

# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW



*Pasajero del Camino Real*  
By  
*J. CISTERNOS '89*

**Doña Ana County Historical Society**  
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# Doña Ana County Historical Society

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# *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*

Volume XXVII

Las Cruces, New Mexico

January 2020

## Contents

[Click on the article you wish to go to](#)

### Articles

Catch A Falling Star In Las Cruces - 1950: Meteor Photography Stations Now In Ruins

**Jim Eckles** .....(*Gemoets Prize for Outstanding Article*) 1

“We Are All Americans:” Edwin Mechem and a Life of Service in Southern New Mexico

**Judith L. Messal** ..... 15

True Face of Billy the Kid

**Frank Parrish** ..... 29

Joseph “Joe” Quesenberry: The Degree of Sacrifice

**Jennifer Olguin** ..... 35

The Historic Naming of Las Cruces and Mesilla

**CW Buddy Ritter** ..... 43

Mesilla Valley Community of Hope: Hope Stories - Final Report

**David Lee del Norte** ..... 51

### Book Reviews

*Across the Space Frontier* by Joseph Kaplan

Reviewed by **Jim Eckles** ..... 65

*A Bad Peace and a Good War:*

*Spain and the Mescalero Apache Uprising of 1795-1799* by Mark Santiago

Reviewed by **Dylan McDonald** ..... 67

*J. Paul Taylor: The Man from Mesilla* by Ana Pacheco

Reviewed by **Jennifer Olguin** ..... 69

### Appendix

Billy the Kid Image Analysis by **Detective Greg Bean** ..... 71

**The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Doña Ana County Historical Society.**

## **Editor's Note**

I would like to thank the Doña Ana County Historical Society for the opportunity to edit this year's edition of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*.

The 2020 edition of the *Review* is an eclectic mix of Southwestern history including such diverse stories as Judith Messal's biography of Edwin Mechem, Las Cruces attorney and District Court Judge, "We Are All Americans," and Jim Eckles' "Catch A Falling Star in Las Cruces," a history of the meteor photography stations just outside of Las Cruces. Eckles piece is the winner of this year's Gemoets Prize for the *Review*. "The Historic Naming of Las Cruces and Mesilla" is a short history of place names in the Mesilla Valley by C.W. Buddy Ritter. Jennifer Olguin, an archivist at NMSU writes "Joseph 'Joe' Quesenberry: The Degree of Sacrifice," a biography of a prominent Aggie who lost his life in WWI and left an important legacy at the school.

The Doña Ana County Historical Society awarded the Mary and J. Paul Taylor Student Scholarship grant to David Lee del Norte to complete his research on a local association that advocates for the homeless in the Mesilla Valley. He writes about the association in "Community of Hope." And finally Frank Parrish writes "True Face of Billy the Kid," in which he argues that a second photograph of the notorious New Mexico outlaw has been discovered. There are also three informative book reviews in this year's *Review*.

Again, thank you for allowing me to contribute to this publication and in a small way to preserve the history of Southern New Mexico and Dona Ana County.

Leah F. Tookey

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# Catch A Falling Star In Las Cruces - 1950



## Meteor Photography Stations Now In Ruins

By Jim Eckles

### Introduction

About 25 years ago I was riding my bicycle in the Doña Ana Mountains just north of Las Cruces. Just off an old two-track pathway I was drawn to a cluster of concrete ruins beside the primitive road. Yuccas and creosote bushes were trying to hide some of it but the taller concrete structures stood out like a sore thumb. They definitely didn't belong in the desert.

In walking around the site of about an acre, I found a concrete slab and a couple of concrete square pillars, one about five feet tall and the other just over two feet tall. Finally, the most noticeable item was a large concrete block with a metal frame around the top of it and two smaller

concrete blocks on top of that. The tops of the two blocks were not flat but angled at 45 degrees and each top had four huge threaded bolts sticking out of it.

The little site clearly wasn't any kind of ranch improvement -- at least I had never seen anything like it on the many ranches I've visited at White Sands Missile Range. Given the angles and bolts on the set of blocks, I thought it might have something to do with the missile range. Maybe it was a launch point for small rockets or some mounts for telescopes or a radar.

That felt wrong and I quickly abandoned the idea. I was left wondering.

Years later, after asking many people if they



*The mysterious ruins in the Doña Ana Mountains found by the author decades ago. Photo by author.*

knew anything about this place, I thought to ask Joe Gold. Gold is a graduate of New Mexico A&M and a pioneer from the early White Sands Proving Ground days. He said it might have something to do with a meteor study station that was once operating near Las Cruces. He said he thought there was another site up at the mouth of Soledad Canyon.

As a boy, Gold was interested in astronomy so he probably paid attention to a meteor observatory established near Las Cruces. Also, because of that interest he was very familiar with the name of Clyde Tombaugh. As the discoverer of the planet Pluto, most Americans knew who Clyde Tombaugh was. The most recent planet “discovered” before Pluto was Neptune which was found in 1846 by English astronomer John Couch Adams. So, when Tombaugh found Pluto, Americans were proud that one of their own had found the last planet.

In 1947, while in college, Gold went to White Sands Proving Ground and asked Tombaugh for an introduction to the folks at the Lowell Observatory outside Flagstaff, Arizona. This

is where Tombaugh made his discovery of Pluto. Gold was planning a trip to Arizona and thought it would be great to see the observatory. Tombaugh was very friendly and told Gold who to see for a tour.

After Gold graduated in June 1949, he snagged a job at White Sands. To Gold’s joy, upon arrival on his first day, he was told to report to Clyde Tombaugh in the Optical Measurements Branch. Tombaugh worked at White Sands from 1946 to 1955. And so began a long friendship with the most famous astronomer in New Mexico.

Finally, a couple of years ago I rediscovered a “note to self” about the site and dropped into the meteor rabbit hole to see what I could find.

### **Harvard Photographic Meteor Program**

It turns out that Joe Gold has an excellent memory. There are two clusters of these mysterious concrete objects near Las Cruces. The concrete work is what is left of a state-of-the-art astronomy project that ran for a few years before and after 1950. Believe it or not, at the time, Las



*The concrete blocks at the Doña Ana Mountains site that held the meteor cameras. Photo by author.*

Cruces was a hub for some very serious meteor research.

The ruins are from Harvard College Observatory's Meteor Stations. The Soledad site is located up in the present-day Talavera development, north of Soledad Canyon Road and just east of the Sierra Vista hiking trail. In 1948, when the site was established, there were no homes up there. It was still ranch land. Navy personnel from White Sands Proving Ground had to bulldoze a rocky track from the ranch road to the camera site

Vista trail. The concrete ruins at both sites are clearly visible on Google Earth images.

These observation sites were put to the east and northeast of Las Cruces for two good reasons. The first was because of the clear skies. According to the February 1949 issue of *Sky and Telescope*, a study of the United States by Smith and McCrosky showed that the Las Cruces area averaged about 5.5 hours of clear sky per night – a combination of high, dry air, few clouds, and little light pollution. In fact, the study revealed that, at



*Robb Hermes inspects the camera mounts at the Soledad Canyon site. Photo by author.*

so Harvard's personnel could move in equipment and eventually get observers back and forth.

The Doña Ana Mountains site is at the north end of the small mountain range, just below the southeast side of Summerford Mountain. The site is in the middle of New Mexico State University's Rangeland Research Center where good desert roads have existed for decades. However the site is now off limits as the whole area is buttoned up with barbed wire fence and locked gates. The Soledad site is still very accessible from the Sierra

the time, Las Cruces was “within a few percent of the maximum amount of clear sky available anywhere in North America.”

At first, these stations were not a new development in photographing meteors. The initial equipment came to Las Cruces from sites already in operation in Massachusetts. There, the weather made the task of recording meteors rather difficult. It made perfect sense to move the stations and their cameras to New Mexico simply to get in more nights of observation. Later equipment



would make them state-of-the-art sites and provide a huge leap forward in meteor observations.

To make it financially possible, the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance was sponsoring the program. The military was interested in finding out more about the upper atmosphere. Seeing how meteors behaved when they passed through it was a learning opportunity.

### V-2 Rocket Meteors

The second reason for moving Harvard's observation equipment from the East to this part of the Southwest was the proximity to White Sands Proving Ground. The launch of German V-2 rockets and other vehicles for scientific research began in 1946. White Sands was suddenly the center of the universe when it came to early space exploration. Researchers like legendary astronomer Fred Whipple, who ran the Harvard meteor photographic program, immediately saw that vehicles falling back to earth from 100 miles up were effectively artificial meteors. It was perfect for someone trying to learn more about meteors and about the composition and behavior of the upper atmosphere.

Before he moved his Harvard equipment to Las Cruces, Whipple was involved in some of the early V-2 work at White Sands. The November 14, 1946 *Las Cruces Sun-News* ran a large article announcing, "Artificial meteors will be fired from V-2 at WSPG Dec. 17." Whipple was quoted in the article saying they were hoping to find out more about the actual size of meteors by comparing images of real ones and artificial ones that would be created with known pieces of metal. He brought cameras to film the launch and, hopefully, capture footage of the manmade meteors.

At the time, astronomers were split on meteor sizes. Most advocated that those bright lights we see streaking through the night sky for a second or two are no larger than grains of sand or dust. The light is caused by the incredible speed (thousands of miles per hour) of these particles as they encounter air molecules in the upper atmo-

sphere. The friction essentially incinerates them.

Harvey Nininger, on the other hand, said the bright streaks were more likely caused by material the size of a walnut. Nininger was a self-taught "meteoriticist" – someone who studies meteors. During the early part of the 20th century he collected meteorites from all over the world. By the 1930s, he had the world's largest private collection of "meteorites." A meteorite is an object that survives passing through the atmosphere and hits the ground.

*NOTE: Most of us use the term meteor to refer to the actual object entering the atmosphere. This is technically incorrect. According to the American Meteor Society, a meteor is the light emitted from a "meteoroid" or an asteroid as it enters the atmosphere.*

The idea of using a V-2 rocket to help propel small metal objects to high speeds, to simulate



*Lieutenant Colonel Harold Turner, center, first commander of White Sands Proving Ground, is briefed on the rifle grenade/meteor experiment. According to Greg Kennedy, in his book "Germany's V-2 Rocket," the person on Turner's left is James Van Allen. WSMR photo.*

meteors in the upper atmosphere, was credited to Swiss astronomer Fritz Zwicky. In 1925, he immigrated to the United States and took a position at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) where he had an office just down the hall from atom-bomb scientist Robert Oppenheimer.

The V-2/grenade idea had credibility because Zwicky was a scientist with a proven track record of forward thinking. In 1933, he ran calculations that led him to the conclusion that there was a lot of unaccounted matter in a galaxy. He dubbed it “dark matter,” a concept universally accepted today. In 1934, he and an associate invented the term “supernova” to describe a normal star turning into a neutron star – another accepted term.

According to an *Associated Press* article that appeared in the region on December 17, 1946, the V-2 was equipped with a mechanism to eject streams of dime-sized metal slugs periodically at altitudes between 20 and 40 miles. The slugs were on the tips of rifle grenades that were launched from the V-2 that would be travelling at several thousand miles per hour. When the rifle grenades were launched away from the rocket and exploded, the slugs, contained in a special metal cup, were supposed to be further accelerated to speeds of six miles per second or higher. That’s over 21,000 miles per hour but is considered only the slow end of the meteor speed scale.

Two other prominent scientists were involved in the effort. Dr. James Van Allen designed the ejection mechanism. Van Allen later was one of the key scientists in the launch of the first American satellites. The Van Allen radiation belts that surround the Earth are named after him because detectors he built for those first satellites discovered the belts.

The other was Dr. E.J. Workman, president of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro. He helped design the explosive material used to drive the slugs. He also helped design the explosives to blow the warhead off the body of this particular V-2. This was done to slow down the fall of the rocket on its way back to the

surface. Instead of coming down pointy-end first and, therefore very, very fast, the headless rocket fuselage would tumble and be slowed by friction with the air.

Early V-2s that came back to earth nose first from great altitude struck the ground with such force that it was like exploding close to a ton of TNT. Such impacts literally blew the rockets to smithereens so almost nothing was left but the heavy steel engine. Cameras and instruments rarely survived such collisions.

In addition to the meteor experiment, the rocket was carrying an instrument to measure cosmic radiation streaming into the atmosphere from space.

The civilian science being done on this flight made it attractive to the news media but it also was the first night launch of a V-2 at White Sands. Articles appeared in all the local papers about the meteor experiment and they stressed how visible events would be during the flight that was sched-



*The artificial meteor experiment sparked interest all over the country. This is the headline in the Binghamton Press from far away Binghamton, N.Y. on December 17, 1946.*

uled for 10 p.m. on December 17. You can bet that people all over the area went outside to watch.

There was a slight delay that Tuesday night but the V-2 got off at 10:13, only a few minutes late. The V-2 performed perfectly. In fact it reached a new altitude record of 112 miles. Its top speed was announced at 5,350 feet per second – five times the speed of sound – or 3,600 miles per hour. It was a nice boost for the rifle grenades.

Claims were made afterward that the exhaust flame from the V-2, which burned for 66 seconds, was visible for hundreds of miles. After the engine shut down and the rocket continued to coast upward, Zwicky said the carbon vanes in the throat of the engine continued to glow cherry red for 45 seconds. He said, if it had been clear back at the Mt. Palomar telescope in California, they would have seen the glow.

Unfortunately, no instruments captured any evidence that the meteor experiment worked. Also, most eyewitnesses said they saw nothing. The only positive was Van Allen's report that his cosmic ray instrument functioned and they captured some good data.

Some pundits have speculated over the years that maybe one of those grenades did work and that some of those pellets reached a high enough speed to orbit the Earth a few times. Bingo, the first manmade satellite. With absolutely no evidence, it doesn't appear that anyone takes that possibility seriously.

### **The Tombaugh Connection**

Whipple was disappointed they captured no meteor data but his time in the area must have opened his eyes to the viewing possibilities near Las Cruces. In a September 2, 1947 letter to local astronomer Clyde Tombaugh, Whipple said



*Clyde Tombaugh. New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections.*

he would be visiting the area to look for places for his meteor photography stations. He asked for Tombaugh's help in finding appropriate viewing locations near Las Cruces.

In the letter he outlined his requirements. The two stations needed to be about 25 miles apart – they ended up being 18 miles apart. The stations would be self-contained with their own generators as he didn't want them to be near power lines.

Also, he wanted the sites to be high enough to avoid low hanging haze but not too high as to cause logistical problems.

Two stations were needed because the cameras would photograph the same chunks of sky and capture the same meteors at the same time. By looking at the films and using triangulation, the astronomers would be able to fix the meteor in three-dimensional space. They would then be able to calculate how high it was, how fast it was moving and how it was moving through the atmosphere – whether or not upper level winds moved it to one side.

This letter must have been early on in their relationship because Whipple sent his best wishes to "Mrs. Tombaugh." As the two developed a friendship, later letters were less formal. He frequently asked about or sent his best to, "Patsy and the children." In several letters they talked about crossing paths so they could get together. Alden Tombaugh, Clyde's son, remembers when he was a small child and Whipple visiting the family home in Las Cruces.

At this time, Tombaugh was getting established in the optics field at White Sands Proving Ground. He arrived in 1946 to build tracking telescopes and teach the Army how best to use them. Like Zwicky, because of Tombaugh's past accomplishments with the discovery of Pluto, he had some credibility with the military bosses.

In a letter dated May 11, 1948, Whipple asked Tombaugh about local housing for his teams of personnel. Also, he said they were going to set up the mobile observatories in July of 1948 at the Las Cruces sites. This equipment consisted of the cameras and mounts they had been using in Massachusetts for years.

Finally, Whipple told Tombaugh that they had yet to order the “super-Schmidt” cameras for the sites. These new cameras were labeled as “revolutionary” at the time. They provided a huge domed image of the sky and were equipped with a fast lens that allowed the recording of much dimmer meteors. In April 1949, Whipple gave a talk at New Mexico A&M and predicted the new camera system would increase the number of meteors recorded each night by 40 times. After running the cameras for a few years, he upped that estimate to 50 to 100 times more meteors recorded.

The cameras were designed by Dr. James G. Baker and were built by Perkin-Elmer Corporation.

In a letter to Tombaugh dated April 10, 1950, Whipple asked him for information about salary levels at the Proving Ground for various levels of workers. He told Tombaugh he was trying to figure out what to pay his team members at the two sites. He didn’t want to be too low or too high compared to personnel at White Sands doing similar kinds of technical work.

Tombaugh must have responded immediately because Whipple shot back a letter dated April 18, thanking him for the information. He also told Tombaugh that the first super-Schmidt camera should be installed “in late summer.” He went on to say, “I am certainly looking forward to this with great anticipation in view of the years I have spent holding my breath for it.”

### **Fred Lawrence Whipple**

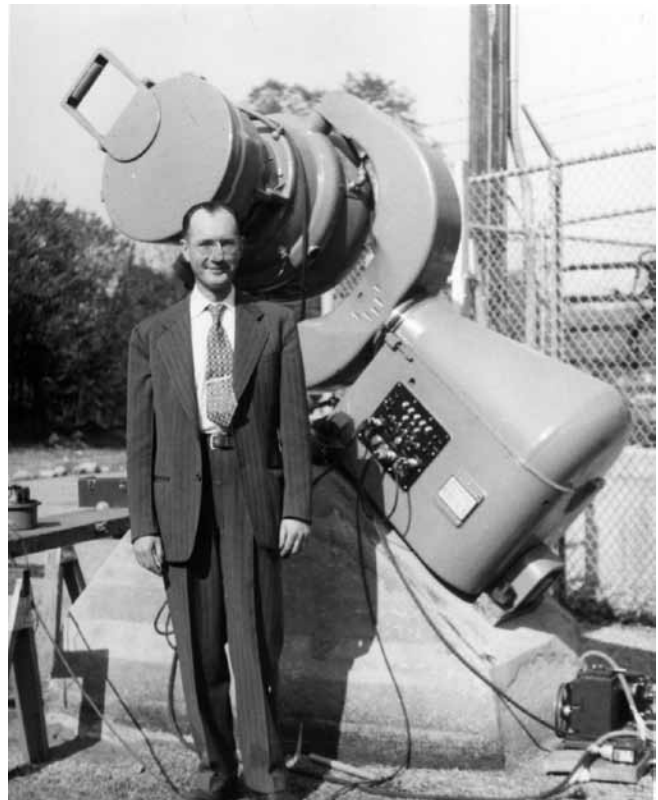
To label Fred Whipple as “legendary” is done with some reverence and yet very few people remember him. At the end of his career he was Senior Physicist at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. They called him “one of the

last giants of 20th century astronomy.” Because of the meteor study program he was a frequent visitor to Las Cruces.

During the 1930s, Whipple discovered six comets. In 1950, he published his theory that comets were “icy conglomerates” which the news media turned into “dirty snowballs.” It struck a cord with the public and the idea was much publicized and is still with us today.

During World War II, Whipple made a major contribution to the war effort by co-inventing a cutting device that converted lumps of tinfoil into thousands of fragments that were dubbed as chaff. This reflective material was released by allied aircraft to confuse enemy radar and is still used today as a “countermeasure.”

Whipple was taken with the idea of space travel and, with his knowledge of meteors, he realized the dangers meteors/asteroids posed for astronauts in their spacecraft. A solid pebble, the size of a pea, could easily go right through a space



*Fred Whipple poses in front of one of his super-Schmidt cameras in this undated photo. AIP Emilio Segre Visual Archives.*

ship if was going fast enough.

In 1946, Whipple invented the “meteor bumper.” It was a thin outer skin of metal that was designed to explode a meteor on contact and prevent disastrous damage.

In the late 1950s, Whipple shows up in photos with the likes of Wehner von Braun and James Van Allen. Van Allen and von Braun were key players in developing America’s first satellite. In 1952, Whipple partnered with von Braun and others to write a series of popular articles for *Collier’s* magazine about a manned trip to the moon.

This led a book in 1952 called *Across The Space Frontier*. In addition to Whipple and von Braun, chapters were added by Joseph Kaplan, Heinz Haber, Willy Ley, and Oscar Schachter. The book has beautiful color illustrations and is very predictive of space travel as we know it. See a book review of *Across The Space Frontier* on page 65 of this *Review*.

In June 1954, Whipple was the only astronomer at a high-level meeting at the Office of Naval Research to discuss an American-launched satellite. He was a national leader in all things related to space but was left out when the President announced America would launch a satellite during the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and a different group would be responsible. The IGY ran July 1, 1957 to December 31, 1958. In 1955, Whipple moved on and was made director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO).

Whipple understood the importance of tracking these proposed satellites from the ground and managed to get the money and responsibility to accomplish it. He devised a string of 12 stations to be placed around the globe, each equipped with new Baker-Nunn cameras built by Boller & Chivens with the optics coming from Perkin-Elmer. He felt the older super-Schmidt meteor cameras wouldn’t work for this.

He doubted the stations and the new cameras would be ready for any IGY launch so, as a stopgap measure, he organized teams of human observers around the world. These

were volunteers, amateur astronomers. Eventually he had over 200 teams trained and ready to work. They were called “moon-watch” teams.

The Soviets then spoiled the show when they shockingly beat everyone to the punch and launched Sputnik I on October 4, 1957. Just five days after the launch, Whipple’s SAO announced America’s first calculations of the satellite’s orbit. The presentation was based mostly on those moon-watch observers visually observing Sputnik in their night sky. The 12 camera stations wouldn’t all be up and operational until the summer of 1958.

However, the first of the new Baker Nunn cameras did photograph Sputnik I on October 17, 1957. The photo was taken by Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory personnel using the new telescope/camera at the Boller & Chivens facility in South Pasadena, California.

Of local interest, the first of the Baker-Nunn tracking stations was located near Las Cruces – on the east side of San Augustin Pass, on the south side of U.S. Highway 70. It was set up in November 1957 and served as the training site for observers from other stations. The huge three-ton telescope could track an object the size of a 20-inch sphere from 1,400 to 1,800 miles away.

### **The Las Cruces Stations**

Through the beginning of 1951, the Las Cru-



***This is the Doña Ana Mountain station in operation in 1949. In the background are the Organ Mountains and the Soledad station about 18 miles away. Photo by Philip Carroll, who managed the stations.***

ces Harvard stations photographed the sky at night during moonless times and in good weather. They used the same old equipment that was used prior to their move to New Mexico. The sky conditions were certainly better but the equipment was holding them back as far as the number of observations and their quality.

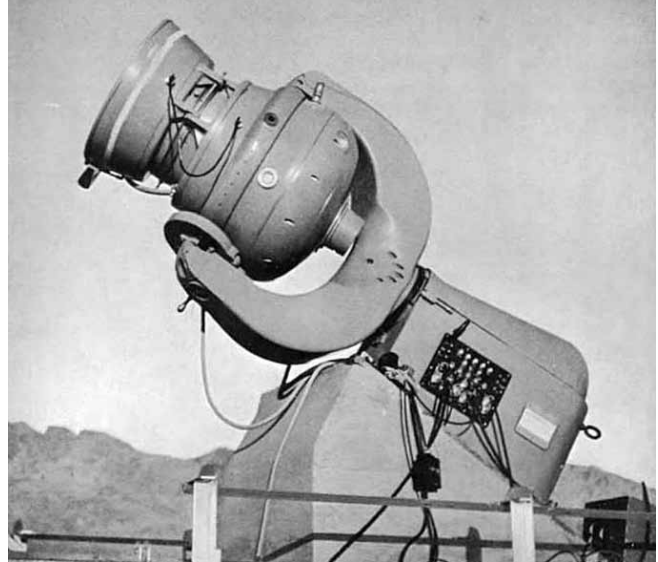
According to a paper by Jacchia and Whipple, "Precision Orbits of 413 Photographic Meteors," the first Baker super-Schmidt meteor camera was finally installed at the Soledad Canyon site in June of 1951. The second camera was installed at the Dona Ana site in March 1952. In a November 13, 1951 *Las Cruces Sun-News* article, the reporter announced that the Harvard crew nicknamed that first camera "Smitty."

These cameras were mounted on the 45-degree surfaces on the large concrete blocks at each site – the large threaded bolts held them solidly in place as the camera section rotated to follow the stars. A truck trailer top protected the cameras during the day and in bad weather but was pulled back at night to allow the cameras to see the sky.

When just the one super-Schmidt camera was up and operational in 1951, it recorded 56 meteors in a short period of time. During the same period, the old equipment standing nearby only recorded one meteor. Whipple was off and running.

With the system finally working as designed, observations suddenly rocketed. In a December 23/30, 1976, article in *New Scientist*, Dr. Keith Hindley wrote about the sudden boom in the meteor observation business. He said, "In the first few months of operation, a two-station combination of these cameras (super-Schmidts) recorded more photographic meteors than had been recorded in the whole previous history of meteor astronomy."

Whipple said, "From March to August 1952, the two cameras simultaneously photographed more than 300 meteors, an average yield of one meteor per 30 minutes" and "In the early days of the Harvard meteor programme the photographic yield was only 5 or 6 meteors per year."



***Bill Godby, White Sands Missile Range archaeologist, and I think this is the super-Schmidt camera mounted at the Soledad site. The unit weighed about 6,000 pounds so the foundation had to be bedrock solid so there was no vibration as the camera moved. The size of one of the bolts below testifies to the camera's weight.***



The data quickly led to new offerings about meteors. For instance, one study concluded that most meteors were quite large in volume but have a very low density. In fact, Hindley in his *New Scientist* article characterized them as "very fragile dust-ball bodies which readily disintegrated on entering the Earth's atmosphere." He said these bodies are only stable in the vacuum of space and would probably collapse under their own weight if

placed on the Earth's surface.

From the data collected using these cameras and other installations of super-Schmidt cameras that followed, scientists started revising their estimate of how many objects actually survived their descent through the atmosphere and struck the Earth. One early estimate was one million meteors per day. By 1958, Gerald Hawkins and Edward Upton estimated it was closer to 90 million per day.

That is quite a large number. It leads to the question of how much meteor material then reaches the Earth's surface. Hindley estimated it is about 100 tons of dust per day, a total that is still used today.

Whipple used the photographs to investigate the density of the upper atmosphere and to calculate the velocity of upper level winds. One thing he noted was that the density of the upper atmosphere changes with the seasons. It is two to three times denser in the summer as compared to winter. The cameras were proving his proposal from 1943 when he wrote that photography would allow them to determine velocities and altitudes which would then lead to determining the density of the atmosphere.

Also, by 1960 Whipple concluded that 99 percent of all meteors were tiny particles originating from comets.

All of this attention to meteors in the local area brought people out to watch the night sky. Clyde Tombaugh, who was still working at White Sands, took advantage of the interest and formed the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces in the fall of 1951. The *Las Cruces Sun-News* on October 17, 1951 said the group was a "society for amateur gazers."

Tombaugh was the first president and he outlined an early course of instructional meetings for the group. The *Sun-News* said the first few meetings would be devoted to the history of astronomy, from ancient times to the present. Later discussions were to focus on telescope making and techniques of observing planets, the moon and meteors.

