



April Field Trip: White Sands Missile Range

The Doña Ana County Historical Society has arranged a field trip to White Sands Missile Range on Saturday, April 19, 2008. Participation is limited to 40 visitors, and a complete list of visitors must be submitted to WSMR Security by April 15, 2008. Participation will be limited to DACHS members and guests. A wait-list will be taken for non-members. Call George Helfrich (522-3477) today to reserve a spot for this trip. Arrangements have been made to visit the Missile Park, the WSMR Museum, the Army Blockhouse at Launch Complex 33, and the Navy

Desert Ship at Launch Complex 35. The Navy has offered to cook beef brisket for us at the Navy launch area where we will have a lunch



that will also include baked beans, potato salad, rolls and a soft drink. The Army Blockhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites; it is where the V-2 launches were performed in the 1940s. Cameras will be allowed, but restrictions will

apply after leaving the Post area. We will meet at 10:00 AM in the northwest corner of the K-Mart parking lot off Bataan Memorial E.

(which places us close to the on ramp for Highway 70). It may be necessary to share rides to reduce the number of vehicles entering the Missile Range.

Drivers will need proof of vehicle insurance, registration and a valid driver's license. All passengers in a vehicle will need a government issued picture ID (driver's license or passport). There will be a charge of \$15.00 per person for lunch. ■

J. Paul Taylor Shows His Home to Government Officials report by Felix Pfaeffle

Earlier this year, on February 17, J. Paul Taylor opened his casa on the plaza to government visitors from both Washington, DC and Santa Fe. Senator Bingaman and members of his staff came from our nation's capital and members of the New Mexico State Monuments Directory were invited to view for

the first time the splendid gift J. Paul Taylor and his family have bestowed on the citizens of this state. The always gracious J. Paul opened up his home to the group of approximately 25 persons who admired the extensive collection of numerous family memorabilia, artifacts, paintings, sculptures, photographs, retablos, [Please turn to page 5]



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DACHS Special Programs & Events

- *New Deal Art and Architecture in New Mexico* presented by: Ms. Kathy Flynn on April 17th. 7:00PM Stucky Auditorium
- *White Sands Missile Range field trip* Saturday April 19th. 10:00AM
- *Silver City's Bear Mountain Lodge—the Untold Story* presented by: Donna Eichstaedt May 15th. 7:00PM Stucky Auditorium

April Program “New Deal Art and Architecture in New Mexico”

At the April 17th regular meeting of the Doña Ana County Historical Society, Ms. Kathy Flynn will speak on *New Deal Art and Architecture in New Mexico*. This presentation will be jointly sponsored by DACHS and the Human Systems Research (HSR) Lecture Series. Ms. Flynn is the executive director of the National New Deal Preservation Association, a non-profit organization that focuses on encouraging individuals, organizations, museums and galleries nationwide to join

The Depression of the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt implemented several government programs to provide work

in celebrating the 75th anniversary (in 2008) of the creation of the New Deal programs. During the Depression of the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt implemented several government programs to provide work and economic assistance to Americans. One of the most successful was the Works Progress Administration,

which sponsored the construction of roads, buildings, bridges, parks, and airports.

Through its Federal Arts Project, artists were employed creating works of art in public buildings. New Mexico

benefited from this program, and in Las Cruces we have the recently vacated Doña Ana County Courthouse, between Amador and Lohman as well as the Women’s Improvement Association building at Pioneer Park. Ms. Flynn has a B.A in education from the University of Utah and a M.S. in rehabilitation counsel-

ing from Southern Illinois University. Ms. Flynn has worked in various state

government positions until her retirement in 1998, including serving as administrator of the New Mexico Crippled Children Program and as Deputy Secretary of State.



