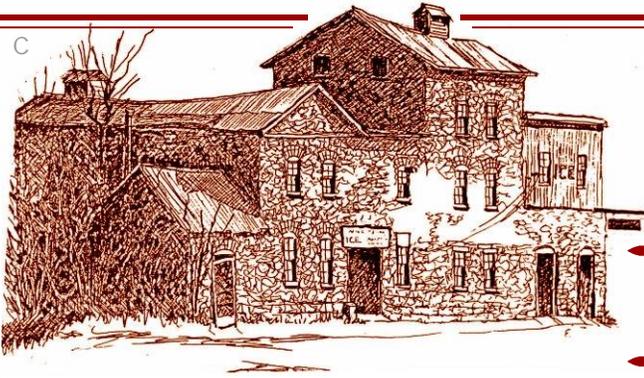


# Socorro County Historical Society

Post Office Box 921  
Socorro, New Mexico 87801

## Membership News • Summer 2017

Printed periodically



## Socorro's Oktoberfest (Oct. 7, 2017) — A Long Legacy

In 1882, Jakob Hammel, and sons Gustav and William, migrated to Socorro, New Mexico. They rented a warehouse on Manzanares Street and began importing Anheuser beer from St. Louis, Missouri. Due to Socorro's "boom years" from the area mines, the railroad, and a growing town (with plenty of saloons), their beer bottling business was very successful. The following year, they began brewing their own beer locally to keep up with demand.

Needing larger facilities, they purchased an adobe building on 6th Street from Pedro Montoya in 1884. This, too, was quickly outgrown such that the Hammels decided to build their own custom brewery. The 3-story brewery we all know today, and the extension to the north, was completed in 1886. This housed a substantial brewery and an ice house (the south extension was added in 1903). Once completed, the Hammels were the only brewery in New Mexico delivering beer packed in ice throughout the state. Cold beer was a real novelty in 1886.

The Hammels planted trees behind the brewery to build a "wintergarten," a reminder of their Bavarian homeland. Once the trees began to mature, they held their first Oktoberfest about 1890 for the employees and their families.

Over the years, Oktoberfest at the Hammel Brewery grew to include friends, neighbors, and eventually, the whole town. The Hammels enjoyed hosting a day of family fun with a flair of their German heritage, which the Socorro Chieftain called a "town picnic."

Clarence Hammel willed his beloved brewery building and property to the Socorro County Historical Society upon his death in 1986. SCHS has since continued the tradition and legacy of Oktoberfest in Socorro with good food, drink, entertainment, family fun, and that "town picnic" flavor. Oktoberfest is rich with Socorro history and tradition we hope you will enjoy as generations before us have done.

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### Your SCHS Board of Directors:

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Chuck Zimmerly    |
| <b>Vice President</b> | Dr. Peggy Hardman |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | Prescilla Mauldin |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Paul Harden       |

### Board Members:

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jon Spargo                   | Roy Heatwole       |
| Kay Krehbiel                 | Claudette Gallegos |
| Bob Eveleth – Past President | Ex-officio         |

Visit the SCHS Website:

[www.Socorro-History.org](http://www.Socorro-History.org)

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



or, like us on FaceBook

Our new FB page: "Socorro County Historical Society" is updated with news & events, history tid-bits and photos to enjoy.

Socorro County Historical Society (SCHS)  
presents our annual

# OKTOBERFEST

## Socorro's Family Picnic

# SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

at the historic Hammel Brewery & Museum  
600 N. 6th Street • Socorro, NM

## Music & Entertainment

- 11 a.m. Dr. Comstock's Oompah Band  
*Best Oompah band west of the Pecos*
- 12 noon Roon Band  
*Ronna Kalish, Jim Ruff & Johnny Dean*
- 1 p.m. Tuesdays @ 2  
*Great folk music from Magdalena*
- 2 p.m. Aditi Natesa Belly Dancers  
*The NMT fusion style belly dancers club*

FREE ADMISSION  
TO ALL EVENTS



Chef Craig



Take out available

## Food service from 11 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Hot from the grill, your choice of -  
Grill cooked beer Brats & sauerkraut  
or hamburgers/green chili burgers  
with beans, chips, drinks, & condiments

Thanks to our Sponsors: Lotaburger, Nghia Ngo,  
Walmart, Bodega Burger Co., Jess Landers,  
Brook's Grocery, City of Socorro,  
NMT's Society of Petroleum Engineers

Just  
**\$10**  
\$7 children  
per  
meal

## Brew on Tap

Bodega Burger Co. will be our beermeisters  
serving Santa Fe Oktoberfest beer on tap  
\$4 per glass (OK, maybe plastic cups!)

