

Socorro County Historical Society

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS • OCT. 2009

HAMMEL BREWERY REPAIR

**Hammel Museum Collapsed Wall Repair Began on
October 5th – Nearing Completion**

As most of you know by now, the Hammel Brewery, the museum building for the Socorro County Historical Society (SCHS), suffered a major wall collapse in April 2008. Thanks to donations by SCHS members and a grant from the BNSF Railroad, the repair work to one of Socorro's landmark buildings was begun on Monday, October 5, 2009 – just two days after our annual Octoberfest.



More photos on pages 5–8

The repair work is being performed by Accurate Construction, Inc. of Socorro, Bruce Burnett, owner. The repair work is going along quite swiftly. As of Wednesday, October 21, about three-fourths of the height of the wall had been rebuilt and looking very nice – and preserving well the original appearance of the 1890s hand-laid rock outer wall of the brewery building.

Work began on October 5th by tearing down the old failed adobe load bearing wall and removing the rest of the rock facade. Electrical wiring, a breaker box, and telephone service running along the west side of the building were removed and relocated. Security fencing was installed to protect the building during the construction work. The alarm system remains operative.

The substandard (and crumbling) wall footing was also removed and a new, very substantial footing built to support the new walls. The external doors are now several inches above the sidewalk level, which has been a source of internal flooding in the past during heavy rains.

Rebuilding the west side load bearing wall and rock facade is now in progress. The “slip form rock wall” technique – building the load bearing wall and the rock facade in a single construction step – is working very well.

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Our Annual 2009 OCTOBERFEST



Story on Pages 3-4 

SCHS Board Meetings:

Socorro County Historical Society meets on the **2nd Tuesday of each month.**

SPECIAL NOTE: The next Board meeting will be the special presentation by Dr. Richard Melzer on Nov. 10. **See page 2 for details.**

All members and the public are invited to attend this public talk.

The slip wall method allows the wall to be rebuilt in a section about two feet high. When completed, the form is moved upward to build the next two foot section. This will be completed to rebuild the entire height of the wall. The rock facade looks very similar to the original – except noticeably “straighter” than the original wall.

The south adobe wall of the brewery suffered a similar fate in years past. It was replaced with rebar, concrete blocks and cement, believed to have occurred in the late 1950s. When the southwest corner was being removed for the new corner, Bruce Burnett found a July 17, 1960 Socorro Chieftain newspaper stuffed in the wall. This fairly well confirms the south wall repair occurred in 1960. I quickly searched the

Socorro Chieftain archives around this date, but could find no article on this repair. I will keep searching to see if any details can be learned.

There is a photo gallery of the repair on the following pages (pages 5–8). Most photos are by Jon Spargo and a few by Paul Harden. Probably more photos of rock and mortar than you care for – but we wanted to document the historic repair.

If you're in the vicinity of the Hammel museum, drive by and see the repair for yourself while it is in progress. You better hurry, though, as the wall is going up quickly.

The Board of Directors are very pleased with the progress and quality of the work.

Public Talk – Nov. 10, 7 p.m.: “Famous and Unusual Graves”

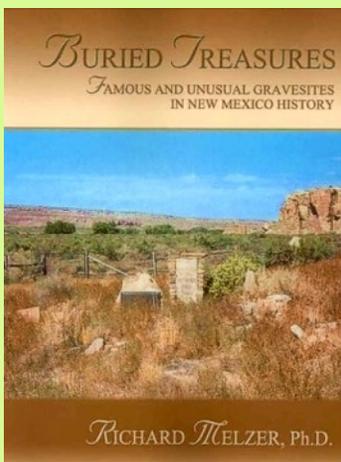
Special Talk for All SCHS and AAUW Members!

In our continuing series of offering public talks, the SCHS and AAUW are pleased to present Dr. Richard Melzer as our next special speaker. Dr. Melzer's presentation will be on “*Famous and Unusual Gravesites in New Mexico History*” – the title of his recent book.

Though the title might sound a bit morbid, it is actually a very interesting look at how New Mexico's gravestones of the famous and infamous gives us compelling stories, humorous epitaphs, and a unique view of our state's history.

In many instances, the gravestone, and where it is located, is the last statement made by a fallen hero, politician, lawman or outlaw.

The presentation will be at the New Mexico Tech library, room 212, on **Tuesday evening, November 10, at 7:00 p.m.** in lieu of the scheduled SCHS board meeting. A short business meeting will be held prior to the



presentation. All SCHS and AAUW members, and the public, are invited to attend the free public presentation.

