

Socorro County Historical Society

Post Office Box 921
Socorro, New Mexico 87801

Membership News • Winter 2015-2016

Printed periodically

Remember Winter?



Socorro seems to have five seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter and February. Our shortest month of the year seems to be winter one day and spring the next. With the recent pleasant and warm winter, it's easy to forget the epic snow on the ground not long ago.

Socorro gets a good dose of winter about every ten years. Apparently, the winter of 2015-2016 was our time once again. It wasn't that long ago that Socorro County got blanketed with a foot of snow, and even more in some places.

Unlike past snow storms, this winter's storm was forecast many days in advance, and with remarkable accuracy. The snow began to fall about 3 p.m. (exactly as predicted) with 13 inches in Socorro when the storm finally cleared.

Crippling snow fell across New Mexico that paralyzed the south and east portions of the state.



Paul's snow gauge near Polvadera

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Visit the SCHS Website:

www.Socorro-History.org

Growing with plenty of Socorro history, photos, maps, articles, etc.
Plus ... past newsletters

Your SCHS Board of Directors:

President	Chuck Zimmerly
Vice President	Dr. Peggy Hardman
Treasurer	Prescilla Mauldin
Secretary	Paul Harden

Board Members:

Jon Spargo	Roy Heatwole
Kay Krehbiel	Don Wolberg



I-25 getting socked in



Did your car look like this?



Snow covered "M" Mountain

Hardly a highway was open east of the Rio Grande and sufficient to make the national news. Closed were I-40, US60, US380 and everything in between. State police left I-25 open, in spite of the deep, snow packed conditions around Socorro, to route the thousands of stranded cars and trucks in Albuquerque south to I-10.

The National Weather Service reported our late 2015 snow storm was the 2nd deepest 24-hour snow on record. The record holder was the winter of 1984 when 14 inches fell over Thanksgiving and 18 inches, coincidentally, also fell the day after Christmas.

There are snows reported in the historic record. For example, we know it snowed during the 1862 Battle at Valverde. Some extreme snows are recorded in the 1880s and 1890s *Socorro Chieftain* newspaper. The 1881 snow buried

Magdalena in over three feet of snow; in 1884, thousands of head of cattle perished in western Socorro County after prolonged cold and snow. These snows isolated the county for days, even stranded trains between Socorro and Magdalena, and near San Marcial.

Unfortunately, the newspaper accounts do not report the depth of the historic snows, just that it was *"the deepest snow the city has ever seen."*



Photo of the 1881 snow in Magdalena, NM

As can be seen by the photos, our 2015 winter storm did provide good fodder for some interesting and unusual pictures – at least for Socorro. Now – almost a distant memory.

The clean-up begins



County crews clearing the roads



Shoveling snow north of the plaza



Snow melting on the Socorro plaza

Historic buildings under the snow



Socorro Depot



Historic Manzanera Street



San Miguel Church

SCHS has long had a problem: a proper place to store our historic artifacts, photos and archival records. Such items need to be stored in an environmentally controlled space. With no heat or cooling in the historic Hammel Brewery building, our museum does not provide for the safe storage of historic documents. As a result, many of the SCHS holdings have been located in several locations over the years. While this does provide for safe keeping, it also makes such items unavailable for viewing or research.

Past President Robert Eveleth has been very instrumental in properly caring for some of our holdings by storing them with the archival materials of the Department of Geology at New Mexico Tech. However, Robert recently retired. Secondly, the department recently moved into their brand new geology building on Bullock Avenue. SCHS was notified that they no longer had the room to store our materials.

The SCHS Board explored several options. A room could be added to the museum, adding heating and air conditioning. Or, an existing room rebuilt with heat and AC. However, these or similar approaches would alter the historic significance of the building and likely be cost prohibitive. The Board decided the only reasonable solution was to purchase our own stand-alone storage container that would be heated and cooled for environmental control, and secure enough to safely store our historic materials. A water-tight ocean going shipping container was selected. Thousands of these are used across the country for various storage needs. And, for good reason. They are remarkably well built and substantial.



Storage unit being delivered

These shipping containers are sold and priced by the number of trips across the ocean they have been used. SCHS spent a little extra money for a “one-trip” container in the hope it would have the least amount of wear and tear, dings and gouges.

In preparation for the delivery, concrete piers were installed by Accurate Construction to support and level the unit, and to elevate it slightly off the ground to keep it dry during rains or standing water.

Storage Unit Delivered

The storage unit was recently delivered. It was placed on the concrete piers previously constructed in the wintergarten area behind the brewery building. President Chuck Zimmerly, Roy Heatwole and Paul Harden were there for the delivery. It is a water-tight ocean-going shipping container, very well built and well secured. When it was delivered, we were all amazed at its pristine condition – looking virtually brand new with no blemishes.

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Centering the unit onto the concrete piers



Locking the container after the inspection

Still Work to be Done

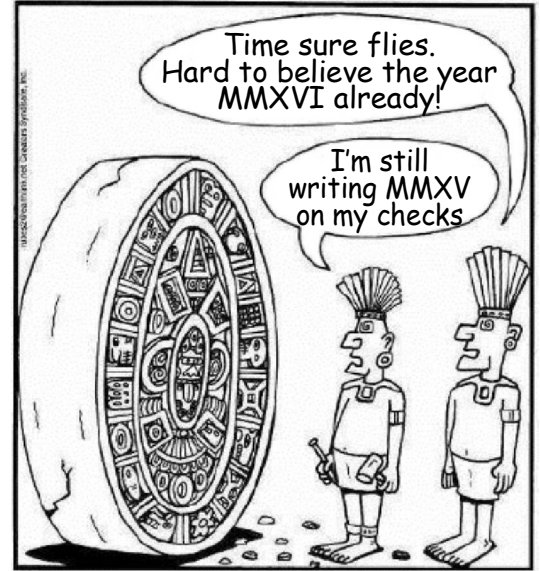
Some mechanical work is pending for the installation of the air conditioning unit and vents. Maintaining a constant temperature and humidity during the summer months is paramount to provide proper long-term document storage.

