



Before Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia National Laboratories, there was Coyote Springs and Greystone Manor. Greystone Manor was a homestead at Coyote Springs, now home to Sandia's Coyote Canyon test facilities.

Settled by both Hispanic and Anglo homesteaders as early as 1892, settlers continued arriving in the 1910s and 1920s. There were about 30 settlements in the area. The community included a one-room school.

Meliton Chavez and his brother Jose Chavez (Papa Grande) great-grandfather of Larry Moya (2548) owned and operated Greystone Manor. Papa Grande was a tall man with a full beard. He liked to wear a stovepipe hat, similar to that worn by Abraham Lincoln.

The property included an impressive two-level house surrounded by two-story porches on the back and front of the house. Five fireplace chimneys peeked out of its gable roof.

Greystone Manor was 15 to 20 feet from the springs. A 100-foot diameter wading pool fed by Coyote Springs, several guest cottages, and bathhouses, were nearby. The main spring was called "El Ojo (the eye).

Papa Grande would come to Albuquerque to pick up tourists in a horse and buggy or his Model-A Ford. Cottages rented for \$1 a week. "The main tourist draw was the mineral spring known for its supposed healing properties," says Larry.

Early in the century the Chavez family began selling Coyote Springs water to bottlers for 10 cents a bottle. Bottlers claimed that the water cured stomach and liver ailments. In the 1930s, the Albuquerque Ice Co. carbonated the Coyote Springs water, which helped the flavor. Locals made Kool Aid with the water because it would get a fizz. Even with the heavy mineral taste locals liked it as a whiskey chaser.

In addition to the mineral bath and water bottling business, the Chavez family also had some cattle and milk cows and a small herd of goats.



OUTINGS and picnics were enjoyed by guests.



"PAPA GRANDE"
JOSE CHAVEZ



PAPA GRANDE bringing a tourist to Coyote Springs.

Coyote Springs and its mysterious healing properties become Sandia test facilities

Story by Iris Aboytes • Photos courtesy of Larry Moya

"Greystone Manor burned in the early 1900s," says Larry, "when my great grandma, Cornella left a candle burning at a shrine in a bedroom. My family built another house and called it Casa Larga (long house.)"

"All my great-great uncles and aunts lived in Coyote Springs except for my grandma and great uncle," says Larry. "They were married and had their own families established in Valencia. My grandma would bring the children, including my mother, to visit by horse and buggy from Valencia. According to my mom, she would bring her own cooking water because she did not like the taste that the spring water gave the food."

Meliton left Coyote Springs to pursue a career in banking in Albuquerque. He was one of the founders of the First National Bank. He and his wife Francisca Armijo y Baca lived in the old Armijo house in Old Town, now known as the Maria Teresa Restaurant. Meliton's daughter Soledad Chacón became the first woman Secretary of State in New Mexico and the first woman

lieutenant governor in the nation due to the death of then-governor Jose Baca.

"My grandfather ran the Coyote Springs resort until his death in 1936. His son ran it until government took it over in the early forties," says Larry. "By 1943, it

became part of Kirtland Air Force Base, and later a Sandia test facility."

"I have pieced most of the details on Coyote Springs together from my grandfather, various relatives, newspaper articles, and Sandia's archives," says Larry.



PAPA GRANDE with his great granddaughters.



ANITA CHAVEZ (Larry's mother) with her cousins.



MISS CHANEY, teacher.



STUDENTS at local school.



PAPA GRANDE introduces springs to tourists.



BLDG. 9071 once belonged to the Chavez family.

