



NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Doña Ana County Historical Society

Work On Picacho Cemetery Progresses

By Sally Kading, DACHS Historian

As reported in earlier newsletters, DACHS bought an old abandoned historic cemetery in January of this year. It is located in the Village of Picacho, off Salem Colony Road. Instead of just talking about saving historic properties, we thought we should try our hand at actually doing it.

Beginning this past spring, the Knights of Columbus from St. Genevieve and the Basilica at San Albino spent two days clearing brush, mesquite and creosote. It was a major undertaking and those of us involved in this project can't express our thanks strongly enough! They made it possible for us to actually see the ground and now go about studying what is there.



Our many volunteers fought valiantly to initially clear the brush from the cemetery. More have come forward to keep the ground clear so the investigation can continue at the site. Photo by Karen George.

Indoors, the Dona Ana County Genealogical Society has been researching the names of people known to be buried in the "Campo Santo de La Familia Sagrada" in Picacho. Based on old St. Genevieve and the Basilica at San Albino's earliest church records, we have

found burials dating back to the 1860's and 1870's. A search of death records has netted us a total of 35 known burials.

We understand from people who have lived in Picacho, that there may be over a hundred burials. That would be remarkable but we have not been able to confirm that claim. However, we haven't all the possible records so it might be possible.

We have also been lucky enough to get **CSTI (Consulting, Surveying & Technology Integration)**, interested in doing ground penetrating radar work to help us look below the surface of sand. This could be a huge benefit to our efforts.

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David Acosta, with CSTI, runs the company's ground penetrating radar over an area where there are know graves. The readings will provide a baseline for comparison in other areas. Photo by Jim Eckles

Plans To Map Graves

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By running the radar device, which is mounted on wheels and looks like a lawnmower, over the cemetery ground, computer software can highlight the anomalies underground. In other words, it is hoped that the disturbed earth where a burial is located will stand out from the background of undisturbed sand.

With that information, we plan to map the cemetery and locate unmarked burials in the half acre we have. There are only two headstones. There are a number of stone mounds that may indicate burial locations. We are hoping the ground penetrating radar will shed light on areas that have no markers.

Of course, it has rained and the weeds and brush have come back with a vengeance since August. We have had to reach out to other sources to help get the new growth under control.

When all is said and done we should have a packet of information that includes survey information, aerial photos, graphed grave locations, ground penetrating radar images, historical pictures, biographies on the deceased and, hopefully, a little Picacho Village history from the late 1800's through 1940's. If you know of any history from that period, or have pictures, please let one of the board members know. We would love to include it. All of this will be given to the NMSU Archives for preservation.

We are nowhere near done. Hopefully we can find funding that will help us place a single granite marker at the entrance with the 35 known names in

the cemetery. It would also be nice to add a fence on the exposed sides to prevent future illegal dumping.

We will continue to update you periodically as the research continues.



David Acosta, with CSTI, and Sally place flags where the radar is showing some anomaly below. Photo by Jim Eckles



David Acosta, with CSTI, explains to Sally how the radar will pick up irregularities below the surface which could be graves. Photo by Jim Eckles

Awards Banquet Scheduled

Our annual Awards Banquet/luncheon is scheduled for January 26, 2019 at the Double Eagle in Mesilla. Mark your calendars.

We are still putting together possible awards for people, places and buildings. If you have an idea and would like to make a nomination shoot Jim Eckles an email at: nebraska1950@comcast.net

Dr. Reynolds Will Outline The Early Life of Martin Amador



Dr. Terry Reynolds

The Amadors are well known as one of the important families in early Las Cruces, but the story of how they got to the Mesilla Valley remains untold. Born in El Paso del Norte (now, Cd. Juárez) in 1836, Martín Amador

spent his formative years there and in Ysleta, Chihuahua (now Texas). While his family was socially privileged, they were not wealthy and after his father died they moved from place to place trying

to become self-sufficient. Eventually in 1849-1850, they immigrated to the Mesilla Valley where through hard work, intelligence, and ambition Martín made a modest fortune before the age of 25. This talk will trace Amador's early years, the traditions into which he was born, the people who helped him and the obstacles he had to overcome as a young man.

After several years of living with Navajo families and doing cultural ethnographic research, **Terry Reynolds** began in 1980 to do ethnohistorical research into the colonial and national settlement of the El Paso and Mesilla valleys of the Rio Grande. As the curator of the NMSU University Museum in 1998, she became familiar with the Amador family artifacts and began to do research into the objects, photos and documents they left behind.

The program will be on Oct. 18 at 7 p.m. at the Good Sam auditorium. Join us in finding out where the Amador Hotel comes from.

Board And Officer Slots To Be Voted On In November

It is time to for the membership to vote on board of director slots and a few officers. The actual voting will take place at our November public program at Good Sam on the 15th.

The board of directors puts forth the following people for election. For at-large board positions: **Garland Courts**, **Daniel Aguilera** (Farm and Ranch Museum), and **Buddy Ritter**.

Also, **Dennis Fuller**, who we just voted on to fill out the current term as treasurer, has agreed to continue as treasurer in 2019/2020. Finally, **Jim Eckles** has agreed to continue for another stint as secretary.

Nominations are not closed and others can be suggested. Just contact a board member.

The vice president slot is still open and we could use someone to help plan the monthly programs.

Southern New Mexico Historical Review Needs Your Help

We are currently putting together the next *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* scheduled to be published in January. Right now we have over a half dozen good articles. We could use a few book reviews and/or museum reviews if you are so inclined. Contact Jim Eckles at nebraska1950@comcast.net if you want to contribute.

Another way to contribute is to help pay the printing expenses for the *Review*. The costs have escalated during the past couple of years and the few donations we received the last two years didn't come close to covering our costs. That is money out of our small treasury that could be used for scholarships and other DACHS business.

We estimate it will cost about \$750 to print the upcoming *Review*. Of course, the electronic version and posting it on the website is almost free - we pay a small yearly fee for a company to host the website.

When you renew your membership this winter, please consider adding \$50 to your dues as a donation for the *Review* - the form has a block to check noting the donation. Of course, if you'd like to give more, it would be greatly appreciated.

We have articles this year from college students studying history at NMSU and UTEP. It would be nice to continue supporting their interests by giving them an viable outlet for this research and writings. At the same, we will probably learn something new.

Border Archives Bazaar Set For Oct. 13 At UTEP

Last year the first Border Archives Bazaar was held in Las Cruces at the Farm and Ranch Museum. It was a great event featuring various archives from the local area. Dennis Daily, NMSU's archivist, says this year's bazaar is way bigger with many more organizations participating. You get to see old books, old maps, old photographs, old letters - you get the picture.

A common response from attendees was, "Who knew they had an archive." Of course, researchers were asking questions about collections and how to get access to rare documents.

The event is Oct. 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Tomas Rivera Conference Center on UTEP.

Here is a blurb from their publicity.

The Border Archives Bazaar is a FREE, fun event for the community to interact with fascinating historical collections from the bor-

der region. See rare documents, photographs, maps, publications, and more that highlight the unique history and culture of the area. Learn about the role that archives play in preserving and promoting history. Archivists, librarians, and museum curators from more than a dozen local institutions will 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 event also will include the mini-DIGIE wall and short talks in English and Spanish about regional history, archives, genealogy, and researching historic buildings and neighborhoods.

Free & open parking at UTEP on Saturday.

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