



NMSU Library News Release

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University Library's Durango Project is Funded

New Mexico State University will receive \$35,000 in state funding for the continuation of the Durango Microfilming Project of the University Library. The funding was included in HB200, recently signed by Governor Richardson, for capital outlay expenditures.

The funding will be used to microfilm historical and ecclesiastical records in Durango, Mexico. Archives under consideration for filming include records of eighteenth and nineteenth-century ecclesiastical visitations by Durango bishops, music archives located in Durango's cathedral and historical records in the town of Sombrerete, Zacatecas. "We sincerely appreciate this support for preserving these important research collections," said Steve Hussman, head of the Library's Archives and Special Collections.

Since 1994, the Library's Archives and Special Collections Department has been engaged in this ambitious project to preserve in microfilm format historical and ecclesiastical records located in Durango, Mexico. Archival holdings located in Mexico are crucial to the study of the cultural heritage of the border region because the southwest portion of the U.S. was governed consecutively by Spain and then Mexico until the mid-nineteenth century.

The ecclesiastical visitations by Durango bishops to the area under their charge contain important early descriptions of New Mexico's social and physical landscape. The music archive contains original sacred musical compositions of the seventeenth through the nineteenth century written for performance during the liturgical calendar in Durango.

The town of Sombrerete, Zacatecas, is important in the study of New Mexico history because the riches of the Sombrerete silver mines were the primary source of funding for Don Diego de Vargas' 1695 expedition to reconquer New Mexico. In addition, Vargas recruited most of his New Mexico colonizers from Sombrerete and its environs, so that many New Mexicans trace their family roots to the area. For more information on the Durango project, contact Dennis Daily, project director, at 505-646-4727.