



The Mansardian™

The Quarterly Publication of the Silver City Museum



With men serving overseas during World War II, women across Grant County stepped into the demanding labor of open-pit copper mining, reshaping both the industry and their community. This track gang at the Santa Rita Pit was photographed September 14, 1945. From left to right, back row: Dora Gutierrez and Soledad “Chloe” Betancourt; middle row: Rosa Betancourt Hernandez, Delores Gonzales, an unidentified worker, Manuela Betancourt, and Juanita Hernandez; front: Rufina Martinez (From the Silver City Museum Archive).

In This Issue



Feature Story
How a Museum Really Works

Page 3



Collections
50 Pounds of History

Page 7



Curator's Corner
Apacheria and Spanish Colonization

Page 4

Director's Desk

I am proud to report that we are coming off a string of winter successes and are looking forward to a great series of spring Community Conversations and work on a major new exhibition.



Bart Roselli

Our efforts to diversify our wintertime celebration paid off with December's rebranded Tapestry of Traditions event, which highlighted Christmas, seasonal New Mexican foods,

and Apache cultural traditions, among others. All who attended enjoyed food demonstrations, tastings, storytelling, and a variety of vendors.

If you haven't seen it yet, you're in for a treat. Our latest exhibit, "A Place in History: The Legacy of the Ailman House," tells the story of the Ailman House and how this site has been used over time — from the home of a businessman and his family to the home of the Silver City Museum. Rarely seen photos and objects tell the stories contained in this place.

Another major exhibit is underway with a working title of "Silver City 101." Several years in the making, this exhibit will provide an overview of our town and the county it sits in. It will occupy both front galleries of the museum and use state-of-the-art interactive media to engage visitors in exploring the thousands of photos, objects, and stories of our community.

One of our proudest accomplishments this last quarter was the publication by WNMU's Mimbres Press of our book "Unpacking Silver City." We were surprised by how quickly

both soft and hardcover editions sold out. By the time you are reading this, we will have restocked the Museum Store with copies of both editions. So, if you haven't gotten your copy yet, pay us a visit.

Not resting on our laurels, we will launch another captivating series of Community Conversations in partnership with WILL and WNMU. Presentations in this spring's series will explore what it takes to manage our forests, how Chinese immigrants impacted Grant County, and the history of the Mining District. Stay tuned!

Thank you for your support. We couldn't do any of this without your generosity and the rest of the Friends of the Silver City Museum.



Museum Director

Click, Share, Preserve

By: Brittany Beers, Community Engagement Manager

Here I am, hunched over a laptop, scrutinizing email open rates in a building older than New Mexico statehood. A big part of my job as community engagement manager is making sure people know what's happening at the Silver City Museum. Not just the individuals who walk through our doors, but the ones scrolling through their phones on

a Tuesday morning. That means managing our website, social media, email newsletters, and partnerships. It means writing, editing, designing, and occasionally staring at analytics dashboards until the numbers start making sense.

And this year, they made a lot of sense. By January, just seven months into the fiscal year, our online outreach had already surpassed its annual goal, reaching nearly 115,000

combined views, engagement, website visits, and followers. That's a benchmark it took a full year to hit last time around. And that doesn't even include visitors to the museum, event attendees, or those reached through our advertising and press releases. Those aren't just numbers on a screen. Every click, share, and opened email represents someone connecting with Grant County's history from wherever they happen to be.

The best museum marketing doesn't feel like marketing. It feels like an invitation. And if you've followed us online, opened one of our newsletters, or shared a post, consider this my thank you. You're helping us do what we do.

A Word from Your Friends

A museum is only as strong as the community behind it. This winter, that community showed up.

Thanks to your generous response to our annual appeal, The Friends of the Silver City Museum raised nearly \$15,000 to support the development of "Silver City 101," the museum's upcoming core exhibit. Your contributions will also directly support an interactive website currently being developed by Education Programs Manager Dr. Rob Haworth.



When you give to The Friends, you are investing in something larger than a single exhibit or program. You are helping ensure that the stories of this community are shared and made available to anyone who seeks them. That is what a museum is for, and it is what your support makes possible. We are also grateful to the Gila Community

Foundation for its continued fiscal sponsorship of The Friends.

Giving opportunities are always available and always valued. This April, a new opportunity arrives as Give Grandly 2026 begins, this time in partnership with the Southwest New Mexico Community Foundation. We hope you will consider supporting The Friends of the Silver City Museum through this initiative.

