

Newsletter

April 2007



Dona Ana Historical Society

Our next Meeting

“LAS CRUCES in 1881”

Doña Ana County Historical Society April program by Pat Beckett. Thursday, April 19, 2007 at 7:00PM at the Stuckey Auditorium, University Terrace Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vida Circle.

The new year of 1881 springs Las Cruces from a sleepy small adobe village to the beginning of a growing city. The name of the local newspaper was changed three times to honor court orders. The Las Cruces Police Department was started and paid for by local merchants and concerned citizens. The question of who was sheriff and treasurer of Dona Ana County went back and forth throughout the year. Mining activities skyrocketed in the Organ Mountains. With the arrival of the railroad on April 26, 1881, allowing goods and building supplies to be readily obtainable, Las Cruces would become the county seat January of 1882. *see Pat Beckett's biography on page 2*

President's Stuff

Many of you attended the March 18th Historical society meeting at the beautiful Rio Grande Theater. What a super venue for a history lesson! The presentations were excellent and there was a good sized audience. This was a cooperative effort with BCC, CARTA, and with help from the U.S. Park Service. Pat Beckett was the moderator. Good job, Pat.

Ms. Leslie Bergloff is now heading up our Education committee, Congrats to her. I am sure she will do a bang up job.

Mr. Bob Pick has agreed to be our representative on the committee for planning the Las Cruces Centennial party. We will be 100 years old this November and the City is planning a big bash.

Marcie Palmer, Donna Eichstaedt, and Susan Krueger are way ahead of the game for the awards for our January banquet. They still need good ideas from the membership.

We are looking for someone to head up our trip effort for this fall and maybe our picnic this September. This might be a good opportunity for a husband and wife effort.

The board has after some discussion decided to change the wording on our Website and other documents to read Cultural Heritage rather than “Tricultural.” *continued on page 3*

Patrick H. Beckett

Patrick H. Beckett, archaeologist, ethnohistorian, bookstore owner, and publisher. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in geography from New Mexico State University, and a Master of Arts degree in anthropology from Eastern New Mexico State University.

Pat has written over 80 archaeological and historical articles, reports and books. While director of the Cultural Resources Management Division at New Mexico State University, he was the principal investigator of 209 archaeological projects. He served ten years as chairman of the Cultural Properties Review Committee for the state of New Mexico, served six years on the New Mexico Historical Archives and Records Advisory Board, is a former president of the New Mexico Archaeological Council, former president of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, and currently he is president of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (CARTA).

He has had numerous awards, some of which include:

- The Award of Distinction from the El Paso Archaeological Society (2003)
- Victor Stoner Award from the Arizona State Museum and Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society (2001)
- Branigan Cultural Center Foundation's "Above and Beyond" Award (2001)
- A book put out in his honor, *La Frontera* from the Archaeological Society of New Mexico (1999)
- *The Mansos*, coauthored with Terry Corbett, was given the "Best Researched Book on the Border" award by the Southwest Border Regional Library Association (1994)
- appreciation of Service award from the Texas Archeological Society (1993)
- Hall of Fame award by the Doña Ana County Historical Society (1991)
- New Mexico Heritage Preservation award from the State of New Mexico (1990)
- the Award of Appreciation for Archaeology in the State of New Mexico by the New Mexico Archaeological Council (1988)
- the title of Honorary Tiwa Indian awarded by Los Indios de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, Tortugas, New Mexico (1981)
- and Certificate of "Outstanding Laboratory Work in Anthropology," from the Paleo-Indian Institute at Eastern New Mexico University (1970)

A contribution to the "Mud Wagon" Controversy

Although in most instances in the West, a Concord coach was used, in some cases the conveyance was a "mud wagon." A mud wagon was a stage coach with canvas top and sides, so as to reduce weight on muddy or rougher roads. It also cost only about half that of a full Concord coach.

James F. Rusling, shortly after the Civil War, proceeded to the West Coast in one of the stages. In his book, *The Great West and Pacific Coast*, he was at first impressed by the comfort of the coach and the quality of the horses:

We found his [Holladay's] stages to be our well-known Concord coaches, and they quite surpassed our expectations, both as to comfort and to speed. They were intended for nine inside--three seats full--and as many more out-side, as could be induced to get on. Their teams were either four or six horses, depending on the roads, and the distance between stations. The animals

themselves were our standing wonder; no broken-down nags, or half-starved Rosinantes, like our typical stage horses east; but, as a rule, they were fat and fiery, and would have done credit to a horseman anywhere. The stage would ordinarily make 100 or 125 miles a day, with the only stops the briefest sort at the swing stations(12 to 20 miles apart), merely to change the horses. As the stage approached the station, the driver would blow a horn or give a loud wild "warwhoop," similar to a rebel yell, to alert the station attendant who would then have the next team ready when the coach pulled into the station. With a fast change, the stage was off again. The only stop for the benefit of the passengers would be a brief, forty-minute stop for meals and a change of drivers at "home stations" located forty or fifty miles apart..
(Excerpt from "Overland Stage-Wyoming Tales & Trails")

Name _____

Address _____

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Membership Fees:

Individual \$ 15 Student \$ 8 Benefactor \$ 150

Family \$ 20 Contributor \$ 40 Life \$ 300

Memberships are active for the calendar year of enrollment. Membership in the Society is deductible within legal limits for Federal and State income tax purposes. If you are unsure of your status, please call Membership Chairman, George Helfrich, at 522-3477.

Doña Ana County Historical Society

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www.zianet.com/dachs

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