothy and I took the janitor job. I think we got $20 a month out of that. And I dug a well at the Ritch schoolhouse by hand and made a few extra dollars. So I think, altogether, we got $120 a month out of it. It was a losing proposition for sure, 'cause I still owed money when the contract was up. And I borrowed money from Dorothy's Grandad Henderson to buy another car. The other wore out and I still owed him money. That's when we left and came to Morenci, and I got a job here and paid him off.

I did anything to make a livin'...

I paid $1,125 for that panel job—I don't really got a picture of that—I wound up with a car. That one, that was $1,100 and something dollars and then I wore it out and it got on fire, it shorted out, and I traded it for a new 1940 Chevrolet car and that cost $940.

Figure 22. J. D. Miller's school bus, ca. 1938-1940.

The little kids would sit in the big kids' lap. I hauled nine kids in that car. They was Hazel and Richard Potter, they was at the end of the line; then Ernest and Bessie and Thomas and Margie was Potsy and Mellie Potter's; then Allene Wood was Tom Wood's daughter, the next one I picked up, and her half-uncle stayed with 'em, Elmer McDonald, her mom's half brother—he went to school. And then over the hill I picked up Joe Pete Wood, which is Uncle Pete Wood's son, and then the next two was Freddy and Sonny Wood, which was Amnon Wood's. And then on down the line, the last picked up was Dorothy's sister, Velma Ruth, and brother, Howard. I think gasoline was 17 cents a gallon. Tires, that road was terrible on tires. When it snowed, that was quite a chore. Usually, when the ground was sloppy wet, it froze overnight, and we'd go early of a mornin', while it was still froze.

...17 cents a gallon.

We's drivin' the school bus and Dorothy'd been a ridin' that rough road every day, every day despite being pregnant. Uncle Dick Gililland down there, looked like the time was gettin' close, and he got worried. His byword was Jesus. "Jesus," he said, "you better get her to town." So we took off about 2:30 from school, and he delivered the kids home. And I got Dorothy into town there at Hot Springs.

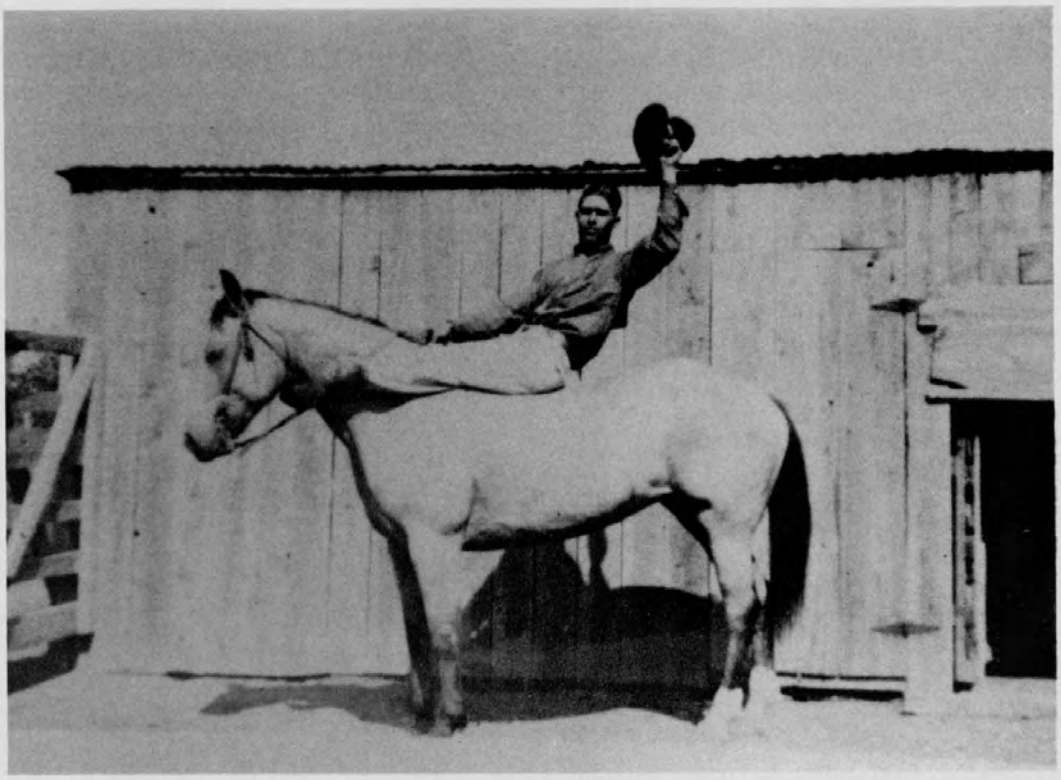


Figure 23. J. D. Miller at the Miller Ranch, 1938.

Figure 24. Mellie Crawford (back) and Lorraine Beam.

I went to school for a while in the Carlsbad area. I don't have any idea how old I was, but I didn't go very long 'til I got sick. After I had polio, I didn't have very good health. I was subject to most everything that was contagious, and my mother got to where she didn't even let me around anybody that had the sniffles, because she's afraid I'd get pneumonia, which I did.

Aunt Myrtle Henderson, she just moved into Tularosa here in October for school. The kids were in high school, the older ones were. All of us kids went to the eighth grade in the mountain school. She lived at Bear Den. They lived about 4 miles from the closest neighbors, the Potters.

When mine started to school, they went on past Wood's, to Gililland's Ranch, and they went to school there. They went on a bus.

Thomas was born in '26. He went to school here in Tularosa his first year. We had to bring him in town for school, and I stayed in here with 'im. My husband didn't want 'im to go to school at the ranch; he thought he was too young to go that far on a bus. Besides that, if it comes big floods, well, the road would wash out and they'd have to stay back over there with some of the neighbors. He started to go to school at the Ritch School when he was in the third grade.

...too young to go that far...

Marjorie started school in Tularosa the first year and then we took 'em to the ranch. We had, by that time, got the bus. If I remember correctly, it was 23 miles. It wasn't a gravel road even. It was just two tracks of dirt. Well, we eventually got a regular school bus, but at first it was a pickup with a thing built over the top of it. And there was seats—a bench of a thing on each side of that pickup. And it was so cold in there in the wintertime that they nearly froze. They wore long handles and heavy coats. Velma Ruth Wood, one of the girls, she got so embarrassed wearing those ol' long handles. J.D. Miller drove it, and a guy—now, he was a teacher, too—Sitze drove it sometimes.

...just two tracks of dirt.

We had a herder; he and his wife had five children. They lived in the Bosque house, and those children rode the bus one year.

Figure 25. Mellie Crawford, age 14, 1924.

Marjie could not ride in the back of that pickup. She would get carsick. So when Wilbur was drivin' the bus, he would put her in the cab, where she wouldn't get carsick. But, if she rode in the back, she would be so carsick that she wouldn't be fit for anything until half a day was gone by.

The last year that our children went out there, they had eight-month school. We brought ours in here and we boarded 'em and they finished up their nine months. Thomas has two eighth-grade diplomas, one from Ritch and one from Tularosa.

Thomas and Marjie had never been separated. Well, we wanted to board 'em and let 'em both stay together. They had experience with that. The lady that they boarded with—we had lots of eggs and we brought eggs in—but she fed 'em mostly a diet of rice. Marjie won't eat rice 'til this day. Thomas won't hardly eat it, because when he was overseas there was rice on every corner, and fish—he said it stunk. Well, when he came back home, it was a long time before he would eat fish, but rice is somethin' that he won't hardly eat yet.

...she fed 'em...a diet of rice.

Rice, boiled rice, rice and raisins, and rice. Oh boy, those kids. On Friday evenin' after school was out, Thomas would go uptown. Marjie would go where they were boardin'; she would pack a suitcase. Thomas would walk the streets tryin' to find somebody that was comin' to the ranch so they could come home. Johnny Wood brought 'em out one time. Their dad looked at them when he came in. He said, "What in the world are you kids doin' here now?" "We've come home." His dad says, "I can't take you back." "We got a way back, Daddy." Thomas was in a big hurry, words tumblin' over words, "We got a way back." His dad said, "All right, then." Marjie was sittin there eatin' like a little pig. "Oh," she says, "Mother, you're the best cook in the whole world." I think this was one of the greatest compliments I ever got in my life. Wasn't no rice on the table! They would come home nearly starved. And we paid her enough that she could 'ave fed 'em good.

No more boarding, no sir. So, we bought this place and I would stay here as long as school was goin'. Durin' Christmas vacation and any other time that there was any vacation I went to the ranch.

