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Celebrating 50 Years!
At the outset of 2014, we welcomed our fiftieth year of dedicated focus on the greater Southwest. Our institution began its work in 1964 courtesy of the foresight and investment of a small group of supporters who hoped to spur scholarly interest and public attention in the field of Southwestern studies. As our region’s oldest such institute, it is our pleasure to invite you to join us as we celebrate the current milestone and look ahead to a promising future.

From the Archives

The ambitious project started with twenty-seven record boxes that awaited appraisal, selection, rehousing, arrangement and description. We began by inventorying and appraising the final boxes sent to the archives from the now-closed Office of Community Services (OCS). Students separated out published material to be reviewed by our librarian and sifted through boxes to remove non-college records. After this initial introduction to the collection, the students paired up and each group tackled 5 boxes of material. The goal was to seek out college records created by the OCS and select those as well as some supporting documentation that best represented what the office did for Fort Lewis College and local communities. In archival jargon, this process is also called weeding. Most of the material was paper, but many students had to sort through photographs, maps, posters, slides and some even discovered older media like 3 1/2 floppy disks. The job of selecting material that best represents the function of the office and has the greatest administrative and historical value was no easy task. Students went through cycles of great frustration and triumph as they discovered the value in records and what made some documents worth storing permanently.

The end result from the seven groups is a well-organized collection of the Mirror Project, San Juan Skyway Project, Fire Mitigation planning, Forest Management, and the Old Fort project, among others. Students then made a finding aid—the format for describing collections in archives. Students wrote up general descriptions of their collection then created a detailed list of folders in their boxes based on the folder name and the contents of folders. The valuable documents of this office are much easier to locate than when they were mixed among hundreds of pages of copies, drafts, non-college records and unrelated material. All this thanks to fourteen dedicated students in one archival course.

Prekay Briggs, Electronic Librarian at Reed Library, formerly held the position of CSWS cataloger and records processor
Writing the Life of a Renaissance Spaniard in New Mexico: An Interview with John L. Kessell

John L. Kessell is an emeritus professor of history at the University of New Mexico and the author of a number of seminal works in the field of early Spanish American history. His new book, Miera y Pacheco: A Renaissance Spaniard in Eighteenth-Century New Mexico, came out in 2013 from the University of Oklahoma Press. He spoke with Center director Jay Harrison earlier this year about the new book.

JH: You have a new book, an intriguing story of a member of the Dominguez and Escalante expedition of 1776. How did you get interested in this character, don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco? You met him many years ago, didn’t you?

JK: Yes, that’s true. I worked initially for the National Park Service at Tumacacori National Monument in southern Arizona. After five years there, I took leave to pursue graduate studies at the University of New Mexico, and then, for ten years, survived precariously as a historical freelancer. That’s when the NPS contracted me to do a narrative history of the pueblo and mission of Pecos, published in 1979 as Kiva, Cross, and Crown. The notably versatile don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, district officer, cartographer, and religious artist, figured prominently in the Pecos story.

In fact, during the lead-up to the U.S. Bicentennial celebration in 1976, I wrote a letter to the chair of UNM’s Department of History proposing a comparative study of don Bernardo and a contemporary Revolutionary figure in Britain’s North American colonies. It would have been a fine project. But it went nowhere. After the Pecos book, I got sidetracked by the journals of don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico’s governor and recolonizer in the 1690s, which I and several colleagues edited and published in multiple volumes over twenty years. But I never forgot don Bernardo.

A couple of years ago, I got an email from someone asking if I knew when the first mention of Chaco Canyon appeared on a Spanish map. I looked first at Miera’s remarkably detailed map of New Mexico in 1758, which I’d used as endpapers for Kiva, Cross, and Crown. But there was no hint of Chaco there. On his epochal map of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, however, which he first drew in Santa Fe in 1777, there was “Chaca” precisely where it should be. Poring again over Miera’s cartography revived my interest in his life and times.