To every donor who contributed to this year's annual appeal, and to every member who continues to stand behind this museum, thank you. Your generosity is the foundation everything else is built on.

--The Trustees of The Friends of the Silver City Museum

The Mansardian

Editor: Brittany Beers
Layout: Tom Oberg

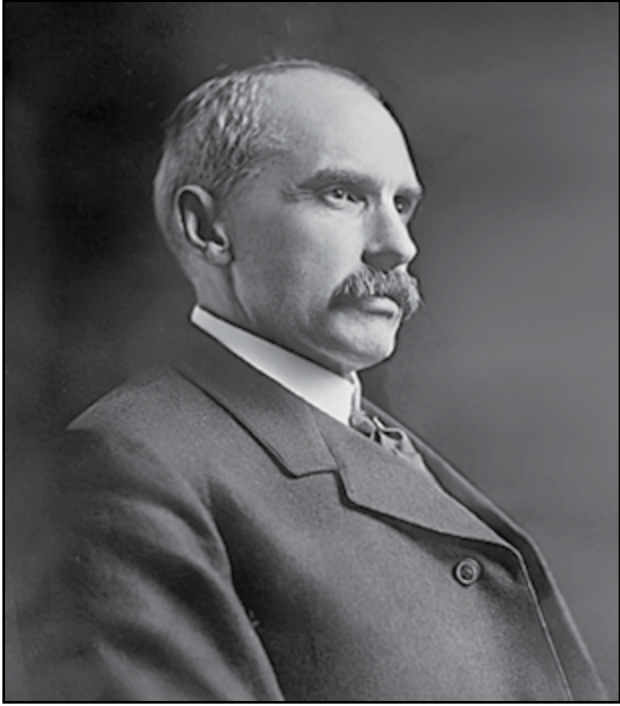
The Mansardian™ newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Silver City Museum. It is named after the *mansard* roof, a hallmark of French Second Empire architecture, characterized by its four-sided gambrel design with steep lower slopes. Constructed in 1881 by H.B. Ailman, the Silver City Museum features this distinctive architectural design.

The Silver City Museum
312 West Broadway
Silver City, NM 88061
Hours: Tue – Fri: 9 am – 4:30 pm
Sat & Sun: 10 am – 4 pm
(575) 597-0221
silvercitymuseum.org

More Than a Curator: How a Museum Really Works

By: **Bart Roselli, Museum Director**

Throughout my career, there is one question I always get when a new acquaintance discovers that I work in a museum: “Oh cool! Are you



John Cotton Dana, circa 1910. As director of the Newark Museum from 1902 until his death in 1929, Dana challenged the notion that a museum's worth was measured by its collections alone, insisting instead that it be measured by its service to its community (Courtesy of the Library of Congress).

a curator?” In every location I’ve worked, this simple question belies most folks’ limited understanding of what makes a museum tick. The word itself has in the last decade become even more popular outside the museum field. People use it to cover a host of extra-museum contexts. “I have curated a special selection of French cheeses.” A playlist “curated” by a musician. A hotel advertising its “locally curated” minibar. It’s everywhere — a word taken over by fashionistas, baristas, and even DJs. So where does the word come from, is there more to a museum than a curator, and how does a museum actually work?

It Starts with a Mission

Not every institution that calls itself a museum is one. The American Alliance of Museums (aam-us.org) defines a museum as

“a permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of study, education, enjoyment, and delight.” That definition is the baseline. But the best museums go further, guided by a mission specific to their community.

Many museums are satisfied with a basic mission. Something like, “The Jones Museum of Toothpicks collects, preserves, and interprets the history of toothpicks.” It’s simple and clear, but it falls short of providing a mission that might energize constituents, staff, and supporters. One of my museum heroes, John Cotton Dana, showed what a more ambitious vision could look like. Dana directed the renowned Newark Museum in New Jersey

from 1902 until his death in 1929. Rather than simply amassing a collection, he established foreign language collections for immigrants and developed a special collection for the business community — shaping the museum around the people it served. He wrote extensively about what modern, community-serving museums should be and was instrumental in the founding of the American Alliance of Museums. A quote of his hangs in my office: “If you want a great museum, find out what your community needs and direct the museum to serve those needs.”

