

For immediate release

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**“Stories of Southwestern New Mexico Women”, New Exhibit Opening April 15 at the Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway.**

Everyone is invited to the opening reception for the new exhibit, “Stories of Southwestern New Mexico Women,” on Friday, April 15, from 4:30pm to 6:30pm at the Silver City Museum, 312 W. Broadway. Admission is free.

The exhibit will be housed in the first small gallery, the hall showcases, and the main gallery in the back. Over 120 objects from the Albuquerque Museum, the New Mexico History Museum, the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, the Western New Mexico University Museum, and the Silver City Museum’s collection will be on view. Women’s stories, as well as their cultural identities, will be captured in part throughout the exhibit.

Many of the stories of women in southwest New Mexico have been obscured in history, lost in the telling by predominantly masculine chroniclers. In some ways, women’s stories are simply a focused version of people’s stories as a whole. And yet women occupy unique niches across cultures by holding specific knowledge, performing work, and assuming roles essential to both basic survival and cultural cohesion.

Within the array of cultures that have touched southwestern New Mexico – Mimbres, Apache, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo – women’s contributions are as varied and mosaic as the cultures themselves. Women are warriors, social organizers, hunters, potters, explorers, and messengers. Often, through necessity or opportunity, they subvert gender norms and buck historical assumptions as to the scope of their capabilities. And yet, quite literally, certain threads universally bind women’s roles. They process and stitch fibers into clothing, procure food and shelter, tend children and animals, and maintain medicinal knowledge. Women are the artisans of survival, sustaining their communities through hard, skilled labor.

The introductory gallery includes mining gear, a replica of a Conestoga wagon, a vignette of early household objects, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century grammar school items. Another display includes early medical equipment such as a doctor’s bag and different medicines of the day.

The exhibit is filled with artifacts of the five cultures including Mimbres pottery, Apache baskets, Spanish and Mexican household and trail items, religious objects, and beautifully woven items of clothing with some dated to early 19<sup>th</sup> century Nuevo Mexico.

In the main gallery, a mercado vignette explores trade items of many cultures. Children will have fun playing with hands-on objects to set-up a mercado of their own. The children’s interactive area will also include large floor puzzles of Mimbres pottery, an area to make paper quilt squares, and a new scavenger hunt on foods the early people ate.

This exhibit is possible, thanks to a gift from John Frank in memory of his wife, Jackie Frank, and her contributions to researching women’s history and her volunteer work with the Silver City Museum.

The Silver City Museum creates opportunities for residents and visitors to explore, understand, and celebrate the rich and diverse cultural heritage of southwestern New Mexico by collecting, preserving, researching, and interpreting the region's unique history. For more information, please contact the museum a (575) 538-5921, [education@silvercitymuseum.org](mailto:education@silvercitymuseum.org) or go to the museum's website [www.silvercitymuseum.org](http://www.silvercitymuseum.org).