The first vice president of the group was Phillip Carroll who was Whipple's man in charge of the Harvard meteor photographic stations east of town. Jed Durrenburger, a White Sands employee, was second vice president. Durrenburger was a camera specialist and is credited with assisting Whipple and the Smithsonian in developing the Baker-Nunn satellite tracking cameras. Like Tombaugh, he is a member of the White Sands Missile Range Hall of Fame.

In November 1951, Tombaugh arranged for his friend Fred Whipple to address the group. As you might guess, Whipple talked about meteors. The meeting was held at Tombaugh's home.

### **Project Twinkle**

A possible byproduct of all this rocket and meteor attention after the war just might be the unidentified flying object (UFO) phenomenon that took off around this time. More and more people were out looking at the sky, paying more attention to what was above them. However, most were untrained and totally inexperienced in understanding what they were seeing. They reported a huge volume of manmade objects like airplanes, balloons, and rockets plus natural things in the sky like birds, bats, small clouds, meteorites and bright planets. These were things that many people had never encountered before.

In 1950, the Air Force's Geophysics Research Division was directed to investigate UFOs – in particular the "light phenomena that had been observed in the skies of the southwestern United States." The investigation was designated Project Twinkle.

Much of the investigation took place in New Mexico as quite a bit of the activity was centered around Los Alamos, the White Sands/Holloman Air Force Base complex and Vaughn. Early on, Dr. Lincoln La Paz with the Department of Meteoritics at the University of New Mexico was an advisor.

The Air Force took this seriously and prepared for various contingencies. According to a summary report, "On 11 September, arrangements

were made by Holloman AFB for Major Gover, Commander 93rd Fighter Squadron at Kirtland AFB, to be on call so that aerial objects might be pursued. This would make possible more intimate visual observation and photography at close range. Major Gover was not authorized to shoot at the phenomena.”

The Air Force knew they needed to collect real data on these “objects” by filming them – just like Whipple did with his meteors. They knew that people just seeing lights in the sky was useless in figuring out what was behind the sightings. They tried mightily by contracting to have personnel film the sky night after night. They got nothing of significance.

They found out about the Harvard studies and asked Whipple to look at the photos his team had taken on the nights when phenomena were reported near White Sands. This was perfect because here was a dedicated program that had been keeping records for several years. Whipple reported they never detected any strange aerial objects.

The Air Force contacted New Mexico A&M in Las Cruces about their astronomical observations. They came back with a negative.

The Air Force also contacted Clyde Tombaugh, knowing about his regular observations of the night sky that he conducted on his own. He reported he never observed an unexplainable aerial object.

In the end, the Air Force concluded that they couldn’t form a conclusive opinion on the matter. Of course, with so many sightings, it was impossible to explain them all away. Also, it was impolite to question the reliability of any of the witnesses. For believers, everyone is considered a “credible” source. The study authors did recommend not spending any more money on the project.

The project scientist, Louis Elterman, did offer up a small ray of hope. He said that Dr. Whipple’s cameras for meteor studies located near Las Cruces should be examined in the future to see if any aerial-object phenomena were captured.

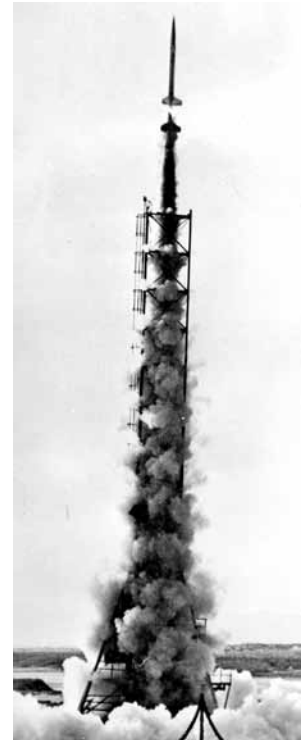
### Meteor Stations Relocated

Like many programs that depend on government money, the meteor photo program had to be suddenly altered in early 1954. The Office of Naval Research withdrew its financial support. Whipple and his people scrambled to figure out how to keep the program going.

One change they initiated was to move the sites closer to commercial power. In the process, the Air Force Solar Project at Sacramento Peak, south of Cloudcroft, offered up land for one site. The second site ended up near Mayhill to be fairly close to the other one. By the end of 1954, they were back in business but nowhere near Las Cruces.

When Harvard pulled out of the Las Cruces area, the crew sold some of the equipment. An advertisement ran in some May 1954 issues of the Sun-News listing two generators, several trucks and trailers for sale. The ad was addressed to contractors and ranchers.

This new location proved valuable as well. Although the rifle grenade/artificial meteor experiment using a V-2 failed in 1946, it didn’t stop others from trying it for themselves during the following decade. Air Force scientists and engineers finally succeeded on October 16, 1957 using an Aerobee sounding rocket launched at 10:13 p.m. from Holloman Air Force Base. The Air Force used small packages of explosives to propel a thousand aluminum spheres about the size of small ball bearings (only a few grams each) from the rocket at an altitude of



*Typical Aerobee rocket launch from tower at Holloman Air Force Base. U.S. Air Force photo.*



54 miles above New Mexico. Guess who captured the action from their new location at Sac Peak?

The Air Force was slow to release its results as technicians had to study thousands of feet of film to find any trace meteors. When they announced success several weeks later, the news spread internationally. It was a small bit of positive space-related news for the free world because, at this time, the Soviets already had their second satellite in orbit.

Maurice Dubin, a physicist with the Air Force Cambridge Research Center that sponsored the test, said “Harvard’s Baker Super-Schmidt Meteor Camera at Sacramento Peak Observatory in New Mexico was able to make a picture of one of the artificial meteors leaving the rocket an instant after the explosion....” Dubin said the “meteors” could have been traveling at over 36,000 miles per hour. He refused to speculate on the possibility that one or more of the pellets might reach the moon but confirmed they were headed away from Earth.

Others weren’t afraid to speculate with some calculating that the aluminum pieces could hit the moon in just 10 hours. Zwicky disagreed and offered that the pellets left Earth’s orbit and were then caught by the sun’s gravity, heading for oblivion.

At exactly the same time, other New Mexico scientists were featured in news stories. Clyde Tombaugh made headlines all across America when he waded in on the issue that the Soviets might launch a moon rocket timed to strike the moon on November 7, 1957 in celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution. The idea surfaced when Russia observers saw propaganda about the country doing something really special to honor Lenin and show America how far ahead the Soviets were in the Space Race. Some jumped to the conclusion it meant a rocket impact on the moon.

Tombaugh was quoted about how a trip to the moon might be accomplished and how the Soviets might explode some sort of flash device on the surface so it would be visible from Earth. Or, he thought they might spread a brightly colored

dust over the surface to be seen from Earth with powerful telescopes.

Of course, Robert Goddard had covered much of this in his ground-breaking publication *A Method of Reaching Extreme Altitudes* in 1919. The big difference was that Goddard was ridiculed by the New York Times for suggesting such a thing was possible. In 1957 such a demonstration was viewed as inevitable.

In any case, Tombaugh organized a moon watch group in Las Cruces to take turns observing the moon through telescopes on Nov. 7 to see if anything happened. Although the team saw nothing, the attention Tombaugh received gave him a platform to advocate for more money for space-related research. He was critical of America falling so far behind the Soviet Union.

Also, Colonel John Stapp, leader of the Air Force’s aero-medical research at Holloman Air Force Base, stated the Soviets were certainly capable of putting a man into space very soon, BUT only if they weren’t too concerned about getting him back. This was based on the huge size of Sputnik II – something about that size could house a man and, if refined, get him back to Earth.

Although the Harvard stations were only outside Las Cruces for a few years, the data collected was invaluable. Doing an internet search today about meteors leads to many research papers that cite information from those images of dust particles streaking across the sky over Las Cruces. Unfortunately for X-Files advocates, no one has reported seeing any spaceships in those old photos.

### Afterward

In doing the research for this article, I found there was one thing absolutely missing. No one had any concern about the possibility of a large asteroid striking the Earth – like the one that wiped out the dinosaurs. The idea is called a hypothesis but it is something most of us accept today. By the way, an asteroid is a large solid mass flying around the solar system that can vary in size from a few feet across to something the

size of Albuquerque.

The reason Tombaugh, Whipple, Zwicky and the others never mentioned it is because the theory hadn't been proposed yet. In 1980, a team that included Nobel Prize winning physicist Luis Alvarez, who was a key player at Los Alamos in building the first atomic bombs, found geological



***The front door to the GEODSS facility at White Sands Missile Range.***

evidence that the Earth was struck by an asteroid approximately 66 million years ago (give or take a few days). Ironically, scientists compare these big impacts to atomic bomb yields. The Chicxulub impact point on the Yucatan Peninsula, where Alvarez's asteroid struck, is calculated to have released the equivalent energy of a billion Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs.

From the computer models that have been run to calculate the result of the Chicxulub impact, it is easy to see why dinosaurs disappeared almost overnight. One model concludes that so much energy was released at impact that everything on the Earth's surface immediately burned like it was under a broiler oven. Then the lights went out as soot blocked 99 percent of the sunlight for about two years - all photosynthesis stopped. The global temperature dropped by about 50 degrees and three-quarters of the plants and animals, including the dinosaurs, died.

These discoveries have energized scientists and some political leaders to action. If it happened once, it could happen again. Since these rocks are fairly predictable, if one is headed toward Earth in the future, instead of simply praying, we might be able to help ourselves.

For the past few decades there has been an emphasis worldwide to find the large asteroids and comets in the solar system that might pose a future threat to our existence. The idea is to identify them, track them and predict their trajectories.

A little known facility at White Sands Missile Range has played a large role in this effort.

At the north end of White Sands, at the edge of the Stallion Range Center, is the Air Force's Ground-Based, Electro-Optical, Deep Space Surveillance (GEODSS) facility. The acronym is pronounced GEE-ODDS. The clos-

est town is San Antonio, N.M.

It is a military satellite tracking station that is just about impossible to get into. Completed in 1982, the observation site was the first of four. The others were built in South Korea and on the islands of Diego Garcia and Maui. The Korean site has since closed because the air quality is not suitable for looking into space with telescopes.

The one on Maui is probably the most accessible - at least anyone can easily see it. It is up on the edge of Haleakala Crater at the end of the road in the national park. Visitors entering the missile range through the Stallion Gate to visit Trinity Site will see GEODSS and its many silver astronomy domes just west of the main camp.

These sites are each equipped with three telescopes capable of tracking an object as small as a basketball at 20,000 miles in space. They only work at night. A very sophisticated computer system has the telescopes move at the same rate the Earth is turning so the stars on the video stay locked as solid spots of light. They don't appear as streaks across the sky over time. Most everything else leaves a slight streak of light on the images. The Air Force is interested in the satellites that leave these stripes.

The site's observations are reported to the 21st Space Wing at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs.

There are other things out there fairly close that could leave streaks of light. Those things are

comets and asteroids and they are in our solar system. Lincoln Labs from MIT developed this tracking system for the Air Force. They partnered with NASA and were allowed to use a GEODSS telescope mounted next to the site at WSMR to find and track asteroids. The automated system works well for finding objects out there that have never been detected before. The comets and asteroids leave streaks of light as well when compared to the stars.

Dubbed LINEAR for “Lincoln Near Earth Asteroid Research,” the civilian searchers have found thousands of NEOs – Near Earth Objects. The count includes over 250 comets. From when the program started in 1998 to 2005, most asteroid discoveries were made here. The Catalina Sky Survey now does most of the work. It is located at the Mount Lemmon Observatory north of Tucson.

Astronomers think most of the big NEOs have been found and searchers are now focusing on finding smaller rocks. These smaller asteroids could still be catastrophic in that some are large enough to wipe out entire cities. The Tunguska meteor that struck over isolated central Russia on June 30, 1908 was estimated to be about the size of a five-story building. The rock did not actually hit the ground but exploded approximately ten miles above the Earth’s surface. The air blast flattened and killed over 750 square miles of dense forest – one estimate is 80 million trees. If it had exploded over a major city, the death toll probably would have been in the hundreds of thousands.

Only 70 years ago, the air just a few miles over our heads was a great mystery. Much of the early research into what is up there, centered around Las Cruces and White Sands Proving Ground. The research was intriguing and we learned to go outside and look up into the night sky in hopes of seeing a “falling star.” It was a time of great optimism. After all, in 1957, singer Perry Como released his hit song *Catch a Falling Star* and advised us to “catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, save it for a rainy day.”

Since then, we have moved from doing basic and rather innocent research to keeping vigilant

watch for falling stars that could kill millions of us in just a few heartbeats.

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**Jim Eckles** retired from a 30-year career at White Sands Missile Range in 2007. He has written extensively about the history of the range and published *Pocketful of Rockets: The History and Stories Behind White Sands Missile Range* and *Trinity: The History Of An Atomic Bomb National Historical Landmark*. His most recent book is *Deming, New Mexico’s Camp Cody: A World War One Training Camp*. He was inducted into the missile range Hall of Fame in 2013. He is currently the DACHS secretary and newsletter editor.

[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)

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# “We Are All Americans”

## Edwin Mechem and a Life of Service in Southern New Mexico

By Judith L. Messal

In 1920, a district court judge in southern New Mexico showed compassion for a child in trouble and rendered a decision which the Albuquerque Journal called “a judicial innovation.”<sup>1</sup> An eleven-year-old named Carlos, had found delight in starting fires in buildings around the town of Alamogordo, not for destructive purposes but for the excitement of hearing alarms go off. In one month, he was thought to have set, or tried to set, fourteen fires, at least one of them very costly.<sup>2</sup> The judge decided not to send the child to reform school because of the exploitation he might endure. Instead, Carlos would attend a Catholic school in Albuquerque. The judge delayed transfer until the boy could have a tonsil operation. Then the deputy sheriff would transport him north, and the court would pay for his father to accompany him. It was a decision that gave a child in a tight spot the chance to grow up and become a good member of his community.

The man on the bench in that courtroom in 1920 was Edwin Mechem, the brother of New Mexico’s fifth governor and the father of the fifteenth. Although his profile in history is not as high as those of his gubernatorial relatives, he too contributed a good share of heart and effort to the civic wellbeing of the state. The story begins with his ancestral roots and progresses to his adventurous young years in Kansas and Arkansas and his life in southern New Mexico, where he was a state district judge, a private attorney, and the mayor of Las Cruces.

### **The Mechems: From Nottingham to North America**

When Edwin Mechem moved to the Territory of New Mexico in 1910, he came as a part of an engaging family story. It was rooted in the American experience of migration from Europe

and movement across a continent, with branches of the family from both the North and the South heading west. Within the story were accounts of family members responding to great issues of their time: settlement among indigenous people, slavery, war, and a new direction in national politics. The story began in 1702, when Francis Mechem and his family sailed from England to North America.<sup>3</sup> Among their possessions was a certificate from the Quaker Monthly Meeting in Nottingham attesting to Mechem’s good standing there. With that document, the family joined the Society of Friends in Pennsylvania. The first generations worked as carpenters and millers, and by the third, they had a descendant who launched the family’s military and government service in America. John Mechem joined the Pennsylvania militia in the 1780s and held posts as county treasurer and commissioner in the 1790s.

Ninety-some years after the first Mechems arrived in Pennsylvania, a branch of the family moved to Belmont County in eastern Ohio. There, in 1813, Jesse Evans Mechem was born. A physician and minister, he brought four enduring elements into the family: an affinity for western frontiers, commitment to a profession, the Methodist Church, and his given name, which would appear in four later generations of Mechems. His Methodism prompted the family to remark that his branch could not have been Quakers; they enjoyed speech too much.<sup>4</sup>

When Jesse and Margaret Mechem headed west in 1869, their son Homer and his wife Martha joined them. Their destination was Ottawa, on the Marais Des Cygnes River in eastern Kansas. The town was newly built on land bought from the Ottawa tribe of Native Americans. Earlier the Ottawa had been fur traders in southern Canada and Michigan, but, pressed by migrating groups

and U.S. laws, they had settled in Kansas. In 1865, they collaborated with Baptist missionaries to found a school.<sup>5</sup> The tribe moved on to Oklahoma, but Ottawa University remains. Among its alumni is Merritt Mechem, Edwin's brother and New Mexico's fifth governor.

In a Main Street building in Ottawa, Jesse Mechem practiced medicine and son Homer had a law office. Soon Homer's and Martha's home was filled with children. Merritt was first and Edwin fourth among six. The young Mechems grew up with both sets of grandparents nearby because in 1871, Martha's parents had moved to town. It was through Martha's line that the Mechems got their southern roots and a special role in ending slavery and preserving the Union.

### **The Davenports from Virginia**

Martha Mechem descended from John Adrian Davenport.<sup>6</sup> Davenport and his father of the same name were Virginia planters and tobacco merchants in the 1700s. They used slave labor, but the son came to view the situation as unjust. Some time before 1819, he left Virginia to buy land in Ohio and begin anew. He brought eighty formerly-enslaved people with him, deeding each man in the group eighty acres. His son, John A. Davenport III was Martha Mechem's father. He had seen his family make remarkable political and social transformations, and he himself joined the new, pro-Union Republican Party. As part of the Electoral College, he cast a vote for Abraham Lincoln. During the Civil War, he served with the Ohio State Militia during Morgan's Raid, a Confederate effort to draw Union troops away from the front.

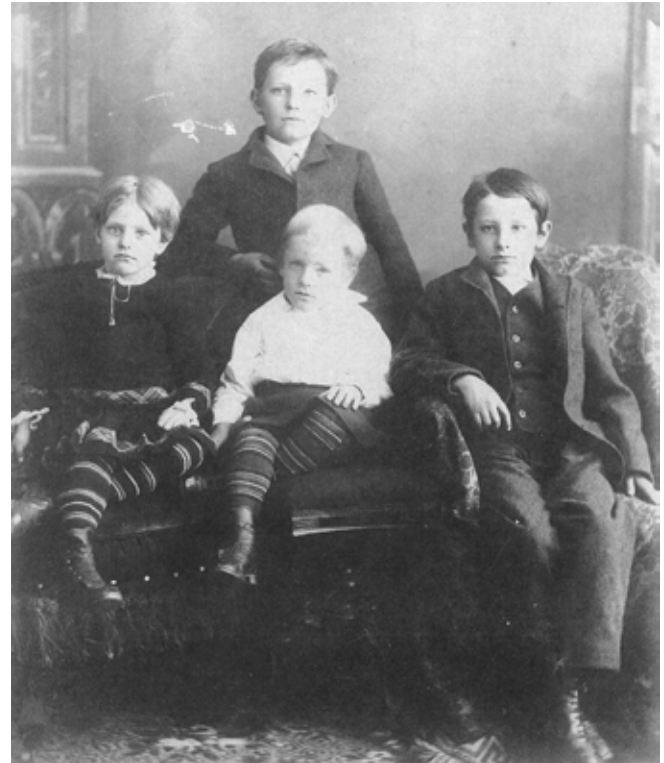
### **Edwin Mechem's Early Years In Kansas and Arkansas**

Edwin Mechem, born in 1878, lived in Ottawa until he was twelve. Steeped in the politics of the nation's newest party, he grew up learning about civic duty and seeing his parents and grandparents help build a community. Then, in 1891,

his father moved the family to a new frontier, Fort Smith, Arkansas, on the edge of Oklahoma Indian Territory.

Fort Smith was a challenging place at the time. It was part of the Western Judicial District of Arkansas, which was under the jurisdiction of Judge Isaac Parker.<sup>7</sup> Parker, like the Davenports and the Mechems, hailed from Belmont County, Ohio. He had been appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant to bring order to a region plagued by violent gangs and individuals. It was a daunting mandate. The judge quickly built up a large cadre of deputy marshals to help with law enforcement in the district, which included Indian Territory. Edwin Mechem may have served as a deputy marshal briefly after Judge Parker's death. (See End Notes No. 7.)

In 1898, when Mechem was twenty, the Spanish-American War broke out, and Arkansas activated two National Guard regiments.<sup>8</sup>



*The Children of Homer and Martha Mechem: Merritt (future governor of New Mexico, standing); L-R, Eleanor, Edwin, and Ralph (probably taken in Ottawa, Kansas in the 1880s) Courtesy of Mac and Carol Mechem.*

Mechem joined the First Arkansas Volunteer Infantry, training at Camp George H. Thomas in Georgia and earning the rank of quartermaster. The war ended before the regiment deployed to Cuba, but the humid lowlands of Georgia could be lethal to soldiers. Several Arkansas men died of local diseases.

By 1900, Mechem was on a new track, preparing to become a lawyer and a political figure.<sup>9</sup> He studied at Kansas University for two years. Then he moved to the University of Michigan where he encountered a distant cousin, law professor Floyd Mechem. Soon Professor Mechem moved on to the University of Chicago, and the newly-graduated Edwin returned to Fort Smith to practice law with his father. He also helped start a Young Men’s Republican club. In 1907, he married Eunice Leard, the dark-haired daughter of a Fort Smith merchant with southern roots and an affinity for the Democratic Party. Eunice became an ardent Republican and Edwin a candidate for a congressional seat in 1909.

### **To Southern New Mexico**

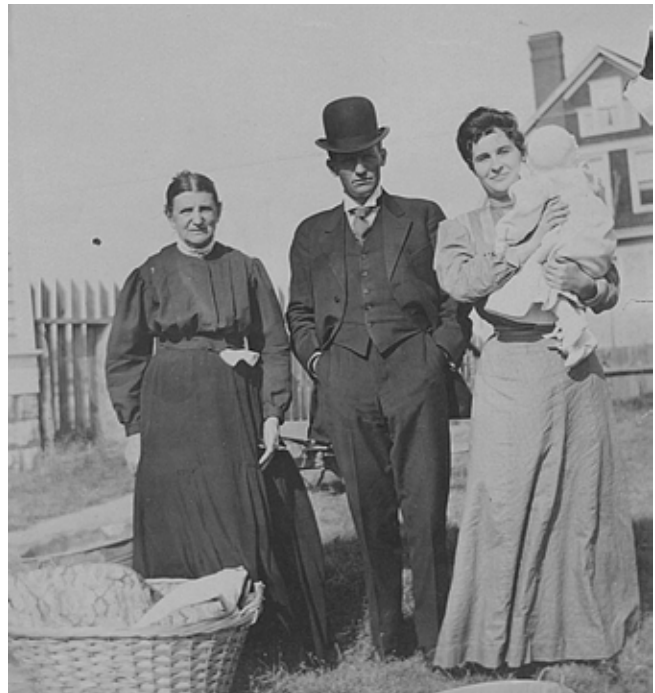
Perhaps it was kismet that Edwin Mechem lost his race for Congress in Arkansas. He and Eunice were not to stay in Fort Smith much longer. Another frontier was calling. By 1910, the Mechems were en route to New Mexico Territory with their sons Davenport (Sport), two, and Jesse (Jay), an infant. They were moving to Alamogordo, a new town near the U.S./Mexico border. It was an exciting time. New Mexico’s constitutional convention had just wrapped up, and the territory stood on the threshold of statehood. Mechem’s brother Merritt had preceded him to the Southwest and was serving on the New Mexico Territorial Supreme Court.

Edwin Mechem had been recruited by one of the territory’s prominent attorneys W. A. Hawkins. Historian William Keleher characterized Hawkins as an intelligent and practical man, who had “. . . a definite bent for business and corporation law.”<sup>10</sup> If corporations were subject to laws and moral considerations, Hawkins believed,

they could promote human advancement. In that frame of mind, he helped develop southern New Mexico. In the political realm, he represented Dona Ana, Grant, Luna, and Otero counties in the Territorial Legislature.

Hawkins’ interest in recruiting Mechem related to his own great achievement, his work with Charles B. Eddy to establish Alamogordo. The town was part of their plan to build the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad to link the Southern Pacific line in El Paso with the Rock Island in Santa Rosa. The new rail company needed a good lawyer to secure water rights, Hawkins told Merritt Mechem, a fellow legislator.<sup>11</sup> Mechem recommended his brother.

Edwin Mechem was not a specialist in water law, but the young man offered something else that Hawkins was looking for, the potential to be a good GOP candidate for elective office. In his new position, Mechem, from the well-watered lands of eastern Kansas and northwestern Ar-



*Edwin C. Mechem with his mother Martha Davenport Mechem on the left and his wife Eunice Leard Mechem on the right. Eunice is holding her first-born son Davenport (Sport). Probably taken in 1908 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Courtesy of Walter and Janet Mechem*

kansas, learned water law in arid southern New Mexico. Doing his own field work in new terrain, he pursued water rights contracts for the railroad in La Luz, Fresno, and South Fork Canyons in the Sacramento and Sierra Blanca mountains.

Mechem's new town of Alamogordo was fresh and inviting, populated by newcomers like him. In a little over a decade, a thriving railroad town had materialized in the desert. By 1912, Alamogordo had four churches, five hotels, two banks, a public library, utility companies, and three newspapers, one of them in Spanish. Entrepreneurs poured in. From a jeweler, a tailor, and a milliner to blacksmiths, barbers, and druggists, people took their place in the local economy.<sup>12</sup> The New Mexico Institute for the Blind had been built on beautiful grounds across the road from a park of cottonwoods, outfitted with an ornamental gate, a pond, and swans. The mountains and canyons supplied timber and marble for the town's pretty neighborhoods of Victorian and Queen Anne style homes and its handsome district of commercial buildings.<sup>13</sup>

The Mechems settled into New Mexico with hearts open to its history and cultures. The Sacramento Mountains drew them, especially the July 4th coming-of-age ceremonies of the Mescalero Apache people.<sup>14</sup> The tribe, formed by Mescalero, Lipan, and Chiricahua subtribes, had ranged through the Southwest and northern Mexico,<sup>15</sup> but by the Mechems' time, they had settled in the forested lands of their reservation. Other summer retreats took the Mechems to the mountains around Ruidoso and Cloudcroft. Traveling to Cloudcroft was thrilling. No road friendly to public travel existed until the 1940s, but, in the early days, the Mechems could go from the desert floor to the evergreens by rail. Passengers made their way to the mountaintop on a little train pulling its open cars up the steep slopes and along the trestle across Mexico Canyon.<sup>16</sup> Today's thirty-minute trip by road took three hours by rail then.

Life was good, but soon a conflict in Europe dominated the news. Isolationist sentiment was keeping the U. S. out of the war, leaving

President Woodrow Wilson in a role as a neutral peacemaker. German submarine activity and the Zimmerman Telegram, however, changed the situation. British intelligence had intercepted a message which German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmerman had sent inviting Mexico to support the German cause.<sup>17</sup> In exchange, Germany would help Mexico regain control of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, lands into which the U.S. had expanded in the 19th century. The threat to the homeland changed Wilson's mind about the war, and it affected Edwin Mechem's thinking as well.

New Mexicans were already concerned about U.S./Mexico relations. The government of President Porfirio Diaz, a friend to U.S. business interests in Mexico, recently had fallen. In the reshuffling of power, Venustiano Carranza came



***Edwin C. Mechem (standing, left) - believed to be taken in 1917 at the Army's officer training camp at Leon Springs, Texas which is near San Antonio. The camp was one of eight used to train the thousands of officers needed to lead the millions of men the United States committed to World War I. Courtesy of Walter and Janet Mechem.***

into the presidency. His rival General Francisco Villa began to stir up conflict, moving up to the border and even crossing it. During the first half of 1916, Villa led a bloody raid on Columbus, New Mexico and later attacked Glenn Springs, Texas.<sup>18</sup> Germany was watching Pancho Villa with interest and perhaps was even encouraging him.<sup>19</sup> If Villa were to draw the United States into conflict with Mexico, Germany could conduct its war in Europe with less American interference.

