

Hondo Valley Snapshots

† Glencoe



Credits for Snapshot Publications:

The Federal Highway Administration and the New Mexico Department of Transportation funded this publication series to preserve a record of the culture of the Hondo Valley. Contributors to the publications include Daniel Wells, Rick Wessel, and Samantha Ruscavage-Barz (SWCA), Kirsten Campbell (Parson's Brinkerhoff), and Karen Van Citters (VanCitters Historic Preservation). Billy Crews (SWCA) designed the publications and contributed to the photography, and Jean Ballagh (SWCA) edited the text. Cameron Saffell (New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum) served as the peer reviewer. New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections generously contributed numerous historic photographs. The following individuals provided oral histories for the publications: Lee Bonnell, Paul and Nellie Ruth Jones, Lupe Kelly, Andreas Salas, Gladys Nosker, Patsy Sanchez, Mary Sedillo, Marjorie Titsworth Slayton, John Thomas, Joe Torrez, Amanda and Ignacio Torrez.

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GLENCOE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the community of Glencoe, at the western end of the picturesque Hondo Valley in southeastern New Mexico. Glencoe sits amid cottonwood and elm trees along both sides of the Rio Hondo, about 6 miles up the canyon from San Patricio and 6 miles east of Ruidoso Downs, at an elevation of 5,700 feet. In Robert Julyan's *The Place Names of New Mexico*, Glencoe is noted for its association with the initial settlers, the Coe and Bonnell families, and their involvement with the McSween faction of the Lincoln County War. Since more ink has been spilled covering that subject than blood during the conflict, this history will not go into those events. This booklet is more concerned with the day-to-day lives of the descendants of Frank and George Coe and the other settlers who came here to follow the quieter pursuits of farming and ranching.

Both written records and oral accounts have been used to tell the story of life in Glencoe from the beginnings of the community up to recent times. Collecting these stories of community lifeways is important, given that much of the history of the community is being lost as a result of changes in land use and ownership, highway construction, and movement of the descendants of the original families out of the area. This booklet is organized around



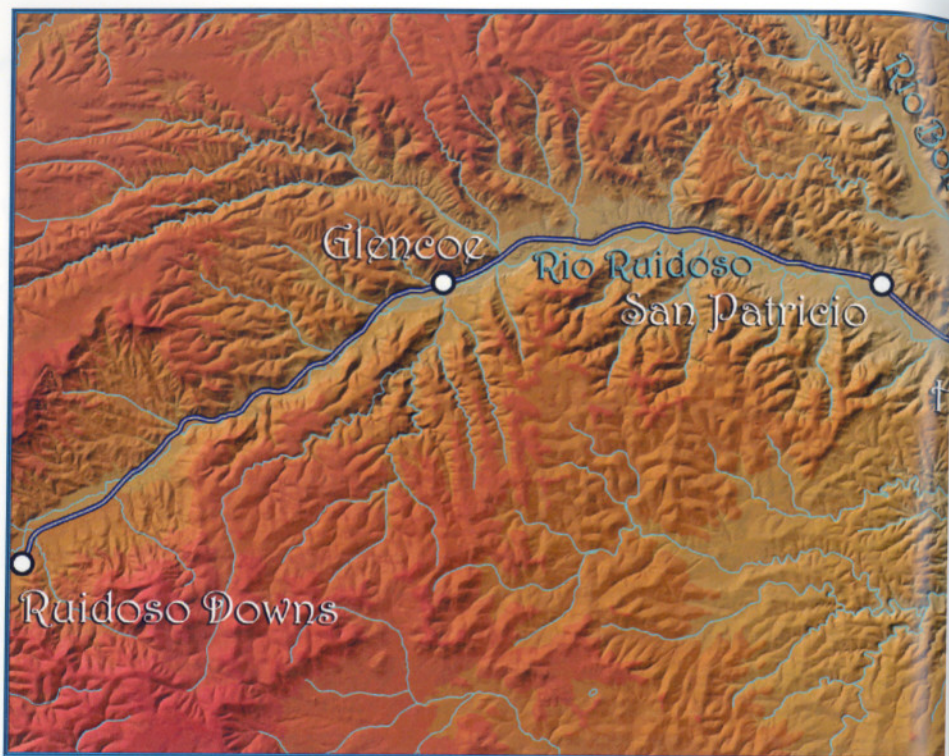
A view into Glencoe

three general themes—community settlement and population, making a living, and education, religion, and social life. The first theme includes the beginnings of Glencoe in the middle to late nineteenth century, key places of interest, and the pattern of settlement in the community and how and why that pattern changed over time. The second theme looks at the challenges faced by people living the lives of farmers or ranchers in Glencoe. Under the third theme, we discuss the community school system and school-related activities, the community church and church-related activities, and other social activities, such as rodeos and dances, and the places where these activities were held.

The story of Glencoe is one of five community histories for the Hondo Valley. The other books in the series cover Picacho/Sunset and Riverside, San Patricio, Hondo, and Tinnie. This series is produced by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) for two purposes: to record information that would otherwise be lost because of the U.S. Highway 70 reconstruction project, and to provide a benefit to the public from that project. US 70 is the major transportation route through the Valley, and changes to the route affect the historic character of the Hondo Valley communities, which have existed along the road since the late 1800s. This series of histories can help preserve the story of the historic character and lifestyle of these communities for future generations.



Nosker's Meat Barn sign



A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE HONDO VALLEY

Two rivers, the Rio Ruidoso and the Rio Hondo, flow through the area referred to in this publication series as “The Hondo Valley.” The Rio Ruidoso joins with the Rio Bonito to become the Rio Hondo. The communities in the Hondo Valley—Glencoe, San Patricio, Hondo, Tinnie, Picacho, and Sunset—share some similarities in their settlement history and natural environments, but each has a unique history. Most of these communities were occupied for a number of years before they were given formal names, and many changed names more than once before they came to have the names we know them by today.

The Hondo Valley has a long history of human use. The first documented settlements were built by the Jornada Mogollon people, who lived in round, subterranean pit houses. They built their villages between about A.D. 900 and 1450 on terraces overlooking the Rio Bonito and Rio Hondo and farmed in the valley bottoms. Well into the nineteenth century, Apache people lived and farmed on a small scale in the valleys and hunted in the surrounding mountains. Earlier, as Apaches obtained horses through trade with Spanish and Mexican explorers and settlers in the 1600s and 1700s, they had staged raids on Mexican and Hispanic trade routes and farms in the surrounding lowlands. The farmers and traders fought back when attacked, but they were unable to pursue the attackers into the mountains. Thus, Apaches exercised military control over the area throughout the 1700s and early 1800s, until the area became part of the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico in 1848.

