



# Noticias de Nuestras Raices

*Genealogical Society of Hispanic America Newsletter*



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The history of **Regis University** begins in 1877 when a band of Jesuit missionaries from Italy founded Las Vegas College in New Mexico. Within ten years, entrepreneur John Brisben Walker offered the Jesuits a plot of land in Denver, Colorado, and in 1887, the permanent home was established at the corner of 50th and Lowell Boulevard.

## Denver—Back to where it all began GSHA - 1988

Dear Members:

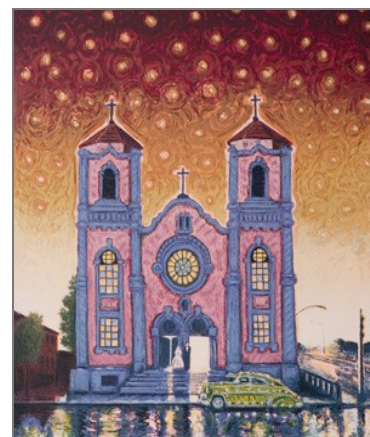
Get ready for a wonderful 2014 annual meeting and conference in Denver where GSHA started in 1988. This is the 25th conference and co-coordinators, Jeanette Fisher, Charlene Garcia Simms and Donie Nelson thought it would be most befitting to have the conference where a group of people who wanted to preserve their Hispanic heritage and family roots took the leap and started the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America. Your current GSHA board agreed and forward we will go.

In the next few months you will be hearing more about GSHA's history and success over the years. Mark your calendars for June 5-7 to be at the Westin Hotel in Westminister which is part of northwest Denver.

More information and details will be posted on our website: [gsha.net](http://gsha.net) along with other media including our next newsletter.

May your holidays be wonderful and your new year prosperous and healthy.

**Charlene Garcia Simms**  
Editor, *Noticias de Nuestras Raices*



The Spanish Colonial St. Cajetan's Church, built in 1926, was one of three Catholic churches clustered within a six block radius in the Auraria Neighborhood in Denver. It served as the focus of Auraria's Spanish speaking community until 1973 when construction of the Auraria campus forced the parish to relocate. Today it is a center for the campus. *Painting by Carlos Fresquez, Denver artist*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Members,

As I write this message the leaves are changing color, the days are shortening and the evenings are becoming cooler. I hope this finds everyone well as we enter the last quarter of the year.

After all the final tabulations were completed for the 2013 Conference in Albuquerque it was determined to be a big success. I know that everyone had a wonderful time and some even found that elusive ancestor they had been looking for. The following received Honorary Memberships for their contributions to GSHA: Ruth Martinez, Michelle Chavez, Jeanette Fisher, and Gloria Mirabal. A portion of the President's Reception was dedicated to the passing of Pauline Chavez-Bent, a founder of GSHA-SC.

We are in the midst of planning the 2014 Conference which will be held in Denver, Colorado, which happens to be the place where GSHA was founded 26 years ago! The conference committee is made up of Jeanette Fisher, Charlene Simms, and Donie Nelson.

I would like to thank the following members of the Rule's and Teller Committees for their fine service: Gloria Cordova, Charlene Garcia Simms, Donie Nelson, Abel Santistevan, Bob Craig, and Mary Ellen Burciaga. Following the announcement of the new amended by-laws and Rules of Procedure at the General Meeting in Albuquerque, two written protests were received by the Board of Directors. We reviewed the written letters of protest in detail and fully understood the nature of the protests. It was decided that the information gained from the protest letters will be used to improve future ballots and voting procedures of the society. The Board of Directors wishes to thank those members who continue to hold our organization accountable. We appreciate the efforts of those who have helped in the democratic process. Any member wishing to make recommendations for change to the existing by-laws is encouraged to do so by February 1, 2014, the next deadline for submission of GSHA Bylaw and Standing Rules of Procedure proposed changes.

This year it has been an honor to serve with my fellow Board of Directors. I would like to thank each of them on behalf of GSHA for all their time and attention that they have put towards this organization. It is because of volunteers, such as these, that we continue to thrive. The offices of Secretary and Vice President will need to be filled in 2014. Our nominations committee, chaired by Phil Duran, is seeking volunteers to fill those positions. Our generous Vice President, Gloria Cordova has volunteered to serve an additional term, should she be nominated. The Board of Directors will also be seeking a new Member at Large Representative to replace Mark Desautel in 2014. Currently only our treasurer, Phil Duran, and myself will be returning to the Board next year.

**Have a wonderful holiday season with family and friends this year.**

Sincerely,  
Douglas S. Daniels  
GSHA- President

### PRINTING YOUR NEWSLETTER

Several of you have asked to have a printed copy of this newsletter sent to you because color is very expensive to print. You may print this newsletter in black and white by going to properties or preferences after you click on print and scroll down to select color and then select gray scale. It will print in black and white.

