



CULTURA DE LAS MONTAÑAS

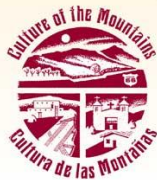
<http://eastmountainhistory.org>

EAST MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

Double Issue
Third and Fourth Quarters 2015

East Mountains: Then & Now

*2016 Calendar
of the East Mountain Historical Society*



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the East Mountain Historical Society is to identify, preserve and present to the public the history and culture of the East Mountain area. EMHS will assist in protecting historical buildings and landscapes, artifacts, records, or any item considered to be of historical significance. EMHS will also identify, collect and archive historical material of significance to the area.

Just Published: Our 2016 'Then & Now' History Calendar

"East Mountains: Then and Now" – our 2016 calendar featuring historical and current photos different from past year's calendars – is now available at local outlets and online [via our website](#).

Retailers selling our calendar include the Triangle Grocery in Cedar Crest, Hitch 'n Post Feed in Edgewood, the Mail & Copy Business Center in Edgewood, Brandy's Hair Design in Tijeras and Western Mercantile in Tijeras.

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'Map of Our Vanishing Past' To Go Up at Library Oct 10

The EM Historical Society's "Map of Our Vanishing Past" becomes a traveling exhibit when it goes on display Oct. 10 at the East Mountain Library. The map will remain at the library at least through the end of October.

EMHS board members **Kris Thacher** and **Rick Holben** will explain the history of the map and answer questions at 10:30 a.m. at the library on Oct. 10. Theirs is one of several adult workshops the library is hosting as it celebrates its 21st anniversary with events from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



The map was unveiled Aug. 23 at our public program featuring

Roger Zimmerman, and includes towns and villages no longer on present-day maps, along with post office sites, springs, railroad beds, stagecoach routes, Civil War trails, and other historic landmarks. (A prototype of the map was unveiled at our public program on *genízaros* June 14.) The six- by six-foot durable exhibit map can be folded and taken to schools, community centers, senior centers, and local events. The EMHS board is currently working toward creating a travel-size or poster-size version of the map, which would be sold as a fund-raising project.

Member Jim Medford talks about the EMHS map with member Eloy Jaramillo at our Aug. 23 Route 66 presentation in the historic church. Effie Medford is looking at photos of oral history participants at right.

Photo by Denise Tessier

2016 Calendar Now on Sale!

All new historic photos paired with color shots of those places "now" grace our latest display-size hanging calendar, including history information about each. This year's cover photo, for example, includes the story of how the famous "Balanced Rock" in Tijeras Canyon was toppled.

Also new this year: Date-squares include significant dates in East Mountain history, from post office openings to land grant dates. Cost of each calendar is \$17 at local retailers and via our [website](#). Cost is \$12 if you buy directly from us at our public events. **Next public event is our annual meeting Sunday, Nov. 8.** As in years past, we thank **Rick Holben** for contributing his time and photographs and **Kathy Rich** for overseeing the printing.

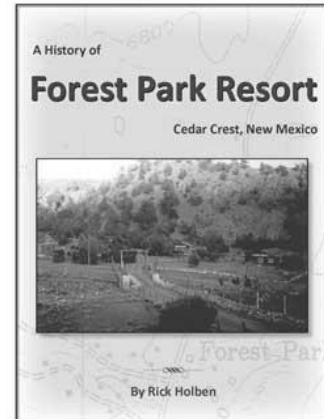
You're Invited: Vote, Learn About DNA Project at Our Annual Meeting

All members and others interested in the EM Historical Society are invited to attend our annual meeting Sunday, Nov. 8. **Dr. Angel R. Cervantes**, administrator and technical adviser of the [New Mexico DNA Project](#), will talk about genetic testing as a tool in determining family genealogy, especially with regard to colonial New Mexico.

The **membership business meeting** will start at 1:30 p.m. at the historic church in Tijeras (next to the library). Members will hear annual reports and vote for officers and board members for 2016. (Consider serving on the board; nominations will be accepted from the floor during the membership meeting.) The DNA Project presentation will begin at 2 p.m.

Before and after the meeting, all of our **in-house publications will be on sale**, including the 2016 calendar *East Mountains: Then and Now*, plus *The History of Forest Park Resort* (at right), *History of the Village of Tijeras*, *Great People, Great Stories*, and Chris Wilson's archeological survey of East Mountain villages.

Publication prices at the membership meeting are \$5 less than in retail outlets or via our website. (The calendar, for example, is \$12 instead of \$17.)



We will also host a **silent auction**, selling books related to New Mexico, history, or both.

