

John Bloom - MAY Program Speaker

"Johnny Gringo on the Camino Real"

JOHN BLOOM: will be DACHS May speaker "Johnny Gringo on the Camino Real". All DACHS members and interested persons are welcome to attend this event, at the Good Samaritan Village's Stucky Auditorium at 7 PM (downstairs in the main activities building at 3011 Buena Vida Drive).

Dr. John Porter Bloom, a native New Mexico, has had a remarkable career. A veteran of WWII, John received an M.A. from George Wash-



ington University and a Ph.D. from Emory University—both in U.S. history. He taught in the Department of History at UTEP, worked for the National Park Service, was Senior Specialist

for Western History at the National Archives, and in the 1980's was Director of the Holt-Atherton Center for Western Studies at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. He has published

scholarly books, papers, articles and book reviews in professional journals and

been a member of numerous historical associations. He is co-founder and charter member of the Western History Association, Life member and Secretary of the Historical Society of New Mexico, member and organizer of CARTA (Camino Real Trail Association.) and, for 7 years, served as secretary for DACHS. His scholarly publications include editing for, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Papers of the Sesquicentennial Symposium*; *The American Territorial System*; *The Territorial Papers of the U.S.*; *Soldier and Brave*; as well as numerous articles and book reviews in professional journals. ■

Book Review: FORGOTTEN FRONTIER The Story of Southeastern New Mexico by Carole Larson - Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993

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 peoples in prehistoric times, the various Indian cultures, the impact of the Spanish conquest, and the coming of cat-

tlemen, 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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DACHS upcoming Programs & Events

- **Silver City's Bear Mountain Lodge—the Untold Story** presented by: Donna Eichstaedt Sep 18th. 7:00PM Stucky Auditorium
- **DACHS Annual Picnic**, Sep watch for date
- **Father Grange of San Albino, Mesilla** presented by: Ms. Frankie Miller Oct 16th 7:00PM Stucky Auditorium

MESILLA TOWN HALL

J. PAUL TAYLOR VISITOR CENTER

The Grand Opening of the J. Paul Taylor Visitor Center in Mesilla

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



J. Paul Taylor

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. ■



Mesilla Mayor Michael M. Cadena cuts the ribbon that officially opened the J. Paul Taylor Visitor Center



A mariachi band entertained the ribbon cutting attendees

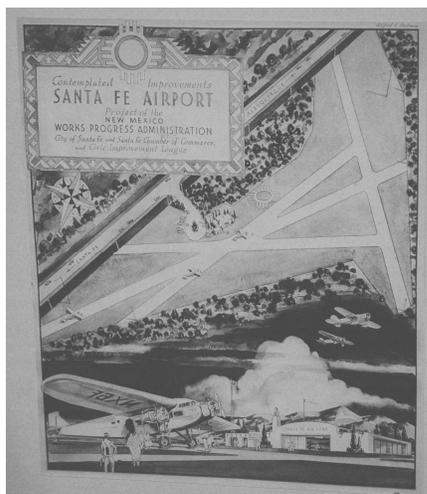
DACHS Program REVIEW

"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. ■

George Helfrich's President's Comments for May 2008

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

He retired from the National Archives in Washington, D.C., after serving for 17 years as Senior Specialist in Western

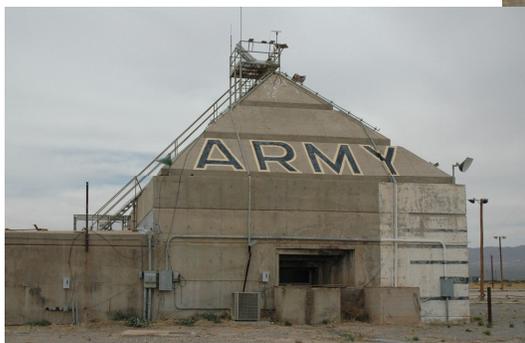
April Newsletter Correction ***
Several comments were received regarding a photo in the April Newsletter that was labeled "City Hall." The building shown was actually the old Masonic Lodge built in 1911 and demolished in 1973 as part of the urban renewal program. The building had no relation to the New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

History. DACHS members and all interested persons are welcome to attend.