Edwin Mechem was among those New Mexicans who thought the European war was coming too close to home not to respond. He decided to volunteer again for military service. He applied for officers' reserve corps training in Texas and, along with ninety or so other New Mexicans, was accepted.<sup>20</sup> Before he left, he wrote his parents in Fort Smith, asking for their prayers. His letter ended up in his hometown newspaper, the *Ottawa Herald*:

*I am going to the training camp at Leon Springs, Tex. to try for a commission. I held off as long as I could and what I have done has been done out of deep conviction that I could do nothing else. We are engaged in a struggle in which the individual must not take himself or the members of his family into account. This seems to be a rather hard statement. But if the Germans win this war I don't care to be here or have any of my family here. I don't want my wife to live through it or my boys to be raised up under it. It is against that that I am going to fight, if I am competent. If not I will come home and do what little I can. I want both of you to understand my position fully. If this war lasts three years, every able bodied man will be in it in some capacity and I might as well go first as last. It may be that I have been a little selfish in trying to get something that will take care of my family while I am gone. If it is over before I get there, I will have had a physical and mental training which will be of benefit to me as long as I live.*<sup>21</sup>

In training, Mechem was injured and returned

to Alamogordo. He was soon to answer another call to service. In 1918, he won the judgeship of the Third Judicial District.<sup>22</sup> A Carrizozo paper predicted he would be one of the district's great judges. While he covered Torrance, Lincoln, Otero, and Dona Ana counties, his brother Merritt, based in Socorro, was serving as judge of the Seventh District. It was another story for the *Ottawa Herald*.

From Alamogordo, Judge Edwin Mechem and court reporter Paul Brinegar traveled their vast district, sometimes leaving their families for weeks at a time.<sup>23</sup> The Mechems had three sons by then and the Brinegars at least one. The boys made the most of their New Mexico childhoods. One of them recalled ranging freely through Alamogordo where the shadow of the town marshal loomed large enough to inspire their good behavior. Brinegar's son Paul, Jr. would channel his Southwestern upbringing into an acting career. At his most famous, he was Wishbone, the gruff cattle-drive cook in the 1960s TV series *Rawhide*, starring Clint Eastwood.

Mechem's youngest son Edwin was preparing for his own role, as a federal district judge. As a child, he accompanied his father to far-away court sessions. He recalled the train rides through New Mexico's grassy central plains with their blue mountain horizons. One favorite memory was an overnight at a hotel in Estancia that served the “yummiest oatmeal ever known to man and boy.”<sup>24</sup> During the day, the younger Mechem remembered, his father would put him in the hands of Sheriff Felipe Alderete “. . . or whoever was capable of getting me out and around to keep me from interfering with what was going on in the courtroom.”<sup>25</sup>

### Notable Court Cases

Edwin Mechem presided over cases ranging from divorces and water disputes to election fraud and murders. One incident, quaint by today's standards, brought four young Alamogordo boys before him.<sup>26</sup> They had been apprehended one spring evening by the sheriff for “raw stunts,” the



details of which the local newspaper would not divulge out of concern for the town's reputation. The press only hinted at the category of misdeeds, noting that the boys had thrown rocks and rattled doors during a lyceum presentation. Judge Mechem's decision on the case is unknown. Most likely he approached the boys with wisdom and care. In other cases, he was known to suspend sentences at times and to recommend clemency for people.<sup>27</sup>

On the more serious topic of murder, two cases in Mechem's court remain of interest, one because of its lingering mystery, the other because of its death penalty controversy. The first was the baffling Scanland case of 1919. It stemmed from an all-night party in El Paso that culminated an early-morning, whiskey-fueled caper in southern Dona Ana County. There, eight El Paso merry-makers had an unfortunate encounter with a driver in a cross-country road race they had come to observe. Soon there was a flying bullet, a dying race car driver, and eight El Paso suspects in a Las Cruces jail.

The eight appeared before Judge Edwin Mechem, who bound one of the suspects, Major Frank Scanland, over for a grand jury investigation. From there, the case grew steadily more convoluted and made the national news, in part because the victim, John Hutchings, had powerful friends. Oliver Lee and Albert Bacon Fall became part of the story, and tragedy followed tragedy, as detailed in a separate article by the author.<sup>28</sup>

The other dramatic murder case to reach Mechem's court involved a deadly assault on a law enforcement officer in Alamogordo. It is a study in 1920s' methods of tracking criminals and involves an embryonic anti-capital punishment effort. The killing occurred on the night of February 13, 1923. Earlier, Ed Harris, sheriff of Lincoln County, had telephoned his counterpart W. L. Rutherford in Otero County to warn him about two fugitives en route to his jurisdiction.<sup>29</sup> They were from Amarillo and had been arrested for stealing saddles and other gear. They had escaped during a transfer from Corona to Carrizozo, and,

in their flight, they had taken guns. They were "bad ones," Harris stated. He urged Rutherford to proceed with caution.<sup>30</sup>

The escapees indeed arrived in Alamogordo. Sheriff Rutherford spotted them parked on New York Avenue between Ninth and Tenth Streets. As he approached their car, the men tried to drive away, but Rutherford positioned himself on the running board. One of the suspects pointed his gun at the sheriff. A shot was fired, and Rutherford lay dying on the street. The men took off to the south, apparently with Mexico in mind.

The horrified community responded at once.<sup>31</sup> The business sector helped form a posse to pursue the fugitives in "fast" automobiles. Deputy Sheriff H. M. Denny and ex-Sheriff Howard Beacham were among them, and Lincoln, Dona Ana, and El Paso county posses joined in.



*Portrait of Edwin Mechem in his later years.  
Courtesy of Walter and Janet Mechem*

Bloodhounds from Carrizozo and Estancia arrived. The dogs, along with horses and their riders, were loaded onto a special train to Orogrande. Fort Bliss General R. L. Howze, sent Lt. Robert Knapp up in a DeHaviland plane armed with a machine gun. “Hedge-hopping” at a hundred feet or lower, Knapp and his observer searched the roads and rails. At the U.S./Mexico border, officers stood ready to intercept the fugitives. Judge Mechem, keeping informed, stated that the bloodhounds seemed to be on the track.

When the suspects ran out of gas, they abandoned their stolen car and fled to the mountains. Nearly twenty-four hours after the killing, parched and weak, they were apprehended near Orogrande, about midway between Alamogordo and the international border.<sup>32</sup> They did not give up easily, firing on the posse and wounding Deputy Little Bradford. The young men would have “shot it out,” they told authorities, but the posse was just too big.

Instead, they waved a white undershirt in surrender. Taken into custody, they gave fake names, and one of them boldly wore Rutherford’s missing hat. They were brought to Alamogordo where a furious crowd awaited them. Arrest photos showed the suspects’ condition: grim and disheveled, their chins whiskered, hair standing up in tufts. Dr. J. R. Gilbert calmed the angry citizens outside; lynching had been on their minds.<sup>33</sup>

People were devastated by Rutherford’s death. He was forty years old. A Democrat from Missouri, he had been elected sheriff just months before. He was an ex-legislator, a man of the people: “[F]rom the day he got off the train at the station at Alamogordo, dusted his clothes and lit one of his own rollin’ he has made friends . . . [B]ig-hearted, the friend of the cow-man, the sheepman, the wage earner, the business man, the day laborer, for sixteen years, Bill Rutherford has mixed with the people . . . in the stores, on the streets, on the range . . . .”<sup>34</sup>

Judge Edwin Mechem presided over the case against Rutherford’s assailants.<sup>35</sup> District Attorney J. B. Newell stood ready to prosecute.

The courtroom was packed. Judge Caldwell, a respected criminal lawyer from west Texas, represented the defendants William LaFavors and Charles Smelcer. The men had other support, their mothers, who were Amarillo charity workers; Smelcer’s stepfather, and LaFavors’ wife.

Early on, A. B. McCamant, Lincoln County deputy sheriff, and Graciano Yriat testified. They described the wild developments that had occurred in a Ford auto as they attempted to transfer the suspects to Carrizozo. En route LaFavors had struggled with McCamant for his gun. The deputy finally opened the car door, and as the men tumbled out, LaFavors grabbed the gun and ordered Smelcer to take on Yriat. Having the upper hand, LaFavors got ready to shoot their captors. McCamant, seeing their assailants’ desperation, told Yriat to end the fight. He counseled the suspects. It was not a good idea to compound their property crime by committing murder, he warned. It would seriously alter their fate. Smelcer seemed to understand. McCamant and Yriat were spared, but their car was taken.

Miguel Sanchez, G. M. Gutierrez, and Max Pierce testified about Rutherford’s encounter with the fugitives in Alamogordo. Members of the posse spoke. Given the bleak facts, the defense attorney made his best argument. His clients had not intended to kill Bill Rutherford, he asserted. The sheriff had caused his own death by grabbing the barrel of LaFavors’ gun, which had discharged accidentally as the young man struggled to maintain his grip on it.<sup>36</sup>

The jury needed little time to return a verdict of guilty and call for capital punishment.<sup>37</sup> The words brought the defendants’ mothers to tears, but the young men stayed stoic. Judge Mechem sentenced them to be executed on April 6, 1923. It would not be a public spectacle; the executions would be in a private enclosure with only a few screened witnesses present.

Reactions came quickly.<sup>38</sup> The defense attorney filed an appeal. An anti-capital punishment movement was predicted, one that would call for commutation of the sentences. People began to

speak against the death penalty, including some of Rutherford's friends. One person, identifying as "K.K.K.," sent Judge Mechem, the DA, and the sheriff threats by mail.

The appeal did not work.<sup>39</sup> The New Mexico Supreme Court upheld lower court's decision as a proper application of the law. A new execution date was set for August 22, 1924. LaFavors' mother, funded by Amarillo citizens, traveled to Santa Fe to plead with Governor James F. Hinkle. Her son had had a hard life--fatherless at ten, working to support his siblings.

Hinkle hesitated, faced with abrogating the decisions of two courts. Deluged by letters from Amarillo and elsewhere, he decided. He commuted LaFavors' sentence to life and Smelcer's to forty-five years, but the men would serve much less time. In 1931, Governor Arthur Seligman approved Smelcer's parole. In 1936, Governor John Miles did the same for LaFavors.<sup>40</sup>

Mechem took the controversy, threats, commutations, and paroles in stride. When a U.S. judgeship opened up, he was touted for it. Although not chosen, he was endorsed by the Las Cruces Citizen and described as patient, learned,

and of "an admirably kind disposition."<sup>41</sup>

### Another Move West

In 1924, when Mechem was up for re-election as a state district judge, the voters returned him to office. Fulfilling a campaign pledge to the people of Dona Ana County, he moved the court offices to Las Cruces. It was a reasonable action. Over fifty percent of court business was in Las Cruces, and the drive from Alamogordo, which takes a little over an hour today, could take seven hours in the 1920s.<sup>42</sup> The road, which crossed the broad Tularosa Basin and climbed the steep San Augustin Pass, challenged travelers then, especially after storms. To prepare for a journey on that track, Mechem's son Edwin remembered, one had to pack water and emergency stores of gasoline and tires. Sometimes, the judge just took the train from Alamogordo south to El Paso and caught another north to Las Cruces. Even that route failed him at times. One day in the summer of 1922, a trainload of cantaloupes en route from California to Chicago blocked Judge Mechem's progress in El Paso, requiring him to scout around for a car to Las Cruces.<sup>43</sup> There, parties in a divorce case



*Dinner by Colonel Sena in Honor of Chief Justice Parker's 30th Anniversary, Supreme Court Bench, Jan. 11, 1928. Courtesy of Mac and Carol Mechem*

awaited him. The cantaloupe incident may have been among the final straws that convinced Judge Mechem to move.

In 1924, the Mechems left Alamogordo for Las Cruces. They were trading their planned community with its Midwestern architecture for another aesthetic. In Las Cruces, they had an older city with the pleasing shapes and colors of adobe buildings. Instead of the broad and arid Tularosa Basin, they had green farmlands along the river in the Mesilla Valley. The Mechems moved into a house on Alameda Boulevard and joined St. Paul’s Methodist Church.

In 1926, Judge Mechem retired from his office. He was giving up the long travels across the district for more time with his family. He went into private practice, representing, among other clients, the Elephant Butte Irrigation District. He was becoming, as *Sun-News* columnist Wallace Perry would note, a favorite citizen: “a good story teller, companionable, capable as a lawyer,” and upstanding in his personal and public life.<sup>44</sup> Eunice Mechem also took her place in the community, active in her church, the Red Cross, the Republican Party, and literary groups.

Before long the Mechem sons enrolled at the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (A&M). Edwin Mechem was an avid A&M supporter. In the late 1920s, he, President Harry L. Kent, Louis E. Freudenthal, and others lobbied the legislature for a better share of the state’s budget. They succeeded, and the college began a major building program.<sup>45</sup>

Mechem’s care for his community extended to protecting it from organized crime. As a former judge and chair of the New Mexico Bar Association, he had achieved stature in the legal profession. In the 1940s, he and colleagues Wayne C. Whatley and Rufus C. Garland petitioned the New Mexico Supreme Court on the matter of illegal gambling. As William Keleher recounts the story,<sup>46</sup> the state police were aware of the problem but would not act, despite citizen concerns. The Las Cruces attorneys strategized to end the inertia. They prompted Chief Justice Clarence R. Brice to

designate Judge James McGee of the Fifth District in Roswell to oversee all illicit gambling cases. Through the courageous work of McGee and grand juries, the crime syndicate, which was seeding New Mexico abundantly with its operations, departed the state.

In 1944, Mechem ran for mayor of Las Cruces, defeating the incumbent Sam Klein by fourteen votes.<sup>47</sup> He had campaigned on more facilities for youth and aid in rehabilitating World War II veterans. He also called for equality in service delivery and protection for all classes and sections of the city, stating, “[W]e are all Americans.” He promised a merit-based personnel system, an end to machine politics, and low taxes. That he, a Republican challenger, won over a popular Democrat in that year was remarkable. It was, after all, the Franklin D. Roosevelt era when the Democratic Party governed almost exclusively in New Mexico.

Mechem’s victory perhaps had two aspects. First, Sam Klein had not intended to run for reelection in 1944. He had done his duty and had health concerns, he said. He wanted to step aside, but his supporters were adamant that he stay. They drafted him.<sup>48</sup> Klein’s earlier reluctance may have cost him. His opponent already had



*Left to right: Edwin Mechem with Son Edwin L. Mechem (future governor) and General Patrick J. Hurley, Secretary of War under President Herbert Hoover and Ambassador to China under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. 1950  
Courtesy of Walter and Janet Mechem*

gained some momentum. Mechem, like Klein, was well-regarded and had enough admirers and supporters to elect him.

Mechem's tenure as mayor turned out to be challenging from the start. First, the city commissioners had allegiances to the previous mayor and often were at cross purposes with the new one. They struggled over Mechem's appointments, even though some key ones were Democrats.<sup>49</sup> That first year in office, the mayor and his family also endured a profound tragedy. Son, Lt. Colonel Jesse Mechem, died in October in the battle for Leyte Island in the Philippines. The mayor, grieving his son's death and blocked from achieving many of his governance objectives, nevertheless, stepped up to run for re-election in 1946. By then, Sam Klein was ready to launch a vigorous campaign. He regained his old office by a 246-vote margin.<sup>50</sup> That year, Mechem had a second loss. He ran on his party's ticket for a state supreme court position, but he hardly expected to be elected. There were few wins for the GOP in 1946, but he believed it was important to keep working at a two-party system.

### The Later Years

Edwin Mechem was 68 when he left city hall. He had come to New Mexico Territory in 1910 as a man of thirty-two, bringing with him on the long road from Ottawa, Kansas the Mechem penchant for public service and community building on the edges of an expanding new country. He was at ease in ethnically-diverse societies and embraced a patriotism that included military service. He continued his family's affiliations with the Methodist Church and the Republican Party, and he joined service clubs. In 1946, he had just over a decade of life ahead of him, time to carry on his work. He was associated with *Cox vs. U.S.*, a case which was published as part of a series on significant federal cases. It concerned the U.S. government's taking of New Mexico grazing lands during World War II and the question of just compensation for the property holders.<sup>51</sup>

Mechem also had time to enjoy his grand-

children as they grew up: Davenport's children Mac and Susan; Jesse's daughter Ruth, and Edwin's children Martha, John, Walter, and Jesse. They knew their grandfather's sweet disposition, sense of humor, and gentle kidding.<sup>52</sup>

Edwin Mechem died at Memorial General in Las Cruces on July 8, 1957. He was seventy-eight and had worked up until the last. On July 9, in acknowledgement of the hour of his funeral, Secretary of State Natalie Buck announced the closing of state offices.<sup>53</sup> Among the mourners that day was the governor of New Mexico, Edwin Mechem's youngest son.

Edwin Mechem resides in living memory among southern New Mexicans still. Educator and retired legislator J. Paul Taylor described him as "such a gentle man and so wise." He had a small, humble office on Miranda Street, Taylor recalled. He consulted Mechem when he served as an executor for a person who had died without a will. "I looked for a lawyer who could provide good information and be fair," Taylor said, one who "tried to do his best for people."<sup>54</sup>

That was Edwin Mechem, a person of goodwill who could see beyond a child's incendiary mischief and use his judicial power to help him achieve his potential. He was a person who believed in a two-party political system and ran for office, even when the odds were not good. He was an individual deeply dedicated to his profession, who used his legal knowledge and skills to help move southern New Mexico forward. In his 1944 public statement, "We are all Americans," he had summed up his family's ethos as public servants in an evolving United States.

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**[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)**





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# True Face of Billy the Kid

By Frank Parrish

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to my wife Priscilla for her patience, to Karla Steen for her suggestions and help to assemble this publication and most of all to Detective Greg Bean (retired) renown forensic specialist analyst and artist for his voluntary help in the complete forensic analysis of both images in the tintype.

## Forward

When the newspaper article declaring that I had identified a previously unknown individual seated next to a purported Billy the Kid first appeared, (*Las Cruces Sun News*, August 18, 2013 Front Page) it got a lot of interest. It soon went “viral” on the Web. By sheer chance it came to the attention of Greg Bean a forensic specialist, analyst and artist, a detective with impeccable credentials. Detective Bean on his own initiative took on the task of a complete forensic analysis of both individuals in the tintype, unsolicited and without pay.

This publication is meant to clarify the historical record by using the very best forensic science to establish for all time the true face of the most notable and notorious Billy the Kid.

Let the chips fall where they may!

## Introduction

As a young boy growing up in El Paso the name of Billy the Kid was known to most of us and was bantered about when playing childhood games such as “good guys” and “bad guys”.

Many years later I befriended Edgar Griggs. Edgar owned the Griggs’ Family Restaurant and “Billy the Kid Museum” on Doniphan Drive in El

Paso. The Museum had once been in La Mesilla and was owned and operated by Edgar’s uncle George Griggs and was famous in its day.

Eventually I purchased a large number of items from the Griggs family, which had been in the original “Billy the Kid Museum.” One of these items is the barber chair in which Billy was given a haircut before his murder trial in La Mesilla. This trial charged Billy with the murder of Sheriff Brady in Lincoln. The trial ended with Billy sentenced to hang.

My connection to Billy the Kid was purely by chance; or was it fate?

## Pat Garrett’s Need For a Photo of Billy

How, when and why the Detric/Bonney tintype was acquired by Pat Garrett will always remain unanswered because only Detric and Garrett knew, and it was never openly discussed.

I offer a plausible explanation that is based on conjecture but is supported by historical information and common sense. It is likely that a similar scenario may have taken place.

When Billy shot his way out of the jail in Lincoln, killing Ollinger and Bell, Pat Garrett was in White Oaks. Garrett was collecting taxes and purchasing lumber to build the gallows for Billy’s hanging, when a courier arrived from Lincoln informing him of the killing of his guards and Billy’s escape.

Pat would have been no stranger to many of the people living in and around White Oaks. The Detric brothers, Mose, Sam, and Dan operated out of White Oaks. It was well known they were friends of Billy and were involved in various dealings in criminal activities. Garrett would have talked to the Detrics and have gotten knowledge

that Dan had two photographs of his friend Billy. Pat would have insisted on having a recognizable image of Billy if he was to track him down and recapture him. Billy was well known and widely recognized by many in the territory but a photo would prove valuable in following leads to Billy's whereabouts. Many citizens of the territory would not be able to converse well in English, but they

would recognize the image of Billy the Kid. It is almost certain that Dan would have asked Pat not to reveal that he had given him this photograph. (Dan would later say to his nephew Frank Upham that he was with Billy when the famous standing photo was taken. This statement putting him in the presence of the photographer at the time.)

It is very likely that this photo served to



*The tintype in question - friends Dan Dedrick and William Bonney posing for a photo in an unknown studio. The image has been analyzed by Detective Greg Bean. Courtesy copy.*

track Billy down and the fact that the photo was given to Pat Garrett by Dan was not openly discussed. The photo would have remained in the belongings of Pat until his murder in 1908.

### **Billy the Kid/Dan Dedrick Tintype Revealing Dan Dedrick in the Tintype**

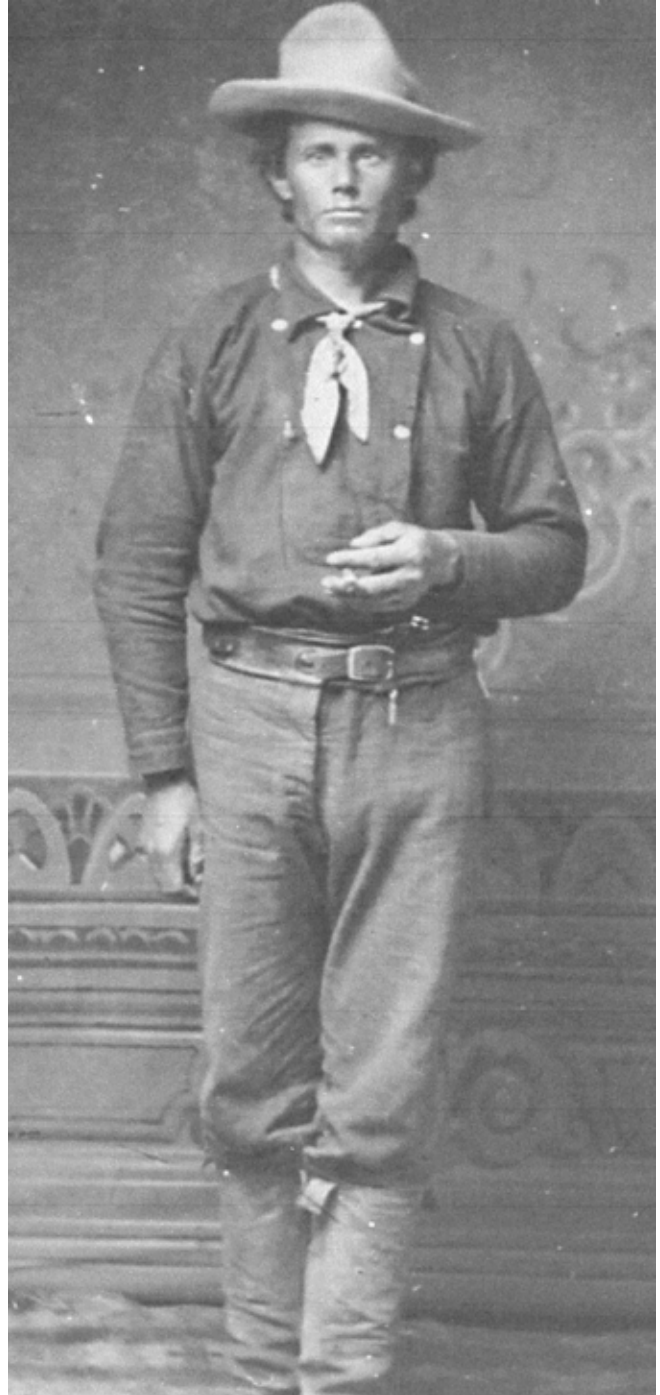
Sometime in the early 1990's I purchased a large number of items from Edgar Griggs through his daughter Bridget. These were items that once belonged to Edgar's uncle George Griggs of La Mesilla. The items had previously been part of the famous "Billy the Kid Museum" in La Mesilla. One item was a canceled check signed by A. B. Fall about the time of the Oliver Lee murder trial. I was interested in finding a buyer for this and some other items from the collection. I was given the phone number and name of Joe Soebbing by Bob Gaines who owned "S.O.B.'s Antiques and Collectibles" on Picacho Avenue in Las Cruces, NM.

I made contact with Joe and visited him at his home where we made our mutual interests known and discussed some mutual acquaintances. Our visit went well. As I was about to leave, Joe said, "Frank, I have something I want to show you that you will find very interesting!" He then led me into another room and without another word picked up a small tintype, showed it to me, and I said, "Billy the Kid" and he agreed. Joe stated that the tintype had been in the estate of Pat Garret and was sold off by Pauline Garrett, Pat's youngest daughter in the late 1970's.

The tintype featured two men in a sitting pose. I asked Joe, "Who is this other guy seated next to Bonney?" (i.e. Billy the Kid), and he said that "It was an unidentified individual." The photo had been shown on the Internet for some years with only false leads to his identity. I was nearly out the door when the thought occurred to me to ask if I might photograph the tintype (I had been out photographing coyotes and had my camera in my car). To my great surprise, after a brief pause, Joe said "Okay." I told Joe that I would work on identifying the individual next to the purported

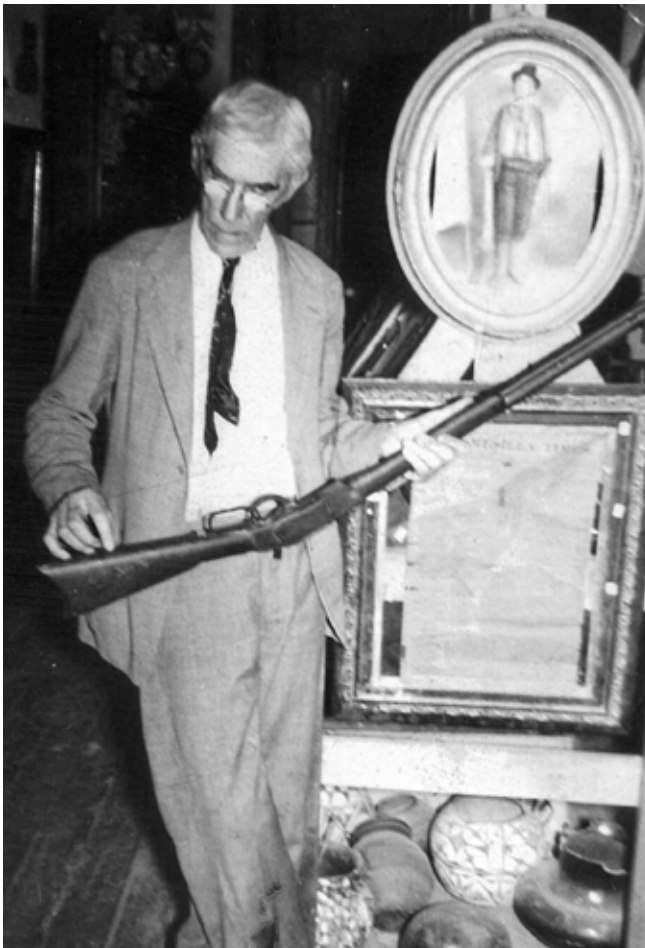
Billy the Kid (BTK). This meeting took place in September of 2008.