His approach was radical for the time. Previously, museums were judged on the collections they held, not the service they provided. That philosophy guided the Silver City Museum when we revised our own mission to “serve Grant County residents and visitors, using authentic records of the region’s multicultural past to foster informed perspectives on the present.” Everything we do flows from that statement.

It Takes a Village

So, about that curator question — yes, most museums have one. The word comes from the Latin *curare*, meaning “to take care of.” Traditionally, a curator takes care of things in the collection. But a curator alone does not make a museum run.

At the Silver City Museum, we have a curator — our historian — who researches and interprets the stories behind our collection. We have a collections manager who ensures objects are properly documented, handled with care, and when exhibited, presented carefully. We have a director responsible for the “buck.” We have an educator who hears the voice of the public and creates programs. We have people responsible for fundraising and working with our support group, the Friends of the Silver City Museum. Others manage our Museum Store, get the word out through printed materials and websites, build exhibits, and coordinate events. And then there are the

scores of volunteers — more than 60 — who devote their time and talents to every aspect of the museum’s operations. We are also lucky enough to have a person whose job it is to care for and support those volunteers — no, they do not curate volunteers. At least not in museum jargon. Depending on size, governance, and type, other professional museums may have several curators, educators, or collections managers. We have a team of ten, each with a specific role.

It Listens to Its Community

Taking our lead from Dana’s call to look outside the walls of the museum, we use focus groups to make sure we hear the voices of our community. Each new exhibit is built upon comments and suggestions from community members. This is how a museum stays relevant — not by deciding what the public should see, but by listening to what the community needs in order to understand more about itself.

It Doesn’t Work Alone

No museum operates in isolation. We draw on regional networks like the New Mexico Association of Museums and the Historical Society of New Mexico, and national organizations like the American Alliance of Museums, the Visitor Studies Association, and the American Association for State and Local History. As we launch our Living History Program, we’re also learning from the International Museum Theater Alliance and the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums. These organizations provide expertise, standards, and accountability. The Silver City Museum earned reaccreditation through the American Alliance of Museums in 2020. Accreditation is the gold standard for American museums, requiring a deep dive into a museum’s management practices, connections to its community, and its governance.

I hope this gives you some sense of what’s behind the curtain. It really does take a village ... and yes, a curator.



“Nuestra Voz: The Chihuahua Hill Story” became one of the Silver City Museum’s most celebrated exhibitions, and it began with the people pictured here. As members of a community focus group, their personal stories, historical insights, and input on the exhibit’s themes helped shape the final production. This collaboration exemplified how community voices can guide museum work from the ground up. Standing, from left: Gail Avignone, Marcus Hanson, Fred Baca, Aimee Jaurequi, Javier Marrufo, Janet Salcido, Tom Oberg, Jody Jaurequi, Mikki Jemin, and Bart Roselli. Seated, from left: Patricia Cano, Guadalupe Cano, and Juanita Escobedo.

Violence to Diplomacy: Apacheria and Spanish Colo

By: **Javier Marrufo, Curator**

Although named for the town, the Silver City Museum cares about any history that directly impacts the people and places that make up the communities surrounding us today. Places that share a common history can still feel disconnected, and this is often true between Silver City and the Mining District. In the coming years, the Silver City Museum will connect more deeply with the history of the Mining District. To lay a foundation, this is part one in a series presenting a general overview of Mining District history.



Javier Marrufo

Before any stream of European society, Hispanic or Anglo, reached this region, it was long inhabited by the Ndé, or the Apache. Sitting at the confluence of the territories of the Bedonkohe, Chihenne, and Chokonen/Chiricahua Apache, the lands that became Grant County sat in the middle of the Apache homeland, called Apacheria by the Spanish.

The Apache first entered written history after their initial interactions with the Spanish, who would become the first non-Indigenous settlers of the region. The first documented Spanish expedition to reach this area occurred in 1747. Under the orders of Viceroy Conde de Revillagigedo, Franciscan friar Juan Miguel Menchero led a campaign against the local Apache, named Gileños in his letters. The expedition was marred from the beginning, with much of its initial resources diverted to other regional conflicts shortly before setting off.

After nearly four months trekking between the Mimbres Valley and the Gila River, Menchero's expedition returned to Santa Fe defeated. Although this campaign does not seem to have accomplished much, it served as the opening salvo of Spanish incursions that would crisscross the region over the next 60 years.

