



NEWSLETTER

of the
EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 106, Tijeras, NM 87059

Second Quarter/ June 2007



Photo by Denise Tessier

It is a rare sight to see water in the salt lakes near Willard. The hills behind the normally dry white basins were reflected under a cloudy sky on our field trip May 12.

Chasing Ghosts Along the Salt Missions Trail

By Denise Tessier

When the wind blows, which is often, the salt lakes near Willard dry up and reveal a briny whiteness. Three hundred years ago the inhabitants of nearby Salinas Mission mined this salt and exported it to Mexico on the trade route south. Hence the route's name: the Salt Missions Trail.

Thirteen EMHS members and guests were treated to an overview of near and ancient history on the shores of one of these remnant salt lakes during a tour May 12 led by EMHS Archeology Chairman Chuck Van Gelder.

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Field Trip to the Salt Missions Trail

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Mexicans used the salt, he said, to process silver, and salt was one of the few things New Mexico exported in quantity in the 1700s – that and 5,000 sheep a year.

The locale for the field trip offered a chance for Chuck to describe the first Americans to come to New Mexico – and to the continent. Up until the 1920s, Chuck said, the standard belief was that the first Americans came to the area at about the time of the birth of Christ. That belief was challenged when New Mexican George McJunkin found a bison kill site with several Folsom points (near Clayton). Chuck said the University of Denver excavated the find, and because they could date the bison parts, the Folsom points provided indisputable evidence people had been in the area 10,000 years B.C.

Not long after, another kind of hunting point was discovered near Blackwater Draw in the vicinity of Clovis; these Clovis points were clearly of an even older culture.

So, in the 1950s, Chuck said, the question of the day had been: Could there be a culture older than Clovis?

That question was answered by the brilliant Dr. Frank Hibben of the University of New Mexico, who attracted controversy when he claimed to have found an older culture at the Sandia Man Cave in the Sandia Mountains. Hibben also drew debate when he excavated a site near the salt lakes in 1956. This time, the criticism was for his methods: His team scraped the first 10 feet of a salt lake shoreline with a bulldozer. Despite this egregious method, the resulting data was impressive, according to Chuck. “The

nicest Sandia points I’ve ever seen came not from Sandia Cave; they came from here,” Chuck said of the Estancia Basin site — adding that they provided clear evidence of a pre-Clovis civilization.

The cliff-like gash where Hibben excavated is still partially visible today. Our group had permission to cross private land to view the site. While there was no discernable “evidence of man,” we did find sea shells, evidence of the vastness of the lakes that once dominated the landscape.

Chuck said this land was once home to the 7,000-pound sloth that traveled only a half-mile an hour, and the 4,000-pound bison, both of which were hunted by early people about a mile from the shoreline of the lake, which at one time held freshwater and could sustain trout. He said there are dozens of Folsom sites around Estancia, dating back to 8,000-9,000 B.C. Pondering this prehistoric scenario, “I can envision fires twinkling around the lake,” Chuck said, each family or group at its own camp site.

New Mexico’s climate went from its wettest to its driest in the 6,000 years that followed. Glaciers receded, and as they did, they left behind incredibly flat and rich fields, Chuck said.

As time moves forward, the archeologist finds smaller arrow points suitable for hunting rabbit or deer, and fewer of the large points used for bison and sloth.

In some of these large flat valleys carved by glaciers, one may be puzzled by the presence of large boulders and stones. Chuck explained that these rocks likely were carried by ice flows that dropped the rocks as they melted, a phenomenon known as “ice rafting.”



Photos by Andre Larroque

Almost Ready To Go

EMHS member John Peterson, left in the upper right hand picture, and Rep. Kathy McCoy (with John's horse) prepare to hike and ride on the Gutierrez Canyon Open Space. Another 480 acres next to the existing 300 acres of open space moved closer to protection with the promise of \$1.25 million toward the project from the recent state legislative session, including more than \$500,000 sponsored by Sen. Sue Wilson Beffort, R-N.M., another \$250,000 from legislation sponsored by McCoy, and another quarter million from Gov. Bill Richardson, secured at Lt. Gov. Diane Denish's request.

The East Mountain Historical Society supported the legislation and some members, including Peterson, actively worked for it. The Trust for Public Land is optimistic that the balance needed to purchase the land could come in by the end of the year. Jeff Bingaman's office has indicated the U.S. senator is interested in helping, especially if a portion of the land near North N.M. 14 is used for a visitor center and history museum, which is of particular interest to EMHS.

EMHS Closer to Securing Temporary Archival Site

The EMHS board has voted to accept an offer of the use of a room on the University of New Mexico campus for temporary storage of the EMHS collection.

Manuel Garcia y Griego, director of UNM's Southwest Hispanic Research Institute, offered us the space and also offered to have a UNM student index the collection. The offer came after Anabel Sanchez and Marie Herrera Dresser visited with Garcia y Griego, who is originally from Carnuel. The board will come up with a written agreement before any materials are moved. The agreement would be for one year with an option to renew. This office will provide a secure place for EMHS archives until a permanent structure can be found.

*Photos
By
Becky
Schnelker*



New owners of the San Antonito historic school house have taken pains to preserve the distinctive rock in the structure.

Changes for Old School House

By Becky Schnelker

One of the owners of what used to be the historic San Antonito school house says restoring the old building has been challenging, but that the owners will incorporate the old structure into their new office as a means of preserving a bit of New Mexico history.

It has been difficult to ignore the flurry of activity at the old school house site, located along the east side of the Turquoise Trail, N.M. North 14, just north of the Frost Road in the Village of San Antonito. The new gate reads High Mountain Homes and identifies the contracting business of the new owners, David Engelman and Sharon Marks. Before the hubbub, the unimposing structure remained mostly hidden behind roadside shrubs.