The EMHS board has voted to recommend that the membership consider approval of the following slate of officers during the annual meeting **elections** for 2016:

Denise Tessier, president; **Kristin Thacher**, vice president; **Rick Holben**, treasurer; and **Beverly Neville**, secretary. The board also will recommend that members retain the following board directors: **Anabel Sanchez**, **Gerry Jones**, **Margaret Garcia**, **Kathy Rich**, **Sandra Lee**, **Andre Larroque**, **Marie Herrera Dresser** and **Anne Dacey-Lucas**.

Please consider joining the board, as we are an active and productive group having a lot of fun learning about and sharing the history of the East Mountains. We are currently in need of a program coordinator and persons interested in leading us on members-only field trips. If interested, please contact Denise Tessier at president@eastmountainhistory.org or contact [any other member of the board](#).

A hearty thanks to retailers selling our 2016 "Then and Now" calendar:
Triangle Grocery in Cedar Crest, **Hitch'n Post Feed** in Edgewood, the **Mail & Copy Business Center** in Edgewood, **Brandy's Hair Design** in Tijeras and **Western Mercantile** in Tijeras.

EMHS To Host Community Las Posadas

Continuing a 400-year-old tradition, the East Mountain Historical Society on **Dec. 19** will host one of the nine nights of *Las Posadas*, beginning at 6 p.m. at the historic church in Tijeras. The public is invited to attend and witness this reenactment of the journey of Mary and Joseph as they search for accommodations (*posadas*) in anticipation of the birth of baby Jesus.



Local residents have long performed Las Posadas in East Mountain villages. Each night, residents dressed as Mary and Joseph visit a different posada, or “inn,” asking for shelter. When they arrive at the church, a sung conversation ensues back and forth between “residents” of the “inn” and the visitors until it is agreed that Mary and Joseph will be allowed to enter. Songs will be sung in traditional Spanish, as they have been done in the East Mountains for centuries. EMHS will provide English translations for visitors to follow along. Once the “innkeepers” let the group in to the church, they will be invited to have refreshments. The public is welcome to enjoy refreshments and music after witnessing the event.

Sandia Park CCC Camps Topic of Talk Jan. 17

The history of the two 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps camps in Sandia Park will be explained at our first public talk for 2016, to be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 17 at the historic church in Tijeras. Presenter Dirk Van Hart promises to show “many photos” (like the one shown here).



In 1998, using surveying equipment, Van Hart mapped the camps with the help of his wife and a friend and with permission from the current owner of the land, the Campbell Ranch company. The first camp, F-8-N Sulphur Springs, was established in 1933, a bit to the west of Tinkertown along the Crest Road. In 1935 a new campsite was established further east.

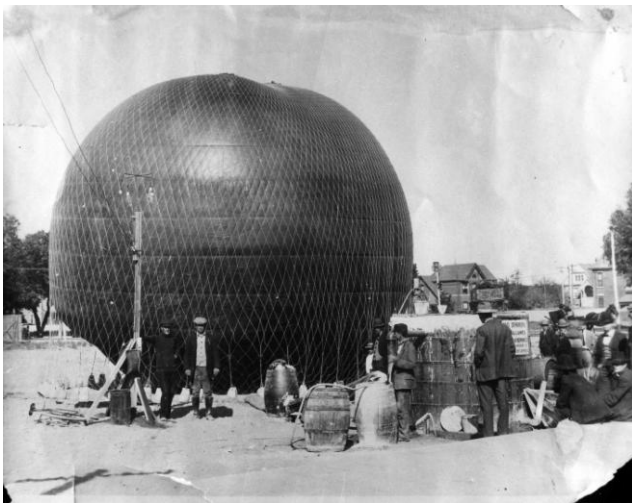
A geologist, Van Hart is president of the Civilian Conservation Corps alumni association's Chapter 141, the only chapter of CCC alumni ever established in New Mexico. At one time there were more than 160 alumni chapters across the US, but today there are only about three. The talk is free and open to the public.

E. Mtn. Flight Had Soaring Role in Ballooning History

By Dick Brown, photos courtesy of the Stamm Family

Ballooning in Albuquerque started in the 1880s and 1890s with ascensions by “carnival professors” during Fourth of July celebrations and New Mexico Territorial Fairs. Significant in history since was the long-distance record attempt made on Oct. 19, 1909 across the East Mountains, by merchant Roy A. Stamm and professional aeronaut Joseph A. Blondin, a veteran of 13 balloon ascensions (his first having taken place in Paris in 1896) who also clerked for the ATSF Railroad in Albuquerque.