She will speak immediately after a very brief business meeting that begins at 7:00 p.m. All members of DACHS and all interested persons are welcome to attend this event, which will take place in Good Samaritan Village’s Stucky Auditorium (downstairs in the main activities building at 3011 Buena Vida Drive). ■

DACHS Program REVIEW

“Cricket Coogler Murder”

At the March 20th. regular meeting of the Doña Ana County Historical Society, Las Cruces author Paula Moore presented a talk about her new book, *Cricket in the Web: The 1949 Unsolved Murder That Unraveled New Mexico Politics*. The author, Mrs. Moore, who has lived in Doña Ana County since 1972, retired from NMSU as Executive Assistant to the President. She has published many short stories and poetry in literary journals.

Her interest in local history drew her to research the story of Ovida "Cricket" Coogler, who was last seen alive in downtown Las Cruces on March 31, 1949. The discovery of her body 17 days later launched a series of court

inquiries and trials that would reshape the direction New Mexico politics.

Mrs. Moore spoke immediately after a very brief business meeting at 7:00 p.m. The interesting talk was held at the



Good Samaritan Village’s Stucky Auditorium and produced a few questions and many factual comments with additional information about the murder from audience members. The author took the names of those with more information. Maybe a new book is in the works. The talk was followed by a book sale and book signing. ■

Look for the details of April’s program presentation above.

Roger Rothenmaier's President's Corner for April 2008

I have added another year to my memory book this March, since we last talked. Well, after all this is a Historical Society.

Most of us recently were mailed the MUSE NEWS if you are a member.

I find it to be a very informative newsletter. They get us the lowdown on The Branigan Cultural Center, The Museum of Art, The Museum of Natural History, and The Railroad Museum. It includes a good calendar of events every month. We can't wait for the day the Amador Museum is added to the list.

The New Mexico Magazine is now available on Email. You can sign up on their Website.

Western Days at the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum was great fun, some people think it's for kids, so do I. Especially if you're three quarters of a century young. They had Texas Longhorns all saddled up and riders aboard.

They reminded me of the movie shown at the Farm and Ranch, A few years ago. Four Faces West, a 1948 flick featuring Joel McCrae. Joel rides a Longhorn

across the White Sands, with no saddle. Also starring Frances Dee, and Charles Bickford as Pat Garret.

Leslie Bergloff was very involved with a lot of the planning and execution.

We are continuing to investigate the right place to keep the Mary and J. Paul Taylor Scholarship Endowment funds.

I would guess everyone noticed the article in the Sun News about Mr. John Hoffman and his plans for the Courthouse renovation, good news. ■

Sampling the Frank Parrish Collected Works



When the history of the Mesilla Valley is recalled, too often it is forgotten that a large portion of New Mexico was once part of the Republic of Texas (1836—1845) as this ten dollar bill from Mesilla illustrates



A Confederate note reflecting the period of Confederate occupation in the Mesilla Valley [please turn to page 5]

Pictures and text courtesy of Frank Parrish

Doña Ana County Historical Society Membership News

Welcome to New Members

Doyle Piland (Contributing Member)
Dallas & Margery Bowser

Please Note. This is the last month that membership renewal reminders will be given, if current annual dues have not been received names will be removed from our mailing lists. Once the 2008

membership list is firm, Volume XV of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review will be mailed to members who have not received a copy at the 2008 Banquet or at the monthly meeting.

Converting to Life Membership

John Hoffman
Chuck Murrell
Elaine Szalay **Thank You...**

DACHS Endowment Fund supports Scholarships and Grants

For application forms, criteria eligibility and other requirements or information Call Leslie Bergloff 575 635-0837 or George Helfrich 575 522-3477

Donation are being accepted:

- \$50 level - \$100 level - other

Please consider making a donation to the Mary and J. Paul Taylor Scholarship Endowment Fund. Make checks payable to DACHS Scholarship Endowment Fund and mail to DACHS, P.O. Box 16045, Las Cruces NM 88004 To discuss creating a memorial or estate gift, please contact George Helfrich 575 522-3477

Campaigning, New Mexico Style: *the Mesilla Riot of 1871*

By Vesta Siemers [reprinted from the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review* January 1995]

It has been called the bloodiest tragedy in the history of the Territory of New Mexico. It happened on a Sunday, the 27th of August 1871, more than 120 years ago. Both the Republican and the Democratic parties were well-organized in Dona Ana County. Colonel W. L. Rynerson and John Lemon led the Republicans while Pablo Melendrez and Mariano Barela not only headed the Democrats, but were candidates for probate judge and sheriff