One of the first priorities of the Americans in the newly formed Territory of New Mexico was to build a series of forts to establish a military presence in the area. Fort Stanton was built on the Rio Bonito in 1855. One of the primary missions of the troops at Fort Stanton was to make the area safe for settlement. The fort benefited Hispanic settlers and Euroamerican immigrants to the Hondo Valley in two ways. Not only did the soldiers provide protection against Apache raids, they needed to be fed, and the fort was the major market for agricultural goods for the early settlers. Under the protection of Fort Stanton, Hondo Valley settlers prospered by farming and by herding sheep, goats, and cattle.

During the late 1850s and early 1860s, small Hispanic farming and ranching communities were established along the Rio Bonito and Rio Hondo. These early settlers most likely came from Rio Grande valley communities and Manzano Mountain villages. They constructed *acequias* (irrigation ditches), grew corn, wheat, and beans, and herded sheep and goats in the surrounding hills. Land was held in common, and property was held by right of possession. The U.S. government established the Homestead Act in 1862, which allowed settlers to have 160-acre lots of land as long as they improved the land by living on it and farming it for five years. Many of the Hispanic farmers who had settled there claimed their land as homesteads. Euroamerican occupation of the southern Pecos Valley, to the east, spread into the Hondo Valley during the 1860s, as ranchers from Texas such as John Chisum moved in to make use of the area's rich grasslands. Lincoln County was established in 1869 and at that time consisted of almost all of southeastern New Mexico.

Ranching became more common during the 1870s as more Texas cattlemen discovered the lush valley grasslands and the high demand for beef at Fort Stanton. While most of the large cattle operations were to the east along the Pecos River, a few ranches were established in the Valley itself. Between 1868 and 1870,

Robert Casey sold his ranch in Texas and relocated his family to the Hondo Valley, 6 miles east of Hondo. He also purchased a grist mill in the Valley and became something of a commercial and political leader. Dave Warner, another Texan, established a ranch at the present-day site of Tinnie in 1876. At Picacho in 1885, John and Mahlon Thatcher and Frank Bloom established the Circle Diamond Ranch, a property that was eventually purchased by the Diamond A Ranch.

By the end of the 1880s, many of the smaller farms in the Hondo Valley had become concentrated in the hands of a few owners, both Euroamerican and Hispanic. The closing of Fort Stanton in 1896 meant that farmers switched to more commercial crops, such as cotton and alfalfa. Fruit and vegetable production became one of the most important economic activities in the Valley, and apples, pears, and cabbage were grown. However, by the early decades of the twentieth century, the farming success of the Hondo Valley was eclipsed by farming and ranching booms in the Pecos Valley, and commercial activity moved to the towns of Roswell and Eddy (later renamed Carlsbad). The town of Lincoln was the county seat until 1909, when the county government moved to Carrizozo.

By 1907 there was an auto, stage, and mail road between Alamogordo and Roswell. This route would become US 70 in 1931. The rough dirt road climbed several large hills and forded the Hondo River fourteen times. What was then the New Mexico State Highway Department was involved in the grading of the roadway as early as 1922, although the section of the road through the Hondo Valley was not fully paved until 1938. The first paved section, completed in 1923, covered a 5-mile area between Border Hill and Picacho. The road was much higher up the slope than it is today and required several cuts with a wooden guardrail and a stone retaining wall. Portions of the retaining wall and drainage ditches are visible today above the modern road as you climb out of the valley east of Riverside.

The growth in popularity of automobiles affected the valley in several ways. Although residents continued to use horse-drawn wagons to haul wood and goods from nearby towns, automobile use for basic transportation needs grew throughout the 1930s and 1940s. With the growth of trucking, residents no longer had to take their agricultural produce to regional shipping points like Capitan and Roswell, but could sell local fruit to buyers from Texas. This was a profitable market for fruit growers throughout the 1940s, until apple growing boomed in Washington state, undercutting local producers. As fruit production became less profitable, many farmers converted their orchards to irrigated pastures. Other changes came to the Hondo Valley during this decade. Electrical service arrived in 1947, and indoor plumbing became common after World War II.

Throughout the changes in transportation, land use, and land ownership, the communities of the Hondo Valley continued to value family, hard work, and pleasure in the simple things in life. In the following sections, we have tried to capture the history and lifestyle of one of these communities—Glencoe—using information given to us by local residents. In many cases we have quoted the people we interviewed, so that reader can hear directly the experiences and life stories of the people of Glencoe.

COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT

Modern-day Glencoe, with its wide-open pastures separated by fence and tree lines and dotted with farm buildings, has changed little from its appearance when the Coe family first settled here in 1875. The earliest patent records in the area, from the early 1890s, include George W. Coe (1891), James V. Tully (1892), Jasper N. Coe (1892), Frank B. Coe (1892), Prospero Gonzales (1897), Telesfora M. Sanchez (1897), Florencio Gonzales (1898), and Felipe Silva (1898). Many of these settlers had lived on their land for years before the official patent date. Some came and went, depending on economic or political conditions. These early settlers engaged in a variety of agricultural and ranching pursuits to provide for their families.

George and Phoebe Coe



of Frank Coe and Glencoe resident, talks about her grandfather coming to the Hondo Valley:

The area around Glencoe changed hands several times but was eventually settled by and named for the Coe family of Missouri around 1875. Lou Coe was the first of the Coe family to arrive in the Hondo Valley. He settled at La Junta, which was later renamed Hondo. By 1874 there were five Coes in New Mexico: Lou, his brothers Frank, Al, and Jasper, and their cousin George. Nellie Ruth Jones, granddaughter