A decade later, a veteran of the Menchero campaign turned mapmaker, Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, assisted Governor Francisco Antonio Marín del Valle in mapping the entire province of New Mexico. The map produced by this expedition gives some of the earliest recorded place names still associated with Grant County today, such as Rio de los Mimbres, Sierra del Cobre Virgin, Sierra de las Burras, Santa Lucia (now the Mangas Valley), and Rio Gila.

Spanish excursions into southwestern New Mexico in the 18th century were not only exploratory but aimed at exterminating the Indigenous Apache population to facilitate further colonization. The largest of these came in 1774 and 1775 when Irish-born Spanish military governor Hugo O'Connor led successive campaigns against the Gila Apache with 259 soldiers and an estimated 1,500 Indigenous allies. Because of the Apache's decentralized social structure, knowledge of the land, and proficient fighting skills, these campaigns largely failed in their goal of eradication.

Despite the Spanish's continuous efforts to either settle Apacheria or rid it of its inhabitants, the Apache remained in near-absolute control of the region throughout the 18th century. When it became clear that the violence defining the period proved ineffective, Spanish tactics shifted from extermination to pacification.

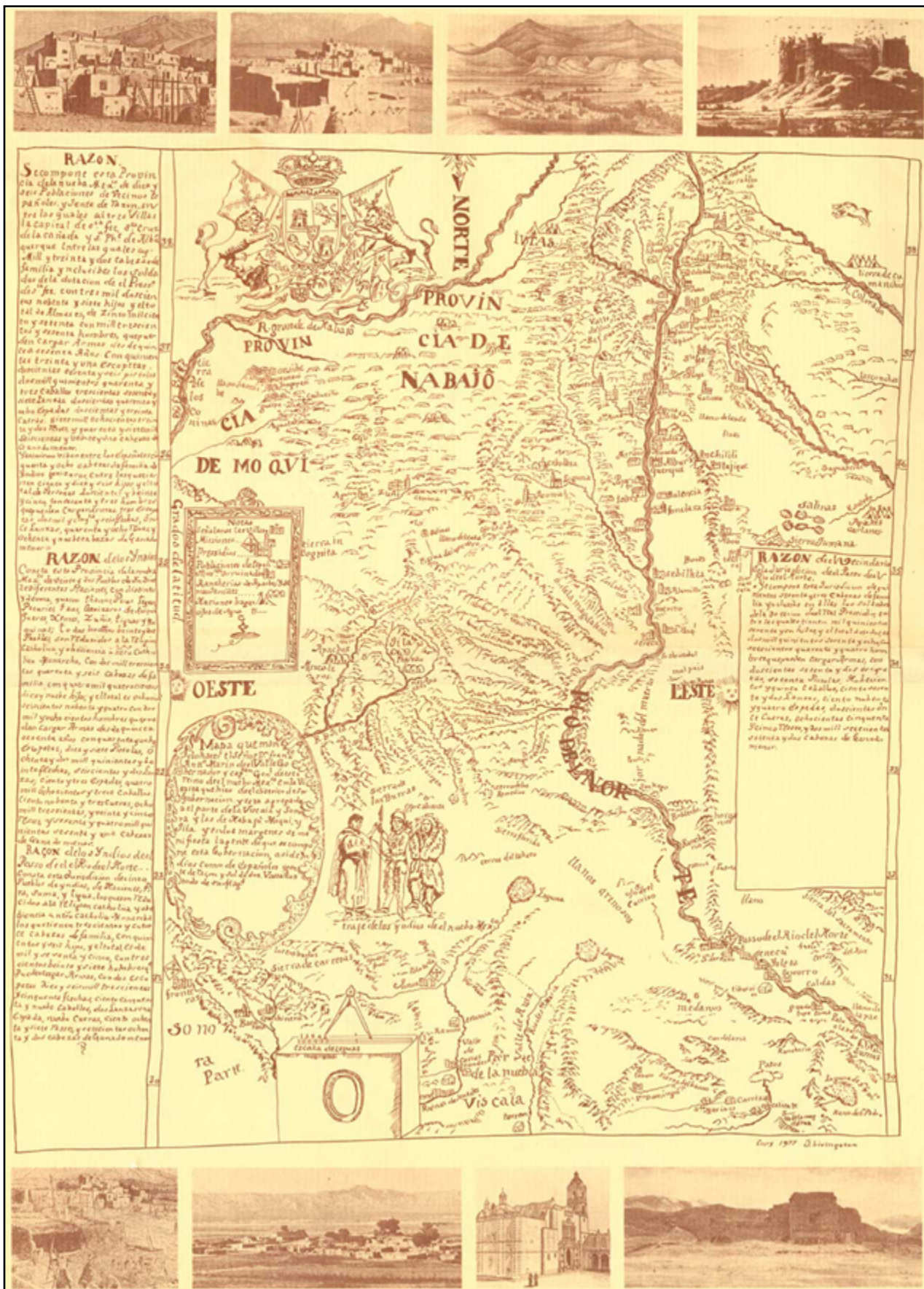
Programs and Events

Programs & Events
History of the Mining District
Wednesday March 4 | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
WNMU Global Resource Center,
ABC Room

This first Community Conversation of the season dives into Silver City's mining heritage and the historic districts that shaped our community. Learn how the buildings, businesses, and families that built their lives around the mines that put Silver City on the map. Learn how mining shaped everything from our architecture to our local economy.

Forest Service
Wednesday April 8 | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
WNMU Global Resource Center,
ABC Room

The Gila National Forest has been part of our backyard and our identity for over a century. Join Forest Service representatives



This is a recreation of Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco's 1758 map traced by the National Archive of Mexico in 1925. The original is now lost. The map not only details the geography of 18th century New Mexico but provides simple census data as well (Courtesy of Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico [AGN]).

nization

Starting in the mid-1780s, a series of peace establishments were authorized and funded by the Spanish crown. With the goal of luring Indigenous communities into dependency, these establishments provided rations, supplies, and trade to the local Apache in exchange for peace.

