



NEWSLETTER

March 2017

Doña Ana County Historical Society

Of Course, There Is More To The Story

EDITOR'S NOTE: In our 2017 issue of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, Kyle Mery wrote about an oral history program at New Mexico State University. In the process, he summarized and quoted from some of the oral histories taken by students in Dr. Hunner's class.

When I read Dolores Archuleta's account of the German POWs working in Las Cruces, my curiosity meter started jumping. I know Dolores and couldn't help but wonder if there wasn't more there. So I sent Dolores an email and asked her. Here is her response:

Yes, I was about 9 or 10 and the out-houses had been banned in the City in 1942 or so. My father added a bathroom to the adobe house where we lived at 329 E. May Street (in the Historic District) so everything was ready



Dolores Archuleta is a strong supporter of Mesilla Valley history. This is her photo for the Downtown Las Cruces Partnership where she is on the board of directors.

except for the sewer lines and I was told it was going to take a while to get the "connections" because we didn't have the men to dig the trenches because they were all at war.

I was anxious to get the trenches for the sewer lines completed so I could try out the new bathtub. I was going to Holy Cross School which was right next to St. Genevieve Church downtown, and one afternoon on the way home from school, I noticed some blond guys digging the trenches close to our neighborhood and a "policeman" was guarding them, but they were not going in the direction of our house.

So, I asked Papá why were they going the wrong way, and he told me they had to follow the plan given to the man with the rifle. I asked him a lot of questions to find out who I could talk to get them in our street, our house. The person who developed the "plan" was the City Manager, and I learned his office was behind our school on Church Street (this was about three blocks from our house).

The next day after school I went to look for him. I was met by a firefighter who asked my name and who was I looking for. He took my hand and took me to the City Manager's office. He asked me to sit down and I remember I had to sit on my legs because the chair was so big and I couldn't see him above the desk.

He asked my name and my parents name, and what was the problem. I told him the workers digging the streets for the bathrooms were going the wrong direction and told him where they should be digging. He told me to go home, and that he would take care that the

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Calendar Of Upcoming Events For Members

March 16 --- Monthly Members Meeting at Good Samaritan, 7 p.m. Paula Moore will be talking about her new book *Matinee and Evening: The Story of Actors Abby Lewis and John Seymour*.

Abby Lewis was the daughter of Reverend Hunter Lewis, the longtime priest at St. James Episcopal Church on South Main. In the early 1930's she went to New York City, following her dream of acting on Broadway and made it.

Moore used materials from some 200 boxes of records she found in the Institute of Historical Survey Foundation - ironically, only a stone's throw from St. James. Moore is also the author of *Cricket in the Web: The 1949 Unsolved Murder That Unraveled New Mexico Politics*.

April 8 --- Field Trip to Soledad Canyon on Fort Bliss. Like the trip to Hembrillo Battlefield last year, this one will require at least high-clearance vehicles. We will be entering Soledad from the east and driving up into the canyon to the Beasley family ranches in the heart of the canyon.

The trip is limited to 25 people so we'll take the first 25 that sign up. We will meet in the large parking lot on the east side of the NMSU Pan American Center and leave there at 7:30 a.m. We will pick up our Ft. Bliss escort at the south county branch of the Dona Ana County Community College at I-10 and OHara Road at 8 a.m. From the college to the heart of the canyon, it is about 40 miles, one way. Expect to be gone until mid-afternoon.

As with Hembrillo, if you do not have a full-size SUV, pickup or 4x4, we'll try to find you a seat with

someone who does. For instance, I will be taking my Xterra and I can seat 3 additional folks.

We have to turn in our list of attendees to Ft. Bliss by March 22 so names can be cleared through the terrorism and criminal databases. You can sign up by emailing Jim Eckles at: nebraska1950@comcast.net or calling him at 575-521-8771.

April 20 --- Monthly Members Meeting at Good Samaritan, 7 p.m. April marks the 100 year anniversary of America entering World War I. Jim Eckles will present the story of Deming's Camp Cody. In order to train a new Army of over 2,000,000 men, the military established 32 training camps across the country. Deming was the site of a tent and crude-timber camp built to house 30,000 men when Deming itself was only 2,000 people. In many ways the camp was just like a western mining boom town. It was built in a matter of months and then, poof, a few months after the war, it was gone.

In doing his research, Jim discovered a treasure trove of World War I posters at the Library of Congress. He has downloaded about 80 of them and arranged them into a Powerpoint slide presentation. This slide show will be running in the auditorium leading up to the start of his presentation. Some of the artwork is fabulous.

May 18 --- Monthly Members Meeting at Good Samaritan, 7 p.m. Mark Santiago, Director of the Farm and Ranch Museum, will present *Into Lands Totally Unknown: Spanish Military Campaigns into Central New Mexico, 1750 -1800*.

Dolores Archuleta's Cruces Memories — Continued From Page 1

workers digging the trenches got to my house soon.

The point I was trying to make to the student(taking the oral history), was that we didn't have telephones, but by the time I got home my father already knew that I had gone to see the City Manager. When I got home, he sat me down and told me any time I had a problem, like today, that I should discuss it with him first. That the workers digging the trenches were Germans and prisoners of war, and to be careful and not get in their way.

I don't remember knowing who the Germans

were much less that they were prisoners of war.

Many years later, I realized that although my two brothers were fighting in the war, never did Papá tell me the Germans were bad people or anything unkind about them, only that I should not get in their way. My father was a WW1 veteran.

