



# NEWSLETTER

October 2015

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Susan Krueger

On September 17, at 7 p.m., the Good Samaritan auditorium was filled with NMSU students, both undergraduates and graduates, many from the History Department, others from Museum Studies, who had come to hear Dr. Peter Kopp and his research team talk about the "Murals of Las Cruces." Joining the students were DACHS members and their friends, along with the curious who stop by when a program is of particular interest to them. Even knowing the students received credit for attending didn't change my thought that out there in that audience was a future president of the DACHS.

Then, as Robert Burns would have observed had he been present, "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley," the program's power point failed and not a tech in the place could rescue it. However, several of the principal researches gave overviews of their presentation without visuals and Jon Hunner announced that the "Murals of Las Cruces" will be the DACHS's November program, moving Paul Ward's presentation, "The Transformation of Lorenzo Torres" to February 2016.

To return to October, Jim Eckles is making arrangements for a field trip on October 17, to the Hembrillo Battlefield, located on White Sand Missile Range. As Jim explained in his article on page 2 of the September 2015 Newsletter the trip is dependent on the condition of the mining road and the Missile Range's schedule. See Jim's article for more information and to sign up for the trip.

Karl Laumbach, an expert on the Hembrillo Battlefield, will be both the guide on the trip and the Society's speaker at the October 15, 2015 membership meeting at 7 p.m. in the Good Samaritan Auditorium, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. Karl will share with us the history of the site and what to look for to make that histo-

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Doña Ana County Historical Society Meeting at 7:00 PM at the Good Samaritan Auditorium on Thursday October 15<sup>th</sup>.

The program for the evening will be:

## Hembrillo Battlefield

Karl Laumbach, an expert on the Hembrillo Battlefield, will be our guest speaker. □



Karl Laumbach

Karl Laumbach was raised on a northeastern New Mexico ranch. Karl has pursued an archaeological career in southern New Mexico since 1974. A Principal Investigator for Human Systems Research, Inc. since 1984, his research interests are varied, including historical research in his native northeastern New Mexico, the pueblo archaeology of southern New Mexico, and the history and archaeology of the Apache. Karl served on the Cultural Properties Review Committee for the State of New Mexico from 1997 to 2003. Active in the history of Sierra County, he has been affiliated with the board of

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## President from page 1

ry come alive in the mind's eye.

Whether you are going on the trip or not, if you would like to read up on the 1880 battle between Chief Victorio's Warm Springs Apache and the Army's Buffalo Soldiers, here are two sources: one is "Fire Fight at Hembrillo Basin" by Karl Laumbach, *Archaeology Magazine*, Volume 54, Number 6, November/December 2001, which is on line at the Magazine's website. The other is the web site of the White Sands Missile Range Museum; go to [www.wsmr-history.org/Hembrillo.htm](http://www.wsmr-history.org/Hembrillo.htm).

Another note about Chief Victorio's war, which raged on between 1878 and 1880, relating to Fort Selden's history: in 1877, during Victorio's war, an entire company of the Ninth Cavalry stationed at Fort Selden was transferred to Fort Stanton, leaving only a regular garrison of one First Lieutenant and three enlisted men at Fort Selden.

Finally, welcome to the DACHS Board to Sally Kading who was elected to the position of historian at our September membership meeting. When the Branigan Cultural Center reopens in October, Sally can begin collecting and organizing the Society's recent records. ■

## Karl Laumbach from page 1

directors for the Sierra County Historical Society and Geronimo Springs Museum since 1992. In January of 2002, he was inducted into the Doña Ana County Historical Society's Hall of Fame "for his outstanding contributions to the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley." ■

## Call for Papers

### *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*

The Doña Ana County Historical Society is looking for original articles concerning Southern New Mexico history for its next annual *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* (Volume XXIII, January 2016). Biography, local and family histories, oral history, student papers and articles focusing on the history of the Southwest and Northern Mexico will be considered. Small monetary awards are available for some pieces.

We prefer submissions electronically as Word or simple text documents. Other formats can be negotiated. To submit an article or to ask questions, contact Jim Eckles by email at [nebraska1950@comcast.net](mailto:nebraska1950@comcast.net) or by phone at 575-521-8771.