Bessie took care of the pumps and things like that at the ranch for a while, but she didn't last very long. She quit. She didn't like it. I did it for

quite a while, but then I had to come in town with the kids for school. My husband would not hear of hirin' someone to take care of the children. He was very, very protective of the children. If I had to go to the ranch for something, to be out there for a week or so, well, we left the children with my Aunt Myrtle Henderson.

That school up Bear Den Canyon was a different place all together. Bear Den School was an old log buildin'. Used to give dances there. Most schools would give dances. Different ones of the ranchers would play. There was no set time. When they had the dances over at the old Bear Den School, we went horseback; but after they had 'em over at the Ritch School, we had a road, and we could go in the car or the pickup. We had cakes and coffee, sandwiches at midnight, 'cause a lot of those people had come a long ways. You see, we danced 'til sunup. The desks were turned with the backs against the wall and our little ones would be put on the back of the desk, where they could go to sleep; and the adults, when they sat down, they'd have a place to sit.

...we danced 'til sunup.

Figure 26. Mellie Potter, ca. WWII.

Jim Martin was drowned when Frank was 11 years old and Frank continued, with his mother and two sisters, operating the ranch. Frank assumed the responsibility of the family.
At 11 years, his school, the Ritch School, ***Frank was 11 years old...*** was 8 miles from the ranch. He rode horseback 8 miles to school each day and 8 miles home until he finished the intermediate school and went to the ninth grade. Then he went into improving the ranch.

And the poison weed, they would hoe it; all the kids, that's what they did. When the poison weed was in the flats down there, they wouldn't even start school until it was all dug up. It was in the fall, then, just about the time school starts, and they would cut it. They would go in; the early ranchers would go in and cut it. Today they go in and burn it to destroy it. But it would put you out of the cow business in nothing flat.

Oh, all the time we'd have ropings on a Sunday. We'd have ropings and the men come down and they'd rope. Women, we'd have potlucks, and election was always a big time. Elections were held down at the schoolhouse and that's most
of the day. Charlie Harden ***...election was always a big time.*** and all the local men were officials, and you'd have your own little election. Charlie Harden used to barbecue a goat and bring it over to this little house, and then we would take in a potluck; election day was always a get-together. There were the judges like they have now, there were judges and clerks and [ballot] boxes—you don't know about boxes, you just know about machines. See, there were many officials. You have to have three judges, you have to have two clerks and there's all the books that you have to fill out.

In the outlying districts here, one man, usually one of the ranchers, was a judge, and after all those ballots were in and they were taken and they were counted, then one guy would go on to the county courthouse to read the ballot boxes. That was Ritch district up there. So, at the courthouse, when Ritch District just come in, they'd know we're pretty strong Democrats or pretty strong Republicans, and that may swing the election.

Lots of people would come over on Sundays; you had get-togethers. They used to have churches. There's a church up at the schoolhouse and they had something going here. Then at Engle, the fourth Sunday of each month, they had the ranchers' church service. The ranchers from that area come in. There's a preacher—Jack King, from T or C—who preaches, then they have fiddle music and they take, you know, potluck, take it in and they have a get-together. Still have the ranchers' Sunday school, church, I think, at Engle.

Figure 27. Miller dance platform, dancing 'til sunrise, 1939
(note whiskey flask in back pocket).

I was teaching school when I met Frank. We loved to dance, whenever there was one. We went together for a long time before we married. At that time, the local residents frowned on that; local residents didn't like teachers to dance. There were just two or three places that you could go to dance. At fair time, when they had the fair, they had a street dance and everybody comes and the teachers were encouraged to go to this dance. And so I just happened to meet Frank. I was up there around Tularosa. I was teaching, and I kept books at the local store after school and on Saturdays. I held down two jobs.

Our superintendent told us that in Tularosa, because we were young, if we were going to go to a dance, for goodness sakes get out of town. There were only just a few places. A teacher could not even get married back in those days; they didn't even allow her to be a teacher. If you were a young teacher and you got married, you automatically were fired. They had some married teachers, but two or three had been in the system for a while. I know a number of girls that were teachers in the local area. They married, but they kept it a secret. There were men teachers; a lot of the teachers were men. They were allowed to be married. If you were married, you couldn't teach, except during the war. I did go back during the war when they asked me. I taught for a couple of years during the war, but that's when we moved out to the ranch, and it was not for long.

...they kept it a secret.

We lived in a house there in Tularosa, and when we had our cattle, I moved to the ranch. When we moved into Socorro, I substituted. I substituted here for a couple of years and, of course, I had all the certifications for teaching. So, when my children were in school, I said, "Well, why in the world don't you?" So I just put in and I got a job in teaching, and I went on in it and became principal, then retired.

Before I was out there at the ranch, there was a school that was 8 miles away. The surrounding children attended that rural school. The rural school was the center of life in the area. At that time, things were very, very hard and the teachers were paid from local county taxes. If there was not any money in the county funds for schools, if they had used it all, then the teachers would get vouchers. Those vouchers were of no value until the taxes came in. Sometimes the teachers were not paid until the following year. They only got something like $67.50 a month. I can remember getting $67.50 a month. There would be $670 a year for a teacher. That was considered very good, because the tuition for school was $10, and board and room was $20 or $30 a month. If she had $10 a month for college tuition and $20 a month room and board, there's $30. You had $40 left for shoes and clothes.

...things were very, very hard...

Lots of times the teachers would live in the schoolhouse. There would be a room at the schoolhouse that the teacher used—just a room, that was all—in the back of the school, usually. Of course, by the same token, the

Back then, community life centered around the school. They'd always have a Christmas tree and Christmas party at the schoolhouse. The parents were very much involved.

They usually had a little local school board and a local man that was sort of responsible. Back in those days, they had a county school superintendent that went around and visited all the schools. This county school superintendent would contact the ranchers in the area if there were any problems. At that time, too, whoever happened to be on the local school board, a certain rancher, he would also be responsible for getting wood—schools had wood stoves. Sometimes there was water, water had to be hauled in, and they would bring in water.

. . . *AND ELSEWHERE* –

BINGHAM, BETHEL, OSCURA, SPINDLE, ENGLE

GEORGE DEAN

I was born in Lovington, New Mexico. My folks were ranchers – Hereford cattle. My dad was postmaster at a fourth-class post office for 40 some-odd years and ran a little country general store in Bingham. I went to school in Carrizozo; well, at Bingham in the early years, to the sixth grade, I guess. Seventh grade, I moved to Carrizozo, or started going to school in Carrizozo by bus, ranging from just a regular car to the mail bus. You know, just depended on what was going that direction.

Pretty soon school faded as families moved out. You only had three or four kids, five kids, six kids. You can't keep a school for six kids. At one point in time, Bingham had 12 grades. And they had three school rooms and an old shed that they even held classes in at one time, and as many as four teachers. My dad had some cabins there, one-room cabins – no bathroom, no nothing – a kitchen and a place to sleep. The teachers, mostly women, would come out there and board in those cabins. I don't remember ever a man teacher being out there. It was always women. And they'd come out, and maybe they'd go back to Socorro on the weekends. Some of them were young and single, yet some were older and widowed maybe. This was in the '30s and the '40s. It all kind of died out in the '40s, I think. I don't remember if Bingham made it into the '50s or not.

...school faded as families moved out.

Well sometimes I imagine some of them rode the bus at least 15, 20 miles to get to Bingham. There was the Hiatts, the Bullingtons, the Muncies, many more, Ratliffs. And Wrye drove the bus then. At one point in time his wife drove the bus. Of course, the Bursums never lived out there, they lived in Socorro. Naldas might have had one daughter that went to Bingham a little bit. I can't remember for sure. But I think mostly they went into Carrizozo, because they were closer to Carrizozo.

