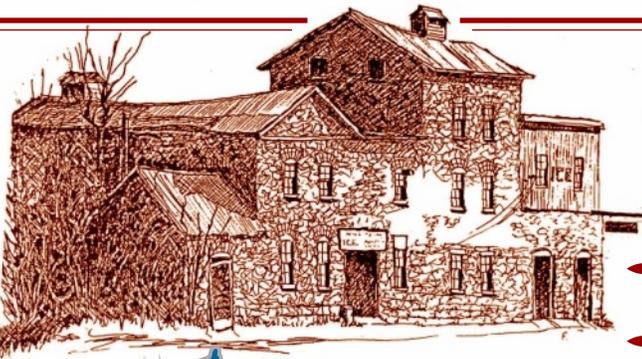


Socorro County Historical Society

Post Office Box 921
Socorro, New Mexico 87801

MEMBERSHIP NEWS • AUTUMN 2013

Printed periodically



A Great OCTOBERFEST October 5, 2013

Thanks to all for your support of the
Socorro County Historical Society

Dear Historical Society Members:

I want to thank each of the SCHS members who were able to stop by the Hammel on O-Fest day and provide great service with your presence, whether it was moving tables & chairs, coaxing our meager electrical system back to life, collecting funds for the meals, selling baked goods, slaving over the grill, working the serving line – or your support through your attendance. All efforts were and are mightily appreciated. According to Paul's preliminary tabulation we made about \$500 -- enough to keep the electricity and the phone service active for the next year.

Special thanks are also due to the three musical groups and also to Betty Houston who's remarkable efforts at the bake sale almost surpassed our brats and burger sales. I don't know how you did it Betty. Perhaps we should seriously consider selling only baked goods and give up on the beer and brats???? :-)

Best to all,

Bob Eveleth
Pres, Socorro County Historical Society

Renew your \$20 SCHS membership to:
Socorro County Historical Society
P.O. Box 921 • Socorro, NM 87801

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RUSSELL LEE PHOTOS ON DISPLAY IN NEW MEXICO

At Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum
Las Cruces until October 2014

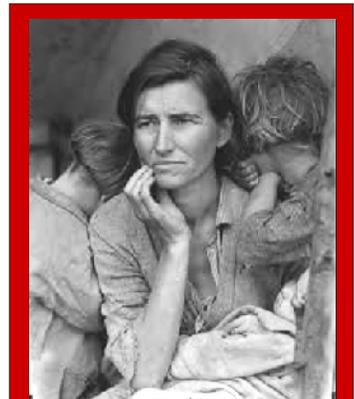
*Iconic Pie Town, NM Photos of the
Great Depression*

Russell Lee was a photographer and photojournalist who traveled the country to document the despair of the Great Depression. Many of his iconic images were taken in Pie Town, New Mexico. More than 70 years later, his photos are as chilling and compassionate as ever.

Thirty-seven of Lee's iconic images of Pie Town will be on display until October 19, 2014 at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces. The exhibit is entitled "The Color of Pie Town." If you find yourself in Las Cruces over the next year, pay them a visit and see the full-sized color versions of the photos.

Russell Lee was one of several photographers hired by the Farm Security Administration (FSA)

in 1936 to photographically document the plight of American farmers during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl years – and publicize the FSA programs to fight rural poverty. Roy Stryker, who headed the program, said of Lee's works in later years, "the greatest documentary collection which has ever been assembled."



Russell Lee had the uncanny ability to capture the personal despair of the Great Depression with the dignity of human survival. Many of his iconic photos were taken in Pie Town, New Mexico.

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Photo Gallery

2013 OKTOBERFEST



Those in attendance didn't seem to mind the chilly air as they enjoyed lunch in the wintergarten.



Nor did the chilly air keep many away from the cold brew of Killian's Red, or just to stand around and visit.



Craig and Caroline working the grill – with Susan, Peggy, and others serving the beans and sauerkraut.



Caroline kept the brats cooking, in spite of the cold air, a broken foot, cast, and crutches!



Two lovely ladies, Valerie taking the donations, and Julie ready to try those fresh cooked brats.



The bake sale had some mighty good goodies, raising some impressive money for SCHS. Thanks to all.

**Photo
Gallery**

2013 OKTOBERFEST



The arts and crafts table with many interesting and useful homemade items.



Lots of people returned to their cars with nice plants, thanks to the Socorro Garden Club.



Always a favorite, German and toe-tapping tunes from Dr. Comstock's "Oompah Band."



