



Final Exhibit's Oral Histories interactive

High-Tech Techniques Bring New Mexico's Past to Life

Interactive exhibits a highlight of new Museum

Santa Fe, NM, May 15, 2009 – Hands-on history. That's one of the many ways the New Mexico History Museum (<http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org/>), opening May 24, puts visitors into the sights, sounds and actual feel of its stories.

How? Meet Second Story Interactive Studio (<http://www.secondstory.com/>). The Portland, Ore., firm, recipient of numerous accolades for installations at the Library of Congress, Bank of America, and Grammy Museum, has built a number of touch-screen interactive exhibits for the History Museum, 113 Lincoln Avenue, on the Santa Fe Plaza. Zoom in to observe details of the treasured Segesser Hides. Dig for nuances in bilingual versions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Watch the state's boundaries grow, shrink and change over time.

"People learn best by employing all of their senses and by assembling knowledge from different formats," said Dr. Frances Levine, director of the New Mexico History Museum. "For historians, that means exploring the artifacts held in museum collections, as well as the oral histories, the diaries,



Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo interactive



Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo interactive

the maps, the paintings and the photographs of the people who lived that history.

"As teachers, it also means using all the tools available to us to touch our visitors' minds and connect to experiences that make history tangible."

From the casual visitor to the serious scholar, the New Mexico History Museum aims not to state "what happened," but to instead offer a variety



Segesser Hides interactive

of viewpoints presented in a variety of ways. Reach out and touch these parts of history:

- ▶ The core exhibition, *Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now*, opens with a stylized cliff wall complete with petroglyph-like handprints. Actual handprints from artisans of the Palace of the Governor's Portal Program, they include three cast-metal prints that, when you place your hands over them, trigger audio stories from Apache, Navajo and Pueblo speakers about what the land and culture mean to their communities and cultures.
- ▶ The Segesser Hide Paintings, on display in the History Museum's Palace of the Governors, are one of the earliest depictions of Spanish Colonial life in the United States. Interactive replicas of the paintings in *Telling New Mexico* include a touch screen that visitors can use to explore various details of the paintings and the people depicted within them. A media-based tour guides you through each step, or you can pan and zoom your way to hotspots containing short, interpretive bullets. Besides explaining the action shown on the hides, the exhibit explains the story of the hides themselves, which were under private, European ownership from 1758-1988, when the Palace of the Governors acquired these treasures of New Mexico history.
- ▶ The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the oldest agreement between Mexico and the United States, remains alive in courtrooms and households throughout New Mexico. Signed on Feb. 2, 1848, it ended the Mexican-American War, and ceded nearly half of Mexico's territory to the United States, including what became the state of New Mexico. A wall-size, bilingual reproduction lets visitors choose a directed story with a linear overview; a free-form, self-directed exploration of every page of the treaty; and video-based interviews with scholars describing its present-day impacts.
- ▶ New Mexico's borders have been made and remade over the centuries. "Encounters," a motion-graphic installation projected onto a glass wall, tells the story of those shifting borders and the events that defined the state. The exhibit includes a two-minute animation that shows how the state was shaped through various time periods, what events triggered the shifting boundaries, and how changing landscapes build upon one another.
- ▶ To carry New Mexico's history into today, Second Story helped collect stories from New Mexicans across the state – ranchers, oil workers, scientists, Sikhs and more – about tradition, land, language, water, lifestyle and growth. These stories, some in video, some in audio, make up the final exhibit in *Telling New Mexico*. After hearing the soundscape, visitors are invited to write their own story and leave it for a future exhibit.

High-tech interactives are the vanguard of museums these days, but so is the ability to stop and ponder, to leaf through an album of historic photos, to sit on the Museum's second-story terrace and let the stories of New Mexico's centuries sink in. We'll pace you through the journey with a mix of the two. Get into it! Come be a part of history in the making.

Opening weekend features two free days of family events at the History Museum, as well as free admission to the three other state museums in Santa Fe – Museum of Art, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture and Museum of International Folk Art. The New

Mexico Rail Runner will be operating both May 24 and 25 in honor of the grand opening.

New Mexico History Museum

at 113 Lincoln Avenue, just behind the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza
Museum Front Desk: 505-476-5200

For more information about the New Mexico History Museum, including a selection of user-ready high-resolution photographs, log onto <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/nmhm>. More than 8,000 additional, high-resolution photographs illustrating the history of New Mexico are available by keyword search at www.palaceofthegovernors.org (click on "Photo Archives" then on "Digitized Collections"). Most requests for scans from this site can be delivered the same day, and usage is free for publicity purposes only.

The New Mexico Rail Runner will operate its Saturday schedule (<http://www.nmrailrunner.com/schedule.asp>) on May 24 and 25 to accommodate opening-weekend visitors. In addition, all four of the state's Santa Fe-based museums will have free admission on both days: the Museum of Art (<http://www.nmartmuseum.org/>); the Museum of International Folk Art (<http://www.internationalfolkart.org/>); and the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (<http://www.indianartsandculture.org/>).

Previous releases:

[Riding the Rails... in Style](#)

[Duty, Sacrifice, Honor](#)

[Where ancient artifacts meet cutting-edge art](#)

[Fashioning New Mexico](#)

[The Tiffany Ties that Bind](#)

[The Railroad Wars](#)

[The New Face of History](#)

[The Tales that Made the American West](#)

[New Mexico History Museum's Core Exhibits](#)

[Telling the People's Stories: A Message from the Director](#)

[Creating a Place for Our Past](#), by Dr. Frances Levine, El Palacio, Summer 2006

Other Sites:

[NM History Museum on Twitter](#)

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