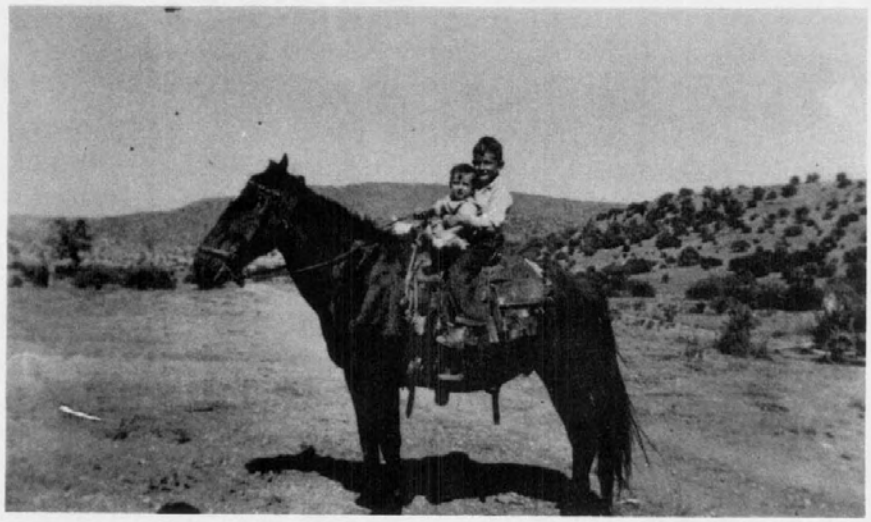


Figure 28. Holm O. Bursum, III, and brother,
Frank Michael Bursum, on Badger, ca. 1940.

HOLM O. BURSUM III

My father was born in Socorro on St. Patrick's Day, 1908, and my mother was born in Ada, Oklahoma, in January 1909. She went to school in Oklahoma and got her degree, her teaching degree, there and then came to Socorro to teach school. She was a school teacher, and my father was a local rancher. My parents lived there at Ozanne, way up in the Oscura Mountains. I had a brother five years younger. We lived there until I started school.

When I started school in the first grade, I went back to Roswell to live with my grandmother, because we didn't live in town yet. I started school when I was seven, so I guess I started school in the fall of '41. I would've been seven in the fall of '41. My parents moved within the next year or two to Hansonberg. We lived there until about 1945. I traveled back and forth every now and then on the Roswell-Carrizozo stage lines. But it was not a horse-drawn stage; it was just a bus.

My brother's first year in school, my mother taught 'im on the Calvert system. That was the correspondence school for people that lived on ranches, or wherever they lived, that couldn't go to the public schools. I guess she taught 'im for two years—first and second grade. It was an excellent system, and, as a result of her teaching, my brother, he was always an excellent student. He was a straight-A student from then on, when he got into public school. And I always gave the Calvert system and my mother credit for that. It's too bad I didn't have it the first year.

...the Calvert system.

I think when I was about eight is when I started staying at the ranch in the summertime. School came first in the eyes of my parents. But, aw, once in awhile during later years, when we were shipping and needed a little extra help, well, I might take a day off, but very seldom.

There was a school at Bingham. I think it was one through eight, and they were all in the same room. It was a one-room schoolhouse. It had been a bigger school in the earlier years—I think in the 1910s and '20s—when there were more people that lived out in the area, but it gradually dwindled down to nothing. People had homesteaded out there and there were lots of people around.

...a one-room schoolhouse.

Then, as those people moved away, their kids moved away, they just went from a fairly good-sized school. I don't know how many students were in there at one time, but there might have been as many maybe as 75 or 100. At one time, it was a bigger school, but by the middle to late '20s, most of those people were gone. Bingham was the only school I remember in the area. The next closest school would have been San Antonio.

I imagine that they used to have circuit riders and they probably had church at the school, the Bingham school, I would guess. In those days there weren't even very many circuit riders. When I was a kid out there, I don't remember that there was ever a circuit rider that came through, so we didn't go to church 'til we moved to town.

They had dances now and then, and those were always held at the Bingham schoolhouse. All the neighbors came in. Those were usually big affairs. Usually some of the local ranchers played. Lee Coker was one, and he played a violin; but that's the only one I remember of any locals. Everybody took their kids. While the grown-ups were inside dancing, the kids were either outside playin', or some were inside, but everybody took their kids. You had a jillion kids there. I think those were pretty well dying down by the time that I's old enough where I could've accompanied my parents to one of 'em, and I don't know that my parents were much for the dancing anyway. It was just that we were too far away from that particular area. That was probably a two-hour trip, and you didn't make many of those that were unnecessary.

Everybody took their kids.

Well, the Fourth of July was always a big holiday celebration where people would get together, probably at one of the ranches. Those were usually not big gatherings, but usually maybe two or three or four or five families would get together. We would have the traditional fried chicken and homemade ice cream and watermelon. Once in awhile, there were a few fireworks; but, you know, in that period of time nobody had much money, so they didn't spend much money on fireworks. There was a lot of horseshoe pitching and sometimes, if there was a livestock tank, there'd be a little swimming.

Well, my dad was born in Arkansas in 1883. When he grew up, he left home and was a depot agent. And mother was born somewhere in Arkansas in 1884. My dad and mother were married June 5th in 1907. My dad and mother, and my dad's people, finally moved to Palo Pinto County, Texas. I was born December the 11th in 1911 in Texas. I was sort of a sickly kid, and the old doctor finally told 'em, "I don't know what to do with her; maybe change climate."

He was working for the railroad when him and Mother married, and they continued to work for the railroad 'til I was about three years old. When I's three, 'bout three and a half, they left Texas and come to New Mexico in an old Model-T car. They come through here and went on to Silver City. Then they come back and we spent the first winter out north of White Oaks at Raventon. My dad went to work for the Forest Service. They bought a little old place up in the Capitan Mountains, and we lived there two years, I guess, and Daddy went to work for the Block Ranch. Then, Mother got real sick in 1918, during the flu time, and she was pregnant with my little sister. When she got to where we could go, we went to Amarillo, where her folks lived. My sister was born in Amarillo, Texas, in August of 1919.

...in an old Model-T car.

Well, when Mama got able to be out of the hospital, Daddy left and come back to Arroyo Seco here, north of the Capitans, and went to work for Mr. Spencer. We come back out there in October, I think it was, in 1919. I started to school at a little old one-room schoolhouse over on the north side of the mountain. This guy, my present husband Ewell, he was going to school there, too. We went to school together in the second grade. I was in the second grade when we started to school together east of the Capitan Mountains. They first named it Bethel, and the people down toward Roswell, they changed our school's name to Hogwallow. They said that somebody come by there and the kids was out there playing in the dirt. Looked like a bunch of hogs wallering around, so they called it Hogwaller. But the real name of it is Bethel. I started school at Bethel in 1919. I was 7 years old.

Looked like...hogs wallering...

Figure 29. Left to right: Carmen (Mrs. Ross McDonald), Laura (Mrs. George McDonald), Ria Lee (Mrs. Rube McDonald), and Mertes (Mrs. Dave McDonald), 1940.

You'd walk to school or you rode a horse or you rode a burro. We had burros we rode to school 3 1/2 miles. When I 'as goin' to school, we rode burros and I can remember when the snow'd be way up on 'em. You know, burros ain't very tall, but it'd be way up. Dad worked here and there, and we went to school there.

...we rode burros...

My dad, his dad had some property in Hot Springs, Arkansas. It finally sold, and Daddy got little bit of money, and he bought a ranch out here about 10 miles north of Bingham in 1928. I graduated from high school here in Carrizozo in '29.

We went to town maybe two or three times a month. After all these people moved out there, after they opened all that up, we had a post office out on the highway. At first, we got our mail at what they called Adobe, it 'as 15 miles from the ranch. Me and my sister rode up there many a time to get the mail. We could leave in the morning and be back by 1 or 2 o'clock, if we didn't stop to talk to somebody.

I married Rube McDonald in January of 1935, and lived out here at Dave's old place. He had a third interest in the ranch and we sold it to one of the other brothers, and we was to buy a place off of his dad.

Dave McDonald bought a house in Socorro when Ray started to school. They moved into Socorro to send the kids to school. When Ray started to school, there wasn't any school at Bingham. But later on, when the Foster kids got big enough to go to school, they went there to school. But Ray and Guy went to school in Socorro. Just wasn't any kids to go to school out there.

Well, at one time they had a good schoolhouse there at Bingham School. And they had four teachers. My sister went to school there. Oh, Lordy. There was a bunch of 'em. Had four rooms, four teachers, and it's a big schoolhouse. Now somebody's bought it and made it into a home. But it was put up with WPA work and made out of rock. It's pretty built.

...four rooms, four teachers...

Rube and I met at an all-night dance. We went to a dance and he was there. About six years later, we married. It was down there in a schoolhouse close to Gililland's [Ritch School]. I don't know what the name of it was; don't have any idea, but it 'as in the spring of the year. We went together a little bit, then quit, then went back together and finally married. I guess I's about 17. He was eight years older than I was.