With the arrival of peace establishments came the eventual possibility of settlement in Apacheria. However, although this system was designed by the Spanish, it was only successful due to the work of Indigenous advisors who facilitated the relationship on both sides. The best-documented example of this is the Compas, an Apache family — a father and two sons — who from 1791 to 1837 acted as mediators between various Apache bands and the Spanish military along the borderlands of Apacheria.

The elder, simply known as El Compa, likely served as a scout in several Spanish expeditions into the region during the late 18th century. During this time, he most likely helped kindle relationships that settled into the ration system the Spanish used to achieve sporadic pacification along the borderlands. In August 1791, the Spanish gave El Compa the title of Gefe Principal de la Apacheria Pacifica — Principal Chief of the Apaches at Peace — a position he served until his death in early 1795. He was exalted by the Spanish and regularly listed as receiving special rations, extra food, clothing, and even a Spanish-style house inside the presidio, or fortified military settlement, at Janos in northern Chihuahua, Mexico.

After El Compa's death, his sons Juan Diego and Juan Jose followed in his position, becoming headmen in their respective bands, facilitating relationships, and moving

freely among Spanish presidios and Apache rancherias in the region. Juan Jose attended Spanish school, spoke and wrote Spanish, and enjoyed the same privileged rations and living space within the walls of the presidio at Janos as his father. He represents one of the few, if not the only, known Apache children to obtain a Spanish education in the 18th century.

In 1789, Juan Manuel Carrasco, a three-decade veteran of the Spanish military, retired and began prospecting the lands where he undoubtedly served during his military career. Most likely knowledgeable of the copper-laden mountains mentioned in Miera y Pacheco's mapping of the province some 40 years earlier, Carrasco "discovered" copper in the lands that would eventually become Grant County.

In 1801, Santa Rita del Cobre became the only documented Spanish land grant filed in what would become Grant County. Within a decade, Santa Rita del Cobre became a self-sufficient,

permanent Spanish settlement of around 400 people. The site was garrisoned by a small contingent of Spanish soldiers, while ranchers, herders, and woodcutters provided sustenance and supplies for the settlement, likely sprawling along the Mimbres, Whitewater, and San Vicente valleys.

Both violent campaigns and peace treaties erected through the relationship of the Spanish and people like the Compas enabled the first true non-Indigenous settlement of the region at Santa Rita del Cobre. Whatever peace was achieved, however relative, was consistently strained, and soon the fall of the Spanish Empire and the arrival of Americans in Apacheria would plunge the fragile system into upheaval.

The next piece in this series will cover the Mexican and early American periods of Santa Rita's history. To be continued.

