

NEWSLETTER

of the
East Mountain Historical Society

Issue 1, First Quarter 2011

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CULTURA DE LAS MONTAÑAS

State's Courthouses Topic of March 6 Lecture

In its territorial days, when disputes were often settled with a pistol, New Mexico had to prove it was worthy of becoming a state—that its Wild West days of lawlessness were on the way out. The most concrete symbol of the territory's move toward civilization was the construction of county courthouses, buildings significant in both importance and size.

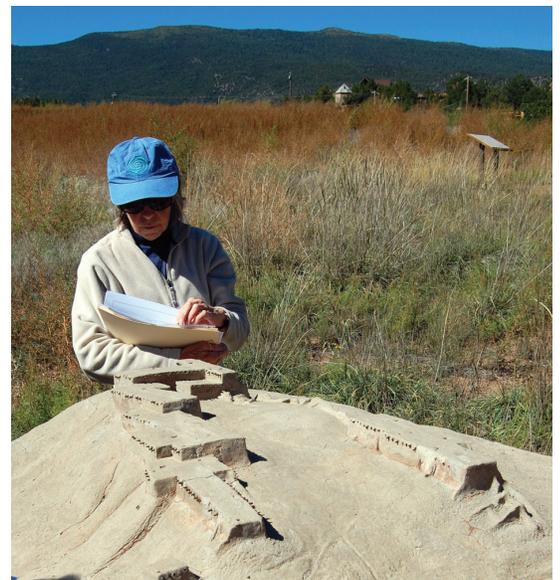
The courthouses of New Mexico are the topic for a lecture by EMHS President Denise Tessier set to begin at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 6, in the historic church next to the library in Tijeras.

This lecture will take you on a tour of some of the structures that have served as county courthouses in New Mexico—from humble adobes to Victorian masterpieces to New Deal courthouses of the 1930s to mammoth structures of today. In New Mexico's early days, before the Internet, television, movie theaters or even radio, the courthouse also was a source of entertainment. Spectators traveled great distances by horse or stagecoach to hear dramatic lawyers, accused lawbreakers and sometimes unwilling witnesses tell stories as spellbinding as any well-produced movie or play. You'll hear details of some of New Mexico's more sensational cases, and about the rash measures some small towns took in their desperation to continue to serve as county seats as county lines were redrawn, or as gold or railroads brought newfound wealth to rival communities.

This lecture will also include details of a sensational Bernalillo County murder committed at the mouth of Tijeras Canyon in the early 1970s.

Denise Tessier is an award-winning New Mexico journalist who has covered court issues for the *Albuquerque Journal*, *New York Times* and *New Mexico Lawyer*. Her EMHS lecture will showcase research for a book in progress. A long-time New Mexico resident, Tessier is also the author/co-author of two history books.

Dr. Linda Cordell is shown with a model of Tijeras Pueblo as she prepares for a walking tour with EMHS members. Cordell led the most recent excavation of the site in the late 1970s for the University of New Mexico.
(Photo by Denise Tessier)



President's Letter

East Mountain Historical Society is starting 2011 with concrete goals, formulated at our planning session in November.

While planning for an EMHS museum is always on our minds, we decided to focus on realistic efforts that cannot wait: one, conducting oral histories of East Mountain residents and two, archiving, digitizing and inventorying current oral histories, photographs and other documents—a list we can post online. At some point, as **Anabel Sanchez** reminds us, we also want to convert our well-traveled exhibit panels to a format more readily transportable and accessible to the public.

Toward these goals we are applying for a grant for an oral-history project in partnership with the East Mountain Coalition. The grant money would allow us to buy recording equipment and train our members in taking oral histories, while the coalition would help us get a good cross-section of oral histories from neighborhood associations. We are grateful to board member **Kris Thacher** for writing the grant application and coordinating the detailed input needed to complete it. We'll keep you posted on our progress.

After two years, we have moved our archives from the University of New Mexico to a secure room inside the Tijeras Visitor Center. Thanks to **Chuck Van Gelder** and **Anabel Sanchez** for helping move boxes of office supplies, archival materials and file cabinet. And thanks to former EMHS board member **Manuel Garcia y Griego** for supplying the UNM room, which proved to be a welcome bridge.

In the Visitor Center, our archiving committee led by **Becky Schnelker** and including **Anne Dacey-Lucas**, with help from **Kathleen Ferris** of the Center for Southwest Research, will work to inventory and digitize photos and other historical documents and to obtain archival-quality storage boxes and materials.

We'll also hold our board meetings in the Visitor Center on the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon, unless there is a holiday, in which case we will meet on the second Saturday. Check our web site, <http://eastmountainhistory.org> for dates. All members are welcome.