Electrical service will then be added for the A/C unit, overhead lights, and outlets. Shelving and file cabinets will be installed to begin the task of relocating and organizing the Societies historical documents and photographs – currently in numerous boxes in temporary storage at several different locations.

The SCHS Board of Directors wishes to thank all SCHS members that contributed to the storage unit fund. Providing an archival storage unit for SCHS documents is long overdue. It is absolutely essential for the long term safeguarding of these materials and properly accepting and protecting future donations.



The membership will be updated as progress continues on our new storage unit. Of course, you can see it yourself next time you drive by the Hammel Museum on 6th Street.



100 YEARS AGO . . .

Much of the news in 1916 was the escalation of the “Great War” (WWI) in Europe and the months-long Battle of Verdun. The U.S. did not enter the war until April 1917. There are virtually no known copies of the *Socorro Chieftain* 1912–1917 such that significant local events are unknown. Here’s some of the national and global events occurring in 1916:

- Jan 29 First bombing of Paris by German Zeppelins
- Feb 11 Germany notified U.S. they will sink any armed merchant ships starting March 1.
- Feb. 21 Battle of Verdun begins; 1 million casualties after months of trench warfare.
- Feb. 25 Germans sink French ship; 930 killed
- Mar. 9 Pancho Villa invades U.S.; 18 killed
- Mar. 15 Gen. Pershing chases Panco Villa in Mexico
- Apr. 6 German parliament Oks unrestricted submarine warfare against allies.
- Apr. 24 Ernest Shackleton and five men leave on lifeboat from Elephant Island seeking help
- Apr. 30 Chicago Cubs plays 1st game Wrigley Field
- May 9 Shackelton and men reach island of S. Georgia, 720 mi. voyage in an open boat
- May 20 1st Norman Rockwell cover appears on Saturday Evening Post
- Jun. 15 Boy Scouts of America formed
- Jul. 1 Coca-Cola brings first formula to market without containing cocaine
- Jul. 15 Boeing Aircraft Co. formed in Seattle
- Aug. 25 National Park Service formed by Congress
- Aug. 28 Germany declares war on Romania; Italy declares war against Germany
- Aug. 29 Congress creates U.S. Naval Reserve
- Aug. 30 Ship rescues Shackleton’s 22 men stranded on Elephant Island
- Sep. 6 First true supermarket, “Piggly Wiggly,” opens in Memphis, TN.
- Sep. 17 The “Red Baron” (Manfred von Richthofen) downs first plane to begin his fame.
- Sep. 27 1st Native American Day celebrated
- Sep. 29 John Rockefeller becomes 1st billionaire
- Oct. 2 San Diego Zoo founded
- Oct. 5 Soldier Aldolph Hitler wounded in battle
- Oct. 7 German U-boat sinks 9 British merchant ships off coast from Newport, RI.
- Oct. 12 13th World Series; Red Socks beat Dodgers
- Nov. 5 Kingdom of Poland formed
- Nov. 7 Woodrow Wilson reelected U.S. President
- Nov. 7 Jean Rankin 1st woman elected to Congress
- Nov. 26 Greece declares war on Germany
- Nov. 28 German air attacks on London
- Dec. 13 Avalanche kills 10,000 Austrian and Italian troops
- Dec. 15 France defeats Germany Battle of Verdun

Special Announcement

The Next Guided Auto Tour of *The Armendaris Ranch and Jornada del Muerto*

Will be held on

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2016

Offered by Socorro County Historical Society, Socorro, New Mexico

By special ranch permission, the SCHS spring tour of the Armendaris Ranch has been approved for March 26. This is an **all-day tour** to visit numerous Socorro County historical sites, normally closed to the public, including:

- **Valverde** townsite ruins and cemetery
- See and walk segments of **El Camino Real** trail
- Visit **Paraje Fray Cristobal** landmark & townsite
- A drive to the top of **Mesa del Contadero**
- Overview of San Marcial and Valverde battlefield
- Experience the dry & desolate **Jornada del Muerto**
- Other historic sites along the way

Complete tour information and map on the SCHS homepage: <http://www.socorro-history.org>

Travel will be in your own car. A **4WD or AWD high clearance vehicle required**. Participants without a proper vehicle will be paired with those who do.

Bring your own lunch and refreshments. This is a primitive desert experience along the desolate Jornada del Muerto on the east side of the Rio Grande; no developed accommodations available along the route.

Reservations. The number of cars on the auto tour is limited by the ranch. Space on the tour is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Reserve your spot now.

For more information, or to reserve your passage, email tour@socorro-history.org or call tour guide Paul Harden at 575-838-4775 evenings.

Cost.

\$100 per person; \$85 SCHS members
\$ 50 children 10-18; children under 10 free with adult



The SCHS guided auto tour allows you to visit numerous Socorro County historical sites in your own automobile.



Learn local history with "boots on the ground." Guides describe the history at each stop with opportunities to explore the sites on your own.

AUTO TOUR EXCURSION

NO. 2

ARMENDARIS RANCH

TOUR NUMBER AND NAME