The next day after school, the blond guys were on our street and not too long after that I took my very first bath in a bathtub and I didn't have to share the bath water like we had to do with the old aluminum tub!

Great Book On The Old West Is Now Available Again

By Karl Laumbach

Apache Land From Those Who Lived It, authored by Keith J. Humphries, has been reprinted by Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences and is available on Amazon and at the Geronimo Springs Museum.

Keith's publication earned him a place in the Doña Ana County Historical Society Hall of Fame. In 2000 Keith was honored with a New Mexico Historic Preservation Award for "Outstanding Accomplishment for Lifetime Achievement in Documenting Southern New Mexico Oral Traditions and the History of the 19th century". More recently he was posthumously honored with the DACHS Heritage Award in 2011.

This edition includes a foreword by Karl Laumbach, a biography of Keith Humphries by Dan Aranda and a 58-page index by Dawn Santiago. Production of this second edition was accomplished by Pete and Morrie Drexler and David Soules.

Apache Land From Those Who Lived It is a unique blend of oral history, art and historic photographs that should grace the book shelf of anyone interested in the old west. Keith Humphries was born in 1907 and lived his life in west Texas and southern New Mexico. Fascinated by the stories he heard from cowboys, Texas Rangers, cavalrymen, and Mexicans who had experienced the old west first hand, Keith decided at an early age that their stories must live on.

During his college years he actively sought out the men and women who could give him first-hand accounts, share their photographs and take him to

the location of historic events. His interviews included George Coe who fought with Billy the Kid, Sadie Orchard the Hillsboro Madame, Billy Bates who was a packer for the Ninth Cavalry, Natividad Padilla whose father worked the lost Spanish mine in the Caballo Mountains and many others. The stories range in time from the late Spanish Period until the beginning of the 20th century and cover west Texas, southern New Mexico and northern Mexico.

After retirement Humphries took painting lessons and produced over 80 oil paintings depicting the events described by the old timers. The stories, paintings, and photographs and Keith's passion for them are bound together in this unusual and delightful volume. The limited first edition has long been out of print and this volume has been produced as a fundraiser for Geronimo Springs Museum in Truth or Consequences, N.M. where Keith's original paintings can be viewed.

Buffalo Roast On March 11

For those of you receiving this newsletter electronically, you still have time to sign up for the annual HSR buffalo roast. The roast is the main fundraiser for Human Systems Research each year.

This year VanAnn Moore will be portraying three historic women of the Old West. Call HSR at 524-9456 ASAP for more information.

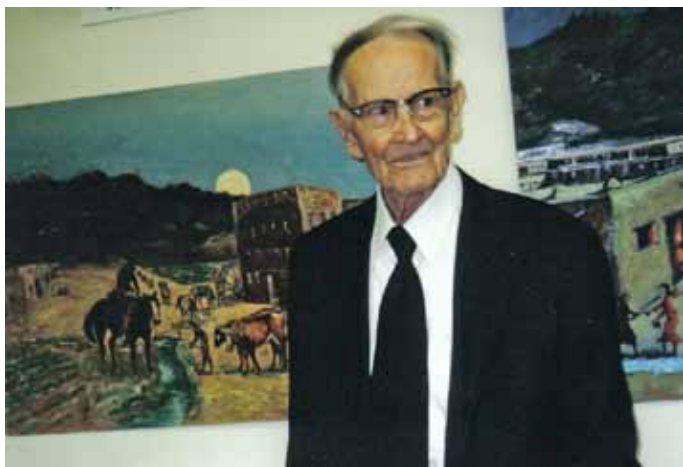
Letters Are Now On Website

The wonderful Lyon-Bowman letters mentioned in last month's newsletter are now on the historical society's website and can be viewed by anyone. They are under the "Reference Materials" link on our frontpage.

DACHS member Dennis Daily, head of NMSU's Archives and Special Collections, reports that he has collected the actual letters from the family in Albuquerque. They are in the process of being incorporated into the collection.

Possible Tour Of NMSU Archives

Dennis Daily has thrown out the idea of a "field trip" to the NMSU archives sometime in the future. It would consist of a guided tour through the facility for small groups. Anyone interested?



Keith Humphries in front of his paintings.

The Results Are In Concerning Newsletter Name

By Jim Eckles

Well, the results of my question are overwhelming and unequivocal. Last month I ran a little piece in this space about the possibility of giving the DACHS newsletter some other name than just "Newsletter." I jokingly compared it to calling your dog just "Dog."

The vote was 100 percent in favor of simply using "Newsletter." Rarely does any opinion question, especially in our politicized culture, result in such a uniformity.

Of course, there is a catch here. Only one person bothered to respond to the question. He wins.

I suspect the reason no one bothered to offer up an opinion is that you don't really care what it is called. Fair enough. Another possibility is that no one actually read the article. That is disturbing for me, as the author, and from the standpoint of the overall newsletter. Hopefully, members are taking the time to read most of this publication.

Ok, so here is another question. In January the

DACHS held its annual Awards Luncheon at the Double Eagle. Very few of you attended. As a member of the board of directors, I'm concerned about that.

So, why didn't you come?

- 1) Is the event too expensive?
- 2) Is it offered on a bad day or at a bad time for you?
- 3) Do you want it to go back to the way it was with a nighttime dinner and auction of white elephant stuff from everyone's garages?
- 4) You don't care about the awards?
- 5) Would you like to see some form of entertainment during the event?

If you would like to provide some feedback on this question, you can email me at:

nebraska1950@comcast.net I promise to keep any input anonymous.

**LAST CALL
DUES ARE DUE**

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