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FIFTY YEARS OF THE NEW MEXICO  
HISTORICAL REVIEW:  
AN ARCHIVAL RECORD

JAMES T. STENSVAAAG

"IF ANY REASONS are needed for the launching of the *New Mexico Historical Review*," wrote co-editor Lansing B. Bloom in 1926, "they may be found in the importance of the field; the source material available, and in the interest of research students in this part of the Southwest."<sup>1</sup> To fulfill the mandate which he sensed from these conditions, Bloom with Paul A. F. Walter, president of the Historical Society of New Mexico, launched the *Review* in January of that year.

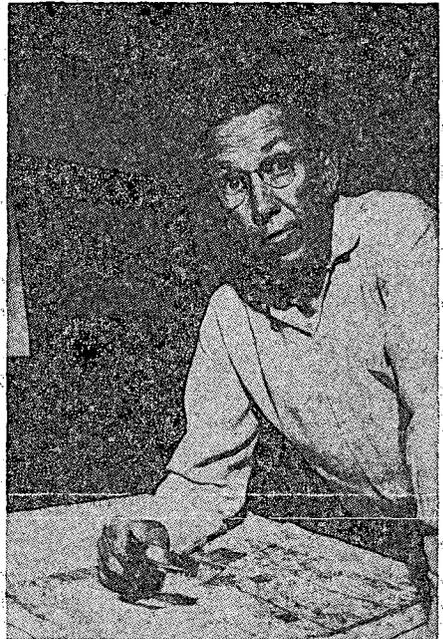
Now in 1976, the fiftieth year of the *Review's* publication as well as the bicentennial anniversary of the United States, the *New Mexico Historical Review* and the University of New Mexico have made the journal's back files available for research work. The ten feet of documentation which comprise the archive provide an invaluable source for a detailed study of the historiography of New Mexico. Located in the Special Collections Division of the Zimmerman Library on the University of New Mexico campus, the collection includes many of the papers of the three editors who served the journal through 1964, including Lansing Bartlett Bloom, Paul A. F. Walter, and Frank Driver Reeve. The interchange between the editors and their correspondents also provides a fascinating and detailed accounting of the day-to-day workings of a scholarly publication.

Lansing Bartlett Bloom, the prime mover in establishing the *New Mexico Historical Review*, first broke his ties with New England and came west in 1907 as a Presbyterian missionary to Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. His first year he led an English-speaking



Lansing Bartlett Bloom  
Editor, 1926-1946

Frank Driver Reeve  
Editor, 1946-1964



congregation while he tried to improve his Spanish, and he began keeping company with John Silliman, a former United States vice-consul in Coahuila. Silliman, an antiquarian of the first order, showed Bloom through the records of the Spanish Franciscans, documents which covered early movement throughout the northern provinces of New Spain. Bloom saw the men of God who left these traces as the precursors to his own mission in the Southwest, and he soon became proficient enough in paleography to decipher the documents. His readings fired his enthusiasm for the culture of the entire region.<sup>2</sup>

Bloom's health, never strong at any time in his life, did not long endure the rigors of the mission field, and in 1908 he left Saltillo for the Mesilla Valley. By the spring of 1909 he had assumed the pastorate of a small church in Mesilla Park. During his convalescence in his new position, Bloom registered *in absentia* at Williams College, where he had previously received his bachelor's degree. He continued his academic work by correspondence through the next two years, despite a move to the Jemez pueblo mission, and in 1912 he received his master's degree. His thesis, "New Mexico under the Mexican Administration, 1821-1846," caught the interest of chronicler Ralph Emerson Twitchell. Twitchell had interested himself in the history of the region and in the Historical Society of New Mexico since well before the turn of the century; he agreed to publish Bloom's work serially in *Old Santa Fe*, Twitchell's new one-man venture into the field of historical journals. The study appeared in the first eight numbers of *Old Santa Fe*, which proved to be two-thirds of its total run. Even though the journal did not grow to match Twitchell's hopes and expectations, the circulation of Bloom's scholarly efforts through its pages established the Jemez cleric's authority on the New Mexican scene.<sup>3</sup>

