



Newsletter

April 2006

Dona Ana Historical Society

PRESIDENT'S STUFF

This newsletter has been pushed back a bit because of various meetings, luncheons, and activity brought about by the push toward finding our Society's place and stance in relation to the Amador Hotel and it's future. We have always been vocal about finding a use for the historic buildings after the County moves. As you know by now, the County Court House and the County's car dealership properties have each received a bid that the County Commission deemed valid and those bids will probably be certified by the State and the property sold. The Amador received no bid.

Your Board and the Dona Ana County Historic Buildings Advisory Committee has felt that the absence of a true Historical Museum has been a glaring hole in the Las Cruces cultural landscape. We understand that the City would probably not be able to pay for a building, but if the building were to be donated they would be more likely to be able to handle the maintenance and other expenses. A new City Museum Administrator, Will Ticknor, is now on the job with a competent staff who can begin the development of this new historic section of the museum system without recreating another administration within the City. His budget will need support as the Museum structure is expanded. The County, having disposed of most of the vacant property at appraised value, would be able to leave a legacy of support for the downtown area by donating the Amador to the City. So we feel that as public awareness is enhanced and the many advantages of a truly Historical Museum are spelled out, the preservation of the Hotel and the addition of a museum are true win-win situations for all concerned.

I hope you feel the same and will support the project by letting your City Councilors and County Commissioners know how you feel. We also know that any undertaking like this will need leadership and volunteer help from local residents. Money will need to be raised at the local, private level as well as the State and National level. Again, I trust that our membership will be available in all areas.

My thanks to Buddy Ritter for his leadership in helping organize the recent museum initiative and contacting City and County officials. He also helped bring us wonderful publicity through the Sun News. The DACHS Board and the DAC Historic Buildings Advisory Committee have spent many hours working toward saving the buildings and finding the best use to recommend for the buildings. It also should be said that an interactive museum (not just a repository for artifacts) will help draw people into downtown. The Farm and Ranch Museum is attracting and involving a very diversified clientele in the history of Agriculture and it's time to do the same for area history in general. It will be good for downtown as well as future generations.

The March program presented by Dr. Peggy Swoveland on her family's history as Asian emigrants to the valley was well attended. Peggy received good interest in her talk and had many compliments as well.

The red dot on the newsletter indicates your dues are due. See you on April 20th!

Chuck

April 20 Meeting

Mr. James W. Hurst Guest Speaker
*The Attack on Columbus, New Mexico,
March 9, 1916*

Jim is a resident of Mesilla since 1993, and a member of the Dona Ana County Historical Society. James W. Hurst, Professor Emeritus (History) Joliet IL Junior College. Jim taught history for thirty five years. His interests are in the history of the southwest, and research using the libraries of New Mexico State University, the State Records Center and Archives, and the State Library, Santa Fe. Hiking camping, photographing, and exploring in Southern New Mexico and Arizona are also high on his list of activities.

Jim's writing has ranged from scholarly to popular, and he has published articles and reviews in the following journals and/or magazines: *Eire-Ireland*; *The Review of Politics*; *Science and Society*; *The History teacher*; an entry on the *Fenian Brotherhood in Irish American Volunteer Organizations*; *Community College Social Science Quarterly*; *Grays Sporting Journal*, and *Fur, Fish, and Game*. Jim is the author of the recently released book, *The Villista Prisoners of 1916-17* (Las Cruces NM The Yucca Tree Press) winner of the Southwest Book Award 2001. The book deals with the March 9 raid on Columbus NM by Francisco "Pancho" Villa and the fate of Villa's bandits who were apprehended during the raid and its immediate aftermath. A number of Villistas who were in the raiding party were brought back from Mexico by General Pershing's expedition 1916-17 and were tried in Deming, New Mexico for murder. The book details the trials, executions and imprisonment of the Villistas. Jim has a book manuscript presently under consideration for publication, **Black Jack's Expedition**, a narrative of the Punitive Expedition. Jim was educated in the public schools of Chicago, Illinois. He has a Bachelors and Masters degree from Southern Illinois University and a certificate of Advanced Study from Northern Illinois University. He has done research and studied at Trinity College, Dublin, the National Library of Ireland, and the State Paper Office, Dublin Castle.



Gadsden Museum Visit

Our planned visit to the Gadsden Museum on April 22nd has raised considerable interest. As a result, spaces are very limited. As of April 1st, two openings for the 10:00 visit and eight openings for the 1:30 visit are available. Please call Karen George at 233-3529 if you want to avail yourself of this opportunity.

Meet Our DACHS Board Members

Donna Eichstaedt, president of DACHS from 2003-4 was born in Peoria, Illinois, raised in Morton, Normal and Chicago, Illinois, and moved to Las Cruces with her husband Carl in 1992. Both Donna and Carl have been professors--she of History at Illinois State University and Lincoln College and Carl at Illinois State University.

