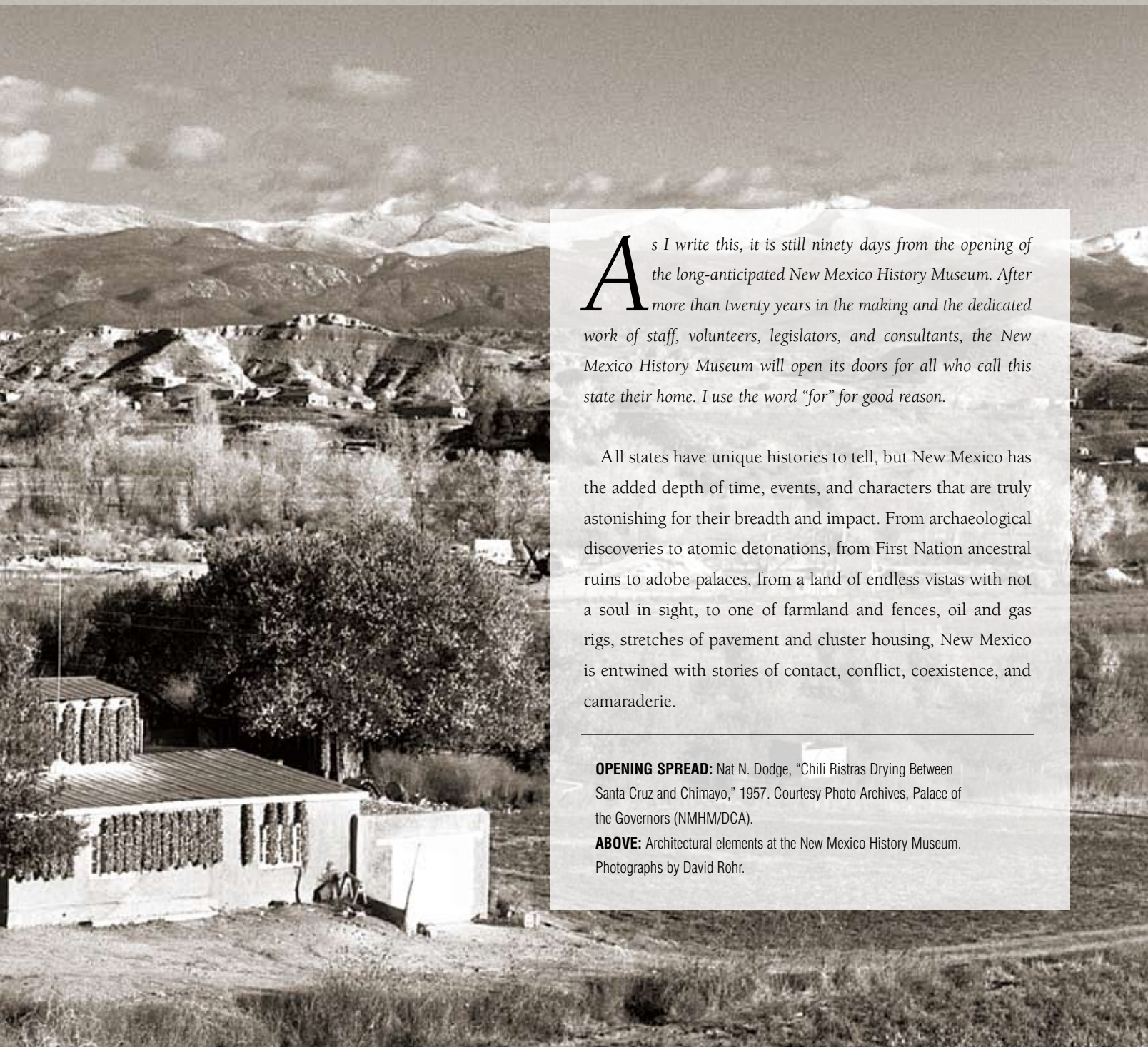


A Place Like No Other

By Frances Levine





As I write this, it is still ninety days from the opening of the long-anticipated New Mexico History Museum. After more than twenty years in the making and the dedicated work of staff, volunteers, legislators, and consultants, the New Mexico History Museum will open its doors for all who call this state their home. I use the word “for” for good reason.

All states have unique histories to tell, but New Mexico has the added depth of time, events, and characters that are truly astonishing for their breadth and impact. From archaeological discoveries to atomic detonations, from First Nation ancestral ruins to adobe palaces, from a land of endless vistas with not a soul in sight, to one of farmland and fences, oil and gas rigs, stretches of pavement and cluster housing, New Mexico is entwined with stories of contact, conflict, coexistence, and camaraderie.