Here was a well-born European Spaniard, who by time and chance, became the quintessential Hispanic New Mexican. He married a local girl, becoming cousin to half the colony. He rode on military campaigns, farmed, ranched, and raised a family. The maps he drew provided a visual dimension to the colony and its inhabitants, both Indians and Hispanos. As artist, Miera carved and painted his neighbors’ favorite saints, enriching their devotional lives and giving rise to New Mexico’s santero tradition. One has only to visit the church of Cristo Rey in Santa Fe, where don Bernardo’s iconic carved and painted stone altar screen still moves tourist and worshipper alike.

JH: Durango historian Duane Smith recently noted that you are among the elite narrative historians of the American Southwest, and I can attest that your most recent book continues that reputation. What is your favorite part of this book?
CSWS MEMBERSHIP

All contributions aid in developing new programs and exhibits!
Please consider membership at the following levels. Your donation becomes part of your lifetime giving legacy.

$55 Basic Annual Membership enjoys free parking if you are not an employee or current student; advance notice of exhibit openings, programs, and events; subscription to our Timelines newsletter; 10% off retail items; 10% off archival reproductions; and special e-announcements of Center news.

$150 Sustaining Annual Membership receives all of the benefits listed above, plus 20% discount on archival services; special behind-the-scenes tours; and invitations to sustaining member events.

Basic Business Membership of $500 offers all of the above, plus your business website linked to the Center's improved website; and free meeting space twice a year.

Business Sponsorship of $1500 offers all of the above, plus free meeting space four times a year; and special tours by staff for your special guests.

The Patron Circle Membership of $2000 or higher offers special benefits in addition to all the basics, including exclusive behind-the-scenes and gallery tours; use of the remodeled Lupien Reception Room for your special events; and personalized tours.

All membership levels are tax deductible.

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Questions? Call the CSWS office at 970-247-7456.

CENTER PROJECTS & INTERNSHIPS

Museum Projects & Internships

This year, selected projects focused on archaeological collections, and the Center’s earliest collections curated and cataloged by Homer Root, the first caretaker of the Center’s collections. Homer Root created annotated ledgers documenting his work, as well as catalog cards, notes, illustrations, and other documents in his signature handwriting, distinctive for identifying his personal hand on the numbers applied directly onto many artifacts and tags. Working with Dr. Kelly Jenks and her Anthropology class, Center student workers produced a large inventory of our lithics storage, the main archaeological repository in the Center.

The Homer Root project was initiated last year, with significant initial protocol, research and planning completed by CSWS staff archaeologist Mona Charles. The Center’s work component included internship students Madison Vlass, Michelle Phair, Jane Cooper, Amber Lark, and Ewa Lichorowicz. We are very fortunate to have new funding for select internships sponsored by members of the San Juan Basin Archaeological Society under the advocacy of SJBAS President Peggy Morris. Peggy Morris is an indispensable volunteer and student supervisor at the Museum. Work study students Ryan Mullan, Charlotte Johnson, Madison Carman, Sabrina Kling, Cassidy Ransom, Jedd Smith, Maia Lang, Abbe Engel, Andrew Kendziorz, Scott Watkins and intern Josh Nash assisted in managing the documentation component, scanning, collating, and transcribing hundreds of pages of Homer Root and other early collections papers, and adding these records to the database.

Special congratulations go to FLC graduates Scott Watkins, Josh Nash, Amber Lark, and Michelle Phair. We’ll miss you and thank you for your excellent work!

Our internship program has been exceptionally successful in directing students to higher education and professional appointments. We are pleased to report on the achievements of some of our past interns. This year, several students were accepted into graduate programs, including Joe Helzer at Western Michigan University, Victor Pascual at the University of New Mexico (UNM); Ric Jefferson at Hofstra University; Patrick Cruz at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Mike Quiver continues his studies at the University of Denver, while Laura Elliff, Collections Manager at the School of Advanced Research, completed her Master’s degree at UNM in Albuquerque.

NOTABLE DONATIONS

The Center would like to acknowledge donations received in recent months from the following individuals and organizations. Due to confidentiality requests and in-process status for some donations, this list is not comprehensive.

We are grateful for the continuing support via in-kind donations of materials to the Center’s collections.