Dr. Richard Melzer is a well known New Mexico historian. He is a professor of history at the UNM-Valencia Campus, president of the Historical Society of New Mexico, and Vice-President of the Valencia County Historical Society. He is an award winning author of many books on New Mexico history from the life of Ernie Pyle to the secrets of the first atomic bomb. His most

recent book, “Buried Treasures: Famous and Unusual Gravesites in New Mexico History” is the result of many years of research, including visiting over 150 of New Mexico's cemeteries. Dr. Meltzer will be showing photographs of some of the interesting gravestones he has found – whether of famous outlaws or interesting epitaphs – with a story behind them all.

New SCHS Members – Welcome Aboard

Charles Demenna has been a past member of the Society – but recently became a LIFE MEMBER. Charles has been a long supporter of the Society, it's functions, and the museum. We thank Charles for his support through becoming a life member and look forward to his future contributions. (No photo available)

Priscilla Mauldin has also just joined the Society with a strong interest in local history. She is the manager of the VLA Visitor's Gift Store and was recently elected to the Board of the Socorro Electric Cooperative.



Priscilla Mauldin

The Society's annual Oktoberfest was held at the Hammel Museum on Saturday, October 3rd. It was a great success. We had a much larger crowd than last year with about another 50 meals served. Of course, unlike last year, we did not have wind, rain and blowing dust all day. It was a beautiful Socorro day with calm crystal blue skies and comfortably warm weather. The shade from the trees in the wintergarten made for a perfect autumn day.

Speaking of our wintergarten behind the Hammel Museum, many of our guests commented on how nice it looked and how much more room there was for the tables. The Society would like to thank Sammy Vivian and the City of Socorro for sending over a crew to trim the grass, cut the weeds, and make the Oktoberfest grounds look like a private park – which, by the way, it is. We also think Councilor and SCHS Board member Peter Romero played some role. Thanks to all.

M-Mountain Grill again catered the event with tasty Bavarian style bratwurst, sauerkraut and German potato salad. The tasty BBQ beef brisket satisfied those seeking an alternative taste. There was a fairly long meal line from shortly before noon until 2:00 p.m., followed by stragglers until 4:00 p.m.

Rancher's Steakhouse provided this year's brew of George Killian's Irish Red, served by our own brewmeister (and SCHS President) Robert Eveleth. Perhaps it was the food, perhaps the weather, perhaps Rancher's Steakhouse private stock, but the brew seemed especially smooth and palatable this year.

Entertainment was again provided by Dr. Comstock's "Oompah" Band, Elise Brower's "Las Cantantes" women's choral group, and the Rawhide Western Band. We are always appreciative of their support, and of course, the always nice entertainment. The Rawhide Band's

Board member Frances Senn helping at the Arts and Crafts table. Frances has helped organize the annual SCHS Oktoberfest for years.



Life member Barbara Dubois (left) and Helen Braswell relaxing after a lunch of brat and performing choral selections at Oktoberfest.



performance was cut short by two different guitars breaking strings, but enjoyable nonetheless.

Vendor tables of the Socorro Garden club, arts and crafts, and the bake table offered winter plants to green up your house to tasty "spider cookies" for desert. The Socorro Train Gang also had a nice model train setup – bright red with the holiday spirit.

Thanks to all who attended and supported our annual Oktoberfest. Proceeds are used for our repair and operating funds. If you weren't there, you missed a really enjoyable day. And, thanks to all Board members, Society members, and volunteers who helped make the 2009 Oktoberfest a grand affair.

The annual SCHS Oktoberfest is held on the first Saturday in October. Mark your 2010 calendars now!

Oktoberfest means good music . . .

The Oompah Band



Las Cantantes



The Rawhide Band



Good Food . . .



The long lines for the brat, sauerkraut & beef brisket



"Spider Cookies" and other goodies at the Bake Table



Oktoberfest goes green at the Garden Club table



The Socorro Train Gang's "Holiday Train"