OPENING SPREAD: Nat N. Dodge, “Chili Ristras Drying Between Santa Cruz and Chimayo,” 1957. Courtesy Photo Archives, Palace of the Governors (NMHM/DCA).

ABOVE: Architectural elements at the New Mexico History Museum. Photographs by David Rohr.

A PLACE LIKE NO OTHER

They are the stories about and for New Mexicans, and theirs are the histories that will be told at the New Mexico History Museum.

Mine is the final article for “A Place Like No Other,” a three-year series of articles for *El Palacio* leading to the creation of the New Mexico History Museum that has been devoted to exploring New Mexico history through new research and recent insights of curators, artists, collections managers, educators, historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and ethnohistorians. This article, however, will not be the last to be based on their work.

That research is sure to inspire further lines of inquiry and future exhibitions in a museum the *Santa Fe New Mexican* and its editors expressed a need for more than 100 years ago. In an editorial, they suggested, “It would not be asking the Legislature too much to build a suitable wing on the Old Palace especially adapted for a history museum and library.”

The *New Mexican* was also a strong supporter of the founding of the Museum of New Mexico in 1909, and its editor at the time, Paul A. F. Walter, later longtime editor of *El Palacio* magazine, continued to champion the history museum that we at long last have built.

The new building buzzes with the sounds of final phases of construction activity—finish carpenters are installing the decorative woodwork in the front-desk area, painters are applying the final coats to the laser-cut railings. Workmen are laying carpet in the offices and linoleum in the classroom and workrooms. Furniture is on its way, and locks are being keyed for the dozens of doors and hallways. Staff members are eagerly awaiting their chance to step into their new offices, begin planning activities for our classrooms and auditorium, and make final exhibition adjustments. Construction workers, too, are curious about what the curators and educators are planning for the spaces they are crafting.

In his seminal book *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, geographer and landscape guru John Brickerhoff Jackson wrote, “For Americans the place where we see most clearly the impact of time on a landscape is New Mexico.” For many who learned that American history began with the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth or the English colonists at Jamestown, New Mexico history can be surprising. Americans have long been taught a history of our country that emphasizes east-to-west migration and not a sequence that begins in the oral traditions and material culture of indigenous peoples rooted in the land itself.



Exhibit fabrication and installation teams from EXPLUS Incorporated, of Sterling, Virginia, and PICO Atlanta of Tucker, Georgia, build an area called “The Far Northern Frontier.” This section of the exhibition tells of New Mexico’s Hispanic history, a story more than four centuries long. Photograph by David Rohr.

New Mexico History Museum will challenge conventional notions of time, place, and the construction of American identity not only in the exhibitions but also in programming and special events.

Fabricators who build and prepare the infrastructure of our exhibitions are painting, plastering, and wallpapering to create the scenic treatments that will form the backgrounds of the museum’s immersive environments. Conservators are working their own magic, building a virtual village as they fit costumes to forms and mannequins that will take our costume collection from storage into life in our permanent and changing exhibitions. Preparators and mount-makers are measuring hundreds of artifacts, maps, paintings, drawings, and photographs to custom-craft supports,



frames, and hinges that will hold artifacts securely. Aural historian Jack Loeffler is wrapping up final interviews and editing for listening stations, and our partners at KNME's ¡Colores! and Second Story Interactive Studio are making final cuts before their work is installed in audio and video throughout the museum. Our graphics team is fine-tuning visual elements from the presentation of artifacts to the positioning of wall text. Our museum staff is proofing that text, as well as label information and photographic panels for the design team at Gallagher & Associates in Bethesda, Maryland. And our marketing team is polishing the scripts and stories for radio and television to advertise the opening on Memorial Day weekend, 2009.

Getting into history at the New Mexico History Museum is everybody's business because it's everybody's story. Our core exhibition, *Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now*, occupies three levels of the building, beginning on the first level in the Ortiz Sala, continuing onto the mezzanine in

ABOVE: An installation evocative of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 began with placing 300 arrows. Photograph by David Rohr.

RIGHT: Detail from a serape with Mexico's Coat of Arms. History Collections (NMHM/DCA), 1596/45. Gift of Mary C. Wheelwright. Photograph by Blair Clark.



