



# NEWSLETTER

## October 2017

Doña Ana County Historical Society

### There Is More To Fabian Garcia Than Chile

By Dennis Daily, DACHS Vice President

The October 19 Doña Ana County Historical Society meeting will feature a presentation by NMSU public history professor Peter Kopp. In his presentation, Dr. Kopp will examine the life and work of Fabián García. While many in our region recognize García as the “Father of New Mexico Chile,” Kopp contends that there is much more to the story. As such, he will share his recent research findings in the hopes of capturing García’s contributions within broader contexts of horticulture, education, and the borderlands.

Peter A. Kopp is associate professor and director of the Public History Program at New Mexico State University. He is an historian of agriculture and the environment in the American West. His first book, *Hoptopia: A World of Agriculture and Beer in Oregon’s Willamette Valley* (University of California Press, 2016),



*Professor Peter Kopp*

traces the fascinating history of one of beer’s main ingredients. He is currently working on a book-length biography of Fabián García.

### Tombaugh Presentation Was Something Special

By Jon Hunner, DACHS President

Welcome back to a new season of lectures and activities with the Dona Ana County Historical Society. We had a fantastic lecture last month with Al Tombaugh, son of Clyde Tombaugh, which covered not just his discovery of



*Alden Tombaugh*

Pluto but he also offered an intimate portrait of a father, a world-renowned scientist, and a Las Cruces resident. It

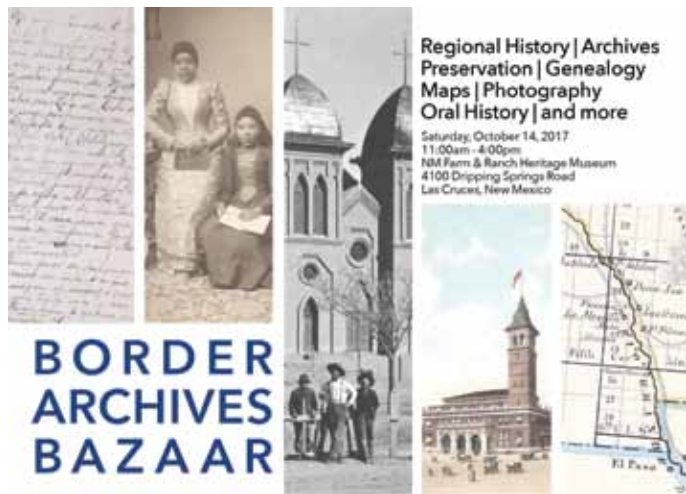
was made extra special because Al was able to play many video clips where we heard Clyde’s story told by himself.

Please see the schedule on line for our upcoming lectures this fall, including a special one on November 9 from Father Justin who lives in St. Catherine’s monastery in the Sinai.

After years of time on our Board of Directors, we are sad to say good bye to **George Helfrich** and **Bob Gamboa**. Elections are coming up soon to replace them so please let me know if you are interested in joining our dynamic society and helping us in preserving the rich heritage of the Mesilla Valley. You can reach me at: [jhunner@nmsu.edu](mailto:jhunner@nmsu.edu). See you at Good Sam for our next lecture.

# Archives Bazaar Promises History Treasures

The Border Archives Bazaar is a free, fun event for the community to interact with fascinating historical collections from the border region. The event brings together resources from more than a dozen libraries, archives, and museums of the El Paso and



southern New Mexico area.

The event is sponsored by the Border Regional Archives Group and hosted by the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum on Saturday, October 14, 11am to 4pm. The Bazaar will feature historical manuscripts, photographs, maps, publications, films and more that highlight the unique history and culture of our region and the role that archives play in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Archivists, librarians and museum curators will be on hand to discuss and answer questions about archives, regional history, and preserving documents.

Scan stations will provide free (limited) digitization services for family photographs, documents, and audiovisual materials brought in by the public. The Border Archives Bazaar also will include short talks and workshops on regional history, genealogy, preserving family archives, oral history, researching historic buildings and neighborhoods, and digitizing old media.

For more information, please contact: Abbie Weiser, Special Collections, University of Texas at El Paso Library, [ahweiser@utep.edu](mailto:ahweiser@utep.edu), 915-747-6839, or Dennis Daily, Archives and Special Collections, New Mexico State University Library, [ddaily@nmsu.edu](mailto:ddaily@nmsu.edu), 575-646-4756.

## *These organizations will be participating:*

- ✓ Border Heritage Center, El Paso Public Library
- ✓ Border Patrol Museum & Memorial Library Foundation
- ✓ C.L. Sonnichsen Special Collections Department, University of Texas at El Paso Library
- ✓ Centennial Museum, University of Texas, El Paso
- ✓ Doña Ana County Clerk's Office
- ✓ El Paso County Historical Society
- ✓ El Paso Museum of History
- ✓ Fort Bliss Museum
- ✓ Institute of Historical Survey
- ✓ New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum
- ✓ New Mexico Museum of Space History
- ✓ New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections
- ✓ Tularosa Basin Museum of History
- ✓ White Sands Missile Range Museum and Archive

## **Eckles At Farm & Ranch**



DACHS member Jim Eckles will speak on Oct. 12 at the Farm and Ranch Museum about ranching on what is now White Sands Missile Range -- in the Tularosa Basin and in the San Andres and Oscura Mountain ranges -- and how the ranchers lost their land to America's military needs. The presentation starts at 7 p.m. and is free.

