

## Music and Entertainment

Two of the oldest entertainments in Socorro County were cockfighting and bullfighting. Public cockfights were staged in San Antonio as recently as the late 1950's. Some time earlier, Park City had a bullfighting arena, and photos by J. E. Smith of the arena and touring bullfighters from Mexico are shown below.

Amateur music was an important form of entertainment from the mining boom onwards. A high proportion of city houses and even remote ranch houses had pianos as evidenced by photographs. Piano manufacture was at its peak in the Victorian and Edwardian periods, and New York City alone had 114 piano companies established between 1789 and 1910. Only a handful of these companies remain. Socorro had marching bands, dance bands, and chamber music groups from the 1880's onward. A reproduction of a program for a concert in Kelly is included in the photo collection. J. E. Smith describes a performance in 1883, saying, "Friday night we had a grand concert here given by the home talent. It was quite an affair and success, a number of those who took part having made music quite a study."

A major development in the area of music and entertainment was the construction of the Garcia Opera House in 1884. It was financed by gold left to the widow of Juan Garcia, a local businessman. Several photos of the interior and exterior are shown. It has a raked stage that improves the sight lines from the level seating area. The acoustic properties are impaired by severe echoes from the parallel walls and the absence of sound absorbing materials, but this can be excused by the primitive understanding of architectural acoustics that persisted until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To this day the Garcia Opera House is used for plays, banquets, exhibitions, political rallies, and public events of all sorts. In the past it was used for commencement exercises of the School of Mines and even for basketball games. For a number of years it fell into disuse and neglect, but it was restored and is managed by the Garcia Opera House Foundation at First State Bank, Socorro.

After the Second World War when the School of Mines was revitalized as the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, a group of townspeople and faculty members sponsored the Community Concerts series under the aegis of Columbia Artists Management. Each year the proceeds of a subscription drive would be apportioned by a committee of subscribers to a series of instrumental, vocal and dance programs. In the 1960's the national organization failed, and the series was continued by a volunteer group called the Cultural Exchange Committee. It relied mostly on New Mexico artists, especially faculty members at the Music Departments of NMU and NMSU. Until the presidency of Stirling Colgate, the performances were held in a 200-seat auditorium in the Research and Development Building. A photo of A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, a show performed by Tech staff and community members, appears below. A metal auditorium building known as the Tin Can subsequently provided a much larger seating capacity with reasonable acoustics owing to an interior lining of insulating and sound absorbing material. During the presidency of Kenneth Ford, the college took over responsibility for the concert series, henceforth known as the Performing Arts Series, and a splendid new auditorium known as Macey Center was built.

During the Ford administration a Music Department was established at NMIMT and it was headed by Michael Iatauro, a composer and performer from New York City. An annual tradition of an orchestral performance in the fall and a musical comedy in the spring was instituted. At present Doug Dunston heads the Department in new quarters annexed to Macey Center.

In 1923 Leo Fay came to Socorro to exhibit silent movies in the Gem Theater located at the south side of the Plaza between Keith's Garage and the Park Hotel. Electricity was a scarce commodity and at 20 cents per KWH it was the greatest cost of operating the theater. Musical accompaniment for the films was supplied by a player piano and by Mrs. Fay at the piano. Leo describes the arrival of the Vitaphone synchronized phonograph records and in 1929 the optical sound track used in *The Jazz Singer*. The Gem Theater evolved into the Loma at the same location until it was destroyed by fire along with Keith's Garage and other buildings in 1957. A drive-in theater south of Socorro supplied movie entertainment until the Loma was reestablished in its present location next to First State Bank on Manzanares Avenue.



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Uniformed marching band at a New Years parade in front of the Grand Central Hotel



ShowTime!



