



Fieldwork: *More than just a good story*

NMMS Institute - Deming, NM

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Presented by

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Creative Economy and Cultural Planner



What is interpretive placemaking?

Interpretive placemaking integrates interpretive experiences into both interior and exterior spaces, shaping them into dynamic narrative landscapes.

- integrating elements of heritage, culture, art, technology, and identity into a unified narrative and,
- storytelling approach enriches the environment, transforming it from a simple location into a vibrant and meaningful experience.



Interpretive signage on the Furneaux Geotrail at Flinders Island by Nature Tourism Services



Urban Light, Chris Burden LACMA

Interior spaces, such as window display areas, can become vibrant storytelling environments through thoughtfully designed elements like art installations, interactive displays, and multimedia experiences.

Exterior spaces can be similarly enhanced with elements like public art, historical markers, and interactive installations. Parks and plazas can be vibrant and engaging environments through the integration of sculptures, murals, and landscape elements that reflect local traditions and values.



**Every story starts with...
...a good story**



Digging deeper in Deming – literally

The Tunnels



Inspiration

Local Lore:

Tunnel Lore (story lines-inspired by Deming Writers Group book: Down Under Deming (2012):

1. Army built Tunnels
2. 19th century secret access to Brothels
3. Local Chinese use tunnels to avoid townsfolk
4. Smuggling and bootlegging
5. Opium Dens

Fodder:

Deming Writers Group book: Down Under Deming (2012)

SWNM History Deming Nearby Towns

Facebook groups

Sanborn Insurance Maps

Photographs

Newspaper Articles

Historic Buildings

Buildings with known and speculated tunnels

Unsolved mysteries, ghost stories and lively historical characters

Goals:

- *Foster identity, heritage preservation and support unique places,*
- *Draw more people downtown through an interactive visitor experience by stringing relevant experiences together,*
- *Making the invisible visible – invite people to engage in the mystery of the Tunnel Lore and its potential connection to City history,*
- *Cause people to ask questions, what to learn more, explore and interact with downtown businesses.*



Research: The Tunnels



Where to find information on older buildings

- **Old City Directories** (UNM Center for SW research, local library, local museum)
- **Deeds, Abstracts of Title** (County clerk and state records center)
- **Building permits/Architect** (local government)
- **Aerial Photographs** (UNM MAG^{CC})
- **Newspapers** (local library, local museum, UNM Center for SW research, online)
- **Post cards and photographs** (local library, local museum, UNM Center for SW research, museums, ebay, online)
- **Sanborn Insurance Maps** (local library, NMSU, Library of Congress, UNM MAG^{CC})
- **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)** - State Register of Cultural Properties and National Historic Register (State Historic Preservation Office, National Parks Service)
- **Booster Magazines** (UNM Center for SW Research)
- **Correspondence and personal records** (local libraries & museums, Center for SW Research)
- **City Historian, Local Historical Society**
- **Books and online** (local authors, researchers, studies)

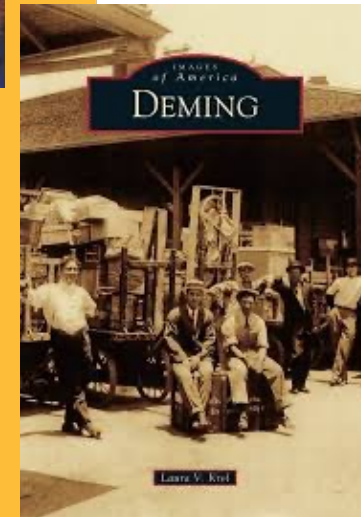
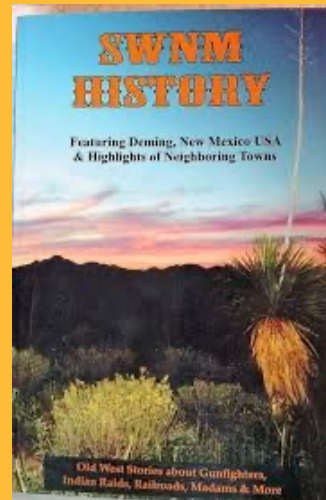
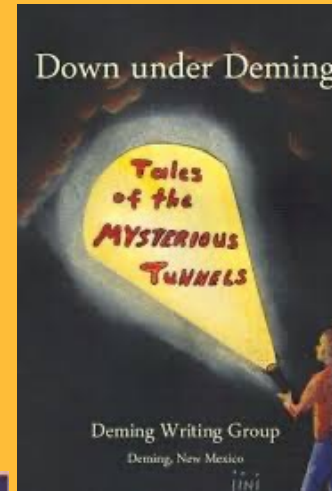
Useful Secondary Sources

- Facebook
- Websites (Cinema Treasures)
- Associations



What kind of information can local authors provide?

