



PO Box 1305
Mesilla, NM 88046

AMIGOS de la casa

Issue 3
FALL/WINTER
2025

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE TAYLOR-MESILLA HISTORIC SITE

President's Chat

What an incredible and busy summer it's been! Our volunteers and Board members have been everywhere, staffing booths for Family Day, joining the Breaking Bad Habits clean-up in Mesilla, and proudly representing us at the Arizona/New Mexico History Conference (where our Taylor table looked fantastic!)



Heather Pollard

We're also launching an exciting new corporate donor program, with the help of our dedicated Board. Family and individual memberships will still be available. Just sign up online or in the Barela Store gift shop which opens on November 8.

To all our loyal members who have supported education programs at the Taylor Site for more than 20 years, we are grateful. Your commitment keeps our mission alive. Right now, volunteers are training as docents under the leadership of Alexandra McKinney, the TMHS Program Coordinator. When the site opens, she'll need more than a hundred volunteer members to bring the Taylor Home to life! And the TMHS site managers and rangers are working tirelessly to prepare for the big day, the Grand Opening Nov. 8.

We are truly fortunate. Paul and Mary Taylor's generous donation of their home stands as one of the most remarkable acts of historic preservation in Southern New Mexico and the Borderlands. After personally touring the renovation, I could feel the Taylors and their spirit of generosity in every room. On opening day, we'll gather as a community to celebrate and to thank the Taylor family for the extraordinary gift they've given us all. I hope to see you there!

❖ *Heather Pollard, President
Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site*

**TAYLOR-MESILLA
HISTORIC SITE**

GRAND OPENING FIESTA

CONNECTING ART, CULTURE, AND FAMILY
ON THE BORDERLANDS

Celebrate the opening of New Mexico's eighth historic site with a ribbon cutting, live music on Mesilla Plaza, and other special activities throughout the day. Visitors will also enjoy a stunning collection of folk art from New Mexico and around the world.

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8
10 AM - 4 PM**

2350 CALLE PRINCIPAL, MESILLA, NEW MEXICO

Taylor-Mesilla Friends NEW MEXICO HISTORIC SITES (575) 202-1638 • nmhistoricsites.org NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

You're Invited!

After two decades of planning and collaboration with the NM Department of Cultural Affairs, the gift that the late J. Paul and Mary Daniels Taylor gave to New Mexico has finally come to fruition as the state's newest historic site. It will open to the public during a festive event on the Mesilla, NM plaza. The Grand Opening Fiesta on Saturday, Nov. 8 will kick off with a 10 AM ribbon-cutting ceremony and a chance to view a museum unlike any other.

From 10 AM to 4 PM, music and family activities will take place as part of the celebration. Members of the Taylor family will be on hand, along with dignitaries from the NM Department of Cultural Affairs, town officials, and the

Board of Directors of the nonprofit Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site. Visitors can also stop by the Barela Store, a gift shop next to the historic home that features a myriad of affordable art and trinkets from Mexico, Peru, and across the Borderland. See more information on page 3.



A Taylor family photo at left depicts Mary and J. Paul Taylor inside their home that is now New Mexico's newest museum. Also pictured are a sculpture from the music room and a painting of their eldest son, Robert.

Fun, Family and History: Friends of the TMHS at Family Day

The Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site (TMHS) brought double the fun to this year's Family Day on the Mesilla Plaza with two lively booths—one focused on membership and water, and the other on activities for all ages. The Friends extend warm thanks to the TMHS site staff and Friends' volunteers whose support helped make both booths a hit with families.

At the membership and water booth, visitors could cool off with complimentary cups of water while learning more about how the Friends support preservation, interpretation, and educational programs at the Site. Volunteers shared information about upcoming events and how community members can get involved by becoming members or lending a hand at future activities.

Next door, the activities booth engaged visitors with a wheel of trivia questions about our border region and New Mexico History. Turtle coloring pages were also



available for the younger kids.

Together, these booths reflected the Friends' mission to keep history vibrant and accessible for all ages. Whether visitors came for a cool drink, a history lesson, or simply to color in the shade, Family Day offered a perfect blend of learning and laughter in the heart of Mesilla.

