



NEWSLETTER

April 2016

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dr. Jon Hunner

The saying is that each generation writes history anew. The past is set in stone, it happened. But our grasp of that past, our understanding about why and how things happened the way they did tend to change over time. We historians research, analyze, interpret, and then present what we think happened. It is our best guess about how events played out and why people did what they did that influenced our past. Historians do our best to fully understand the past but sometimes we need to revise what we know. New documents and sources are found, new methods of analysis are created, new ways of thinking about the past emerge. To the best of our abilities, we historians predict the past.

Enjoy the spring and see you at the next members meeting on April 21st when we will hear our State Historian, Dr. Rick Hendricks, talk about an important Mesilla Valley family "The Bennetts: Binational Pioneer Family of the Mesilla Valley."

Dr. Rick Hendricks short Biography

Rick Hendricks was born in Waynesville, North Carolina. Rick received his B. A. in History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his Ph.D. in Ibero American Studies at the University of New Mexico. He also attended the Universidad de Sevilla in Spain. He is a former editor of the Vargas Project at the University of New Mexico. After the conclusion of the Vargas Project, he worked in the Archives and Special Collections Department at New Mexico State University Library. While there he took part in the project to microfilm the Archivos Históricos del Arzobispado de Durango and the Archivos Históricos de Sombrerete and edited the guides to those collections. At NMSU Rick also taught courses in colonial Latin America and Mexican history. He has written or collaborated on numer-

Presentation at April 21 Membership Meeting

New Mexico's State Historian, Dr. Rick Hendricks, will give a presentation called: "The Bennetts: Binational Pioneer Family of the Mesilla Valley."



Dr. Rick Hendricks, the speaker for the Society's April 21st Membership Meeting

Photo from State History Website

ous books and articles on the history of the American Southwest and Mexico. His writings have garnered awards from numerous organizations in the southwest. His most recent book, *The Casads: A Pioneer Family of the Mesilla Valley*, was published in 2012 by Rio Grande books. He edited the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, a publication of the Doña Ana County Historical Society, for a decade. Rick is a past president of the Historical Society of New Mexico and is a long-time member of the Advisory Council of the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross State University.

The Bennetts: Binational Pioneer Family of the Mesilla Valley

Joseph F. Bennett was born in New York in 1830. He was living in California in 1861 when President Lincoln called for volunteers from that state. Bennett helped raise a company and

See Presentation on page 2

Presentation from page 1

then served under General James H. Carleton in the California Column in New Mexico. Bennett settled in Doña Ana County and in 1864 married Lola Patton. Joseph, Lola, and their numerous children formed one of the preeminent pioneer families of the Mesilla Valley. Binational and bicultural, Bennett family members were active in government service and commerce in the Southwest, Mexico, and other Latin American countries. This brief presentation is part of what will eventually lead to the publication of a more complete history of the Bennett family. ■

To Doña Ana County Historical Society Members and Friends

Last year the Amador Hotel Foundation was one of the community partners whose work with the Branigan Cultural Center lead to the Branigan being awarded a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association for local programming highlighting the contributions of Latin Americans to our community.

The lectures on Friday, April 15 each highlight a pioneering family in Las Cruces, the Amadors and the Armijos. The lectures on Saturday, April 16th highlight adobe as a traditional building material and its impact in the Southwest. All four lectures will be held in the historic Amador Hotel, are free and open to the public.

The historic Amador Hotel will be closed and under construction for several months following these lectures. Therefore, it is a great opportunity to not only learn about the early years of Las Cruces history but also to see the wood floors of the historic hotel. They have not been visible since 1968 when covered with carpeting as the building was remodeled to become Citizens Bank.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need additional information or have any questions. Thank you for your help in disseminating this information! I hope to see you at the Amador Friday April 15 and Saturday April 16.

Best wishes,
Deb Dennis

Deborah M. Dennis, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Human Systems Research, Inc.
(575) 524-9456 office
(575) 635-5593 cell
Email: ddennis@humansystemsresearch.org ■

Page 2

Free lectures about the Amador Hotel

FRIDAY, APRIL 15

Remembering the Amadors

2:00pm, Amador Hotel - Dr. Terry Reynolds

The Pioneering Families of the Nestor Armijo House

3:30pm, Amador Hotel - Eric Liefeld

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Cornerstones Celebrates 30 Years of Partnerships
to Preserve SW Heritage

11:30am, Amador Hotel - Jake Barrow

Community Resiliency: New Mexico's Adobe

1:00pm, Amador Hotel - Francisco Uviña ■



Deborah "Deb" Eckles talks to a potential buyer as she is selling Jim's books.