Engelman says the fate of the old house was one not quickly agreed upon by its new owners. However, once the exterior layers were pried away, is revealed a sturdy single-

room stone building, which was once San Antonito's public school house and an integral part of village life from the 1920s to the 1950s.

In his recent publication, *Towns of the Sandia Mountains*, author Mike Smith included two photographs of the building with groups of teachers and students of different decades. The new owners of the property say they have had several neighbors stop by to share bits of family histories as related to the old school house.

The East Mountain Historical Society welcomes the opportunity to collect any information – including written, oral and photographic histories -- that might be sparked by seeing the modest little school house by the side of the road. Anyone with information is encouraged to contact any member of the EMHS steering committee.



News and Notes. . . . *of the East Mountain Historical Society*

More than 40 attended our second public event this year on land grants, held June 10 at the Cañon de Carnuel Land Grant Hall. The event, co-sponsored by the land grant, featured:

Dr. L.M. “Manuel” García y Griego, associate professor of history and director of the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute at the University of New Mexico and an heir of the Carnuel Land Grant; **Enrique Lamadrid**, director of Chicano Hispanic Mexican Studies at UNM and a Spanish professor at UNM; **Moises Gonzales**, active in the Carnue Land Grant and an heir to the San Pedro Land Grant, who has done extensive research into the land grants history; and **Macario Griego**, president of the Carnuel Land Grant and an heir of the Carnuel Land Grant through the Garcia and Griego families, who has also been the chairman of the Acequia Madre of Carnuel for six years. (Story will appear in next newsletter.)

Thanks to these speakers and all the EMHS members who provided refreshments.



A hearty welcome to our new members: **Manuel Garcia y Griego**, **Marilyn Hershberger**, **East Mountain High School** (see story in this newsletter), **Kris and Bob Thacher**, **Barbara Davis**, **Susan** and **Kevin Bean**, and **Ruth Haas**, who is a returning member. It’s great to have you join us and support the efforts of EMHS!



EMHS once again hosted a popular booth at the East Mountain Celebration, held April 29 at Los Vecinos Community Center in Tijeras. EMHS members handed out “Family Trees” for youngsters to color and later fill out with the help of older family members; adults were given genealogy charts to get them started on their own family history quests. Thanks to **Marie Herrera Dresser** for bringing a table, to **Anabel Sanchez** for her tent, and to **Pat and Dot Rich** for manning the booth.



The Vintage Players of Albuquerque is putting on an hour-long program at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 19 at La Vida Llena Nursing Home, located behind the Dion’s at Montgomery and Morris NE. EMHS member **Eleanor Gallant** is one of the players in this history-themed program and invites EMHS members to attend. If you go: Say you’re a guest of Eleanor Gallant.



In doing her own family history research, EMHS President **Anabel Sanchez** has discovered an intriguing Web site: www.glorerecords.blm.gov. Through it, Anabel accessed Homestead Act documents from the early 1900s signed by Presidents Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Hoover and Harding.



Does your employer match your charitable donations? Please remember EMHS in your giving.

East Mountain Fiesta Dates

Chilili Aug 3-4 Cañoncito Aug 10-11 San Antonito Sept 14-15

Fiestas start with *vespers* Friday nights at 7 at each of the villages, where the patron saint is carried in a procession and returned to the church. Saturday fiestas generally commence with mass at 10 a.m.

Board Creates School Membership Category

The EMHS board has created a nonvoting membership – with no annual dues – for the four East Mountain schools: A. Montoya Elementary, San Antonito Elementary, Roosevelt Middle School and East Mountain High School.

The idea for the membership came from a request by East Mountain High School history teacher Michael G. Jamison for a “lifetime membership” for that school. The historical society had no school membership category, and decided to create one. But EMHS did not want to charge dues to the school because it is an educational organization, as we are.

The new school membership category entitles each school to receive our quarterly newsletter, advance notice of public events, which anyone at the schools may attend, and invitations to members-only events, such as archeological field trips. These events would be limited to two representatives from the school, adult or student.

On an event-specific basis, EMHS will also entertain the possibility of having one or more classes attend field trips or events, and can also arrange to have one or more of our members talk to classes about East Mountain history.

The Road to the Mountains

The street that took Albuquerque residents and travelers east to Tijeras Canyon in the late 1800s wasn't Lomas or Central or even Route 66. It was Mountain Road – the road to the mountains.

But it wasn't called Mountain Road then. Its name was Tijeras Canyon Road, according to an 1888 map of Albuquerque in the city's library archives.

On a map dated just 10 years later, February 1898, the street is no longer listed as Tijeras Canyon. It has evolved to “Carnuel or Mountain Road” (both names appear on the map).

By 1920, the name is settled: It's Mountain Road. That same map, which also shows the tracks of the city's street cars, shows Mountain Road was Albuquerque's northernmost city limit.

– D.T.



EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 106
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2007 RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Membership year is from January 1, 2007 thru December 31, 2007)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ **ZIP** _____

TELEPHONE _____ **E-MAIL** _____

DATE _____

ANNUAL DUES: Student (\$10) _____ Individual (\$15) _____ Family (\$20) _____
Sponsor (\$25) _____ Corporation (\$50) _____ Donation _____
Honorary members do not pay dues.
(Tax deductible to the extent allowed by law)

Make checks payable to: East Mountain Historical Society
P.O. Box 106
Tijeras, NM 87059

The newsletter of the East Mountain Historical Society, published quarterly, aims to inform members and prospective members of EMHS events and endeavors, including committee work, and to serve as a record of society activities. It is also a forum for stories about the area. Please send your ideas for future newsletter items to Denise Tessier at P.O. Box 379, Cedar Crest, NM 87008, or contact her by email at newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org .



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