Minutes of the SCHS Board Meeting – Oct. 13, 2009

1. Meeting called to order at 7:03 p.m. at the Hammel Museum; in attendance: Robert Eveleth, Roy Heatwole, Kay Brower, Jon Spargo, Prescilla Mauldin, Paul Harden.
2. Treasurer's report by Kay Brower; \$2,074 deposited for Oktoberfest door sales; \$400 more than 2008. Motion to accept treasurer's report passed by Board.
3. First payment of \$10,000 issued to Accurate Construction Inc. for building repair to begin Oct. 5-6.
4. Dr. Richard Meltzer will give public talk at next Board meeting on Nov. 10 at NMT Library. Topic will be his new book on Famous & Unusual Graves. Paul Harden will handle publicity.
5. Motion to pay Socorro Pumping for portable toilet for Oktoberfest and for duration of repair for use by the construction crew. Motion passed.
6. Charles Demenna has renewed SCHS membership as a life member. Robert Eveleth read to Board a letter to be sent to Mr. Demenna.
7. Prescilla Mauldin attended the Board meeting, expressing her interest in the Society and local history and joined the Society.
8. Discussion to manufacture plaque to honor Hammel Brewery caretaker Alex Ulibarri 1955-1986. Paul Harden will get prices from Southwest Rubber Stamp, who has made previous award plaques for Society.
9. Report of active bee hive in ceiling of the museum building; Robert Eveleth will contact Milton Ulibarri for proper disposal and spraying museum building for insects due to building being open and exposed during construction work.
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted/ Paul Harden, SCHS Secretary

Documenting the building repair. Photos by Jon Spargo and Paul Harden

The Wall Collapse, April 10, 2008



Rocks from the collapse closed 6th Street for several hours. Electricity was cut from the building for safety.



The collapsed rock facade revealed the fragile load bearing adobe wall; a temporary support was built.

Removing the old adobe load bearing wall



Jack hammers were used to remove the old adobe wall and adjoining cement members, beginning Oct. 6, 2009.



Where the jack hammer wouldn't work, good old back breaking work was required.



With adobe wall removed by Oct. 7, upper story is shored with temporary supports.

Building the new footing



Building the forms and rebar for the new wall footing.



Pouring the cement for the new footings on Oct. 12.



Finishing the new solid concrete footing that will support the new load bearing wall and rock facade.



The new footing for the southwest corner of the Hammel Brewery and museum building.

Building the "slip form" to begin the wall reconstruction



With the footing in place and concrete dried, the "slip wall" form is built on Oct. 14.



The "slip form" in place and ready to build the first course of the wall.



New frames for the external doors are built and placed on top of the new concrete footing.



Looking into the "slip form." The rocks for the external facade are positioned into place.



With the rocks for the external wall in place, the form is filled with concrete. This builds a solid concrete load bearing wall and rock facade together.



The first row, or course, of the wall was completed on Wednesday, Oct. 14. The concrete was allowed to dry overnight before moving the form.



On October 15, the slip wall form was raised about two feet for the next course of rock and concrete. This is being repeated until the full height of the wall is built.



“How high’s the wall, mama? It’s four feet high and risin”



Step 1: Luis Chavez lifts another heavy rock to Bruce Burnett, positioning them into place.



Step 2: Luis fills a bucket with cement then lifts the heavy bucket to Bruce.



Step 3: Bruce pours cement into the slip rock form. By Oct. 19, the wall was about one-half completed.



Step 4: Slosh & swish the cement around the rocks (there’s probably an engineering term for that).



By October 21, about 3/4 of the wall had been completed. Finishing and cleaning will follow.



A look at the new load bearing wall from inside of the brewery showing internal stairs to the 2nd floor.

I received a letter (personally, not through the Society) from Lawrence and Deborah Fullerton. They had contacted me wondering if I knew anything about the “Brewsterite” Mormons that had settled in Socorro in the 1850s. I had not. After several email exchanges, a previously unknown story in Socorro’s history was revealed.

John Colin Brewster was a Mormon who claimed to have received revelations from the angel Moroni, as did Joseph Smith. Publishing these revelations, some of which were contrary to the revelations given to Joseph Smith, basically got Brewster excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1848.

The angel gave Brewster instructions to take his followers to the river Amlí, which Brewster interpreted as the Rio Grande. Arriving in Santa Fe in July 1849, the Brewster party had a falling out. Brewster and his followers traveled to Socorro; Roy Oatman and three other families stayed in Socorro for a spell, then continued along the southern immigrant trail (later, the Butterfield trail) to California. In late August, they were attacked by Indians near Yuma – the famous *Oatman massacre* in Arizona history (which I had no idea had a Socorro connection).

Brewster and his followers built a small religious community they called “Colonias” south of Socorro. They also appear in the 1850 Socorro census. From letters they sent home, and other information provided by Deborah Fullerton, the descriptions indicate Brewster’s Colonias was located near Luis Lopez.

Brewster and a couple of his followers had returned to Missouri by the late 1850s, but what happened to the rest of them is unknown.

The Fullerton’s provided me with a list of those settling at Colonias, which I took to the Socorro courthouse to find any mention in the old marriage or land records. I hit paydirt by finding one of the party, William Conner, witnessing the marriage of his daughter, Mary Conner, to Orlando Barkley, another of the Brewsterite party in Socorro.

