



# NEWSLETTER

## November 2022

Doña Ana County Historical Society

### Our Nov. Topic Is New Mexico And The Rough Riders

Retired US Army Brig. Gen. Jack R. Fox will be our speaker on November 17 at 7 p.m. The presentation will be held in the auditorium at Good Samaritan, 3011 Buena Vida Cir., and will also be available via Zoom.

Gen. Fox's subject will be the "Rough Riders and New Mexico." The Rough Riders was a nickname given to the 1st United States Volunteer Cavalry, one of three regiments raised in 1898 for the Spanish–American War and the only one to see combat. It was led by Theodore Roosevelt. According to Wikipedia, the name was borrowed from Buffalo Bill Cody whose traveling Western show was called "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World."

Many New Mexicans ended up in the unit as it was originally meant to draw frontiersmen from the Indian Territory, and the Territories of New Mexico, Arizona and Oklahoma. See the story below on how the Brito brothers served with the Army.

Fox served as Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Dept. of Veterans Services from January 2015 to December 2018. Prior to this



appointment he served with the Army, Army Reserves and New Mexico National Guard.

Gen. Fox is a graduate of NMMI and NMSU. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government from NMSU, he was commissioned as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant/Infantry in 1969.

While stationed at Ft. Benning, GA, he earned a Master's Degree in Education from Georgia State University. He is also a member of the New Mexico Military Institute Hall of Fame and the New Mexico State University ROTC Honor Company. He also served as Commandant at the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI). He is currently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Higher Learning Commission. General Fox and his wife, Marvine, have been married for 52 years and lives in Placitas, NM.

If you cannot attend, you can participate via the Zoom platform. We will send out the Zoom invitation a few days before by email. Non-members can also attend in person or request the Zoom link via email at: 19dachs63@gmail.com.

### The Brito Brothers Served With The Rough Riders

*Editor's Note: For the 2019 edition of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review, Frank Brito wrote an article about his grandfather Frank C. Brito who, with his brother José, signed up for the Rough Riders. This is an excerpt from the article.*

Frank was employed as a miner in his late teens and as a cowboy, joining his brother working for the Circle Bar Ranch near Silver City. In April 1898, Santiago learned that the U.S. had declared war on Spain after the USS

Maine was sunk in Havana Harbor. Santiago directed his sons Frank and José to enlist because "Our country is at war." We can surmise Santiago harbored a hatred for Spain because of its history of maltreatment of indigenous Mexicans.

Frank and José dutifully enlisted into the 1st Volunteer Cavalry at Santa Fé on May 6 and the enlistees were sent by train to San Antonio, Texas, for basic training under the

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# DACHS Board Election To Be Held On November 17

The slate is set for the DACHS annual election for board and officer positions. Members attending the Nov. 17 general meeting will be voting on the following:

Vice President - **Dr. Jerry Wallace**

Treasurer - **Garland Courts**

Secretary - **Jim Eckles**

At-Large #1 - **Susan Krueger**

At-Large #2 - **Faith Hutson**

## DACHS Board Is Looking For Annual Awards Suggestions

Every year, at our annual awards banquet in January, the DACHS presents numerous awards and acknowledgements. We recognize individuals, groups, organizations and efforts made to preserve, protect and promote our local history. Susan Krueger and her committee are busy putting together a slate of possible awardees for this coming event. If you have a suggestion, please contact Susan at: [skrueger575@msn.com](mailto:skrueger575@msn.com) or at 575-640-4266.

The various awards we present are on the DACHS website. You can go there to see past honorees and more details on the awards themselves.

Here are the various awards we give.

**Hall of Fame:** *The Hall of Fame Award recognizes an individual who is known for exceptional contributions to the preservation of the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley. The contribution should be of a substantial nature and be evidenced by enduring and observable worth to the Doña Ana County Historical Society and the community at large.*

**Heritage Award:** *The Heritage Award is given to a person or persons whose actions or deeds have contributed to the historical or cultural heritage of Doña Ana County and who is (are) not professional or avocational historians.*

**Old Timer's Award:** *The Old Timer's Award recognizes a cherished object, natural phenomenon, or cultural tradition prominent in Mesilla Valley heritage that would otherwise escape recognition as an important part of the character of this region and that deserves public attention.*

**The Gemoets Prize:** *The \$100 Gemoets Prize is awarded to the author of the "Outstanding Article" in the current issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review as determined by the Editor.*

**Hiram Hadley Prize:** *The \$100 Hadley Prize recognizes the best article on pioneer history (1840-1900) in*

It turns out there are two at-large positions open this year because Jerry Wallace is moving from an at-large position up to vice president. Also, Susan Krueger is stepping aside as past president, a role she has filled for years, and taking an at-large position. Susan has been acting as temporary treasurer since Dennis Fuller moved out of state.

If you do not attend the meeting on the 17th in person, you can still vote via the Zoom platform.