His interest in the entire scope of Southwestern history and his link with Twitchell led Bloom naturally into the Historical Society of New Mexico. His contacts gained there also led him out of the ministry, when in 1917 Edgar Lee Hewett, Director of the School of American Research in Santa Fe, offered Bloom a staff

position. His wartime duty consisted of compiling service records and biographical data on all of New Mexico's servicemen, a task which acquainted him fully with the genealogy of his adopted state. Bloom also assumed the title of Executive Secretary of the Board of Historical Service, a strictly wartime enterprise which disbanded in 1919.<sup>4</sup>

Bloom's associations with the School of American Research and the Historical Society of New Mexico continued unbroken for the rest of his life. In 1924, he became corresponding secretary and sometime treasurer for the society; the former job continued until his death.<sup>5</sup> His associations with those scholars most interested in Southwestern history made him acutely aware of the absence of any scholarly publication which emphasized New Mexico's past, especially after the demise of *Old Santa Fe* in 1916. Consequently, on November 21, 1925, Bloom and Paul Walter, the society's president-elect, sought and obtained permission from the executive council of the society to publish a journal called the *New Mexico Historical Review* as the official bulletin of the Historical Society.<sup>6</sup>

The name of the *Review* did not originate with Bloom or Walter. On March 7, 1913, the members of the society had approved a resolution which read, in part:

Resolved, that the Historical Society of New Mexico, upon the proposition submitted by Mr. R. E. Twitchel [sic] to publish a periodical, quarterly each year, to be known as the New Mexico Historical Review, . . . endorses and accepts said proposition and authorizes said publication as the official bulletin of this society.<sup>7</sup>

The society put provisos on their endorsement, however. Twitchell had to retain control; the subscription price had to remain at two dollars per year, and subscriptions could only be offered to society members; and Twitchell had to surrender one hundred copies to the president of the society for distribution as the society saw fit.<sup>8</sup> Twitchell evidently had second thoughts about his proposal when he saw the limitations imposed, since at the appearance of *Old Santa Fe* the next month, the subscription rate stood at three dollars and the invitation to subscribe carried no requirement to join

the Historical Society. Nevertheless, the periodical became the society's official bulletin, and soon after had the endorsement of the School of American Archaeology (soon Research) and the "New Mexico Museum."<sup>9</sup> Even with the simultaneous freedom to seek subscriptions from anyone and to emphasize the official status of his journal, Twitchell shut down publication in three years because of wartime limits on paper and an increasing deficit.<sup>10</sup>

A decade after *Old Santa Fe* folded, Bloom and Walter announced the society's new publishing venture in letters sent to prospective subscribers in December, 1926. The editors lamented the passing of Twitchell's journal, but they also acknowledged the accumulation of manuscripts once destined for *Old Santa Fe*. In this regard at least, the ten year hiatus in historical publication would help launch the *Review*. Bloom and Walter rather optimistically predicted the reception of a thousand subscriptions which would "cover expenses." Actual initial subscriptions did not come close to that number. Like Twitchell and others who published regional scholarship, the *Review's* editors found from the outset that breaking even presented a challenge and that profits remained elusive.<sup>11</sup>

The society and the editors could take heart, however, from the response of the academic community to the announcement of the *Review's* imminence. Historians and social scientists around the region wrote to express their delight, including Herbert Eugene Bolton, George Hammond, Charles Fletcher Lummis, and Etienne Renaud.<sup>12</sup> Hammond, moreover, contributed a thorough study of "Don Juan de Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico," which ran serially through the first six numbers of the *Review*.<sup>13</sup> To help fill those initial issues and to show the support of the individuals most closely connected with the society, Bloom drew on his own wartime research and that of Walter, Hewett, and others around the state for a five-part series on "New Mexico and the Great War."<sup>14</sup>