Over a period of time I would look at the photo and consider possible ways to identify the mystery man. I was looking for clues within the



*A previously authenticated photo of Dan Dedrick and used for comparison in the analysis of the Dedrick/Bonney tintype. Courtesy copy.*

image itself. I knew that the man seated with Billy would be someone he was close to. As I gazed at the photo it was clear to me that there might be something telling in the way the mystery man was posed. He appeared to be holding his arms in a most uncomfortable and awkward position as though he might have an injury or have his arm in a sling. It then jogged my memory that one of the Regulators had been shot in the left arm above the elbow in the shoot-out at the McSween house in Lincoln, New Mexico. The Kid had notoriously participated in this fight also, escaping in a hail of bullets.



***George Griggs, circa 1928, purportedly showing bullet damage to the Winchester Sheriff Brady was carrying when he was gunned down. Billy the Kid retrieved the rifle which he claimed was taken from him previously. From the Billy the Kid Museum, La Mesilla, NM. Frank Parrish Collection.***

In researching the Lincoln County War, I was able to name the wounded Regulator as Dan Dedrick. There was a famous photo of Dan included in my research. It became clear to me that the individual with Billy in the photo was Dan Dedrick. Soon I was able to add another photo of Dan from the Ruidoso River Museum that was labeled “Dan Dedrick-close friend of Billy the Kid.” This photo convinced me that the mystery man was indeed Dan Dedrick. I kept this information under wraps and didn’t disclose it other than to my wife and brother.

A few years passed and I had a near fatal cardiac event. While recovering I realized that I should come out with the information and historical evidence regarding the tintype or the identification of Dan Dedrick might die with me.

I was involved at this time with a group of fellow history buffs. We had organized and worked to establish a historical museum that would reflect the rich history of the Mesilla Valley and greater Las Cruces area. Members included Dr. Gerald Thomas, Bob Gamboa, Dan Aranda, Cal Traylor, David Thomas and myself. I decided to run a survey of our history group by passing around the purported photo of Dan Dedrick with two other known Dedrick photos. No names were ever mentioned and all the members agreed that the three images were very likely the same individual. (No connection was mentioned regarding a possible BTK image.)

With this acknowledgment I continued my research into the relationship between Dan Dedrick and Billy the Kid. The only accepted photo of Billy the Kid, the famous photo of Billy standing and holding a Winchester rifle, was given to Dan Dedrick by Billy the Kid himself. This photo passed down through the Dedrick family and sold a few years ago for \$2.3 million dollars. This was the same Dan Dedrick in the tintype.

In my research I discovered that Dan Dedrick left the Territory of New Mexico and went to California. Dan lived a long productive life and was in his nineties when he died. In 1930, he presented his now famous tintype to his nephew

Frank Upham. He told his nephew at this time , “I want you to know I was with Billy when that photo was taken.” This declaration places Dan with Billy in the presence of the photographer.

I decided it was now time to go public with my findings. I contacted Derrickson Moore of the *Las Cruces Sun-News* with my declaration of identifying Dan Detrick seated next to a purported Billy the Kid. The supporting photos of Dan were the “clincher” for identifying Billy in the tintype. In the article I was quoted as saying the tintype was pending forensic analysis. The article made front page news in the Las Cruces and Albuquerque papers and went “viral” on the Internet at the time.

It was at this time, purely by chance, that a forensic analyst and detective happened to see the story on the Internet and became curious as to whether I might be correct in my identification. This forensic specialist, artist and detective was Greg Bean on the Bellevue Police Department in Washington. Detective Bean had over 30 years service as a detective and was ranked highly as a forensic analyst as well as forensic artist. Detective Bean on his own initiative ran a preliminary analysis on the image I declared to be Billy the Kid and thought I was correct. He then contacted the *Las Cruces Sun-News* for my contact information.

We talked over the telephone and I informed Greg that I was not in a position to authorize payment for a complete forensic analysis of both individuals. However, if he was interested in doing so it would be of great scientific and historical value if a determination could be made as to the identities of both individuals. I then stressed that the proven identity of Dan Detrick was of monumental importance and would be the “clincher” in establishing the second person in the image as his close friend, Billy the Kid. Detective Bean said that he was interested in doing a complete analysis of both images but he was very busy and would work on them as time permitted. His work on them continued over several months and I have copies of all our email correspondence. I have

copies of the complete forensic analysis of the two individuals in the Detrick/Billy tintype, and they are included in this publication.

Detective Bean stated that the photos submitted of Dan Detrick were “a slam dunk” and after a complete forensic analysis of both the images in the “tintype” he concluded that the images were in fact a perfect forensic match with known images of Dan and Billy. The criteria having been met with a 100 percent match in each case, “the odds of Dan Detrick having another friend that looked exactly like Billy were too small to even imagine.”

The conclusion is that the individuals in question are indeed Dan Detrick and William Bonney, alias Billy the Kid.

### Conclusions and Implications

After the scientific forensic analysis concluding that the images of both individuals in the tintype were a 100 percent match to both Dan Detrick and William Bonney (to known photos of both individuals).

It becomes clear that the face of Billy the Kid is once and for all revealed to history as a better image than the previous buck-toothed portrait, after more than 132 years. It becomes clear that the famous Billy tintype which sold for 2.3 million dollars is now eclipsed by a second and better image who is seated with another historical figure, Dan Detrick.

A. How much, if any will this affect the value of the 2.3 million dollar tintype?

B. What are the possibilities of other “Bil-lys” being matched to this new image?

C. This Detrick/Billy tintype will shut the door on “Wannabe Billys” and frauds as well as possibly supporting images which are a forensic match.

**To examine Detective Bean’s analysis of the Detrick/Bonney photo, go to the Appendix on page 71. The pages of his report are simple copies of the original PDF pages.**

**Frank Parrish** is the 2016 Heritage Award Recipient from the Dona Ana County Historical Society. Frank was born and raised in El Paso, educated in El Paso and attended UTEP, graduating with a double major in Zoology/Geology.

Frank's interest in Southwestern history grew into a collection of memorabilia, writings, and presentations which have contributed significantly to the historical and cultural knowledge of Dona Ana County and which have earned Frank

the DACHS Heritage Award.

Frank met and married his current wife Priscilla of Las Cruces in 1989. Frank relocated from El Paso to Las Cruces where he pursued his passion for nature photography and created artifacts. He did some freelance writing and wrote and illustrated *Pancho and the Power* a local best selling children's book.

Frank has long been interested in North American archeology and Southwestern history.

[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)

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# Joseph “Joe” Quesenberry

## The Degree of Sacrifice

By Jennifer Olguin

### Abstract

*Joseph “Joe” Quesenberry was one of many students attending New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in 1916 when World War I was declared. He left college, family and a fiancé and began his quest to serve in the military. He departed Las Cruces, New Mexico in December 1916 to begin his life as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the United States Army. He was one of the first individuals from New Mexico, a prominent Aggie, to be sent to France to fight for his country and he was noted to be the first American officer to capture German troops. Joe unfortunately lost his life fighting for his country, but his legacy continues within the community.*

### Quesenberry Family Ties to the Mesilla Valley

Joseph was an imposing figure physically standing at 6 feet 3 ½ inches, but he could be viewed as a gentle giant due to his personable character.<sup>1</sup> Joseph was known by his family and peers simply as Joe. The name that he went by is a common name, but his character was one of a kind, which he proved, as he excelled in the areas of academics and in the battlefield. Browsing through the various publications from New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts now known as New Mexico State University, it is evident that he was admired and esteemed by many due to his strong leadership skills and his amiable personality.

Joe Quesenberry was born in Las Cruces on September 17, 1894 to James Slaughter Quesenberry and Florence Brodus Potts Quesenberry. Joe’s parents had quite a large family - a total of seven children. Joe was the fifth oldest and the youngest of the boys. As the Quesenberry family

made the Mesilla Valley their home, Joe’s father and the rest of the family became invested in the city of Las Cruces, their surname familiar to most citizens.

The Quesenberrys came to the valley when James and Florence made the cross-country move from Virginia. The exact year is unknown, but due to rough farming conditions on the east coast, the couple decided to move to the Las Cruces region and start their family.<sup>2</sup> The young couple managed to make the cross county relocation by saving enough funds to travel by train. They made the move to Las Cruces to join Florence’s sister and brother-in-law who were already established farmers in the valley. A few years later after saving enough to secure a place of their own, James and Florence set down their roots. They operated a farm on which they also built a house - near the area of Hadley Street and Picacho. They continued with the family farming tradition and made a sustainable income to provide for their growing family.

As the Quesenberry’s settled and made Las Cruces their home, James became involved in several civic organizations, where he held important positions. The various positions he held made him instrumental in the development of the community. He was involved in securing the Elephant Butte Irrigation Project, which assisted the agriculture industry in the Mesilla Valley. James served as the director from 1906 to 1917.<sup>3</sup> Along with serving as a director, James also was one of the founders of the First Baptist Church and he served on the Board of the Bowman Bank. In addition, James held the position of a member of the Board of Regents of New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts from 1917-1923.





**Quesenberry family portrait: left to right – Florence (mother), Florence (daughter), Elizabeth “Betty,” Fred, George, Richard “Dick,” Joseph “Joe,” Annie and James, ca. 1900, NMSU Archives and Special Collections – Rio Grande Historical Collections RG89-165.003.**

During this time Joe was enrolled as a student.<sup>4</sup>

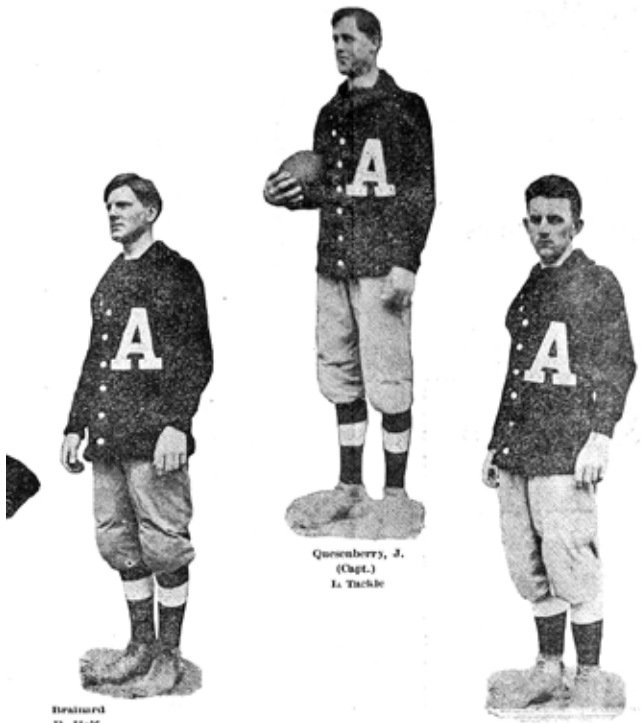
#### **Student at NMAC - Education**

Education was an essential component of the Quesenberry family. While James and Florence were growing up, their educations were interrupted by the Civil War and they were convinced that their children would have the best education.<sup>5</sup> During the time their children were school-aged, there were no public schools available in the area until New Mexico became a state in 1912. So, their children attended private schools until they could attend New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts Prep School, after which they attended college. It was apparent that education was very important to the Quesenberry family and

that their children complete college and become professionals.

Considering Joe was familiar with the agriculture business due to his family background, he enrolled at NMAC and pursued a degree in agriculture. During his time enrolled at NMAC, he was active in several extra circular activities. He was also involved in organizations such as athletics, ROTC, Agriculture Club, Columbian Literary Club, Alpha Pi Alpha fraternity and served as the editor of the college newspaper.

Browsing through New Mexico State University *Swastika* yearbooks and *The Round Up* newspapers, one is captivated by the strong leadership roles Joe undertook while studying. In the area of sports, he was a standout athlete and was captain of the football team. During the six



**Joe Quesenberry, middle, in 1913 as captain of the NMAC football team. The Round Up newspaper, NMSU Archives and Special Collections**

years he attended college as a prep student and in traditional college he earned six letters in football. Also he was named an all-star tackle of the Southwest in 1915, all-star center in 1911, captain of the Aggie championship team in 1913 and captain elect for the 1917 team.<sup>6</sup>

In a family memoir written by a Quesenberry descendant, it was clear that Florence, Joe's mother, was not too fond of the idea of her children playing football. In the memoir, it says that she was persuaded to attend one of the boy's football games, but after watching the game she said, "Never again was she going to watch her boys get killed."<sup>7</sup> It was apparent that the Quesenberry boys had a passion for the sport of football; all four boys were distinguished football stars during their time at NMAC.

While Joe was enrolled in college, he took part and was active in ROTC, and served as a cadet commander. While serving he decided to halt his education and travel to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for three months and complete military

training. In 1917, he reported to Laredo, Texas for active duty with the 37<sup>th</sup> infantry. From there he made his way to France.

While in France, Joe was a first lieutenant in Company K of the 18<sup>th</sup> infantry.<sup>8</sup> In August 1917, Joe was promoted to Captain and given the command of Company K, 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Company K was noted as the first company to occupy the frontline trenches on the battlefield in France. The company was also famous for the March 1, 1918 capture of the first German gun and first German prisoner taken by the U.S. Army. About a month later, after capturing the first German prisoner, Joe sustained injuries from a shell bombardment on the battlefield, which proved to be fatal. He died on April 18, 1918 at the young age of 23.

The Las Cruces and the campus communities were stunned by the tragic news. The *Rio*



**Joe Quesenberry in ROTC uniform, undated, NMSU Archives and Special Collections.**

*Grande Republic*, a local newspaper at the time, reported that a “spirit of gloom casted over the city as a cablegram was received announcing the death of Capt. Joe Quesenberry.”<sup>9</sup> The campus community paid homage to Joe Quesenberry in the May 14, 1918 issue of the college newspaper known as *The Round Up*. The tribute issue indicated that Joe’s friendly persona enabled him to make friends easily and many of his school peers respected and honored him. It was difficult for his classmates to grasp his untimely passing.

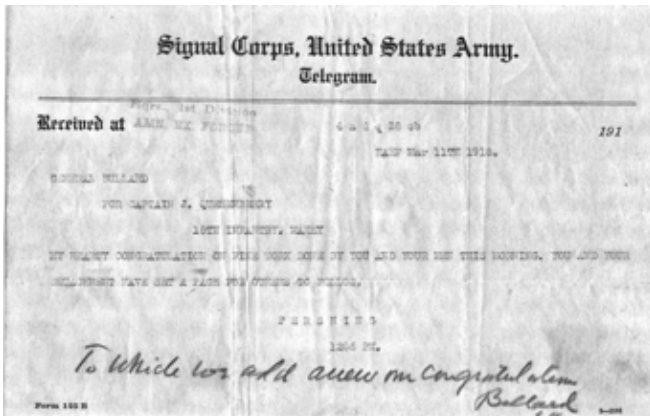
In the special edition of the *Round-Up* with a tribute to Joseph Quesenberry, a column titled “Capt. Joseph Quesenberry Friend, Schoolmate, Soldier” included: “Our former school mate and friend performed a great service by his life and example. He was ready when his country called. He was ready when God called.”<sup>10</sup>

During the research process, the opportunity arose to meet with descendants of the Quesenberry family. During the visit, the family stated they had a diary belonging to the Joe Quesenberry which he kept during his brief time at war in France. On the first page of the diary, a note indicating that if the diary were to be found it should be returned to his father, Mr. James S. Quesenberry in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The Quesenberry descendants report that the diary was found in

Hatch, New Mexico many years after Joe’s death.

The diary covers the time span from December 31, 1916 to March 1918. The first entry states “I left my home at Las Cruces New Mexico to begin my life as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the U.S. Army. I went to Fort Leavenworth Kansas for a three-month course.”<sup>11</sup> The diary provided a first-hand account of issues Joe encountered, such as living conditions and what he experienced on the battlefield. He vividly explains his daily experiences being part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Co. K. As an officer, it is evident he played a vital role.

In the diary, entries vary in nature, some are detailed and light in nature and other entries are exhaustive and provide much detail. He describes his daily life, drill exercises, and how injuries and illnesses affect the soldiers. The content of Joe’s diary is touching considering he describes the events he encounters with remarkable detail. In an early entry dated in June 19, 1917, he wrote that a Corporal’s wife was found aboard the ship, which was making its way to France. The Corporal’s wife disguised herself to pass as a young man by cutting her hair and wearing soldier clothing. Joe continues by noting that it was rumored that there was possibly two more women onboard trying to disguise themselves in order to remain with their husbands.



**Telegram from General Pershing, through General Bullard (Joe’s immediate commander), to Joe congratulating him on his fine work, 1918, NMSU Archives and Special Collections – Rio Grande Historical Collections, RG90-170.**

### World War I Impact On NMAC Campus

In 1917, the United States was experiencing some unsettling times because of World War I and Las Cruces was no exception. The draft of the war was felt in the valley, and many students attending NMAC enlisted in the armed forces to serve their country. By the end of World War I, Gerald Thomas reported in 1998 that “325 former Aggies or college personnel had served in the military and ten had given their lives.” New Mexico as a whole sent 17,157 men into the service, a great number when comparing it to the state’s population.<sup>12</sup>

The NMAC campus was experiencing the effect of the war. In the summer of 1918, the campus was overwhelmed by 220 soldiers who were expected to be trained. During that time, the

United States was going through a military draft and both students and staff were unsure of their fate – whether or not they were going to be selected.<sup>13</sup>

## Dedications

### Las Cruces/Community Dedications

Joe brought many Las Cruces pride and honor because of his ultimate sacrifice for his country. The April 16, 1918 *Round Up* issue indicated that people of the Mesilla valley felt honored to claim him as one of their own and proud of his distinctive service.<sup>14</sup> Joe left his stamp and legacy within the community and many residents felt the impact of his untimely passing.

In recognition of the excellent qualities Joe left behind, both the community of Las Cruces and the New Mexico State University have honored Joe's legacy. The American Legion Post 10 is named after the late Joe Quesenberry. Ed Torres, who is Commander of Post 10, graciously offered to give me a tour of the Post. The exterior of the

building is a conventional building located along Madrid Avenue. Inside there is a dedicated room that has memorabilia belonging to Joe which represents his time involved in the military and at NMAC. The area highlights Joe's career in the military and contains a replica of his military hat and medals. It represents his time with the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Along with the military attire, a leather football helmet is featured in the exhibit to highlight his time spent in college as a standout athlete. George Quesenberry, Joe's brother, served as Commander of Post 10 and as the New Mexico State Commander.<sup>15</sup>

### NMSU Campus Dedication Quesenberry Field

In remembrance of Joe's heroism and courage, in 1933, the Quesenberry field opened at New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Quesenberry field was located south of present-day William's Hall.

The field was named in his honor and from 1933 to 1949 when the Aggie team competed there. In 1950, the Quesenberry field officially became the Aggie Memorial in honor of all the other Aggie veterans who served in war.

As of today, there is a piece of history of the stadium that was saved and that is presently known as the Memorial tower. The tower is the sole piece of the original stadium and currently the tower is now part of the College of Health and Social Services building. In tribute to all the Aggies who lost their lives in service, there is a memorial located in the Health and Social Services building honoring their service and memory. The Aggie Memorial Tower contains photographs and biographical information of fallen soldiers affiliated with NMSU.

Era Rentfrow, the college registrar from 1922-1961, and reportedly the fiancé of Joe Quesenberry, took it upon herself to collect and document the biographical in-



**American Legion – Joe Quesenberry Post 10 exhibit area showcasing Joe's memorabilia, June 2019.**



**Aggie Memorial Tower at New Mexico State University (Main Campus), 2019.**

formation of the fallen soldiers who once attended the university.

### **Surviving Fiancé - Era Rentfrow**

Era Rentfrow is another individual who has left her legacy and footprint within New Mexico State University. Like Joe, Era also attended

preparatory school, then continued her education, and eventually graduated from NMAC in 1919. During her time as a student at NMAC she was engaged to Joe, but never married due to his death. There are no extant letters between Era and Joe but within Joe's diary log of outgoing and incoming mail, there is one entry dated November 23, 1917. It is unclear if Joe received or sent mail to Era.

Era obtained her degree in 1919, and soon after she began working as a staff member. Later, she became the college registrar where she served for 40 years. According to an article published by New Mexico State University, as the college registrar, Era she "was in charge of sending out publicity to potential students, issuing student activity cards, supervising ticket sales and keeping an official list of members of the alumni association."<sup>16</sup> Further along in the article, Era was described as having a giving personality that often led her to build a special connection with the students enrolled at NMAC. At times she would lend students money from her personal funds so they could cover tuition or pay for books.<sup>17</sup>

Remarks in the *Panorama* state, that possibly because the loss of her fiancé Joe, she took it upon herself to chronicle the Aggies who served during World War I. She ensured a dedicated place in history for each of these young men. She gathered their photographs and biographical information from families. The information collected by Rentfrow is displayed in the Aggie Memorial Tower.

Memorial tower is located on the main NMSU campus in the Health and Social Sciences building. Due to Era's contributions and association with the institution, a gymnasium has born her name since 1959. A few years later in 1961, she retired from the University after 40 years of service. On April 7, 1991 she passed away, but her legacy lives on due to her significant contributions.

### **Quesenberry Legacy Continues**

It has been more than 100 years since Joe

made the life altering decision to leave his studies behind. By joining the military, he gave the utmost sacrifice during a critical period to fight for the nation's freedom. To this date, Joe Quesenberry is remembered as a young, courageous, and fierce leader within the Las Cruces and the NMSU campus community.

**Jennifer Olguin**, obtained her undergraduate degrees from New Mexico State University and a Masters in Library Science from the University of North Texas. Currently, she is the Archivist at New Mexico State University Library Archives and Special Collections Department – Rio Grande Historical Collections. Contact information: Email: [jechavez@nmsu.edu](mailto:jechavez@nmsu.edu) Telephone number: (575)646-7281

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**[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)**

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# The Historic Naming of Las Cruces and Mesilla

By C. W. Buddy Ritter

## First Recorded European Presence In the Mesilla Valley

In 1581, a priest named Fray Augustin Rodriguez obtained official permission to explore the land north of present-day Chihuahua through El Paso del Norte that was now for the first time being called Nuevo Mexico. Already in his fifties, Rodriguez surrounded himself with younger men—a group of “two other Franciscans . . . nine soldiers [and] . . . sixteen Indians”<sup>1</sup> -- and was drawn by rumors of gold, and of more sophisticated civilized cultures who lived in multi-story houses and dressed in woven clothing, but had yet to be taught the virtues of Catholicism.

Rodriguez and his band journeyed north to the Rio Grande and entered the Mesilla Valley for the first time. Not much is known of their stay here, but their mission was a success at establishing new territory and contacting new civilizations.

The following year, in 1582, a party led by two other friars, Bernardino Beltran and Antonio de Espejo, on an unauthorized expedition passed through the Mesilla Valley to discover that Fray Rodriguez and the other priest with him had been martyred.

## Oñate and Nuevo Mexico

There was desire to go north again, this time to permanently claim the lands of “New Mexico.” King Felipe II of Spain, who had in 1588 suffered the defeat of his armada at the hands of the English, was looking for new sources of wealth and land. It was a matter of finding the right person to lead a new group.

The right man turned out to be Juan de Oñate, the son of a wealthy mine owner in New Spain, and a military leader and prospector him-

self. Oñate signed a contract in 1595 with the Viceroy of New Spain that called, not for a conquest of the new territory, but rather pacification. The expedition was launched and it would change forever the land of the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico.

This expedition had from the beginning something quite different in its aims than earlier ones. Rather than a small group of soldiers, natives, and priests looking to conquer and convert, the group that Oñate assembled in Zacatecas in January of 1598 was really the seed of a new society.

Consequently, the people recruited for this voyage north were generally young, and it was preferred that they had a skill or trade and even a family. Crypto-Jews who had escaped the inquisition in Spain by fleeing to the New World were anxious to leave the established Spanish settlements. Oñate, who would become the first governor of New Mexico, could grant to these people titles and land if they stayed in the new territory for five years. (They were required to stay for five years—if they left early without permission, they were subject to execution.) Friars would accompany this pilgrimage.

So when expedition left, the group of several hundred had with it “eighty carts and wagons, hundreds of culturally Hispanic and racially mixed people, [and] thousands of head of livestock.”<sup>2</sup>

The Spanish New World, was an established civilization at this point. Centered in an increasingly populated Mexico City, it had become crowded and dirty, and people were ready to move on to establish new societies. One of the places that was widely seen as being a potential new home was the territory of Nuevo Mexico.



### The Naming of Mesilla

At the end of April of 1598, Oñate crossed the river at El Paso del Norte, into the lower reaches of the Mesilla Valley, and claimed all lands to the north for Spain.

On the first day of his journey into Nuevo Mexico, Oñate and his expedition camped in what may have once been an Indian site located on a small but higher spot near the river. It was in the spring, so the river was high when they arrived. The name given to this spot by Oñate was the *Trenquel de la Mesilla*. A search of early-modern Spanish, the transitional form of the language between old and modern, spoken at the time of Oñate's expedition, shows that *Trenquel de la Mesilla* actually meant a "military exploration encampment at the little mesa."