A PLACE LIKE **NO OTHER**

front of the auditorium, and concluding on the lower level. The exhibition covers New Mexico history from the sixteenth century, just before Spanish contact, to the present, with varying views on what makes New Mexico home to the dozens of people throughout the state who have been interviewed and photographed for the final section, an intimate portrait of those who can't imagine living anywhere else.

In six galleries *Telling New Mexico* covers six centuries and

Hands on History

By Erica Garcia



Photograph by Blair Clark

The New Mexico History Museum will expand its education and exhibition experience by involving children within the exhibitions themselves and giving them a chance to do what can't be done enough in museums: Touch the objects. Please.

Our touchable-collections approach is based on studies that prove exploring objects through touch increases interest and attention. The studies clearly support the proverbial wisdom, "I see and I forget. I hear and I remember. I do and I understand."

The developing project will expand the opportunity for New Mexico's children to have a sense of these objects within the context of their state's history. We hope that in turn the students will become exhibition tour guides themselves as they bring their families and friends to experience by sight, sound, and touch the New Mexico History Museum.

Erica Garcia is the chief of education at the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors.

refers to our longer archaeological record. Discoveries made here—some at the Clovis and Folsom type sites—were among the first Paleolithic sites studied in the United States. The archaeological legacy of New Mexico—found in such places as Bandelier, Chaco, Mimbres, and Puyé—is scientifically important and central to our state's cultural patrimony. The sites themselves are staggeringly beautiful. For the nation as a whole, the landscape and ancestral ruins here are tangible evidence of those Native people who continue to occupy some of the villages and at least part of the land base they occupied before European contact. That the nineteen Pueblo Indian communities and the Navajo and Apache tribes continue to be linguistically viable and able to maintain traditional practices within modern standards of living is a testament to the acceptance of cultural plurality in New Mexico. That may be the most important lesson that we New Mexicans have to share with the nation.

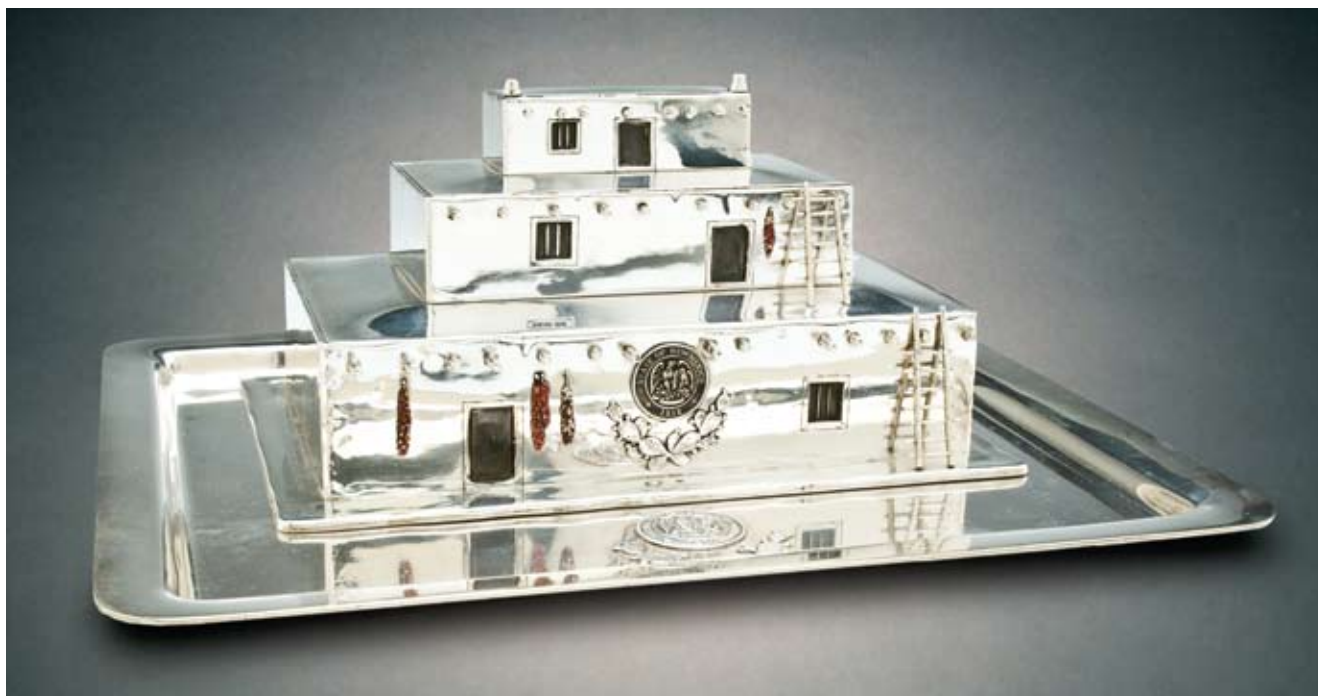
The exhibition as a whole honors those whose ancestors were here before contact, those whose ancestors were part of the conquest of New Mexico, and those who have come