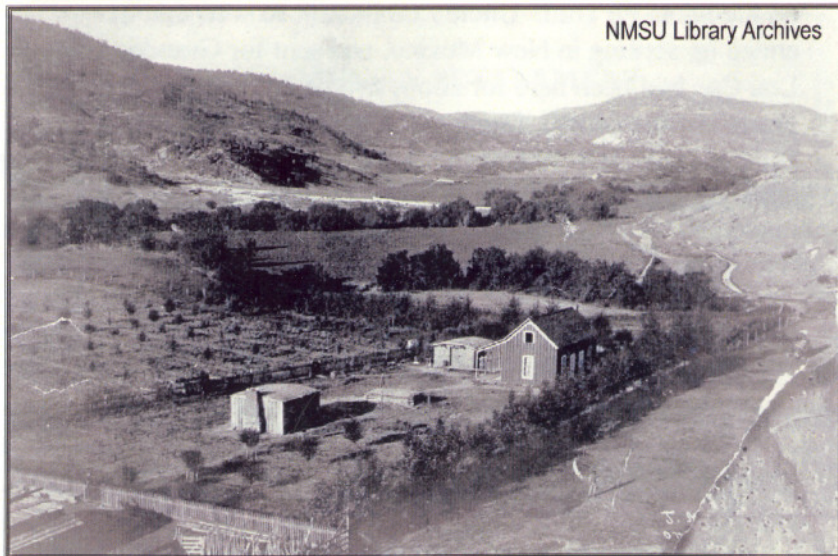
My grandfather, Frank Coe, first came in probably about the late 1870s, between 1875 and 1878...and he settled down at Hondo first, right at the "Y".... His oldest brother, Lou, was a freighter on the Santa Fe Trail. When Granddad was 14 he started coming with his brother, bringing freight on the Santa Fe Trail. Uncle Lou liked it so well that he ended up settling in New Mexico, and sent for Granddad.... Lou Coe had been here for about two or three years when Frank and his cousin, George Coe, came and took over his [Lou's] place.



The Coe Barn

Frank and George are perhaps the best known, because of their involvement in the Lincoln County War and their association with Billy the Kid. After the conflict, Frank and George both left Lincoln County for several years, but they returned in the early 1880s. In 1882 Frank Coe purchased a portion of Dick Brewer's old ranch on the Hondo, and George built a homestead on his cousin Jasper's place, the Golden Glow Ranch, about one mile west of Frank. The cousins built a school and a post office, and the town was officially named Glencoe.

A portion of the Coe Ranch was eventually sold to Bert and Nelson Bonnell, two brothers who worked for the Coes and who married into the family. The Bonnell Ranch house, at the junction of Eagle Creek and the Rio Hondo, became a popular community gathering place. It was the scene of many harvest feasts and dances and became a stopover for travelers along the highway. Lee Bonnell says that his grandfather "had a coal mine in White Oaks, and that's where they got into the valley. They came from Leonard, Kansas, and bought [the Bonnell ranch] in 1915."



NMSU Library Archives

Bonnell Ranch, ca. 1917



NMSU Library Archives

Bert Bonnell on his horse

The Sanchezes were among the earliest settlers in the Glencoe area. From the 1880s up to 1917, the Sanchez family homesteaded a parcel of land now owned by Paul and Nellie Ruth Jones. Paul Jones's grandparents bought the land and the house from the Sanchezes in 1917, and it has been in the Jones family ever since. The Sanchez family built the adobe portion of the house before 1892, according to a Sanchez family member who was born in the house. Additions have been made over the years, but the house and the surrounding property with its functioning acequia still retain some of the character of historic homesteads in Glencoe.



Community Identity

Although the term “Hondo Valley” is used to describe the larger area along the Hondo and the Ruidoso, dotted with farm fields and fruit orchards, for the residents of the area each community has a distinct identity, even if clear community boundaries are not shown on a map. When asked what makes Glencoe different from the other Hondo Valley communities, Paul Jones, a lifelong Glencoe resident, says:

You know, I don't really know. It was just where the dividing line was. Somebody says “I'm from San Patrice” and another next door says “I'm from Glencoe,” and that's just the way it was.... There wasn't a “community” so to speak, it was just a...scattering of places.

Gladys Nosker, granddaughter of George Coe and lifelong Glencoe resident, says that for her Glencoe is distinctive from the other communities because “the main thing is most of the families that live right in Glencoe are the original family that settled here.” Lee Bonnell sees Louise Coe as a contributor to the unique identity of Glencoe: “She's the first school teacher, first county school teacher, the first senator, first [New Mexico State Senator]. She done it all. That's what made Glencoe popular.” Louise Coe served as the Lincoln County school system superintendent from 1923 through 1925 and in the New Mexico senate from 1925 to 1940. She was a member of many committees throughout her time in the senate, was chair of the Education and Public Institutions, and was president pro tem from 1935 until the end of her service.

Historical accounts of early settlers in the Hondo Valley do reveal some differences between Glencoe and San Patricio in terms of ethnicity and religion. San Patricio is characterized as Hispanic and Catholic, while Glencoe is described as Euroamerican and Protestant.

Law Enforcement

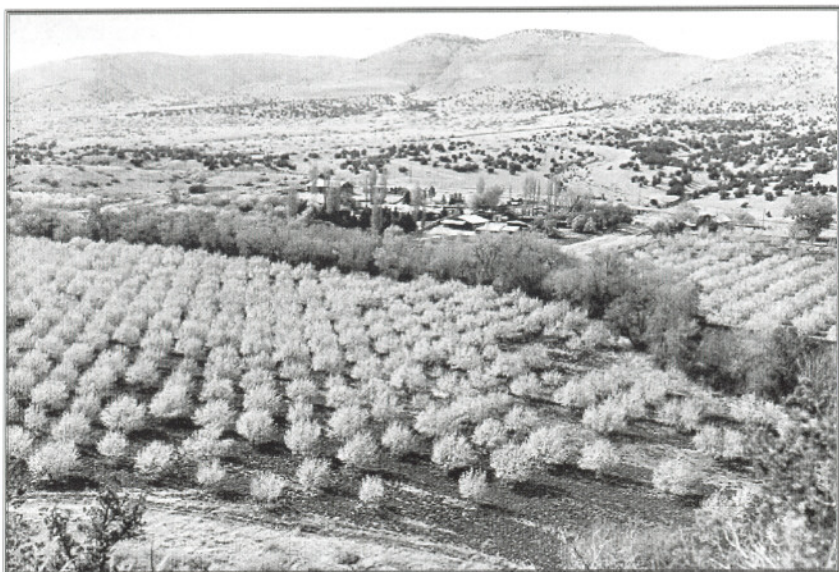
After the lawless days of the Lincoln County War, things settled down in the Hondo Valley. There were not many problems with crime, and everyone was busy tending herds and raising crops. When the highway that became US 70 was paved, it connected the valley to the rest of the United States, bringing not only tourists and truckers, but people on the wrong side of the law. In the 1930s crime in the United States became a major issue, as gangsters such as Al Capone, John Dillinger, and Bonnie and Clyde made headlines for their flouting of the law. Even places like the Hondo Valley were not safe, since criminals often stole cars and “headed to the hills” to try to evade capture. As the Hondo Valley was a major throughway at the time, criminals sometimes passed through on their way out of Texas or tried to hole up until things cooled off. In the testimony below, Paul Jones describes how his father was killed by two lesser-known robbers, Glenn Hunsucker and John (Perchmouth) Stanton, on the run after killing a Texas sheriff.

