



# NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Doña Ana County Historical Society

## Vote On Sept. 20 For New Treasurer

This is the mandatory notice that the DACHS members will be asked to vote on a new treasurer at the September program on the 20th. The Board of Directors has voted to nominate Dennis Fuller for the empty position.

Gerry Veara left us at the beginning of the summer after a short but productive stint as our treasurer.

You may have noticed Dennis at some of the programs early in the year. He is a relative newcomer but is very interested in the well-being of the historical society. Also, he brings experience to the job as he has served as treasurer before with a non-profit organization.

Dennis was born a long time ago, as he put it, in 1943 in Crofton, KY, moved further north in 1946 to Northern Indiana. In 1961, after HS graduation he joined the U.S. Air Force.

He served for a little over 23 years, most of it in Texas (Austin, Lubbock), the last eight years in the Air Force he was stationed at Texas Tech University, working in the AF-ROTC department. During his years in Texas, he became fascinated with the state's history and traveled around the state specifically to visit as many historical areas as possible.

Once he retired, he went to work in several different university/college housing offices, with the last one being good old NMSU, from 1993 - 2005. Before and since retiring he has enjoyed even more traveling to the many historical venues through out New Mexico and the Southwest. He continues to always be in search of places of a historical nature that he has not visited, and put them on his bucket list. He says he will continue to work on taking trips to those locations.



*Dennis Fuller.*

He is currently a volunteer at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum. "I enjoy the opportunity of learning more about the history of farming and ranching everyday I am there," he says.

## C-SPAN Clips On The Web

In case you missed it, four of your DACHS board members were recently featured on C-SPAN's visit to Las Cruces this summer. The appearances were part of C-SPAN Cities Tour which has been running for years. The intent of the series is to feature the literary life and history of a selected city.

Making appearances were Leah Tookey, board member, Jon Hunner, former president, Dennis Daily, current president and Jim Eckles, secretary.

These and many more clips about Las Cruces can be found on C-SPAN's website.

# The DACHS Fall Lecture Series Kicks Off

September 20

## Rediscovering El Camino Real

**Kelly Jenks, PhD**



If you live in Doña Ana County, you probably know something about “El Camino Real.” This Spanish “royal road” played a pivotal role in the region’s history, facilitating successive waves of conquest and colonization. We know something of the various travel-

ers who followed this trail: Spanish conquistadors and missionaries, Native American soldiers and captives, Mexican and American merchants, even Union and Confederate forces.

We know (more or less) where it is, as many of its campsites developed into the county’s oldest settlements. Dig a little further, though, and you will find that we know surprisingly little about the specifics of travel—the exact routes that people took, when, and what they did along the way.

In this lecture, Dr. Jenks draws on recent archaeological fieldwork to offer some insights into life along the trail.

**Dr. Kelly Jenks** is a historical archaeologist whose research focuses on Hispanic colonization and settlement in the Southwest. Her recent projects include archaeological fieldwork at two sites along El Camino Real: La Parida, a 19th-century Hispanic village located northeast of Socorro, and Paraje San Diego, a 17th-century watering stop at the south end of the Jornada del Muerto.

She is also involved with an oral history project focused on the state’s rural heritage, and with archaeological projects on the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument and in the Pecos River Valley. She is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at NMSU.

October 18

## Early Mesilla Valley Pioneering:

## The 1850s Martín Amador Story

**Terry R. Reynolds, Ph.D.**

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. Now housed in the NMSU Museum and the NMSU Library Archives, the materials compose one of the largest collections in the United States documenting the pioneering 19th-century Hispanic experience.

November 15

## Longtime Mescalero President

## Wendell Chino

**Dr. Jeffrey Shepherd, UTEP**

Professor Shepherd is currently working on a biography of Chino. In 2010 he published “We Are An Indian Nation.”

# Rio Grande Archives Reveal New Photos Of Early WSMR

By Jim Eckles

Knowing about my interest in the history of White Sands Missile Range, Dennis Daily, Department Head of Archives and Special Collections at NMSU, mentioned the collection of James Flanagan. He said it was large, consisting mostly of law enforcement images as Flanagan was the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Dept. photographer during the late 40s and early 50s.

However, Dennis said there is a series of negatives, did I mention they are beautiful 4x5 negatives?, dealing with White Sands Proving Ground. The envelopes and contact prints were labeled as circa 1954 but what I saw was much earlier, images from the first couple of years of White Sands.

I've been associated with White Sands in one way or another for more than 40 years and I think I have seen most of the images officially saved from the early years. I have never seen these exact pictures before. Some, like the V-2 launch in May 1946, seen on the right here, are very similar to others but Flanagan did more with what he had. This photo has blockhouse in the foreground, the V-2 preparation in the background along with the tall WAC Corporal tower. The photo clearly shows new construction on the blockhouse to add the communications room and new entry on the southside. You can see the new rebar placed in the wall and the new slab poured for the addition.

I think the bottom photo of V-2 tails and motors was taken in 1948/49. The officer in the photo, probably his escort, also shows up in some photos Flanagan took of the new 500K Static Test Stand. The officer is posed at various places around the new facility and it is pristine yet, not quite completed. We have an Army photo of the stand in the later stages of construction in Feb. 1948 so Flanagan may have visited later in the year or early 1949.

Flanagan was a WWII vet, wounded in combat in Europe, but I'm not sure that explains how he, a civilian, got access to shoot some of his pictures. Will have to do more digging. Anybody know more?



## Other Local Activities You Might Be Interested In Pursuing

**H**uman Systems Research has a different approach to their lectures this year. The entire series will focus on findings revealed by HSR's archaeological explorations on the Canada Alamosa just north and west of Truth or Consequences on the Monticello Box Ranch.

Field work began in 1999 and continued through 2011. Field explorations were followed by seven years of artifact analysis and specialized studies. Through this lecture series, they plan to introduce you to some of the many professionals who have brought their expertise to the project and what has learned from them.

They will partner with the Dona Ana Archaeological Society to kick off the series on Tuesday, September 11 at 7 pm during their regular meeting at the Good Samaritan auditorium.

The series will begin with Karl Laumbach, Project Director of the Canada Alamosa Project and HSR Associate Director of Public Education and Research. He will be providing an overview of the project and the entire lecture series.

**D**avid Lee presents "Hope Stories" at the History Notes lecture at 1 p.m. on Thursday, September 13th at Branigan Cultural Center.

Topics include the beginnings and continued cooperation of Camp Hope and the five contributing MVCH organizations.

Hope Stories seeks to document Mesilla Valley Community of Hope staff, volunteers, and board members, and to encourage dialogue about poverty, homelessness, and hunger in New Mexico.

David approached the Dona Ana County Historical Society about a small grant to help fund his efforts. The board of directors voted to make the grant to help fund making transcripts from the recorded interviews.

**T**here will be an adobe and lime plaster workshop in Dona Ana, Oct. 9-13. It will include hands-on work on historic buildings in the village. Each day will run from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For information and to register, contact Karen Kuranz at 505-982-9521 or by email at [kkuranz@stones.org](mailto:kkuranz@stones.org)

[www.donaanacountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.donaanacountyhistoricalsociety.org)

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