

NEWSLETTER

March 2022

Doña Ana County Historical Society

Early Aviation In Las Cruces Is March's Topic

"Cleared for Takeoff: Aviation in Southern New Mexico " will be the monthly talk given on March. 17, at 7 p.m. by Jennifer McClung, the Exhibits Curator at the Las Cruces Museums. It will be held in the auditorium at the Good Samaritan, 3011 Buena Vida Cir.

Southern New Mexico seems an unusual place for the introduction of early aviation, given its rural nature and desert landscape. However, in 1916 the 1st Aero Squadron arrived in Columbus, NM to assist the U.S. Army in locating Pancho Villa and military aviation was established.

Just twenty years later Las Cruces would host its own small airport and shortly after more airfields were established throughout the Borderlands to support the war effort in the 1940s. Since then, aviation has shifted from military to civilian as recreational pilots and commercial commuter services filled local airports, especially from 1950 through the mid-1970s.

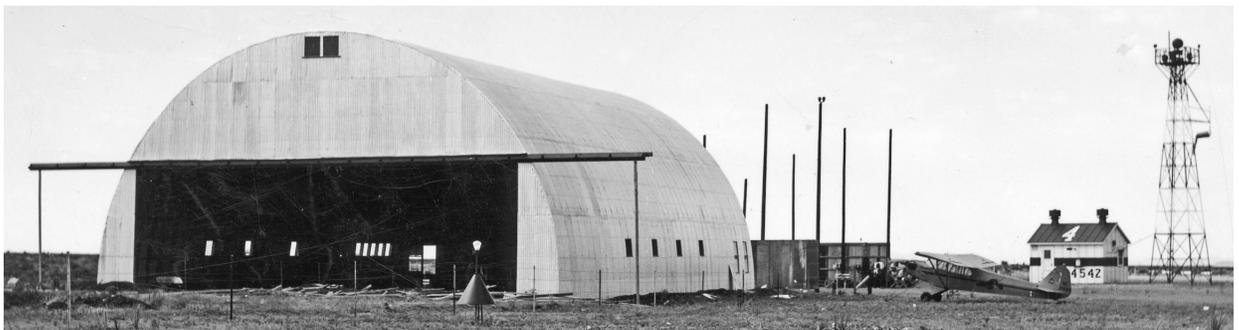
The people who were a part of the Borderland's history of aviation were colorful and their legacy is remembered to this day. This talk will focus on some of the events and people that made up this legacy.

Jennifer was responsible for researching and developing the "Cleared for Takeoff: Aviation in Southern New Mexico" exhibit among others. She holds a Master of Arts in Museum Science and a Bachelor of Arts in History.

As always, the presentation will take place in the auditorium at the Good Samaritan. Also, it will be presented live via Zoom.

Like our past few monthly meetings, if you cannot attend or do not feel safe yet, you can attend via the Zoom platform. We will send out the Zoom invite a few days before by email. Non-members can also request the Zoom link via email at: 19dachs63@gmail.com

The only requirement for those attending at Good Sam is that you must wear a mask inside their facility.



This hanger was originally constructed in 1940 by New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (NMA&M) out north of Highway 70. It didn't last long. Early in the morning of Jan. 30, 1941, 80-mph winds tore it apart. Pieces were found a quarter of a mile away. It was quickly rebuilt of sturdier stuff and served the airstrip in training young pilots during the war. (Image courtesy of New Mexico State University Library, Archives and Special Collections, A74-061-1275)

NOTICE -- NOTICE -- NOTICE -- NOTICE -- NOTICE -- NOTICE -- NOTICE

Dr. Jerry Wallace, our presenter in March, has volunteered to serve on the DACHS board of directors. To make it official, the membership will vote on it during the March meeting.

Rare Opportunity To Attend The New Mexico - Arizona History Convention As A Participant And/Or A Volunteer

Historians and enthusiasts from all over New Mexico and Arizona will be back in Las Cruces April 7-9 for the big, joint New Mexico - Arizona History Convention. It will be held at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum. Regular sessions start on Friday and range from "The Spanish Flu of 1918 in New Mexico and Arizona" to "Women That Made a Difference in the West" to "Native American Stories." Our own Rick Hendricks, along with Erik Berge, will kick things off late Thursday afternoon with a look at the historic wine industry in the Mesilla Valley and its influence on the Arizona wine industry. Of course, there is a wine-tasting reception afterward.

The Dona Ana County Historical Society is a co-sponsor for the event as it is in our backyard. That means helping the Historical Society of New Mexico make it happen. Also, we will have our own table in the exhibit area to tell our story.

To fulfill our obligations we are putting out a call for volunteers from the DACHS. We don't expect anyone to work more than a couple of hours at any one stretch so it shouldn't be too burdensome. We are even trying to convince member Dan Crow to

man our table early on, put his boots up on the table and strum his guitar occasionally. That ought to attract a crowd.☺

It is too early to have a list of jobs and times, so we are asking you to put your name in the hat and your preferences for day and time. We'll compile everyone's information and get back to you the week before the convention. If you'd like to volunteer, email your name, contact info (email and phone #) to the DACHS email address - 19dach63@gmail.com Be sure and include your preferred day and time.

Also, please consider attending so you can learn more about our regional history - there really are a lot of choices, enough to keep you engaged all day long. You can access the convention's brochure with its catalog of sessions at the HSNM website using this URL: <https://hsnm.org/history-conference/>

For those of you who regularly receive information from us via email, I will attached a PDF of the registration form. It can be filled in by hand and then mailed with your check. The deadline to register for meals is March 24. Also, you'll note there is a menu of choices allowing you go for the whole shebang or just a day of sessions.