Nellie Ruth Jones: Paul's dad was a deputy sheriff, and he was killed in the line of duty. What were they, bank robbers?

Paul Jones: Robbers, and they escaped and killed a lawman in Texas. Perchmouth Stanton shot my dad.

Nellie Ruth Jones: They ended up over there in the Jicarillas, around Ancho, and Tom was the deputy sheriff, who evidently said, “Come out with your hands up.” And they shot [and] killed him. And that was when Paul was... seven.

[Note: Lincoln County Deputy Sheriff Thomas Jones was memorialized on the Chaves County Fallen Heroes Memorial in July 2003 near the Roswell Civic Center.]



Frank Coe Ranch, ca. 1958

MAKING A LIVING: FARMING, RANCHING, AND TOURISM

In the early days, many Glencoe families had orchards and grew vegetables such as corn and cabbage. The farmers often focused on a single crop, such as apples, that would produce more than the family needed so that the excess could be sold for cash. Most families also kept animals, such as cows, horses, mules, sheep, hogs, and chickens. Fort Stanton and local towns such as Roswell and Capitan served as markets for the excess produce. Nellie Ruth Jones says that the Coe family raised apples, truck-farmed vegetables, and kept cattle, horses, and mules. The Bonnell family raised fruits, vegetables and alfalfa in addition to running 50 head of cows, along with ten horses, five mules, and four hogs.

Orchards

Fruit orchards were a mainstay of the Hondo Valley economy from the late 1800s well into the middle of the twentieth century. Apples were the primary orchard crop, along with peaches, pears,

and cherries. Prior to truck transport, loads of apples were hauled by horse and wagon to local markets. The growth of the orchard industry was closely tied to the growth of trucking, as trucks could haul large quantities of fruit to out-of-state markets. Paul Jones says that the truckers would “load up three or four hundred bushels and say, ‘I’ll be back in four or five days. Have me another four hundred bushels ready’. And they always paid in cash.” Nellie Ruth Jones says, “There were some truckers who came year after year after year, you know, and they went to the same orchards, would make several trips to Texas and back.”



NMSU Library Archives

Glencoe fruit stand



Perry fruitstand

As the market grew, some local producers organized into a cooperative by bringing all of their apples to a central storage place, such as the White Mountain Apple Shed in Hondo, where they could sell in bulk to truckers. Others continued selling produce from roadside stands, the remnants of which can still be seen today along the roadside in Glencoe.

The availability of truck transport made farming more profitable and injected cash into the local economy. There was a drawback to this efficient system of produce transport, however, in that trucks were able to reach markets much farther afield than the Hondo Valley. Paul Jones says, "What really hurt us—Washington really started raising apples. Their apples came off before ours did, and they colored up so much better than ours that they just took the market and there wasn't any market for these apples." By the 1950s, the competition resulted in a decline in the apple market in Glencoe and other communities, and many families took out their orchards and replaced them with permanent pasture and cattle, according to Nellie Ruth Jones.

The realignment of US 70 between 1957 and the early 1970s also affected the already-declining roadside fruit stand business. Glencoe fruit stands along the old road alignment closed because, as Gladys Nosker says, "there was no longer traffic, other than if you were lucky enough to be on the new highway, you could put up a fruit stand. And only the bigger fruit stands went ahead and Coe Ranch had one of the best ones, but they remained on the new highway. Ours [Perry Fruit Stand] was off the highway, and it killed it." When we asked Mrs. Nosker how her family responded to the closing of the Perry Fruit Stand she replied, "You quit raising apples and started raising cows."

Farming and Ranching

Water was a key factor in the success of early settlements in Glencoe. Crop and livestock production would have been impossible without a reliable water supply, so one of the first activities of the earliest settlers would have been building an acequia. This early irrigation system would have been small and able to water only small parcels of land. Priority dates from the State Engineer's Office indicate that most of the irrigation ditches along the Ruidoso River were built between 1864 and 1874.

The acequia on Frank Coe's ranch was already built when Mr. Coe bought the ranch from Dick Brewer in 1882. Nellie Ruth Jones says:

I know in the survey taken way back yonder—1868 or somewhere along there—they talk about crossing some irrigated land. So this ditch was in then, and the people that owned it had it by a well... They...dug it by hand, and they told me, the old timers, that they'd take a...whiskey or wine bottle full of water, or half full of water, and...they'd lay it in the ditch to get the grade.

Lee Bonnell talks about how the acequias were maintained and the water use allocated:

We all had ditches. Each place had five days a month...ours run 26th through the 31st. We watered then, and some of the rest of them had the water. [We had to] clean them out. Keep the weeds and stuff out of them. Keep the water rolling free, usually after the weeds and everything died on later in September. There were five [families] on it. Each one had a ditch and took care of that. Every farmer done his own so that he could do it at a convenient time. We did have a ditch foreman, all right. My dad was a ditch foreman for a long, long time. If the rest of them wasn't doing their work he'd go tell them about it.

The Great Depression of the 1930s led to a change in farm and ranch organization in Glencoe and the rest of the communities in the Hondo Valley. Farm consolidation accelerated as people with marginally productive farms sold out to those who could afford to buy them. The government also tried to raise the price of beef by lowering the number of cattle coming to market. Paul Jones talks about the transition from small to large farms and ranches in the Glencoe area:

Well, back then [1880s through 1920s] there were a lot of homesteaders and people just had these little old farms, and they just raised crops and worked when they could and raised what they ate.... And when times got so hard, why, bigger fellows got to buying the little ones out. That's where these big ranches got started [in the 1930s]. The ones that had a little money or a little credibility at the bank could borrow money and buy the little ones out.... 'Cause there was a time there...when it was so dry the government bought up a lot of cattle and killed them. [They gave] the ranchers \$5 a head, then they just gathered them up and shot them.... Prices got so cheap.

Many of the farmers and ranchers caught up in the depression failed and were forced to move on to other parts of the country. Others were able to hold on through the worst of hard times. Paul Jones relates how some people in the valley were able to make it with the help of his wife's father, who was an agent for one of the banks in Roswell:

Fred Lucas [was his name]. The bank was foreclosing on a bunch of people, and they sent him up to get these cattle. That was during the Depression and he'd get most of the cattle and leave a few. And those people really appreciated him then. Because I've had some of them tell me about that later that that's the only way they got by to build their herds again.

In spite of this upheaval, descendants of the Coe and Bonnell families, among others, continued to call Glencoe home and continued working on the lands that had been in their families since the late 1800s.