I thank **Kathy Rich** for taking over the web site, which has been my responsibility since its inception, and for designing professional EMHS stationery and business cards. She is setting up a Pay Pal account on our Join Us page, so soon you may renew your membership and donate to EMHS online. We will send out an e-mail when this is ready. A big thanks to **Melissa Howard** for taking over from me production of the EMHS newsletter. As you can see from this issue, EMHS is accomplishing much, thanks to our hard-working members and board of directors, but there is always more to do. Thank you for your continued support!

—*Denise Tessier*



East Mountain Historical Society Newsletter

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The EMHS Newsletter aims to inform members and prospective members of Historical Society events and endeavors, including committee work, and to serve as a record of EMHS activities. It is also a forum for stories about the area. Please send your ideas for future newsletter items to the Editor, P.O. Box 379, Cedar Crest, NM, 87008, or by e-mail: newsletter@eastmountainhistory.org

Deadlines for future issues are April 31, July 31 and October 31.

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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News and Notes ...

... of the East Mountain Historical Society

Officers chosen to serve EMHS through October 2011 were Denise Tessier, president; Anabel Sanchez, vice president; Pat Rich, treasurer; and Anne Dacey-Lucas, secretary.

Elected to the society's board of directors were Rebecca Schnelker, Chuck Van Gelder, Beverly Neville, Kris Thacher, Andre Larroque, Kathy Rich, Marie Herrera Dresser and Gerry Jones.



During successful efforts to expand the Gutierrez Canyon/Milne Open space, the coalition that facilitated that expansion (which included EMHS) expressed to legislators the desire that its trailhead eventually house a visitor center that would include EMHS displays about area history. EMHS preservation director Andre Larroque pointed out that Bernalillo County's draft North Highway 14 Sector Development Plan includes photos and renderings of a park at the trailhead, but not any structures. To remedy that, the EMHS board asked Bernalillo County officials to include such a structure in its next draft of the plan, and EMHS members also wrote the county after being urged to do so by Tessier on behalf of the board. Deadline for comments was Jan. 31.



EMHS has gone on record in support of naming the East Mountain Library in Tijeras after Tomas "Tom" Herrera. Tom's sister, Marie Herrera Dresser, has collected more than 200 names in support of this.

President Tessier wrote to county officials that Herrera, who served for more than 40 years, "was much loved in the mountain communities, by both newcomers and those who grew up under his guiding hand of law enforcement. To name the library after him would celebrate an incredible life . . . from his single-handed capture of criminals, to the lives he saved, to his appearance in a movie filmed in the Sandias."



EMHS is partnering with the Friends of Tijeras Pueblo to present "Garden Traditions of the East Mountains," celebrating the historical and present-day importance of gardening in the East Mountain area. Scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 7, the event will feature seed specialist Isaura Andaluz and ethnobotanist Jean Brody as speakers, along with a panel of residents who will share their stories and expertise. The free event will be held at the Tijeras Pueblo archeological site behind the Sandia District Ranger Station in Tijeras.

EMHS will have an informational table at the event, and members are needed to greet the public and explain our materials. To volunteer, contact Becky Schnelker, Anabel Sanchez or Bev Neville.

Welcome to New Members:

- Nancy Carpenter of Cedar Crest
- Carla Ward of Sandia Park
- Janet Saiers, president of the Albuquerque Historical Society
- Kathy and Donald Ferris of Tijeras.



The *Denver Post* reported that the Rev. Thomas Steele, once a part-time parish priest in Carnuel, died at age 76.

Steele was a passionate collector of santos, images of saints dating to Spanish colonial times in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. He created the nation's largest collection of santos at Regis University in Denver, where he taught English for 25 years.

And Don E. Alberts, who spoke on the "New Mexico Campaign" of the Civil War at a 2009 EMHS meeting, has died. He was the author of two books about the Civil War, among others.



EMHS has joined the East Mountain Chamber of Commerce, which is sharing the Tijeras Visitor Center with us. President Denise Tessier gave a "new member" presentation at a recent chamber meeting.



The Sandia Mountain Lions Club donated \$200 to EMHS after Vice President Anabel Sanchez and Denise Tessier made a presentation.



The Texas State Historical Association will host its 115th annual meeting March 3–5 at the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso, Texas.

More Images from Recent EMHS Gatherings



*Bill Baxter (facing camera) led East Mountain Historical Society members on a fall tour of the Ortiz Mountain Educational Preserve, part of the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. After a four-wheel-drive ride, members hiked for about a mile, viewing former mines and reclaimed mine sites. Baxter is author of *The Gold of the Ortiz Mountains*. (Photo by Becky Schnelker)*

Songs, including a hymn to the Virgin of Guadalupe, were featured at the EMHS holiday party on the saint's day. Hosts Jim Hanlon (with guitar) and Kathy Hanlon (right) and Marie Herrera Dresser (center) led the singing.