We went together a little bit,

Jim was born January the 9th, 1948. That's my oldest boy. Mary was born February the 2nd in 1950, and she died October the 2nd, 1993. Rube and I busted up and divorced when Mary was 2 years old. When Mary was about five, I worked for my dad. I raised a crop or two of feed down here at Oscura at that little ol' place we had. Then we moved to Tularosa and I worked for Charlie Trammell in the dairy, milking cows by hand—3 o'clock in the morning, 3 o'clock in the evenin'. I's working there when me and Ewell married. But we wasn't strangers. We went to school together. I started to school at that little ol' school when I's in the second grade in 1919, and he was goin' to school there then on the north side of the Capitan Mountains.

EWELL SIDWELL

I was born in Uvalde, Texas. I came to New Mexico when I was about five years old. My grandfather come to Capitan around 1900. My mother and daddy was married in Roswell, but they went to Texas for nine years. They had three children and we come back and homesteaded near where my granddad lived on the north side of the Capitan Mountains.

There wasn't no school there, and they built one. We went there several years, went to Spindle School two years. There was lot of people up there then in the mountains, lot of homestead people, lot of old-time people. The school was on our homestead and the road went right along close to it. My uncle and my dad built the school.

...lot of old-time people.

I haven't got much education. I didn't ever finish the eighth grade. I went through the seventh at Spindle, New Mexico. That's the last school I went to. I think I went two years to Spindle, but I went the rest of the time on the homestead there. But that'll be all right that-away.

Figure 30. Left to right: Annie Sidwell, Ruby McFarland, G.B. Sidwell, Thelma McFarland, Ewell Sidwell, and Vera McFarland at Spindle, New Mexico, ca. 1925 or 1926.

ELOISE (DOLLY) HELMS ONSRUD

Well, when we lived out in the Oscura Mountains, my kids were preschoolers, and when they got old enough to go to school, why, we moved right here to Carrizozo. The bus come out here right to the door.

We used to have a schoolhouse in Oscura. We used that schoolhouse as our place of worship. If not, why, we would go to a neighbor's home and hold our Bible studies on Sunday. On holidays, the neighbors would get together for a barbecue and a rodeo and just a community get-together. We used the schoolhouse at Oscura for the dances, too. Now the schoolhouse is gone. We had our community functions at the schoolhouse as long as we was there. It was easy for everybody to congregate in and it was close enough that most of the ranchers could be there.

Figure 31. A.D. and Dolly Helms with son Larry at White Oaks, New Mexico, 1949.

Home Schooling

Verena Andregg Mahaney

We didn't really go to school—only when we's in town. But we did have our homework to do. And we done it; we done a lot of things out there to the ranch. We helped herd goats and we had a good life.

In the wintertime, Uncle Frank would get schoolwork in Las Cruces for us to do; you know, homework and books and stuff. Mom would kindly teach us, then he'd take all this back when he'd go for supplies again. He'd take it into the school and get more work and have 'em grade it. We got report cards like everybody else.

Mom would kindly teach us,

Most generally, Uncle Frank got supplies in Alamogordo, but if he had to pick up our school assignments and books, he would come to Las Cruces. We knew what grades we were gonna be in. Alameda School was on one end of Las Cruces. He knew where Alameda was, and he just went in there. When we were in town, that's the school that we went to, and we knew the teachers. Uncle Frank went there and found the teachers for each grade that we'd be in. He talked to 'em and told 'em about us staying at the ranch, that he wanted books and assignments—you know, whatever we needed. He bought us pencils and tablets and stuff like this, and they furnished the assignments and the books and stuff for us to use. Then we took it all back, as we were through with 'em, and they'd give us a list of what we's supposed to do, each one of us. He would bring it out to us in a big box, and then, when he'd go in again, well, he'd pick up all the work that we had done and take it in, and he'd bring other assignments out.

...they'd give us a list...

Mom'd make us do the schoolwork before we went out and done anything else, 'cause she thought it was really necessary. She loved for us to read, so we'd read to her. And, she would grade us, you know, what she'd think we should have. Then she would send the papers in and, sure enough, we'd get pert' near the same thing, but maybe not as high as she graded us. She would go over our stuff.

Mom never had much schoolin'. I think she went to the fourth grade or sump'n like that. But she felt it was necessary for us to get our schoolwork done before going out and doing anything else. So, we really didn't have a real schedule. We got it all done and then went out and played or whatever we had to do—gather wood or whatever. It would probably take us up to noon, or a little better. But sometimes—I was always slow—so with mine, it would take me longer. I guess I was just kindly slow at it or dumb or sump'n. Yeah, it took us several hours. We's always up at daylight and gettin' started really early. We didn't do too much at night, unless it was reading, or studying Reading or studying Spelling, or sump'n like that. We usually liked to just sit around and sew or sump'n like that.

We got it all done...

Figure 32. Left to right: Alfred Clay Andregg, Sr. (Verena's father); Verena; Perry; Val Dee; Clay; Eunice (Verena's mother); Joe; and Frank Andregg with burro Old Whitey and dogs Coco and Boots, at Alice Andregg Ranch, ca. 1939.

School in Town

EDA ANDERSON BAIRD

My grandfather bought a farm west of the railroad tracks in Tularosa for his family. That farm had water rights, but the home was adobe, and when my grandmother saw the kind of home that she was going to live in, she had a fit. She told her husband, "I will not live in a 'soddy.'" So, he went east to the outskirts of the village of Tularosa, and bought another small tract of land and built a frame house on it for his wife to live in. Then he and the rest of his family farmed both farms.

"I will not live in a 'soddy.'"

By the time my mother married, the other farm had been sold. And of all pieces, all people in the world, it was sold to Mary Baird, Jim's grandmother, and the people who operated the farm was Jim's parents, Myrtle Lewis Baird and Mr. Alonzo Eugene Baird. So, our families' have known each other always.

As a child, Jim's younger brother and I started school together. His youngest brother's name was Alonzo Eugene, Jr., but we called him Steamboat. And Steamboat and Jane Clayton and I and the Ritches all lived west of town. So, when we started school, we walked home together.

In the mornings, after Mother milked and we helped with the separating and helped get breakfast, we got dressed and got ready to go to school. Mother usually would not let us go to school until after she had seen the Baird boys' pa go by on the highway on their way to school, because they nearly always were at the same time. Oftentimes she was outside working and she would use them as a point of reference, when it was time for us to go, too. See, my brother and I were pretty close to the same age. My sister, oftentimes, would go early because she was a singer. By the time my brother and I were in school, she was in high school. She was nine years older than me. I just remember that oftentimes we would be following the Baird boys to school.

...a point of reference,

Figure 33. Eda and Lloyd Anderson, Tularosa, New Mexico, 1922.

When I married Jim, I was a school teacher. He came into Las Cruces, before he became the manager of the ranch in 1946, after his divorce. He lived in Las Cruces and managed the Elks Club. When Jack and Steamboat went back into the service after they came home from World War II, the two of them decided that one of them had to stay and manage the ranch they bought from Uncle Walt. And so they elected Jim. I met Jim in the spring of 1947 and married him September 20th of 1947. I had known the Bairds all my life. In fact, the romance between Jim and I was pushed very strongly by Steamboat, who was still at the ranch at that time.

In fact, Jim was working at the ranch when Steamboat was still there waiting for his orders. I was working as the director of a Girl Scout camp on the Jornada. And Jim would come to visit me there where I was, where I was on the Jornada at the headquarters. I was running this Girl Scout camp until August. Jim and I decided to get married in September. It was very shortly after that they helped me move to the ranch.

...director of a Girl Scout Camp...

Uncle Walt and my mother were good friends 'cause they went to school together in Tularosa before Uncle Walt was sent to the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell. And so, my mother was in the process of finishing her schooling when she went to Tularosa, and Uncle Walt would move into Tularosa and go to school there rather than go down to El Paso to go to school. That was in the '30s.

Well, not even Jim, Jack, and Steamboat lived out there at the ranch. They lived at the farm in Tularosa. They went to the ranch to work at the times that they were not in school. They helped more at the Mountain Ranch than they did the Hunter Place because, you see, most of the time that the cows were at the Hunter Place was in the wintertime and they were nearly always in school. The only time that they ever worked the Hunter Place was at Christmas vacation. Mrs. Baird would not allow them to take off from school to help at the ranch. She felt their education was important.

...their education was important.

I think most ranch families have a place in town for children to go to school. The only ones that I can remember that did not live in Tularosa that were ranchers, they would go to the teachers, and say, "I'm goin' to

have to work at the ranch for two years. Can you tell me what books I need to pass the sixth grade, or what books I need to pass the third grade, and what I need to do, and then I can do it at home?"