Two years before that historic flight, Stamm, then Fair Commission secretary, had hired Blondin for a much ballyhooed New Mexico Territorial Fair balloon exhibition during which Blondin flew a gas balloon up the Rio Grande Valley. Despite being shot at eight times over Alameda, the flight went well and Blondin landed safely on a mesa west of Corrales. The balloon, which had been purchased by Stamm, sat in storage during the 1908 fair. But fair commissioners, recalling how pleased they’d been with Blondin’s 1907 performance, brought him back in 1909.



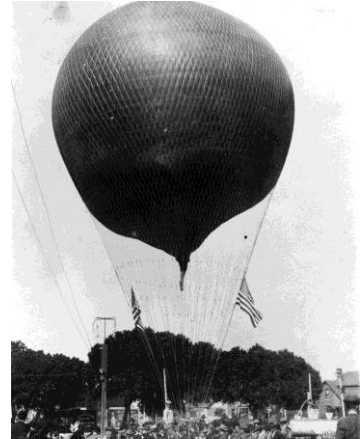
Joseph Blondin (left) and Roy Stamm (right) pose in front of their balloon as a gas generator pumps hydrogen into its gasbag.

During the 1909 fair, Blondin and Stamm offered tethered balloon rides to passengers willing to pay a dollar to risk their life for 10 minutes at the end of a 500-foot rope! For these rides, explosive hydrogen gas was generated on the fairgrounds using iron filings and sulfuric acid. Despite use of a leaky, makeshift wooden vat as a hydrogen generator, Blondin and Stamm managed to inflate the rubberized silk fabric gasbag with 25,000 cubic feet of hydrogen.

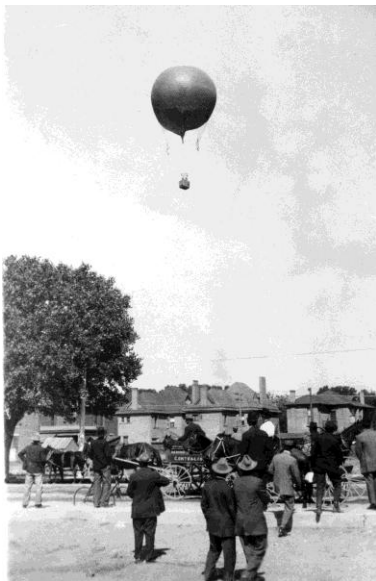
President William Howard Taft, who 27 months later would sign the New Mexico Statehood Bill, arrived by special train in time to witness the balloon repeatedly rising and descending on its tether line, and congratulated the aeronauts on their daring aerial exhibition.

After the tether rides, at the close of the fair, Blondin and Stamm then set about preparing for what would be a free flight from a vacant lot at Sixth Street and Central (then Railroad) Avenue. This time, the balloon was filled to only 75 percent of capacity as there was no more sulfuric acid to replace the hydrogen used during the tether operations. Worse, the balloon could only carry 100 pounds of ballast. There was enough lift to carry the two men, but they had to abandon their overcoats, camera and six-shooter, as well as some food supplies and half their water. Privately, Blondin and Stamm agreed they would end the flight nearly naked if that was what it took to set a record by getting out of sight of Albuquerque.

The 10:55 a.m. launch was witnessed by Mayor Lester Felix and a large cheering crowd. A gas balloon jettisons ballast to go up and valves off gas to descend. The balloon basket narrowly missed some trolley wires, thanks to quick action by Stamm in dumping an entire bag of sand ballast. With the emergency release of that precious ballast, the balloon shot up to 5,000 feet, where it paused as if in doubt as to which way to go. With its aeronauts still fully clothed, the balloon then veered eastward toward Tijeras Canyon and the snow-covered Manzano Mountains and, hopefully, a new world long-distance record. By 11:45 a.m., the balloon had passed three miles northwest of Coyote Springs.



Above, Stamm on the basket rim just prior to launch. At left, the balloon over Albuquerque.



As the balloon neared a point roughly midway between the Sandia and Manzano peaks, it dropped so low the aeronauts could hear the wind roaring through the Ponderosa forest. More ballast was dropped. Then, in a repeat of the Alameda potshots, the balloon was fired upon by an angry rancher as it passed directly over Escobosa. Balloons do not take kindly to bullets. Fortunately, the shooter missed.