The successful, if not profitable, launching of the *Review* came as well from the efforts of Bloom's co-editor, Paul A. F. Walter. The son of a German immigrant family originally settled in Penn-

sylvania, Walter practiced law and became the editor of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* after his arrival in the Southwest in the first years of the twentieth century. His partisan political activity brought him the postmastership of Santa Fe in 1902, which position he surrendered when he became a reporter for the territorial supreme court in 1908. He left the territory briefly to join the editorial board of the *Los Angeles Times*, but returned in 1914 at the behest of Edgar Lee Hewett, who made Walter Executive Secretary and director of publications for the School of American Research. In this position he established *El Palacio* as the official journal of the school, and he edited the quarterly until his resignation in 1944.<sup>15</sup> Walter's involvement in the Historical Society of New Mexico dated from 1917, and his active participation from that time made him a natural candidate for the presidency when the society was revived in 1925 and 1926. He and Bloom proved to be the main moving forces behind the continuation of Twitchell's efforts to reconstruct the constitution, and Walter served as the organization's chief executive from that time until 1959 when he gave over the position to Albuquerque businessman Calvin Horn.<sup>16</sup>

Walter continued to serve as co-editor of the *Review* until 1963, although for the last twenty of those thirty-seven years his function was more nominal than actual. After 1933, he held successively higher posts within the First National Bank of Santa Fe, culminating with its presidency, and those positions absorbed an increasing amount of his time until his retirement in 1949. As a result, the greatest burden of daily activities and production of the periodical fell on Bloom and his successor, Frank D. Reeve. Walter continued, however, to provide a firm and constructive liaison between the *Review* and the Historical Society and guided the journal capably during the brief intervals when Bloom or Reeve extended himself to other research chores.<sup>17</sup>

In 1928, Bloom took one of his infrequent research trips, this one to Spain at the behest of the School of American Research, and left Walter in charge of the *Review*. During his stay in Seville at the *Archivo de las Indias*, Bloom received an offer of an associate

professorship of history in the University of New Mexico. The move from Santa Fe also included a slight hike in salary, so Bloom accepted. He also maintained his nominal alliance with the School of American Research and he took his half of the *Review's* editorship south with him. The University offered Bloom the job on two accounts. First, the death of Charles Coan had cut the department of history and government to two members, and Bloom had a reputation in the field. And second, in Bloom's own estimation, "the *Review* had been started by our Historical Society in 1926, and the University wanted 'in' on it."<sup>18</sup> Bloom's move effectively bifurcated the responsibility for the journal, and developed the relationship between the *Review* and the university which later proved vital to the journal's survival. Bloom assumed much of the weight of editorial work in Albuquerque as Walter became more and more tied to his other responsibilities in Santa Fe. When Bloom died in early 1946, the university's role in producing the *Review* strengthened with the appointment of Frank Driver Reeve to fill the vacant chair.<sup>19</sup>

Frank Reeve graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1925. Within three years after that date, he had earned his master's degree with a thesis on the history of the university, and had joined the faculty of the Department of History and Government in his alma mater. Professor France Scholes remembered in later years that he and Reeve "taught all of the courses offered that year [1928, after the sudden death of Charles Coan] in European and American history and government."<sup>20</sup> During his career at the university Reeve pursued a particular interest in the history of the Navajo people and a general interest in the entire scope of the history of his home state. His last research labors concerned Navajo foreign relations between 1795 and 1846, and appeared posthumously in the *Review* in 1971. His multivolume *History of New Mexico* (1961) still stands as the most scholarly treatment of that subject.<sup>21</sup>