Mancerina. History Collections (NMHM/DCA), 2008.29.1, Museum Purchase. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Preparing and serving chocolate was a luxury and a ritual of respect among some Spanish people, and its preparation required elegant pots, cups, and saucers. Recently acquired for the core exhibition is this silver *mancerina*, a cup holder used specifically for drinking chocolate, that dates to the early eighteenth century. The artifact helps to illustrate the story of Don Diego de Vargas when he served chocolate to Pueblo leaders while they negotiated. —Curator of Spanish Colonial History Josef Diaz

to New Mexico more recently. In assembling the themes, life histories, and artifacts that will be exhibited, our curators and educators extended their search to find not only the well-



USS New Mexico Humidor. History Collections (NMHM/DCA), 2153/45q. Gift of the United States Navy.

Photograph by Blair Clark.

It's Tiffany! It's silver! It celebrates New Mexico! Looking at it I dream of Audrey Hepburn and, uh ... breakfast.

Make that a breakfast burrito, Christmas. —Marketing Manager Kate Nelson

known events but also the personal stories. Large or small, they are the stories that speak to the historical experiences of all New Mexicans and tie *our* events to the larger contexts of American history.

The words of “Taos Pueblo (Tuah-Tah) man” that open the exhibition area called “Beyond History’s Records” speak directly to all who claim discoveries in land long necessary to another people’s existence: “We have lived upon this land from days beyond history’s records, far past any living memory, deep into the time of legend. The story of my people and the story of this place are one single story. No man can think of us without thinking of this place. We are always joined together.”

The design of the space evokes the landscapes of New Mexico—from mountains to salt flats. Excerpts of the Native languages of New Mexico with English and Spanish translations reveal the existence of Native peoples and envisage the influx of those to come. The curve leads to a display of pottery, spear points, and jewelry, mixed with images of rock drawings, petroglyphs, and other ancient art. The sounds, the objects, and the setting convey a central message: Native peoples have lived across present-day New Mexico for thousands of years.

They have explored throughout the region and traded with other peoples across North and Central America. The American Southwest remains their home, never empty nor waiting to be discovered, neither a frontier nor a paradise.

“The Far Northern Frontier” tells the Hispanic history of New Mexico, which is more than four centuries long and represents some of the oldest Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. Today many New Mexicans can claim ancestors on both sides of European contact, and from that fact alone there are lessons of building and rebuilding cultural accommodations that began when, chasing legends of gold, the first Spanish explorers pushed into New Mexico in the early 1500s. They explored the Southwest, where they found only hardship—reason enough to return to Mexico. At the end of the century, another Spanish explorer, Juan de Oñate, and 500 followers reached northern New Mexico and established a capital near what became Santa Fe.

For the next 200 years, the Spanish missionaries, aristocrats, and settlers who followed struggled to create a colony in New Mexico, at times competing among themselves for land and power. Some exploited Native American labor, imposed taxes, and claimed immense tracts of land. Others, seeking



Courtesy Photo Archives, Palace of the Governors (NMHM/DCA), Neg. No. 58853.

At the time this photograph was taken in 1883, Kingston was the largest city in New Mexico. Silver was king, Kingston was the epicenter, and there was money to be spent. Boasting more than twenty saloons, Kingston was filled with opportunities for spending that hard earned cash. For the more practical minded, a better way to treat oneself was to stop by the butcher on the way home for a nice steak or venison roast. —Photo Archivist Daniel Kosharek

Christian converts, suppressed Native customs and religion—precipitating the first American Revolution.

In 1680 Pueblo Indians across New Mexico revolted and drove the Spanish settlers from the territory. After years of warfare and some accommodations, they returned in 1693 and reestablished a colony, albeit fragile. Many Pueblo Indians left the area, some were reconciled to live with a Spanish presence, and still others remained, defiant.

Over the next 200 years, cultures coexisted despite conflicts that diminished over time. As Spanish and Native lifeways mixed, clashed, and at times melded, both cultures were unavoidably—and permanently—changed.

