

DOÑA ANA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Committed to encouraging and promoting a greater appreciation and knowledge of the historical and cultural heritage of Southern New Mexico since 1963.



58th Annual Awards Banquet

January 25, 2025

Welcome.....Dennis Daily, DACHS President

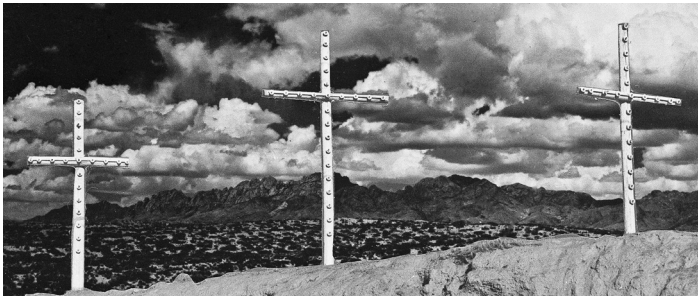
Lunch.....La Posta

Installation of 2025 Officers and Board Members.....Dennis Daily

Awards Presentation.....Faith Hutson, DACHS Awards Committee

A Property With Historical Significance

Today, we assign significance to the three crosses that have marked the north entrance to Las Cruces since 1940 when they were first erected for the 400th anniversary of Coronado's expedition into southern New Mexico. The crosses commemorate the story of how Las Cruces was named. The prevailing version is that a party of travelers was attacked and many killed by the Apache somewhere north of Las Cruces, where trails/roads crossed the valley. Later travelers noted the crosses from those burials and called it the "place of crosses."



The original crosses, made of poles and painted white, with the light sockets installed for lighting them during December. The middle cross was 20' tall with the other two being 14' high. These were replaced with the metal crosses in 1970. NMSU Archive and Special Collections photo.

A Building Worthy Of Preservation

Tommy's Roller Rink at 100 E. Willoughby was a community gathering center for skating sessions and special events for decades beginning in the early 1950s. The building now houses Out of the Blue, a printing company. Farzin Zehtabian, the owner, has expressed a keen interest in the building's history and is trying to preserve some of the flavor of this old recreational facility. The Tommy's iconic sign still stands atop the building and inside the maple skating floor is still in place.



Gemoets Prize-Outstanding Article, The 2025 Southern New Mexico Historical Review

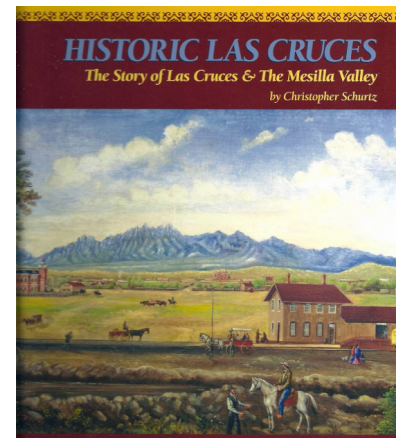
To Doyle Daves for his article “Helen Haines, Age 19, Author of History of New Mexico (1891).” Daves says Haines was probably one of the youngest authors of a real history book at the age of 19. According to Doyle, she wrote her large volume without ever leaving New York. To top it off she never attended school but was home-schooled by her mother. What Daves has done is provide us with some of the book’s short biographical sketches of some of the pioneers of southern New Mexico, people we might be interested in.

Hiram Hadley Prize-Outstanding Article On Pioneer History, The Southern New Mexico Historical Review

To Frank Brito for his article “Treachery and Tragedy in Sonora at the Cañon de Los Embudos.” Brito recounts the last days of the Apache in Arizona and New Mexico in the 1880s as they are hunted by the U.S. Army. He focuses on the ill-fated conference between Geronimo and General Crook and writes about how he and friends found the site. They recreated some of the famous photos from the conference.

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award

To Christopher Schurtz for his book *Historic Las Cruces: The Story of Las Cruces & The Mesilla Valley*. It was published in 2012 by the Foundation for Las Cruces Museums and unfortunately isn’t available anymore. Much of the back portion of the book is taken up with commercial profiles which doesn’t detract from Chris’s well researched chapters depicting some of the historical highlights of Las Cruces. The photos he used are beautiful. Christopher is a New Mexico historian who focuses on the history of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley. A former reporter for the Las Cruces Sun-News, Schurtz has a master’s degree in history from NMSU and is the author of more than a hundred articles about local history. In addition, Schurtz has taught courses in U.S. history, public history, and military history at New Mexico State University and El Paso CC.



Old Timer’s Award

The slot canyon 4.2 miles north of the Blue Moon Bar in Radium Springs is recognized as a natural phenomenon important to the local communities. The hike up through the canyon has become a family favorite as even young children can handle the walk. While the canyon is only about ½ mile long, it snakes through a conglomerate sedimentary formation with walls sometimes over 60 feet high. The rough rock and gravel walls are evidence that the material was laid down by the Rio Grande during past floods. At the top of the canyon, hikers suddenly find themselves walking on basalt from a lava flow that once covered the canyon’s sediments.

Endangered Historic Properties

A row of houses on the north side of the 1200 block of University Avenue is recognized. Three are pictured below. They were built in the 1930s during the Depression so they are simple and small – around 1,000 square feet. The houses we are recognizing are now some of the few structures left from that period of the university’s history. Presumably they once housed faculty or staff from the college. They are being listed because similar houses just to the east were razed last year on University Ave. without much notice.

