
An empty niche in the written story of New Mexico has been filled admirably by this book. Southeastern New Mexico, defined as about 41% of the state’s square mileage, is bordered on the south and east by Texas; it extends northward to the Canadian Escarpment (almost to Fort Union) and westward to the central mountain chains (Sacramentos, Jicarillas, etc.).

The author writes that "No element of the great morality play of the Westward Movement is missing from the saga of southeastern New Mexico." (279) She surveys the physical characteristics of the land, the immigration of people in prehistoric times, the various Indian cultures, the impact of the Spanish conquest, and the coming of cattlemen, outlaws, railroad and canal builders, dreamers and visionaries, and especially politicians. She quotes Lew Wallace, governor from 1878 to 1881, as saying: "Every calculation based on experience elsewhere fails in New Mexico." (133). The New Mexico experience is vividly brought to life in the

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The ribbon cutting ceremony on April 24 at the Mesilla Town Hall at 2231 Avenida de Mesilla was a historic event hosted by mayor Michael M. Cadena, as shown cutting the ribbon and was attended by Mesilla city officials and many local residents interested in honoring J. Paul Taylor.

The guest of honor was retired state representative and Mesilla resident J. Paul Taylor. A reception followed the ceremony. There was also a museum display as shown above. The museum features the April 1881 trial of Billy the Kid with historical photos and artifacts including the barber chair the Kid sat in before his trial.

The visitor center is staffed by “Amigos” who are dedicated volunteers who love Mesilla and are eager to promote the culture and historical qualities that make Old Mesilla unique.

The J. Paul Taylor Visitor Center is equipped with brochures, videos, restaurant menus and other interesting information on the area. The center has a great collection of old photos that adorn the walls dating back to the late 1800’s.

DACHS Program REVIEW

“New Deal Art and Architecture in New Mexico”

At the April 17th regular meeting of the Doña Ana County Historical Society, Ms. Kathy Flynn spoke on New Deal Art and Architecture in New Mexico. This presentation was part of a Lecture Series. Ms. Flynn is the executive director of the National New Deal Preservation Association, a non-profit organization that focuses on encouraging individuals, organizations, museums and galleries nationwide to join in celebrating the 75th anniversary (in 2008) of the creation of the New Deal programs. Ms. Flynn spoke of the Depression of the 1930s and President Franklin Roosevelt implementing several government programs to provide work and economic assistance to Americans. One of the most successful was the Works Progress Administration, which sponsored the construction of roads, buildings, bridges, parks, and airports. Through its Federal Arts Project, artists were employed creating works of art in public buildings. New Mexico benefited from this program, and in Las Cruces we have the recently vacated Doña Ana County Courthouse, between Amador and Lohman as well as the Women’s Improvement Association building at Pioneer Park. The talk was followed by a book sale.
May Meeting … On May 15, Dr. John Bloom will speak to the Doña Ana County Historical Society regular meeting that begins at 7:00 p.m. His subject, "Johnny Gringo on El Camino Real," deals with the life of the U.S. soldier during the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-48. Bloom, a native New Mexican, has deep family roots in Las Cruces. His grandfather, John R. McFie, was a founder of NMSU, and his mother, Maude McFie Bloom, graduated from there in 1903.

April Newsletter Correction ***
Several comments were received regarding a photo in the April Newsletter that was labeled “City Hall.” The building shown was actually the old Masonic Lodge built in 1911 and demolished in 1973 as part of the urban renewal program. The building had no relation to the New Deal public works program of the 1930s. - George Helfrich

Doña Ana County Historical Society Membership News

Board Membership Changes …
Roger Rothenmaier has resigned as president due to upcoming knee surgery and travel plans this Fall. It is hoped that he will remain on the Board as a Past President.

Felix Pfaeffle has resigned from the Board and as Newsletter Editor because of an increase in hearing loss that has made it difficult for him to participate in meetings. Felix will continue to help with audio/visual projects and the newsletter.

Leslie Bergloff has resigned from the Board as she is moving to El Paso. As chair of the Education Committee, she will be difficult to replace and greatly missed.

Richard Majestic has volunteered to take over the newsletter as editor.

Please consider making a donation to the Mary and J. Paul Taylor Scholarship Endowment Fund. Make checks payable to DACHS Scholarship Endowment Fund and mail to DACHS, P.O. Box 16045, Las Cruces NM 88004. To discuss creating a memorial or estate gift, please contact George Helfrich 575 522-3477.
middle section of the book where she details New Mexico history through the lives of assorted characters who lived it and made it: John Chisum, Billy the Kid, members of the various factions involved in the Lincoln County Wars, members of the Santa Fe Ring, Pat Garrett, Joseph C. Lea, Martin Corn, John Poe, J. P. White, J. J. Hagerman, and many others. Within the state, the southeastern region is presented as distinctive and different because of four major features: the economic and cultural links with Texas, the critically important role of water both in the location of communities and in agricultural development, the social and economic segregation along ethnic lines, and the role of a small number of powerful men who successfully engineered change and helped to set New Mexico on the road from territorial status to statehood (232).

Central to the book’s theme is the reality of the frontier and its significance in shaping the emergence of southeastern New Mexico as a vibrant and viable part of the American West. This area may indeed be the "forgotten frontier": it was certainly among the last of the western frontiers to be settled. In the author’s view, “...because this is a place still in the process of being discovered... it may be the destiny of southeastern New Mexico to be forever frontier.” (287).

Author Carole Larson is a journalist who lives in Roswell, New Mexico, and who has been, for many years, a staff writer for the Roswell Daily Record. Through the years, she has been an enthusiastic supporter and member of the Historical Society for Southeastern New Mexico.

Reviewer: the late Julia K. Wilke of Las Cruces, New Mexico

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Membership Dues: ☐ $8 Student ☐ $20 Individual ☐ $25 Family
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