## CONFERENCE UPDATE



### 2014 Conference Plans are Moving Forward!

By Jeanette Fisher

Have you started planning for GSHA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting and Conference? The 2014 conference committee has! They're hard at work putting together a fantastic slate of new speakers, workshops, a tour of History Colorado Center, gathering research location information, and planning all details that make a conference successful.

New GSHA-SC member, Pat Dileski, will be writing an article on the Denver area. Watch for it in the special conference issue of the *Nuestras Raíces* Journal next spring.

The conference theme for our Silver Anniversary celebration will be *GSHA: Preserving the Past; Moving into the Future*. Ask yourself how you are preserving your past and moving into the future with your research.

Three things that we would like to ask our members to do as GSHA moves into the future are:

1) submit an article to our *Nuestras Raíces* Journal, 2) volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors or a committee, or 3) contact the conference committee to participate as a speaker or workshop instructor.

We're looking for sponsors to help defray some of the conference costs in 2014. If you know a business owner or anyone who might be interested in sponsoring a portion of our conference, please contact Jeanette Fisher at [jsmf1925@hotmail.com](mailto:jsmf1925@hotmail.com), or Charlene Garcia Simms at [charlenegsimms@yahoo.com](mailto:charlenegsimms@yahoo.com). (Several of you answered yes to this question on the questionnaire you received earlier this year. Please contact Charlene or Jeanette if you were one of those people and give us your ideas and contact information.)

Think about what you'd like to donate for our popular raffle. Begin now talking with your family and friends about joining you at the conference. And remember to plan an extra day or two before or after the conference to enjoy all the great amenities the Denver metro area has to offer.

Watch for the registration form and further details in January. Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to all!



## DOWN MEMORY LANE

### **In the first quarterly Nuestras Raices: Volume 1 No. 1 January 1989**

#### **Charter Membership reaches 203**

Charter membership runs from September 15, 1988 through December 31, 1989. As of December 12, 1988, we are pleased to announce that we have a total of 203 memberships. These memberships break down in the following manner: 45 family memberships totaling 90 members, 73 individual memberships, 31 Senior memberships, 6 supporting memberships and 3 student memberships.

Nationwide we have 16 states represented with out out-of-state membership accounting for roughly 33% of our membership. States represented include the following, Colorado, California, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Nevada, Virginia, Texas and Kentucky. We are extremely grateful for the response we have received nationwide and are well on our way to reaching our goal of 300 to 400 members by the end of our first year

#### **Calendar of Events**

January 21, 1989 2:00 p.m. Meeting to be held at Dayton Library, Regis College, 50th and Lowell Blvd. Installation of Officers; Featured Speaker will be Enid Thompson, Archivist, who will speak on the Regis College Archives and Linda Watson will speak on the Colorado State Archives.

Feb. 18, 1989—2:00 p.m. Meeting to be held at the Archdiocese of Denver Archives, 200 Josephine Street, 4th Floor, Room 415; Sister Anen will conduct a tour of the archives dealing with Hispanic church records.

March 18, 1989 2 p.m. Mary Ann Stoller, Professor of Anthropology at Colorado College, will speak on Migration Patterns of Hispanics for New Mexico to Southern Colorado. She co authored "The Diary of the Jesuit Residents of Conejos," along with Reverend Steele.

The following is a list of goals concerning GSHA Research projects that appeared in the first journal in 1989. Sound familiar? It's amazing that we are still following the same goals in 2013.

#### **Goals:**

1. Coordinating our research projects with all other groups doing genealogy research to avoid duplication of effort.
2. Using our projects for teaching and training our membership on how to do research.
3. Making our research available to the Hispanic Community and the general population through our quarterly and other publications. Also as they are completed, they will be placed in the Denver Public Library for public use.
4. Preservation of our historical legacy handed down to us by our ancestors.
5. Long term planning for future projects that we can begin work on.
6. Offering our resources, help and guidance to any members who are working on their own research projects.

We need your help!



## Christmas at Bent's Fort in 1846

by Charlene Garcia Simms



I was delighted to be invited to attend the Bent Fort's Candlelight Christmas Tour between La Junta and Las Animas last Saturday. It was freezing temperatures when we arrived in the late afternoon and it didn't get any warmer at night. However, the bonfires were going and the fireplaces in each room were giving off that warmth that only wood can provide and the smell was as comforting as my grandparent's home when we came in out of the cold almost every wintry day in the San Luis Valley.

One of the surprising things I found was in the doctor's quarters. There was a bottle of Volcanic oil or as my grandparents called it, *Volcanico*, used for every joint and bone ailment, something like Tiger Balm today except for the smell which remained with you for days and days. I found that it is still sold at Walgreen's and Mexican grocery stores. The tool in the photo to the left was used to ease swelling in the brain. Doesn't look too inviting, does it?