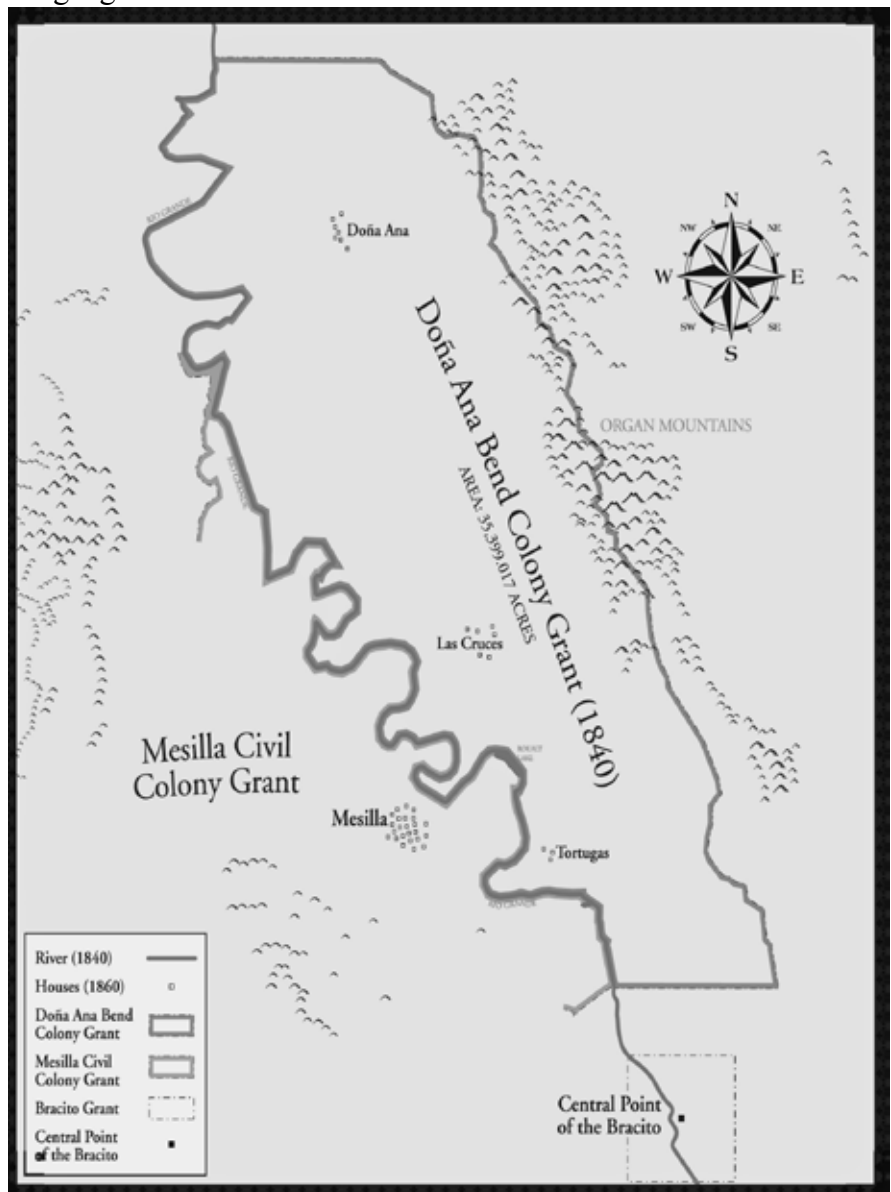
A shortening of this ultimately yielded not only the name Mesilla for the future town that would sit on this little mesa near the Rio Grande, but also for the entire valley which opened to its north and south.

It is evident that Mesilla was the first European name used in *Nuevo Mexico* that would eventually become a town. Though the name *Nuevo Mexico* pre-dated Mesilla by nearly 40 years, the mission at Socorro was named later than Mesilla, as was Santa Fe. Mesilla was the first place Oñate encountered on his journey north that was given a name.

Oñate's encampment at *Trenquel de la Mesilla* in 1598 was nine years before the colonists established Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. The Spanish by that time had already been a presence in New Mexico on and off

for seventy years and had been plying the Camino Real for nearly thirty years. It would still be another 13 years before the pilgrims would land at Plymouth Rock. And, it would be 108 years before Albuquerque was founded.

Oñate traveled up the Rio Grande from *Trenquel de la Mesilla* over the next several months, going as far north as present-day Espanola, at the junction of the Chama River and the Rio Grande. In 1610, Don Pedro de Peralta moved that settlement south to what would become the city of Santa Fe. He constructed the Palace of the Governors, the oldest continuously occupied



public building in the United States, 12 years after *Trenquel de la Mesilla*. The route that Oñate and others before him had taken north, was now firmly established.

### War!

In 1845, President Polk sent General Zachary Taylor with his army to the banks of the Rio Grande to enforce the river as the Texas border, established after the signing of Independence at Washington-on-the Brazos on March 2, 1836. United States soldiers were killed in the spring, as Taylor's army worked its way west. War was declared on May 13, 1846.

The Mexican War ended with the February 2, 1848, signing in Mexico City of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty added an additional 525,000 square miles to United States territory, including the land that makes up all or parts of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming.

Things changed when a U.S. Military outpost was established in the town of Doña Ana to help protect against Indian raids. Initially it consisted of 87 men led by Lieutenant Delos B. Sackett.

### Mesilla Comes Alive

In 1849, settlers began to cross the river and settle on the little plateau, the same little plateau where Oñate had camped 251 years earlier—the place he called the *Trenquel de la Mesilla*. According to the National Register of Historic Places of the U.S. Department of the Interior, a two-room *jacal* was built on the newly laid out Mesilla Plaza in 1849 -- the beginnings of what would become today's Double Eagle Restaurant.

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the settlement of Doña Ana, lying east of the river, was clearly in the United States. Because of the mistakes in the Disturnell map and of the surveyors, the plateau where Mesilla would be founded now lay in Mexico, west of the river.

It is commonly believed and noted in many histories of this area, that the town of Mesilla

was created because the Mexicans of Doña Ana wanted to live in Mexico, not the United States. "In the summer of 1849 . . . colonists had begun to arrive in the area of La Mesilla from northern New Mexico and from the Pass—ethnically different Indian, Mestizo, Spaniard—all of them Mexican citizens."<sup>3</sup> "More than half the population of Doña Ana removed to Mesilla within a year."<sup>4</sup> The 1850 census counted about 700 people in Mesilla.

It is clear that Mesilla was originally populated not only by Mexican citizens from Doña Ana but other Americans and Mexicans had also settled there. A man named Thomas Bull who testified that he first came to the area of Doña Ana as a clerk under Doniphan, a Colonel of the 1st Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, said "that the town site was surveyed at that time and divided into 160-acre lots, measuring 960 by 960 *varas*."<sup>5</sup>

"Among the first Americans to establish themselves on the Mesilla side of the river was Louis William Geck, a private, honorably discharged at Doña Ana from Company H, First Regiment United States Dragoons. Don Luis, as he came to be known, was born in Poland."<sup>6</sup> Other former-soldiers who came down with Doniphan settled in Mesilla.

By 1854, a military census listed a population in Mesilla of more than 3,000, compared with only 600 in Las Cruces. In 1854, the U S Congress ratified the Gadsden Treaty or *Tratado de Mesilla*, though only after much disagreement to less than 30 thousand square miles and a purchase price to \$10 million.

President Polk signed for the United States on June 9, 1854. Thus, on November 16, 1854, in "a public ceremony on the plaza," Mesilla and 29,670 square miles of land were annexed into Doña Ana County and thus Mesilla once again became part of the United States.<sup>7</sup> The border then set with Mexico is the one that still exists today.

Mesilla would grow while Doña Ana and Las Cruces remained very small towns of only a few hundred people each.

### The Naming of Las Cruces

Almost immediately after The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo made New Mexico a U.S. territory, things changed in the town of Doña Ana. Some of the newcomers were Texans still claiming that the territory east of the river was part of Texas, although The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed that any previous settlers could keep their land, the Texans began either taking over homesteads outright or laying claims.

In 1849, a group of these settlers established a camp to the south of Dona Ana and began to dig a new acequia from the river. Later that year, the Prefect or *Alcalde* of Doña Ana, asked Lieutenant Sackett to survey a new town site near the end of the acequia. After drawing lots for new settlers, Lt. Delos Bennett Sackett laid out an 84-block grid using rawhide ropes. The blocks were divided into quarter lots, and twenty eight of them (112 lots) were soon settled. This would become the Mesquite neighborhood in the city of Las Cruces.

The accepted wisdom regarding the naming of Las Cruces—often repeated in official histories as well as casual accountings—is that the name originated from an Apache massacre of about forty travelers from Taos, perhaps in 1830 or 1839 or even 1840, near the future site of the town, and that the resulting “garden of crosses” became the town’s namesake. There is virtually no direct evidence of such an attack nor of one specific group of crosses on the town’s site. (There would have been crosses all up and down the Camino Real.) In fact, “Las Cruces” in old Spanish means “The Crossing.” In a 1693 report “Don Gabriel del Castillo, an Army officer stationed in Parral, Chihuahua,” sent his commanding officers a report on Indian Raids near the Organ Mountains (“Los Organos”), that included the phrase, “... the raiders then going to a place called Las Cruces, and stealing stock also at Mesilla.”<sup>8</sup> The site was situated at an old crossing of roads that had existed since long before the Spanish arrived. The North-South trail along the river was crossed by one that ran west over the Organ Mountains and

then followed the Alameda Arroyo down into the valley to a crossing at the river. Later the North-South route became the Camino Real and the east-west trail led to the town of Picacho, a well-used resting or gathering place, on the far side of the river, and then across to Arizona - largely the route that the wagon trains would later follow. This crossroads was situated at the location of today’s three crosses—in the vicinity of Alameda Avenue where it becomes Doña Ana Road.

### That Crazy River

After the war with Mexico, the river ran to the east of the plateau where Mesilla was founded. It ran between what is now the city of Las Cruces and the town of Mesilla. This would remain the case until another series of serious floods from 1862 - 1865 would reroute the river once again, splitting it, so that in 1863, Mesilla would actually become an island, bounded by the river on both sides. Mesilla would be, at least intermittently, an island for a period of twenty years.

“Time after time the bocacequias were destroyed and heedless waters ripped up new fields. Countless times the men of La Mesilla were called to ditch duty or fatigas.”<sup>9</sup> But from 1862 to 1865, a series of particularly heavy floods beset the area. Silt from the riverbed was carried around and deposited in various places, causing new lakes to form, covering fields and ruining crops. And in 1865, the flooding was so violent and the silt deposited so deeply that it partly closed off the old river bed that had run between Mesilla and Las Cruces since the early 1840s. The river dug itself an entirely new bed to the west of Mesilla, beneath the rise of the mesa. But the riverbed to the east, at least some of the time, held enough water that Mesilla remained an island. On February 1, 1866, the year after the large flood, the Mesilla Ferry Company was chartered.<sup>10</sup> It would have certainly been used to maintain traffic between Mesilla and Las Cruces, and so clearly the water to the east persisted and remained an on-going problem.

*[Post-1865] the valley is described as one*

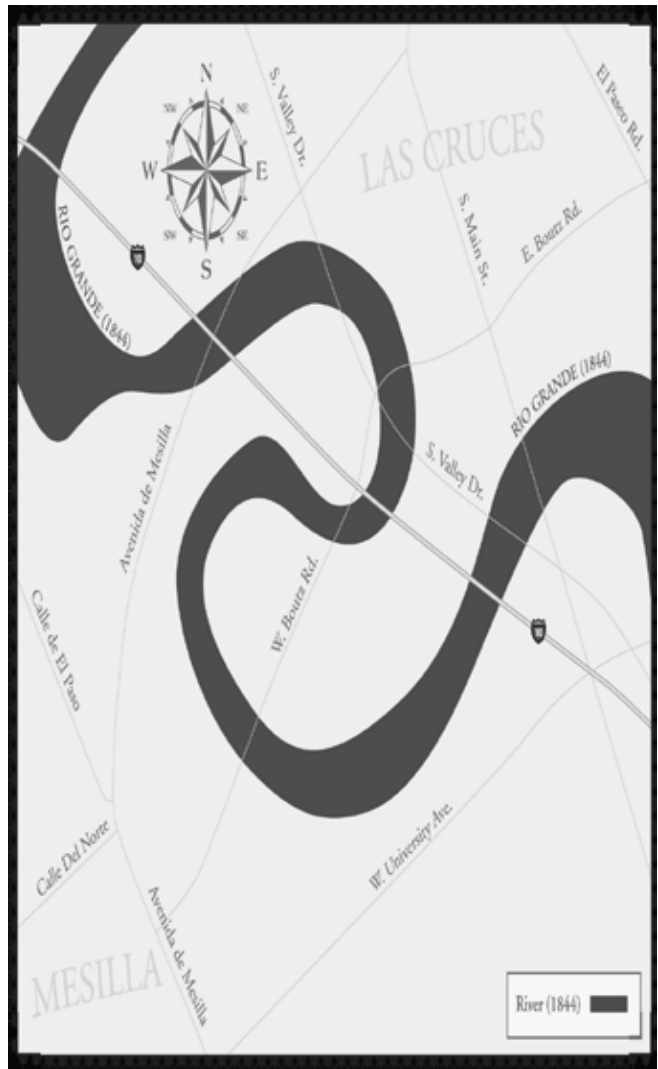
*vast sheet of water from the edge of Las Cruces to the hills on the west, with the site of La Mesilla a strip of island. It is said that for years the river actually ran into this bend, keeping the water high and almost deadly to inhabitants. However a movement of the people, headed by the Mayor-Domo, dammed up the mouth, and in a few years the stagnant water had evaporated, and people began to take up their residence in the valley and farm lands upon the rich deposit of the former river bed.<sup>11</sup>*

This cycle, from an island to a sand-blasted wasteland, continued until another huge flood marked the area. After 1884-1885 it settled into single bed to the west of Mesilla, where it remains to this day. It wasn't long after this that serious talk began to arise about the possibility of a dam upriver, though that would not become a reality until 1916.

The following two maps are of modern day Mesilla and Las Cruces with the present route of the river (in pale gray) and the 1844 route of the river (in darker gray, almost black) superimposed.

One can see that it would have crossed Valley Drive in several places, extended almost as far east as the intersection of El Paseo Road and University Avenue, then meandered back and forth across south Main Street for some distance south of town.<sup>12</sup>

The old riverbed to the east can still be seen. If you begin at the south side of the Plaza on *Calle de Parian* (which becomes Boutz when it crosses Hwy 28), heading east, you will soon come to a dip in the road. This is the old riverbank and riverbed. To your left, you'll see an old white house on the crest. This adobe was the original ferryman's residence on the western bank. Immediately beyond this you then enter an area that was bounded by an oxbow, so shortly after that you encounter another dip, which means you're cross-



ing the river again. The ramifications of these old channels and their alterations would have much to do with both the founding, development, and future of Mesilla.

### **The Railroad**

#### **The Fall of Mesilla and the Rise of Las Cruces**

The spring of 1881 was really a perfect moment in the history of the town of Mesilla, marked by a confluence of the most famous people and events of that time and yet simultaneously by the arrival of the force that would seal it's end as the most important place in the southern territory. It was a sort of coming together before it came apart -- Albert Fountain, William Bonney (AKA Billy the Kid), Pat Garrett, all were there. And even as the Kid was leaving town, the railroad was arriving.

By early 1881, the Atchison Topeka & the Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) had built a line within 45 miles of Mesilla. At the same time, the Southern Pacific was building a line east toward Mesilla from California. The Southern Pacific had contemplated coming east from Deming to Mesilla before turning south to El Paso, but in late 1880 Leland Stanford, the president of the railroad, decided that it was a waste of track—the distance could be made fourteen miles shorter by cutting the corner south of Mesilla to El Paso.<sup>13</sup> The AT&SF kept on due south, directly through the heart of the Mesilla Valley.

The north-south track would reach Las Cruces on April 26, 1881. As recently as the end of 1880, plans had been that the AT&SF line would go through or very near Mesilla. It makes sense, looking at the situation logically and from an engineering perspective, that railroad officials would have had a strong motivation to come through Las Cruces rather than Mesilla. For the simple reason that Las Cruces lay on higher ground and the flooding and isolation of Mesilla had continued. Why would you fight with the unpredictable river, sandy bogs, and arroyos, when you could come through on straight high dry ground? There's no question that flooding was the big problem for the

AT&SF and a Mesilla stop.

A description of the 1884 arrival in the Mesilla Valley of Mary Bloom (mother of Elizabeth McFie Bloom), includes this passage:

The train was going through a flooded area, and twenty-four year old Mary Bloom began to regret her husband's decision. Why had he given up the speakership of the Illinois House of Representatives to come to this godforsaken place where the river had washed away the county seat at Mesilla, so that the land-office papers had to be moved by boat to Las Cruces, getting soaked in the process."<sup>14</sup>

In any case, the flooding marked the abrupt end of Mesilla as the political and commercial center of the Mesilla Valley. In 1882, Las Cruces was declared the Doña Ana County seat.

This article contains excerpts from:

*Mesilla Comes Alive, A history of Mesilla and its Valley*

by C W Buddy Ritter with Craig Holden.

## **End Notes**

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15 Original source: U.S. Government, Data.gov. Source: Rio Grande Channel, Northern Mesilla Valley, NM, 1844.)

**Buddy Ritter** was born and raised in the Mesilla Valley. He owns the 165-year old historic Double Eagle Restaurant on the Plaza in Mesilla and he has served on the DACHS Board of Directors for more than a decade.

Ritter has spent his life studying New Mexico history and culture. That and his six years as President of the Board of Regents of the Museums of New Mexico laid the groundwork for his local history, *Mesilla Comes Alive, A History of Mesilla and Its Valley*.

In describing the book, Buddy explains that he wanted to challenge assumptions, some of which have stood the test of time - until now. Also, he wanted to reveal new information like the true origin of the city's name "Las Cruces." In the process he was able to uncover new resources, including a document written in Spanish by Albert Fountain. Getting the information to the public was important to Buddy.

[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)



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# Mesilla Valley Community of Hope

## Hope Stories - Final Report

By David Lee del Norte

***EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is not a traditional historical article about Doña Ana County. David Lee del Norte applied to the DACHS for a grant to help pay for transcription services associated with his thesis work at NMSU. He recorded oral histories from personnel at MVCH and needed hard copies. As part of the grant approval, David Lee was required to provide the DACHS with a report on his project. This is his report.*

**Author's Note:** To the Doña Ana County Historical Society, with gracious thanks to the Mary & J. Paul Taylor Student Scholarship fund, and support from Dr. Jon Hunner: a report on the 2018 Hope Stories project, available to read and listen to at New Mexico State University Special Collections and Archives, Las Cruces, New Mexico, Spring 2020. David Lee del Norte

### Origins of Support

Near downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope (MVCH) history dates back to early 1970s urban renewal.<sup>1</sup> With a thrift store, a daycare center, and later as more support grew, El Caldito soup kitchen. Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church pledged to feed the hungry with mid-day meal programs to help to mitigate underserved needs of Las Cruces.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years, great numbers of people formed non-profit organizations, community boards, and, like the Good Sam's Housing Helpers, standing committees of activist volunteer citizens who continue to give time, energy, and the resource skills necessary to raise money each year.<sup>3</sup> The result combines health and human service related access for those experiencing homelessness. The City of Las Cruces community, in support of Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, and many additional city-wide locations of health access, today continues to advocate for professional homeless service resources for everyone.

### Community of Hope

Developed by City of Las Cruces citizens, and by the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope (MVCH) staff, volunteers, and clients, the Hope Campus offers a wide range of public health services. Online visitors learn more by navigating to [www.mvcommunityofhope.org](http://www.mvcommunityofhope.org) where up-to-date information proves most valuable to anyone seeking first-time resources.<sup>4</sup> Examples include "case management, assistance and referrals to other social service agencies," such as, "medical and mental health care, child day care, mail services," even a "legal clinic" to help alleviate settlements of court scheduled appointments.<sup>5</sup> A variety of resources make varieties of resolutions. Food, medical care, and timely resource connection at MVCH works together to help circumstances of homelessness; however, with any call to 911 Emergency, first responders visit Hope Campus like any other neighborhood. Available to everyone, and important to note, organizational hours of operation, staffing levels, and real-time capability to assist during times of personal duress may differ. That said, for non-emergency visits to Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, plan to arrive by prescheduled appointment Monday through Friday. The community of Las Cruces supports the homeless and hungry 24 hours a day, seven days a week within limits of reasonable notice. For anyone experiencing a night without shelter, personal health from sickness, or simple hot meals



to keep vibrant spirits going, call MVCH at (575) 523-2219. New volunteers, for best results, may email [hope@zianet.com](mailto:hope@zianet.com) accordingly. To be crystal clear, and regardless location in the City of Las Cruces, always call 911 responders to emergency circumstances via telephone.

Located at 999 West Amador Avenue in Las Cruces, it is fundamental to remember that Camp Hope relies on MVCH staff for outreach programs that serve, connect, and inform clients about City of Las Cruces community resources. Services are confidential, provided by staff as quickly as possible, and succeed best when client-residents begin to recognize self-resiliency to diligently become housed. Five core organizations provide support on the Hope Campus:

☞ **Mesilla Valley Community of Hope**, the central intake organization at the roundabout.

☞ **Casa de Peregrinos**, also at the round-

about, a long-time local food pantry, Roadrunner distribution center, and important source of nutrition assistance to Doña Ana County.

☞ **Jardin de Los Niños**, a Pre-Kindergarten through High School shelter for homeless youth.

☞ **El Caldito soup kitchen**, meals served daily at 11:30 AM, including prescheduled events that offer food, drink, and service opportunity.

☞ **Amador Health Center**, formally Saint Luke's Health Clinic, where non-insured as well as insured clients may access out-patient care.

After initial care for new clients takes place, crucial support services to provide for individual and family health begins with compassionate and professional care. For instance, MVCH recently became recognized from outside the State of New Mexico. In the same organization where Camp Hope first originated in 2011, staff received three-year accreditation from Commission on



*An aerial view of the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope.*

Rehabilitation Facilities for the Supportive Services (CARF), an international organization that reviews quality of care for public health rehabilitation facilities.<sup>6</sup> CARF acknowledged MVCH's work to deliver services through Veteran Families Rapid Rehousing and Homeless Prevention Program, citing achievement of "Functional Zero," a federally recognized status of "Zero" unhoused military service veterans.<sup>7</sup> This distinction includes the active role of veterans and MVCH staff to locate transitional-housing services, and helps educate the general public about the history of veteran homelessness in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Despite the ups-and-downs that may occur when staff and clients work to become housed, Functional Zero is a significant first step to recognize current MVCH programs.

### **Spring of Hope**

A good way to volunteer on the Hope Campus, the annual "Spring of Hope" event invites guests to tour, to learn more about community needs, and to collaborate with the clients, staff, and board members of participating organizations. This, I believe, is the best way for outsiders to learn about Camp Hope for the first time.<sup>9</sup> Not only does each of the five core organizations operate under their own board of directors, the Spring of Hope event familiarizes the public with participatory, prescheduled volunteer-ship to create potential for board membership and future community engagement. As mentioned, to supply greater access to clients, please contact specific organizations to identify best avenues of volunteer-ship. This small gesture of collaboration — calling ahead of time, or visiting Spring of Hope public tours— should not be taken for granted by anyone who wishes to volunteer. Students from New Mexico State University, public officials from city and state Health and Human Services, and compassionate organizations congregate to present themselves to MVCH clients and staff to be put to work.

### **Community Mappers**

Travelers to Hope Campus, sometimes unfamiliar with downtown Las Cruces, may not recognize the current consolidated services model. Others are familiar, and might access services more easily dependent upon the personal circumstances. Those accustomed with the cooperative health care model at MVCH often share information both on the Hope Campus, and during travel to obtain resources throughout the city. In fewer words, kindness goes a long way in Las Cruces. In asking for direction, like where is Camp Hope; which service provides food baskets; or what time does the daily meal begin — this may require on-the-ground adaptation to give accurate and up-to-date information. Thankfully, to clarify, each organization at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope can be reached within walking distance from one another.

This consolidated model serves as unspoken guide to anyone new to Hope Campus, and further helps to coordinate visitors toward individual points of access. For a closer look, navigate web-browsers to the Social Equity Mapping Project — a collaboration between organizations like Doña Ana Communities United and New Mexico State University Nursing Program — for example, whereby local area citizens work "with under-represented community members throughout Las Cruces by listening-to, identifying, and helping to solve consequential problems within the community where they reside."<sup>10</sup> Past projects include mural painting, "share fair" events, and food pathway investigations, like Anthony, New Mexico's response to document food item purchases at local grocery stores.<sup>11</sup> Collaborative networks accommodate opportunities for volunteers to strengthen activities with MVCH staff, while also making space for homeless clients, and, most importantly, without infringement upon health and service access.

### **Urban Public Health Renewal**

Throughout the United States, similarly populated cities like Las Cruces experience public health and human services' history through stories

of regional urbanized growth. In research to locate archival documents, city and county records, even photographs and correspondences between business partners, it is clear that Las Cruces worked to re-urbanize, and, in some cases, publicly debate on-going gentrification, contested historic building preservation, and questionable downtown mall-building speculation. Today, across the city, decisions made more than 50 years ago can be seen from the area around the Hope Campus, through surrounding downtown streets, and along frontage-roads next to Interstate 25 and East Lohman Boulevard.<sup>12</sup> In fact, memory of divisive, ill-tempered, and unresolved resolution between citizens, city planners, and outside investment, shows decades' old growing pains in development of economic infrastructures throughout Doña Ana County.<sup>13</sup> The relationships that communities have with land, property, and one another, create memories for future generations of vital, distinct activities that take place in present day Las Cruces.

That homelessness became a direct result of urban renewal is no small argument; however, an outsider's history cannot claim to personally understand community sentiment without Louis E. and Carmen K. Freudenthal Family Papers.<sup>14</sup> An impressive collection for Las Cruces history, Carmen Freudenthal's activity to organize the Doña Ana Mental Health Services (combined to Louis Freudenthal's business documents highlighting regional commitment to food preservation) make visible a range of local services planning efforts.<sup>15</sup> Each of these examples, call attention to evidence of American contested urban renewal, protest against conditions that create homelessness, and nation-wide historic inequality.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, a Citizen Advisory Committee member and vice-chairman of Minority Housing Board, Mr. Freudenthal's papers share insights on today's discussion about past and present-day redevelopment in Doña Ana County.<sup>17</sup> With conversation, dialog, and workable collaboration, the City of Las Cruces continues to work to rebound from the history it has written through urban development.

The geographic nature of homelessness plays distinct, historic roles throughout the industrial and modern cities of the United States. These stories refuse to disappear from today's news cycle. It is crucial to recognize that poverty and homelessness began prior to American colonization, slavery, and human migration between peoples from all over the world. That said, American society must escape racist barriers of hate, and engage citizens to work for community social justice issues that make a difference.<sup>18</sup> If history can help, it will do so through innovation in fields like housing architecture, preventative and holistic health care services, and agricultural and nutrition delivery methods to combat the high costs of food sustainability.

Founded in 1888, New Mexico State, a land-grant university, furnishes knowledgeable regional perspective about agricultural practices which seek to understand modern relationships between farmers, workers, and grocery store shoppers across the world.<sup>19</sup> Without more attention to harmful urban threats to life — such as environmental pollution, transportation infrastructure, and utility services disruption — social justice networks risk misinterpreting valuable public contributions, and historic struggles of hard-working rural communities.<sup>20</sup> Without clear and responsive connection Doña Ana County rural areas, urban ignorance belittles our collective intelligence to support entire future generations of New Mexicans who, undoubtedly, will call on elders to sustain equitable, collaborative, and long-term employment systems at NMSU.<sup>21</sup> Poverty, homelessness, and hunger damages entire communities, no matter what urban neighborhood or rural area suffers most.

### **Shelter, Healthcare, and Food**

Accurate, reliable, and responsible public awareness campaigns continue to occur as part of federally branded "Community of Hope" homeless programs, services, and resources.<sup>22</sup> At Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, some clients require crisis intervention; others battle drug or

alcohol abuse. Yet others flee from domestic abusers, some of whom may continue to be dangerous to Hope Campus clients.<sup>23</sup> Through legacy of professional healthcare services known at Saint Luke's Health Clinic, the Amador Health Center continues to help new generations of homeless service providers to assist homeless or near-homeless individuals. Some clients work part-time or even full-time jobs. Others may access temporary day labor at MVCH, such as the Mano y Mano day labor program.<sup>24</sup> In working toward access to affordable housing, some clients travel to-and-from the Hope Campus like any other housed person to reach the everyday necessities of home, healthcare pathways, and sustainable food options.