They did not have what they call today 'home teaching,' but, in our day, books were not furnished by the state; they had to buy their own books. So, oftentimes their early education was at home. Then, after two or three years, they would come in and they would start, say, in the third grade. And as soon as they were able to finish the third-grade work, they would go on, say, middle year, into the fourth grade. Then, if they were good enough, they would go on in the fifth grade. I can remember that J.C. Stephens was in the third grade, and he went from third, to fourth, to fifth in one year. Then he skipped the sixth grade and the seventh grade, and he came back and started in the sixth grade and went and finished the sixth grade and went into the seventh grade. By the time he got into the eighth grade, they begged him to stay in Tularosa instead of goin' back out to the ranch, so he worked on the ranch just in the summertime and finished high school. That was the way that most of the ranchers did, but at the time when Jim and I were there, we only had little Jack.

...early education was at home.

We didn't sit up and read. Once in awhile, we'd sit up and play poker with Uncle Walt until he left. We didn't stay up very late, but we always got up early. We did most of our reading in the daylight, and both of us loved to read. We couldn't go to libraries, because they always wanted 'em back too soon. We ofttimes would pick up books at my daddy's or we would pick up from whoever would loan us books. We just borrowed books and bought magazines and bought books to read, and that's what we would do when we didn't have anything else to do. And we kep' a library of books that we were able to get ahold of from my parents or from other people.

Cora Cox Fribley

My dad was George W. Cox, and I'm sure he was born in Liberty Hill, Texas. He was a rancher's son, and I guess they came from Texas looking for places to live. They had a cattle ranch about 30 miles from Hope. My oldest brother and sister were born in Texas. She was just an infant when they came and I wasn't here yet. They got me later.

Well, I guess they had heard about the range, how the grazing was, and it was good that year. My dad went out and thought it was wonderful. So he sold the place, and he and his brother moved to the San Andres. I think it must've been about 1914 or '15. We were out there during World War I.

He bought this place right here in Tularosa after he sold the homestead, so we kids could go to school. It was more than 60 miles; took all day just about. Yeah, get in the wagon and rootie toot, here we come! Well, we finally moved for school and just stayed in town. Those other people didn't move to school. I don't know what they did. We'd be here all winter, the school year.

...rootie toot, here we come!

I had gone to school before we came to Tularosa, 'cause they had a little country school. Little young girls would go out there and teach for nothing—$30 a month—and live in the house of some of the people. Yes they did. I'm sure they did, 'cause they had this one-room schoolhouse. I never thought that would be interesting; might be interesting, but wouldn't be very funny.

I was a basketball player for Tularosa about seventh grade and a Girl Scout. There was three girls played basketball. They were short of girls when they got me. The Bookout girls were the star players. We played Capitan and Carrizozo, but we didn't play Alamogordo because they were too high-toned for us. They were citified. We're the country kids. I was 13, I guess. It was probably around 1916 or '17. I remember Mr. Clayton was our referee. One day I played mean and he told me I'd have to sit on the bench if I did it again. I didn't do it anymore. Yeah, he thought I was a little mean. I hit that ol' girl under her chin, I didn't bite her tongue, she did it. In those days they had a running center, and I was runnin' center.

I was a basketball player...

Figure 34. Tularosa, New Mexico, school group, ca. 1900.

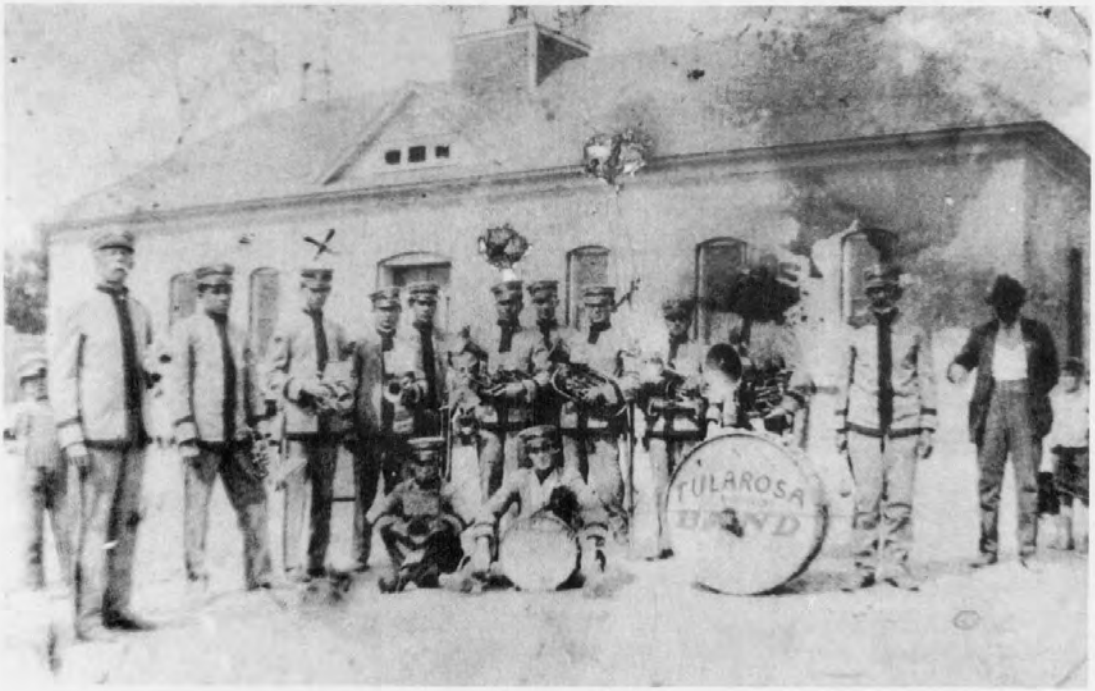


Figure 35. "Tularosa's First Band," ca. 1900.

I guess there's about 15 to 20 in my grade. There's only three people graduating. Graduation 'as big-time stuff, you know.

Mother made all our clothes. She was a good seamstress. My oldest brother had a shirt with a big collar and a ruffle on it, she made that. She had a sewing machine. I guess she's had one all the time. I can't remember what it was anymore, but it was a treadle. This little store, I think they carried a little bit of dry goods, some shoes, and some yard goods. I think she bought yard goods when she had a chance. Then she'd have it to make up. I can remember going in for shoes. You know, kids were pretty good at saying the shoes are alright, 'til they got home. Then they'd get tight. Picked whatever they happened to have—kind of brogan, I'd call it. They had little Mary Jane pumps, but we didn't get any of those.

I remember her ripping the bonnets where they gather across the top. She ripped that out so I could iron that bonnet when I was a little bitty kid. And then we bragged, you know, and she showed everybody how I ironed the bonnets. Then she sewed it back on and I got the credit. Oh yeah, oh yeah, we wore bonnets. So did my brother, the oldest one. He was a tough and ready young man, but he liked to wear a bonnet. He'd just pick up anybody's bonnet. He had sore lips from the hot sun, and the bonnet helped. I imagine he did take an awful teasing from the men, but he didn't care.

...we wore bonnets.

Mother did the mending. I may have done some; I was always a fiddling around doing something. We had dolls. We had bought ones. But my sister didn't learn to make clothes for her babies; I did.

When I was in Home Ec., I was leading the class, being a seamstress, not a cook. We didn't have anything to cook, anyway. If we had one thing, I don't know what it was. I don't know why they even tried to have it, if they couldn't have anything. The teacher'd have us bring little bits of food from home, you know. Then we'd take it up there and mess it up. They didn't supply anything, I don't know when they started supplying the ingredients. But it's crazy, no need to have it, if you're not going to have anything to do it with. Of course, your sewing is different, 'cause you usually made something for yourself.

Then we'd...mess it up.

We had books; we read. My mother was a reader. She had a ladies' magazine, *Home Journal;* no, that wasn't it, but something like that. Came out every month, I guess. And I remember my grandpa had a newspaper. I guess it came everyday. *Kansas City Star* was the name of it. That was way back when, 'cause he died in 1920. He had to have his newspaper. I guess that was a big part of his day.

We had books; we read.

Figure 36. Teachers at the new Tularosa Public School, ca. 1917.

Betsy Biel Lucero

Well, I had met my husband, Raymond Lucero, when I was going to high school. We had met and we kinda had gone out together, off and on, on dates and parties and things, and then he went off into the service. We decided that, no, we weren't going to get married until after he got out.