All girl orchestra

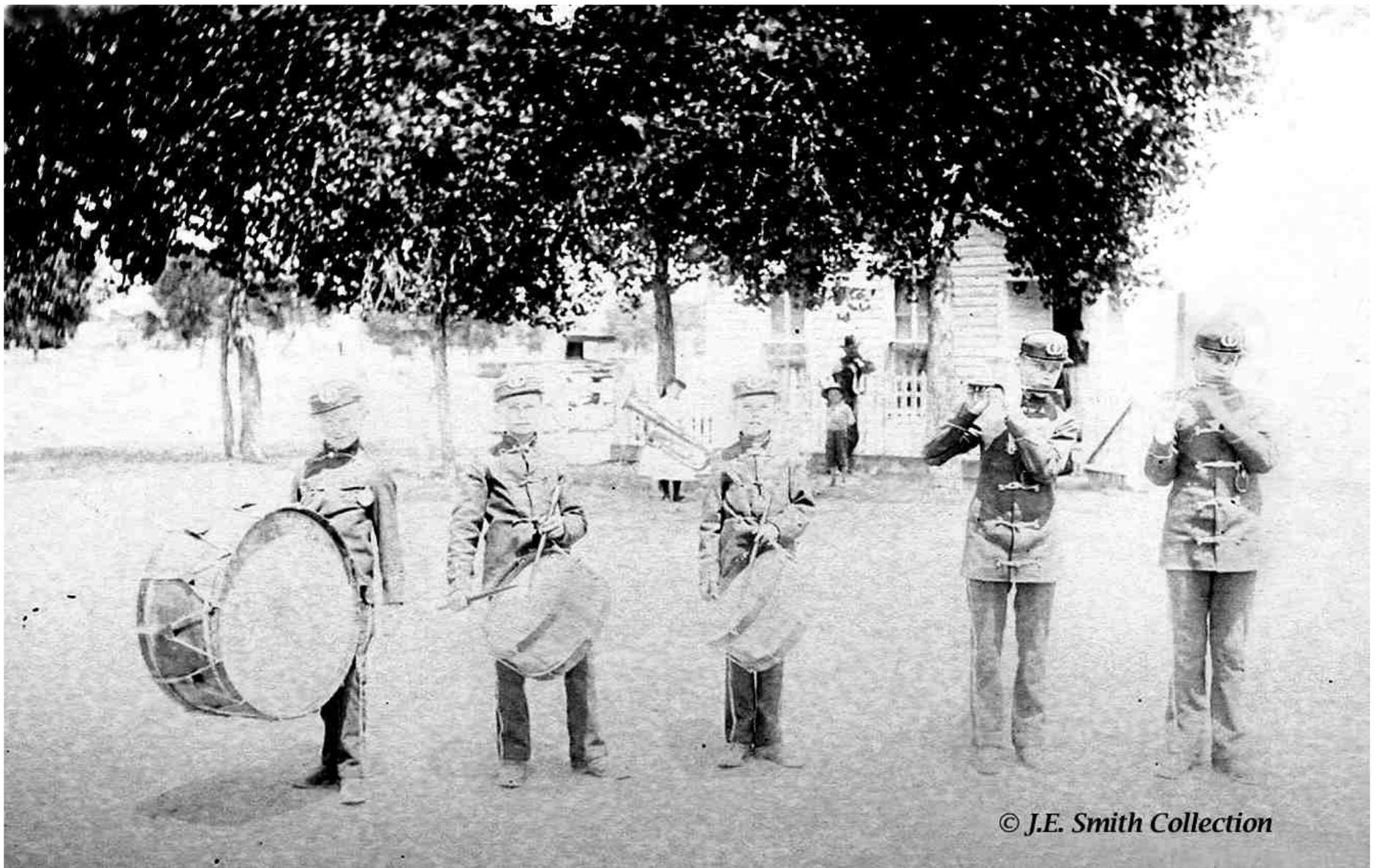


Music in the home

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Music on the ranch



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Military boy's band



Violinist in the Studio

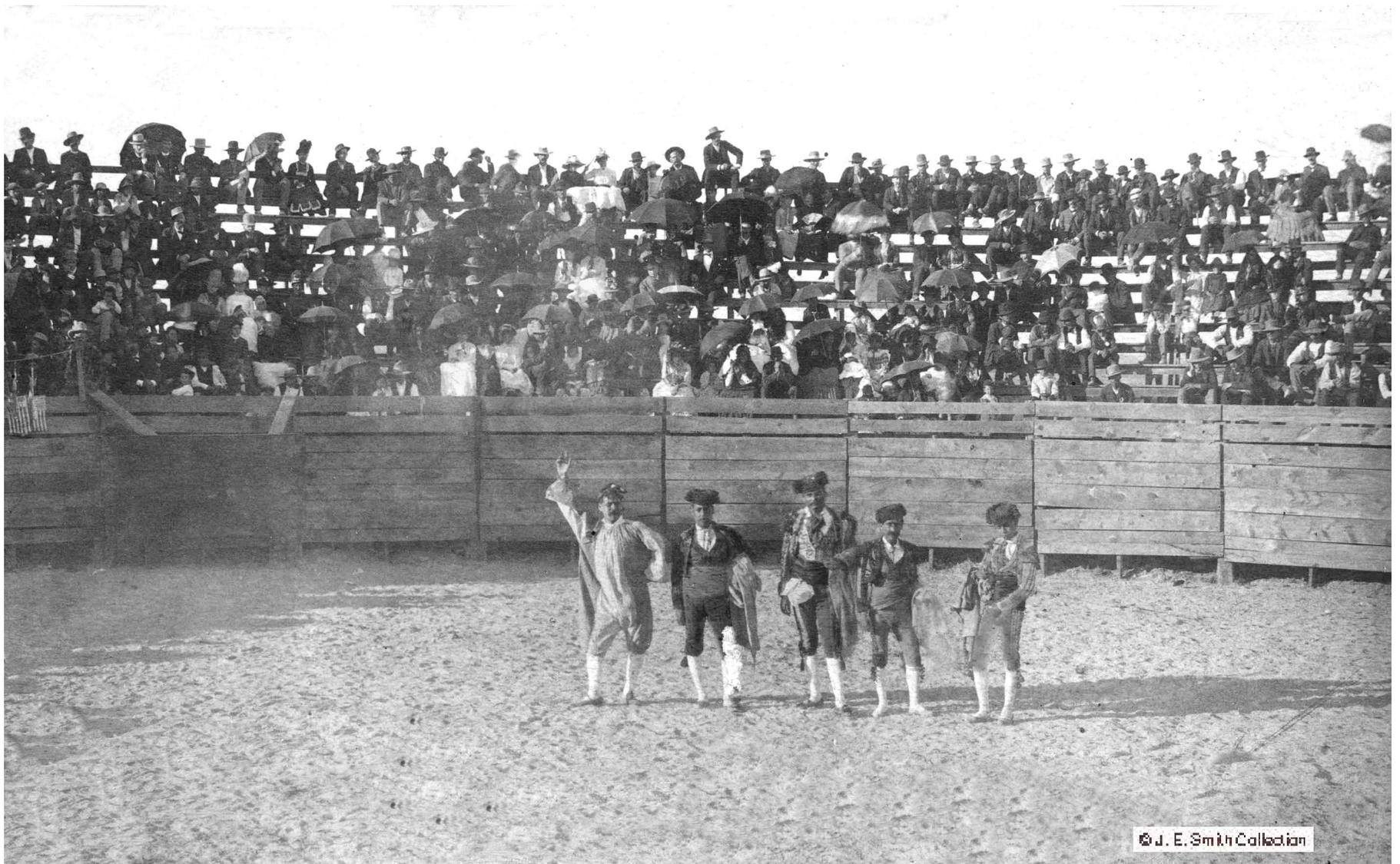


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The Music teacher



The music teacher



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Plaza de Toros, Park City



Gregorio Gallardo, primo banderillero

Luis Yslas, Grascioso



Luis Yslas, graciosco



Angel Godinas, Banderillero





Young cornet player

*Part First.*

- 1. Duet.—Piano, *Sounds from the Ohio*, (Karl Merz.)  
Mrs. M. L. Townsend and Mrs. June Tew.
- 2. Quartette, *Moonlight Sleeps*, (J. Hunter.)  
Mrs. Townsend Tew, Messrs. Roseboom & Beyea.
- 3. Trio. *Light may the Boat Row*, (Watson.)  
Misses Mattie Clark, Cora Scott, Winnie Townsend.
- 4. Quartette, without accompaniment.—*Sweet and Low*. Mrs. Townsend, & Tew, Messrs. Bowness & Beyea.
- 5. Duet, Piano and Cornet. *Thousand and one nights* (Strauss)—Piano, Mrs. M. L. Townsend, Cornet, I. W. BEYEA.