Volunteer View

Some great news from our Volunteer Corps — we have recently been joined by five new volunteers, and they are already helping as greeters and store sales staff. Thank you, Butch, Dan, Allan, Becky, and Gene! These individuals are quickly honing their personalized welcomes to visitors and getting to know more about museum staff members and their various job duties, the history of the house, and Silver City's fascinating stories from the past. It is so encouraging to welcome new folks to the museum's family. There is more good news — we have an additional four applicants who will soon be going through our orientation and then joining the ranks of the best group of volunteers around. We must give a special shoutout to Marcia Sherry-Newby, who has been instrumental in scheduling and coordinating our volunteers. Thank you, Marcia, and thank you to ALL the volunteers. We could not provide much of the service to our community and visitors if not for you!

ents

for a conversation about the past, present, and future of our public lands. Discuss conservation efforts, recreation opportunities, fire management, and how the Forest Service continues to balance preservation with public access in this extraordinary wilderness.

Chinese Immigration in Silver City
Wednesday May 20 | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
WNMU Global Resource Center,
ABC Room

Dr. Karen Leong shares her research on Chinese immigration and the Chinese American community in Silver City. Discover the often-overlooked stories of Chinese immigrants who came to work the mines, run businesses, and build lives in Grant County. This conversation sheds light on an essential chapter of our local history and the lasting contributions of Chinese Americans to our region.

Give Grandly 2026
Saturday April 18 | 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Gough Park

Mark your calendars for Give Grandly, Grant County's annual day of giving! The Friends of the Silver City Museum invite you to support our mission to preserve and share our community's rich history. Your donations help fund exhibitions, community events, educational programming, and the care of our invaluable collections. Every contribution, large or small, makes a direct impact on keeping local history accessible to all.

Continental Divide Trail Days
Historic Walking Tour
Sunday April 26 | 9:00 am – 10:30 pm
Silver City Museum

The museum will offer a guided walking tour of the historic Chihuahua Hill neighborhood, exploring its cultural heritage.

New Exhibit Opening
Saturday May 9 | 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Silver City Museum

This new exhibition celebrates the Western Institute of Lifelong Learning (WILL) as it marks two decades of enriching life through learning in Grant County. Discover how WILL's partnership with Western New Mexico University has transformed it into the university's official lifelong learning institute and how accessible, volunteer-based programming fosters curiosity, friendship, and intellectual stimulation while strengthening our entire community.

Education Update

New Tools Bring Local History to Life

By: Dr. Rob Haworth, Education Programs Manager

It's been a great start to the new year! I'm continuing work on an interactive map featuring historical locations throughout Silver City and Grant County. This project is taking considerable time as I research and ensure historical accuracy for each location. For the downtown portion, I'm utilizing "Built to Last: An Architectural History of Silver City" by Susan Berry and Sharman Apt Russell, along with other museum materials, to provide comprehensive historical context. A key component is the downtown walking tour, which pairs historical photographs with contemporary images of the same buildings, allowing viewers to see how our downtown has evolved while maintaining its unique character. The map will be accessible on mobile devices, making it easy for visitors and community members to explore local history wherever they are.

Alongside map development, I'm continuing to create curriculum materials for each museum exhibit. I recently completed a three-week oral history project with Jennifer Lepisko's middle school students at Aldo Leopold Charter School. Students began by writing "I Am From" personal narratives, reflecting on their own identities and connections to place. They then used these narratives as



History at your fingertips: the museum's forthcoming interactive map pairs historical photographs with contemporary images, inviting users to explore the transformation of Silver City and Grant County one location at a time.

a springboard to investigate and document family and community stories through oral history interviews. The project taught students valuable research and interviewing skills while deepening their understanding of how personal stories contribute to our broader community history. I had a wonderful time working in Jennifer's class and truly appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with her and the students.

Looking ahead, I aim to develop teacher workshops that will help educators incorporate both the interactive map and curriculum lessons into their social studies classrooms. These resources are rooted in place-based education, using our local community, history, and geography as a foundation for meaningful learning. Keep an eye on our website for updates as these projects continue to develop!

Partners

It Started at a Coffee House: WILL Turns 20

The year is 2005. Summer, to be exact. Eight years of conversation and site exploration finally pay off as Lloyd Alexander responds to Patty Reed's dream of starting a lifelong



learning organization in Silver City. Nancy Elsinger, a friend of Lloyd's and an organizational expert, offers to help Patty and Lloyd write a mission statement and initial organizational

description. As word gets out, seven others join the team, and at the original Javalina Coffee House on Bullard and Broadway, Western Institute of Lifelong Learning begins to take shape.

