

New Mexico



GRANT COUNTY

The County Seat is located in the rolling foothills of the mountains. The altitude is 6,200 feet. The town came into existence early in 1869 and has a colorful history, spiced with tales of Apache raids, sagas of Billy the Kid, a silver and gold bonanza, soft-handed gamblers and two-gun cowboys. One of the original settlers of the City, John Bullard, made the discovery of the Chloride Flat silver bonanza; rich packets of almost pure silver were found. Millions of dollars of virgin silver were removed almost at grass roots. A smelter was erected and the once sleepy little settlement became a riproaring mining camp.

Today Silver City is a prosperous community with a net population of 8,000. It has a long record as the shopping center of Southwestern New Mexico. It boasts a trade territory of approximately 50,000 persons.

With a climate unexcelled; a beautiful country of rangeland, farms and forest; and untold millions of wealth in the ground, this portion of New Mexico has been truly blessed by a beneficent nature. For hundreds of years the Indians roamed the rugged mountain country and left much evidence of their having been here. Many fine specimens of pottery and other Indian relics can be found by even the most casual tourist.

The population of Grant County is 21,286. It stands third among New Mexico's counties in total assessed valuation. The principal industry is mining. The total value of metals mined is approximately \$38,792,425.00 annually, out of a total of \$42,350,200.00 for the entire State.

From the earliest days, cattle raising has been one of the major industries in Grant County, the cow country atmosphere still persists. There is an annual cattle crop of over \$1,500,000.00. This being an arid section of the country, a successful ranch necessarily has to be very large, usually 50 sections or more. Ranches comprising 350 sections of land are not unusual. Along the Gila River, where there is irrigation, there are a number of prosperous farms and fruit orchards.

Bank deposits of the American National Bank in Silver City and the Grant County State Bank at Bayard total over \$8,000,000.00.

Silver City

COUNTY SEAT OF GRANT COUNTY,
NEW MEXICO'S GREATEST
METAL MINING DISTRICT

Murray Hotel

100 Modern Rooms

Lea County Gas Co.

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June, 1951

one with his compliments and name writ in

Cowboys from the surrounding cattle ranges would visit Silver City for a period of relaxation from arduous roundups or relief from ranch routine before cattle were bred behind barbed wire and when huge herds freely grazed at large over many miles of broad, open country.

Those were the days when "roundup" was the general term and "rodeo" scarcely ever heard, even at the tournaments: when cowboys were not called "cowpokes" and a pistol was that, or a revolver, gun, "hogleg" or six-shooter—never a "six gun."

And the mining camps. . . . Whatever the number of inhabitants none were without an adequate—often excessive—supply of saloons. Bland, with a population at its peak of less than five hundred persons, had seven—Paxton's in a tent, Andy Horne's a mile down the canyon, "The Lobby," Arthur Henry's, "O'Connor's Place," "The Option," and "The Philippine," the latter owned by Tom Kline, who was one of those on coming west who had given up their original purpose to save souls and had gone into the business of quenching thirsts.

"The Option" was conducted by Phil Barber, who had formerly been deputy warden of the territorial penitentiary. He and the Rev. Fred T. Bennett, of St. John's Episcopal church of Albuquerque, were both British born, natives of the Isle of Jersey, the home of Lily Langtry, an actress famous for her beauty and known as the "Jersey Lily," and the island where Jersey cows originated.

Father Bennett, as he was affectionately called, sometimes visited his fellow-countryman, and on one occasion he was seated apart in "The Option" while Barber was serving a bunch of boisterous customers who were "whooping it up" at the bar. Their language was loud and loose—and might be expected to shock the religious sensibilities of a man of the cloth.

To avert having his friend offended at something his customers might do or say, Barber approached the clergyman and said: "Father, wouldn't you rather sit outside?"

"Oh, no, Philip; I like to be among the boys." They can't hurt me, you know."

It was not unusual for someone to stick his head in the Bland Herald office door and invite: "Come on, Mr. Editor, and have a drink."

However, the editor was not imbibing, alcoholically. But to refuse was to offend. At the bar he would pour into his glass the smallest, noticeable quantity of whiskey, tip it into his mouth, pretentiously cough and spit it into a cuspidor. Now and then more customers would drift in; more drinks would be forthcoming. Every time he was invited to join them, which was then the manner of men, the wily editor repeated the same process of never swallowing a drop of the contents of his glass.

As the others were becoming "drunk as a lord" he would manage to slip back to his desk "sober as a judge."

The prevailing magnetism of the saloon of the "gay" days was wittily put by Bill Nye, the celebrated hairless humorist, who would open his public appearances with the remark: "Before you stands the most notorious bald-headed man in America." On one of his lecture tours he was addressing an Albuquerque audience.

"Do you know?" he exclaimed, "down in the wind blows so hard that it actually blows a man past a saloon one day."

BLAND