

**STATE of NEW MEXICO**  
**State Records Center and Archives**

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**For Immediate Release**

Archives Month 2013: Growing as We Go – Statewide Events Celebrate New Mexico Agriculture & More

Throughout every major period of New Mexico’s historical past, agriculture ranks at the top alongside all the other important factors and circumstances that have influenced the distinctive characteristics of the Land of Enchantment. In recognition of National Archives Month, the State Records Center and Archives (SRCA), the New Mexico Historical Records Advisory Board and the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area are leading a statewide celebration of the ever-evolving cultural tradition of agriculture.

The theme of this year’s celebration, *Growing as We Go*, pays homage to the state’s dynamic agricultural heritage, and a diverse roundup of statewide events are planned throughout the month of October.

*Growing as We Go* culminates in a three-day span (Oct. 24-26) of free educational sessions at the SRCA in Santa Fe and a screening of historical films at The Screen on the campus of the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

On Thursday, October 24, State Historian Dr. Rick Hendricks and Assistant State Historian Dr. Rob Martinez, will head a session that will show beginning genealogists how to get started on researching family trees. Following the morning session, Melissa Salazar, the director of the Archives and Historical Services Division, will provide a tour of the research and genealogy rooms. Special permission has also been granted to take visitors into the highly restricted and climate controlled State Archives vault, where centuries-old records are preserved.

On Friday, October 25, sessions include lectures about native-seed harvesting and the controversial advent of genetic modification of seeds, the influence of Middle Eastern culture on agriculture in Colonial New Mexico, the Bureau of Land Management’s seeds and regenerations program, agriculture in ancient times, seed and cultural preservation and much more.

“From red and green chile, to our complex system of *acequias*, to the many mom-and-pop farms and ranches dotted throughout the state, there are so many unforgettable icons that were born of agriculture in New Mexico,” says Felicia Lujan, bureau chief of the Archives Historical Services Division. “The vaults at the Archives are rife with original materials related to growing and raising food.”

During a brown bag luncheon with the speakers on Oct. 25, Dr. Hendricks will announce the renaming of the Carmen Quintana Collection as the Eric Sverre Collection, in honor of her son who died in a tragic car accident earlier this year. Quintana hopes that the renaming will inspire youths and anyone else for that matter to become interested in New Mexico history and culture. Lunches for the presenters will be sponsored by RealBurger restaurant.

Finally, on Saturday Oct. 26, there will be a free screening of four historical films, including *Adventures in Kit Carson Land*, a 1915 or 1916 travelogue which follows a convertible Packard Twin 6 containing “five travelers and a spotted dog” over untamed dirt roads and switchbacks in northern New Mexico’s ; *Adventures in Kit Carson Land (Dawson Reel)*, a short film that depicts coal-mining operations at the Phelps Dodge–owned mines in the northeastern New Mexico town of Dawson; the short silent film, *A Day in Santa Fe*, scripted by poet Lynn Riggs, follows a burro loaded with wood to sell as he goes about

his rounds over a single day in 1931; and *Last Run of the Chili Line*, in which passengers take their last ride on the narrow-gauge Denver and Rio Grande Western from Santa Fe to Embudo.

Indeed, when any thorough analysis about New Mexico agriculture is sought, there are so many perspectives to consider rather than just looking at planting a seed in ground, watering it and then watching it grow. The roots of agriculture began sprouting here with the ancient Native American cultures centuries ago, and then began to evolve as other cultures arrived, from the Spanish colonization to the American westward expansion and even to the waves of Sunbelt migrations we see today.

“Much of the expanse of New Mexico is not only extremely beautiful, but it is also filled with the farms and ranches and the related products that define our state,” Lujan says. “Anyone who attends these educational events will surely get something out of them.”

Historically, many believe that a plethora of prime agricultural areas that once existed in many places, such as Chaco Canyon in the northwest and the Mimbres settlements in the Southwest, were wiped out by climate change more than a millennium ago. Whole cultures of people had to move to other areas, settling in such places as the rich agrarian lands along the Rio Grande and other lands with available water.

As each new culture arrived and affected the others, especially through food, it allowed for the distinct commingling of cultures that is so endemic to New Mexico today. Nearly every aspect of life was influenced by agriculture, mainly through the limited availability of arable land, water, accessibility and monetary resources. The adaptability of the people to improvise and sustain a living in such an isolated place contributed greatly to multicultural flavor and evolution of agriculture in the state. In nearly every corner of the Land of Enchantment, there are still farms and ranches that have been operating for centuries if not more, and evidence of where ancient cultures plowed their living.

Many of the collections available to the public at the State Records Center and Archives, including the Spanish, Mexican and Territorial archives, contain fascinating materials that relate directly or indirectly to growing and raising food in the state. They include much about the types of food and crops that existed here when the Spanish arrived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; what types of food, crops and farming techniques the newcomers brought; land grants; Spanish Colonial law granting aboriginal water rights and land retention to Native Americans; and much, much more. There are also hundreds of historical photographs that depict both historical and contemporary agricultural farms and ranches, techniques and science, as well as a multitude of related food products.

For a complete list of all statewide events slated for this October’s National Archives Month, please visit [www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/archives/archivesweek\\_hm.htm](http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/archives/archivesweek_hm.htm).

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