

The honoring of a 'brave and solid' man

Written by By Marc Simmons, Ph.D.
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To the people of McKinley County:

Recently, I was pleased to learn that on this day of July 23, 2016, the almost forgotten name of José del los Reyes Bustamante was being pulled at long last from the shadows of the past so that he may receive a measure of the recognition that he indisputably deserves.

I am grateful that my long-time friend of the Gallup area, Phillip Marques, aided by another local history enthusiast, Martin Link, has pulled together the pieces allowing today's honoring of Bustamante.

Born in the year 1844, just two years before an American army seized New Mexico, Bustamante was still in his late teens when he helped defend New Mexico from an invading Confederate army of Texans early in the Civil War.

On February 21, 1862, Pvt. Bustamante, having become a member of Captain James Graydon's Independent Company of Spies and Scouts in the Union Army's defense of New Mexico, fought gallantly with his unit against the Texans at the bloody battle of Valverde Ford, south of Socorro.

On this day, I find it fitting that the people of Gallup and McKinley County have taken notice of the life of Jose del Reyes Bustamante, since brave and solid men like him are too often overlooked.

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