



NMSU Library News Release

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Grant Helps NMSU Library Preserve History of Agriculture

The NMSU Library has received a \$97,755 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)/United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) to preserve publications documenting the history of New Mexico agriculture and rural history. The grant is a collaborative effort with nine other libraries in land grant institutions led by the Cornell University Library. According to agriculture librarian and local project director Tim McKimmie, the NMSU Library, in cooperation with other libraries in the state, will develop a comprehensive bibliography of published materials critical to the story of agriculture and rural life in New Mexico published from 1820 to 1945 and preserve the most important of these materials.

The project is intended to advance the goals of the USAIN's National Preservation Program for Agricultural Literature and the national preservation program administered by the NEH to preserve the intellectual content of deteriorating research resources.

The project will employ a four person scholarly review panel to rank titles according to their priority as research resources and will target for preservation the most important 30% of a universe of approximately 5,000 volumes. Once the ranked listing has been compiled, the Library will organize preservation micro-filming activities consistent with national standards. When filming and quality checking are completed, cataloging according to national bibliographic standards will be done, and the catalog records will be entered in OCLC, an international bibliographic database. Microfilm masters will be housed at the National Agricultural Library, and the duplicate master and one circulating copy of each publication will be added to the Library's collection and made available to Library users.

McKimmie states that the materials to be identified and preserved include books, government documents, extension publications, newspapers, farming journals, theses and dissertations. These materials include historical information on the New Mexico's crops such as chile, alfalfa, cotton, pecans, and grain crops, as well as the cattle, sheep, and dairy industries. Since the history of New Mexico's agriculture is also the story of scarce water resources, sources of information on acequias (small irrigation ditches) and dam construction are also included.

The literature of agriculture and rural life in New Mexico ranges from reminiscences of times gone by to ranching and rodeos, struggles between the poor and land barons, changes wrought by railroads and dam building, and the effect of disasters such as the dust bowl. Many of the books to be reviewed during this project deal with rural life in the West. *My Life on the Frontier* by Miguel Antonio Otero, *Blackboard Days* by Sophie Poe, and *No Life for a Lady* by Agnes Morley Cleaveland are examples of this type of literature.

For more information on the project, please contact McKimmie at tmckimmi@lib.nmsu.edu or 646-7483.

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