Much cheap campaign whiskey had been provided. No one knows now which agitators from which party first suggested it

respectively. The Democrats planned a rally in La Mesilla. The Republicans also decided to hold a mass meeting there at the same time. Democrat Jose Gallegos was running against Republican Colonel J. Francisco Chavez for Congress. Feelings over this election were so intense that these planned events generated great fear and apprehension among the people of both Las Cruces and La Mesilla. Troops from Fort Selden were summoned to provide security. Businessmen of both towns got the leaders of both parties to hold a peace conference. It was decided to defuse the situation by letting the Democrats hold their meeting in La Mesilla plaza since they had announced it first, and the Republicans agreed to meet in front of John Lemon's home about a block from the plaza.

Both mass meetings were held successfully, and many people had started home. Most thought that all danger was past. Even Horace Stephenson, from La Mesa, had begun the four-mile ride home with his 100 mounted men, all armed with rifles, before the trouble started. Much cheap campaign whiskey had been provided. No one knows now which agitators from which party first suggested it, but each group decided that they should make a ceremonial march around the plaza of La Mesilla. It must be remembered that, at that time, Las Cruces was only a dusty little village while neighboring La Mesilla was the largest town and trade center between San Antonio, Texas,

and San Diego, California. La Mesilla's plaza was thus a prestigious place.

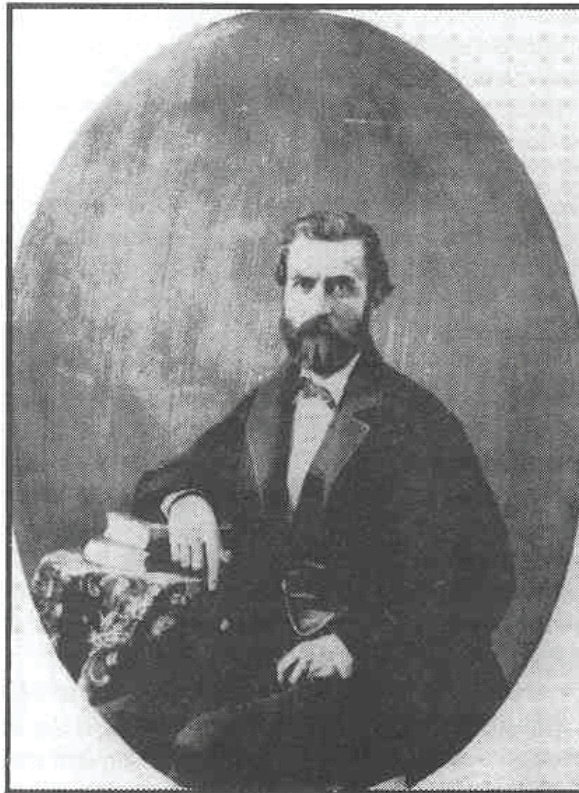
About 3:30 p.m., both parties started marching in opposite directions. They were about in front of the Barela-Reynolds building when they met. As they stopped, a printer named I. N. Kelly, a Democrat, started an angry political shouting match with John Lemon, Republican. When push came to shove, Apolonio Barela somehow fired a pistol, so Kelly, who was carrying a heavy

streets leading out of the plaza. All this added to the panic, and several women and children were injured when they were crushed in the narrow street between Colonel Bennet's home and the building being used as the courthouse. It was sheer terror.

Just a half hour before the melee started, Generals Gregg and Devin, thinking the event had concluded peacefully, had started back to Fort Selden where two companies of the Eighth Cavalry were stationed. A messenger was sent to the officers in transit. They galloped to the fort, though their orders were only to protect the citizens from Apache attacks, not from each other. Despite those orders, they finally decided to go back to the plaza with about 60 cavalymen at about 10 o'clock that same Sunday night. Members of both political parties met them, urging them to camp in the plaza that night, which they did. The following day, 20 soldiers were left in place to keep the peace, and another 15 were stationed in Las Cruces. Colonel Chavez then came to address a meeting in La Mesilla. Thus, both congressional candidates had completed their campaigning in Doña Ana County.