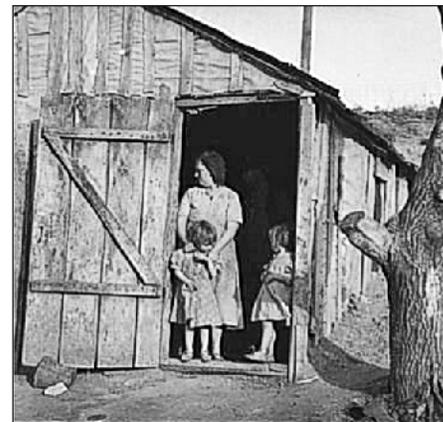
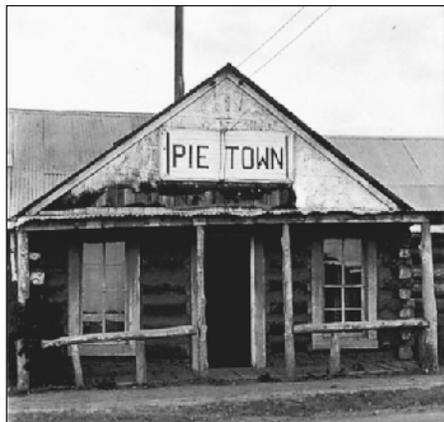
Dr. Comstock leading a sing-along.



Toby Jaramillo, Robert Catanach, and Fidel Baca provided some nice fiesta music for all to enjoy.



The "Rawhide Band" again entertained us all with a nice selection of classic country and western favorites.



On Russell Lee's first visit in 1939, he captured life in the western homestead town of Pie Town with black-and-white film. The following year, he was one of the first FSA photographers to use the new Kodachrome color film. He quickly learned to master color photography to add another dimension to his storied images of rural life.

The Compassionate Lens

Lee began his documentary work by traveling through the mid-west, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico ... the "Dust Bowl" states. While his job was to show the successes of the "New Deal" programs, Lee was immediately struck by what he saw. Countless abandoned farms, houses and fields buried in sand, rampant poverty, and American families in deep despair – yet, still filled with the human spirit and the will to survive.

In every image, Lee was able to capture all of the emotions of despair – and hope. His success is attributed to the fact that Russell wanted his photographs to tell the truth.

Trek to New Mexico

After photographing the dreary Dust Bowl states, Lee and his wife, Jean, moved farther west in late 1939 to photograph the thousands of refugees looking for a better life in the fields of California. Most refugees headed west on either US-60 or famed Route 66. Lee chose US-60, which brought him to Polvadera, Socorro, Magdalena, and west towards Arizona.

While in Socorro County, Lee photographed some of the old mission churches, which he learned to love dearly. They reminded him of the state of the country and the Depression – run down, abandoned, and the faith gone, but knew someday they would shine again.

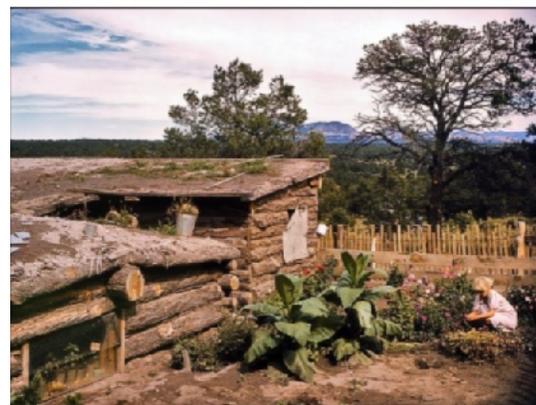
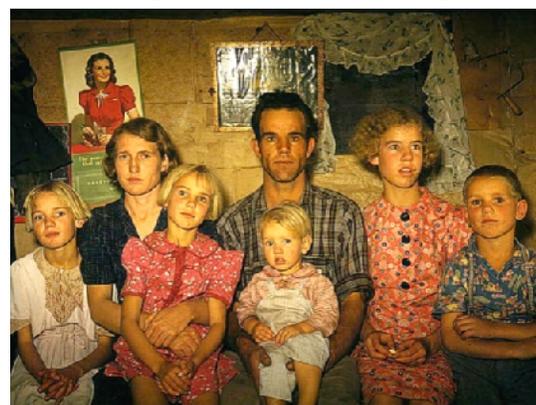
Pie Town

Pie Town was a small cattle-drive stop and settlement on the Ocean-to-Ocean highway, consisting of a small mix of Hispanic and Anglo ranchers, though sparsely populated. In the 1930s, Pie Town was one of the few areas in the United States opened for homesteading. Most of the residents were those forced out of Texas and Oklahoma by the Dust Bowl catastrophe. It was a hard life trying to cultivate the dry, desert land, and building their homes – mostly dugouts, or pit houses. Few had automobiles nor two nickels to rub together.

As Russell and his wife traveled west, they drove through the little village of Pie Town. He saw the run down houses, hastily built dugouts, the parched fields, and the obvious impoverished little town. However, not far ahead, he saw two hundred people



Pie Town children playing in a make shift play house built by their father, Jack Whinery.



Among the first of Lee's color photographs was this portrait of Jack Whinery and family, and their Pie Town homestead and garden.



(Left) One of the most iconic and published photos of the Great Depression is this photo of Faro and Doris Caudill of Pie Town. Standing on their parched fields with storm clouds brewing, Lee captured for eternity the unwavering look of determination and survival of the Pie Town homesteaders. (Right) The Caudill homestead dugout in the shadow of Alegres Peak.

assembled in what seemed like a town party. It was. They called it the Pie Town Festival, held in August after the first harvest and slaughter. Everybody made meals, barbecue beef, breads ... and of course, pies and ice cream. What little the people had, they shared. To them, it was a feast.