- Personal stories and historical context
- Locations, Dates, Names, Building Uses
- Myths and lore
- Photographs



Sanborn Insurance Maps



Was your district mapped?

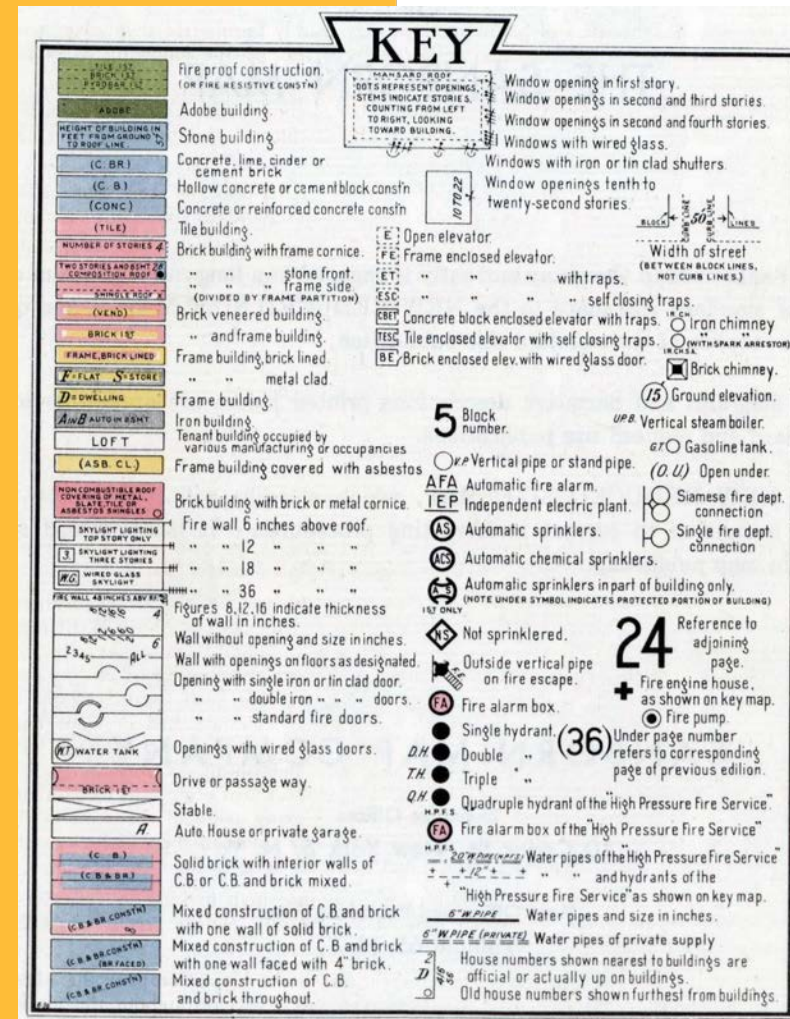
*Alamogordo
Albuquerque
Artesia
Aztec
Belen
Carlsbad
Carrizozo
Cerrillos
Cimarron
Clayton
Clovis
Columbus
Deming
Dexter
Elida
Espanola
Estancia
Farmington
Fort Sumner
Gallup
Hagerman
Hatch
Hillsboro
Hobbs
Hot-Springs (T or C)
Kenna
Lake Arthur
Lake Valley
Las Cruces
Las Vegas
Lordsburg
Magdalena
Maxwell
Melrose*

*Mora
Pinos Altos
Portales
Raton
Roswell
Roy
San Marcial
Santa Fe
Santa Rita
Santa Rosa
Silver City
Socorro
Springer
Taos
Tucumcari
Vaughn
Wagon Mound*



What kind of information can a Sanborn Map provide?

