



PIE TOWN, NM

Gather 'round, children, it's time to hear the story of Pie Town. Once upon a time, a great, choking cloud of dirt destroyed the land that was supposed to feed America—they called it the Dust Bowl. To escape the ever-present feeling of dirt under their fingernails and between their teeth, travelers struck out west to California in hopes that Pacific Ocean breezes would dust them off. Well, some didn't quite make it all the way, including one man with a predilection for baking. That man, a Texan and a World War I veteran, found himself broken down on a rocky ridge about two hundred miles southwest of Santa Fe. His name was Clyde Norman, and somewhere between a rattlesnake and a juniper bush he started making the best dried-apple pies anyone had ever tasted at 8,000 feet above sea level. A little town sprang up around Norman's pies, and when it petitioned for its own post office, in 1927, the locals wanted no other name for their village than Pie Town. Soon enough, one of the great Farm Security Administration photographers, Russell Lee, would pop by Pie Town and capture, in photographs, the town's determination to survive the tail end of the Great Depression. Nowadays, people there are no longer living in dugout cabins, but you can still eat the best darn slice of pie you've ever had. If you take U.S. 60 west of Socorro, about eighty miles down the road you'll find a quaint little storefront called the Pie-O-Neer Café, where you can have your pick of apple, strawberry-rhubarb, peanut butter, cherry streusel, or whatever else strikes your fancy. A meal there won't set you back more than ten dollars, and the old-town charm is free. Note: A short documentary film—*The Pie Lady of Pie Town*—by Jane Rosemont, is currently in production and should be completed this summer.