...gone out...off and on,

We were already engaged, and Raymond was going to school when his dad passed away. My husband knew we were getting married, and we were going to live over there at the ranch, so they had cleaned it up quite a bit, because just the men had been living there for a long time. Mama Lucero and the kids didn't go up there that often. The children were in school, so she hadn't been going as often as she used to go. Maybe in the summer months they'd go and spend a few weeks, but they didn't really live over there, as such. I guess just the ranch hands had been living there, so my husband kind of cleaned it up.

Louise Crockett

I was born in Eunice, New Mexico, in 1912. When I was five, we came to Hope to send us kids to school. It's a pretty nice town then. Many people there; the best fruit orchards and vegetables in the world. We didn't go much of any place, except to school and church; school plays and programs and things like that.

We were married in '32. We went to ranch out on the San Andres Mountains in about '38, I guess. Then I lived in Las Cruces; sent 'em to school four years. I never thought about lockin' the door then. And then I lived in Hatch for five years and sent 'em to school. I guess Sonny was eight when we moved to Hatch, about '45; he was born in '37.

...never thought about lockin' the door...

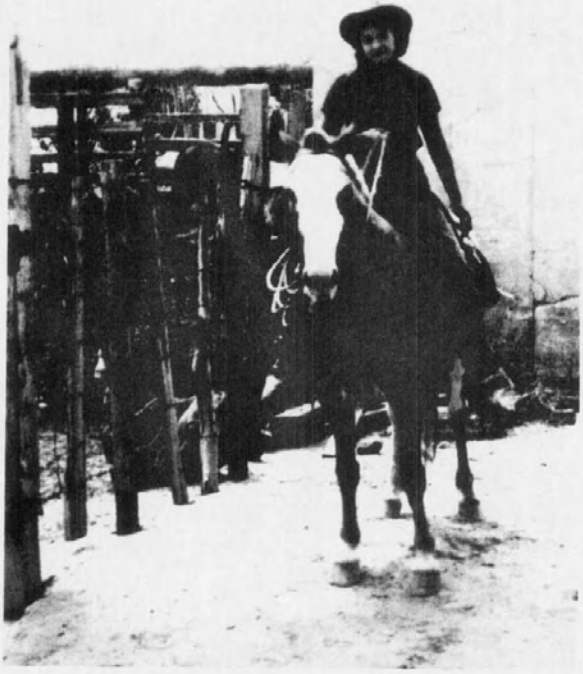


Figure 37. Natalia (Nellie) Lucero at the José B. Lucero Ranch, ca. 1931–1936.

NATALIA (NELLIE) LUCERO DI MATTEO

I was already seven years old when my sister Susie was born in 1927. We were still there with Grandma. Now, the only home that I remember having lived in before my dad's home was at Grandma's on Lucero Avenue in Las Cruces, where the Alameda Junior High is. That property belonged to my grandfather and was deeded over to the schools with the stipulation that it would be used for a high school.

We lived up there at the ranch when my other sister Izzie turned seven. At that time you didn't go to school until you were seven. So, Izzie had to be seven, and Julie had to be about eight and a half, because Julie was a late talker. She didn't talk too plainly when she was about seven, so she couldn't go to school. She had to wait 'till she was eight. But then they started school, and Izzie tells me that when they went to school, she had a lot of hair, real pretty long hair that mother braided into pigtails. And her first day of school, she sat in front of this little boy in the back and he got one of her pigtails, stuck it in the inkwell. She turned around, she just turned around and she just slapped him. They didn't have a telephone, I guess, so the teacher sent a note with Julie and Izzie to my mom. And instead of Dad spanking Izzie (the teacher should have done it), he took them both out of school and they didn't start school until the following year. Izzie was happy about that.

...she just slapped him.

We were very, very lucky, because in our family, you know, there's very few people my age that were able to continue their education, other than going through high school. In our family, we had five that went through the university. The others did not, because they married younger or they didn't care to go. I do know that we paid for one of my sister's education. That was Patsy; she was the third to the youngest. I was already married. Then Izzie got married and she didn't go, but my older sister did. One of my younger sisters did, too. Sonny did not, because he came during World War II. Dad had passed away, and he went on the ranch for three years.

PAT WITHERS

My name's Irving Virgil Withers, born June the 8th, 1909. But Dad and all the rest, everybody else, always called me Pat. I've been Pat, oh, to everybody except my mother's side of the family. Mother always called me Irving. My daddy got crippled. Horse kicked his kneecap open and he got crippled. We had several head of broncs that had to be broke. He hired a bronc breaker to come in there and break the broncs and that's who named me Pat.

My daddy was a cowboy and he went with Goodnight to North Dakota back when he was a boy. He trailed cattle from Texas on to plum out there, I guess. He went to North Dakota and punched cattle when he was just a big button. Mother and Daddy got married in Sweetwater, Texas, 'cause that's where Mother and her folks moved. I was born in Sweetwater. Don't know anything about my daddy's side of the family except just his mother and daddy; that's all I heard, and Mother's folks.

My daddy was a cowboy...

They moved there, north of Jal, New Mexico, about 1911, when I was two years old. We was ranchers. It was all a ranch country then. There wasn't nothing else in there; just the Jal Cattle Company, a big cattle company back then. And it began to settle up just like this Jornada flat country did back in '31–'32. We just happened to be a little luckier. We got a little bigger ranch, and not a lot of them did. They tried to farm it, but it was sand covered. Sand would cover the farm up so quickly.

Well, when we was little kids we had bottles. We'd make out like they's horses and cows and we built corrals out of baling wire. Cowboys and Indians and things like that, there wasn't much to play with when we was kids. Stick horses, that's right, we had plenty of stick horses.

Stick horses,...

The only thing I done when I was a child, as far as working for somebody else, was when we lived at Jal, actually. I was 12 years old. Two old maids in Midland, Texas, owned the ranch west of us, and they wanted heifers off that ranch brought to Midland. They sent me and an 18-year-old guy with that 100 head of heifers to Midland. Well, it was quite an experience for a kid 12 years old, I tell you. It was right around 90, between 90 and 100 miles.

And we made about 12 to 14 miles every day with them. We had to get 'em there. We brought a bunch of registered bulls back for their ranch, so it took us just as long to come back as it did to go down. That's the first wages I ever got. I got $2 a day.

Figure 38. Jay, Pat, and Wayne Withers (L-R), near Jal, New Mexico, 1918.

We lived there at Jal 'til '24; moved there in '11. We went through the eighth grade there at Jal. Then we moved to Artesia to go to school, try to get an education, and I graduated out of high school there in '30. The big oil boom hit Artesia, and hit Jal where it come up through our ranch. That oil field hit Jal in '27. Dad said you could stand on our old front porch and count 19 oil rigs. Artesia is twice as big now as it was when we moved there in '24. We had a fair football team, and we went to the state in '30 in basketball. Back in my time, you see, there wasn't no classifications. We played Albuquerque, even if you wasn't nothing but a little place like Carrizozo.

The big oil boom hit...

I done a lot of carpenter work with my daddy on his contract jobs and things in the summertime. I worked in a grocery store in the wintertime and went to school; worked there on weekends most of the time, on weekends in a grocery store.

Dad was building the first tourist court in Artesia, and this guy come along peddling beans. He said something about having a ranch up here in this mountain and wanted to know if anybody would be interested in it. Dad and Mother come and looked at it. He told them about where it was. Course, it was just a wagon road, only way of getting in there, but he had an old Model-A Ford. They drove over there and looked it over, and then he and my oldest brother, Jay, went in there and surveyed. There was a piece of state land that nobody had leased, and they went in there and surveyed it out and found out where it was. Then Jay filed. Dad had done used his filing rights, but Jay filed. Then Dad come and got me out of college at Hardin-Simmons [Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas] and I filed. I went to Hardin-Simmons for about six months, in Business Administration, but Dad came over there. He'd bought the ranch, and said "I need you." Then, when Wayne got of age, he filed. And so, back then when Taylor Grazing Act come along, why, they give us 21 sections in there between three big outfits.

Dad...got me out of college...

Dad went back down to Jal, to the old guy we sold out to, and he bought 79 head of old cows for $8 a head in fall of '31. And he called Carrizozo and got somebody to tell me and Wayne—we was on the ranch—for me to bring a bunch of horses and meet him in Artesia. We were breaking broncs for everybody in the country. I took 11 head of horses and headed that way. He told me to bring four of them old work horses, so we'd have pack horses for things, bedrolls, and so on. I headed for Artesia.