The Schedule At A Glance

THURSDAY - APRIL 7

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Conference Registration – Main Lobby
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Book Vendors & Exhibitors set up – Tortugas
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Opening Plenary Session – Ventanas
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Opening Reception & Wine Tasting (hors d'oeuvres) - Amaro Winery

FRIDAY - APRIL 8

7:30 am – 5:00 pm	Conference Registration – Main Lobby
7:30 am – 5:00 pm	Book Vendors & Exhibitors and Coffee Breaks – Tortugas
8:30 am – Noon	Conference Sessions (1-2) – Ventanas, Organ View, Theater
12:15 pm – 1:15 pm	LUNCH - LOCATION TO BE ANNOUNCED
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Conference Sessions (3-4) – Ventanas, Organ View, Theater
5:30 pm – 7:00 pm	HSNM Book Auction (open to all conference registrants; cash bar) – Ventanas
	DINNER ON YOUR OWN

SATURDAY - APRIL 9

7:30 am – Noon	Conference Registration – Main Lobby
7:30 am – Noon	Book Vendors & Exhibitors and Coffee Breaks – Tortugas
8:30 am – Noon	Conference Sessions (5-6) – All venues LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Tours and local museum visits
5:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Social Time (cash bar) – Ventanas
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Awards Banquet (cash bar; pre-registration required) – Ventanas

Picacho Cemetery Cleared Of Weeds And Other Debris

DACHS Board of Directors member Sally Kad-ing organized a clean up session at the DACHS's owned Picacho cemetery on Feb. 26 to clear last year's growth of weeds and brush. Thank goodness the local councils of the Knights of Columbus showed up or we would have been there all day and into Sunday. With their help we were done in two hours.

Workers from the following councils helped us: Basilica at San Albino, Council 15578; Immaculate Heart of Mary, Council 17083; Santa Rosa de Lima, Council 15850; and, finally, Saints Mary & Mathias, Laurent Council 1305 from Muscatine, Iowa. The Iowa representative was Sally's brother who was visiting and found himself conscripted into working.

In addition we had someone from the Dona Ana County Genealogical Society and a few people from DACHS. **THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED!!!**

Instead of hauling all of the dead material away,



we raked it into convenient piles and burned it. It was a whole lot easier than bagging and hauling.

There was some excitement at one point on the south end of the cemetery as someone raked up a white marble. The excitement was because, according to Sally, the oral history is that a boy died decades ago and was buried in the cemetery. He liked to play marbles and the family supposedly placed a slab of wet cement over his grave and imbedded some of his marbles.

Sally has not been able to confirm the story as the grave is probably deep under the sand that has blown into the graveyard. It is unlikely that the marble is associated with the grave as it was basically on the surface, not buried, and at the wrong end of the cemetery. More than likely it was simply lost by one of the kids who have regularly walked through the cemetery as a shortcut for decades..

Southern New Mexico Historical Reviews Distributed

The *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* for 2022 has been distributed to those who have paid their dues for 2022 or are life members. If you have paid your dues and did not receive a copy in the mail, please let us know. We'll check to make sure our membership records get updated and send one to you.

We have a few copies left that will be given to past members who renew in the next month or so. Also, we'll give new members a copy as a benefit for joining. At the DACHS table at the joint history convention next month they will be offered to visitors who join us for 2022.

Thanks to everyone who donated a little extra to offset the cost of printing and mailing out the *Review*. This year it cost us \$450 for printing and

another \$300 for mailing. Your generosity covered those costs. Thank you.

In our list of donors, we missed Frank and Pricilla Parrish who also helped out. Thanks.

Interestingly mailing out the *Review* is not always the same price. We started off sending them out as "media" assuming it was the cheapest. In looking at postal rates - they went up at the end of the year - we saw that first class might be cheaper. Sure enough, the next batch, went first class and saved us 23 cents an envelope. The next time we tried for first class and a different postal clerk said they were thicker than 3/4 of an inch and could not go first class. Back to media rate. Of course, in the long run, a few cents was negligible. Thank goodness for the generosity of the membership.

Archaeological Society To Feature Dripping Springs History

The Dona Ana Archaeological Society will meet at 7 p.m. on March 8, at the Good Samaritan auditorium and DACHS is invited. The speaker will be Bureau of Land Management archaeologist Garrett Leitermann, who will talk about the Van Patten resort and Boyd Sanatorium at Dripping Springs.

The presentation is based on his research for the Dripping Springs National Register nomination.

Recent historical research derived from preparing the nomination for the property allows for a supplemented retelling and re-interpretation of the history of Dripping Spring. This presentation will examine and critique common misconceptions and confusion surrounding the events and people of the Dripping Springs area that have been promulgated in various media sources over time.

San Albino Cemetery Tour Being Offered in April

Mark your calendar for April 23 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Take a walk through Old Mesilla's San Albino Cemetery and learn about the rich history of the Mesilla Valley and our Southwest. Visit the Fountain Family plot and hear the tragic story of Albert Jennings Fountain and his son, Henry. Find out about the story of James Edgar Griggs, the patriarch of the Griggs restauraners.

Remember Civil War history through general store owner, Thomas Jefferson Bull and the plots where California Volunteers of California now rest. Listen to the mystery of Agostini-Justiniani, "El

Ermitano" (the Hermit). He was a monk said to have healing powers who lived alone in La Cueva at Dripping Springs. Learn more about cemetery symbolism, fascinating gravestone carvings, even ghosts and witchcraft.

The field trip will be led by historian, Mary-Kay Shannon, the author of the San Albino Cemetery guide published by the Branigan Cultural Center.

Meet at the entrance to the Cemetery located at the southern end of Calle de Guadalupe in Mesilla. For reference, La Posta Restaurant, is on the corner of Calle de Guadalupe and the Mesilla Plaza.

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