



# NEWSLETTER

September 2023

Doña Ana County Historical Society

## Eric Liefeld To Speak About The Armijo House

Eric Liefeld will be our first speaker in the fall 2023 series of programs. He will talk about the Armijo house at 7 p.m. on Sept. 21 in the auditorium at the Good Samaritan, 3011 Buena Vida Cr. It is open to the public.

That the Nestor Armijo House stands today with so much architectural integrity is something of a miracle. It has witnessed many births and deaths within its walls. It has housed multiple generations of Armijos over their 100-year tenancy, as well as the Daily, and Barncastle families before them. It has undergone significant structural modifications, fallen into disuse, and been at risk of demolition and collapse. It has always been saved by people who cared. It is now home to the Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce.

People have long rallied around the Armijo House and its history. First listed as a “Building Worthy of Preservation” by the fledgeling Doña Ana County Historical Society at its first meeting in 1967, the house was named to the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties on May 23, 1969. It was subsequently named



to the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 1976.

Eric Liefeld is the President and Founder of Mesilla Valley Preservation, Inc. He is a native of Las Cruces with a Bachelor of Science from New Mexico State University (1985). Mr. Liefeld is President of KTLO, LLC, a small technical marketing consultancy, in operation since 1994. Eric currently serves as President of Mesilla Valley Preservation, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission of preserving the architectural legacy of

the Mesilla Valley and “Preserving the Future of Our Past”. He is actively preserving and renovating historic buildings in the Town of Mesilla, and volunteers with several local preservation efforts. Eric has interests in traditional adobe construction techniques, modern preservation approaches, and the architectural history of the Southwest.



*The Armijo house in the early 20th century. Courtesy photo.*

# Your Historical Society Helping In The Community

By Sally Kading

The Doña Ana County Historical Society has partnered with St. Genevieve church to help preserve the historic older section of San Jose cemetery. This section marks the last resting place for many of the oldest residents of Doña Ana County and Las Cruces specifically.

As early as 1859, St. Genevieve has been keeping burial records. In the cemetery, because of the amount of time that has elapsed, all the original wooden crosses and markers have turned to dust themselves. Many markers made of concrete and more durable materials are broken and lay flat on the ground. Sadly, this gives the historic part of the cemetery the look of an empty lot. In the past people have driven into this area and across graves. If they drive across a flat marker, they may not have seen, the result is more breakage. Names and dates become unreadable. This past year someone drove into this area, collapsed a grave and a wrecker had to be called to retrieve the vehicle.

Working with Rosemary Leyva, historian for St. Genevieve church, DACHS has purchased a gate that now separates this older, open area, from the newer sections of the cemetery. To gain access to this area by car you must check in with the St. Genevieve office next door to get a key to unlock the gates. Walking in is always an option. Simply walk around the end of the gates.

*All photos by Sally Kading.*



*Rosemary Leyva, historian for St. Genevieve church, watches the installation.*



*The outer gate to the San Jose cemetery.*



*Cemetery volunteers Jose and Albert get the inner gate lined up during installation on Aug. 21, 2023.*

## Pat Garrett's Descendants Here For Some History Tourism

The Friends of Pat Garrett hosted Scott Davis (Pat Garrett's great grandson) and Owen Davis (Scott's grandson) in August so young Owen could see some of the history his grandfather has passed

along. In addition to visiting local places and others farther afield, the two Garretts had dinner with the Friends of Pat Garrett at the Double Eagle where Scott thanked the group for its efforts.



*From left to right are: Dan Crow, Elva Osterreich (editor of Desert Exposure), Karla Steen, Owen Davis (on one knee), Scott Davis, Sally Kading and Bob Gamboa. Scott is Pat Garrett's great grandson and Owen is his grandson. Here they are visiting the site just east of Las Cruces where Garrett was shot and killed in 1908. The Friends of Pat Garrett erected the small plaque in the background some years ago to mark the spot. Photo by David Thomas.*

## Last Reminder For Submitting An Article For Next Review

There is still time for you to write a short piece on your family history or maybe an essay for the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*? Or, maybe you know something about the history of a local organization or about some event in our distant or recent past that would make a nice short article for the *Review*. Think about spending a few hours to commit it to paper.

The Doña Ana County Historical Society wants original articles concerning Southern New Mexico history for its next annual *Review* (Volume XXXI, January 2024).

Biography, local and family histories, oral history, student papers and articles focusing on the history of the Southwest and Northern Mexico will be considered. Small monetary awards are available for some pieces. Last year we had a wonderful little essay by Monte Rout about growing up in remote House, NM.

Jim Eckman will be the editor again. All submissions must be made electronically as Word documents. Other formats can be negotiated. Also, we would like end notes instead of footnotes. To submit an article or to ask questions, contact Jim Eckles by email: 19dachs63@gmail.com or by phone at: 575-521-8771. Eckles will act as the middle man and continue to do the layout.

The deadline for final articles will be sometime in October.

More information is available on the society's website at: <http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.org/HistoricalReview/Reviews.html>.

## Positions Available On Board

The DACHS board of directors has several openings as well as some officer positions. If you would like to volunteer to help this organization continue to support the community, contact Dennis Daily. His phone number is 575-646-4756.

# The Back Page -----

*We are certainly a Billy the Kid state. Discovered this BTK sculpture in the Range Cafe in Los Lunas this summer when passing through. He is kind of hidden in the back near the restrooms. Maybe trying to find a backdoor escape.*



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