Donna started at Illinois State as an academic advisor, taught Native American History and History of American Women classes, and earned a



doctorate in History in 1990. From 1981 to 1993, she served Lincoln College as director of the Bloomington/Normal non campus and later, as Associate Dean. Donna and Carl have 2 daughters, Annie and Susie, and 5 grandchildren: Gabriel, Cory, Carly, Jackson and Lanie. Donna teaches for the Doña Ana Branch Community College, serves as DACHS secretary, and is a writer and researcher specializing in Oral History and World War II. She has published extensively in various publications in the Southwest, and is currently working on a manuscript on the Bear Mountain Lodge in Silver City, NM.

Human Systems Research Presentations

Friday, April 7, 2006: Canada Alamosa Archaeological Tour. HSR is currently taking reservations for an all day tour to the Monticello Box Canyon, northwest of Truth or Consequences, to visit HSR's Canada Alamosa Project area where archaeologists have been working for the past 7 years. The 8th field season will commence June 1, 2006. The tour includes seeing the Pinnacle Ruin, a 200+ room site dating from 1350 AD and the Victorio Site is a 440-room multi-component pueblo site.

The tour fee is \$20 per person and is limited to 25 people. A packet of information will be provided prior to the tour. For reservations and more information, please contact Deb Dennis at (505) 524-9456.

Friday, April 21, 2006: An Archaeological and Plant Tour of the Oliver Lee Ranch. HSR is currently taking reservations for an all day tour to the Oliver Lee State Park in Dog Canyon just south of Alamogordo. Led by Helen Shields, project director in HSR's Tularosa office and native plant expert, the trip will focus on the blooming plants of Dog Canyon and the history of the ranch house. HSR carried out excavations of the Oliver Lee Ranch house in 1984 and assisted in the transfer of the property from the federal government to the state of New Mexico to create the Oliver Lee State Park.

The tour fee is \$20 per person (all park fees are waived for this event) and is limited to 25 people. A packet of information will be provided prior to the tour. For reservations and more information, please contact Deb Dennis at (505) 524-9456.

The lectures are held at 7:00 pm in the auditorium of the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village Social Center at 3011 Buena Vida Circle in Las Cruces. Refreshments will be served after the lecture and it is free and open to the public.

E-mail, USPS and our web site

Last month the Society's newsletter costs were reduced by 50% after we started e-mailing the newsletter. Our friendly and efficient Post Office has a new service; they now place in our postal box mangled newsletters in plastic envelopes with their apologies. We resend ones if the mail label survives. If you wish to start receiving your newsletter via e-mail, please send your e-mail address to dachslcnm@aol.com and we will add you to the list. Send your e-mail address in any case so we can send a meeting reminder. You can also see the newsletter and other interesting things on our web site www.zianet.com/dachs

Amador - Courthouse Update

On March 27, 2006 a special DACHS Board meeting was called at which the future of the old Amador Hotel and the Courthouse was discussed. At that time a bid for the appraised value (\$1,000,000) of the Courthouse had been received by the County but no bids had been received for the Amador. Consistent with negotiations initiated by Buddy Ritter with the County and the City of Las Cruces, the Board approved submission of a proposal to the County "that ownership of the Amador be transferred from the Dona Ana County to the City of Las Cruces, with the understanding that it will become a History Museum



operated by the City". The proposal was submitted on 3/31/06 at the advertised time in accordance with County Purchasing Department instructions. On 3/28/06, at a County Commission meeting, acceptance of the bid for the Courthouse occurred. The bidder was Amador Associates LLC and is represented by Mr. Edgar Lopez with Mr. Lundeen as the architect. Amador Associates proposes conversion of the Courthouse into condominium type apartments. Plans call for conversion of the jail addition for the same purpose except that the outside appearance will be made to match that of the original Courthouse. The County has promised to attach covenants to the sale of both buildings requiring that the external appearance of the buildings be maintained. There will be a joint meeting on April 18th between both the City and the County at which time the future of the Amador should be decided. A recommendation from the Dona Ana County Historic Building Advisory Committee was made to the County in favor of the plan.

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

Enjoy a day helping young people learn to love history! Be a judge for the National History Day regional contest being held on April 18th and 19th at the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum. Contest categories include papers, exhibits, documentaries and performances. If you can help, please call Leslie Bergloff, the regional coordinator, at 522-4100 or by e-mail at leslie.bergloff@state.nm.us

New Members:
Linda & Shawna Pinto
Bob & Xandy Church
Kito Kato
Mark & Billie Jean Thompson

Thanks to Contributing Member:
Mark Thompson

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.



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

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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