**Van Houten Residents Learned from Obituaries**

These names are all found in obituaries published online. It is, of course, by no means exhaustive, and could be expanded if new information arises. These were found from Googling “Van Houten New Mexico”. The quotation marks are important to include in the search bar, as they force the results to include New Mexico. This helps to include more results relevant to the town, and fewer about the Charles Manson follower Leslie Van Houten and the actress Carise van Houten, who have both been a plague upon my research efforts. While I’m on it, so, too, has been Milton van Houten, the character from the Simpsons.

I have elected not to include the personal contents of the obituaries, but instead will scribe down their names, dates of birth, and any other pertinent information. Military service is denoted in a separate line.

**Magdalena “Helen” Lucero**

Born July 2, 1925

Not born in VH but raised there. “Proud to be a coal miner’s daughter”. Ran the post office in Raton after college.

**Sinforosa Vigil**

b. July 6, 1936 in VH to Daniel and Julia Rivera Garcia

**Samuel Luis Lucero**

b. December 3, 1933 in VH to Carolina (Griego) Lucero and Samuel Lucero.

U.S. Army.

One of 13 children. Graduated from High School in Raton.

**Bruno Leon**

b. 1924 in VH

USAF 1943-45, pilot.

FAIA Architect. Worked for famous architect Eduardo Fernando Catalano, who designed the Juilliard School of Music at New York City's Lincoln Center. Parents came from Italy. “There’s a continuity to history; that’s important”. Dean of University of Detroit Mercy

**Christine Mahannah**

b. April 6, 1917 (same day U.S. declares war on Germany) in VH to Yugoslavian immigrants Pete Pesikan and Jennie (Krivokapich) Pesikan.

**Martha (Mileta) Menapace**

b. December 17, 1932 in VH to Lazo and Antonia Mileta

Sister-in-law of Nickie Yaksich

**Josephine Riali**

b. December 20, 1926 in VH to Andro and Mary Liptak Segotta

**George Mavredakis**

b. March 22, 1924 in VH

U.S. Army Air Corps WWII, European Theater, Armorer Gunner, 33 combat missions.

Graduated high school in Dawson. Played football as All American for New Mexico A&M.

**John & Marie Simovich**

John:

b. December 11, 1928 in VH to Pete and Mary Simovich.

U.S. Army in Japan

Taught himself harmonica at 9. Also played accordion and piano.

Marie:

b. July 24, 1928 in Surgarite to Elvira and Emilio Giampietri

**Lela Marquez**

b. April 6, 1931 in VH to Sam Miera Sr. and Rafelita Miera

“Her father was a coal miner in New Mexico and her mother was a homemaker.”.

**Michael Sims**

b. January 2, 1916 in VH to Peter and Maria Simovich

**Sophia Leonakis**

b. 1920 in VH to George and Christina Leonakis

**Jim Orphanakis**

b. 1923 in VH to Stella and Christ Orphanakis (“Hard working, God fearing Greek immigrants”)

U.S. Army 32nd Red Arrow Division in 60 and 81 Mitameter Motors, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, MP in Japan

Lived in VH for the first 12 years of his life.

**Catherine Ann (Briski) Snell**

b. March 17, 1930 in VH

Youngest of 11. Moved shortly before WWII

**James N. (Jim) Segotta**

b. November 20, 1936 in VH to Jack and Edythe (Rork) Segotta

**Richard Gene Segotta**

b. September 23, 1926 in VH to Jack and Edythe (née Rork) Segotta

US Navy, USS Escalante

Oldest of 10. Graduated high school in Dawson.

**Nickie Yaksich**

b. May 18, 1929 in VH to George and Pauline Kovacevich Yaksich

US Army, Korean War

Worked for Kaiser Steel. I have seen his signature on the employment records. Brother-in-law of Eugene and Martha Menapace as well as Chuck Stevens

**Darinka Rising**

b. July 31, 1935 in VH to

Graduated from New Mexico Tech with a BSc in Chemistry in 1957

**Rose Marie (Spatar) Oliver**

b. March 31, 1921 in VH to Frank and Lena (Frenchmore) Spatar

Oldest of six. Graduated high school in Raton in 1939

**Chuck Stevens**

b. July 10, 1918 in VH to Charles Sr. and Ann Stevens

US Army Air Force, WWII, Pacific Theater

Played MLB baseball for the St. Louis Browns. Oldest MLB player at the time of his death in 2018. Played with or against Bob Sturgeon, Ted Williams, Jackie Robinson, and Bob Lemon. Met Babe Ruth. Playing exhibition baseball with Joe DiMaggo. Appeared in "The Stratton Story" starring Jimmy Stewart and "The Winning Team" starring Ronald Reagan.

**Maj. Chris G Patterakis**

b. July 23, 1935 in VH to Gregory Patterakis from Crete and Eleni (Helen) Katsufrakis, also of Greek heritage

USAF, Vietnam, Distinguished Flying Cross, 557th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 315 combat missions, Thunderbirds Air Force Demonstration Team

Left VH at age six.

**Steve Perovich**

b. September 10, 1917 in VH to Perko and Mary Kovacevich Perovich

US Navy, WWII

Worked briefly in the mines.

**Mary Chagenovich**

b. August 16, 1920 in VH to Helen and Velo Chagenovich

Second of nine children.

**George Sandoval**

b. 1931 in VH

Married childhood sweetheart Lillian Cordova then moved.

**Grace Orphanakis Lowe**

b. January 8, 1928 in VH to Christ Emanuel and Stella Saradakis Orphanakis

**Carmen Duran**

b. May 15, 1925 in VH

**Pauline Marie Stilinovich**

b. September 19, 1929 in VH to Marko and Elsie (Garzina) Vuicich

“Pauline’s early education was acquired in the Van Houten coal camp. After completing the eighth grade, she rode a school bus from Van Houten into Raton to attend high school. She was a 1947 graduate of Raton High School.”

**Michael Briski J.D.**

b. 1936 in VH to George and Zella Briski

US Army, Korean War

Moved when ‘Michael’s father decided that the next mine cave-in might be his last’.