Reeve carried the *Review* through several crises. The first came less than a year after his accession to the editorship in 1946. Post-war difficulties in obtaining vital production supplies drove the

costs of the *Review* skyward to such an extent that the society recognized the impossibility of meeting those expenses with subscription income and the small subsidy from its treasury. Paul Walter suggested a reduction in format to, perhaps, *Readers' Digest* size, but Reeve pointed out that such a reduction would actually increase costs. Instead, Reeve suggested, the society should approach university president J. P. Wernette about a small annual stipend from his institution until such time as expenses could be met by the society. Walter so ordered, Wernette agreed, the university became financially involved, and the bonds between institution and journal became more closely knotted.<sup>22</sup>

Then, in 1959, the Historical Society received official word that it could no longer expect any state appropriations. The society had received tax monies indirectly through the budget of the Museum of New Mexico, but such an arrangement was, in the opinion of the state, illegal since the society had been privately incorporated. Reeve attended the society's executive board meeting in which the disheartening news had been discussed. Tom Popejoy later received a memo from Reeve stating that he, as editor of the *Review*, had suggested that the journal be turned over completely to the university. His suggestion, Reeve wrote, "appeared to fall on deaf ears."<sup>23</sup> Within three years, however, Reeve's advice had become an imperative as the state government refused all attempts to provide any part of the society's budget. The university assumed sole ownership of the *Review* in 1963. Reeve continued as editor until the October 1964 issue, when Eleanor B. Adams assumed those duties. Paul Walter had retired upon the transfer of ownership. Reeve continued after his retirement to contribute to the *Review* until his death on the last day of 1967.<sup>24</sup>

The *New Mexico Historical Review* collection in Zimmerman Library presently covers the years from the journal's inception to Frank Reeve's retirement. The correspondence and related archival material deal with a much broader range of activities than just those of the quarterly, however. Each of the editors kept related material in the *Review's* files: detailed records exist, for example, concerning Lansing Bloom's trips to Europe and Mexico for re-

search materials appropriate to Southwest history. The *Review's* back files also deal, quite appropriately, with affairs of the Historical Society of New Mexico, especially for those years during which Bloom served as editor and as the society's corresponding secretary. His position within the society meant that most questions and queries from scholars and school children ended up in the *Review's* files. President Walter also consulted freely with each of his co-editors, and many other active members of the society wrote as well. The society and the *Review* remained allied in spirit, at least, throughout the editorships of Bloom, Reeve and Adams. A more recent reappraisal of the society's legal position, the scaling down of the group's activities in the wake of the rulings in the years following 1959, and closer bonds between the *Review* and the university have lessened the direct connections between the society and the journal which it founded.

Both Bloom and Reeve kept in close touch with the most perceptive minds active in Southwestern studies throughout the region. Contributors from the university included France Scholes, William Dabney, Edwin Lieuwen, and the dean of the university's school of business, William Parish. In addition to Walter and Hewett, the editors drew upon the work of New Mexicans from all across the state. Besides George Hammond, distinguished Southwestern and Western scholars such as Agapito Rey, Oscar Osburn Winther, Max Moorhead, Howard Lamar, and Odie B. Faulk lent segments of their broad understanding of the region to the *Review*.

The archives reflect the contributions of these scholars as well as interest shown in the quarterly by great numbers of people who never wrote specifically for the *Review* or whose manuscripts were not used. Correspondence from J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb falls into the former of these categories. Writers of a more literary bent also evinced an interest in the journal and occasionally in the earlier days, talents such as Erna Fergusson and, albeit posthumously, Eugene Manlove Rhodes contributed articles, reviews, and even poetry.

Professional growth of the *Review* reflected the expansion of

interest in and scholarly treatment of historical subjects in the Southwest. In the journal's first years, Bloom resorted to solicitation for books to review, to articles originally intended for *Old Santa Fe*, and to articles written in some haste by associates of the publication. The obligations of the quarterly to the Historical Society, and the editors' inclinations, led to the publication of minutes, reports, and an overly lengthy necrology section often of direct interest only to the organization's membership. As the reputation of the *Review* grew, however, the amount of solid historical information in each issue increased, most articles came to the *Review* unsolicited, and publishers of Southwestern subjects looked to the *Review* for definitive opinions on their efforts. This growth resulted primarily from the honest attempt made by each of the *Review's* editors to insure that all material published by the journal genuinely added to the literature of the field.