*the current issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review.*

**Pasajero del Camino Real :** *This award is given to an author or authors of a significant historical publication about events, persons, places or issues in Doña Ana County or the nearby area.*

**Buildings Worthy of Preservation:** *The award is given to encourage an owner to preserve the uniqueness of a building in Doña Ana County that is distinguished by its age and historical character, its historical significance, or that represents historical architectural character.*

**Bldgs & Properties w/ Historical Significance:** *This designation can be applied to a property, including a district, a building, structure, or object, which is at least fifty years old.*

**Endangered Historic Property:** *This designation is used to identify a historic building or structure, a site, or landscape that is endangered because of a threat to its continuing historic significance.*

**Noteworthy Renovation/Restoration:** *This award recognizes the renovation/restoration of an historic building in Doña Ana County, not necessarily adhering to strict preservation standards.*

**Bldg Adhering to Regional Architecture:** *This award recognizes a building in Doña Ana County built in recent times following the historical architectural style characteristic of New Mexico and the Southwest.*

Last year we made the following awards:

☞ **Old Timer's Award** to recognize the boundary markers between Mexico and the United States;

☞ **Historically Significant Building Worthy of Preservation** to St. James Episcopal Church;

☞ **Hall of Fame Award** to David Soules;

☞ **Heritage Award** to Evan Davies;

☞ **Pasajero Del Camino Real Award** to David Thomas for *The Trial of Billy the Kid*, 2021.

## New Mexican Brothers Served As Jailers --- FROM Page 1

command of Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt and Col. Leonard Wood. Finished with training, the Brito brothers and the entire "Rough Riders" regiment, as the unit was called, were sent to Tampa, Florida, to await the ships to take them to Cuba.

The origin of the term "Rough Riders" has been speculated upon and retired New Mexico Territorial Militia Commander Eugene Van Patten states in his journal that his state troopers were given this name by Governor L. Bradford Prince. In March 1897, the militia changed its designation to the New Mexico National Guard, which Major Van Patten commanded. When war was declared with Spain, Van Patten was sent to Silver City and other New Mexico towns to recruit for Roosevelt's Volunteers. Van Patten and Roosevelt were fellow New Yorkers and Roosevelt liked the term "Rough Riders," so he appropriated this name for his cavalry troopers.

Due to lack of transportation, Frank and José spent the duration of the Spanish American War in Tampa and to their deep regret never made it to Cuba. As native Spanish-speaking soldiers, they were placed in charge of the stockade, tending to Spanish prisoners. This was Frank's first experience as a jailor, which later led to a 20-year profession in Doña Ana County, New Mexico.

## The Holidays Are Close So Its Membership Renewal Time

If you haven't already renewed your DACHS membership for 2023, please consider doing so now. In the December newsletter, I will post the renewal form that you can mail in with your check. Please mail it to our P.O. Box (its at the top of the form).

However if you wish a much easier way without the hassle of writing checks, finding a stamp and mailing all of it in, you can go to the DACHS website at:

<http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org>

and pay online with your credit card or PayPal account. It really is simple. Many members did this last year.

On the DACHS homepage, access the renewal page by clicking on the "Membership" link near the top of the page or scroll down to "Quick Links" under the calendar and use the "Join Us" link. This will take you to a page where you can chose to download a PDF of the membership form or go to the box below to select your level of membership

Upon victory in Cuba, Frank, José, and the remaining troopers of the 1st Volunteer Cavalry were sent to Camp Wikoff on Montauk Point, New York, to recuperate from their wounds and diseases. By far, disease took a heavier toll than battle on the returning men and Frank suffered from malaria contracted in Tampa. Camp Wikoff was a miserable tent city with lack of medical care, poor food, and men dying of rampant dysentery.

The treatment, food, and medical care of the Rough Riders was shamefully inadequate at first and the New York newspapers created a scandal about the situation by writing about the men that were gravely ill, with many dying. The troopers were first quarantined at a detention camp, then released to other areas until they recuperated. Pvt. Brito personally complained to Col. Roosevelt that they were not getting any milk to drink.

Recovering from malaria and receiving his discharge on September 15, 1898, Frank returned to Pinos Altos and his mining activities. After a short leave in Pinos Altos, José re-enlisted in the army to fight in the war with Spain and shipped out of Fort McDowell, Angel Island, San Francisco, to the Philippines where Frank says he was reported "missing in action." Nothing was heard from José again.

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If you have questions, contact Susan at 575-640-4266 or Jim at [nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net).

## Consider A Review Donation

This year I'm going to try to put together the 2023 edition of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* early. If you intend to donate to cover the printing costs of the *Review*, please send Jim Eckles ([nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net)) your name and statement that you will donate by the first week in December. I need that information so I can list the donors inside the cover of the *Review*. And THANKS for your help.

# The Back Page -----

By Jim Eckles

In September I got to visit Mark Twain's wonderful house in Hartford, CT - seen here. While there, I remembered a clever Twain witticism about history. He is often credited with "***History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes.***" A website called "QuoteInvestigator" was asked to look into it. They published a long article basically saying that the aphorism is much newer. Here is their conclusion: "In conclusion, the earliest match for this popular quotation appeared in an essay by Theodor Reik in 1965. Currently, he is the leading candidate for coiner of the saying. The earliest attribution to Mark Twain appeared in 1970, but that date is many decades after his death. Hence, there is no substantive support for the Twain ascription. Precursors mentioning history and rhyme were published before 1965, but the statements were not compact and witty." Oh well.



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