- Building location
- Number of stories
- Building use and sometimes name
- Construction materials
- Window and door locations
- Fire hydrants and waterlines
- Flammable materials
- Approximate age of buildings
- Historical platting



What kind of information can a newspaper provide?

- Name of building
- Building owner
- Place based stories
- Dates
- Builder and architect
- Building use
- Age of building
- Historical context



What kind of information can photos and postcards provide?

- Name of building
- Building owner
- Dates
- Builder and architect
- Building use
- Age of building



Background Research

Task: Using provided newspaper articles indicate on **ONE** map the name of the business

Time: 20 minutes, report out

Challenge: Find as many as you can!

1. Name of building + Date
2. A good story
3. Crazy fact

Tips & Tricks

- Look at advertisements*
- Look at the 1 cent/word section*
- Look for articles about fires and new construction*
- Look at special features*
- Highlight info so you don't lose it!*

Hint

- "Gold" and "Silver" are north of pine and south of pine is "S Gold" and S Silver"*



Fieldwork: The Tunnels

1. Meet at Copper Kettle (Corner of Spruce and Silver)
2. Sidewalk Decal Demonstration (2 locations)
3. Interpretive Placemaking

Interpretive Placemaking Themes:

- Chinese Laundry*
- Opium Alley*
- Window Painting*
- Invisible Visible*



Fieldwork: The Tunnels



2. Window Painting

Ever wonder what used to be in the old buildings downtown? Deming has a rich history of entrepreneurs, fires, vices and mystery. Help reveal the business history of the community during the early railroad years to the prohibition and provide potential clues to the Deming Tunnel mystery.

Date/Time: Thursday, September 26, 2024; 4:00-5:00pm

Meet At: Copper Kettle (**Note: if you want to help discover history from maps, meet at Mimbres Valley Learning Center at 2:50pm.**)

Project: Work with MainStreet participants to use temporary materials to indicate former building uses, apply old advertisements and other visuals from Deming's past on store windows.

Skills needed: Problem solving. Creative thinking. Being comfortable sharing your ideas and opinions and offering suggestions with strangers. Being respectful of others ideas. Speaking in groups.

Tasks:

1. 4:00 pm: Meet at Copper Kettle
2. Using maps created during MainStreet Fieldwork Session match building information on maps to buildings in the field. Using supplied stickers, temporary paint and stencils, mark names of former businesses on buildings.

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Fieldwork: The Tunnels



3. Opium Walkway

In the late 1880's, America experienced an opiate crisis. Many medical and home remedies at the time involved opium and morphine use. "Opium joints" could be found in most American towns. In 1909, the federal government began to regulate the opiate trade. Some locals have theorized that the tunnels may have been used by the Chinese for smuggling or lead to opium dens.

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Project: Work with MainStreet participants to create a temporary art installation in the walkway featuring opiate history in the 1880's and in modern times. Decorate and install temporary lanterns in trees, make wall collages and displays about opiate addition in history, provide opportunities to mourn those lost to addiction and provide information on how to fight addiction.

Skills needed: Following directions, working with others, patience, creative thinking, love of arts and crafts, attention to detail.

Tasks:

1. 4:00 pm: Meet at Copper Kettle
2. Assemble Chinese Lanterns and hang in trees
3. Create and install themed collages: opiate history (then and now), addiction experience, information on where to get help

Interpretive Placemaking Themes:

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Fieldwork: The Tunnels



4. Chinese Laundry

Over 200 Chinese laborers worked on the second transcontinental railroad. With its completion in Deming in 1881, many Chinese chose to stay in the fast growing town. Anti-Chinese sentiment and Federal laws began to limit occupational opportunities and restricted Chinese immigration. Chinese laundries became a business opportunity for many Chinese in the west, where few women and long distances to ship clothes for cleaning created a demand for laundry services.

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Meet At: Copper Kettle (**Note: if you want to help discover history from maps, meet at Mimbres Valley Learning Center at 2:50pm.**)

Project: Work with MainStreet participants to create a temporary art installation in the alley to make visible the presence of the Chinese in Deming's early history. Using stamps and fabric, help create a clothesline which memorializes the Chinese laundries in Deming's history.

