

Field notes on:
Turkey raising

Tape # 588
Porferio Montoya
SANTA ANA PUEBLO
November 28, 1967

Proferio could not stay for the interview today because he had to pick up his sister's daughter at the B.C.I. (Bernalillo County Indian Hospital-Albuquerque) where she had been for an examination. She was suffering from a tooth ache. Also, he wished to thank Dr. F. Ellis for the live turkey she gave him.

Dr. F. Ellis told him he should keep the turkey alive, in order to have a constant feather supply. She also pointed out that I could show him how to pluck the feathers and not injure the bird. He said he already knew how because he had had some turkeys before. The birds should be plucked while they are molting.

Dr. F. Ellis said we should get him a female turkey and that he should try to raise them. However, consensus was that young turkeys are extremely hard to raise because of their being subject to extreme temperatures.

This brought to Porferio's mind that he had once known a woman (the wife of the maintenance foreman at Jemez Dam) who used to raise turkeys. She had brought them to New Mexico from Tennessee or somewhere in the Southeast. She had told Porferio that the best way to raise turkeys is to wet the ground under the turkey eggs, this she said caused the eggs to form a harder shell. However, then the mother turkey has to help the young out by pecking at the shell.

Porferio liked this woman and her husband very much, but he was replaced by a man that did not like Porferio. This man wanted Porferio to either be fired from his job, or to quit. (Porferio's job was to control the irrigation ditch flow.) No matter what Porferio did, this new man found fault with; example, one morning after Porferio had opened the gates the previous night the man said to him - Hey! why hasn't the water gotten to Albuquerque yet? Porferio was mystified because he knew he had opened the gates. After several of these incidents, Porferio became suspicious. One night after opening the gates, he went to his brother's house (apparently nearby), left his truck and walked back to the gates and hid in the weeds. Later in the evening, a truck came along with its lights out, it was the new foreman, the foreman got out and shut two gates. (Porferio only watched.)

The next morning, Porferio did not go to work. Soon the foreman came to ask why, and Porferio only said that he was quitting (no reference to the previous night.) He gave the man the keys to the gate, and said he wanted to be paid right then. The foreman said he would have to wait until pay day. So Porferio went to the Albuquerque office (?) where some people knew him- and told them what had happened. He was told to tell the paymaster to see if he could pay him, he did.... Porferio felt bad about losing the job

because he had worked there for seven years. He felt that the reason the new foreman wanted him out was because he wanted to give the job to a Mexican.

However, the Mexican did not work out very satisfactorily. He did not clean and oil the turbines as well as Porferio did and they broke down almost once a month. (Porferio could see the scaffolding that had to be set up in order to pull the turbines.) Soon a man from the Albuquerque office came out and asked Porferio if he would work for them again.

Porferio said he wouldn't because he would not work for that foreman again, and moreover he had a new job (working for Dr. F. Ellis on the land claims.) The new job did not pay as well, but he liked it a lot better.

This reminded him of an incident which had happened while working on the land claims. Apparently the gas tank of the car they were using split open. He wet some clay from a nearby clay deposit, smoothed it over the crack, wrapped the tank with some rags and tied it up with a belt, then they were able to get home.

Another day when he was out in the country the fuel line to his fuel pump broke. He took a small rubber hose which he had along, attached it to one broken end (end from gas tank), sucked on the hose to start the gas flow, and attached the other end of the hose to the fuel pump line and again made it back to town.

The next day he started the car the same way, and he and Dora (his wife) went into Albuquerque. Porferio stopped at a blacksmith shop (he knew the owner), got a copper tube, and fixed the fuel line permanently.

Dr. F. Ellis asked Porferio if they caught the renegades out his way. Well he didn't know, but he had heard a siren Sunday morning while he was chopping wood. When he went inside he didn't mention to the family cause he didn't know what it was. Later more sirens came by their house, up Highway 85 and down to the river. The whole family went outside to see what was going on. Harry (Porferio's nephew) climbed up on the roof to see better. Dora wanted the men to get in the truck and go see what happened. He wouldn't do that because it wasn't any of his business. But he thought he would ask one of the neighbors what they knew about it, when he saw them Monday.

Andrea (Dr. F. Ellis' daughter) said that it was a brush fire.

This brought to mind a brush fire that started while Porferio was Governor of the pueblo. It seems that some boys had built a teepee out of rabbit brush. Then the boys started a fire to roast some ears of corn and the fire spread. Porferio was notified, he sent some officers to go to the lower village and get the people there to help put out the fire and to call

the fire department. By the time Porferio and the officers got there, some people were already putting out the fire. They were bringing water up in buckets and all kinds of containers, soaking rags and wrapping them around stumps, etc.... By the time the fire trucks got there, the fire was out, but they put more water on it.

When the men called the Bernalillo Fire Department, the fire men wouldn't come because they said it was too far. However, the Indians called the Alameda Fire Department which came right out. When the Alameda Fire Department went by the Bernalillo Fire Department, the Bernalillo firemen decided it must be a bad fire so they followed the Alameda trucks out.

Porferio thought he should go. Dr. F. Ellis got some feathers her students had given her, she gave them to Porferio.

This reminded Porferio that Dora's brother had been by and asked if Porferio's friend (Dr. F. Ellis) had brought some feathers. Porferio said he didn't have any, then the turkey gobbled. "Hey was that a turkey?" "Yes!" said Porferio, "but I don't know why Dr. Ellis left it here, so I can't say if you could use the feathers." (Explanation: Porferio wasn't home when Dr. Ellis had taken the turkey out.)

Dr. F. Ellis asked if the turkey was still in the garage. Yes, said Porferio, but he was going to build a pen for it that afternoon.

Some of his neighbors said he wouldn't be able to keep the bird because of a pack of dogs which are apparently killing some of the small livestock around Ranchitos. Mrs. so and so (?) had two sheep which she had in a pen, with a high fence and the dogs dug under the fence and killed the sheep. However, the dogs only ate the entrails and the meat was saved.

Porferio could remember the last time he had turkeys in a pen, a dog was trying to get into the pen. It circled the pen several nights, but didn't get in. One day Porferio heard him out there, so he went to get his gun, which was hung on the wall. But he was in such a hurry to get the ammunition drawer opened, that it jammed. By the time he got it opened, the dog had been scared away by someone coming around the corner of the house. However, the dog was seen. It was a large black and white one, no one in the community had one like it as far as Porferio knew.

Dr. F. Ellis said she had seen several dead dogs along the highway, and wondered if the dogs were coming from somewhere over by Sandia Mountains.

Oh! said Porferio, he had found his own dog! (Porferio's dog came up missing several weeks ago.) Someone had seen it in the barrow pit of the highway. It was a good dog and usually stayed home, but Porferio thought it smelled a bitch 'in heat' and went off looking for it.

Porferio had lost another dog several years ago. He and Dora had gone to the State Fair for several days and had arranged for a neighbor to look after their place and feed the animals. When they got back, the dog was gone. Someone said they had seen a person catching dogs around the village, so Porferio feels that his dog got stolen by that person.

END OF DISCUSSION