



# Newsletter

May 2007

**Dona Ana Historical Society**

## **Our next Meeting**

***George Griggs and the Billy the Kid Museum  
(An Overview of the History of the Mesilla Valley)***

**Doña Ana County Historical Society May program**

**by Frank Parrish.**

**Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 7:00pm at the Stucky Auditorium,  
University Terrace Good Samaritan Village,  
3011 Buena Vida Circle.**

Frank's talk will center around George Griggs and his many endeavors, but mainly focusing on the history of the Mesilla Valley. Using the "Billy the Kid" Museum as a venue, Griggs introduced the visitor to the wealth of history of the Mesilla Valley using the famous collection of the "Billy the Kid" artifacts as attention getters. Once inside, the visitor was exposed to all manner of artifacts relating to the Mesilla Valley!

Frank's presentation, accompanied by a film, will include many items from his own collection, many of which were once in the George Griggs Museum.

## President's Stuff

Where has all the time gone? It seems we just had our gala Banquet. This may be our last newsletter before summer break. As you know, we pause for the summer, some to evade the heat, some to visit relatives and friends. My wife and I do both, we make our annual migration to

There has been a little confusion regarding the 100th city celebration, mostly regarding the date. Nineteen hundred and seven is the date that Las Cruces was incorporated as a town according to the City's Website. Who are we to argue with

Ms. Barbara Jean Neal has regretfully resigned her position as a member of our board. We will miss her. We would also be very happy to have someone volunteer to fill that position.

By the time you read this we may have more information regarding the

Plan with the University. We have slipped a little in that regard lately so it would be super if we got that off the ground.

*continued on page 3*

## Looking Back with Gratitude to DACHS' Early Days

In 1992, Linda Harris, then Vice President of DACHS included among other projects the future publication of the DACHS history. After a few years Madeleine Vessel, who had served the Society in a number of assignments, but chiefly as the DACHS Historian in the '90's, published a book entitled *DOÑA ANA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1963 – 1994*.

Your newsletter editor recently re-read this publication and encourages every member of our Society to do likewise. The 124-page book is a well-written treatise dealing with the foundation of our group and contains many thoughtful reminders why this organization came into being. All of us are interested in furthering greater appreciation of our local history. That is, after all, why we signed up to become members.

We owe it to the founders and early members, who worked so hard to bring this society into being, to reflect on their hard work and dedication. Without them, we would not have a viable organization which continues to build awareness of the historical significance of Doña Ana County.

The “establishment of historical collections and museums” is listed as one of the most important goals in the preamble of the DACHS 1963 bylaws. Whereas former members have made remarkable progress in most of the areas stipulated as goals, the establishment of a historical museum had to be postponed. Over the years your society had made many valiant efforts to further this goal and has only recently reached some important milestones in this regard. The acquisition of the Amador Hotel by the City and its assignment as a future historical museum is a significant accomplishment. Now is the time to concentrate on this effort. It is critically important that our membership supports the “Amador Museum” drive.

Consider these excerpts from Madeleine Vessel's book: “...*The Society's first artifacts were six 90 – 100 year old cannonballs found at Ft. Selden. They were still loaded and dangerous. After their de-activation at Ft. Bliss they were handed over to General Milton for the newly established DACHS. Lacking a museum to exhibit the six cannon balls, the DACHS stored four of them in the vault at the First National Bank of Doña Ana County, where General Milton was Vice President...*”

“...*the collection included an early 25-star United States flag from 1836, which was mounted for DACHS*

at Ft. Bliss at the request of Gen. Milton. Because it was so large and so heavy after it was mounted, it was stored in the basement of the First National Bank where it remains today...”

“...when DACHS members recognized the Amador Hotel as a building worthy of preservation in 1969, they became aware that generations of Amadors had been collecting artifacts to display in the hotel since it was built in the mid-nineteenth century. As a consequence, when it was announced that artifacts from the Amador Hotel were going to be auctioned off, DACHS president Calvin L. Traylor appointed a committee to bid up to \$ 450 for items which were historically significant. When the committee viewed the artifacts on June 19, 1970, however, no bids were made. Many of the items, which had been collected from around the world, were historically significant, ‘but there was nothing in the auction that was vital to the county's history record’...”