❖ *Rebecca Campbell Friends Member*

Top Photos: Kids enjoyed the coloring activities. At right, Friends Board Member Joanne Achen (right) greets a visitor at the membership table. [Photos by Mike Cook]



Inside the Home: The TMHS Collection

Each issue of *Amigos de la casa* will feature items that you can see when you take your museum tour. The Friends of the TMHS thank the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, and Historic Sites Instructional Coordinator Alexandra McKinney for providing information about the items on display. [Photos courtesy of Tira Howard Photography.]

Material: Oil on canvas

Date Made: Unknown

Museum Location: Alma Capen

Sitting Room

This beautiful painting features a young child in a swaddle looking to the right. The painting's title indicates the child is from the Tarahumara community of Northern Mexico. It is a favorite among the TMHS staff.

Little Tarahumara
Artist: Betty Hummer



Nacimiento
Artist: Doug Roy



Material: Paper

Date Made: 2014

Museum Location: Dining Room

Doug Roy is a paper carver known for his miniature works of art. Using tools like exacto knives, rulers, toothpicks, punching tools, and glue, Roy is able to create detailed and intricate works with pieces measuring smaller than 1/64th of an inch!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 1-2, Sat.-Sun.: Día de los Muertos Fiesta (Day of the Dead), day-long event on the Mesilla Plaza. A cultural celebration with fun activities, music, and exhibits. Look for the Friends' table on the plaza or come into the Barela Store for items specific to the event.

Dec. 10-Jan. 4: TMHS Exhibition, "One Story, Many Perspectives: Exploring Nacimientos Through Art and Culture" showcasing the site's collection of nativity scenes. Open house days will be Dec. 13, 14, 20, 21. Fee: \$15/adult; \$5 for children 16 and under.

Jan. 17, Sat: Taylor Talk, 2-3 p.m., Mesilla Community Center, 2251 Calle de Santiago. Matt Barbour, Deputy Dir. of NM Historic Sites, will discuss "An Archaeological Perspective on Hunting in New Mexico." Join the free event.

Come to the Next Taylor Talk, Saturday, Nov. 17

The next Taylor Talk will feature Matthew Barbour. His talk is titled "An Archaeological Perspective on Hunting in New Mexico." Matt holds BA and MA degrees in Anthropology from UNM and has worked for the NM Department of Cultural Affairs since 2002. He's currently the Deputy Director of New Mexico Historic Sites. He has published more than 200 nonfiction articles and monographs.

The Nov. 17 presentation begins at 2 PM at the Mesilla Community Center, 2251 Calle de Santiago. It's free to the public.

Tours, Turtles, & Treasures

In the days following the Taylor-Mesilla Grand Opening, the historic site (including the home and the Reynolds Store Visitor Center) will be open Wednesday-Sunday 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM. Admission to the Visitor Center is free. There are two options for tours: • A self-guided experience of the historic home will cost \$10/adult and is free for children 16 years and under. • Guided tours of the home will be held Wednesday-Saturday at 10 AM and 2 PM. Those tours will cost \$15/adult and \$5 for children 16 years and under. Tickets can be purchased for the tours at the Visitor Center. Both tours include a peek at the turtles that have lived at the home for years. The kids will love it!

In addition, you can visit the new location for the Barela Store, a gift shop run by the Friends organization. Hours of operation are Thursday through Sunday, 10 AM - 4 PM. On special occasions, additional dates may be added. There is no entrance fee to attend the Barela Store.



Alexandra McKinney (right) of NM Historic Sites works with the volunteer docents in the Tin Room in preparation for the opening. [Photo courtesy of Mike Cook]



The turtles at the historic home!
[Photo courtesy of Emily Wilson]



Mesilla Mayor Russell Hernandez, center, who is also a TMHS advisor, gets information about the site inside the Reynolds Visitor Center.

History Fills the Oct. 18 Taylor Talk

Several newcomers were among 40 attendees of the final Taylor Talk of 2025 to hear Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site interpretive ranger Daniel Webb discuss little-known facts about the New Mexico Territory's march to statehood. In the Oct. 18 talk, Webb related the complicated history marked by shifting, proposed, and ill-defined political borders and conflicting allegiances and motivations among the region's population.