- 6. Solo.—Soprano, *Waiting*, (Millard.)  
Mrs. June Tew, accompaniment, Mrs. Townsend.
- 7. Quartette,—Male. *The Torpedo and the Whale*, (From Opera *Olivette*.) Messrs. Bowness, Eaton, Roseboom & Beyea.
- 8. Whistling Solo, *Mocking Bird*,  
Mrs. A. B. Thomas.
- 9. Solo.—Baritone, *Grand Old Ocean*, (Millard.)  
I. W. BEYEA.
- 10. Duet.—Piano, *Secret Love*, (Resch.)  
Miss Winnie Townsend, Vivien Clark.

J. E. Smith Collection

- 11. Quartette. [Comic.] *El Torro Perro En El Barranco* (Miller.) Messrs. Bowness, Eaton, Roseboom & Beyea.
- 12. Duet. [Comic.] *"A B C"* (Parry.)  
Mrs. June Tew, I. W. Beyea.
- 13. Quartette. *Vogel's Waltz*, (Merz.) Mrs. Townsend & Tew, Messrs. Bowness & Beyea.

*Part Second.*

*Invitation to the Ball*  
DOORS OPEN AT 7:30, CONCERT COMMENCES  
**at 8 o'clock.**  
DANCING WILL BEGIN  
**at 9:30.**  
SUPPER FROM 11:30 UNTIL 1 O'CLOCK.  
*Supper will be given at the Clark House, and will consist of every delicacy of the season.*

TICKETS: INCLUDING CONCERT, SUPPER AND BALL \$2.00

Cover of concert program, Kelly, New Mexico, 1887

*Concert, Ball*

AND SUPPER,

AT KELLY, N. MEX.,

FRIDAY EVENING, OCT. 28, 1887.

TO BE GIVEN BY THE