Skills needed: Following directions, working with others, patience, love of arts and crafts, attention to detail.

Tasks:

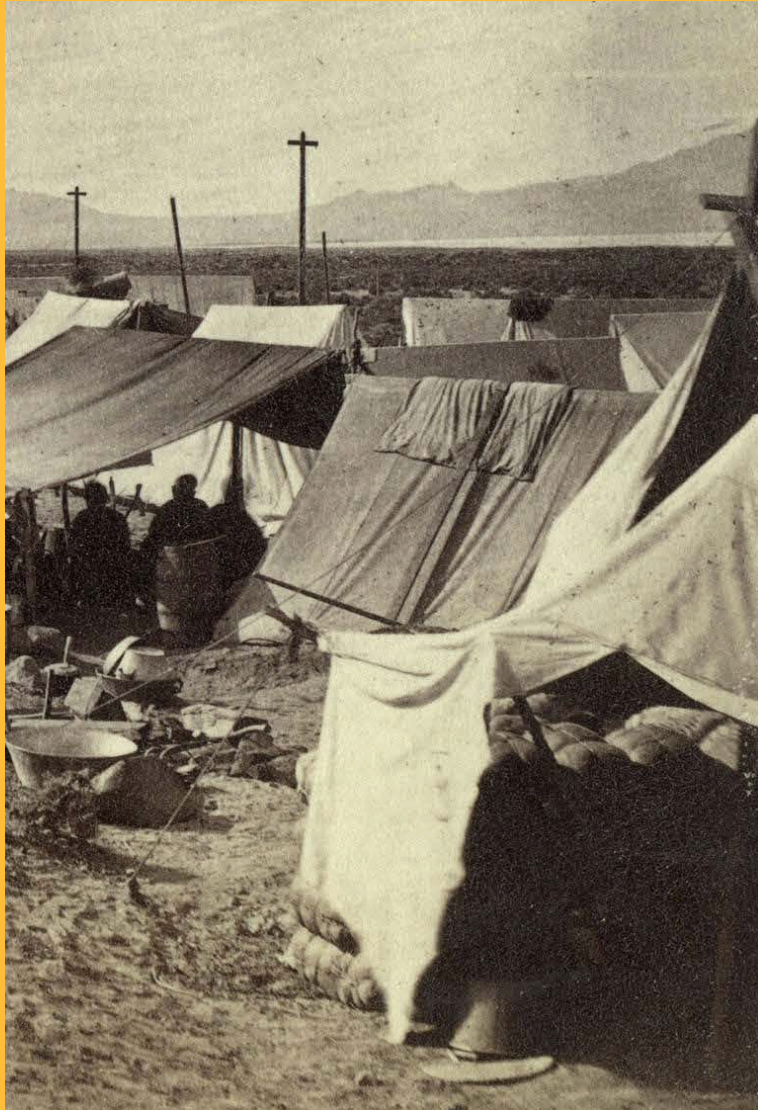
1. 4:00 pm: Meet at Copper Kettle
2. Stamp addresses on laundry bags
3. Hang string lights
4. Hang laundry bags by years open
5. Create information gallery

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Fieldwork: The Tunnels



5. Making the Invisible Visible

Chinese businesses could be found on every block in the early decades of Deming's history. Chinese businesses consisted of laundries, restaurants, grocery stores, dry goods stores, and others. This forgotten history may offer clues to Deming tunnel locations.

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Meet At: Copper Kettle (**Note: if you want to help discover history from maps, meet at Mimbres Valley Learning Center at 2:50pm.**)

Project: Work with MainStreet participants to identify buildings that were once Chinese businesses. Using old maps, locate these former businesses and apply a marker at the location.

Skills needed: Following directions, working with others, map reading, love of arts and crafts, attention to detail.

Tasks:

1. 4:00 pm: Meet at Copper Kettle
2. Using maps use provided materials to indicate the presence of a Chinese business in early Deming history.

Interpretive Placemaking Themes:

- Chinese Laundry
- Opium Alley
- Window Painting
- Invisible Visible



Thank You!

nmmainstreet.org



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