



## NMSU Library News Release

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### Loretto Web-based Exhibition Opens

The Rio Grande Historical Collections of the New Mexico State University Library is pleased to announce a new web exhibition, *The Loretto Academy of Las Cruces*. The exhibition provides a look at how the Sisters of Loretto arrived in Las Cruces, the history of the school, the contributions made by the Sisters to the local community, and the daily life of students who attended the Academy. The exhibition can be viewed on the World Wide Web at <http://archives.nmsu.edu/exhibits/loretto/index.html>

The Sisters of Loretto, who first arrived in Las Cruces in 1870, established the first school in southern New Mexico and West Texas. The first years were ones of hardship and poverty, but the strong leadership of Mother Superior Praxedes Carty, who arrived in 1880, allowed the Academy to grow and prosper. Mother Praxedes was also instrumental in the restoration of St. Genevieve's Church in 1886. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw an increased enrollment at the Loretto Academy; however, a new Academy in El Paso, founded in 1922, drained students from the Las Cruces Academy. This loss was exacerbated by disturbances along the Mexican border, the outbreak of World War I, and the Depression of the 1930s. Despite the Sisters' best efforts, the Las Cruces Loretto Academy was closed in 1943.

The exhibition was prepared by Portia Vescio of the Rio Grande Historical Collections and Wendy C. Simpson of the Library's Technical Services Department. The exhibition is based on Simpson's thesis *The Sisters of Loretto in Las Cruces: The Education and "Americanization" of a Frontier Community, 1870-1943*. The thesis is available at the NMSU Library. For more information, please contact Portia Vescio at 646-4746 or email [pvescio@lib.nmsu.edu](mailto:pvescio@lib.nmsu.edu).