ID required for our younger looking guests; alcohol can not be taken from the property

**Plus** ... bake table, Socorro Garden Club, model train  
displays, tour the 1880s built Hammel Brewery building,  
a whole bunch of friendly people, and more ...

Thanks to all for your support of SCHS

[www.socorro-history.org](http://www.socorro-history.org)





## Hammel Roof Damage and Repair

Heavy Spring winds on March 23–24, 2017 dislodged some roof panels on the south section of the Hammel Brewery building. The Socorro Airfield registered 59 and 63 mph gusts over those two days. While a portion of the damage could be seen from street level, the extent of the damage could not. Nobody wanted to climb atop the 2-story section of the old Ice House to inspect the roof damage, including the contractors called, for fear the old rafters might be rotted and would not support the weight to inspect the damage.

Board members Roy Heatwole and Jon Spargo climbed above the old boiler room only to see blue sky shining through a gaping hole in the roof. Obviously, a quick repair was needed before rains caused water damage to the interior of the building, or worse, more heavy winds.

The next day, Paul Harden used his DJI Phantom drone to get some aerial photographs of the damage. The aerial photos were used by the Board, and the contractor, to determine the extent of the repairs. The photos also revealed the rafters were in good shape, no signs



DJI Phantom 3 drone



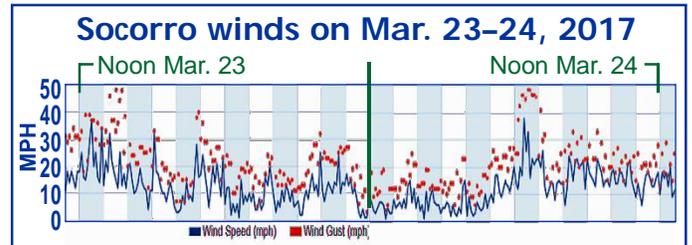
Damaged roof



Damaged roof



Following repair



of rotted or water damaged wood, simplifying the needed repairs and the expense.

**Joe Gonzales Construction** was selected for the repairs. The SCHS insurance policy has a \$2,000 deductible – about the estimate of the repair. Thus, an insurance claim was not filed. The Board went to work to get the repairs accomplished and funded.

Fortunately, **Damien Ocampo** at **State Farm Insurance** (our insurance carrier) donated 20 sheets of the corrugated roof panels needed, a value of \$300 or more.

In addition, SCHS received \$500 donations for the repair from:

- **Roy & Lynne Heatwole** (Board member)
- **David Pierce** (SCHS member)
- **First State Bank** (Life member)

The Board of Directors thanks the above for their generous donations. The final repair bill was about \$1,600, covered almost entirely by these donations.

The repair was very well done with additional work to improve the integrity of the building. The challenges of keeping a 130 year old building in good repair has been well met by donated gifts and the membership. Thank you to all.

See our homepage:

**[www.socorro-history.org](http://www.socorro-history.org)** for a few more photos and a short aerial video of the Hammel Brewery and Museum building like you've never seen it before.

## The Deadliest Hurricane in U.S. History

**W**ith hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria not far behind us, it's natural to wonder, "what was the deadliest hurricane in U.S. history?" In recent times, hurricane Katrina officially claimed 1,836 lives. A century before, the "Great Galveston Hurricane," on September 8, 1900, remains the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history.

In the 17th–19th centuries, many Spanish ships were lost to hurricanes due to little or no advance warning of a tropical storm. By the early 1900s, the situation wasn't much different. Communications was very limited; shipboard wireless radio was a decade away. If lucky, an arriving ship brought news of a storm, though without any knowledge of its path.

