



NEWSLETTER

September 2010

Doña Ana County Historical Society

President's Comments

By: George Hackler

Where has the summer gone? Our summer hiatus is coming to a close. The summer get-together was the open house at Jan and Mickey Clute's home. The members that were able to attend the open house were treated to a full measure of southwest hospitality which included a guided tour of the house and a patio table set with the best of Mexican food and lots of it. The Clute house won the DACHS award for new construction "Building Adhering to Regional Architecture." The design and layout suggest an entrance into a zaguán. The outside of the house, although using the latest materials and modern construction techniques, was made to look and feel just like the buildings that were built during late Spanish and early Mexican periods. The coating materials were selected to weather rapidly to produce the feel and appearance of age. The great surprise is the interior of the house which is modern but built and furnished to create the same period feel. The floors throughout are red brick, ceilings are a mix of old weathered planks, vegas and latillas. Rooms are separated by old salvaged doors and walls decorated by equally weathered santos. Muchos gracias to Jan and Mickey for their hospitality. ■

September 16th Program

Mary Salopek was scheduled to be our September program with a presentation of the history of the Salopek family. However, Mary had to cancel due to pressing family needs. We hope to reschedule Mary at some later time. Board member Martha Andrews suggested that we contact Margaret Moore Booker. Martha had heard



Margaret Moore Booker at a book signing for her latest book

her and was very impressed with her command of subject and presentation. We did contact her and she has agreed to come down to Las Cruces for our September 16th program.

Margaret Moore Booker will discuss her recent publication entitled "*The Santa Fe House: Historic Residences, Enchanting Adobes, and Romantic Revivals*," a scholarly study of the historic houses of Santa Fe from the 1600s to 1940. She will describe the interesting discoveries she made concerning the restoration, preservation, and research of adobe buildings in Santa Fe, as well as give a brief overview of the different his-

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DÉJÀ VU all Over Again

The recent dilemma and fervor over the disposition of prisoners captured during the war against the Taliban and al Qaida in Afghanistan reminds us of a similar situation that occurred almost one hundred years ago.

On March 9th, 1916 485 armed men under the leadership of General Francisco (Pancho) Villa crossed the border into the United States at the small village of Columbus, New Mexico. The force proceeded to murder several inhabitants and loot and burn the village until they were restrained by elements of the 13th Cavalry. This attack on the sovereign soil of the United States and its citizens could not be declared an act of war because we were not at war with Mexico. Indeed we were supporting the elected legitimate government of Mexico.

A number of prisoners were taken during the course of the attack and during the punitive expedition that pursued the Villistas as they retreated back into Mexico. Since no declared war existed between Mexico and the U.S., the status of these prisoners was not clear. The subsequent treatment of the prisoners, would become a hotly debated subject and an embarrassment to the State of New Mexico and the President of the United States just as the status and treatment of the prisoners at Guantanamo became a national issue.

During the attack four civilians were killed: J.J. Moore, Charles D. miller, James T. Dean, and Paul Simon. All were well known and liked by the people

of Luna County. These murders incensed the population of Deming and Luna County to the point of bending and even ignoring the rules of evidence and justice.

Ten of the prisoners were indicted by a Luna County Grand Jury, and tried for murder. Six were ultimately hanged for crimes they probably did not commit. Eighteen additional men were held in Silver City jail because there was not room for them in Deming. Fifteen of these men were eventually transferred to the state penitentiary at Santa Fe to serve out life sentences imposed by Luna County Court. Governor Larrazolo would pardon the 15. After much wrangling and many challenges, the pardons were upheld. The remaining prisoners were tried and found "not guilty".

Reference, Villista Prisoners of 1916-1917, by James W. Hurst. ■

DID YOU KNOW?

On the west mesa out I-10 about 12 miles just south of the highway, you will find the Southern New Mexico State Fairground. At the Fairground, there are several buildings that are used for exhibits during the State Fair each year. Did you know that from 1955 to 1 August 1963, the Fair Ground location and the buildings were the "Las Cruces Air Force Station?" That is what it was built for. The Air Force installed and operated an Air Defense Radar Station there during that period. ■

-----Cut along dotted line-----

Doña Ana County Historical Society, P. O. Box 16045, Las Cruces, NM 88004-6045

DACHS Membership Form

Please renew/enroll my/our membership in the Doña Ana County Historical Society. Memberships are active for the calendar year of enrollment and are deductible within legal limits for Federal and State income tax purposes. If you are unsure of your status or have questions regarding membership, please contact the Treasurer, Xandy Church, at 526-9774 (May-Sept. 575-536-9728) or the President, George Hackler, at 521-4458.

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George Hackler and the Stagecoaches

At our May 20 meeting, the program was presented by the Society President, George Hackler. George gave a very interesting, informative presentation on the history of stage lines that served southern New Mexico. He pointed out the various routes and many of the stage stops. There were slides with photos of the ruins of buildings at some of the stops and details about the operation at many of them. It was very clear that George has spent 10 years conducting field research as well as



George Hackler, on the right, chats with Society member Bill King after his stagecoach talk

literature search. Seemingly everyone enjoyed George's presentation. ■

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