

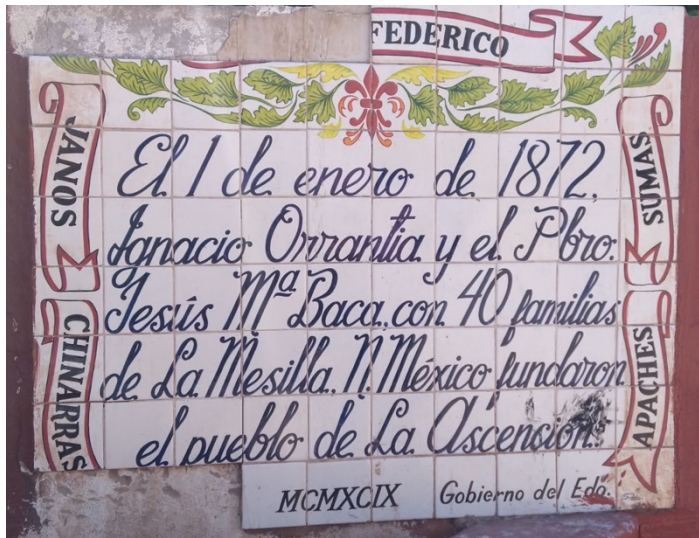


# NEWSLETTER

## April 2025

### April 17<sup>th</sup> DACHS Speaker Examines Border Colonies of the 19th Century

Doña Ana County Historical Society



*Left: Marker in remembrance of the founding of La Ascención, 2024. Marker reads, “On January 1st, 1872, Ignacio Orrantia and Father Jesus M. Baca, alongside 40 families from La Mesilla, New Mexico, founded the town of La Ascension.” Photo by Joel Gonzalez Parra.*

The next speaker in DACHS ongoing speaker series will explore New Mexican repatriate colonies and the making of the US-Mexico border.

The talk begins Thursday April 17 at 7 pm at the Good Samaritan Society-Las Cruces Village, 3011 Buena Vida Cir., in the downstairs auditorium – also on Zoom for DACHS members.

Joel Gonzalez Parra, a McNair Scholar and History Undergraduate at NMSU, will examine a combination of factors that motivated the resettlement of New Mexican people in the Mexican state of Chihuahua in the years following the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. In addition, he will provide some insights into the social dynamics of the colonies and the interests that they served to the colonists, as many maintained ties to their former homes.

Joel helpfully provided the newsletter a thorough narrative of his topic, which follows:

The ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 brought hostilities between the United States and Mexico to an official conclusion after two years of war. Better known as the Mexican Cession, the treaty saw the Rio Grande, or Rio Bravo del Norte, declared as the border between Mexico and Texas, as well as the incorporation of the territories of Alta California and Nuevo México as part of the United States.

The people of these territories would find themselves at a crossroad regarding their national allegiance. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo stated those who were to stay in the annexed territories would have a year to declare their intent to keep their Mexican citizenship. If a declaration was not made at that time, American citizenship would be automatically granted.

In the end, the majority of New Mexicans opted to remain in the territory of the United States. Yet some answered the call of the Mexican government to populate the newly created border by repatriating the citizens that had been “lost” after the war. Between 1848 to the 1870s, the New Mexico-Chihuahua border region witnessed the creation of several colonies, including in the Mesilla Valley with La Mesilla, Santo Tomas de Iturbide, and Refugio. Simultaneously, a few miles down the river from San Elizario, Texas, repatriates founded the towns of Guadalupe and San Ignacio. In the following years, changing border dynamics led to more waves of repatriation, resulting in the founding of Zaragoza during the American Civil War and the “exodus” from La Mesilla to La Ascención in 1872.

## DACHS Lucero Ranch Site Visit



DACHS members headed out early in the morning last month to visit the remains of the ranches owned by brothers and long-time county sheriffs Felipe and Jose Lucero. The group toured the sites of the Luceros' ranch houses, which no doubt had once seen better and more lively days. The old homes sit deep in what is now White Sands Missile Range, and were among dozens of cattle ranches that once existed in the late 1800s and the early-to-mid 1900s throughout the Tularosa Basin.

The brothers are perhaps more well known for essentially taking turns serving as Doña Ana county sheriff between the turn of the century and the 1930s, but they also ran a significant ranching operation, with the family's 160-acre homestead and thousands of leased acreage.

According to the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum's "Ranches to Rockets" exhibit, Felipe's ranch was near San Nicolas Canyon, while Jose's ranch was near Lake Lucero. The Lucero family continued to ranch after the brothers' deaths, including during the brief "co-use" period after WWII, as missile testing and cattle ranching attempted to co-exist. Ultimately, the Lucero family, as well as most other ranchers, left the range by the 1950s. For more information, see the oral history collection "Homes on the Range" available online.

*Top left: The ruins of the ranch house of Felipe Lucero, pictured top right.*

*Top center, bottom left: The home of his brother Jose Lucero, pictured bottom right.*

### NEXT WALKING TOUR – San Jose Cemetery April 27

Rosemary Leyva will lead a tour of the historic San Jose Cemetery, located across from St. Genevieve's Catholic Church at 100 N. Espina Street, on Sunday April 27 at 12:30 pm. Rosemary has spent years documenting and mapping the oldest cemetery in Las Cruces, discovering numerous lost burial locations and identifying unmarked graves. The cemetery is the resting place of many notable Las Cruceans, with its oldest tombstone reportedly dating to 1859, according to a report in the Las Cruces Sun-News.