Additional research showed William Conner served as Socorro’s 2nd postmaster from 1852 to 1855, and again from 1863–1866. In 1866, the office of postmaster was turned over to Orlando Barkley – Conner’s son-in-law! Obviously, two of the families remained in Socorro for some time following the breakup of the Mormon community.

Searching online sources, it turns out Brewster’s Colonias was a fairly well known

attempt at creating an utopian society near Socorro in church records, even though they were considered apostates at the time.

I was asked to write an article for *Desert Tracks*, a publication of the Oregon-California Trail Association (OCTA), on some of the above facts I had discovered. I also created a map based on all the “clues” as to where Colonia was likely located. The map is shown below.



The Brewsterite Mormon community near Luis Lopez is a fascinating and previously unknown chapter in Socorro’s history (not related to the Mormon Battalion), proving again that not all of our history is known or documented. The history of Socorro is an unfinished work with new history discovered nearly every time you research something. This is what the Society and some of the members do.

If you have ever heard of any aspect of the Brewsterites in Socorro or Luis Lopez, please let me know to add to the knowledge base. It does appear their community was built very close to the suspected Teypama pueblo, also known as “Plaza Montoya,” near Luis Lopez.

I am planning on presenting the Brewster and Oatman story in my January and February 2010 *Defensor Chieftain* history articles.

– Paul Harden
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The Society was contacted by El Defensor Chieftain newspaper regarding the repair work seen at the museum. The article appeared on the front page of the Oct. 17, 2009 issue and read as follows:

The Hammel Museum is one of Socorro's landmark historical buildings. Built in several stages in the 1880s to 1890s, the two-story brewery produced one of Southwest's premier beers until the Prohibition Act required it, and all breweries, to be dismantled in 1919. Operating under the name Illinois Brewery, it was famous for years as one of the few breweries in the west that delivered its Bravarian beer to customers ice cold. Much of the Hammel brewery building today contains the old ammonia refrigeration system and ice making plant. During and after prohibition, Clarence Hammel operated the business as a soft drink bottler and ice plant. Today, it is the Socorro County Historical Society museum and home to the Socorro Model Train Gang.

The west facing wall of the brewery suffered a major collapse on April 10, 2008. The rock facade gave way and fell onto Sixth Street, which exposed a large portion of the old adobe load-bearing wall. Temporary repairs have been in place to stabilize the wall from further collapse and to support the second story of the building.

The historical society hired a structural engineer to determine the extent of the failure. The inspection revealed the damage was more serious than it first appeared. Years of hidden water damage had caused an internal "melting" of the adobe wall, and caused the rock facade to slowly separate from the adobe until it was free standing. The rock work began to bow outward until it collapsed under its own weight. The inspection also revealed cracks, melting and compression of the internal wall was no longer capable of supporting the second story of the brewery. This demanded a more extensive repair than first thought. Initial repair estimates were about \$35,000, well beyond the financial resources of the Socorro County Historical Society.

A fund raising effort was undertaken for the repair work. Thanks to donations from Socorroans, historical society members and a grant from the Burlington, Northern and Santa Fe Railroad, funds were raised to begin the repairs. Additionally, Elise and Kay Brower matched a portion of donations.

The Society's board of directors always felt strongly that the repair must be to preserve the building properly. A two-step repair was required, first, to rebuild a load-bearing wall to properly support the building and second, replace the rock facade.

Bruce Burnett, of Accurate Construction Company in Socorro, proposed a novel plan to rebuild the load-bearing wall and the rock facade in a cost-saving process. The technique is called "slip form rock wall construction" in



which a solid concrete load-bearing wall and the rock facade are rebuilt at the same time. This method rebuilds the wall inside a wooden form about 2 feet high. When the cement is dry, the form is moved upward for the next 2-foot layer. This is repeated until the full height of the load-bearing and rock wall is completed.

Accurate Construction began the repair shortly after the annual Oktoberfest celebration on Oct. 3. Electrical and telephone wiring had to be relocated, temporary supports for the second story of the building put in place, and the old crumbling adobe wall removed. After installing the steel rebar for the new wall, the new concrete footing was poured and is now completed. The rebuilding of the load-bearing and rock wall is now under way.

This repair will restore the Hammel Brewery to its original 1880s appearance, and hopefully last another century for Socorro to enjoy.

The Socorro County Historical Society would like to thank Accurate Construction for performing the repair to preserve the historical character of the building, and to all those who have donated to the repair effort. For those who would like to help with the repair effort, donations can be sent to Socorro County Historical Society, P. O. Box 923, Socorro, NM 87801. An open house will be announced when the repair work and restoration is completed.