# Some Background On The Garrett Coroner's Report

*NOTE: On June 16, the Dona Ana County Clerk's Office unveiled the original cononer's report concerning the death of Pat Garrett. Many historical society members were present. Also, Dr. Robert Stahl was there to provide historical background for the discovery. Stahl is a historian and professor emeritus at the University of Arizona.*

*For the event Dr. Stahl had prepared a lengthy presentation about what the investigative process was like in territorial New Mexico in 1908. He didn't have time to make a full presentation but has allowed us to cherry pick from it so you get the full story. What follows are Dr. Stahl's words.*

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I congratulate the staff of the County Clerk's office for what it has done to date in searching through the old records and to move towards recording, filing, describing the records found, and making these documents available to an eager and growing public. You have a gold mine of documents that are and will continue to be of great interest to historians, history buffs, genealogists, and people researching family histories. What you have done so far is the tip of the iceberg of unveiling important documents of this county's history.

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In New Mexico's Territorial days coroner's juries were assembled at the instance of a violent death or a death under unusual circumstances. The elected county coroner and justice of the peace of a particular voting precinct where a dead body was located were the only ones who could legally assemble a coroner's jury made up of an all-male, 6-man jury consisting of men of that precinct. The justice of the peace or coroner selected the president or foreman of the jury.

A primary task of the jury was to identify the body. The justice of the peace or coroner were not members of the jury, but were present to guide the jury through its investigative and decision-making activities and to make sure the jury president created a final written report of the jury's findings and to make sure each juror signed the final report. Typically the jury reached and recorded its verdict as to their view of the category of death of the particular individual. The justice of the peace or coroner then

was responsible for signing off on the jury's report and make sure that it was delivered to the county's courthouse, usually the Probate Court Clerk, for recording and filing.

At no time during Territorial days were there specific detailed guidelines to direct the jury during its investigation or to dictate the kinds of decisions it had to make or record. For instance there were no guidelines as to whether or not they needed to interview eyewitnesses to the killing or the known or suspected murderer himself or herself. There were no guidelines as to whether or not they reported on the disposition or position of the body, or guidelines they record the manner of death. There was no official form or format for the written report.

The decisions as to what to do and what decisions needed to be recorded were up to the jury's president or foreman with suggestions from the justice of the peace or coroner. In other words, they could record what they wanted and decide what language to use to report their final decisions. Given this lack of guidance and as we might suspect, some coroner's jury reports were relatively detailed while others were very sparse with few details.

At the beginning of the Territory of New Mexico in 1850, all official documents were to be written in Spanish. However during the latter part of the 1800s and early 1900s, official documents were being written in English. This jury's report is consistent with this trend to record in English.

What is interesting but not uncommon for the time is that this particular report for Pat Garrett was not very detailed or specific. For instance, they did not report details of the specific place where they found his body, such as it was alongside the road to Garrett's Bear Canyon ranch, about five miles northeast of Las Cruces. They did not report an approximate time of death. They did not record they found Garrett having been shot in the back of the neck with the bullet exiting just above his left eye and shot again in the chest at about the 7th rib. They did not record which bullet wound was the first inflicted on Garrett. They did not note that it was odd that Garrett was shot from behind in the neck with the second shot fired from the front. They did not

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record whether the bullet wounds were or seemed to be from the same gun or type of gun. They did not record the position of the body, which would have noted Garrett was lying on his back with arms outstretched. They did not record that Pat Garrett was unarmed. They did not record that Garrett's pants were partly pulled down and that his pants was wet due to urine. They did not record that Wayne Brazel was the self-confessed killer of Garrett. They did not record whether they interviewed Garrett's killer and, if so, what he told them. They did not record whether they interviewed Carl Adamson of Roswell, the only other known eyewitness present at the time of the killing, and if so, what he told them. They failed to obtain information about the body and wounds from a physician who made the trip to the murder site and remained there during much of the time the jury was at the scene. They failed to record a verdict—such as whether at the time of their meeting they considered the shooting death an instance of first or second degree murder, justifiable homicide, a murder in self-defense, an accident, a suicide, or some other type of homicide.

Such information in this particular coroner's jury report would leave us with more information as to exactly what they saw and heard at the murder site and what their opinion was of the nature of the killing. Any of these would have made this particular jury's report far more interesting and informative.

What might surprise many of you is that even with a coroner's jury report, abundant newspaper articles, a later physician's report, and a later murder trial that included eyewitness Adamson's very ambiguous and somewhat contradictory testimony, Wayne Brazel was acquitted of this murder, leaving Garrett's death one of the most famous unsolved murder case in the history of New Mexico.

What also might surprise you is that there is no official death certificate for Patrick Floyd Garrett in the files of the N. M. State Bureau of Vital Records. In Territorial days, coroner's jury reports were accepted as equivalent to a death report, so no death certificate was usually created.

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