Although criticism about transitional housing and healthcare programs continue, it is important to recognize availability for greater points of access through MVCH services, including pathways that support healthy self-sustainability. Distinctions between confidential and personal matters need not mystify nor misinform community members unfamiliar with poverty, despite circumstances of near-homelessness. The complex dangers of living rough on the street often creates ambiguity concerning the ability to sustain individual life in the desert. Locally, Doña Ana County history remembers Shalam Colony, “a utopian community for [orphaned] children established six miles northwest of Las Cruces in the fall of 1884 by John B. Newbrough and a group of his religious followers from New York who called themselves Faithists.”<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the regions most direct experience with Charity Organization Society philosophy, Shalam Colony shows the important work necessary of reliable city planners to create strong, reality-based decisions to prevent the causes of American homelessness.

We must not together assume that compassionate ideas of homeless service care does not also return with community-wide consequences. With real-world physical barriers in mind, the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope successfully innovates “corridor of care” practices of public

health service delivery.<sup>26</sup> Some cities refer to these one-stop public health access resources as “corridors” or “havens,” or, in the case of MVCH, the Hope Campus. Located in consolidated urban areas, many American communities face challenges with high costs of crisis support; preventative healthcare visits by certified doctors and nurse-practitioners; daily meal and food pantry programs; trained liaison peer-support specialists; and, educational childcare opportunities maintained either on-site or in-conjunction with established city services and Las Cruces Public School programs. Unfortunately, some off-Hope Campus locations where the homeless sleep for the night cannot prevent threat of violence, trespassing charges, or loitering citations. Perhaps understood most accurately within each specific American community of origin, some with locally sanctioned tent cities — established public health services corridors — allow the hungry and homeless temporary safe space to sleep, eat, and regain health.

The Hope Stories thesis argues that Mesilla Valley Community of Hope — through basic, traditional, and innovative homeless shelter services — cultivates positive resources to bring the homeless and hungry closer to the principles of universal human rights. Examples include case management for temporary to permanent housing transition; services by certified State of New Mexico staff, and daily, accessible “nodes of access” to shelter, healthcare, and food.<sup>27</sup> Further, noted above, my thesis argues against unjustified mystifications to blame for generations of locally contested institutional racism, corrupt housing eviction schemes, and shameful city planning practices which have since proved avoidable.<sup>28</sup> Today, the costs of public health contact to American homelessness must not continue to be damaged nationally, in New Mexico, or by the urban renewal history of Doña Ana County and the City of Las Cruces.

The Hope Stories thesis asks: in light of historic partisanship, what does the future hold for poverty, homelessness, and hunger in New

Mexico? Likewise, which future steps do communities like Las Cruces take in order to achieve long-term success? Many families tell stories about losing family homes or traditional lands of heritage, memory, and subsistence for future generations. For instance, some experience unexpected bouts with hunger, severely limited basic income opportunity, and continue to suffer many of the same organizational mismanagement seen in the past. Historically strict limitations of state and city services further risks dangerous and misinterpreted experiences by clients on their journey toward housing, healthcare, and food security.<sup>29</sup> In local, state, and federal welfare policy, first responder law enforcement practices, and well established community emergency response trainings, become crucial to lifelines of support. Simply put: in times of need, and regardless circumstances, everyone deserves to be housed.

At Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, compassion and care is made available through real-world interactions to provide for citizen, resident, and client comfort, and during first-through-final engagement with staff and volunteers. Some volunteers, and even some long-time staff members, themselves recovered from homelessness thanks to the creation of the Las Cruces “Community of Hope” consolidated services model. Demonstrative of how poverty, homelessness, and hunger becomes acknowledged, realized, and understood generally by the public, City of Las Cruces council members addressed citizen requests to change policy, grant-funding, and externalize support needs. With compassionate and timely response to provide renegotiated zoning, as required by law to permit over-night camping on city-owned space, MVCH opened Camp Hope.<sup>30</sup> This important distinction — between sanctioned and unsanctioned homeless tent-city camps — helps to increase historical awareness with resourceful, real-time commitments.<sup>31</sup> These active measures engage citizens alongside MVCH staff and volunteers, and, when accessing services, the clients themselves can generate extraordinary stories about Mesilla Valley Community of Hope.

The Hope Stories thesis argues that community activism, combined with professional care services, continue to be the successful direct result of public and private cooperation following city-wide Las Cruces urban renewal.

### **Hope Campus Scholarship**

This public history project began Summer 2017 when historian Dr. Peter Kopp and archivist Dennis Daily connected the notion of Hope Stories to the Rio Grande Historical Collections (RGHC) at the NMSU Branson Library Caroline E. Stras research room.<sup>32</sup> Fieldwork on the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope Campus began October 2017 with visits to Great Conversation, a Tuesday morning meeting for Camp Hope. After everyone arrives to the weekly 10 AM meeting, introductions are made, camp rules and regulations proclaimed, and avenues for necessary discussion opened for the group to consider. Keynote updates and talking points include emergency procedures, timely announcement sessions, and safe space to express any grievances about Hope Campus service related activities. These meetings are crucial to supportive networks — such as NMSU Nursing, Doña Ana County United, or New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness — frequent visitors from outside the five core organizations who help organize volunteer civic engagements with MVCH clients, staff, and volunteers.

Researchers from NMSU, like myself, must first contact acting MVCH executive directors and outreach coordinators for permission to attend meetings.<sup>33</sup> Great Conversation concludes when all attending have had the chance to speak. Likewise, new client orientation sometimes blends with the goings-on of Camp Hope over the weekend before. This noticeably small or large nuance, dependent upon circumstances, helps to foster what outreach coordinator Jack Turney called “democratic governance” — a model of communication to promote health related legibility among homeless clients about available City of Las Cruces programing in-conjunction with Hope Campus. Not all residents attend the meet-

ing; although, everyone is encouraged to celebrate victories both big and small, and especially when someone moves into permanent housing. Housing, of course, the fastest way to end homelessness in New Mexico.

The rules of residency, and what some call the “Spirit of the Camp,” continues to be voiced, considered, and reconsidered by Great Conversation attendees.<sup>34</sup> Through dialog, respect, and community transparency, each person chooses their individual agency to respond, and comfort zone level of involvement. Each week is different, and yet, many Camp Hope residents remain center stage for transitional housing opportunities. Peer-support specialists, and rotating schedules of spokesperson information sessions, allow citizens to orient themselves toward resource options, and thereby access specific services through communicative partnerships with outreach coordinators.

During times of hot Summer temperature, or a wintery cold snap sometimes taken for granted by new visitors to the region, the Great Conversation moves inside to the community meeting room for air-conditioning and cold water, or heating and hot coffee, as the case may be. The near-homeless, and the chronically-homeless, must both endure the same conditions dependent upon how resilient they are to find shelter for the night. It is important to remember, and to reconsider, that Camp Hope clients work together with MVCH staff and volunteers to engage with City of Las Cruces services. This homeless client meets professional staff collaboration — to find and secure services with a reasonable manner — can be experienced throughout each organization. For instance, the Great Conversation allows service providers from Amador Health Center to visit clients informally. Likewise, Jardin de Los Niños, as necessary, works with Las Cruces Public Schools’ and Project Link for crisis intervention when children under the age of eighteen are known to experience homelessness.<sup>35</sup> Definitions for near-homeless and the chronic-homeless help to clarify the changing circumstances by which clients may or may not be identified.<sup>36</sup> Examples

include over-night sleeping arrangements, and environmental conditions that clients must navigate according to season, place of work, or health care service. Locations that separate transitional housing from permanent housing situations, and healthy long-term citizenship, all too often go unnoticed without community support.<sup>37</sup>

In some cases, families must make space during tough times under circumstances known as doubling-up, or multiple family members within a single family home, a difficult situation to maintain for long-term sustainable health. Antiquated urban renewal tactics that demolished Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels, known historically to occur across the United States, have seen returns to newer, more innovative practices of redevelopment. For instance, Tucson, Arizona’s recent homeless services corridor consolidated into an old retrofitted hotel, and with features seen by many of the same programs and resources available now in Las Cruces at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope.<sup>38</sup> Whereas Tucson’s remodeled hotel for homeless arrived only after great expense, the history of American housing, health access, and hunger, within moderately sized communities comparable to Las Cruces, becomes useful to academic research, and presents further evidence to support the Hope Stories thesis.

### **Hope Stories Narrators**

The narrators who participated in the Hope Stories public history project are 2018 staff, volunteers, and community contributors whose insights are mostly thanks to colleague recommendation. From a wide range of backgrounds, fields of study, and personal stories of community contribution; some narrators know one another, while others may be unaware of the function, staff, or volunteer engagement of neighboring organizations. In early March 2018, following initial fieldwork gathering, and NMSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the Hope Stories project asked participants to agree to audio-only interviews about poverty, homelessness, and hunger in New Mexico. More personal research ques-

tions became formed afterward through potential narrator pre-interviews, some held on the Hope Campus, others via telephone during biographical information conversations.

About half of those encountered had an interest to become contributors to the project, this from extensively updated listings of potential narrators shared each month with MVCH executive director Nicole Martinez. Many encouraged the effort regardless their availability, and often commented on a sometimes overly-interested news media presence at the community doors. Frequently mentioned above, it should be clear that clients and staff work together on the MVCH campus. This includes supportive communication between one another when public historians seek to learn more about what works, what does not, and who might be willing to become a storyteller.

Regardless professional, political, or public title within the City of Las Cruces community, NMSU Archives and Special Collections promotes a sizably large access to knowledgeable networks of southern New Mexico memory. Available to everyone in the Spring of 2020, the Caroline E. Stras research room hosts the Hope Stories collection of oral history recordings, narrator transcription, and additional research materials. The project interviewed thirteen current and former staff and volunteers at the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, a homeless services corridor located near downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico. Three additional narrators contributed to the project, including two Aggie Cupboard trailblazers who spoke about food insecurity, housing inadequacy, and historic student homelessness on the New Mexico State University campus.<sup>39</sup>

Affordable housing, access to healthcare, and sustainable food security options promote individual and family pathways of health, and, in doing so, drastically limit the dangers of street life. In New Mexico, historic limited access to healthcare and food security resource endangers those in need of protection, guidance, and compassion during hardships related to homelessness.<sup>40</sup> With archival research, the Hope Stories

project gathered evidence of housing inequity, and unequal partnership seen by widely documented struggles, corruptions, and failings of public health and human services mismanagement.

As the project nears academic sunset, all narrators receive an appreciation packet featuring research documentation, compact disk copy of recorded audio interviews, and memento of original art by local painter Ray Ortiz.<sup>41</sup> The Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum archivist Donna Wojcik worked laboriously, and graciously, to provide transcription and appreciation artist liaison support. The next steps of project processing completes final draft transcription documentation for upload into Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS).<sup>42</sup> Partially funded by Doña Ana County Historical Society, Donna's well crafted transcripts, and helpful public history narrator appreciation insight, blessed the entire Hope Stories project. Without Donna's careful transcription practice to closely, thankfully, follow high standards of archival level transcription, OHMS narrator display for online platforms would not exist during current project development, processing, and post-production accession to NMSU Archives.<sup>43</sup>

My own work is dedicated to each and every narrator who took the time to visit with me, including the generous contributions of storyteller experiences which make the project successful. As mentioned at the February 21st, 2019 Doña Ana County Historical Society monthly Good Samaritan Village meeting, public historians document the present-day through community stories about the past.<sup>44</sup> With narrator stories for the 2020 new year, hyperlinked PDF copy of this article, in addition to completed thesis documentation, becomes available through the project's web-blog at [www.elpueblomemory.com](http://www.elpueblomemory.com). Not matter what avenue, resource services information about Mesilla Valley Community of Hope is widely available.

### **In Memory Of**

A final note, until next time... Please remember to consider how best to help the helpers

of homeless services. Poverty, homelessness, and hunger are serious issues that public history and academic research cannot, and should not, attempt to transcend by virtue of archival evidence nor scholarly ambition. Everyone knows that homelessness exists. Everyone approaches homelessness and hunger through personal perspectives, beliefs, and experiences.

In Doña Ana County, New Mexico, community action makes familiar appeal to reason regarding historic indigent burial sites and homelessness; and whose responsibility it is to recognize, maintain, and generate funding sources to beautify antiquated or newly discovered cemetery lots.<sup>45</sup> When such community responsibilities are forgotten, or lost to the generations, complications between historic perspective, public health, and civil discourse risk misplaced applications of perceived moral good. Not quite a dispute, unmarked graves and indigent burial cemeteries nonetheless remain controversial across the country, where infrastructure for housing developments merge to meet the seasonal demands of the city.

The issue here, that burial sites are seen as historical spaces of importance, sacred ground to gracious hearts and minds within community. And yet, some cemeteries experience limbo between ownership and community care to restore a sense of dignity to the unknown homeless. Recent Las Cruces community service thanks to local elementary school students who help clear trash and other debris remains honorable and memorable.<sup>46</sup> Like many cemeteries in similar outward disrepair, physical addresses sometimes does not occur for a number of years. Likewise, radio and newspaper media cannot always consider preservation in the same historical terms as buildings, neighborhoods, or the history of the urbanized homeless community over the decades.

With a little time, these news stories blend together to create little-by-little knowledge, and, in my opinion, crucial avenues to increase com-

munity legibility. A city or county's claims of service include giving-back narratives to help to promote awareness of homelessness. Despite this, more work will be needed to further demystify community poverty. Like other historic pauper cemeteries, some graves are without identification of any kind. Because grave yards where the homeless rest are not exclusive to Las Cruces, greater measures are advised to make certain school teachers and elementary students are not the symbolic caretakers of burial sites.

In Google Maps screenshot of the Griggs Avenue burial site — white wooden crosses adorn the grassy lot, an understood reminder for the Las Cruces community to reconsider historical preservation approaches throughout the city.<sup>47</sup>

The Dona Aña County Historical Society



*The Griggs Avenue burial site.*

recently took responsibility for the Old Picacho Cemetery, a plot of land deemed culturally and historically valuable by members the society, and worthy enough to purchase the land for preservation purposes. Although regional historical societies may appear monolithic entities without official city or county restrictions, community engagement of this sort happens with limited funding. A case for separation of history and preservation for the sake of clarity, and more reasonable community balance when pauper cemeteries stir citizens into beatification action.

Respect for each and every person, each and every day, is the first step taken toward



healthful and collective rehabilitation at Mesilla Valley Community of Hope. Imagine for a moment the impact on young peoples' lives, whose visits to pauper cemeteries shape historical perceptions and, therefore, the future physical environment. In places where the unknown homeless rest, after all, dying without a gravesite to mark your life appears to be an unfortunate and common thematic reality of modern living. In com-

munities of technological advancement, whose lands, property, and livelihoods cause the experience of homeless in the United States? These issues, debates, and historical struggles continue regardless the truth about what we can and cannot accomplish together. Be sure to recognize the historic causes related to present-day homelessness in New Mexico, and throughout United States-Mexico Borderlands.

## End Notes

1. Louis E. and Carmen K. Freudenthal Family Papers. Ms 2. Rio Grande Historical Collections. New Mexico State University Library.

2. New Mexico State University. Las Cruces: A Photographic Journey: New Mexico Centennial, 1912-2012. Las Cruces, N.M.: FIG Publications, 2011. 40-41

3. Today, at MVCH, a yearly event called Tents-to-Rents draws community support fundraising with local business, individual contributors, and committees like Good Sam's Housing Helpers. Learn more about these and other benefactors here: <http://tentstorents.org>. As noted on the Tents-to-Rents homepage, be sure to click on each Participant's Name for more biographical information.

4. MVCH. Website. 2019. Locate the "What We Do" tab for a complete programs listing found here: <http://www.mvcommunityofhope.org/what-we-do/programs/>

5. The MVCH website shares both general and specific information about current available services. For best results, visit the online presence of each organization and each resource most relevant. Regularly updated posts can also be found at the MVCH Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MVCommunityofHope/>

6. Learn more about CARF history here: <http://www.carf.org/About/History/>.

7. MVCH Website Homepage. 2019.

8. United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Website. 2018. <https://www.usich.gov/goals/veterans/>

9. MVCH Webpage. 2019. <http://www.mvcommunityofhope.org/camp-hope-2/>.

10. The Social Equity Mapping Project advocates for neighborhoods and communities to encourage and revitalize citizen engagement. ESRI story maps visualize projects that interpret urban and rural spaces. Similar MVCH results at Google maps may help new visitors to understand how the Community of Hope delivers collaborative service resources.

(Image # 1) Note regular street traffic on Amador; a single road and pathway through adjacent business properties; and how locations at each organization create what is today MVCH.

Likewise, on the SEM webpage, be sure to explore each informational web tab. The screenshot example of the project shown here shows hazards for anyone visiting what Community Mappers call the "Campus of Hope."

Visit Doña Ana Communities United website: <http://www.da-cu.org>

11. Ibid.
12. Locally, the Rio Grande Historical Collections at New Mexico State University Archives provides vast Hope Stories thesis evidence. Freudenthal Family Papers, Pete Domenici Institute collections, and the Garrey Carruthers papers support sources of additional evidence, whether about MVCH service, the City of Las Cruces, or region's shared urban development history.
13. Website. Las Cruces Blog. "Las Cruces' Worst Mistake." 2007. <https://lascrucesblog.com/history/2007/las-cruces-worst-mistake/>.
- Information about Colonias helps clarify the relationship between urban renewal in Las Cruces and the agricultural & urbanized development history in Southern New Mexico. Discussed in thesis chapters, more information about Colonias can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/cdbg-colonias/historia-de-las-colonias/>.
14. Evidence of public scrutiny and disruption during 1970s urban renewal can be located throughout Hope Stories research, especially for urban design, community development, and city planning. Regardless field of research, more information about socio-economic, housing, and resource development — or for disparities caused by rapid unexpected change to public space, city-owned lands, and contested local opinions — begin with Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) at Rio Grande Historical Collections. Like history, stories of excellence accompany stories of shame. Hope Stories narrator questions consider the scope of this regional history, in addition to present day perspectives of MVCH staff and volunteers, and regardless individual level of knowledge or personal interest about "the past." Read preliminary Hope Stories questions here: <https://elpueblomemory.com/2018/01/31/hope-stories-question-list/>.
15. Freudenthal Family Papers. Ms 2. Rio Grande Historical Collections. NMSU Library.
16. Sharon Reynolds Maxwell Papers (MS 589). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries. (See Image #2) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). "Tucson Model Cities... A Dream Becomes Reality." This front cover shown, the publication worked to familiarize local Tucson residents about state and federal approaches to urban renewal, including Citizen Advisory Board style engagement akin to Las Cruces. Documents of Freudenthal Family Papers weave precise historic connections between American urban redevelopment efforts, homelessness, and the City of Las Cruces' response to do better for those less fortunate.
17. Ibid.
18. Although saving focus on civil rights for this thesis discussion, it is important for citizens of Las Cruces to be aware of the historic human rights' struggles of Las Cruces, El Paso, and Ciudad Juarez.
- For insight about NMSU, biographical information about Clara Belle Williams, the university's first Afro-American graduate, is a small first step toward higher standards of accountability today, and into the future of New Mexico. Available here: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/exhibits/cbwilliams/index.shtml>.
19. Thomas, Gerald W., Samuel E. Curl, and William F. Bennett. Food and Fiber for a Changing World: Third Century Challenge to American Agriculture. Danville, Ill: Interstate Printers & Publishers, 1982.
20. Freudenthal Family Papers. Ms 2. Rio Grande Historical Collections. NMSU Library. The SRG/COG Comprehensive and Functional Plans booklet provides historic 1970s Las Cruces and Doña Ana County planning. More information to follow within thesis chapters.
21. Website. New Mexico State University. Outreach and Extension. 2019. Available here: <https://www.nmsu.edu/outreach.html>.
22. Hope Stories thesis chapters includes Washington D.C. Community of Hope, an important insight for anyone under the

impression that homeless service provider models like MVCH do not also take place outside of Las Cruces. To compare services, visit Corridors of Care in bigger cities to bring further understanding to the reality of poverty and homelessness. Recognize complex homeless services' needs through local and national programs that make a difference.

For instance, consider national hometown experiences with historic homelessness.

Washington, D.C. Community of Hope: <https://www.communityofhope.org>

Las Vegas, Nevada, CARE Complex: <https://www.carecomplex.org>

New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness: <https://www.nmceh.org>

Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless: <https://www.abqhch.org>.

23. Baker, Nancy. Hope Stories narrator. 2018. A historic past MVCH organization for homeless women and children, learn more about Hacienda del Sol here: <https://elpueblomemory.com/2018/09/07/hacienda-del-sol/>.

24. 'Mano y Mano' Day Labor Program Puts Jobs in Hands of Las Cruces Homeless, Youtube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaGeZhTd0hI> For more information, visit additional MVCH Videos here: <http://www.mvcommunityofhope.org/videos/>.

25. Shalam Colony. NMSU Archives. 2019. <http://lib.nmsu.edu/exhibits/shalam/>.

26. Trowbridge, Glenn. Hope Stories narrator. 2018. Mr. Trowbridge's volunteer executive director Hope Stories recording occurred during an April 2018 visit to the CARE Complex in Las Vegas, Nevada. Of sixteen Hope Stories narrators, Mr. Trowbridge's contribution is the fourth interview of the project, and the only interview to take place outside of Las Cruces. Available here: <https://elpueblomemory.com/2018/06/26/care-complex/>

27. Lory, Kara Andrea. The Cultural Geography

of the Homeless in Las Cruces, New Mexico. New Mexico State University. 2003. Figure 22. 152.

K.A. Lory's research has been invaluable to my own, and should be the first reviewed source, in my opinion, from anyone seeking information about Hope Stories. Seen here courtesy NMSU Archives and Special Collections, Lory's city-wide depth of fieldwork provides crucial information about homeless services "nodes," locations of public health access or known importance to the homeless community. Such excellent research, seen in light of Social Equality Mapping Project, is absolutely vital to understand the history of homelessness in Las Cruces, past services related to the current community culture, and ways forward to continue to improve upon the work of staff and volunteers at MVCH.

28. Wolberg, Hannah R.. "An Evolving Main Street: The Impact of Urban Renewal on Downtown Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1966-1974." (2011). [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist\\_etds/85](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds/85).

29. Hoffman, Lisa, and Brian Coffey. 2008. "Dignity and Indignation: How People Experiencing Homelessness View Services and Providers." *The Social Science Journal*. 45, no. 2: 207-222.

30. City of Las Cruces regular city council meeting. Website. 19 February 2013.

Transcripts and video documentation available online here: [http://las-cruces.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=399&meta\\_id=40054](http://las-cruces.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=399&meta_id=40054).

31. Heben, Andrew. *Tent City Urbanism: From Self-Organized Camps to Tiny House Villages*. Eugene, Oregon: The Village Collaborative, 2014.

32. To plan archive visits, navigate browsers to research room services at NMSU Branson Library. Available here <http://lib.nmsu.edu/archives/researchroom.html>.

33. Martinez, Nicole. Turney, Jack. Hope Stories

narrators. 2018. In October 2017, the MVCH executive director and outreach coordinator first learned about this research project to create public history with Las Cruces homeless providers. Regardless what research or journalistic interests visitors may have with any one of the five organizations, it is important to always contact respective front desks like any other volunteer new to the Hope Campus.

Whatever intentions, do not assume researcher or journalistic privilege. This is especially vital to public history methodologies that capture audio recordings of oral history interviews. Return visits require NMSU Institutional Review Board approval, in addition to the strictly expressed written and signed consent of acting the executive director.

34. Harris, Randy. Hope Stories narrator. 2018. It is important to keep in mind that Great Conversation meetings take place throughout the community; although, Camp Hope holds its own meeting each Tuesday morning at 10 AM. Learn more about The Great Conversation process here: <https://www.facebook.com/TheGreatConversationLasCruces/>.

35. Hardman-Hartley, Audrey. Silva, Yolanda. Hope Stories narrators. 2018. More information about resources for homeless children available at Las Cruces Public Schools Project Link. Please be patient when accessing Las Cruces Public Schools internet servers.

Listen to Yolanda Silva's narrator perspective about helping homeless youth here: <https://elpueblomemory.com/2019/03/08/project-link/>.

36. Website, Jardin de Los Niños. 2019. These federal definitions of homelessness work to demystify stereotypes, and cite important standards and variances to service needs between the near-homeless and the chronic-homeless.

Learn more about these different circumstances here: <https://www.jardinlc.org/our-work/>.

37. Ibid.

38. Website, AZ Central, "Tucson hotel repurposed as shelter focused on giving dignity to homeless." 2019. <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2019/06/03/former-tucson-hotel-turned-into-350-bed-homeless-shelter/1332112001/>.

39. Elliot, Kit. Long, Meg. Hope Stories narrators. 2019

For more information about food availability on the NMSU Campus, and other important student health-related resources, visit Aggie Cupboard here: <https://aggiecupboard.nmsu.edu>.

40. Engstrom, D. W, A. O Korte, and K McDonough. 2004. "Understaffed, Underfunded the Emergence of Social Welfare in New Mexico, 1940s-1950s." *New Mexico Historical Review* 79 (4): 459–88.

41. Ray Ortiz created beautifully designed brick art for Hope Stories project narrator appreciation.

42. OHMS. Oral History Metadata Suncronizer. Louie B. Nunn Center of Oral History. University of Kentucky Libraries. Learn more here: <http://nunncenter.org/ohms-info/>.

43. Wojcik, Donna. Hope Stories transcriptionist. 2017-2020. The Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum Research and Collections webpage features the not-to-be-missed Oral Histories Collections Catalog Collections for New Mexico. Visit here: <http://www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org/oralhistory/browse.php>.

44. Website. Doña Ana County Historical Society. 2019. Monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Learn about upcoming 2020 events here: <http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org>.

45. Freudenthal Family Papers. Ms 2. Rio Grande Historical Collections. NMSU Library.

46. For more information about Doña Ana County Pauper's Cemetery, visit KRGW Radio's 2015 article here: <https://www.krww.org/post/las-cruces-students-clean-pauper-cemetery>.

47. (See Image #2)

**[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)**

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## Book Review

*Across the Space Frontier* by Joseph Kaplan, Wernher von Braun, Heinz Haber, Willy Ley, Oscar Schachter and Fred Whipple. Edited by Cornelius Ryan. Illustrations by Chesley Bonestell, Fred Freeman and Rolf Klep. New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1952, 147 pages, retail price at the time, \$3.95, hardcover.

I decided to review this book because one of the authors is Fred Whipple who was responsible for the Harvard meteor photography stations which are the highlight of the article “Catch A Falling Star in Las Cruces – 1950.” One of the other authors is Wernher von Braun, the German rocket scientist who influenced what took place during the early days of White Sands Proving Ground. There is a local connection.

In 1952, Collier’s magazine ran a series of articles about outer space. Three books resulted with *Across the Space Frontier* being the first. The other two dealt with going to the Moon and to Mars. Walt Disney used the material to broadcast a series of television programs about going into outer space.

There are several reasons to read this seemingly outdated book. The first is the simple explanations behind the principles of space travel. They are still relevant. The longest chapter is “Prelude to Space Travel” by von Braun. He proposed that the United States build a space

station during the coming decade and proceeds to explain how it could be done.