This year, Santa Fe celebrates its *cuarto centenario*, and the building in which the first Spanish settlers established their far northern frontier capital—and that temporarily was taken from them in the Pueblo Revolt—is still being used. With the opening of the new museum, the 400-year-old Palace of the Governors, the most important artifact in the New Mexico History Museum collections, will be free to tell the history

of the longest continuously occupied public building in the United States.

In 1821 Mexico came into its own, throwing off the rule of the Spanish kings, creating the Republic of Mexico, and, without knowing, leaving one new nation vulnerable to another. The United States was only forty-five years old, but it already had a nascent infrastructure in trails leading west, a mounting conviction that its destiny to win territory was manifest, and a vivid recollection of how to fight foes, whether strong or weak.

In “Linking Nations,” it’s clear that Mexico and the United States were connected at the geographic and cultural hip by crisscrossing trails and the people who traveled them, by a common border, and by the people who lived on either side, hardly aware of its existence. That *laissez-faire* attitude changed drastically with *la intervención norteamericana*, the redrawing of the line that separated Mexico and New Mexico, and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

In 1846 Colonel Alexander William Doniphan defeated the Mexican army at the Battle of Brazito, near El Paso,

Courtesy, Library of Congress



The Healing Rod. History Collection (NMHM/DCA), 799/45. Gift of Estate of Edgar Lee Hewett.

Since joining the Palace staff six years ago, I've had more people request to see Francis Schlatter's healing rod than any other object in our collections. This 27-pound artifact was carried by the religious healer who wandered across the western United States in the 1890s. Thousands came to him to cure what ailed them. Schlatter also used the brass rod as an exercise bar to maintain his healing abilities.
—Chief Curator Louise Stiver

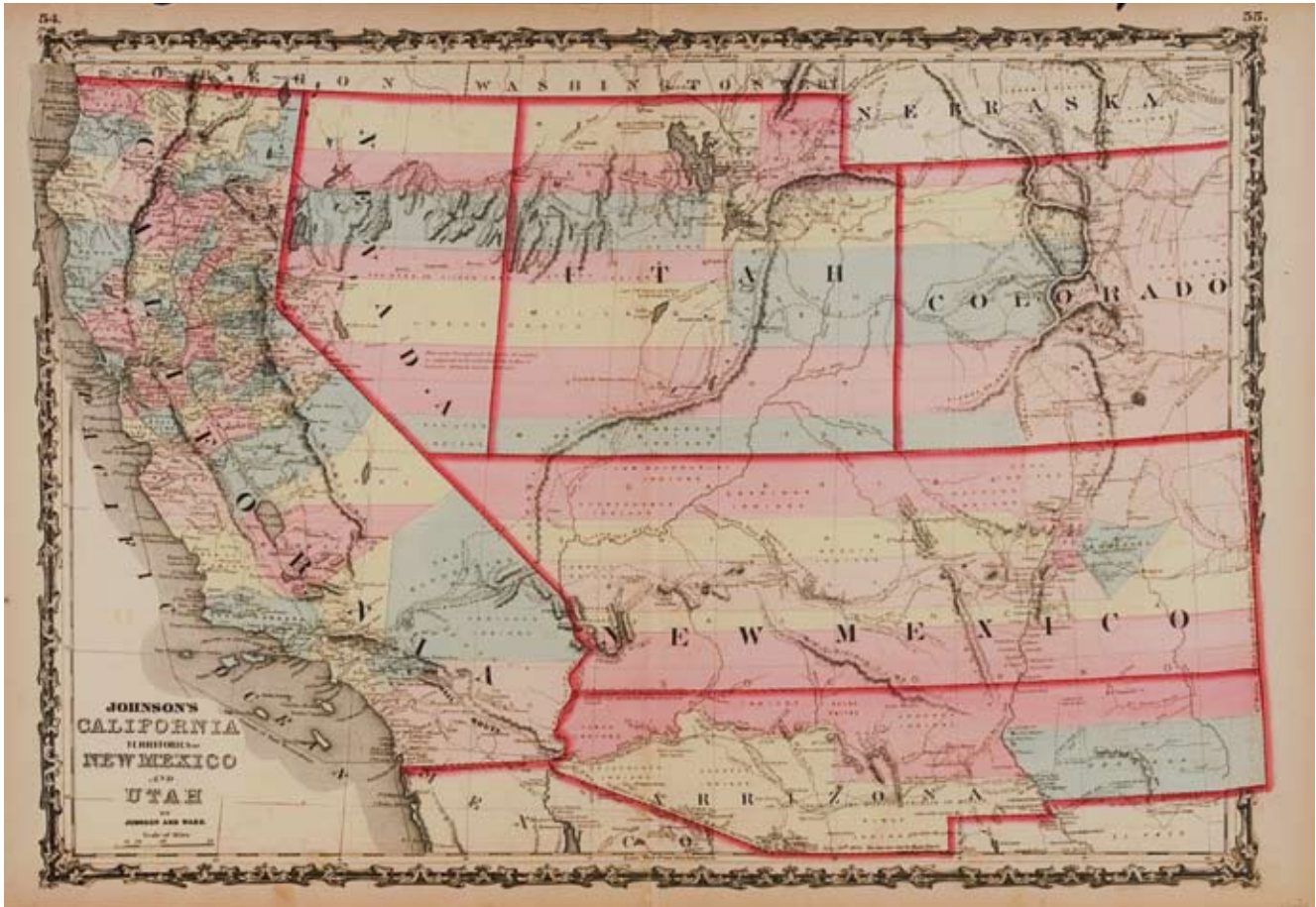
and General Stephen Watts Kearny invaded New Mexico, marched to Santa Fe, installed a military government at the Palace, and moved on to join a fight for California. The events laid the foundation for “Becoming the Southwest,” though that would take decades of more accommodation, struggle, and violence.

