

Recollections of Living in Dixon

By Mary Louise (Romero) Trujillo.

Going back to 1946-1959, I can gather my thoughts to many of those wonderful hardworking people that made Dixon a most interesting community. Being a six year old child when my family moved to Dixon and leaving Dixon at the age of nineteen, these recollections will hopefully help a reader understand the many happenings that made Dixon a hard place to leave.

Dixon did not have the many activities a bigger town or city had, but children along with adults made it possible for young children to have some fun recreation. Older adults and young teenagers made several nice places in the Embudo River where we could swim. Removing rocks and damming an area made a great so-called swimming pool. One pool, near the Johnson home (1st home coming into Dixon) was a pool where many of us (me included) learned to swim and dive off a small cliff! Another swimming hole was down a dirt road across from the Zeller's store.

Children did not lack for things to do. The Mission teacher and other community adults organized a hayride drawn by a couple of horses and a wagon to give us a nice tour of Dixon. We saw the beauty of the hills, orchards, homes, businesses and the secluded road behind the old post office and near St. Anthony's Church. Along this road were homes that were connected to each other. We were told that this so-called street was built this way to protect the families from the Indian raids many years ago. One of these structures was the "old sala" or dance hall owned by the Lujan family from Embudo. Wedding dances, fiestas, regular dances, and other activities were held there.

Again, the same adults interested in keeping Dixon youth busy, did so by taking us on quite challenging hikes. One hike I remember started across the from the Johnson home, climbing all the way until we could see Velarde on one side and Dixon on the other side of the mountain. I remember my father (one of the guides) found an arrowhead of which I am the proud owner.

Lydia Zellers, being quite a talented musician, organized the Dixon Talent Show. This grand performance was held at the old public school where the current school now stands. Many talents popped up from our small community. Poems, instrument players, solos and a group choir, to mention some great performers. I recall Lydia teaching a group of us the song "Oh Baby Mine" and "Humming Bird Should be Your Name". This talent show attracted many persons from the community.

Mission teachers, and ladies from the Presbyterian Church, prepared wonderful Christmas sacks for the children attending the mission school. These sacks were given to the children after the well-attended Christmas program performed by the school children. The ladies also filled sacks and sacks of Christmas candy and fruits to be distributed to the many Dixon children of all faiths on Christmas day. Dixon children always seemed to know that Santa (my father Rev. Porfirio Romero) would come on Christmas afternoon and distribute the candy. I can still picture the many children happily anticipating the arrival of Santa Claus, standing by the road waiting for his arrival. Santa went to Dixon, Cañoncito and Apodaca to distribute the candy. This annual event was greatly anticipated by the children and their parents. For some children this was the only Christmas gift they got.

The Dixon area families were busy all summer. I have memories of men and boys guiding their horses to plow the fields where their gardens would be. With the irrigation ditches, their crops would soon blossom into healthy looking vegetables, melons, green chili, corn, squash, tomatoes, etc. These ditches would also water the gorgeous orchards along the valley. Late summer one could see the hard working families gathering their crops, canning, drying fruits and roasting chili. What wonderful smells! I remember a few stands where some families would sell some of the overflow of vegetables and fruits. My younger sister who was about 8 years old would go up and down the road near our home selling the delicious strawberries from our patch. No one lacked for food during the winter months. Dixon men were good hunters and great butchers. I believe every family had plenty of jerky, hamburger meat and steaks. Canned peaches, cherries, apricots and apple pies sure made a delicious dessert!

The old post office was quite a place for men to congregate. It was right behind a store on the main plaza. We didn't have a newspaper, so I imagine a lot of news was spread all over Dixon because of the men who would congregate and pass on what was going on in the area.

Additional notes from Mary Louise Trujillo via Charlotte Valdez:

The Embudo Presbyterian Hospital would provide the parents of a newborn baby with a layette of baby clothing; i.e., baby blankets, booties, diapers, shirts, pajamas, everything for a baby's trip home. For some women this was a treat because this was a starter kit for the new baby, since most children had to wear hand-me-downs from the older children.

The hospital hired many young women from the community and surrounding areas, which provided employment for them near their homes. The young women resided in the hospital dormitory and were strictly supervised, which was a relief to their parents. They had recreation within the hospital grounds, and were allowed to attend local festive events, but had a curfew, which was strictly adhered to. Many of these young ladies met their future husbands while employed at the hospital, so they have good memories of time spent here. Some of these young ladies went into the medical field and became nurses, lab technicians, etc.