



Doña Ana County Historical Society

Newsletter

November 2025

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TAYLOR-MESILLA HISTORIC SITE GRAND OPENING CEREMONY

The big event this month is definitely the grand opening of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site Saturday, November 8 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Mesilla Plaza.

There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. followed by tours of the site and mariachi and ballet folklórico performances and festive events throughout the day. With the grand opening, the old J. Paul and Mary Taylor family home will officially become the state's eighth designated historic site.

The N.M. Department of Cultural Affairs, New Mexico Historic Sites, and the Friends of Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site, as well as the Town of Mesilla have worked over the many years to develop the former home into a living museum that displays the Taylor's vast regional art collection as well as highlight the historic structure itself, which is listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. The Taylors lived there for more than 70 years, and donated their home and collections to the state of New Mexico with the intent it would become a museum and a showcase of New Mexico history.

VILLAGE OF DOÑA ANA PRESERVATION CONCLUDES SPEAKER SERIES NOV. 20

The last speaker of the Doña Ana County Historical Society's 2025 monthly series will describe the decades-long preservation work by volunteers and residents of the historic village of Doña Ana.

DeAngelo Nieves started volunteering with the Doña Ana Village Historic Preservation Committee in the early 1990s during the restoration of the historic Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria church, up until the completion of the project in 1999. He's taken part in other preservation efforts over the years, including the current project to preserve the village's historic cemetery.

Having served as the committee's treasurer since 2017, Nieves has helped steer the group through a transitional period as longtime members pass on leadership to a new generation. Nieves' presentation will include discus-

sion of the group's preservation efforts, as well as the many challenges he says it has faced over the years, from working with church officials and local governments to organizing community members to preserve our cultural heritage.

The DACHS monthly speaker series features local and regional historians and will return next February. If you'd like to present on a historic topic related to the southern New Mexico region, shoot us an email.

As always, the talk is free and you're encouraged to attend – the Zoom link is not always dependable - Thursday November 20 at 7 p.m. at Las Cruces Village's Social Center at 3011 Buena Vista Circle (previously known as the downstairs auditorium of Good Samaritan Village).

BRANIGAN CULTURAL CENTER OFFERS A FULL HOUSE OF EXHIBITS

In celebration of its 90th birthday, the Branigan Cultural Center is taking a look back at 90 years of public libraries in Las Cruces with a new exhibit that runs to December 20.

When it opened in November 1935, the cultural center building served as the city's first official public library. Alice Branigan donated much of her estate to the city for the expressed purpose of establishing a public library. Designed by architect Percy McGhee in a Spanish Pueblo revival style and featuring a mural by noted regional artist Tom Lea, the new library opened in 1935. After the opening of the current Thomas Branigan Memorial Library in 1979, the city converted the old library into a cultural center in 1981. It has since earned a place on the National Historic Register.

The cultural center is also hosting the Toys in the Attic exhibit through January 24, featuring a wide selection of vintage toys from the early 1900s to the mid-1970s, including some of the earliest popular, mass produced toys that will no doubt be familiar to many.

In addition, you can still catch the ongoing Land of the People exhibit that tells the story of six Indigenous groups with historic roots and contemporary involvement in the Borderland region.

A secondary gallery changes every 12 weeks which allows each Indigenous group to go deeper into their own unique stories, traditions, and perspectives. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo exhibit will finish in November, followed in December by the Tortugas Pueblo (see the Branigan Cultural Center web site for a complete schedule).

HISTORIAN PRESENTS STORIES OF APACHE SURVIVAL

The NMSU Library Archives and Special Collections presents another installment of its Borderland History Lectures on Wednesday, November 12, 3-5pm.

Ruben Q. Leyva will present "No Roads Led Straight to Fort Sill: Outlaw Myths and Kinship Truths," which traces the stories of three Warm Springs Apache men and their various routes to individual and cultural survival. Leyva, a visiting professor in NMSU's Borderland and Ethnic Studies department, focuses his teaching and research on Native American history, Indigenous methodologies, and Gila Apache identity.

The lecture will take place in the NMSU Branson Library, fourth floor. For more information, contact Dennis Daily: ddaily@nmsu.edu, 575-646-4756.

MADAMS AND HOMEGROWN AT THE FARM AND RANCH

The Friends of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum (NMFRHM) Culture Series presents “Let Me Entertain You: Three Madams of Silver City” at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road. The event takes place Thursday November 13 at 7 p.m. in the museum auditorium.

Historian Liz Mikols of the Historical Society of New Mexico brings to life the stories of Silver City’s early madams and their surprising impact on the frontier community.

The culture series is a monthly program focused on history, culture and storytelling. December’s event will feature stories, cowboy poetry, and treats.

The Farm and Ranch Museum is also hosting the 11th annual HomeGrown: A New Mexico Food Show and Gift Market, November 22 and 23.

The event showcases the food grown in New Mexico. The museum partners with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture for this popular two-day event as gift-giving season approaches. Attendees can expect about 60 vendors, the majority representing a variety of food and beverage companies from around the state.

This is not a free event, so check the museum’s website for details

VETERANS DAY PARADE TO HONOR ROTC

In addition to recognizing the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, the annual Las Cruces Veterans Day parade this year specifically honors the Reserved Officer Training Corps, or ROTC. The parade, whose theme this year is “Honoring America’s Future Leaders,” takes place in downtown Las Cruces, but not on November 11 (which is a Tuesday), but rather Saturday November 8, with the parade itself beginning at 11 am.

Around 60 groups are scheduled to take part, including military, veterans and numerous school and civic groups and organizations. An all-volunteer group has presented the Veterans Day parade since 1995, although military parades have taken place down Main Street since the early 1900s.

Originally called Armistice Day, which recognized the official end of World War I on November 11 (precisely at 11 am), it’s been called Veterans Day since 1954, and honors all veterans of the United States military. The N.M. Department of Cultural Affairs is offering free admission to the state’s museums on November 11 to all veterans and anyone currently serving in the military.

SNM HISTORICAL REVIEW NEEDS A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

We’ve got the articles and the photos – now we just need some help forming it into a publication! We’re looking for someone with some basic layout skills (and a lot of patience) to help put together the 2026 Southern New Mexico Historical Review. Take a look at a recent copy on the DACHS website and see if you might be up for it – a fairly simple design, but definitely some effort involved

We’d also like input on anyone you think deserves some recognition at next year’s DACHS Awards Banquet for anything they’ve done to promote and preserve our local history. On the website you’ll see descriptions and nomination forms for the awards, which honor people involved with various historical projects, as well as historically significant buildings.

Can you help us out? Contact 19dachs63@gmail.com

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