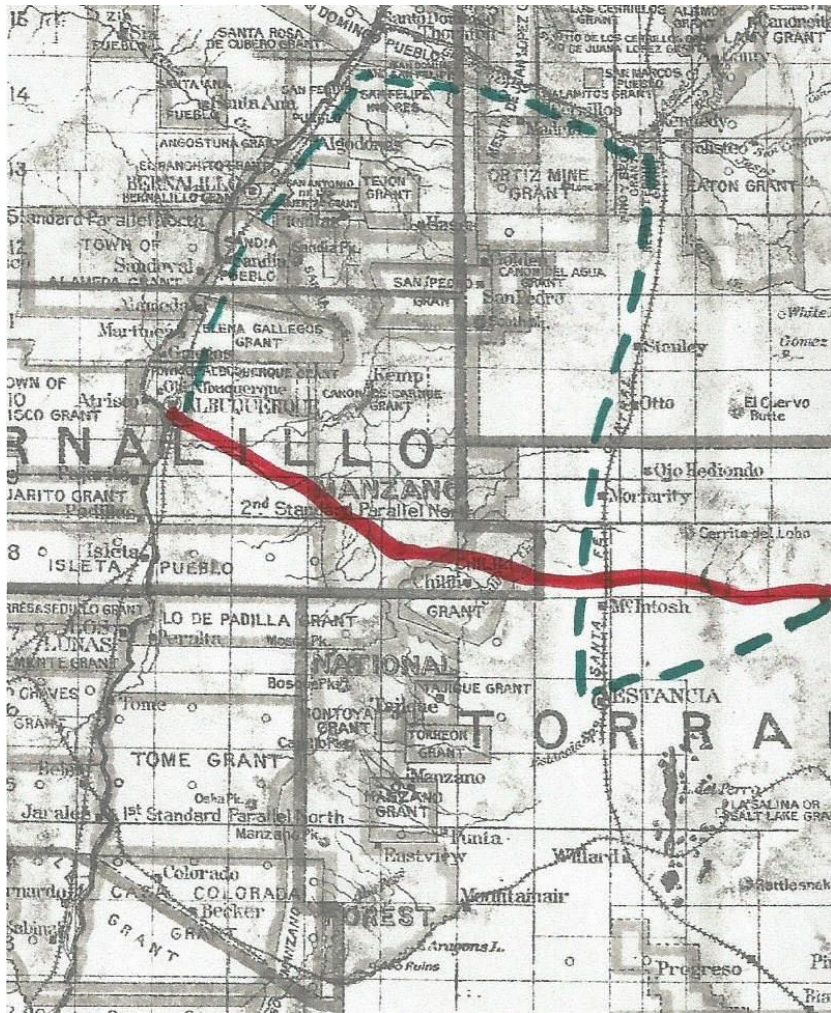
The intrepid aviators continued on. To pinpoint their location and track their progress, they used postal route maps of New Mexico's eastern plains, which showed roads, section lines, railroads and streambeds. A little more than an hour into the flight, they determined their position was about five miles north of Chilili.

Moving east at 50 mph, warmer air over the Estancia Valley sent the balloon up to nearly 13,000 feet, giving the men a panoramic view of Moriarty, Estancia and Willard's string of salt lakes. Hydrogen expanded and bled through an open appendix at the base of the gasbag, thus initiating a descent, slow at first, then alarmingly fast. At 12:42 p.m., the balloon passed over the William McIntosh ranch and the tracks of the New Mexico Central Railway.

As the balloon flew over the Angus McGillivray ranch, Stamm noted they were racing toward the base of the Pedernal Hills, 10 miles south of what we know today as Clines Corners, dropping 8,000 feet in just four minutes. At this point, they were 26 miles east of Estancia and 22 miles from Lucy Station on the Belen cutoff – and still dropping.

At 100 feet, Blondin avoided a crash landing by tossing overboard the last sandbag and the grapnel hook. The hook plowed a long straight furrow and the wicker basket tilted over, nearly dumping both men into a cactus patch. Blondin tugged on the valve cord to release gas and the balloon finally skidded to a stop.

As they began packing up, cowboys Charley Calkins and Lewis Bachmann arrived on horseback from the McGillivray ranch and offered the weary travelers wagon conveyance to the ranch for an overnight stay. The next day, the aeronauts and their balloon journeyed by wagon to the Estancia railway station, where they boarded a northbound train that stopped in McIntosh, Moriarty and Stanley, then headed on to Kennedy and connected to the AT&SF line. They finally made it back to Albuquerque just after sundown.



Solid line indicates the balloon flight; dotted line marks the trip home by train.
Route map by Kris Thacher

“I am confident that never before with such a small gas bag and with a bare one hundred pounds of ballast, has a balloon gone so high above the earth and made the speed which we did on our way across the Manzano mountains,” Blondin noted at the time.

A charter member of the Aero Club of America, Blondin made meticulous log entries during the flight, using onboard scientific instruments to measure barometric pressure, altitude and temperature. For verification of the landing, he also collected affidavits from the McGillivray cowboys for submittal to the Aero Club.