Nina Heald Webber
Mancus Public Library
Duane Smith
Esther Greenfield
League of Women Voters of La Plata County
Barbara Grecker
Jeannie Brubak
Doug and Maxine Garner
John Irish
Marilyn Broom
Kevin B. Reid
Thomas A. Towner
James Ayres
Pete McCormick
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Susan Dalton
Mike Coulsrey
Ned and Judy Martin
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Hisatsinom Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society
Roma Martinez
Marilyn McCord

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Questions? Call the CSWS office at 970-247-7456.
Our November 15th fashion show featured Orlando's newest work. The Orlando Dugi Fashion Show will featured cutting edge haute couture day and evening wear worn by regional runway models and will be held in the FLC Ballroom.

And don’t forget that our traveling Mountain Lion! exhibit continues its run at the Swaner EcoCenter through March 2015. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make our exhibit program shine!

In October 2013 the Center opened Native Views, Native Visions featuring contemporary Native art. The show was a stunning reflection of the unique artistic interpretation of Native men and women from a variety of tribal backgrounds. The exhibit was co-curated by Shung-Waketah LookingHome, a junior in the Public History program at Fort Lewis College. Waketa has worked for the Center for two years as both a work-study employee and as an intern. Her combined interest in Native art, nurtured by her family of notable artists, and her experience in working with our collections, made her the ideal student to create the exhibit. Center curator Jeanne Brako explains that “Waketa came highly recommended from her academic instructors -- and she has the drive, interest and maturity to take on a project of this scope.”

The process for selecting works for the exhibit took well over a month. After reviewing the Center’s extensive holdings, Waketa eventually pared down her 100+ selections of art based on available real estate in the gallery. She and Jeanne then enhanced the space with sculpture and contemporary textiles.

Waketa also met donors Bill and Sue Hensler. The Henslers are long time collectors of Native American art, and have donated numerous works to the Center’s permanent collection. The Henslers capped the presentation of this exhibit with a new gift, Two Koshares (1969) by Pablita Velarde, mother to Helen Hardin and grandmother of Margarete Bagshaw. The three women’s work was shown side by side in the exhibit as a powerful statement of Native art practices passed down through generations.

As it turned out, this experience was invaluable for Waketah. She has continued work as an interpreter at Crazy Horse Memorial in the Black Hills of South Dakota this summer.
FALL EVENTS & EXHIBITS

October 9 ~ Exhibit Opening Reception
Masterpieces of the Durango Collection*: Native Blankets from the Early American Southwest
After a year in Santa Fe, our hallmark Durango Collection* returns to the Center for an exhibit featuring its most significant Pueblo and Navajo textiles.
The Museum, 5:00-7:00 pm

October 23 ~ Book Signing
Tough Men in Hard Places: A Photographic Collection
Book signing with author Esther Greenfield to release her new photo essay on Western Colorado power, in conjunction with Delaney Library’s book sale. CSWS members are invited to shop beginning at 3:00 pm.
Delaney Library and Archives, 4:00-6:00 pm

Monday, October 27
Sara Porterfield, Center Doctoral Fellow in Southwestern History Lecture
The Colorado River in Global Perspective.
Center of Southwest Studies Lyceum, 6:00 pm

Wednesday, November 5
The Duane Smith Lecture in Southwest Studies featuring Marsha Weisiger, the Julie and Rocky Dixon Chair of U.S. Western History, University of Oregon
Narrating Adventure on the Colorado River.
Center of Southwest Studies Lyceum, 6:00 pm

November 10 ~ Film Screening and Discussion
Documentary film and discussion with Dr. John Baranski
Film on immigration and social issues in the Southwest, title to be announced.
Center of Southwest Studies Lyceum, 3:30 pm

November 15 ~ Fashion Show
Orlando Dugi Fashion Show
The creations of Orlando Dugi hit the runway at this haute couture fashion show. Ticket information forthcoming.
FLC Ballroom, 4:30 pm VIP Reception; 5:30 pm Show

November 21 ~ Holiday Gala
The Center’s Holiday Gala
Ticket information forthcoming.
The Museum, 7:00 pm