The space station was to be a thousand miles above the Earth. Von Braun pointed out that if the rockets used to travel to the space station were just one second early or late, they would be a little over four miles away and would have to maneuver on their own to the station. Point well made for precision timing.

The second reason for reading the book is to see how wrong they were in many areas. For instance, von Braun projected the space station, housing 80 men, could be operational in 1963 at a cost of only four billion dollars. He saw rockets making trips to the station every few days instead of every few months. He totally underestimated the cost and the country’s will to make it happen.

On the other hand, it is satisfying seeing all the things these pundits got right. Whipple wrote about the ability to both look down and to look

out from the space station. Looking down was going to give meteorologists incredible information about Earth’s weather and make forecasting so much better. He was right except that we use satellites instead of a space station.

Looking out into space with large telescopes was going to give astronomers a new and unfiltered look at how the universe works and its history. The Hubble telescope is an excellent example



*The illustration of a space station on the inside cover of Across the Space Frontier as proposed by Wernher von Braun and the other authors in 1952.*

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of what he meant.

Interestingly, von Braun's proposal for frequent rocket launches depended on reusable rocket stages and an airplane-like vehicle for carrying the men that would land as a glider just like the Space Shuttle did.

There is a chapter by Oscar Schachter called "Who Owns the Universe?" In it, he addressed the issue of how far out from Earth does a country's claim to domain extend.

Willy Ley, the famous German promoter of rocketry, has a chapter on "A Station in Space." If you ever wanted to know how much oxygen and water per person would be needed on a space station, Ley provided the answer. The analogy to a submarine was used frequently in the book.

"Can We Survive in Space?" is a chapter by Heinz Haber. From our country's experiences in space, the answer is obviously yes. Haber talked a great deal about mechanical stresses during launch that turn out to be very manageable. However, he danced around a couple of biggies – radiation and lack of gravity.

At the time, researchers didn't think radiation levels would be a big problem because people would only spend a couple of weeks on the space

station before being sent home. Haber didn't supply any kind of prophylactic for radiation exposure especially during high Sun activity.

The elephant in the room, we now know from experience in space, is the lack of gravity. These authors saw the absence of gravity as a mere inconvenience, something that human beings would quickly adapt to. They cited a few of the early experiments done at White Sands using V-2 rockets to carry animals to apogees where they experienced "zero-gravity" for a few minutes. Everything was fine.

From the experiences and studies of our men and women who have spent extensive time on the Space Station, we know that bones become brittle sticks and muscles turn to goo without the stress or force of gravity. It is now one of most serious considerations in an extended flight to Mars.

*Across the Space Frontier* is a wonderful historical look at the state of rocket science in 1952 and is still a great educational source for space travel principles.

**Jim Eckles**

DACHS Board of Directors  
Las Cruces, NM

[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)

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## Book Review

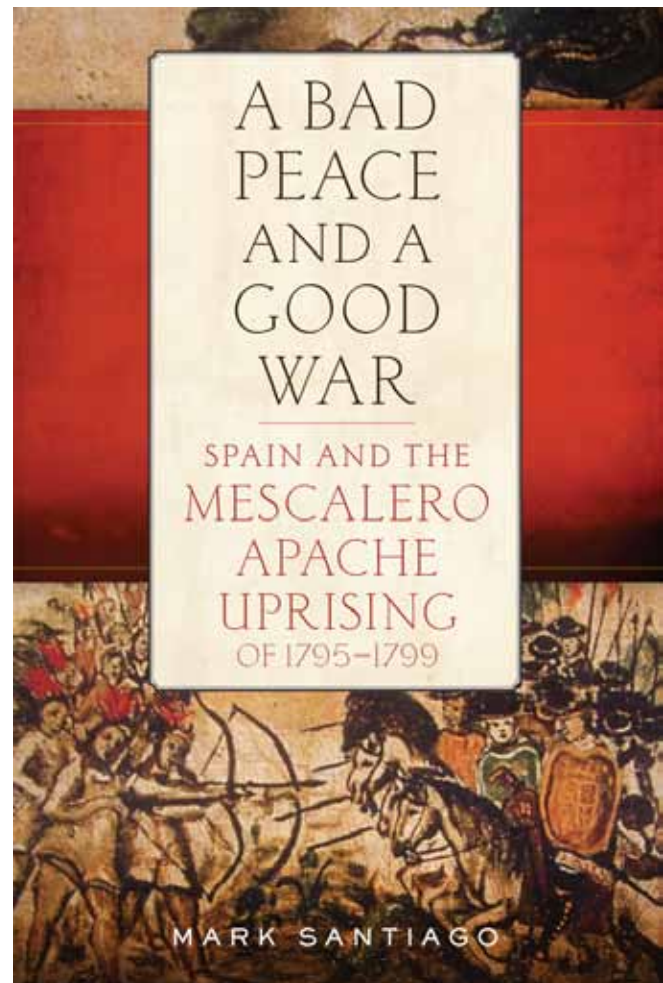
*A Bad Peace and a Good War: Spain and the Mescalero Apache Uprising of 1795-1799* by Mark Santiago. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-8061-6155-6, 248 pages, \$32.95, hardcover with dust jacket.

Spanish military operations in the Interior Provinces of New Spain proved increasing problematic and costly in the final decade of 18th century. With Spain engaged in combat with rivals France and Great Britain, and the threat of a newly independent United States to be wary of, local Spanish leadership on the northern frontier struggled to maintain peace with the Apache peoples while dutifully securing the royal empire. Employing a strategy to avoid all-out war, these military governors acknowledged the flaws in their “bad peace,” as sporadic Apache raiding on settlements continued despite Spanish efforts to feed, clothe, and protect the Apaches willing to submit to semi-settlement near designated presidios. Seen as the better alternative to a protracted “good war” in a time when military resources were spread precariously thin, the plan came to a spectacular demise in August 1795 when Mescalero Apaches killed nearly sixty Spanish soldiers in two separate battles, turning the peace on its head.

Historian Mark Santiago argues in *A Bad Peace and a Good War* that the four-year period of 1795-1799 hardly proved an era of relative quiet, as previous historians had asserted, but rather a time of full-scale military operations with strikes and counter-strikes. The war’s brutality ravaged the Mescalero people as Spanish soldiers invaded the Apache homelands in modern-day New Mexico and Texas and forced an eventual détente. This military history, Santiago’s fourth book, rightly received both the 2019 Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà Award from the Historical Society of New Mexico and the 2019 Robert M. Utley Award from the Western History Association. Meticulously researched and a pleasure to read, the book

fills an historical gap regarding Spanish-Apache relations and foreshadows the United States’ similar struggles in the region after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Santiago’s deep-dive into the available sources, largely microfilmed and digitized copies from Spanish and Mexican archives (225), resulted in a more accurate picture of this era of strife, something for which we are all the richer. The deficiencies in the previous histories are likely the result of several causes. First, because the recordable events of the conflict largely occurred beyond the Spanish frontier, and thus fewer people or reasons to record them, the surviving documentation is not as voluminous (4-5). Second, what is available is a one-sided account of the Spanish





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victors, meaning there is no written evidence from the period that describes in detail Apache(s) point of view (8). Finally, the existing records were written in both a bureaucratic-style and in Spanish, certainly additional barriers to a fuller history being made known to an audience of readers in the United States. These are crucial points in setting the context of his study and Santiago strikes a great balance in not going further than the sources can take him (73, 89, 141-143) as well as succeeding in credibly filling in the gaps of knowledge with secondary sources. For examples of this, see the arguments regarding the possible outcome of the Spanish raid of December 24, 1795 (129-131), and the proof of the death of Mescalero leader Volante (172-173).

Any criticism of the work is minor and in no way distracts from the book's persuasive arguments. First, while the book includes two maps of the region under scrutiny (xiv-xv), maps of the specific Spanish campaigns with their key battles and skirmishes inserted in the running text would have been extremely useful. Even more so if they included the geographic points with both their colonial and modern names, as they are likely to be different as not. Second, Santiago provides the reported casualties for each campaign if known, as well as summarizing them in total over the four years of conflict (8, 188-189), estimating

that the Mescalero people, numbering between three and five thousand persons, suffered a loss of a quarter of the population. As stunning as that number is, it is likely conservative. It fails to estimate the Mescalero loses to the rival Apache and Comanche, who were allied and encouraged by the Spanish in a campaign of harassment; the deaths to exposure and starvation caused by having abandoned their possessions – clothing and shelters, domesticated animals, food stores, and weapons for defense and food gathering – in order to escape Spanish raids; and the psychological toll on a people in a constant state of fear for their lives, coupled with the dread of being captured, knowing it likely led to being deported southward and on to Cuba to never return. The Spanish campaign had staggering results on the Mescalero, as the modern nation-state unleashed its might against a tribal society (188).

Santiago's book is enthusiastically recommended for those interested in the Spanish colonial-period and the Apache people. All academic libraries, as well as those in Apacheria, should carry this title.

**Dylan McDonald**

Political Papers Archivist/Special Collections  
Librarian  
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[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)

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## Book Review

***J. Paul Taylor: The Man from Mesilla*** by Ana Pacheco. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-089013-544-0, 128 pages, \$30.43, hardcover.

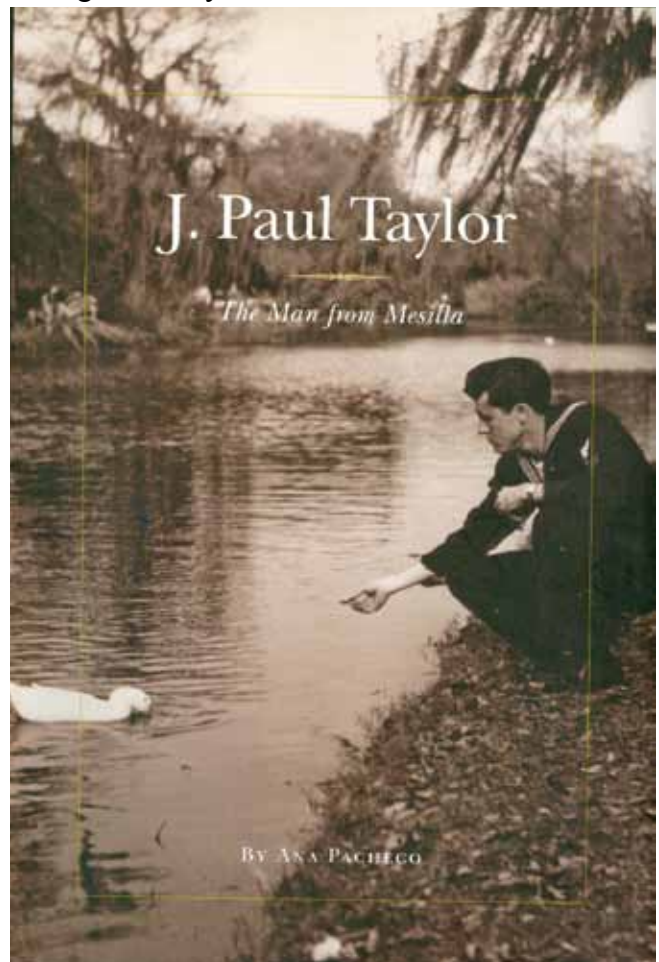
Ana Pacheco's book titled *J. Paul Taylor: The Man from Mesilla* is a biography about one of New Mexico's most well-known individuals. This book includes in-depth information regarding J. Paul's upbringing as well as notable accomplishments and how it shaped him to be the one-of-a-kind educator, civic leader, and politician that many New Mexicans highly respect and cherish.

The book begins with genealogical information and describes J. Paul's rich family ties to New Mexico from both his mother's and father's side. A valuable visual resource that the author includes is a genealogical chart of the Taylor and Romero y Lopez families. The chart is informative to the reader since it allows for further analysis and serves as a valuable tool to interpret the family's lineage. The book provides a personal touch in which the author does a wonderful job conveying the major milestones and obstacles that J. Paul encountered, that made him the person he is today. While turning each page, the reader becomes engaged and has the opportunity to re-experience momentous chapters of J. Paul's life in which his early family history and childhood is detailed. As mentioned, the book's time span includes his birth to his time spent in the New Mexico House of Representatives and serving the community.

Along with being descriptive, the book also provides a glimpse into his life by providing the reader a first-hand account of his memories while growing up on the family farm and attending school in the valley. As J. Paul describes, growing up in the valley was not easy and he encountered humbling experiences and challenges. For example, during his early childhood upbringing, he spent it in the Chamberino area and it was at times difficult due to the Great Depression and the Dust

Bowl. One scenario that Pacheco recounts is that while growing up on the family farm J. Paul and his family lacked modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing and had to adjust their lives to make ends meet. Throughout the book, recollections are related such as when J. Paul was a child helping on the family farm while attending Valley High in Chamberino.

Although the book is mainly about J. Paul's endeavors there is a dedicated chapter to his wife Mary Daniels Taylor. This chapter captures the life of Mary and tells how her family made their way to the United States/Mexico border region due to her father's occupation. Further along in the chapter, personal information is shared such as the couple's relationship and how it flourished throughout the years.



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As stated, the book offers a timeline of major milestones that Taylor experienced which includes his work as an educator, legislator, and an advocate for social justice. Each chapter corresponds with his lifetime achievements and offers a profound look into his life and the notable accomplishments.

Overall, this book is a relaxing read for anyone wanting to know more about J. Paul Taylor and his achievements, and how his personal and professional career shaped southern New Mexico and the Mesilla Valley. Pacheco's writing and

inside knowledge are descriptive and rich in nature, which makes this book a valuable resource to individuals wanting to know more about J. Paul and his impact on the region. Due to the personal relationship that Pacheco has developed over the years with the Taylor family, a personable recount of memories comes to life and are vividly captured throughout the book.

**Jennifer Olguin**

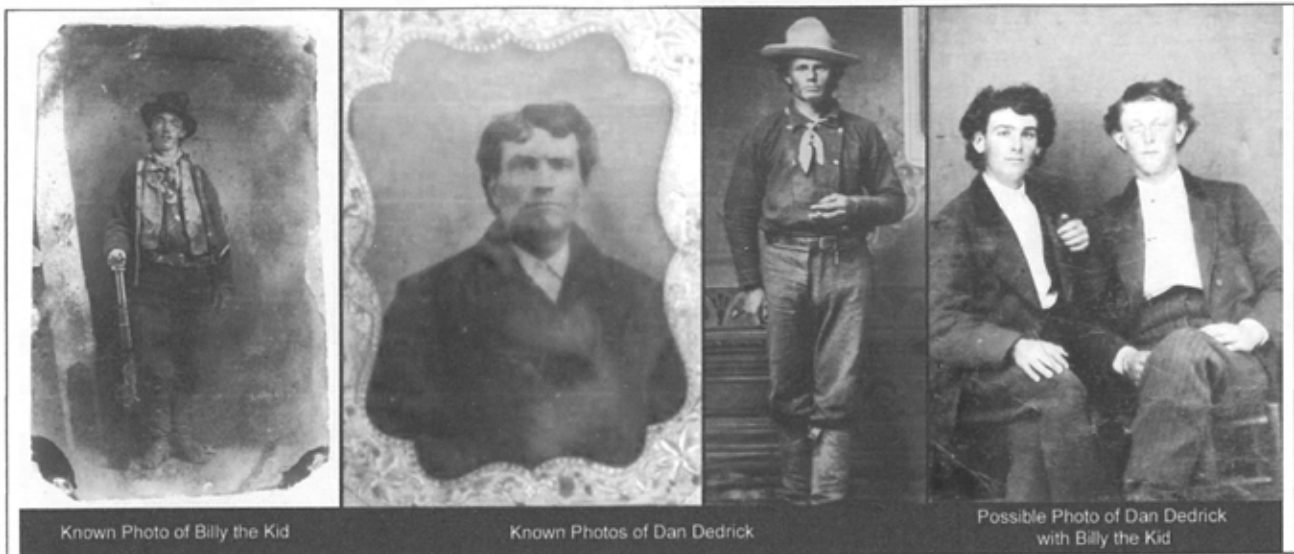
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[\*\*Return to  
Table of Contents\*\*](#)

## Appendix - for Frank Parrish's Article

# Billy the Kid Image Analysis by Detective Greg Bean

On August 29, 2013, I came across a reference in the news regarding a newly discovered photo of Billy the Kid. As a forensic artist, I was immediately intrigued by the photos. I've been a police officer and detective for 30 years. Additionally, I've been a forensic artist for 15 years. In that capacity, I have received more than 400 hours of training, including the 120 hour FBI Advanced Forensic Facial Imaging class, and specific training regarding forensic facial comparison from photographs. As a forensic facial imaging specialist, I'm frequently called up on to analyze and compare photos of known subjects to images of criminals captured on surveillance or security video, or similar sources.



**Quick Analysis.** At first glance, I thought the subjects in both photos looked remarkably similar. I decided to do a quick analysis just to satisfy my own curiosity. On the internet, I located a high resolution copy of the known Billy the Kid photo and then compared it to the photo shown in the news article. Following my normal work flow, I looked for any features, landmarks, shapes or other attributes that would immediately eliminate the subject in the unknown photo. Unable to find any attributes that would eliminate the Unknown Subject as a match, I lined up the two faces and checked the proportions. The facial proportions all matched very favorably. I quickly scanned the photos looking for clues to the underlying bone structure and other landmarks, and sketched some of those landmarks on top of the photos. I then created an overlay of the quick sketches and discovered that the skull and feature shapes also matched very closely.

**Important Information Regarding Forensic Facial Analysis and Comparison.** Many factors affect the appearance of photographic images; lighting, camera angle and distance, focal length and lens distortion, aspect ratio, depth of field, focus, exposure, resolution, movement, artifacts caused by reflections, lens flare, etc. All those factors and more also affect the appearance the subjects in photographs; including age, weight loss/gain, hair length, color, and style, facial hair, clothing (including hats and eyewear), body position, make-up, scars, marks, tattoos, facial expressions, etc. In the case of old photos, they can also be affected by fading, dust specs, spots, scratches, folds, water damage, etc. In other words, forensic facial comparison is not a search for identical photos or a direct one to one match of every feature. It's difficult to create identical photos under the best of conditions. It would be more than unreasonable to expect identical images to come from different cameras taking pictures at different times, distances, angles, and using different lenses under different lighting conditions etc. Forensic facial comparison therefore, means taking all of those factors into account, understanding how they affect the appearance of the subjects, making allowances for those effects, and using all the visual clues to identify and map the features and underlying structures that define a human face. If those features and structures don't match up, then it is possible to definitively eliminate a match. For example, if the

mandible of a known subject is clearly much longer than the mandible of the unknown subject in question, it would be anatomically impossible for them to be a match. Conversely, due to all the variables, it is rarely possible to make an absolute, definitive match. Forensic facial comparison is not DNA. However, if there are no attributes which clearly eliminate a match, and all the feature and structures appear to correlate closely, it is possible to conclude that they are a likely match. The better the photos, the more features and attributes that can be accurately assessed and closely correlated, the more likely the match. In some cases, with good photos that correlate perfectly, especially if there are unusual or unique attributes shared by the subjects, the likelihood of a match can be elevated to near certainty.

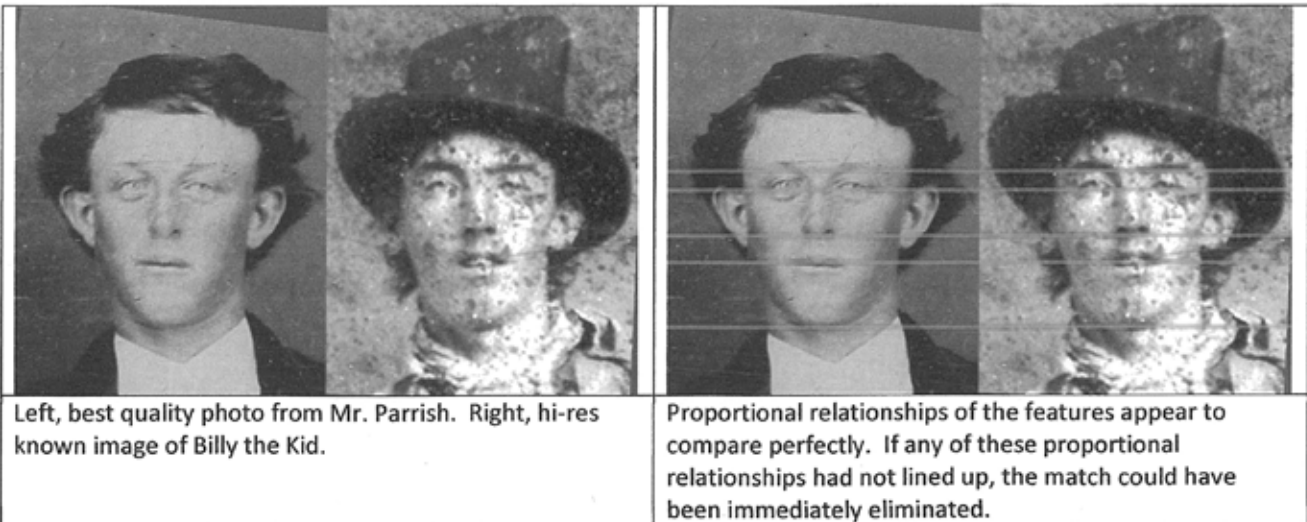
**Conclusion of Quick Analysis.** After performing this quick analysis, it appeared to me that Frank Parrish, the historian mentioned in the news article, was correct and he had very likely discovered a previously unknown photo of Billy the



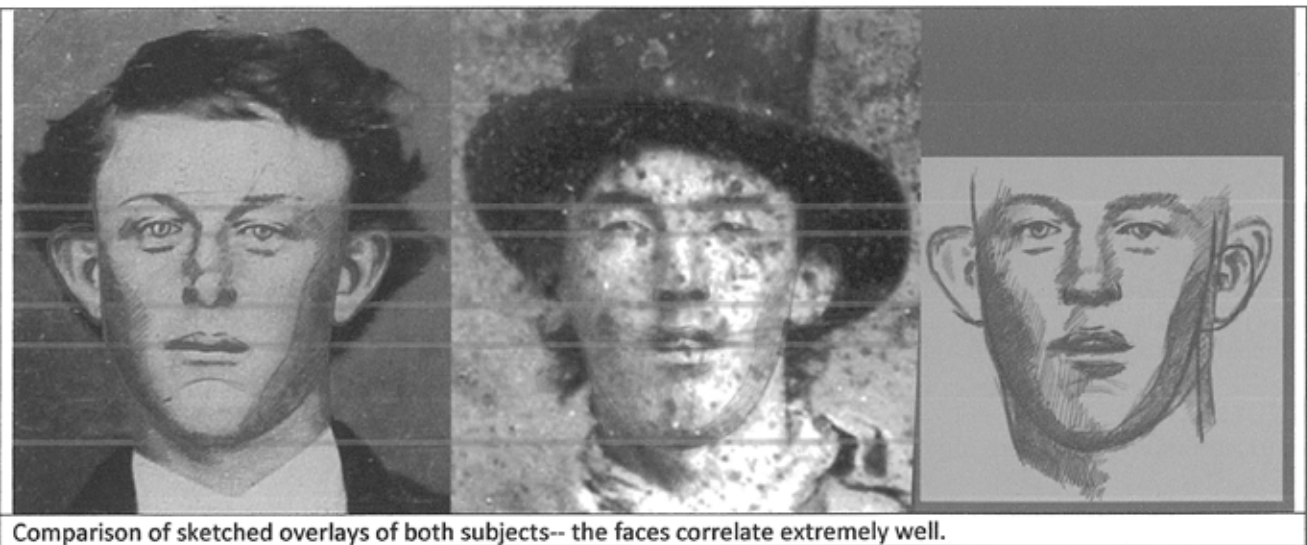
Initial Quick Analysis of Billy the Kid Photo and Unknown Subject

Kid. Based solely upon the photos, I believed that there was a significant likelihood that subjects in both photos were the same person. I sent Mr. Parrish's my congratulations with a copy of my brief analysis.

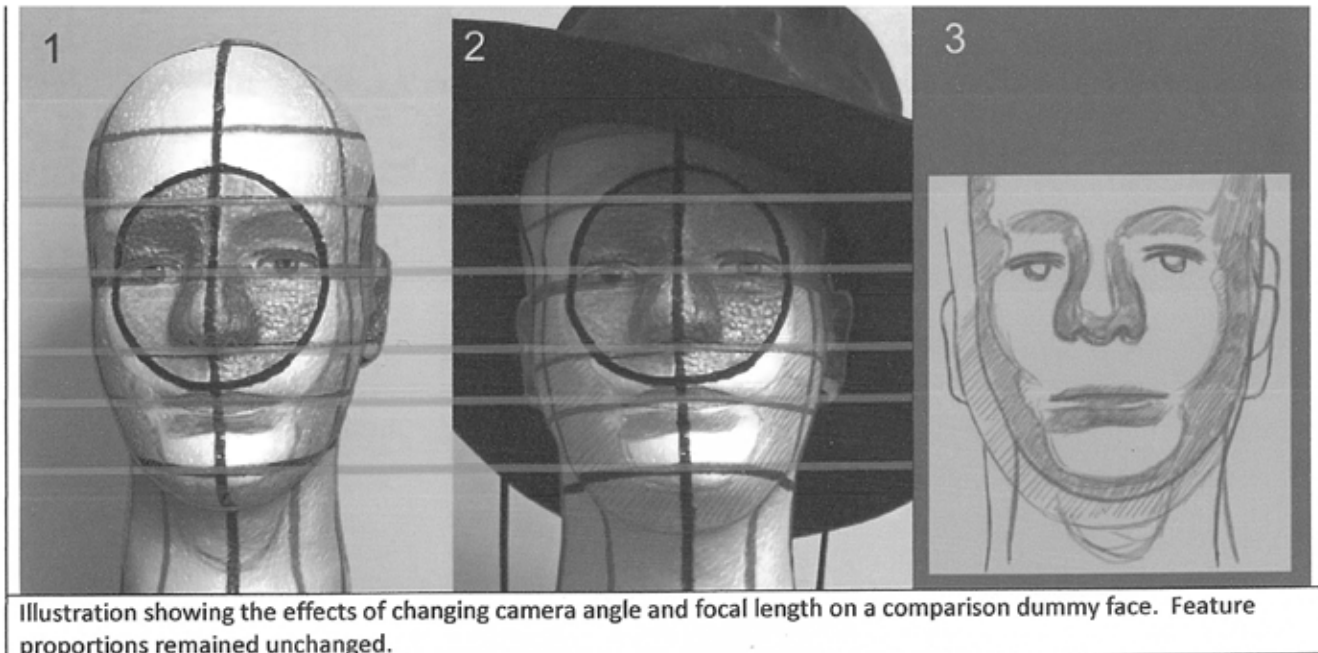
**Additional Analysis and Comparison.** A few days later, Mr. Parrish responded to my email. He asked if he could send me some better photos, and if I would consider doing the same thing with the photos of Dan Dextrick. I agreed to do a more in-depth analysis of all the photos. I received a number of photographs of Billy the Kid and Dan Dextrick from Mr. Parrish. I scanned all the photos at high resolution and revisited the analysis of the photo believed to be Billy the Kid. Once again, I searched the photos for any attributes that would eliminate the Unknown Subject as a match. Unable to find any significant inconsistencies, I again lined up the two photos and verified that the proportions of all the features compared very favorably. These primary features are based on bone structure, so barring changes to the subject's actual skull, these proportions do not change regardless of age, weight-loss/gain, surgery, etc. In other words, the eyes will always remain in the orbital cavities, the nose will be located above the nasal spine, etc. If the features don't line up proportionally, that would indicate that the skulls of the subjects do not correlate, eliminating the possible match. If the Unknown Subject's features had not lined up with Billy the Kid, he would have been immediately eliminated as a match.