The minute the treaty was signed, residents of Mexico lost what had been their country; Mexico gave up vast territories that had reached as far east as Louisiana, as far north as



Idaho, and as far west as the Pacific Ocean; most of modern-day New Mexico, which had been in the Republic of Mexico, became part of the United States, a country that promised prosperity for some and more problems for others. Policies regarding the Indian population were often ill conceived and at times brutal. Land and water rights long thought settled were cause for fighting. Then came the railroad, and everything changed. Again.

The railroads opened New Mexico to its new countrymen, bringing more goods for the people and more people who came to work. As rails were added, ranching, mining, logging,



Courtesy Fray Angélico Chávez History Library.

This map of southwestern territories gives New Mexico the Grand Canyon and cedes everything south of the thirty-fourth parallel to Arizona. RandMcNally, get out your whiteout! —Deputy Director John McCarthy

and tourism grew wherever tracks were laid. As more came to see the enchanting territory, more stayed—for their health, their art, their professional careers, their amusement, their livelihood. Once here, not many would ever leave.

New Mexico had found “Our Place in the Nation” in every way except for an all-important white star stitched onto a field of blue.

New Mexico the territory struggled for nearly sixty years to achieve statehood, delayed as much by issues of racial intolerance as by political maneuvering. When New Mexico found its place in the nation—and on Old Glory—as the forty-seventh state, it was as a place of refuge and renewal for artists and writers whose gifts to the nation continue to this day. It is that rare combination of light and land, cultural authenticity and acceptance that has attracted people to our state.

New Mexico also held a secret location where scientists

would develop the technology and scientific know-how to win the Second World War. New Mexico was only one of the many campuses across the nation that housed the Manhattan Project, but it was *the* site where the nation would learn of the power and awesome responsibility of dropping an atomic bomb. Labs in New Mexico continue to find ways of using atomic energy for such peacetime applications as medicine and energy production.

The countdown to opening weekend continues even as my writing comes to an end, and still we cannot help asking questions that range from the aesthetic to the historical: Are those the colors we chose? Should we make that typeface a little larger? When and where did Stephen Watts Kearny declare New Mexico part of the United States? Is “king” always capitalized in English or only when used with the king’s name? Is the material selected for the inside of



the case the right texture? Is it the right fabric for the context of the story? Would that shirt have had buttons or hooks?

[The answers are: Yes. No. Las Vegas, August 15, 1846. No, though courtesy trumps Chicago style this time. Yes. No. Hmm.]

We continue to make history in New Mexico and to share our cultural assets with the nation and beyond. New Mexicans are proud of their communities, their cultural traditions, and their diverse heritages, which number well beyond a tricultural myth. In the gallery called “My New Mexico,” recordings of New Mexicans from all parts of the state give voice to what

Toy Horse Puppet. History Collection (NMHM/DCA), 2007.26.01.

