**Archaeology and History in Your Back Yard**

**The Ghost Towns of Duran, Cedarvale & McIntosh**

Hello Everyone! This is Archaeology and History in Your Back Yard and my name is Dixie. X 88.7 FM and the Torrance County Archaeological Society are pleased to bring you a series of programs designed to acquaint you, our listening audience, with little known people, places and events that took place in the past, right here in your own back yard. For the most part, we will be covering interesting facts, stories and legends about the past, and people that lived right here in the Estancia Valley and surrounding areas in central New Mexico. Our goal is to inform, educate, and possibly enlist your help in preserving and protecting our past.

Our show today will focus on the history of ghost towns Duran and Cedarvale.

This program was written by Dixie Boyle and produced by Bill Simms. Thank you for joining us today.

Duran and Cedarvale are located in the extreme southeast corner of Torrance County and although not totally uninhabited are still listed as ghost towns. Many of the original buildings making up Duran are still standing and several others remain inhabited by the descendants of the first settlers arriving in the country. The feel of a bustling, railroad town still persists in Duran.

Duran had a post office by 1902 and was named for two brothers named Duran who immigrated to the United States from Lebandon. After the establishment of a post office many other businesses followed, Place Mercantile Company, the Duran Eating House, Owl Drug Store and the City Meat Market to name a few.

By 1908, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company had established a division point at Duran, causing the town to boom even more. The railroad constructed a round house on the east end of town and railroad yards and shopped followed. At one time there were over thirty families living in Duran who worked for the railroad.

Duran was not exempt from fire as other frontier communities throughout the West. The town suffered a disastrous fire in August of 1909, when the Duran Savings & Trust Bank, the City Meat Market, Mark Robinson Rooming House and a vacant store were destroyed by flames.

The town had established a school by 1905 and it would close in 1964.

Cedarvale would have a post office established by 1908 although the mail wasn’t always delivered in a timely manner. Mr. DeWolf the first postmaster had to meet the train half way between Willard and Torrance and then transport the mail by handcart to Cedarvale. The train did not adhere to a definite schedule and people often waited until late in the night on mail day to receive their correspondence.

According to the Torrance County History Book, Cedarvale was named by its founders for Cedarvale, Kansas because it was similarly situated in a valley with cedars nearby. It was first established in 1908 by Ed Smith and William Taylor of Wellington, Kansas.

The community was well populated with bean farmers and railroad men until the early 1940s when the population began to dwindle. No businesses remain today, although a few families still live in the almost ghost town. Even the foundations of many of the early businesses are gone today. But at one times there were mercantile stores, a lumber company, a well drilling company and more.

The Cedarvale Sewing Club established in 1916 is touted as the oldest club in Torrance County. The club consisted of a group of women who quilted together every two weeks. Quilting Bees were a favorite form of entertainment for women on the frontier. The Cedarvale Quilters met every two weeks and before working together on a quilt had a potluck meal together and visited about their neighborhood and lives. Before there were too few women living in the town to continue, the group met at the old schoolhouse still standing on the north side of town.

On the opposite end of Torrance County is the small community referred to as McIntosh. According to the Torrance County History Book, “Among the sheep ranchers who settled in Torrance County in the late 1800s was one William McIntosh, a native of Scotland. Mr. McIntosh selected a site near the Cinega Spring, which made an excellent place for lambing as the grass came much earlier in the spring of the year to this spot than it did elsewhere in the Valley.”

McIntosh soon constructed large wool barns and shearing sheds. He also built a rock house for the men in charge of his herdsmen. He ran a large operation in the Estancia Valley.

McIntosh liked to drink a little and often drive his horse and buggy into Estancia to have a drink or two. He had a team of black horses and a fancy buggy. When he had enough to drink, those in the bar would load him into his wagon and his horses would take him home at the end of the night while he slept off his drinking.

At one time in its history as throughout Torrance County, McIntosh was a sheep headquarters of sorts. All shearing and sacking of the wool was done by hand in those days. There were acres filled up with sheep and a corral that held over a hundred animals.

Boys were often utilized to keep the corral full of unshorn sheep and each shearer grabbed the sheep nearest him, turned it over, tied its feet together with a leather strap, dragged it to a shearing post and then continued with the next one. The shearer was given a metal token when he was finished shearing a sheep and later received cash in exchange.

Before the coming of the railroad all wool was hauled by ox or horse drawn wagon to Albuquerque. The trip took over a week and required a caravan of wagons to transport the wool.

By 1902 the area was being settled by homesteaders and McIntosh was an important location along the Santa Fe Central Railroad. The town began to grow and had a lumber yard, livery stables, two hotels, feed store, hardware store, a newspaper, three general stores and many more additional businesses. McIntosh had a school in session by 1907. Most of the settlers were bean farmers and when the drought came the majority of them moved away leaving McIntosh another Torrance County almost ghost town.

This has been Archaeology and History in Your Back Yard, a series that will take you through our area’s history in future episodes.

The Torrance County Archaeological Society meets at 7 PM the first Tuesday of every month from March through November. We meet at the East Torrance Soil and Water Education Building at 700 S. 10th Street in Estancia. Please come and join us.

You can listen to Archaeology and History in Your Own Back Yard Monday at 1 PM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday at 10 AM and Saturday at 4 PM. Thanks for listening!

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