Galveston was the fourth largest city in Texas in 1900 and a bustling sea port with a population of about 40,000. Though Galveston was only ten feet above sea level there was little concern over hurricanes, – they were fairly rare in the Gulf of Mexico and seldom made landfall.

On September 4, 1900, Isaac Cline, the meteorologist stationed on Galveston Island, received reports of a hurricane along the coast of Cuba. By the morning of September 7, Cline saw the tell-tale signs of an approaching hurricane: rapidly falling barometer, winds suddenly from the southeast, and a warming of sea temperatures along the beaches. He immediately issued the alarm, which fell on deaf ears.

By the next morning, the approaching cloud bank, rain and wind, drew little attention. Cline's warnings were ignored even as unusual rising tides began to cause flooding along the beach fronts.

**Then ... it hit.** In only hours, the wind went from 20 mph to about 130 mph. The 15–20 foot storm surge was so destructive, most people thought it was a tidal wave. The winds and the rising waters crumbled houses along the shore, with debris collapsing the houses behind them in a continuing domino effect. By the dark of night, Galveston was reduced to rubble. Top winds reached 145 mph – a category 4 storm by today's measure.

When the sun rose on September 9, the horror of the utter destruction was evident everywhere. Except for a few brick buildings still standing, the rest of the



Galveston, Texas – before and after the 1900 hurricane

city was flattened, submerged in several feet of water with mountains of lumber and debris. Even more gruesome were the thousands of bodies floating in the flooded streets, in the harbor, or buried under collapsed homes. In the end, it was estimated over 8,000 persons had perished in Galveston.

Many bodies were in their night clothes, making identification very difficult. Survivors searched the mass of bodies

looking for their missing loved ones.

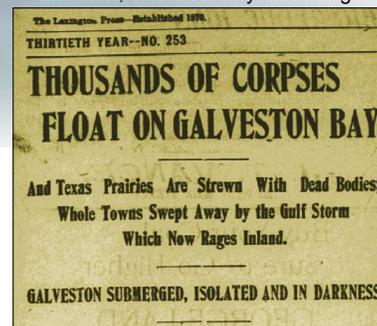
At first, bodies were stacked with the debris and set ablaze. However, there were just too many bodies to cremate. The majority were loaded onto barges and ships for burial at sea. Accurate records were not kept of the number of cremations and at-sea burials, the reason the exact death toll will never be known.

Galveston was rebuilt and remains a major sea port. A huge seawall, over 10 miles in length, was built which still protects the port city today.

When and where a hurricane hits land was only a guess not long ago, costing many lives. Today, the path of hurricanes are predicted with amazing accuracy and forewarning, saving thousands. Most of whom now perish are those who fail to heed the warnings.

If only Galveston had listened to Isaac Cline – whose own wife perished in the storm surge as he went door-to-door attempting to save others.

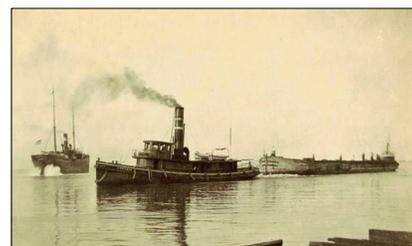
Photos: Library of Congress and Galveston, Texas History & Heritage



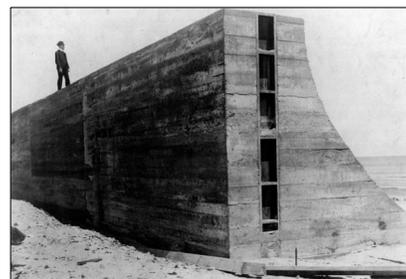
Typical newspaper headline



Searching the bodies for missing family members



A tug taking a barge filled with bodies to sea for burial



Building the seawall after the hurricane – still in use today

The SCHS Board of Directors have had a busy year so far, with some ongoing projects, and setting a plan for Hammel Museum improvements over the next two years.

## New Board Member.

Board member **Donald Wolberg** tendered his resignation from the SCHS board due to extended travel commitments that interferes with Board meetings. We thank Donald for serving on the Board and his support to the Society.