The *New Mexico Historical Review* now starts its second half-century, and the second year of the editorship of Manuel Servín. The *Review*, both from the printed product and from archives made available, provides an invaluable source for study of the movement of historical interest westward, for glimpses into the minds of the men who established the vital and intensive scholarship which now characterizes borderlands and Southwestern historiography, and for cross-sectional views of the intellectual life of New Mexico from the decade after the Great War to the present.

#### NOTES

1. Lansing B. Bloom, "Notes and Comments," *New Mexico Historical Review* (NMHR) 1 (January 1926): 97.
2. Paul A. F. Walter, "Lansing Bartlett Bloom," NMHR 21 (April 1946): 93-94.
3. Walter, "Lansing Bartlett Bloom," p. 94.

4. Lansing Bloom to Ward Curtis (letter), 28 June 1939, NMHR Collection, Special Collections Division, University of New Mexico Library, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
5. Edgar Lee Hewett, "Lansing Bartlett Bloom," NMHR 21(April 1946): 98-99.
6. Executive Council Minutes, November 21, 1925, Historical Society of New Mexico (HSNM) Records, New Mexico State Records Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Microfilm housed in Special Collections Division, University of New Mexico Library, Albuquerque, New Mexico.
7. Meeting Minutes, March 7, 1913, HSNM Records.
8. Meeting Minutes, March 7, 1913, HSNM Records.
9. Ralph E. Twitchell, "Editorial," *Old Santa Fe* 1(July 1913): 93-95.
10. Lansing Bloom and Paul Walter [to prospective subscribers] (form letter), December 1925, NMHR Collection.
11. Bloom and Walter [to subscribers] December 1925, NMHR Collection.
12. Bloom, "Notes and Comments," p. 96-97.
13. George P. Hammond, "Don Juan de Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico," Part I, NMHR 1(January 1926): 103-34; Part II, NMHR 1(April 1926): 156-92; Part III, NMHR 1(July 1926): 292-323; Part IV, NMHR 1(October 1926): 445-76; Part V, NMHR 2(January 1927): 37-66; Part VI, NMHR 2(April 1927): 134-74.
14. Lansing Bloom, *et al.*, "New Mexico in the Great War," Part I, NMHR 1(January 1926): 3-22; Part II, NMHR 1(April 1926): 103-34; Part III, NMHR 1(July 1926): 231-64; Part IV, NMHR 1(October 1926): 400-33; Part V, NMHR 2(January 1927): 3-26.
15. Walter, Paul Alfred Francis (biographical information), NMHR collection.
16. "Minutes of a Meeting of the Historical Society of New Mexico, Held July 7, 1959, in St. Francis Auditorium, Santa Fe, New Mexico," HSNM Records.
17. Frank D. Reeve, "Paul A. F. Walter," NMHR 41(April 1966): 165-66.
18. Bloom to Curtis, NMHR collection.
19. Reeve to Wernette (memo), March 7, 1946; Wernette to Reeve (memo), March 9, 1946, NMHR collection.
20. France V. Scholes, "Frank Driver Reeve: Scholar, Colleague, Friend," NMHR 43(April 1968): 93.

21. Frank Driver Reeve, *History of New Mexico*, 3 vols. (New York, 1961); Frank D. Reeve, "Navaho Foreign Affairs, 1795-1846," Part I, 1795-1815, NMHR 46(April 1971): 101-32; Part II, 1816-1824, NMHR 46(July 1971): 223-52. Reeve never completed Part III.
22. Reeve to Walter (letter), September 30, 1947, NMHR collection.
23. Reeve to Popejoy (memo), May 16, 1960, NMHR collection.
24. France V. Scholes, "Frank Driver Reeve," p. 94.