In January of 2006, Patty Reed, Kathie Gilbert, and Bonnie Maldonado present a complete proposal for the institute to Dr. John Counts, then president of Western New Mexico University. Patty's closing pitch: in exchange for WNMU providing office space, classrooms, and secretarial support, the institute will carry "Western" in its name. Dr. Counts' response was immediate —and the rest is history.

After two public meetings introducing the concept, 43 people signed up at a yearly fee of \$35, and 110 possible course topics are identified. By spring, WILL opens its doors

with three courses: Cultivating Creativity, Facets of Silver City, and a WILL Book Club.

Twenty years later, WILL has grown into the official Lifelong Learning Institute for WNMU, surviving even the pandemic years by using Zoom to continue to reach its members. On May 21, 2026, WILL celebrates two decades.

Reflecting on the past 20 years, the

administration and staff of WILL thank the hundreds of volunteers who have made this one-of-a-kind organization flourish in Grant County. Join us May 9 at the Silver City Museum for the opening of our exhibit which celebrates 20 years of lifelong learning.

To learn more, visit www.will.community or call the Rhoda House Office at 575-538-6835.

LULAC Plans Las Posadas Revival

The League of United Latin American Citizens Council 8003 has operated in Silver City for over 40 years. In that time, we've promoted education and Latino culture for generations of local youth and families. As a community organization,



the events we organize are always informed by community interactions.

It may be spring, but we're already looking ahead to December

— and for good reason. This year, we're happy to announce that we will be leading a procession of *Las Posadas*.

Las Posadas, meaning "the inns," is a Mexican tradition honoring Mary and Joseph's difficult journey to Bethlehem. Lasting nine days between December 16–24, Las Posadas is a community effort of nightly processions, traditionally from home to home. Participants sing songs asking for shelter, only to be turned down night after night. On the ninth night, they are finally accepted into the final home, where a celebration is held complete with traditional music and food.

An event like this takes months of coordination, community involvement, and planning, which is why we're starting now. We will continue to share updates here in *The Mansardian* and on our website, grantcountylulac.org.

On Display: New and Upcoming Exhibitions

By: Tom Oberg,
Exhibitions Projects Manager

We have a new permanent exhibit at the museum. “A Place in History: The Legacy of the Ailman House” focuses on the house’s residents as well as the building’s changing role throughout the history of Silver City. The exhibit has four major themes: a timeline outlining the many changes the building has undergone and the changing faces of its inhabitants; an exploration of architectural elements that make the house unique, along with descriptions of the steps taken to preserve the original structure while modernizing it to accommodate each successive use; a section honoring Harry Benjamin, the museum’s first curator and well-known New Mexican artist; and a section dedicated to the people who have resided or worked in the building over the years.

An exhibit celebrating 20 years of the Western Institute of Lifelong Learning (WILL) opens on May 9. WILL is a volunteer-driven, adult learning organization serving Silver City and surrounding communities. Its mission is to “enrich life through learning in community.” I have reviewed the first draft of the exhibition script and am confident this will be yet another engaging exhibit here at the museum.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is developing relationships with the community that supports this museum. The volunteers are a wonderful group to work



John and Jennifer Mahl of J&J Signs at work in December 2025, installing the large-format vinyl wall design for the museum’s latest long-term exhibit. The vinyl, typically used to wrap cars, offers both visual impact and lasting durability.

with, and their dedication to the museum and its mission is a great source of inspiration for me. I’ve also worked with John Mahl of J&J Signs professionally for a long time and enjoy working with him on graphic solutions for our exhibits. John’s knowledge of materials and processes has been a great help over the years. A bonus to his expertise is his easygoing

personality — never short on thoughts and observations, always quick with a joke, John has a way of making deadlines much less stressful as we power to the completion of an exhibit. John’s wife, Jennifer, joined him on the latest installation of graphics and has proved to be just as well-suited to the job.

Collections

50 Pounds of History

By: Ashley Smith,
Registrar & Collections Manager

Mining has been an integral part of Silver City since the Spanish first arrived in the area. It is the reason the city as we know it exists and one of the many reasons it continues to thrive. Given its long history, the industry has produced many objects unique to the trade. The Silver City Museum houses a wide array of mining objects, including drill bits, assay cups, weights and measures, helmets, and mineral samples.