SCHS member **Claudette Gallegos** was unanimously elected by the Board to replace Donald Wolberg. Recently retired from New Mexico Tech, we thank her for her willingness to fill the vacancy.

## Armendaris Ranch.

Ranch manager **Tom Waddell** has retired after serving in that capacity since **Ted Turner** purchased the sprawling ranch. The new manager is **Ed "E.D." Edwards**. E.D. has asked SCHS to assist in documenting the history of the ranch. SCHS members **Paul Harden**, **Peggy Hardman** and **David Love** have already begun assisting the ranch in this endeavor, including gathering GPS positions and photographing some of the historical features on the ranch.

## Hammel Museum Open House.

SCHS continues to hold our open house to the Hammel Brewery and Museum on the first Saturday of the month, and often upon special request by tour groups or other interested parties. The attendance at our open houses has generally been quite good, often with people traveling from Belen, Albuquerque or out of state areas to visit the historic Socorro landmark.

Improvements to the internal displays and construction of some new exhibits are planned to address the interests and questions we often receive.



## Upcoming SCHS Projects.

*Keeping a century old historic building in good repair and condition is quite a challenge. Though the Hammel building is in fairly good shape, the Board has identified items for future improvement or to enhance the functionality of the facilities.*

**Rear delivery platform** for the old ice plant is slowly rotting away and becoming a safety concern. Plans are being developed for rebuilding the platform to preserve the historical integrity of the Hammel.

**The front door steps** have always been a bit hazardous. Anyone entering the Hammel knows that sudden drop must be taken with care. A carpenter has been hired to build new steps, providing the standard 7-inch height on each step for safety (maybe by Oktoberfest).

**The new storage unit**, which we have nicknamed "the vault," is slowly growing with the Society's historic holdings, photographs, and library. We have also begun to organize and archive our collection of old *Socorro Chieftain* and *El Defensor Chieftain* newspapers. The vault is environmentally controlled to properly preserve our history documents and holdings.

**A covered gazebo** type structure, with concrete pad, is also being contemplated for where the bands at Oktoberfest typically perform. This will provide a "band shell" of sorts for our bands and entertainment groups – appreciated when it rains, we're sure, with a design we hope blends in well with the Hammel.

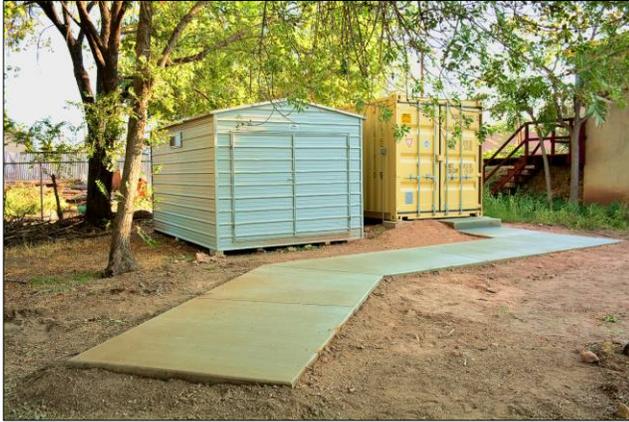
**Wintergarten** trees are also a century old, some planted in the 1890s, and some are beginning to die. Two dead trees were recently removed. We are working with others to improve the health of our historic trees and to replace those where needed. The Hammel's were proud of their wintergarten, and still enjoyed by our visitors today and for Oktoberfest – a legacy we feel compelled to continue.

**The Hammel Wintergarten** and facilities are unique to Socorro. The Board desires to improve these facilities and make them available for public use for graduation parties, weddings, etc., needing a nice, private location.

## NEW OCTOBERFEST GRILL & FOOD SERVICE AREA



*Edwards Construction leveling and preparing the area for the cement*



*The finished Oktoberfest food service area and step to the archive storage unit*

## ONGOING WORK IN THE SCHS ARCHIVE VAULT



*Bob, Peggy and Paul organizing historic books and documents in the Vault*



*Moving storage shelves into the Vault*



*Organizing our newspaper collection*