We went from room to room with a docent at each place explaining life in 1846. The fort is a reconstructed 1840's adobe fur trading post on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail where traders, trappers, travelers, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes came together in peaceful terms for trade. The spirit of the Christmas season came alive with wagon rides, a taffy pull, storytelling and more.

My favorite activity was in the room where the Chavez family had just gathered after an arduous trip from Taos. They were surrounded with their daughters and their cousins playing simple games (no Internet or iPads then).

Then the *abuelos* (sometimes called *aguelos*) came in—old-man figures who played the role of a bogeyman in Hispano folklore. They appeared at Christmastime to test and discipline children who did not know their catechism or prayers. They were scary figures, dressed to terrify children with a black cap and a mask with large horns, and always carrying a whip. A few days before Christmas they would knock on the door of a home, give a bloodcurdling cry, crack their whips, and yell at the children, "*Han sido Buenos muchachos estos?*" (Have these children been good?) The children would cringe and hide while the parents defended them. Then *el abuelo* would say, "*Pues que recen y se acuesten*" (Well let hem pray and go to bed). In this reenactment, the mother rose and told the children to hold hands and pray. Soon the horrible *abuelos* left as fast as they came.

We wish everyone happy holidays and may memories of the past warm you as they warmed me going back to 1846 in the freezing cold. Warm apple cider, *biscochitos*, ginger cookies, shortbread, and maple cookies hit the spot.

## Don't Climb the Wrong Tree—Advise by James Douthat, Mountain Press—10-13-23

How many times have you worked long and hard on a line in your family tree to find out that you have been climbing the wrong tree? It happens to all of us. Researching the lines of our family, we pick up a name that we know is ours only to find out later that it was not. It is easy to follow the wrong family line. If you are using the internet entirely as your source, keep in mind that you still need to verify the information provided. One major problem with the internet is that there are bits and pieces of information that are connected many times in the wrong places. The internet is a great tool in genealogy research and can be of tremendous value. However, if the information isn't verified, it can bring incorrect information that will continue for generations of those that blindly follow your research. Here are a few points to keep you off a lot of useless trees.

**First**, every bit of information that you find must pass the test of good research with the ability to verify how the information relates to your family. Just to find a name that fits is not good research. Remember how unimaginative many of our ancestors were when it came to names. There are plenty of William Williams [or Jose & Maria] out there and not all are related. I have actually known families to use a name over when a child dies. I guess that when you have 12-19 children, it is hard to come up with a different name.

**Secondly**, you need to strive for accuracy in your research. I hope none of you are like the woman who ran into our local genealogical library. Out of breath she came up to the counter and said "Quick, show me which book has all of my family." Before those of us standing around had time to respond she added, "My son is driving around the block and I need the information right now." Several of us just turned and walked away to leave the poor librarian alone to answer her question.

Research is one of those things that takes time and a questioning mind. To find a marriage even in the original court house records is not the final proof that one needs. Do you have proof that your ancestor was in that area at that time? Are there other records that give the names together? I try to use the "rule of three" when it comes to verifying an answer. In other words, I try to find three unrelated sources that prove the event in question. You may have the court record of a marriage. Is there a Bible record that states the same thing? Are there letters giving the fact? Is there a military record that includes the names of the wife? Even deeds can verify the fact or sometimes the settlement of the estate will give the name of the wife.

**Thirdly**, try to obtain the original documents to back up your research. This step takes time and effort to double and triple check the information. You cannot be too careful in making your research as accurate as possible. Always verify the information that you find. If you find information in your research or on the internet that you question, you should be able to go back to the original source to verify.

Note: The Association of Professional Genealogists has done research on the web and their conclusion is that the internet contains less than 10% of the information that is available for use by researchers. While this number will continue to grow, keep in mind that there is a lot of information that can be found elsewhere.

*Scitly. It is my will, that some two or three pieces of land, lying in the Valley of Taos, N. M., the title to which and in my wife's name, be rented, from year to year, to the highest bidder, and the sum so received, be used by my administrator, for the benefit of my children.*

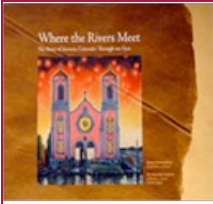
## The Pueblo Library District is asking your help by voting by 12-31-13

The Pueblo City-County Library District's Special Collections is housing the last will and testament of famous frontiersman Kit Carson. The document was nominated recently as one of Colorado's top 15 most significant artifacts and now it has a chance to be in the top 10. To make the next cut, it will takes lots of votes from the public. Voting is electronic, and can be done at the library website:

<http://www.pueblolibrary.org/> then scroll down and click on Kit Carson's Photo or go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/P5YJ352>

Kit Carson's third wife was Josefa Jaramillo from Taos, daughter of Francisco Vigil and Apolonia Vigil, and niece and goddaughter of Cornelio Vigil, of the Vigil-St. Vrain land grant. The will shows that women could own land in New Mexico in the 1800s. The sixth item in the will shows Kit leaving Josefa's property in Taos to the children since she had died one month earlier. Carson was illiterate and dictated the will. We appreciate your vote!