The preferred deadline for final articles is October 1. However, if you can't make it by then, later deadlines may be arranged. ■



President Dr. Susan Krueger, the Society's new Historian Sally Kading, and Vice President Dr. Jon Hunner

For many years, Sally Kading has been volunteering at Thomas Branigan Memorial Library providing expert assistance in genealogy research. The library has copies of some church records from San Albino and St. Genevieve that had been partially transcribed and typed. Looking through the material, Kading immediately saw the value, but knew that more was needed. The data needed to be extracted and put into some format that researchers could readily use.

To accomplish this Kading organized a group of volunteers to translate and transcribe church records of marriages, baptisms and burials into a searchable database. Dubbed the "Mesilla Valley Pioneer Project," the group is going beyond what was found in the library. To capture as many people as possible, Kading led the group to include other churches, including the Methodist and Presbyterian records. After three years, Kading and her small group of dedicated volunteers have transcribed over 15,000 entries into a master file.

The project documents the lives of the men and women who came to the Mesilla Valley. Small villages, gone today, like Bosque Seco, Colorado, Nombre de Dios and Santa Barbara are mentioned and take their place in valley history. Deaths by Indians, drowning and murder are often noted. Also noted are the many deaths from illnesses such as diphtheria, distemper, tonsillitis, small pox and fever as well as childbirth. In many cases the marriage and baptismal records list, not only the name of the person receiving the sacrament, but also the names of parents, grandparents and witnesses at these events. ■

## Special Notice

The NM Jewish Historical Society Fall Conference is November 14-15 at the Farm and Ranch Museum. For information and registration, go to [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org).

### More History of Fort Selden

Madeleine Vessel, in her book *Doña Ana County Historical Society 1963 -1994*, beginning on page 7, has recorded the story of Fort Selden and what follows is her report of the Fort's beginning. This section is from page 8.

#### A Ruin after 1891

By the time Bailey took ownership, Fort Selden was well on its way to ruination. Its deterioration began shortly after its abandonment, brought on by the removal of essential wooden supports from various structures. It is believed that the individual who handled the reinterment of the post's military dead was given permission to salvage what was left of the fort's reusable building materials. What he didn't take was soon carried off by local people, rendering the adobe walls vulnerable to the various moods of mother nature. Roofless and continually subjected to sand-blasting, spring winds and violent, summer thunderstorms, the old post's walls crumbled away.

Vandals and treasure hunters also contributed to the fort's deterioration. The stone walls of the two-story guardhouse reportedly stood eight feet high in 1935. Forty years later, so many stones had

been carried off, that many walls were level with the ground.

Sometime in the 1930s, Bailey approached Hugh M. Milton II, who was President of New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (New Mexico A & M), now known as New Mexico State University (NMSU), with his concerns about Fort Selden's deterioration and his hope that the state or the federal government could be persuaded to make Fort Selden into a state or national park. Although Milton was in sympathy with Bailey's concerns, the pressures of administering the college and subsequent long absences kept him from being personally involved. Milton was President of New Mexico A & M until he was sent to serve in the South Pacific during World War II. After the war, Milton served as President of the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell until 1953 when he was called to serve under President Dwight D. Eisenhower as Assistant Secretary and later Under Secretary of the Army. ■



Inside a Doña Ana County home circa 1936. Photo from Library of Congress.

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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 President, Susan Krueger, at 575 525-0654.

#### Annual Membership/Sponsorship Rates

Individual \$20  Family \$25  Student \$8  Contributor \$40  Benefactor \$150  Life \$300   
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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



From left to right: Norma Hartell (NMSU museum studies graduate student), Meg Freyermuth (local artist and NMSU graduate), Dr Peter Kopp (NMSU history professor), Dr. Jerry Wallace (NMSU history professor), Jason Weisensell (NMSU museum studies graduate student).

The Murals of Las Cruces Research Group photo at left was taken at our September 17<sup>th</sup> Membership meeting. They had planned to give us a Power Point presentation with slides of many of the murals located at various locations around Las Cruces. However, the Power Point presentation and/or the computer didn't feel like working that night. So, instead each member gave a short talk about their efforts. They will return for our November 19<sup>th</sup> membership meeting with their Power Point presentation fully operational and do what they had planned to do in September. ■

### Thanks to our 2014 Corporate Sponsors

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