

La Sociedad de la Entrada

After Action Report for Onate Event 01/07/1612

Event

We were invited to participate in the Statehood Parade in Las Cruces on Saturday, January 7th, 2012. Apparently, the Las Cruces parade was the only official parade in the whole state. The organizer, Dolores C. Archuleta, had seen us at the Spaceport groundbreaking and was so impressed she wanted us to participate.

Parade Background Info: On 6 January 1912, at 11:35 a.m., Mountain Time President William H. Taft signed the Proclamation admitting NM to the Union as the 47th State after repeated attempts (62 years) had failed. About 10 years ago Dr. Jon Hunner, Chair, Department of History, College of Arts and Sciences, NMSU, encouraged the leadership of New Mexico to start planning for New Mexico's 100th year of statehood. As a result, in Las Cruces, the Mesilla Valley Centennial Planning Committee was organized and Gregg Smith is the Chairperson and Dolores C. Archuleta was elected as the Chairperson of the Centennial Parade Subcommittee. Archuleta's first question to Dr. Hunner when she accepted her duties was: "What took so long to get admitted into the Union?" His short answer was that Congress was concerned with the residents, that they were Indians, Mexicans, and too Catholic, and spoke a language they did not understand.

The Parade Subcommittee was supported with services from the City of Las Cruces and the New Mexico Army National Guard. However, no funding was available with her assignment, Archuleta soon discovered. The Las Cruces Sun News quickly came to the rescue as the Media-sponsor and because this is such an important community event the Bulletin will support them as well. NMSU's School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism hosted a successful fundraiser to create funding for the Committee to get them started. Archuleta has been involved with the Veterans Parade held in Las Cruces for about 10 years, so she recruited retired National Guard Sgt. Bill Hawkins to select the Parade route and stage the parade. The parade was scheduled for Saturday, 7 January 2012, at 11:00 a.m.

The Route: Staging was at the Loretto Town Center, traveled north on Church Street, turned left (west) on the newly opened Roundabout, on to Water Street south back to the staging area, about two miles.

Mustor

Our group, La Sociedad de la Entrada, guarded the cargo in the carreta on the Camino Real Trails Association (CARTA) float, near the head of the parade. A traditional carreta (wooden cart) was placed on a trailer and we marched on all sides of it. In attendance were Mike Bilbo, Dave Poulin, Blaine Bachman, three members of the Las Cruces BLM office, and one member (the director) of CARTA). We felt very honored to have been sought out by Dolores Archuleta and invited to participate. And it was a GREAT parade. If I'm not mistaken, it was the only Centennial Parade in the state, and thus THE New Mexico Centennial Parade. As our group is from central and northern New Mexico, we owe thanks to the BLM Las Cruces District for helping and supplying additional people and also with us, the new executive director of CARTA, in the polished burgonet helmet, who served as Al Ferez - bearer of Queen Isabel's Castile y Leon flag. Staging began at 9:00 a.m. Dave and Blaine arrived at 9:30-9:45 with the gear.

The Parade

The Parade Grand Marshal was President William Howard Taft portrayed by Dale Liikala, hired by the NM Farm and Ranch Museum for the re-enactment of the signing of the 1912 Proclamation admitting NM into the Union. This took place on January 6, 2012, at 11:35 a.m. at the Farm & Ranch Museum followed by lunch cosponsored by NMSU and the Farm and Ranch Museum. The Centennial Parade Committee agreed that President Taft needed a Mrs. Nellie Taft and Las Cruces Judy Roscoe graciously agreed to fill that role. Mrs. Nellie Taft was the first First-Lady to insist in riding with the President-elect to his inauguration.

The Reviewing Stand was on the front steps of the old City Hall, and Dr. Margie Huerta was the emcee for the opening ceremonies. Invited guests included: Governor Susana Martinez, former Governors, Mayors, and Mayors of Mesilla, Hatch, Alamogordo, El Paso, Commanders of WSMR and HAFB, Congressional representatives, and local elected officials.

Conclusion

As an extra special bonus, BLM archaeologist Jane Childress, who was one of our armed and armored Onate colonists, asked us to stay in period attire, ca 1598, and we went for a nice lunch in La Mesilla and then out to Point of Rocks on the Camino Real to work on photos for a poster in a series on national historic trails. It was a truly great - and nice long - day (especially for Blaine and Dave).

Gracias, El Bilbolero



Members of the Sociedad de la Entrada, BLM, and CARTA on the Jornada del Muerto.

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