### Book Review

#### Where the Rivers Meet

*The Story of Auraria Colorado: Through our Eyes*  
 Magdalena Gallegos, Project Director

“Denver’s beginnings date to the 1858 discovery of traces of gold in Cherry Creek. The Gold Rush brought frontiersmen and pioneers who settled on the southwest bank of the creek. Named Auraria (from Aurum, the Latin word for gold), the settlement also drew a trickle of Spaniards from Mexico in 1859.

It wasn’t until 1916 that the first wave of Hispanics arrived from Mexico and New Mexico, fleeing revolution and poverty. They were seeking a new and more secure way of life, but it took them a while to establish roots. The non-Hispanics who were the first major settlers in Auraria, were apprehensive about the cultural differences between them and the Hispanic people, so little by little they moved out, leaving vacancies for more Spanish speaking people to move in. Discrimination from the outside brought the Hispanic community closer together, and there was a sense of belonging in the small neighborhood which they formed.

The community was established more permanently in 1926 when St. Cajetan’s Catholic church was built at Ninth and Lawrence Streets. The lives of the Hispanic people in Auraria revolved around their church. Over the years, community bonds cemented as marriages between families took place and new generations grew up together. For over fifty years, Auraria was home for these Hispanics, but in the early 1970’s the community was broken up and relocated to different sections of Denver. The Auraria Higher Education Center was to be built on the site.” This is the story about what the people of this community went through as they fought being relocated. It is also a book of many stories, told by former residents, with beautiful pictures and poetry about people “who are a vital part of that brilliant rainbow of historical narratives that make up Auraria’s past.”

### Congratulations to 2013 Honorary Member Ruth Martinez



During the 2013 Annual Meeting and Conference one of our members who was given an honorary membership was Ruth Martinez. The following was read by President Doug Daniels about Ruth.

“Ruth Martinez was always curious about her ancestors, but because of family tragedies and circumstances she never knew much about either side of her family.

When she became a grandmother ten years ago, she felt driven to give her grandchildren the history she never had.

In addition, Ruth joined forces with a group of friends to conduct research. They are affectionately called “The Genealogy Geeks.” The “girls” have each had their stories published in the GSHA journal. Ruth has her Coca/Sammon genealogy on display at the Heritage Center Museum in Pueblo, Colorado. As an active member of FACC, Ruth has served as a Member-at-Large, has been on the entertainment committee and worked on the new member handbook. Ruth makes it a point to greet everyone at the general membership meetings, but more importantly, she creates “genealogy connections,” introducing people who share ancestors.

In 2006, Ruth and her husband, Leonard, (shown in photo) joined forces with Phil Duran and family in restoring the Cotton Creek Cemetery in Moffat, Colorado. Their hard work and generosity of others resulted in the building of a chapel on the site. The rededication of the cemetery took place in 2012.

Because of her dedication to her family genealogy, her participation with the genealogy geeks, her work with FACC and GSHA, and efforts in restoring the Cotton Creek Cemetery, I am honored to recognize Ruth Martinez and present her the GSHA honorary membership award.”



We're on the web!

[gsha.net](http://gsha.net)



2013 Officers



Doug Daniels, *President*

Gloria Cordova, *Vice-president*

Michelle Chavez, *Secretary*

Phil Duran, *Treasurer*

Mark Desautel, *Member-at-Large Representative*

Rita Vega-Acevedo, *Southern California Representative and Chapter President*

Abel Santistevan, *Fray Angelico Chavez Chapter Representative*

Donie Nelson, Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor, *Nuestras Raices Journal*

Charlene Garcia Simms, Editor, *Noticias de Nuestras Raices Newsletter*

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Please notify us if you have had a change of address or email.

**You Were There?**

Remember that TV series *Your Are There* (1953-1957)? The show recreated great events of the past. What does this have to do with GSHA? The staff of *Nuestras Raices* is already planning a special issue of your journal to be published in the spring 2014. One of the articles will be about the early history of GSHA (1988+) and its first genealogical conference. Guess what? The staff has no records of those early events. So, if “you were there” will you please share photographs, your memories and impressions? This may be the only way we can reconstruct the Society’s history—and all of you know about reconstructing your family’s history. So, Please help us with this project so that we can share those events with all our readers.

*Donie Nelson, Editor-in-chief & the Staff of Nuestras Raices*

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