The balloon had traveled 90 miles in two hours and 25 minutes, hardly a record for distance or duration, but a pioneering flight all the same – and a historic first for the East Mountains – perhaps foretelling the many world

distance records that would be set by future Albuquerque aeronauts, logging a place in the history of the Balloon Fiestas that now grace our October skies.

Editor’s note: Dick Brown, an EMHS member who lives about three miles north of Escabosa, has a unique perspective on the 1909 flight. He has flown twice over the Sandias by hot air balloon, once landing at Zuzax and once at Golden. Like Blondin, he went up to 13,000 feet on his first flight, concerned about turbulence on the east side of the mountains.

News and Notes . . .

Welcome to our newest members: **Liliana Ziesmann** of Edgewood and **Dick Brown** of South 14.



Congratulations to EM Historical Society board member **Marie Herrera Dresser** for being nominated for the 2015 Henrietta J. Smith Award for national and community service through the Senior Corps RSVP Program. Marie has donated more than 1,000 hours of her time sewing for children, raising \$5,000 for the preservation of a cemetery (by making and auctioning quilts) and championing the preservation of Tres Pistolas in Tijeras Canyon.



Thanks to **Rick Holben** for his donation of a 1957 Highland High School yearbook and A. Montoya and Roosevelt Middle School yearbooks for our archives.



The rich history of Carlito Springs will be shared during a “Stories of Carlito Springs” event to be hosted by Bernalillo County Sunday, Sept. 27 from 10 a.m. to noon (82 Carlito Springs Rd., Tijeras). Visitors are invited to share memories of when the property was a private residence and retreat.



The community of La Cienega, wanting to know the effects climate change and drought are having on aquifers that feed springs, ponds, wells and acequias in the area, has set up a [GoFundMe site](#) with the goal of raising \$10,000. El Ranchos de las Golondrinas has pledged a matching donation of \$10,000. Springs in La Cienega, La Cieneguilla, El Canon and La Bajada have diminished over the last 40 years. Without protection, the group says, water sources and farms dating back to the 1600s will disappear in 20 to 30 years.



The Historical Society of New Mexico will hold its 2016 annual conference in Farmington April 14-16. For more information, visit <http://www.hsnm.org/conference-2/>.

East Mountain Historical Society
Newsletter
Published Quarterly

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The EMHS Newsletter 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 or stories for future newsletters to the Editor, P.O. Box 379, Cedar Crest, NM 87008, or by email: newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org Deadlines for future issues of the newsletter are Jan. 31, April 30, July 31, and Oct. 31. All stories by Denise Tessier unless noted otherwise.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the East Mountain Historical Society is to identify, preserve and present to the public the history and culture of the East Mountain area. EMHS will assist in protecting historical buildings and landscapes, artifacts, records, or any item considered to be of historical significance. EMHS will also identify, collect and archive historical material of significance to the area.

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East Mountain Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Membership year is from January 1 through December 31. All new memberships now through the end of 2015 are good for all of 2016 as well.)

Please use this form and mail it with your dues to the address below.

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

ANNUAL DUES (please check appropriate line):

Student (\$10) _____ Individual (\$15) _____ Family (\$20) _____

Sponsor (\$25) _____ Corporation (\$50) _____

Donation/Amount _____

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

Honorary members (residents of the area more than 50 years) do not pay dues.
Dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Make checks payable to:

East Mountain Historical Society, P.O. Box 106, Tijeras, NM 87059

Have you renewed for 2016?

Please join us and support our efforts. You may also join online and pay by credit card/PayPal by visiting our website at eastmountainhistory.org. All new memberships made now through the end of 2015 are good for all of 2016 as well.

You've Invited – *Please Mark Your Calendars!*

Oct. 10 – Our historic “**Map of Our Vanishing Past**” will be displayed at the East Mountain Library through the end of October. At 10:30 a.m., Oct. 10, **Kris Thacher and Rick Holben** will explain to the public the origins of the map and answer questions as part of the East Mountain Library’s Community Appreciation Day. Free and open to all.

Nov. 8 – **EMHS Annual Meeting, Elections** and presentation on **New Mexico DNA Project** by **Angel R. Cervantes**. Business meeting 1:30 p.m., with talk by Cervantes at 2 p.m. Sunday at the historic church in Tijeras. Free and open to the public.

Dec. 19 – **Members-only potluck** at 4 p.m. followed by **community Las Posadas** at 6 p.m. at the historic church in Tijeras.

Jan. 17 – **1930s CCC Camps in Sandia Park** presentation by **Dirk Van Hart**, with photos of the camps. 2 p.m. Sunday in the historic church. Free and open to the public.