Due to the poor condition of the known Billy the Kid photograph, it was difficult to make a point by point comparison, so I did an overlay sketch of both photos, trying to highlight the positions and shapes of the features, clearly visible landmarks, and underlying structures of the face, and then compared those two sketches. As you can see below, the faces correlate extremely well. The features share the same sizes, shapes, locations and proportions. The shape and structure of the face and underlying bone structure match closely. I believe that the slight visible differences are most likely the result of camera angle and focal length.



**More Information Regarding Forensic Facial Comparison Issues.** In order to illustrate the common visible changes that can be seen due to slight differences in camera angle and focal length, I took two photos of the same facial comparison dummy a few minutes apart. I changed the camera angle and focal length enough to make the differences obvious. Photo 1 was taken with the camera angle level with the dummy's eyes, with head turned slightly to the dummy's proper right, and a short focal length lens. Photo 2 was taken head-on from a slightly lower camera angle with a medium focal length lens, with the addition of a hat to create shadows. I then quickly sketched the primary features and facial structures and compared the sketches. Although the different settings clearly affected the appearance of the comparison dummy, the proportions of the primary features were unaffected, and the underlying structures were still discernable and correlated well.



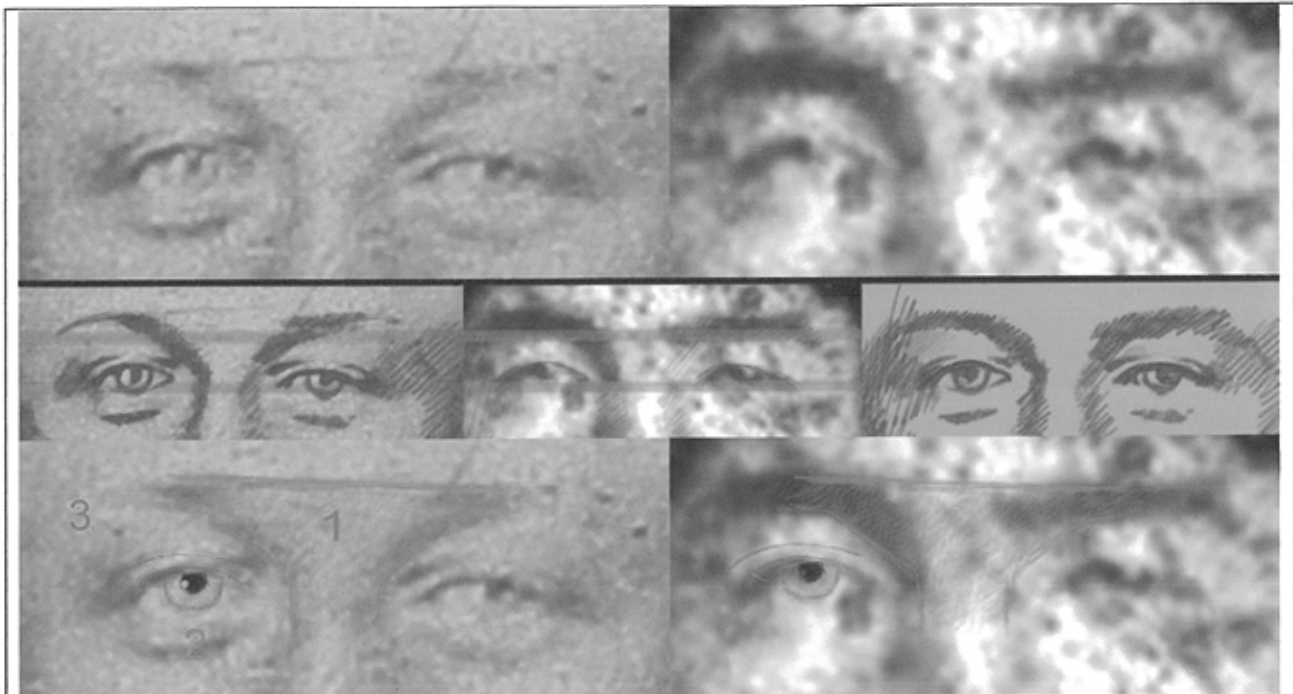
#### Areas of Specific Interest and Concern

**Eyes.** There were many obvious consistencies between the subjects' eyes, including the size, shape, location and proportion, but some areas were of particular interest.

- 1.) Glabella and Differences in Eyebrow Value.** The Unknown Subject's glabella, or area of the lower forehead between the eyes, seemed to have the same shape and structure as Billy the Kid. In both cases, the shapes, angles, and underlying structures appeared to correlate extremely well. The single inconsistency was the apparent difference in value (relative lightness or darkness) of the eyebrows. Billy the Kid's eyebrows appeared significantly darker than the Unknown Subject's brows. After more closely examining all the involved photos, I concluded that a number of different issues could have contributed to this difference, such as lighting, hair color, and thickness of the hair. The eyebrows in the known Billy the Kid Photo appeared darker; however, the lighting in that photo clearly comes from overhead and to the proper left of Billy. There were shadows under his nose, below his lip and chin, on his neck, etc., showing the directionality of the light. In that lighting, every hair in the eyebrow casts a shadow, cumulatively darkening the appearance of the eyebrows. The photo of the Unknown Subject was taken under very different lighting conditions. Highlights on any photographed subject are typically the area of a curved surface that most directly face the light source. The photo of the Unknown Subject displays numerous highlights on the front of the subjects, facing nearly directly at the camera. Also note the brighter illumination under his nose and chin, etc. In other words, the lighting in that photo was frontal and very strong (possibly suggesting the use of flash powder). Strong frontal light would contribute to the "washing out" of any lighter values contained in the eyebrows, especially if the local color of the hair was light or the hair was sparse. Any shadows cast by the hair would also be hidden directly behind the washed out hair. Additionally, the other man in the photo, believed to be Dan Dedrick, appeared to have darker, thicker hair than the man believed to be Bill the Kid, and his proper right eyebrow was also partially "washed out" by the bright light. Finally, after finishing the comparison, I contacted Mr. Parrish and asked him about Billy the Kid's hair color. According to Mr. Parrish, Billy's hair was described as light brown or sandy blond. If correct, that lighter color would contribute to the "washing out of the eyebrows."
- 2.) Irises.** I was troubled by the unusual appearance of Billy the Kid's eyes—in the known photo, it looked like his eyes were heavily lidded or partially rolled back in his head. Then I noticed that the Unknown Subject clearly has very pale eyes, likely light blue. In black and white photos where the color is not visible, only the value (relative lightness or darkness) of that color remains, and in this case of the Unknown Subject photo, that value is so light that it nearly matches the value of the sclera (white portion of the eye). If Billy the Kid also had very pale irises, it would explain

the odd look to his eyes in the known photograph. I believe that it is very possible, due to the age of, and damage to the photo, that only the dark pupils and a small portion of the irises where they are under the shadow of the lid are still strongly visible, giving the illusion that Billy had overhanging lids or his eyes are partially rolled back. In order to test this theory, I sketched the iris of the unknown Subject's proper right eye and transferred it to the known Billy the Kid photo. The transferred iris appeared to be a natural fit for the opening (see illustration below). Again, after completing my analysis, I contacted Frank Parrish and asked about the color of Billy the Kids eyes. Mr. Parrish told me they were light blue, confirming my suspicion about the appearance of his eyes in the known photo.

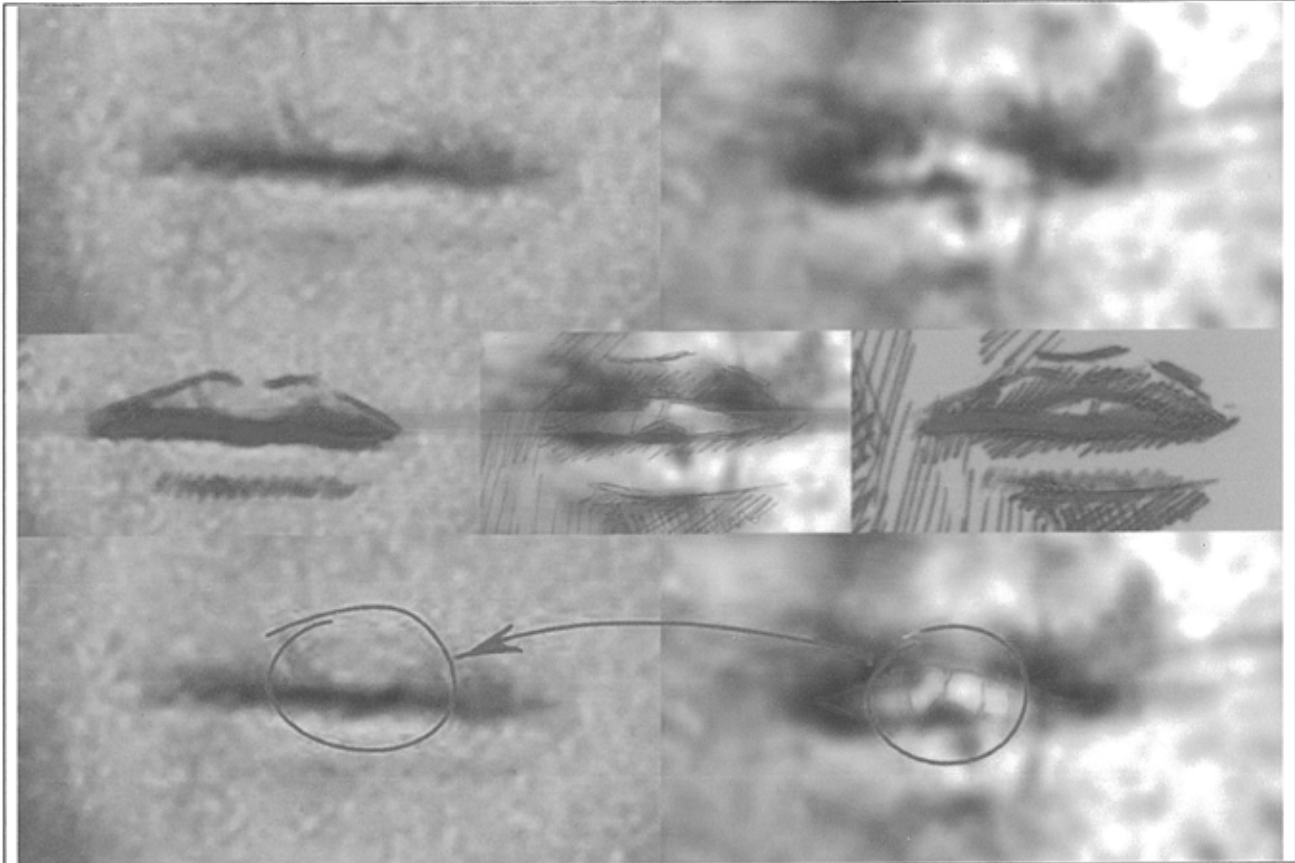
- 3.) **Eyelids.** In the known Billy the Kid photo, the existence of the proper left eyelid seemed to have been almost completely erased. However, the proper right eyelid was still barely visible and seemed to match closely the Unknown Subject's right eyelid. This also seemed to help ameliorate the odd, heavily lidded appearance of Billy's eyes in the known photo.



1.) The shapes and structures in the area of the glabella correlated very closely. 2.) The extremely pale iris may help explain the unusual appearance of the eyes in the known Billy the Kid photo. 3.) The strongly visible eyelid of the Unknown Subject's proper right eye matches very closely the faint remnant of the same eyelid in the known photo.

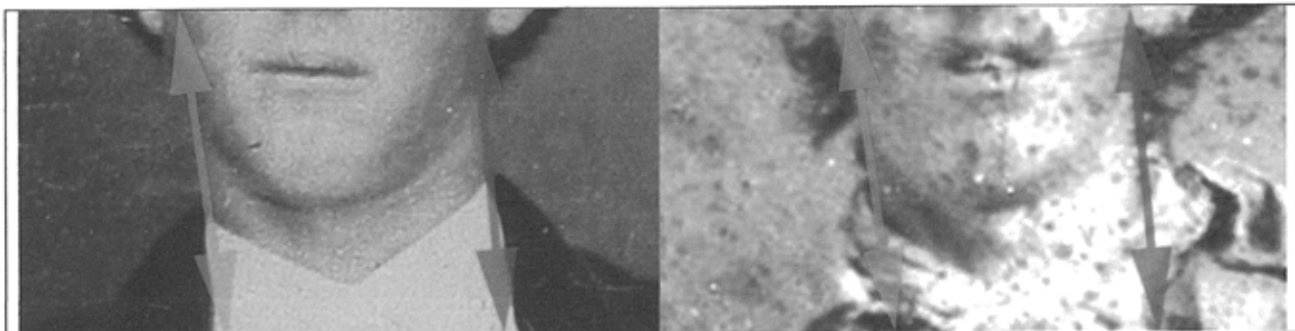
**Mouth.** The lips of both subjects also seemed to match well by size, shape, proportion and location. Of particular interest was the highlight in the middle of the Unknown Subject's upper lip. As previously mentioned, highlights are the areas of a curved surface that most directly face the light source. Since the light source in the photo appears to almost directly in front of the Unknown Subject, the highlight in the middle of his upper lip would be the apex of the curve where the lips wrap around the "barrel" of the mouth. In this case, I believe that spot is pushed dramatically forward by the protruding "buck teeth" that are clearly visible in the known Billy the Kid photo. In other words, it appears that the center of upper lip of the Unknown Subject photo is pushed forward by the underlying structure of the teeth, thus creating the strong highlight, which correlates extremely well with the known Billy the Kid photo.





The lips of the Unknown Subject not only match well for size, location, shape and proportion, but they appear to curve over an underlying structure that would be an excellent match for the protruding “buck” teeth in the known Billy the Kid photo.

**Neck.** The mandible of the Unknown Subject was also an excellent match for the known Billy the Kid photo; additionally, the subjects’ necks shared an interesting attribute. In both cases, the subjects seemed to carry the weight of their heads the same way—they leaned toward their proper right and appeared to have an uneven tilt to their shoulders. Every person’s skeletal structure is just as individual as their faces. Bones and all the attachments are different, angles and proportions vary, etc. That’s why everyone walks and moves differently. In this case, it seemed that both men to had similar uneven shoulders and leaned to their proper right.



In both cases, the subjects seemed to carry the weight of their heads the same way—they leaned toward their proper right and appeared to have an uneven tilt to their shoulders.

**Billy the Kid Conclusion.** In comparing these two photographs, I was unable to find any attributes which would have eliminated the possibility of a match. In fact, just the opposite was true. All the visible attributes, features, and

underlying structures appeared to correlate extremely closely. As previously stated, the better the photos, the more features and attributes that can be accurately assessed and closely correlated, the more likely the match. In this specific case, in my opinion, it is extremely likely that the Unknown Subject is, in fact, Billy the Kid.

#### Dan Dedrick

I scanned, straightened and lined up all three provided photos believed to be Dan Dedrick. All of the Photos were taken under different lighting conditions, had slightly different poses, and displayed other defects. Photo A, a known photo of Dedrick, was slightly blurry and contained artifacts that appeared to be reflections present during the photographing of the original print (which appeared to be behind glass). Also, the Subject was photographed from a slightly lower angle, or the Subject's head may have been tilted slightly toward the back. (The ears, which are close the rotational axis and thus appear to stay in the same place as the face rotates up or down, appeared to be lower in this Photo, indicating the lower viewing angle.) Photo B, another known photo of Dedrick, was also blurry and lacked detail in the lightest areas. Photo C, the unconfirmed photo of Dedrick, appeared to be overexposed, the subject was posed with his shoulders turned to his proper left, and his face was also turned slightly to his left, showing more of his proper right side in a slightly  $\frac{3}{4}$  view which produced some foreshortening issues. As mentioned above, Photo C also appeared to have been photographed with strong frontal lighting.

Following the same procedure described above, I searched the photos for any attributes that would eliminate the unverified photograph. Unable to find a reason to eliminate the photo, I compared the proportional relationships between the primary features and found that they compared very favorably. Eyebrows are, of course, very mobile, but should occupy the same space when at rest. The distance between the eyes, nose, centerline of the lips, and top of the chin all lined up perfectly. Due to the shadows caused by the differences in lighting, it was difficult to line up the bottom of the chin, but the mandibles appeared to be a good match for size and shape. If any of these proportional relationships had failed to match, the unidentified subject would have been immediately eliminated as a match for Subject Dedrick.



## Dan Dedrick Comparison by Detective Greg Bean



I scanned, straightened and lined up all three provided photos believed to be Dan Dedrick. All of the Photos were taken under different lighting conditions, have slightly different poses, and display other defects. Photo A is slightly blurry and contains artifacts that appear to be reflections present during the Photographing of the original print (which was likely behind glass). Also, the Subject was Photographed from a slightly lower angle, or the Subject's head may have been tilted slightly toward the back. (The ears, which are close the rotational axis and thus appear to stay in the same place as the face rotates up or down, appear to be lower in this Photo, indicating the lower viewing angle.) Photo B is also blurry and lacks detail in the lightest areas. Photo C appears to be slightly overexposed, the subject is posed with his shoulders turned to his proper left, and his face is also turned to his left, showing more of his proper right side in a slightly  $\frac{3}{4}$  view and producing some foreshortening issues. Photo C also appears to have been Photographed with strong frontal lighting—note the very strong reflected light illuminating the underside of the Subject's chin and the underside of his nose.



I compared the proportional relationship between the primary features and found that they compare very favorably. Eyebrows are, of course, very mobile, but should occupy the same space when at rest. The distance between the eyes, nose, centerline of the lips, and top of the chin all line up perfectly. Due to the shadows caused by the differences in lighting, it was difficult to line up the bottom of the chin, but the mandibles appear to be a good match for size and shape. If any of these proportional relationship had failed to match, the unidentified subject would have been immediately eliminated as a match for Subject Dedrick.

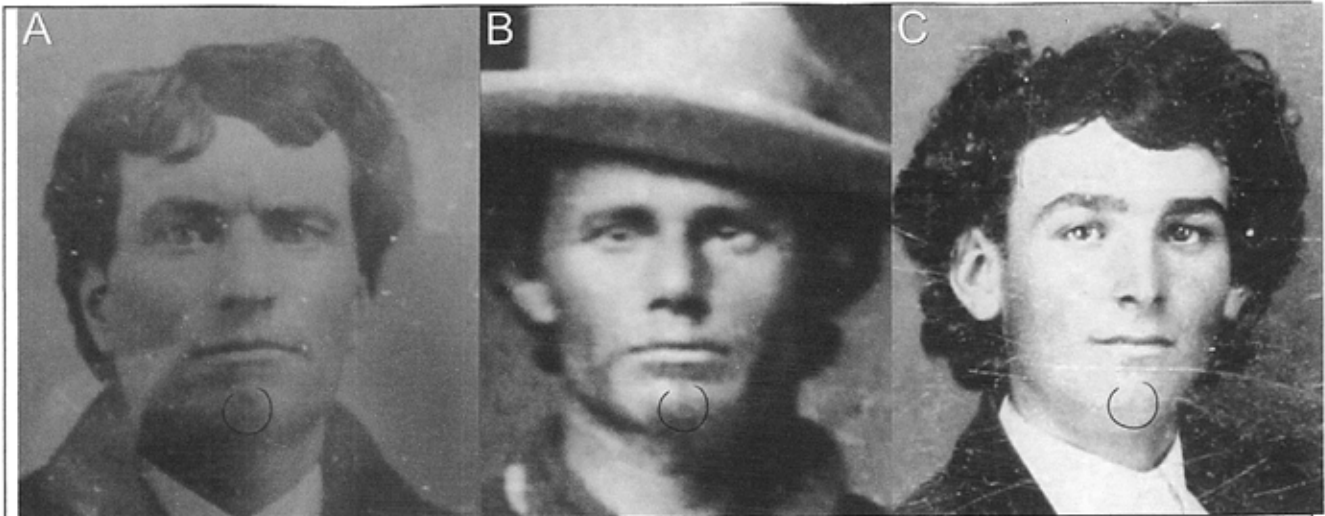
I noticed that in both Photo A and B the angle of the shoulders was asymmetrical, but that unusual asymmetry matched very closely in those two photos. In Photo C the Subject was not posed facing the camera but with his shoulders slightly turned.



In all three Photos, the lighting and shadows provided clues revealing the construction of the underlying structure of the skull, particularly the cheekbones. In each case, the faces compared favorably.



The muscles surrounding the mouth (orbicularis oris) have no bone attachments making them particularly mobile. However, at rest they should also appear very similar. In Photos A and B the lips compare extremely favorably, appearing to be nearly identical. In Photo C the Subject is smiling slightly, and the lips are also slightly foreshortened due to the turn of the head, but the lips still compare very favorably with the other Photos.



In addition to the attributes mentioned above, I also noticed that in each Photo, the Subject appears to have a very slight dimple in his chin. Due to the different lighting schemes, the patterns of light and dark that illustrate that slight dimple present themselves differently in each Photo. Additionally, in each Photo the Subjects' proper right ear is more or less visible, although it appears to be partially hidden by the Subject's hair in Photo A and turned more directly toward the camera in Photo C. In each case, the size, shape and construction of the ear seems to match favorably.



When considered together, the totality of all these favorably matching attributes, plus the lack of any attributes that would definitively eliminate any of the subjects, would indicate, in my opinion, that the men pictured in these photos are likely the same person.



The eyebrows in Photographs C were in particularly good focus and well lit, and the subject's proper right eyebrow showed a particularly strong, angular shape. Again, eyebrows are very mobile, but when they're at rest, the size and shape should line up closely. Because Photo C shows a slightly  $\frac{3}{4}$  view, the Subject's proper right eyebrow appears wider side to side, and his left eyebrow is foreshortened, appearing shorter side to side. Both right and left eyebrows in Photos A and C were an excellent match. The eyebrows in Photo B were also a good match.

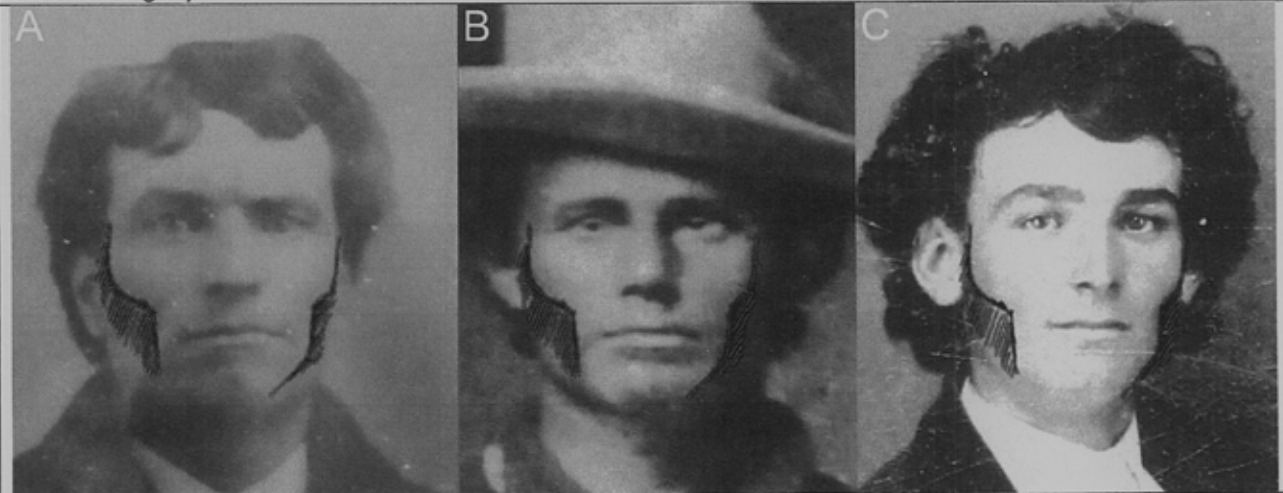


In photo 3, the subject's proper left eye appears to have an overhanging lid that slopes at a pronounced angle, while the lid over his right eye is not overhanging and folded lid is clearly visible. That same combination repeats in the other two photos. The overhanging left lid with the pronounced angle is particularly visible in each of the photos.

In all three Photos, the subjects have noses of similar size, shape and proportion. The apparent inconsistencies appear to be caused not by physical differences but by lighting, especially in Photos C where the underside of the nose is strongly lit. The same area is hidden in shadow in the other two Photos.



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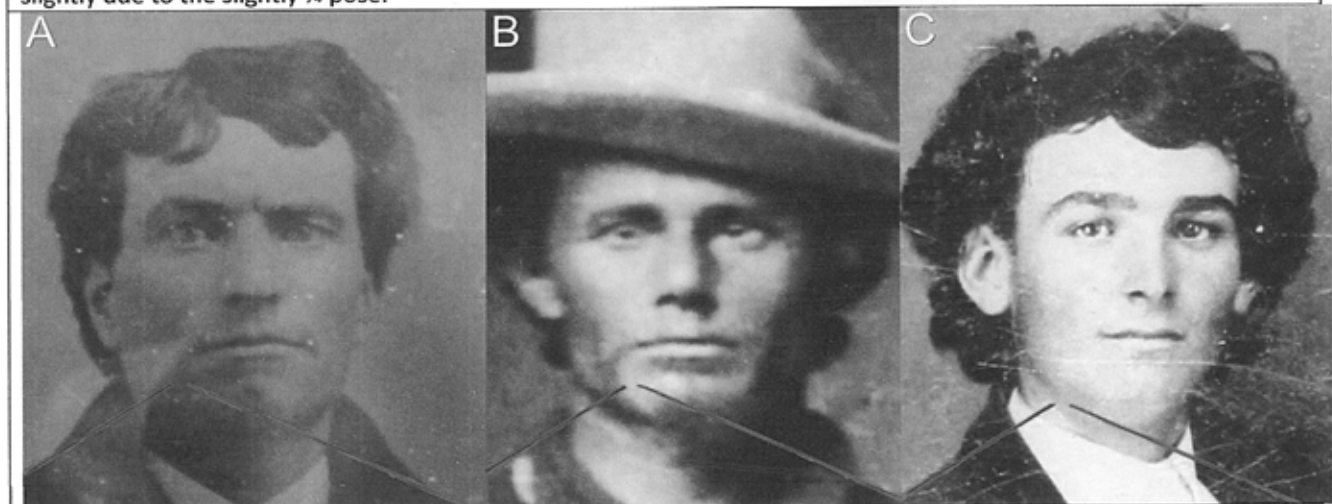
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When considered together, the totality of all these favorably matching attributes, plus the lack of any attributes that would definitely eliminate any of the subjects, would indicate, in my opinion, that the men pictured in these photos are likely the same person, Dan Dedrick.