The treaty ending the Mexican-American War in 1848 prompted Mexicans to relocate when the new border placed them in U.S. territory, but it wasn't the only issue. Father Ramon Ortiz encouraged Mexicans to relocate from American territory to Mexican soil including Mesilla, but hostile raids in El Paso caused local leader Rafael Ruelas to lead colonists to Doña Ana Village on American soil in 1849. The Gadsden Purchase of 1854 brought Mesilla to the American side of the border. While many dreamed of U.S. statehood for New Mexico Territory, a minority of people who depended on federal contracts for territorial services were against it.

By 1856, proposals surfaced to carve the territory in two, in great part to develop mining. Sylvester Mowry proposed the Arizona Territory, and it gained support from people like Ruelas. In 1861, the incursion of the Confederate Army highlighted territorial divisions of Union and Confederate sympathizers and pro-slavery and abolitionist factions. Confederate defeat at Glorieta Pass in 1862 put the Union in control, and President Lincoln approved an East-West division of Arizona and New Mexico Territory as opposed to a North-

South division.

The arrival in 1862 of William Army, a native of the District of Columbia, as Secretary of the NM Territory renewed an effort to create a southern New Mexico territory. He introduced a Congressional memorial to create the Territory of Montezuma that would include the union of Doña Ana and El Paso Counties, which Texans strongly opposed. The U.S. Senate declined to act on the memorial.

The drive toward statehood included the work of the Bureau of Immigration, enticing people to the region to take advantage of irrigated agriculture and pasture land. New Mexicans, who fought alongside Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish-American War, won his favor when he became president, prompting his support for statehood. He also signed the Reclamation Act, which funded western dam projects including the Elephant Butte project and made irrigated agriculture in the Mesilla Valley a great draw. The next president, William Howard Taft, endorsed statehood and the enabling act that made it possible.

The next Taylor Talk will be on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026 at 2PM at the Community Center.



Las Cruces native Daniel Webb is an interpretive ranger with the NM Historic Sites.

Photo courtesy of Janet Brydon

Come to the Barela Store!

The Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site announce the transformation of its small pop-up gift store that has been in the site's Visitor Center since August 2024. The gift shop has been named "The Barela Store" and is in a 500 square foot space, located at 2340 Calle Principal in Mesilla, next door to the historic home. Marci Beyer, TMHS Board member, says the name is in honor of the merchants who owned the space and ran a mercantile store in the 1800s. The space itself is an historic property and, like the site, has a rich history.

The Barela Store carries gifts sourced from all over the world, especially the Borderlands, which include many hand-made items. You'll find books, cards, jewelry, textiles, t-shirts, souvenirs, household and decorative items, handbags, children's items, and religious artifacts like nativities, Santos, and Day of the Dead figures. The items are chosen to reflect the lifelong interests of the Taylor family in art and artifacts of great cultural diversity. "This store will be a great place for all your holiday shopping and it will be an adventure and an extension of the site experience," Beyer said.

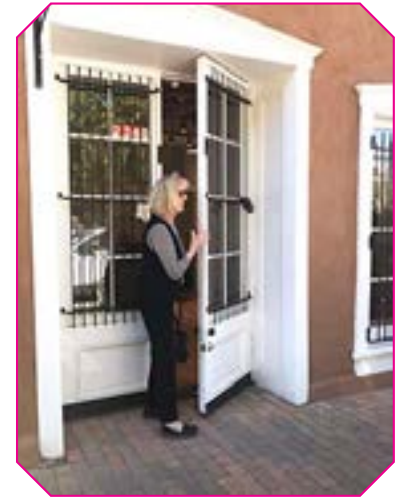
The Barela Store is operated by Friends' volunteers and all profits are donated to the Historic Site to support its educational programs. It is open from Thursday to Sunday from 10 am-4pm, with additional hours for holidays and special events. The store phone is 575-449-4193.