Dinner was followed by songs, square dancing, and other activities. Lee was taken how these impoverished and run-down people still had the spirit to have fun, dance, laugh, and temporarily forget their plight. This drove Lee to capture this contrast through his lens for the rest of his life.

Lee stayed in Pie Town for several days, almost becoming a part of the community, before he continued on to California. However, he returned the next August in time for the Pie Town Fiesta. This time, he was armed with a new camera, from which many of his iconic images were captured for the first time on color film. He learned to love the Pie Town people for their diligence and spirit to survive. He returned to Pie Town several more times.

The people of Pie Town enabled Lee to create some of the finest candid in the history of photography. And, images of life around Socorro 70 years ago.



ANOTHER GREAT FIND

SCHS President Robert Eveleth has done it again – this time an ebay find of an old Pepsi bottled by “*Illinois Brewing Company, Socorro, New Mexico.*” Age of the bottle was estimated to be 1940s. Not being bottle collectors, the internet was used in an attempt to date the bottle.

To save the company from slumping sales, president Charles Guth introduced the 12 ounce green bottle in 1934 for 5¢ – the same price as Coca-Cola’s 6 ounce bottle. This was an instant success for Pepsi-Cola. Unable to keep up with demand, licenses were issued in 1936 to 94 franchise bottlers. Presumably, Socorro was one. Paper labels were used to identify the bottler.

In 1940, paper labels were replaced with the Pepsi-Cola logo embossed directly on the bottle. This seems to



date the Socorro bottle to between 1936 and 1940, coinciding with what we know about the soft drink history of the Hammel Brewery.

Turns out, paper labels are rather rare finds, since they seldom stood the test of time, plus this style of label appeared only in the late 1930s. This dating is also confirmed by the double-dash between Pepsi and Cola, and the *Sparkling Bracing Beverage* slogan.

The Saga of D&RGW 485

Helper engine 485 on Marshall Pass, Colorado

The K-36 Baldwin 2-8-2 locomotives were the workhorses on the Denver & Rio Grande Western railroad. Numbered 480–489, these narrow gauge engines saw years of service hauling passengers and freight through the mountains of New Mexico and southern Colorado.

Even though now 90 years old, eight of the original ten locomotives are still in service. Engines 480, 481, 482 & 486 are in daily service on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Numbers 484, 487, 488 & 489 are the workhorses on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. 483 is in Chama on static display, leaving only engine 485 unaccounted for.

In the 1940s, engine 485 was used on the San Juan line, running almost daily between Alamosa, CO and Farmington, NM via Cumbres Pass, Chama, and Durango. In 1953, the engine was used for a short time as a helper engine on Marshall Pass in Colorado before being sent to the shops in Salida. There, the engine was completely rebuilt and ready to return to service by December.

The Salida Mountain Mail newspaper reported what happened on December 7, 1953: *“Monday afternoon at 1:30 Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge engine 485 made its first solo trip and ended up on its side in the turntable pit, a broken little engine. ... Leonard Abbott, a roundhouse employee, was on the engine when the walk started but jumped to safety. Total replacement cost on a steam narrow gauge engine would be about \$25,000.”*

It is still not known exactly what happened. The engine was stopped short of the roundtable, but it was not chained nor drivers locked per regulations. It is suspected cold water hitting the super heated steam pipes produced a burst of steam, or perhaps a leaky throttle valve. Regardless, the engine “walked” forward to the roundtable, which was not lined up with the tracks, and the engine fell into the roundtable pit.

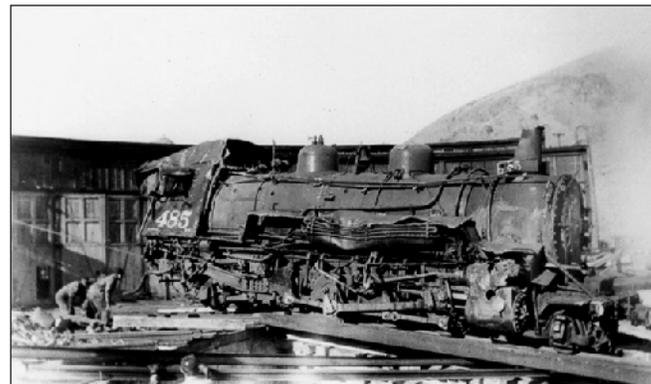
Just as mysterious is why the worker jumped from the engine without attempting to apply the engine air brakes.

Without making a single revenue run after the rebuild, the engine was declared a total loss. In 1955, it was moved to Pueblo and scrapped. Many parts were salvaged and used in the rebuild of #489, still operational today.

The K-36 engines were the most reliable of the narrow gauge engines, designed not for speed, but for power to negotiate the high mountain passes. The fact that eight engines are still in daily service today is testimony to their hearty design. What a shame a simple yard mistake ended the life of the 485.



A recently found photo shows the 485 shortly after it toppled into the round table pit with steam and smoke still escaping from the blow-down valves and ash grates.



After constructing a special ramp, #485 was pulled out of the pit. A hole can be seen in the drive cylinder, piston pulled out of the valve cylinder, bent frame and other damage forced D&RGW to declare the engine a total loss.