St. Anne's Church

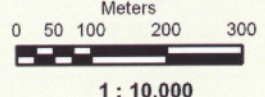
Bonnell Road House

Old U.S. Highway 70 Alignment

Historic Coe Ranch

70

Glencoe Community



Life as a Farmer and Rancher

Work on a farm or ranch is never ending, and chores were divided between all of the members of the family. The people interviewed for the history of Glencoe said that the farms and ranches depended primarily on family labor, and only rarely hired people to help out. Many modern-day comforts, like plumbing, were not available until after World War II; electricity did not reach the Hondo Valley until 1947. In spite of the hard work, people also have many fond memories of those early days. Lee Bonnell talks about his early life on the Bonnell Ranch:

I did everything on the ranch...that there was there to do, branding or shipping or taking care of the calves when they come, and breaking horses, and working all the time on something.... I worked every day but four hours on Sunday. We got four hours off after church. Worked 'til dark and sometimes after dark. We didn't have lights like they have now. There wasn't electricity in the valley.

Gladys Nosker also remembers working hard on her family's farm:

All the family had to help with whatever job there was to do that day, because you didn't hire any outside help, and when Sunday come, my Grandmother Coe was definitely very religious, and we took Sunday off.

Nellie Ruth Jones provides some insight into what it was like for a girl growing up on a ranch in this story about her mother, who was one of Frank Coe's daughters:

There were six sisters in the Frank Coe family. And they had to learn how to rope and ride...to help their father. Mr. Ready said that in about 1918 that there was a group of Texas cowboys came through here, moving a herd to Arizona. And they were talking about what good cowboys Texas cowboys were in comparison to New Mexico

cowboys. Mr. Ready was just a young man, and he said there were several of them there, and they said, "We've got women that can outride you Texas cowboys." And these Texas cowboys had to go on to Arizona, but they said, "We'll stop on the way back." So they did. And they were going to have a bronc riding contest, and they put my mother and my Aunt Edith up against these Texas cowboys. And Mr. Ready said, "We cleaned them out, man! We made money that day!"

Girls took to the job of "cowboy" as well as any boys in more recent times as well, according to Paul Jones as he talks about his own daughters:

We had all girls and I made cowboys out of them. They were just as good cowboys as anybody I ever had help me. Bar none of them. They were good hands. [They could] do anything, rope and ride. They grew up doing it.

In addition to the food produced on the farms and ranches, increased traffic on the highway often provided an extra, unexpected food source for families as the speeding cars hit deer that came down out of the hills at night to forage. The fresh kills did not go to waste, and local people could take advantage of the game that unintentional hunters provided, as Lee Bonnell often did:

We could get enough venison to eat just driving up the road a mile and picking up on car-hits. And just go ahead and finish him off and take the good quarter and eat venison all the time. And just nearly every night somebody got one. Eat all the venison you wanted.

Living on the Land

The endless work of living off the land includes caring for animals and crops, maintaining equipment, harvesting crops, and getting the produce to market. Sometimes a family didn't have enough people to get all the necessary work done and had to rely on hired help. In the early days labor was traded for labor—you help your neighbor this week, they help you the next. According to Nellie Ruth Jones, Frank and George Coe both had additional household help in the late 1800s and early 1900s:

I think Grandmother Coe and Aunt Phoebe Coe probably had a little bit easier life than most women had. They always had some servants, and, like, Grandmother had a cook. Old Man Goss...worked many, many years for Grandmother as a cook. And then they always had some house help. And there was a black man who had been over there during the days of the Lincoln County War, and he came and he divided his time between Uncle George's family and Frank Coe's family, helping the children with their music.

In addition to the household help, Nellie Ruth Jones says local community members also helped the Coes with the farming and ranching tasks:

I know when Grandmother and Granddad were living on Coe Ranch, when mother was a little girl, they had quite a few hired hands. He had young fellows helping with the cattle and the horses and the mules. They had one son, Wilbur Coe, but he had polio when he was just a baby, and was crippled, and he rode a horse and became very, very

strong from the waist up. But there were a lot of things he couldn't do, so they'd hire young men to help and then all six of the girls helped with the cattle and things too. They were really good riders.

By the 1940s and 1950s, the cash economy became the norm as people made money from produce sold to truckers and from jobs at the racetrack at Ruidoso Downs. According to Lee Bonnell, his family ranch "did hire out laborers to pick apples or to mow hay or spray trees and all that kind of farm work." Mr. Bonnell also talks about the effect of Ruidoso Downs racetrack on the local economy:

The big change was made in the valley when the racetrack come in, in 1952. That's when it seemed like everybody run up there to go to work and they quit farming. They don't do much farming anymore. I never see no corn trucks or anything there anymore. It's all in junk. But they brought enough jobs—that racetrack brought enough jobs into Ruidoso to keep all their families going down there. They don't have to farm. Lot of them still got cows.

Tourist Industry

Tourism began with the growth in popularity of the automobile. Cars enabled people to travel from the Midwest and the East to experience the exotic western landscape that they had seen in the movies. The popular westerns of the day made people want to experience horseback riding, camping under an open sky, and rodeos firsthand. The Bonnell family and at least one other were happy to oblige the tourists and opened "dude ranches" where people stayed for a week or two to enjoy ranch life. Many of the visitors to the Bonnell Ranch and the Lone Pine Dude Ranch, both in Glencoe, came from the East Coast and Chicago.

According to a 1964 newspaper article in *New Mexico Farm and Ranch*, the Bonnell Ranch started in 1915 with a few boarders and quickly grew to accommodate 30 guests in small cabins on the property. Gladys Nosker remembers the dude ranch as a "convenient place for travelers to stop, so they had the gas station, dining room, and cabins for travelers to stay at, 'cause in those days it took three days to go to Roswell. And it was the largest place that we could have gatherings. And there was a dance almost every Saturday night, and they had rodeos down there." Bert and Sydney Bonnell also had a filling station, grocery store, and lunch counter next to St. Anne's Church in Glencoe. The store was washed out in a flood in 1965. Lee Bonnell worked at the dude ranch milking cows and saddling horses for the guests to ride:

[I] kept a record of them all the time, what horses [are] available, what's not available, and record them out as long as we had them, and if we didn't have enough we'd go to the ranches below or above and borrow a couple more.... Sometimes we'd have 30 horses going.... I washed dishes a few times. My brother done the pie-making and the cake-making...he was a pastry cook.

All of Mr. Bonnell's sisters were waitresses at the Bonnell Ranch. They worked in the dining room, which was in the big middle room of the main house. The *New Mexico Farm and Ranch* article states

The Bonnell Ranch and Farm

Glencoe, New Mexico

Growers of Registered Hereford Cattle

Situated 62 miles west of Roswell, 63 miles east of Alamogordo. Santa Fe Railroad passes through Roswell, Rock Island & Southern Pacific passes through Alamogordo. El Paso, Texas, 150 miles south of Ranch on Highway No. 70. Daily stages from above mentioned towns stop at Ranch.