Gift of Ann Baumann. Photograph by Blair Clark

One might think that the “Palace Printer’s” favorite object would be something “not quite hot” off one of New Mexico’s vintage presses, but the object that really captivates me is an articulated horse-and-rider toy that comes to us via the daughter of New Mexico’s great artist printer Gustave Baumann. Baumann was enough intrigued by the object to feature it in one of his woodcuts, which he titled “Marionette Out of San Ildefonso Church.” The toy appears in a photograph of Baumann’s studio, on a shelf above his door. How this mounted conquistador fit into life, play, or ritual of early nineteenth-century San Ildefonso will likely remain a mystery. No matter; it will certainly convey its mystique to generations to come.

—Palace Press Director Thomas Leech

A PLACE LIKE **NO OTHER**



LEFT: Colcha. History Collections (NMHM/DCA), 4674/45.

Gift of Pierre Bovis. Photograph by Blair Clark.

Looking at this, I see the stitches, the colors, the movement, and I think about the person who created the piece and feel that I know something about her. Colcha resonates with me because I work with yarn. I know how it feels to my hands, and I appreciate how working with it possesses a meditative quality that can, for a moment, bring calm to my world. —Director Frances Levine

makes New Mexico the homeland of those whose ancestors were here first and those whose wanderlust brought them here last. Their stories are inspiring and humorous, poetic and poignant. It is here that New Mexicans will find their place, their heritage, and their experiences. And it is up to all of us to see that those elements are reflected in the exhibitions, programs, and activities in the New Mexico History Museum . . . not just when the doors open but for many years to come.

For the past twenty-plus years historians, curators, and benefactors have wanted a history museum for New Mexico. For the past four years, Deputy Director John McCarthy, the staff project construction coordinator, has answered the question, “How’s it going?” with, “We are exactly where we should be.”

As of Grand Opening, Memorial Day weekend, 2009, he couldn’t be more right. ■

Frances Levine, Ph.D., is director of the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors. Members of her team who helped to developed exhibition content, design, and educational components are René Harris, assistant director; Louise Stiver, chief curator; Erica Garcia, chief of education; Mary Anne Redding, curator of photography; Josef Diaz, curator of Spanish Colonial history; Tomas Jaehn, librarian;



Peineta. History Collections (NMHM/DCA), 2007.42.01. Museum purchase with funds from The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of New Mexico. Photograph by Blair Clark.

A silver filigree peineta on exhibit in “The Far Northern Frontier” is a small, but charming, and very feminine artifact that dates from the late eighteenth century. To look at it is to wonder to what occasions it was worn.

—Assistant Director René Harris.

Caroline Lajoie, exhibition designer; and Thomas Leech, director of The Press at the Palace of the Governors. The exhibition script was a coproduction of consultant Robert Selim, a professional museum scriptwriter and historian, and the New Mexico History Museum core team. Working together they wrote the script and wall text for the core exhibition, some of which appears in this article.