The plan currently is for everyone to meet at the parking lot next to the cemetery and across from the church (on Espina Street). Everyone is encouraged to dress appropriately and prepare (hats and sunscreen, good walking shoes, a bottle of water).



## Historic Preservation Committee to Get Amador Update

The Las Cruces Historic Preservation Commission will receive an update on the ongoing renovation work on the historic Amador Hotel at its next meeting Wednesday April 16 at 6 pm in the Lerdo Room in City Hall.

The Amador Foundation's Dr. Deb Dennis will discuss work recently done on the Amador, as well as offering a status of where the project is at this time.

In addition, the HPC will discuss a new watchlist it is creating of historic and important buildings, in response to the recent loss of buildings like the old Country Club clubhouse. DACHS vice president and HPC member Dr. Jerry Wallace said the watchlist includes buildings that are important to our community and identity.

"This list reflects a number of buildings that we would not want to lose to development," Wallace said. "Think of this as being preventative as opposed to reactionary."

The HPC is also creating a similar but much more comprehensive listing of cultural properties and historically significant buildings in the community, which Wallace expects to take several years to fully complete. He's also formed a subcommittee to pursue a possible national historic nomination for the old County Club neighborhood.

The Historic Preservation Commission was created to help guide the city's historic preservation efforts and to ensure the city's historically important buildings are considered in any renovation – or demolition – projects. The HPC currently has two vacancies it needs to fill – for more information, visit the city's website at <https://lascruces.gov/property/remodeling-and-construction/las-cruces-land-use-development-and-preservation/preserving-history/>

The HPC meets at 6 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month in City Hall Lerdo Room (2007B).

## NMSU Corn Mother Exhibit

The New Mexico State University Museum's new exhibit, "Corn Mother: Her Story in the Southwest," explores the deep cultural and historical significance of corn in Indigenous communities of the Southwest.

Curated by NMSU anthropology graduate student Sabrina Gonzalez, the exhibit highlights corn's role as a symbol of sustenance, resilience and spiritual connection, emphasizing how the crop has influenced traditions, ceremonies and daily life for centuries.

Through artifacts, historical narratives and artistic interpretations, the exhibition tells the story of how Indigenous knowledge has preserved the agricultural and cultural importance of corn across generations, and how corn has remained an essential part of Indigenous identity.

The University Museum, located in Kent Hall, welcomes visitors from noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday with free admission.

## Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site Explores Family Connections to NMSU

When These Walls Talk, Pt. III:

The Mary Daniels Taylor

& J. Paul Taylor Papers

Saturday April 19, 2:00pm-3:00pm

Mesilla Community Center

As part of its ongoing "Taylor Talks" series, the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site will present Dennis Daily, Department Head for the Archives & Special Collections at New Mexico State University. Dennis will discuss Mary & J. Paul Taylor's many connections to the university, specifically Mary's work with the Durango Microfilm Collection. He'll also explore the archival collections of the Taylor family housed at the NMSU archives, including Paul's political papers and Mary's photography.

The "Taylor Talks" series highlights the history of Mesilla and Southern New Mexico through interesting talks presented by guest speakers. This talk will be presented at the Mesilla Community Center, at 2251 Calle de Santiago. It is free and open to the public.

The Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site is also offering walking tours of the historic Mesilla Plaza. Join Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site ranger Daniel in the Reynolds Store Visitor Center (2350 Calle Principal) where the walking tours will begin.



Tours are free but space is limited and registration is required (see N.M. Cultural Affairs web site <https://my.nmculture.org/33079/43429>).

The walks are set for Thursday April 10 and Saturday April 12, and both go from 10 to 11 a.m. Call 575-202-1638 for more information.

## Deadline for Conference Presentations April 4

The 2025 Joint New Mexico-Arizona History Conference is accepting presentation proposals for its upcoming conference here in Las Cruces, September 25-27.

The conference, presented by the Historical Society of New Mexico in partnership with DACHS and the Arizona History Convention, has extended its deadline for submissions to Friday April 4.

Presenters can explore any aspect of New Mexico, Southwestern or Borderlands history. Proposals related to local history are encouraged.

Presenters are grouped in a 2-to-3 person, 90-minute session, with each presenter speaking for 20-25 minutes, and a group/audience discussion following.

See the conference's website for more details about how to register for the convention or submit a proposal at <https://hsm.org/history-conference/>.

### Descendants and friends join to remember the 83<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Surrender Of Bataan

Wednesday, April 9, 4:30 pm  
Las Cruces Veterans Memorial Park  
2651 N. Roadrunner Parkway



*Left: Bataan bronze memorial "Heroes of Bataan" by Kelley Hestir.*

The Remember Bataan Foundation invites one and all for a ceremony honoring the 83<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the surrender of Bataan. Descendants and friends of the ex-POWs are encouraged to attend and share their memories. The event, which will culminate with the lowering of the city's garrison flag, takes place at 4:30 pm by the Bataan memorial at Las Cruces Veterans Memorial Park, located at 2651 N. Roadrunner Parkway.

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