This Ranch is connected closely with the early history of the state, the Lincoln County War in which Billy the Kid took an active part. Ranch also rich in ancient Indian ruins.

A few miles away is the Mescalero Indian Reservation. Horseback riding a feature of the Ranch. Many trips of a day's duration. The famous Carlsbad Caverns one day trip by auto. The Great White Sands one day trip. The lava bed near Carrizozo one day trip.

★ ★ ★

" " The Ranch is open to Guests " "

Both Summer and Winter.

For additional Information Write

B. J. BONNELL, Glencoe, New Mexico

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DINING ROOM

that the dining room at the Bonnell Ranch also operated as a public restaurant and bus line post house. World War II caused a decline in guests for the dude ranch, and the Bonnells got out of that business in 1941.



Ralph and Bert Bonnell at the dude ranch, ca. 1938

Transportation

The main road through Glencoe that became US 70 was not the only transportation route people used to travel across the Valley. Less developed, unnamed tracks leading into the hills on either side of the Hondo Valley provided access to wood-gathering and grazing areas away from the Rio Ruidoso. Most of these trails were passable by wagon, while others were suitable only for horse or foot travel. Paul Jones remembers an old trail “down there at Coe Canyon that went back out to the [Mescalero] Reservation. Indians used to use it to come in [to the Valley].” Mr. Jones also recalls “a wagon road going up Hale Lake, toward Hale Lake” to the Mescalero Reservation. Nellie Ruth Jones remembers a trail between Bonnell Ranch and Coe Ranch that “went over to Capitan and it branched off and also went to Lincoln.”

According to George Coe’s autobiography, the main road between Ruidoso and Roswell was nothing more than an “irregular, winding

cow trail” before the 1920s. Nellie Ruth Jones remembers her older relatives “talking about before the road was paved, how each person had to give so many days to road work to keep it smoothed off and graveled and the mud holes raked out, and so forth. And I remember Uncle Burt Bonnell saying that his portion was five days a year to work the highway. I’m sure they were glad when it was paved and that was not an annual chore.”



Bonnell Ranch and Highway 70

After the Federal Road Act was passed in 1916, several stretches of US 70 were improved by surfacing with asphalt. In 1938 a top course was laid and oil treated. In 1952, over 88 miles of the road between Roswell and Tularosa were sealed. The paving projects freed local people from the chores of filling potholes and also opened the valley to more travel than it had previously witnessed. The road became an important route between Texas and points to the west, which eventually led to its realignment between 1957 and 1970. A segment of the old US 70 alignment remains, parallel to the current US 70 alignment in the community of Glencoe. This segment still retains its feeling of a winding country road through an agricultural valley. It is at a lower grade than the current US 70, is asphalt paved, and runs adjacent to the Rio Ruidoso. Orchards, fields, pastures, and a horse ranch are between the river and the roadway. The road segment includes features such as original road cuts, culverts, and a spillway.

EDUCATION, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL LIFE

Every community has its gathering places, where people come together to talk, learn, and worship. These are the places where people can share in the experience of living in a community and feel a common bond with their neighbors. In the Hondo Valley, these places tend to be centered around the schools, churches, and general stores.

Schools

Before the school system was consolidated, Glencoe had its own schoolhouse that served the families within walking distance. The school fluctuated in size with the number of children in the local families but always had at least one teacher. Grades were combined in one or two rooms where all the children learned together, from the first grade through the eighth grade.



The first school in Glencoe was probably built before 1880, since the earliest available school census records for Lincoln County are for that year. The census records indicate that there were 35 students in the Glencoe School District in 1880 and 27 students in 1920. Paul Jones recalled three schools in Glencoe during the early 1900s: the Sanchez School, the Stetson School, and one at the Bonnell's. The earliest schools were in people's houses; eventually community members pitched in to build schoolrooms for the local children. Sometime before 1934, the one-room Glencoe School was built in the area behind where St. Anne's Church sits today. Nellie Ruth Jones says, "there must have been about 30, maybe 40 pupils, because there was a big bunch of Coes, their grandchildren. And when they finished eighth grade, well, most of them went elsewhere for high school."

According to Lee Bonnell, classes consisted of English, spelling, arithmetic, and geography, interspersed with a few recesses. Mr. Bonnell remembers that "[the two teachers] had different classes, one at a time. And when one's doing bookwork or something, and she'd take it over and do the teaching.... I'd say there was 35 [students]."

The Glencoe school building was torn down in the 1940s when the local school districts consolidated. All Glencoe children were moved to the Stetson School in Ruidoso Downs and placed in the Ruidoso school district rather than the Hondo Valley school district.

School provided a social environment for children, where they were exposed to children from other parts of the community whom they might not meet otherwise and forged friendships that would last for a lifetime. The schoolhouse also served as a community center where adults met socially. Thus, the school was an element that helped bind the community together for many years. Paul Jones remembers social events at the school: "At the schools they'd have these potluck suppers...box suppers to raise money to buy school materials or so forth and people'd go to that, that was considered a social visit. 'Course, back then some of the box suppers went awful cheap."



NMSU Library Archives

One-room Glencoe School behind St. Anne's Church

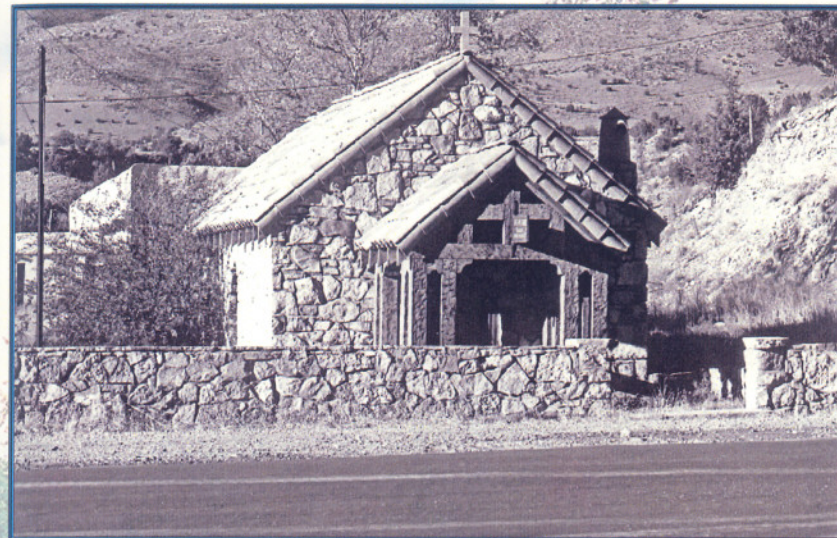
Churches

Glencoe has both a Protestant and a Catholic Church. In the early days, people's homes were used for Sunday worship, and a family might dedicate a room to serve as a meeting space. Later the community built a church to hold more people. There was no permanent minister or priest, and services were usually offered only when a traveling clergyman from a larger town passed through on a regular circuit. Paul and Nellie Ruth Jones, whose house in Glencoe was built by the Sanchez family in the late 1800s, were told by a member of the Sanchez family that one of the original rooms in the house was saved for the priest's visits:

There was one of the Sanchez sons stopped by, been about 20 years ago.... He had been born in this house in 1892, and he said that that front bedroom was what his mother called the priest's room, and that the Catholic priest just came around once a year, but that room was kept empty for his arrival and they couldn't use it at all. And he said as a child he really resented that here they were all piled up in two rooms and the kitchen, when there was this empty room.... He said that the priest would come and do the marriages and the baptisms, and bless the graves, and do the communions, and confirm the children baptized.

San Ysidro Catholic Church was built on land the Sanchez family donated to the Church prior to 1917, when the Jones family acquired the property. Today San Ysidro is used only for funerals, and St. Jude's Church in San Patricio serves the Hondo Valley Catholic communities. The bell from San Ysidro still hangs at St. Jude's, along with the bells from the Hondo and Picacho Catholic churches.

The Coe family brought their religious traditions with them when they arrived in Glencoe in the late 1800s. Nellie Ruth Jones tells about how her grandmother, Helena Coe, and aunt, Phoebe Coe, maintained their religious traditions in those early days:



St. Anne's Church, 1934, US 70 in foreground

When Grandmother came and started having children, she and George Coe's wife held Sunday schools in their living rooms to educate the children in a religious lifestyle. My grandmother was Anglican from Canada, and Aunt Phoebe Coe was Baptist from Texas. Well, they combined on their Sunday school projects.

From the late 1800s up to the 1920s an Episcopal bishop rode through Glencoe about every 18 months to perform baptisms and confirmations, bless graves, or marry couples who were waiting for him to come by. During the 1920s and 1930s, before the church was built, the Episcopal minister from Roswell would come to Glencoe and hold services about once a month at Sydney Bonnell's house. The Coe family built St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Glencoe in 1934. Lee Bonnell remembers a priest coming from Roswell for Sunday services, and that there were about 30 parishioners when he attended the church as a boy.

Dances

Dances were the main social events in the Hondo Valley communities. They were relaxing after the long hours of work that everyone put in during the week and a chance to catch up with neighbors. The Bonnell Ranch had the best dance hall in the area, and Paul Jones recalls that the Ranch "had dances off and on all year long." Local talent provided music, and many bands had players from grandparents down to children on an assortment of instruments. Whoever could play an instrument did, and by most accounts the bands were professional quality and a source of considerable local pride.



Nellie Ruth Jones recalls her mother, Helena Coe, telling her how she learned to play a musical instrument:

They'd gather around the piano. Granddad played the fiddle, mostly, and mother said she could remember as a child him teaching her to accompany him while he was playing dance music or something. And if she hit the wrong note, he'd poke her with that bow and she'd never hit it again! She said, "Man, you learned those right chords real fast, 'cause that bow hurt." All the children learned to play at least two instruments, most of them three and four. That's why they could have their own band.

The Coe Ranch Orchestra was perhaps the best known of the family bands in the Hondo Valley, and played regularly at the Bonnell Ranch. Wilbur Coe played the fiddle; Louise Coe, Helena Coe, and Sydney Bonnell were the piano players; George Coe's grandsons played guitar, as did Elzy Perry, Jr., and Ralph Bonnell. This multi-generational orchestra included great-grandparents down through great-grandchildren.



Lee Bonnell recalls the Bonnell Ranch dances and the Coe Orchestra:

There was one-step and the two-step, the jigs. I don't know how Coe could play it all. Besides he played Mexican music.... [The dances were] just like a family meeting. There's family together and have a little fun.... [There would be] maybe 30 couples. And the guests were according to how many guests [from the Bonnell dude ranch] we had. They'd all be up there.

Music and dancing in Glencoe were not limited to events held at the Bonnell Ranch. Smaller dances were held in many people's houses, including the Jones house. Paul Jones says:

We had dances here, in that living room. We moved the furniture out on New Year's Eve, because it got to where it wasn't any good to go out to one of these dance halls on New Year's Eve because there was so much drinking and lot of strangers there, and they'd always end up a bunch of fights and cussin' and so forth, and the families would come.... [T]alking about the babies, why that bedroom back there'd just be solid with kids sleeping. The women'd run in there and check on them every once in a while and we'd move everything out and have a dance. The kitchen was set up. Everybody brought their own bottle, and whatever they'd want to drink, they'd come mix their own, and never was any trouble. Everybody got along.



Dances were the main social events in the Hondo Valley communities

With the closing of the Bonnell Ranch and damage to the dance hall from a flood in 1941, the community dances ceased. According to Gladys Nosker,

You just had no central place to gather all the community and surrounding families. There was no place large enough to continue. People went more to individual family gatherings at somebody's house instead of going to Bonnell's for a picnic, a rodeo, or dance.

Baseball Games

Dances were not the only recreation in the Valley. Men put together baseball teams that played against other regional teams. Lee Bonnell recalls that [the baseball team was] "just people from the community, and started having my Hondo High School boys, all right...we played against Fort Stanton, Capitan, we'd go down and play with Roswell. They'd come up there. And Cloudcroft would come down. We had different towns playing."

