

# NEWSLETTER

## February 2022

Doña Ana County Historical Society

### February Presentation Will Be About Dale Bellamah

"All Over New Mexico" -- The Dale Bellamah Addition and Other Midcentury Neighborhoods" will be the monthly talk given on Feb. 17, at 7 p.m. by Dr. Jerry Wallace, instructor at NMSU. There are hundreds of Bellamah houses in Las Cruces and this is your chance to learn how they came to be.

As always, the presentation will take place in the auditorium at the Good Samaritan. It will also be presented live via Zoom.

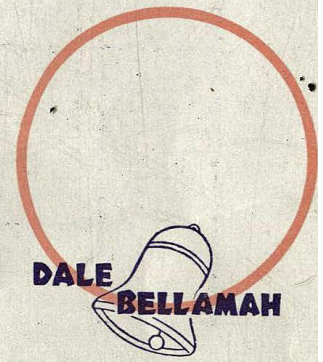
In 1947, Dale Bellamah sold his family's liquor store in downtown Albuquerque and used that money to build three small family homes near Kirkland Air Force Base. Within three years he was one of the three largest home builders in Bernalillo County and by the middle of the 1950s the sixth largest home developer in the world. In 1955, Better Homes and Gardens labeled Bellamah as one of the modern architectural pioneers of American homes in the Borderlands.

From 1947 to 1972, Bellamah promised cheap and affordable homes "All Over New Mexico." Dr. Wallace will explain how Bellamah created a regional identity and a post-war cultural landscape in New Mexico, West Texas, and Southern Colorado. Examining

his neighborhood designs in New Mexico's second largest city, Las Cruces, will show how Bellamah created a template that allowed him to replicate his vision of home ownership through cheap, mass-produced homes that introduced a new vernacular architectural style throughout the region. These new home designs challenged the region's long established architectural influences of race—Spanish, Native American, and Mexican—and instead articulated differences of class and gender. More importantly we will see that, while Bellamah's vision of home ownership tried to reflect the patriotism and conformity embedded in America's Affluent Society, the unique cultural milieu of the Southwest mediated these influences, leaving Southwestern homeowners feeling less of this pressure of conformity than their counterparts in other areas of the United States.

Like our past few monthly meetings, if you cannot attend or do not feel safe yet, you can attend via the Zoom platform. We will send out the Zoom invite a few days before by email. The only requirement for those attending at Good Sam is that you must wear a mask inside their facility.

**B**ELLAMAH engineering . . . and Bellamah styling . . . and Bellamah craftsmanship, have all produced at their superlative best in **The Lady**. The first part you can judge by the eye. Take in the long sweep of the roof, the bold combination of redwood and rugged Colorock exterior, and the elegance of spacious windows — and you begin to see why Dale Bellamah Homes are far more than a modest success. But the next part — the pulse-quickenning interiors — have pushed Bellamah homes to the top level of popularity. When we tell you that this lovely home has a beautiful, Swedish-modern fireplace set in gleaming, hardwood floors, a unique free-form breakfast bar connecting the dining room and step-saving kitchen, and a whole host of "Bellamah Firsts," we're just giving you the simple facts. It is the inner thrill of pride you feel when your guests enter your door, that no mere listing of the facts can explain. Won't you let us show you this exciting new home today?



*Bellamah advertising. See the back page to see what "The Lady" looked like along with floor plan..*

# Donors - - Going Into The New Year

When we put out the word that it was time to renew your memberships, we also asked for donations to help defray the cost for printing and mailing out the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*. You responded enthusiastically. We received many donations targeting the *Review* but many of you said to use the money wherever it was needed.

We received enough money to cover all aspects

**Deb Dennis**  
**Glennis Adam**  
**Lois Gilcrease**  
**Ingred Phillips**  
**Chuck Murrell**  
**Dennis Fuller**  
**Robert and Alice Distlehorst**  
**Frances Williams**  
**Barbara Stevens**  
**Wolfgang Schlauch**  
**Bob and Cherie Gamboa**

of the *Review's* costs and will apply the rest to other expenses such as printing this Newsletter and renting our space for the website.

Most of you got your donations in by the time the *Review* went to press with ABC Printing and we were able to get your name on the "donor's" page. Some came in too late. Here is what we hope is the complete list of everyone who donated.

**George Helfrich**  
**Dennis Daily**  
**Jim Eckles**  
**Judy Messal**  
**Dale and Sharon Owen**  
**Louise S. Forshaw**  
**Merle and Linda Osborn**  
**Richard Padilla**  
**Carol Reynolds**  
**Susan Krueger and Jesus Lopez**

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!!!