It took me three days and a little over a half to go from Carrizozo to Artesia. I never had anything to eat the three days and a half I was out with them horses. I was a little hungry. I'd lost enough weight that my aunt didn't even know me, and she knew I was coming with those horses. I rode up the front yard gate and she stuck her head out and I said, "Lady, can I put my horses in your crib?" She said, "You'll have to see Mr. Jones. He's back yonder, in back." Course, Uncle Buddy, he come out there and opened the gate, and I was feeding my horses. Then the cousins, they were three girls, they come out and was talking to me, and Aunt Edith come out there and looked me over right close and said, "Irving, what in the world's wrong with you?" I said, "Aunt Edith, I haven't had anything to eat," and gosh dog it, did she feed me.

I was a little hungry.

It was 1:30 of the fourth day when I got in there. I had water. It was right after it rained. It started raining the day I left Carrizozo and all the rock holes and everything was full of water. I could get a drink anytime I wanted to, but I didn't have a darn thing to eat. I went to a football game that evening and I guess I'd a died 'cause I sure did eat a bunch.

Not all of them, but most communities had a church, a schoolhouse actually, a country schoolhouse. They had church there once a month, or something like that. We had Sunday school every Sunday. A preacher come once a month, preached out there in that Bingham country at the schoolhouse, where we all met and we had Sunday school.

The preachers we had here were ordained. Now, the one we actually moved down here, we had a Presbyterian preacher that come here, and we had a schoolhouse up here at Oscura. After that, they tore that schoolhouse down. Then we went to just having it at some person's home every Sunday. Every Sunday we decided who done it the next.

...they tore that schoolhouse down.

When we first moved up yonder we had a dance every Friday or Saturday night, all night long. We started at sundown and we didn't quit 'til the sun come up. First, one person's house and then the other. Oh, we had musicians every color, every kind you wanted. It was just like the Sunday school; when we got through, well, they decided who was going to have the next dance.

"Cotton Eyed Joe," "Put Your Little Foot"—just all night long hoe-down music. "Red River Valley"—everything was just old Western music, what it was. "Over the Waves" and "Blue Danube Waltz," just things like that. Wasn't no singers in the crowd, just strictly old musicians. I played the French harp one night for an hour before the fiddlers got there, never took it out of my mouth. Danced 'til the sun come up. It is open to everybody, they just brought their whole family. It was just a community gathering is what it really amounted to.

"Cotton Eyed Joe,"

Figure 39. Loretto Academy in Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1930s.

Boarding at the Academy –

The Sisters of Loretto

Elma Hardin Cain

I went to school in Hope [New Mexico] a couple years, and I went to school in Artesia a couple years. Then I went to Las Cruces and finished high school at Loretto Academy. I was 9 when I went to Loretto.

I don't remember how big Hope School was. There was probably 20 in my class. I don't remember, but Hope was a pretty good size town at that time. I stayed with my grandfather and grandmother, my daddy's parents, and went to school. When they moved to the San Andres Mountains, we—Mother and I—moved to Artesia. I could have gone to school at Ritch, but the folks didn't want me to. That's when they put me in boarding school at Loretto, from '34 or '35 through '42.

But sometimes you get a better education in a country school than you do in a public school. Even though there's maybe one or two teachers to a big bunch, they get more individual attention than you would in a bigger public school.

They took me down and left me. I stayed, but I didn't like it. I don't remember a lot of conversation, other than I had heard that they were going to take me, and that the nuns—you know, I'd heard that if you weren't nice they'd put you in the basement. I'd heard scare stories and, of course, I cried and cried for two weeks.

I cried...for two weeks.

The nuns wrote Mother and told her that she'd better come down and see about me.
Mother came down, she and Daddy, and he told me, "You're gonna stay. You might as well get over it. If you don't quit and settle down, we won't let you come home Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter; we'll just leave you here." Well, it wasn't long 'til I shaped up. When I came home Thanksgiving, I was so lonesome, I was ready to go back. I had adjusted. There was no question whether I would go back to Cruces from year, to year, to year. That was understood.

School started after Labor Day and we got to come home at Thanksgiving. I usually rode the bus to T or C [Truth or Consequences, New Mexico] and the folks would pick me up. Then they'd take me to T or C and I'd ride it back to Cruces. Same way at Christmas, and the same way Easter. It wasn't too awful far, probably an hour and a half or two hours. It was just riding the bus; it wasn't too bad.

We were off at Thanksgiving for two or three days, and Christmas, about a week off at Christmas. Then Easter, usually we'd get off. Get to go home on Thursday and come back on Easter Monday. Then go home at the end of school and go back to school in September.

...72 boarders...

When I first went to Loretto, there was 72 boarders from the first grade up to high school. A lot of those—well, not a lot, but maybe 10 or 12, maybe more—were out of Old Mexico, and they couldn't speak a word of English. Some of 'em young, some of 'em older. We had two dormitories. We had a little girls' dorm and big girls' dorm; the high school girls and the little kids.

Loretto Academy was at the end of Main Street. The front of the building was big; the middle was the administrative part of the school. To the west were the dormitories upstairs and the classrooms and things downstairs. To the east, the chapel was upstairs and the nuns' quarters were there. On the bottom floor was the cafeteria and the kitchen and different things like that. It was sort of in an L shape, more or less.

They were all nuns, Sisters of Loretto. I never had a lay teacher. The Music teacher, History teacher, English teacher, they were all nuns.

It was very rigid. We got up about six o'clock every morning. You could not talk at all to, you know, visit with the other kids and all—it was in silence. We went to mass; we went to church every morning. You'd get dressed and brush your teeth and wash your face and comb your hair and you'd go to church. From church you would go directly down to the—the refectory is what we called it, not cafeteria—the refectory. And we'd all stand behind our chairs and they'd say grace and ring a little bell and we could sit down. We could visit and talk when we ate breakfast. Whenever everybody was fairly well through, they'd ring the bell and you'd stand up and return thanks, and go in silence up to make your bed. Then you'd come back down at 8 o'clock.

They'd ring a bell and you would go to study hall. You would have study hall and your classes the rest of the morning. Then at noon you'd get in line and you'd go to the refectory and the same routine. Then you'd have recreation until 1 o'clock, after you'd had dinner, which wouldn't usually be very long. Then you'd have classes in the afternoon. At about 3 or 3:30, you'd be out; school would be over and you'd have recreation 'til about 4:30 or 5 o'clock.

We had tennis courts, and you could skate, or you could listen to the radio, if the radio was working, or you could just read, or whatever you could find to do. Then you'd have study hall from 4:30 'til about 5:30, somewhere around there. Then we'd go and eat supper, and at 8 o'clock the little girls had to go up to bed.

When I got to be a freshman, I was a big girl, and then we got to stay up 'til 9. It was the same routine over and over every day, except Saturday. Saturday, if you were lucky, they might let you sleep late if you were a big girl. A little girl, you didn't get to sleep late; you got up and went to church on Saturday. Whenever you got to be a big girl, on Saturday you'd get to sleep late maybe; but Sunday you'd go to church and then they'd have study hall from 11 'til 12 so you could write letters home. And you'd write your letter and the nuns would correct it and then you'd have to rewrite it. They read all of your mail, coming in and going out.

They read all of your mail,

There weren't any chores to do, other than you had to mend your clothes. Sometimes on Saturday they'd take us up to the wardrobe. If you had a button off or something like that, they'd show you how to sew it on. If they wanted to teach you how to darn, if you didn't have a sock that had a hole in it, Sister Arcela would cut a hole in the sock, so you could darn it. Darning, you put an egg, a darning egg, in the sock and you learn to close that hole up. You went one way all the way, and then you went and wove in and out the other way.

...how to darn,

And they taught you manners. If you were a lower classman and an eighth grader came by, you had to open the door for the eighth grader. If you were a sixth grader, you had to show that eighth grader respect.

Figure 40. Loretto Academy Christmas pageant, 1942.

Figure 41. Loretto Academy school play.

It was always the same, always the same discipline. It never changed. The bigger girls had a little more leniency, but not a lot. As far as talking and keeping silent, going to eat, and things like that, they were all the same. They just wanted you to go in silence. That was teaching you that you had to be quiet.

And then when I got older, I worked for part of my tuition. I waited tables in the refectory and I cleaned the music rooms whenever I could. There was some that had chores like that. The biggest end of the girls didn't have any; they didn't have to work, but I did. I've often wondered what tuition might have been, but I don't know. I do know that Daddy, several times, brought a beef down—killed a beef and brought it down for part of my tuition.

I waited tables...