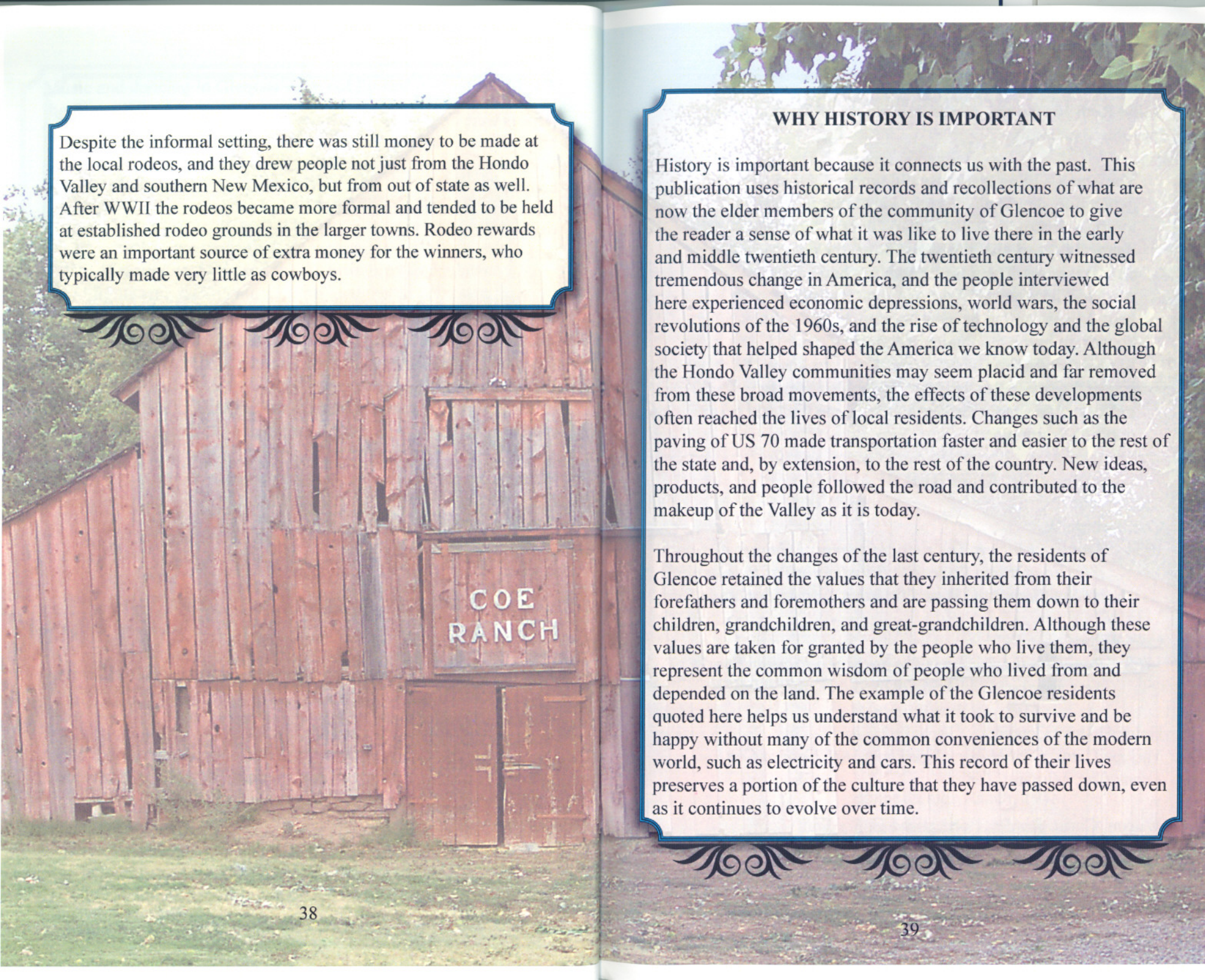
Rodeos

Rodeos presented another opportunity for people to get together and were often accompanied by cook-outs, dances, and overnight stays. Before World War II, rodeos were held all over Lincoln County in the spring and summer in places like Turkey Canyon south of Ruidoso Downs, Ruidoso, Mescalero, Fort Stanton, and Carrizozo. Paul Jones remembers the rodeo days in Lincoln County:

Yeah, that was a big thing, the rodeo. Guys from all over came to compete, and their families came, and friends, and a lot of those places didn't have a fence around the arena, and they'd use parked cars as a fence.... [They held rodeos up until] World War II, and then they kind of settled down. They still had them in Ruidoso and Capitan.... It became more organized and a little bigger rodeo.

One thing has remained the same in rodeos: they have always been a test of the rider. The one who stays the longest on a furiously bucking animal wins the most bragging rights, and the most money. Learning to ride a bucking horse was not easy, as Paul Jones explains:

When I was about 9 years old, a horse jumped the ditch and went to bucking, and I grabbed the horn. [A cowboy I knew] rode up along side of me, ripped my hands off the horn, and he says, "If you can't ride without holding on, get off and go to the house. That horn is to tie a rope onto."

A large, weathered wooden barn with a sign that reads "COE RANCH". The barn is made of vertical wooden planks and has a gabled roof. The sign is mounted on a door or window opening. The barn is surrounded by green grass and trees.

Despite the informal setting, there was still money to be made at the local rodeos, and they drew people not just from the Hondo Valley and southern New Mexico, but from out of state as well. After WWII the rodeos became more formal and tended to be held at established rodeo grounds in the larger towns. Rodeo rewards were an important source of extra money for the winners, who typically made very little as cowboys.

WHY HISTORY IS IMPORTANT

History is important because it connects us with the past. This publication uses historical records and recollections of what are now the elder members of the community of Glencoe to give the reader a sense of what it was like to live there in the early and middle twentieth century. The twentieth century witnessed tremendous change in America, and the people interviewed here experienced economic depressions, world wars, the social revolutions of the 1960s, and the rise of technology and the global society that helped shaped the America we know today. Although the Hondo Valley communities may seem placid and far removed from these broad movements, the effects of these developments often reached the lives of local residents. Changes such as the paving of US 70 made transportation faster and easier to the rest of the state and, by extension, to the rest of the country. New ideas, products, and people followed the road and contributed to the makeup of the Valley as it is today.

Throughout the changes of the last century, the residents of Glencoe retained the values that they inherited from their forefathers and foremothers and are passing them down to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Although these values are taken for granted by the people who live them, they represent the common wisdom of people who lived from and depended on the land. The example of the Glencoe residents quoted here helps us understand what it took to survive and be happy without many of the common conveniences of the modern world, such as electricity and cars. This record of their lives preserves a portion of the culture that they have passed down, even as it continues to evolve over time.

Nellie Ruth Jones sums up the importance of writing down history for future generations:

You know a thing that those old timers did that our generation should have is they kept what they called journals. It would be like a diary, but the men usually kept them, and every day just wrote down the activities of that day, you know. The times that things had happened and what had happened. I have a journal that my grandfather kept, I guess before he ever married, because it was when he was up in the mountains around Raton one winter. And to read that history is really neat now, you know. And then I have the one he kept the last year of his life, and I think, golly, what a shame that we haven't done that. But people don't do it any more.

FURTHER READING

Coe, George W.

1934 *Frontier Fighter: The Autobiography of George W. Coe Who Fought and Rode with Billy the Kid, as Related to Nan Hillery Harrison.* Riverside Press, Cambridge.

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List of photographs donated by citizens of the Hondo Valley used in this volume of the Snapshot Publication Series:

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