## The DACHS 2022 Awards Video Is Complete And Posted

The presentation of the DACHS awards for 2022 is finished. The video of our awards ceremony is also complete and now available as a 20-minute program on the DACHS YouTube Channel and our Facebook Page.

President Dennis Daily and former President Susan Krueger put together the awards in such a way

that they were recorded using the Zoom platform. It meant we were able to produce a short program without any special equipment - just what we use for the monthly programs.

If you have any ideas for future awardees, please send them to our email address which is: [19dach63@gmail.com](mailto:19dach63@gmail.com).



*On the right, Mark Howe, Cultural Resources Specialist with the International Boundary and Water Commission visited Dennis Daily at NMSU to receive the Old Timer's Award for the border markers along the Mexico/US boundary.*

## 50th Anniversary Of The Rio Grande Historical Collections

The Archives and Special Collections department at the New Mexico State University Library will be celebrating 50 years of preserving the past of Southern New Mexico and providing access to historical documentation for students, researchers and the community.

The Rio Grande Historical Collections was formally chartered on Jan. 29, 1972. At the time, NMSU President Gerald W. Thomas recognized the need to create an archives program at the university to ensure the documentary evidence of the region's cultural heritage would not be lost. He became an avid supporter of establishing the unit.

"He worked with the library director and with the history department to start an archive program here, and that was the Rio Grande Historical Collections," said Dennis Daily, department head of NMSU Archives and Special Collections. "The purpose was to collect unique historical documents that illuminate the history and cultural heritage of southern New Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico border region, and to ensure that they would be preserved and made available to future generations."

Since NMSU is a land-grant research university, initial materials that were collected covered topics such as farming, ranching, food production, manage-

ment of natural resources, and community history.

"Think of family papers, correspondence, financial records, business records, diaries, things like that," Daily explained.

The program receives most of its archival collections through donations from families, individuals, organizations and businesses, garnered from decades of community outreach by the department.

Now, 50 years after its establishment, the collection occupies much of the top three floors of Branson Library, located on NMSU.

"If you took all these boxes and lined them up side by side, they would stretch about 15,000 feet," Daily said. "That's nearly three miles."

The types of materials collected over the decades have gone through their own evolution, especially as technology continues to advance in multiple ways.

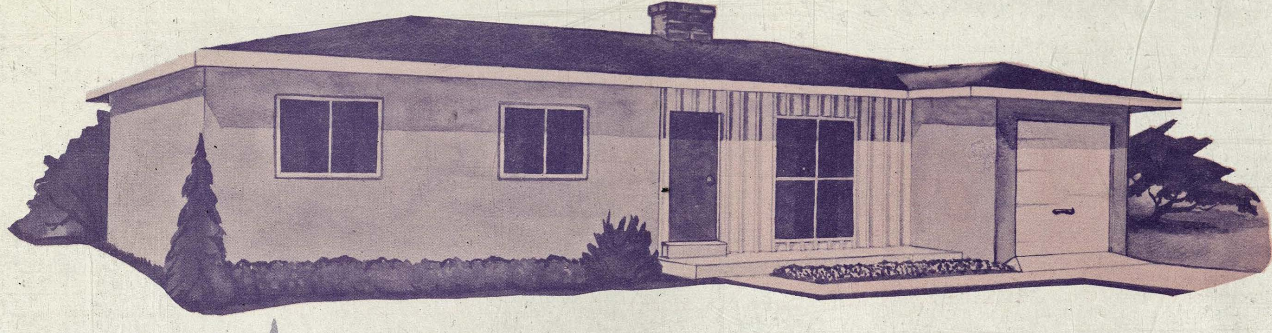
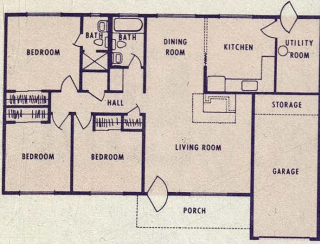
"In the early formation of the archival repository, it was primarily paper-based materials and that type of format," said Jennifer Olguin, RGHC archivist. "As technology evolves, we tend to get more digital objects, so we have to think of how to preserve the information on floppy disks, CDs, different types of media that come in. We have to keep up with the current standards and best practices.

*Courtesy Tatiana Favela, NMSU Media Relations*



*This is another image courtesy of Dr. Wallace. He estimates it was taken around 1960. It shows the big Bellamah development in Las Cruces, looking to the northeast. At the very top of the image you can see construction of the bridge for the intersection of Lohman and I-25, yet to be built. Also near the top is a large white square that must be the beginning of Young Park. The school in the middle right is Conlee.*

So Thrilling to Own!



*Bellamah's "The Lady" home as described on the front page. Courtesy Dr. Wallace*

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