



NEWSLETTER

March 2019

Doña Ana County Historical Society

Jim Eckles Will Talk Oppenheimer On March 21

Jim Eckles will give a talk called “Robert Oppenheimer: A Timely Genius” on March 21 at the Dona Ana County Historical Society’s public meeting. During World War II, Oppenheimer led a team of some of the brightest scientists in the world at Los Alamos, N.M. in designing and building the atomic bombs that ended the war in a few days. This includes the test of the very first atomic bomb on July 16, 1945 at Trinity Site here in New Mexico - just up the road a ways.

Eckles has spoken to the Society before about Trinity Site. This talk will focus on the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer and how he basically emerged from nowhere to take charge of one of the most important efforts of World War II. Most of his contemporaries were quite surprised at how effective he was.

After the war, Oppenheimer was considered a controversial figure by some and was eventually squashed by the forces of McCarthyism. Wernher von Braun said that if Op-



Jim Eckles giving a Trinity Site briefing at Ground Zero this winter. He estimates he may have visited Trinity Site more times than any other human being at this point and no longer needs a night light when getting out of bed in the dark.

penheimer had worked in England they would have made him a knight instead of throwing him out the door.

The talk is scheduled for March because Trinity Site will next be open to the public on April 6. Eckles, who has been leading tours to Trinity Site for over 40 years, will answer queries about Trinity Site as well as questions concerning Oppenheimer’s enigmatic life.

The presentation will be at our usual time and place...7 p.m. in the Good Samaritan Auditorium at 3011 Buena Vida Circle.



Robert Oppenheimer and Maj. Gen. Leslie Groves at Trinity Site in September 1945 when they took reporters to see Ground Zero. They are standing beside one of the footings to the 100-foot tower on which the bomb was placed for the test. The tower was vaporized by the incredible heat from the explosion leaving four footings exposed. One is still partially visible at the site today.

Membership Notes

✦ The March meeting of the Dona Ana County Genealogical Society will be on March 13 at 2 p.m. at the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library in the 2nd floor Roadrunner Room. Visitors are welcome.

What Are You Saying?

Frankie Lerner, the founder of the DACGS will divide the audience into learning groups and present genealogy questions. We will divide members and visitors into teams. Then give a word and the team that answers it correctly will get a point. We will go from Team A to Team B, etc. If the team that is supposed to answer does not know the answer, it will pass to another team. The words presented will all be words found in the census, death certificates, birth certificates, legal items, et al. In other words, they are all words one may run across in their research and needs to know. Some of the words are very easy and others not so easy. Abbreviations have also been included. The team that get the most right answers will win a prize.

✦ **LAST REMINDER** - DACHS dues are due. Forms are in the last few editions of the Newsletter from 2018. OR you can just send in your check with a note providing your contact information. An individual membership is still only \$20 and a family is \$25. Students only pay \$8 - that's only a plate of tacos and a soft drink. What a deal.

✦ Speaking of dues, your board of directors has decided to take up the question of dues and what the rates should be. The current rates for individuals and families were raised \$5 each back in 2007. The other categories were not increased.

There has been no serious debate yet, just informal discussions of the rates. Some feel \$20 for a membership is too low, especially with the cost of printing newsletters, printing the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, maintaining a website, paying honorariums to speakers, and trying to offer grants to students and community members. If you have input, let us know. We'll keep you informed.

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