It was a Catholic school, and naturally they taught Catholicism—you know, religion. Everybody took it. It was very strict. But if you failed a test, they would have you study and they'd give it to you again. They'd give you an opportunity to pass. We had one teacher that would give you the question and the answer. Say, she'd give you 50 questions and answers, and she'd pick maybe 10 or 15 out of that. Alright, she wanted it word for word, and dot for dot. You had to have not only the question answered correctly; she wanted your penmanship and your spelling and your punctuation—everything—right. Everything she marked off, because she gave you the whole thing, and you were to learn it. She was very meticulous in that, and you learned pretty quick that she wasn't going to put up with sloppiness and not doing what she wanted.

...word for word, and dot for dot.

We had a priest that lived there. I think he was just the father that held the church services. We had mass every morning at the school at the same time, early every morning. We had a sister—called her Mother Superior—I'm sure that she was the one that took care of the business, 'cause she didn't teach.

I don't remember any of the nuns leaving. As you got older, you got different teachers, but they had been there for years. The one nun that I remember, that stayed in the little girls' dormitory, she was there forever. The dormitories, they were all in one room, one big room. They were all, in the little girls' dorm, all different ages. In the big girls' dorm, you see,

were the high-school kids, freshmen up to seniors. I don't remember how many beds were in there. The nun's bed had curtains around it. Usually there were two nuns that slept in the little girls' dorm. I'd say there were maybe 40 beds in there. I don't really know, but they were just rows and rows with just a little space in between.

In the little girls' dorm we had a washstand, and we kept our toothbrushes and hair brushes and things like that in there. Each one had their own washstand. When you got to be in the big girls' dorm, you had a washstand, but then you had an alcove. They had a room where there was a little alcove-type thing that had three walls and a curtain in front. You had a little chest of drawers in there and you kept your little personal things in there. You could hang some of your clothes in there, but the little girls' things were all up in the wardrobe room. You wore a uniform, a navy-blue uniform with a big, white collar. I have my white collar from whenever I got out of school. I had it autographed and I kept it. But I didn't keep a uniform; I didn't want a uniform. But you know, you get used to it. It's just, sort of like the Army, I imagine.

You wore a uniform,

Figure 42. Loretto Academy class picture, 1936.

Mother used to send me a birthday cake, and it would be packed in popcorn; an angel food cake with seven-minute icing, and she'd pack it in popcorn. When that package would come, well, we kids would sneak and get on what we called the devil steps—they were steps saved for visitors. They were hardwood steps. We'd get there and eat our cake and popcorn. We'd crawl out of the dorm; we got in trouble several times. We'd have to clean those steps—wax them and polish them and clean them up. Then lots of times we had to write "I will not do" whatever it was "again" maybe 500 times.

...she'd pack it in popcorn.

They did have one girl, she called the sisters "You old devil. El Diablo, El Diablo." They washed her mouth out with soap several times, but . . . .

There wasn't a lot of ruckus, 'cause someone was there watching all the time. We were chaperoned even when we went to town. There'd be two or three nuns that would go with us to town. We were just, well, at the end of the street. It might have been six or eight blocks.

The meals were very well prepared. The only thing, I thought we got too much parsnips; I never did like parsnips. But we'd have cream of wheat for breakfast of a morning, and if we didn't eat it all, they'd fry it at night and serve it with syrup for our evening meal. I liked the cream of wheat of a morning, but I didn't like that of an evening. We'd have prunes for breakfast, and I didn't mind those. If there were prunes left, we'd have prune whip at night for dessert, and that was good. I didn't mind that too much. Those are about the only things that stick in my mind. The meals weren't bad. They had people in the kitchen that weren't nuns, and I'm sure they were bound to come from town, but I don't remember who they were.

...too much parsnips;

Mother and Dad, they could come and see us. They would come and take us out in town and things like that, but we couldn't go out in town just as a group. When I got to be older, there was one girl that was in school, and I got to go home with her over a weekend.

You got a good education, as far as learning. We took Music. You had Spanish and Latin and Math, different kinds of Math, and Shorthand and History and English, and they had the Business classes then, too—Bookkeeping, Shorthand, Typing.

It's all right, but I would never send my kids. I don't think so. No, uh-uh, because I think you miss so much with your parents and with other things, other activities and things. I never saw Leonard play football. I never saw a football game, a high-school football game, or a basketball game, other than what we played there in the convent. You miss things like that.

...you miss so much...

When I first went, there were 72 students, as I remember. When I graduated, there were 42. They decreased and decreased. But now, that was boarders. They did have some Catholics that came in as day students, you know. I don't remember how many there were. A lot of them didn't come from Old Mexico anymore. Maybe it got too expensive for them to come there; I don't know. I know when I graduated, there was 3 that lived there in 'Cruces, and there was 10 of us that graduated, so there was 7 of us that were boarders, the summer, May of '42, I graduated.

When I graduated from high school, that fall, my grandmother and mother took me to Denver to school. The college in Denver was also a girls' school associated with the Sisters of Loretto. I got a scholarship to go to Loretto Heights, and I was Valedictorian of my class. Now we weren't restricted to go to bed at a certain time and we could go to Denver and, you know, out. A group of us would go out. The only requirement when we left the Loretto Heights Academy, we were supposed to have a dress on and gloves and a hat and high-heel shoes and hose; we were supposed to be representatives of the school and act accordingly. Of course, lots of times, by the time we got to Denver in the taxi, we had shed a lot of hats and gloves and various things! I stayed up there and I came home at Christmastime, and I rode the train back with Leonard, back to Denver. We got married the following summer.

...gloves and a hat...

ANNA LEE BRUTON GAUME

I was born in Magdalena, New Mexico. My family had a ranch in the Magdalena Mountains in 1912.

Well, school was terrible. Daddy had six sisters and one brother, the youngest. Daddy was the oldest and he was the boy, and then six sisters in between him and his brother. I think we stayed at least one year and went to school with each one of those sisters, so Mama wouldn't have to go in from the ranch and leave Daddy by himself. That's the way they worked it. My first school was at Cutter, New Mexico, when I was in first grade. I had to walk quite a ways to the little schoolhouse way off by itself.

...school was terrible.

I didn't go the full year there. They moved me then to Engle, where I finished the first grade, then I went to all of the elementary through the eighth grade at Engle. Grandma and my aunt run the hotel there, the old Engle hotel, and so I stayed with them and helped Grandma wash dishes and cook. They had four trains going through Engle at that time. There was two night trains, one going east and one going west. And the daytime, there was a morning train and an evening train. They all had mail; my aunt was the postmaster.

We wore long skirts and stockings—we had stockings, old, black stockings, heavy—and grandma made us wear long underwear under our stockings. When we were little, that's the way we went to school, with those stockings on. Then we had black net stocking pants. Mama made them and our dresses, too, so, that's the way we went to school from when I can barely remember. If she didn't have any elastic, she'd take old rubber inner tubes and cut them and put elastic in my pants.

...long skirts and stockings.

I had a uniform down at the Loretto in 'Cruces, but not until I went down to the Loretto. You go to a private school, you did. It was a white blouse with a long collar, a sailor collar, and we had to have a tie in the front and a navy blue skirt.

Elementary was through the eighth grade; then you had four years of high school. Yeah, that's the way it went. I returned after I graduated

from high school at Loretto Academy in Las Cruces, May the 31st, 1931. Daddy was up at the L-Slash-S then. He was running the ranch, and pass your knock at him. That fall, after I graduated, I didn't get to go right on back to school. But for the second semester, I started out at the University in Albuquerque and went a half a year and then started teaching.

So I'd teach a year, teach in the winter, and go to school in the summer. I was 40 years old before I ever got my degree. I taught elementary all up and down the Rio Grande. I taught at San Antonio. And a funny thing about it, too, at the present time, my cousin, Daddy's brother's youngest son, has built a home right exactly where the schoolhouse was and he tells me about the two little Spanish girls that lived across, over by the hills. They'd come to school, and they remembered me, their first-grade teacher. Then, of course, they moved me, and I went and taught at Bingham and San Acacia and then at San Marcial and down in Doña Ana County.

The girl that I was staying with, that was teaching with me there, was going with my husband Paul's brother. So anyway, we'd go together and that's the way I met him. I was teaching then, too. I was 19 then.

I was 19 then.

Figure 43. Anna Lee Bruton and Paul Gaume (rear), Paul Fite and Florence "Toots" Bruton at Little Tank corral on the O-Bar Ranch, 1941.

Figure 44. Thomas Potter,
Millie and Uel "Potsy" Potter's son, ca. 1933.

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