Telling New Mexico: A New History

Alluring New Mexico: Engineered Enchantment, 1880—1941

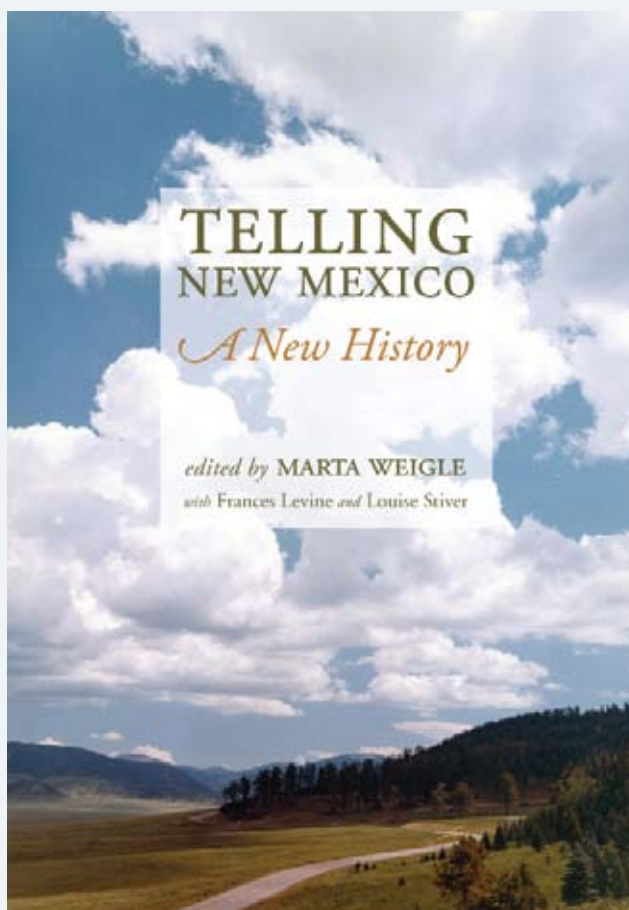
BY MARTA WEIGLE

New Mexico! The first white men to set eyes upon its magnificent distances were valiant Spanish adventurers plodding weary leagues up from Mexico in search of the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola and the Gran Quivira, seeking the new, the strange and the different. Since Coronado and De Vargas wrote so largely upon the first pages of American history, New Mexico has been the Land of Enchantment for the traveler. From the sixteenth century to modern today, New Mexico has lured men from afar off. The fascination is undimmed by time. You, too, will find it, share it, never forget it. . . .

—From *2 weeks in New Mexico* “Land of Enchantment”

On May 20, 1934, the New Mexico State Highway Commission and the Albuquerque advertising agency Ward Hicks, Inc., launched a ten-week campaign in fourteen Oklahoma and Texas newspapers urging 810,000 readers to “take a real Vacation this summer in cool New Mexico ‘Land of Enchantment.’” These ads and a thirty-two-page booklet published later that year, *2 weeks in New Mexico* “Land of Enchantment,” mark the state’s first use of a new designation for what since 1912 had been called the Sunshine State. From its inception in May 1935, the New Mexico State Tourist Bureau used only “Land of Enchantment” as the state’s nickname, which first appeared on license plates in 1941. Yet despite efforts in 1947 and 1999, “Land of Enchantment” was not made official until Governor Bill Richardson signed enabling legislation on April 6, 2003, some 120 years after an 1882 Bureau of Immigration publication proclaimed the territory “The Tourists’ Shrine.” ■

Excerpted from a chapter in *Telling New Mexico A New History*, edited by Marta Weigle with Frances Levine and Louise Stiver and dedicated to Michael and Marianne O’Shaughnessy, ©2009 Palace of the Governors/New Mexico History Museum. The 481-page volume presents essays by forty-five prominent scholars and writers representing diverse disciplines including anthropology, Native American and Chicano studies, history and geography. *Telling New Mexico* was published by the Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, in 2009, and is available by telephone order, 800-249-7737, and at Museum of New Mexico Shops in Santa Fe and select bookstores everywhere.



The landscape image on the cover of the book *Telling New Mexico: A New History* is a detail from a photograph by Robert H. Martin and is in the Robert H. Martin Collection at the Photo Archives, Palace of the Governors. Robert Martin generously supported the Photo Archives through donating funds to support maintaining the collections. Those wishing to contribute to a special acquisitions fund or to support the Photo Archives through other means may contact Daniel Kosharek, photo archivist, at daniel.kosharek@state.nm.us, or Mary Anne Redding, curator of photography, at maryanne.redding@state.nm.us.

A Place Like No Other

Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now fills the permanent exhibition space at the New Mexico History Museum with objects and art from prehistory to the present. In addition to the staff's selections that are shown in *El Palacio*, Volume 114, No. 2, are these artifacts—and many, many more. The museum is open; come see for yourself.

“Beyond History’s Records”

The American Southwest was never empty nor was it waiting to be discovered.



Collage of baskets. Courtesy the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture.



Bow and arrows. Courtesy the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture.

“The Far Northern Frontier”

The Hispanic history of New Mexico is more than four centuries long.



“The Far Northern Frontier”: Halberd. New Mexico History Museum.



Silver rosary. New Mexico History Museum.



Metal dog collar. New Mexico History Museum.

“Linking Nations”

Mexico and the United States have long been connected at the geographic and cultural hip.



Fan from the Otero Collection. New Mexico History Museum.



Playing cards from the Manderfield Collection. New Mexico History Museum.



Gen Stephen Watts Kearny's writing table. New Mexico History Museum.

“Becoming the Southwest”

The Mexican-American War paved the way for the railroad, which in turn opened new territory for the United States to expand.



Wells Fargo shotgun. New Mexico History Museum.



Beaded pouch belonging to Kit Carson. New Mexico History Museum.



Peace pipe belonging to Cochise. New Mexico History Museum.

“Our Place in the Nation”

New Mexico’s struggle to become the 47th state culminated January 6, 1912.



47-star flag of the United States of America. New Mexico History Museum.



Nuestra Señora de la Luz. New Mexico History Museum.



Pancho Villa's death mask. New Mexico History Museum.