



NEWSLETTER

September 2014

September 18, 2014 Meeting Program



Leah Tookey, Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum Liaison to the DACHS board

Leah Tookey, Curator of History at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, was born and raised in Rangely, Colorado. At nineteen, Leah moved to Iowa where she met and married a farmer. She and her husband lived on the farm for five years during the “Farm Crisis” of the late 1970s and early 1980s, but moved into town when interest rates soared to 25 percent and corn and cattle prices bottomed out. Leah raised her three children in Iowa and when they all entered school, she went to college and earned a Bachelor’s Degree from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. She majored in History, English, and Secondary Education. After graduation she began teaching English at Jefferson-Scranton High School in Jefferson, Iowa.

After teaching for five years, Leah returned to academia in order to pursue a Master’s Degree in history. She attended Iowa State University where she specialized in Agricultural History and Rural Studies. While at Iowa State,

The September program “The McNew and Lee Families 1885-1915” will be presented by Mary Kay Shannon. The program is an in-depth look at the McNew and Lee family histories as drawn from the book, *Last Frontier West*, by George Lee McNew. The unpublished manuscript spans a thirty year period recounting the experiences of four pioneer families bound by birth and marriage. In the preface the author notes that the events in the narrative are factual and pulled from a number of sources including Sonnichsen’s *Tularosa*, William Keleher’s *Fabulous Frontier*, archival material, period newspapers, and *Otero County Pioneer Histories Volume II*. The story is enriched by formatting it as a historical novel allowing dialog between the participants to reveal their character, emotions and motivations.



William Henry McNew
Photo credit: reprint from Sonnichsen, *Tularosa: Last of the Frontier West..*

The program is not an investigation into the disappearance of Albert Fountain, but rather a look at events both before and after from the McNew family perspective.

Mary Kay Shannon describes herself as a professional student of history of the Southwest, of arts, of the desert. With thirty years of

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she worked as the editorial assistant for the Agricultural History Journal, the journal of record for the Agricultural History Society. After graduation from Iowa State and eight months at a small private historic site museum in the Adirondacks in New York, she took a job as Director of Education at the New Mexico Museum of Space History in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Leah served in this position for three years and then took on the assignment to build an archives and library at the Museum. In 2008, Leah returned to the high school classroom in Alamogordo where she taught American Literature.

In the Fall of 2013, Leah began working at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum where she is “living her dream”! ■

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Dona Ana County Historical Society is looking for original articles concerning Southern New Mexico history for its next annual Review (Volume XXII, January 2015). 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.

The editors are Becky Young and Mary Kay Shannon. They prefer submissions electronically as Word or simple text documents. Other formats can be negotiated. To submit an article or to ask questions, contact them by email at snmhistory@gmail.com or by phone at 915-539-3381.

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

Southern New Mexico Historical Review

If you have not received your copy of the 2014 Historical Review, please contact Susan Krueger at 575-525-0654 or e-mail at skrueger575@msn.com. You may also access the 2014 Historical Review at the society's web website at URL <http://www.donaana-countyhistoc.org/>. Scroll down to the “Special Publications” where you will see links to all editions from 1994 through 2014. Changes have been made such that all editions will work with any web browser. ■

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Mary Kay From Page 1



Mary Kay Shannon

museum work behind her she now works with the FAT Boys Historical Research Group writing travel guides focusing on southern New Mexico. She also is perusing her arts background crafting decorative wind chimes utilizing glass bottles and selling them on the Mesilla plaza most Sundays.

Mary Kay has served on the Doña Ana County Historical Society Board since 2012. She and her sister, Becky Nell Young, have agreed to be the newest editors of *the Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. “Please, please submit your articles for the next Review NOW,” she begs.. ■

From the *Las Cruces Historic Cemetery Guide* we take a look at one of the people that played a significant role in our history.

W. W. Cox

Established San Augustin Ranch

William Webb Cox was born to James William and Anna Wofford Cox in Dewitt County, Texas, in 1854. He came to New Mexico from Texas in 1886. Cox became a prominent citizen of Dona Ana County, engaging in extensive ranching and other business enterprises including investments in local banks and mercantile businesses.

See Cox on Page 3

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Susan Krueger

Welcome to fall and the return of the Dona Ana County Historical Society monthly meetings held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month in the Good Samaritan Auditorium. Following each program, we gather in the lobby for punch and cookies to chat with the presenters and to catch up on our lives with friends, new and old.

We start on September 18th with a presentation by Mary Kay Shannon titled "The McNew and Lee Families, 1885 to 1915." Mary Kay, who is a member of the DACHS board and a vital contributor to our work, will take us back to New Mexico's frontier west, its pioneering living and its politics.

On October 16th, we move from pioneer history to southwestern architecture with a presentation by Eric Liefeld, President of Mesilla Valley Preservation Inc. (MVP), on the discovery and re-discovery of previously unknown Trost & Trost buildings here in the Mesilla Valley.

Then on November 20th, Nathan Brown, the Digital Projects Librarian at NMSU and a new member of the Society, will lay out for us his research into a controversy surrounding the name of MNSU's yearbook: The Swastika and The Phoenix.

We take a program break for the holidays in December. For Board members, in between traveling and entertaining, it is the month to finalize the program for the 2015 Awards Luncheon scheduled for January

31, 2015, at the Double Eagle Restaurant. Please add that event to your calendar. See you on September 18th and bring a friend. ■

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In 1893, he bought the former Davies Ranch on the eastern slope of the Organ Mountains from Numa Reymond. At first he stocked the ranch with sheep, but soon decided that they destroyed pasture land and that cattle ranching was better suited to his arid property. Purchasing additional acres over the years, he eventually created the 150,000 acre San Augustin Ranch, one of the largest in southern New Mexico. In 1945, the U.S. Army bought ninety percent of the ranch to form the nucleus of the White Sands Proving Grounds, now renamed White Sands Missile Range. Cox family members still own and occupy the ranch house.



William Webb Cox

Cox served as treasurer of Dona Ana County from 1911 to 1913. He died in 1923. ■

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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 Treasurer, Rebecca Slaughter at 575-523-1845 (during business hours) or the 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



C. W. "Buddy" Ritter and Craig Holden (on right) talking with an audience member (on left) after their presentation. In the background is George Helfrich holding the restored stage coach wheel.

Thanks to our 2014 Corporate Sponsors

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www.donaanacountyhistoristsoc.org

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