❖ *Marci Beyer, Barela Store Committee Chairwoman*



[Photos by Jo Galván Nash]

WE'RE OPEN
Thursday to Sunday
and on special occasions
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



The Barela Store front door is directly on the Mesilla Plaza, next to the Reynolds Visitor Center, at 2340 Calle Principal

*** FOR SALE ***
(Photos from top-center)

- ❖ There's a wide selection of jewelry available. These are made out of leather.
- ❖ New Mexico chile flakes with red and green chile oil make a wonderful holiday gift, not to mention the beautiful table runners (or shawls) in many vibrant colors.
- ❖ Keychains are adorned with yarn-sewn hearts. Need a stocking stuffer?
- ❖ Beautifully painted bowls and cups from Peru, Mexico and other countries are for sale.
- ❖ Brightly painted animals and piggy-banks sit next to New Mexico coasters.
- ❖ Nacimientos during the holidays are popular. This one below from Mexico is made of tin.



Welcome, Kathy!

Kathy Shannon has joined the Friends Board of Directors. She will volunteer as the bookkeeper and work directly with Treasurer Chris May. Kathy's career was centered in Oregon before she returned to Las Cruces. She then served as a financial secretary at a local church, as a bookkeeper at La Casa Domestic Violence Shelter and finally retired from Kriegel/Gray/Shaw, Inc. She grew up with a love for agriculture, the outdoors, and Native American History and she recalls her first visit to the Taylor home as a junior high student.



Board Members UP CLOSE

The Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site offer their spare time by volunteering in a variety of activities. In late September, Membership Chair **Diana Seward**, along with several other volunteers, managed a TMHS table at the 2025 New Mexico-Arizona History Conference at the Las Cruces Convention Center (see photo). By being a conference exhibitor, the Friends promoted the new historic site, told visitors about the Nov. 8 Grand Opening Fiesta, sold books from the Barela Store (gift shop), and networked with those attending the conference.



"I got involved with the Friends Board because there's so much potential." Diana says she's looking forward to the Grand Opening. "I really encourage people to come out and experience it. I think it will add to Mesilla and will be a place they want to visit over and over again," said Diana.

Diana has been a financial advisor for Edward Jones for nearly 20 years. Previously, she managed the trust department of a local bank for many years. She's been on the Friends Board since 2023.

Friends Group Goes Online

During the month of November, the Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site will unveil its new website that will help promote the historic site and its programs, the variety of activities taking place in Mesilla, and the history and artifacts that makes the new museum unique. We hope you will bookmark the new site when it goes live! The web address will be www.taylormesillafriends.com.

We also hope you will contact us and let us know what you would like the website to include. Our goal is to reach people across the country and entice them to make a visit to Mesilla and explore the many treasures this area provides, including the new historic site. Please, email us at friends.taylormesilla@gmail.com.

❖ *Jo Galván Nash*
Friends Marketing Chair

Become a Member of Friends of the Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site

The Taylor-Mesilla Historic Site (TMHS) is New Mexico's newest historic site, and the TMHS Friends organization is welcoming new members to join them in support of this one-of-a-kind site. For generations to come, the museum, interpretive center, and gift shop will preserve the vast collection of artifacts that represent a variety of cultures and traditions.

Suggested membership amounts:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Supporter | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Benefactor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Partner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Patron | | |

MEMBERSHIP OR DONATION OPTIONS — Online or by Mail

- Join or donate with checks, major credit cards, or PayPal.
- Online: www.taylormesillafriends.com (available in mid Nov.)
- By email: friends.taylormesilla@gmail.com. A Board Member will then contact you to assist with your donation or membership.
- By Mail: Send your check payable to Taylor-Mesilla Friends:
Taylor-Mesilla Friends, PO Box 1305, Mesilla, NM 88046

FRIENDS EXECUTIVE OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

Heather Pollard, President;
Bob Wofford, Vice President;
Tom Dormody, Secretary & Programs;
Chris May, Treasurer;
Diana Seward, Membership Committee;
Jo Galván Nash, Marketing Committee

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the NM Department of Cultural Affairs Matthew
Barbour, Alexandra McKinney, and Emily Wilson.