“...in 1964 the ATSF offered an old locomotive to DACHS if the Society would keep it painted and properly taken care for in a fenced area. As DACHS had no property and very little money, a plan was formed to negotiate with NMSU to collaborate in bringing the locomotive to Las Cruces. In September 1966, having failed to attract NMSU's interest, the Society approached the City of Las Cruces for assistance- once again, without success. Finally, in February 1967, ATSF announced the locomotive had been promised elsewhere...”

The DACHS Collection contains many other items referred to in Chapter 6 of Madeleine Vessel's book. It is a litany of lost opportunities and a reminder that our Society should honor the efforts of its founders and the hard work of many former and present members and should redouble its efforts in securing a permanent central home for historical artifacts now stored and many others probably available as donations from individuals in our community in the future.



*President's Stuff cont'd from page 1*

We are now publishing the award forms for the banquet on the Website and the newsletter. This should give more members a chance to have a say. Check out the Website.

The Website, thanks to Mary Lou, has a link to the SNMHR explaining submittals and criteria for the same. Rick Hendricks is always looking for new articles and would like submittals as early as possible. This material is also available on the newsletter. Felix is interested in receiving submittals for use in the newsletter.

Possibly someone may be interested in doing a monthly column.

By this time you all know that DACHS has awarded J. Paul Taylor with an Honorary Membership to the Doña Ana County Historical Society. No one in the Mesilla Valley has done more for his beloved Mesilla, Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and New Mexico than J. Paul Taylor. We thank you, Paul!

Have a nice summer!  
Roger



### **Text of Taylor Resolution**

*In recognition of the many contributions that J. Paul Taylor has made to increasing the quality of life and preserving the history of Doña Ana County and*  
*Whereas, J. Paul Taylor and his family have donated the family home in Mesilla to the State of New Mexico for the purpose of creating a State Monument and*  
*Whereas J. Paul Taylor has been recognized as a leading educator in Las Cruces and Southern New Mexico and has been recognized as a trusted and honorable representative of the people of Southern New Mexico, having served nine terms in the New Mexico Legislature and*  
*Whereas, J. Paul Taylor is a founding member of the Doña Ana County Historical Society and continues to be a friend and supporter of the mission*  
*of the Society, it is hereby resolved by the members of the Society that he be recognized as an Honorary Life Member.*

The motion shown on the left presented to the full membership on 4/19/07, there being no discussion the resolution passed unanimously.

### **Southern New Mexico Historical Review Call for Articles**

The Society needs articles for the next issue of The Southern New Mexico Historical Review. The Review seeks original articles concerning the Southwestern Border Region. Local and family histories, oral history, bibliography, and well-edited documents are welcome.

It is preferred that material submitted be sent directly to the Editor via e-mail or on a disc in Microsoft Word or in WordPerfect. The format of the Review has been chosen to provide a pleasing appearance and to provide consistency from issue to issue. The Chicago Style has been chosen so that all articles have consistent punctuation, footnotes, etc.; which thereby reduces the effort required to publish. However, material submitted but not adhering to the desired style will still be considered and the editorial staff will make required conversion as necessary if selected for publication.

The Editor, Mr. Rick Hendricks may be reached by e-mail at [rhend03@comcast.net](mailto:rhend03@comcast.net) or by USPS at P.O. Box 3135, Las Cruces N.M. 88001-5066

A link to a complete list of style suggestions may be found on the DACHS website at [www.donaanacountyhistsoc.com](http://www.donaanacountyhistsoc.com)

## Welcome New Members

Dan, Janet and Amanda Shearin  
Aaron Diaz  
Jan Reed



### Membership

This is the last month that we will send the newsletter to past members that have not renewed their membership. Remember that membership is for the calendar year. If you have a question regarding your status please call George Helfrich at 522-3477. If there is a red dot on your mail label, you need to renew.

#### NEW MEXICO TRIVIA

Soap was once made by New Mexico settlers from what plant?

accuY

Please renew/enroll my/our membership in the Doña Ana Historical Society. A check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### 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**  
**P.O.Box 16045**  
**Las Cruces, NM 88004**  
**[www..zianet.com/dachs](http://www..zianet.com/dachs)**

#### 2005 Officers:

President - Dr. Chuck Murrell  
Past President – Austin Hoover  
Vice President – Roger Rothenmaier  
Secretary – Donna Eichstaedt  
Treasurer – George Helfrich  
Historian – Karen George  
Board Members-at-Large -  
Marcie Palmer  
Felix Pfaeffle  
Buddy Ritter  
Wanda Tourney  
Newsletter Editor – Felix Pfaeffle  
Public Relations – Mary Lou Pendergrass

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