After Jim Eckles' Presentation at our membership meeting on the 17th of March, his wife Deb was in charge of selling his two books. She had an adequate supply of books. His first one *Pocketful Of Rockets: History And Stories Behind White Sands Missile Range* and his most recent book *Trinity: The History Of An Atomic Bomb National Historic Landmark*. ■

SCHEDULE OF 2016 SPRING PROGRAMS

April 21: Dr. Rick Hendricks, New Mexico State Historian, will present “The Bennetts: Binational Pioneer Family of the Mesilla Valley.”

May 19: Sarah Stanley will present on the Choape family and heritage preservation through food.

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 Dona Ana County and who is (are) not professional or avocational historians.

**2016 Heritage Award Recipient
Frank Parrish**

Frank Parrish was born in El Paso, Texas, and at an early age, he was fascinated by the natural world and local history. He hunted arrowheads in the Franklin Mountains and hung out with his neighbor whose father was C. L. Sonnicshsen, the noted historian of the Southwest. He graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with degrees in zoology and geology.

After graduation he worked for Mobile Oil Company in Dallas, gaining work experience in the different fields of the oil industry. When he left Mobile Oil, he returned to El Paso, obtained a teaching certificate and taught in the sciences for years. His next job was with Texas Parks and Wildlife and it was here he picked up a



On the right, President Dr. Jon Hunner presents the Heritage Award to Frank Parrish. Photo by Jim Eckles

camera for the first time, beginning a lifelong passion for nature photography.

Frank’s study of American history and the Wild West inevitably included Billy the Kid. Frank was a regular at the famous Billy the Kid Museum owned originally by George Griggs and then by his brother Edgar who moved the Museum from Mesilla to the Griggs family restaurant in El Paso. Over time Frank, who had befriended Edgar, became a scholar of the life and times of Billy the Kid. His interest grew into a collection of memorabilia, writings and presentations which have contributed significantly to the historical and cultural knowledge of Doña Ana County and which have earned Frank the DACHS’s Heritage Award.

-----Cut along dotted line-----

Doña Ana County Historical Society, P. O. Box 16045, Las Cruces, NM 88004-6045

DACHS Membership Form

Please renew/enroll my/our membership in the Doña Ana County Historical Society. Memberships are active for the calendar year of enrollment and fees are deductible within legal limits for Federal and State income tax purposes. If you are unsure of your status or have questions regarding membership, please contact the Past President, Susan Krueger, at 575-525-0654.

Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates

Individual \$20 Family \$25 Student \$8 Contributor \$40 Benefactor \$150 Life \$300
Southern New Mexico Historical Review Sponsorship \$50

Is this a change of information? Yes No A check for \$ _____ is enclosed. Date _____
 Check # _____

Name(s) _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____ Newsletter via E-mail Yes No

How would you like to receive your copy of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* (SNMHR)?
 Printed Version Society Website Version PDF on CD Version



Above, Jim Eckles chats with members of the audience after his presentation on 17 March. Jim's presentation about the convergence of World War II technologies at White Sands Missile Range was very interesting and informative and was well received by the Audience.

He started with a brief introduction to the technologies that essentially began at White Sands Proving Ground (now Missile Range) and

later merged to create very effective military weapons. He gave a history of the missile part of the convergence by discussing the German V-2 and its follow-on missiles the Corporal, Sergeant, Redstone and other missiles that were capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

Then he discussed the first Atomic detonation at Trinity Site and the resulting refinement and development of smaller Nuclear warheads that could be mounted in a missile and launched. The long range missiles that were developed by the Air Force used some of the techniques and technology developed by the missiles tested at White Sands. ■

Thanks to our 2016 Corporate Sponsors

We encourage our Members to patronize their businesses

Double Eagle Restaurant & Peppers Cafe
On The Mesilla Plaza
C. W. "Buddy" Ritter, Owner

Insta-Copy Imaging
Main Street Las Cruces Downtown
Parry & Diana Lyon, Owners

2016 Board Members

President: Dr. Jon Hunner
 Past President: Dr. Susan Krueger
 Vice President: Kimberly Miller
 Secretary & Website: Jim Eckles
 Treasurer: Rebecca Slaughter
 Historian: Sally Kading
 At-Large Board Members:
 Garland Courts
 Bob Gamboa
 George Helfrich
 Doyle Piland, Newsletter Editor
 C. W. "Buddy" Ritter
 Sara Wagner
 SNMHR Editor: Keith Whelpley
 Dr. Jon Hunner, Education and Scholarship
 Committees
 Carl Eichstaedt, Book Sales
 Michael Walczak, City Museums Liaison
 Leah Tookey, Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum
 NMSU History Department Liaison
www.donaanacountyhistoricalsociety.org