One of the largest, heaviest, and most interesting items is a jack donated by Rudolfo “Rudy” Dominguez in 2021. Rudy believed this jack belonged to Ines Morales, a leader of one of the “ganger” groups at the Santa Rita mine, still in operation today. Rudy had many stories to tell about his time working at the mine as a young man, first in the assay office and then as an administrator. He was also a union organizer, unionizing the office staff while at the mines, and later served as the union’s vice president.

Rudy talked about how the gangers would come in for their shifts, pick up the jack they would use to move the narrow-gauge railroad tracks that ran

around the pit mine’s terraced steps, and carry it up the sloping side of the mine to the day’s starting point. Sometimes they would be given a ride from one of the managers in his car, where he had removed the back seat to make it easier for the men to load their equipment. This was a rare respite from backbreaking labor, as the jack is solid metal, weighing

more than 50 pounds. The gangers would use the jack to continuously shift the tracks throughout the day, using a five-foot pole as a lever arm, allowing the ore carts to be moved around the mine and in and out of the pit. Each jack was marked with its gang’s symbol — in this case, a large “Z” with hooks on each end. Sometimes the groups would compete to see who could make it up the side of the pit fastest while carrying the jack.

This work was done by Mexican American men and was among the most backbreaking and labor-intensive at the mine, performed year-round in all weather. This kind of ethnically based division of labor was common at the time and well documented as a form of discrimination, reflected in disparities in pay, segregated cafeterias, and treatment by management. This is one story among many still in living memory — stories that our future oral history project of the Mining District aims to capture before they are lost.



The “Z” carved into this 50-pound jack identified it as belonging to Ines Morales’s gang at the Santa Rita mine (From the Silver City Museum Collection).

December

“Managing a National Forest”

Wednesday April 1

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

The Hearth | 1915 N Swan Street

Gila National Forest Supervisor Camille Howes will present on the complexities and challenges of managing one of the nation’s premier natural assets.

Give Grandly 2026

Saturday April 18

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Gough Park

The Friends of the Silver City Museum invite you to support their mission which directly serves and supports the Silver City Museum. Your donations help fund exhibitions, community events, educational programming, and the care of the museum’s collections.

Continental Divide Trail Days

Historic Walking Tour

Sunday April 26

9:00 am – 10:30 am

Silver City Museum

Come and enjoy a historic walking tour. Space is limited and **reservations are required**. Visit cdcoalition.org/trail-days for registration and more information.

May

Exhibition Opening

“20 Years of Lifelong Learning”

Saturday May 9

2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Silver City Museum

This new exhibition celebrates the Western Institute of Lifelong Learning (WILL) as it marks two decades of enriching life through learning in Grant County.

“Chinese Immigration in Silver City”

Wednesday May 20

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

WNMU Global Resource Center, ABC Room

Dr. Karen Leong shares her research on Chinese immigration and the contributions of the Chinese American community to Grant County.

Upcoming Programs and Events



The Mansardian

The Silver City Museum

312 West Broadway
Silver City, NM 88061

The 2026/2027 Mansardian is underwritten by Liz Mikols in memory of her husband Joe Schindler.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED



BECOME A FRIEND

The Friends of the Silver City Museum is the nonprofit partner of the Silver City Museum. It complements public resources with private philanthropy. As the museum’s premier support organization, The Friends provides crucial funding for exhibits, educational programming, and collection care.

All Membership Levels Include

- The Mansardian™ newsletter
- Invitations to exhibit openings and member-only events
- 10% off every day at the Museum Store
- Holiday discount at the Museum Store

Additional Sponsor Benefits Include

- Recognition on the Museum Appreciation Wall while membership is current
- A matted print image of your choice from the Silver City Museum’s photo collection

Membership Levels

- **Student \$15.00**
- **Senior \$30.00:** One adult 60+ years old
- **Friend \$35.00:** One adult
- **Family and Couples \$50.00:** Up to two adults and all children under 18
- **Sponsor \$100.00**
- **Patron Sponsor \$250.00:** Also includes acknowledgement on our website and a private behind-the-scenes tour with Museum Director
- **Benefactor \$500.00:** Also includes acknowledgement on our website, a private behind-the-scenes tour with Museum Director, and a copy of “Unpacking Silver City.”

Ready to join? Visit silvercitymuseum.org to download your membership form or stop by the museum to pick one up in person. We’d love to welcome you to our community of history enthusiasts and museum supporters!

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SILVER CITY, NM
PERMIT NO. 140