Meetings are held at Good Samaritan Village's Stucky Auditorium (downstairs in the main activities building at 301 Buena Vida Drive - turn east off Telshor Boulevard). The Doña Ana County Historical Society, founded in 1963, seeks to encourage in every way possible a greater appreciation of New Mexico history, especially that of Doña Ana County. For information on becoming a member or participating in programs, call 521-7532 or 522-3477. ■

DACHS April Field Trip to White Sands Missile Range

On Saturday, April 19 DACHS members and friends conveyed to WSMR to visit the Navy Desert Ship and Army Blockhouse where V-2 launches took place in the 40s. We had a sellout with 35 DACHS visitors. The Navy officers cooked us Brisket; it was a wonderful treat and good venture. ■



The Army Blockhouse and V-2 Gantry

The Army blockhouse is one of the two oldest buildings at White Sands Missile Range. Construction started in July 1940 and was completed in September of 1941. The shelter was designed to withstand the impact of a V-2 being fired from above at a speed of 5,000 miles per hour. The walls are 10 feet of reinforced concrete and the roof is 27 feet thick at its apex. Because of the thick walls, the control room is only 637 square feet. The control room has three viewing windows - two on the north and one on the east. The east window was added after construction so a look had to be chopped through the wall.

In addition to windows, there were two mirror systems on the north side that allowed personnel inside to look up into the sky to watch vehicles after lift off. The 63-foot gantry north-east of the blockhouse is two steel towers tied together at the top. It is 28 feet wide.

Three pairs of adjustable work platforms could be used when workers tested the vehicle, prepared its payload and adjusted its guidance system.

The gantry rode on four pairs of railroad wheels and was powered by electric motors. Under the gantry is a Hermes A-1 missile. It is 28 feet long, almost 36 inches in diameter, and used liquid oxygen and ethyl alcohol for propellants. Five Hermes vehicles were fired from LC-33 in 1950 and 1951. They were capable of reaching an altitude of 15 miles and a range of 38 miles.

The Hermes A-1 is not to be confused with the Hermes II. The Hermes II was a modified V-2 developed to test ramjet technology. In the late 1940s the plan was to use a V-2 as a booster to accelerate an experimental ramjet vehicle to a speed high enough to fly on its own.

On May 23, 1947, Hermes II vehicle No. 0 was launched from LC-33. Instead of going north it flew south and crashed outside of Juarez, Mexico near a cemetery. Luckily, no one was injured.

Another use of the V-2 at LC 33 was for the Bumper project; this was the first large two-stage rocket ever built. It used a V-2 as the first stage and a WAC Corporal for the second stage.

On Feb. 24, 1949 a fully-fueled Bumper was fired here. At 30 seconds after launch, the vehicles separated as they were traveling 3,000 miles per hour. The WAC Corporal then attained a speed of 6,150 miles per hour and an altitude of 100 miles - both records at the time. Also, it marked the first time a near-miss object traveled in space. Not long after this, the program shifted to Florida where a Bumper was the first vehicle launched at Cape Canaveral.

These facilities were also used in the development of many advanced military weapon systems. America's first anti-defense missile system, the Nike Ajax, was tested at LC-33. In November 1949 a Nike missile destroyed a captured B-17 bomber from Germany. America's first ballistic missile, the Corporal, was also tested here. On May 22, 1949, a Corporal II (experimental) was fired with results exceeding expectations. The missile attained a range of 62 miles, an altitude of 123,000 feet and it accepted guidance corrections. The Corporal was about 45 feet long and is often described as a pencil with fins. One is on display in the museum's Missile Park.

Probers and scientists monitor the health control panel inside the blockhouse circa 1946. The panel is one of the windows used to watch the vehicle.

A V-2 is hoisted by the gantry.

One of the stages in the Bumper's design was tested at LC-33. The WAC Corporal was attached to the V-2's booster. The WAC Corporal launch tower is in the background.

A Nike anti-defense missile tests at LC-33. The Nike has captured the Nike Ajax when the Nike captured Nike Ajax (Hermes), launch taking place.

Bumper No. 5 lifts off from LC-33.

A Nike anti-defense missile tests at LC-33. The Nike has captured the Nike Ajax when the Nike captured Nike Ajax (Hermes), launch taking place.

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.

DACHS endowment fund supports scholarships and grants

For application forms, criteria eligibility and other requirements or information Call George Helfrich 575 635-0837

Donation are being accepted:

- ☐ - \$50 level ☐ - \$100 level ☐ - other

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

DOÑA ANA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 16045
Las Cruces NM 88004

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Book Review continued from page-1: FORGOTTEN FRONTIER The Story of Southeastern New Mexico

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 real-

ity 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

Join us in preserving the history of Doña Ana County. You will be rewarded with increased knowledge and satisfaction of a job well done in passing along important history to your children and grandchildren. New members & renewals will receive the Southern New Mexico Historical Review

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