**"BOHEMIAN"**

**MUSICAL CLUB**

OF KELLY.

*Concert under the management of  
Mrs. Wadge J. Townsend,*

WITH THE FOLLOWING

*Programme.*

SOCORRO DAILY CHIEFTAIN PRINT.

Cover of concert program



Young lady with guitar



Brass choir, L to R: Jacques Renault, Hank Giclas, unknown, Paul Deininger



Choir rehearsal, Ralph Ball conducting



Socorro Early Music Ensemble

Back row, L to R, C. Rutledge, M. Petschek, Ken Ford (NMT President), E. Brower, S. Thompson, Betty Clark  
Front row, J. Ford, Barry Clark, M. Gaeddert, K. Brower



Concerto for Four Harpsichords by J. S. Bach, L to R, C. Rutledge, J. Rutledge, R. Drissler, E. Brower



The restored Garcia Opera House



Party in Garcia Opera House, ca. 1906



The Aragon Theater in Magdalena



The Gem movie theater at south side of Plaza in Socorro



Destruction of the Loma (formerly Gem) theater by fire, 1957



Present day Loma Theater and First State Bank



Present day Music Room, Macey Center, Doug Dunston conducting



A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, ca. 1966, Research Building Auditorium, Jim O'Connor, director



The Mikado (Ralph Ball) and Three Little Maids