John Lemon had been carried to his home. Realizing that he was dying, he had his will prepared since he had a wife and young children, the oldest boy being about 12 years old. He died that evening.

Nine men had been killed in the plaza, and 40 to 50 men had been seriously wounded. Given the chaos of the situation, it is a wonder that more did not die. Of course, many more had been taken home and treated without notifying anyone. Daniel Freitze, who was running for probate clerk on the Democratic ticket, had Probate Will of John Lemon quoting oral testament made by him on his death bed before witnesses. ■



John Lemon shortly before his death in 1871. He was head of the Republican Party of Doña Ana County. (Photo courtesy of John Lemon Jr., Doña Ana, New Mexico).

ax handle, immediately struck Lemon a powerful blow to the head driving him to the ground. In an instant, Felicito Arroyasy Lueras shot Kelly, killing him, and was, in an immediate return of fire by an unknown, shot through the heart. For ten or fifteen minutes, everyone was fighting and shooting indiscriminately.

At the very moment of the tragic incident, people were coming out of San Albino Church on the plaza, and men, women and children were screaming and rushing for the

J. Paul Taylor Shows His Home to Government Officials

report by Felix Pfaeffle, continued from page - 1

bultos, antique furniture and various Southwestern artifacts assembled by the Taylor's over many years.



J. Paul had asked Chuck Murrell, Jon Hunner and me to help

with "docenting" his home and we were honored to be of assistance.

The visitors, touring the various rooms of the home on the Mesilla Plaza, were impressed by the quality and wide range of the exhibits. This home, in the writer's opinion, is destined to become the "anchor" for the Mesilla Plaza State Monument designation and will attract many admirers and tourists in future days. Our community is extremely fortunate to have this property as a historic manifestation of the tradi-

tions and culture of Southern New Mexico. Senator Bingaman and his people went away with demonstrated gratitude

and a better understanding of the great gift our region has received from the Taylor's. ■



Seated: J. Paul Taylor standing L to R: Judy Martinez, Mary E. Taylor Ratje, Ernesto Garcia, Pat Taylor, Jon.Hunner, Felix Pfaeffle, Nathan Stone, Chuck Murrell

Sampling the Frank Parrish Collected Works

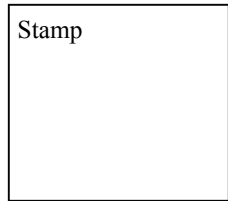
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The fierceness of the Apache is well illustrated by this Apache War Club, fashioned from the fingers of some forgotten victim. Formally in the "Billy the Kid Museum", the George Griggs collection



These shackles are similar to "the ones" Billy the Kid broke out of following his escape from Lincoln. Some unknown "desperado" broke out of these near Tombstone Arizona



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Back Page Story

The First Las Cruces

Millions of years before the dinosaurs, Las Cruces teemed with reptiles and amphibians, whose stories are told in the endless scattering of fossils in nearby mountains and deserts. In the late

1980s, a local paleontologist discovered what the Smithsonian Institute has called, "the world's best-fossilized footprints from the Permian Period." According to geologists, southern New Mexico was covered by a great inland sea 250-300 million years- ago. When the sea retreated, many fossils were left behind.

How We Got Our Name

There are multiple theories as to how Las

Cruces got its name. One theory suggests that sometime during the 18th Century, a

bishop, a Mexican Army colonel, a captain, four trappers and four choir boys were attacked near the Rio Grande

and only one - a boy - survived. Crosses were erected in their honor, and the name, El Pueblo del Jardin de Las Cruces, (the City of the Garden of Crosses), evolved.

Other stories say multiple crosses were erected in the area to mark the grave sites of the many victims of Apache raids. Still another story is that a group of 40 travelers from Taos, New Mexico were killed just as they reached Las Cruces. ■

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Membership Dues: - \$8 Student - \$20 Individual - \$25 Family

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