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SILVER CITY: Silver City Museum will host a talk entitled “Let Me Entertain You: Three Madams of Silver City, Bessie, Lottie and Millie,” presented by noted local historian Liz Mikols. The talk will take place Saturday, August 11th at 1:30 pm in the Museum’s Annex located at 302 West Broadway. The talk and museum admission are free to the public; a donation of \$5 is suggested to help support the museum.

This free 45-minute presentation will focus on the histories and impacts of three of Silver City’s most colorful women. Newspaper article quotations from the period and historic photos will be incorporated in this lively presentation. There will be ample time for questions and answers following the presentation. The talk is made possible by support from the Historical Society of New Mexico.

Mikols will tell about the lives of three madams, Millie Cusey, Lottie Deno and Bessie Harper, and will also depict the world of prostitution in the early days of this pioneer community and the lasting effect these business owners had on the economy, politics and culture of Silver City. These particular three madams all had very full businesses and community lives. They played an important and often over looked part of Silver City’s history.

Women entered this profession for many reasons; most were orphans or widows and some were on the run from their recent past. These weren’t necessarily the booze-swilling, scantily clad characters from popular Western books and Hollywood movies. “A lot of them were educated,”

Mikols says. She goes onto say that “They were expected to be able to sing, at the very least, but to also discuss the matters of the day and recite poetry. There was lots of sex, of course. But there was also gracious living on the first floors (of their bordellos).” Mikols says prostitutes were the primary purveyors of fashion in the more remote territories. “These women were expected to have up to twelve nice dresses in the styles of the day,” she said and adds, “That isn’t to say life was all sunshine for these practitioners. Many died of drug abuse and suicide, or disease...”

Liz Mikols has studied the history of this area for more than 20 years. Her background includes a bachelor's degree from U.C. Berkley and a master's degree from Yale University. Mikols is a member of the Historical Society of New Mexico.

An additional feature on August 11 will be the release and book signing of the new history of regional mining entitled “Relics of the Underground Metal Miners.” Authors Christopher Saxman and Terry Humble will be at the museum from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm signing copies of the book. The book will be available in the Museum Gift Shop. A portion of the proceeds go to benefit the museum.

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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. Admission is free; a suggested donation of \$5 helps support the museum’s education programs, collections care and exhibitions. For more information, please contact the museum at (575) 597-0222, education@silvercitymuseum.org , or visit the museum's website: www.silvercitymuseum.org.