

ABELIAN GROUPS AT NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

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This is a description of some of the happenings in abelian group theory at New Mexico State University (NMSU). This account is quite personal and certainly has my own personal biases in it. Some of the players may feel slighted, for which I apologize. My excuses are simply bad memory and bad judgment.

This account is supposed to explain how New Mexico State University became a center of abelian group theory. At least it will describe some of the events and circumstances that I feel contributed to its development. There will be no attempt to detail who proved what particular theorem when, or to give a complete story of which areas were being emphasized at any particular time. Over the years there were many abelian group theorists at New Mexico State University doing many different things, and such a task would be overwhelming. Please keep these things in mind while reading this account.

The flourishing of abelian group theory at New Mexico State was a product of several things. We had a sympathetic administration, both at the department level and at higher levels. Research money was readily available in the late 1950's and 1960's. And the subject was ready for development: Kaplansky's book, *Infinite Abelian Groups* appeared in 1954, and Fuchs' book, *Abelian Groups* appeared in 1958 and were tremendous catalysts. These circumstances and some good luck enabled us to attract some truly talented people.

But how did this all get started, and how did New Mexico State continue to develop as a center of abelian groups? It could be said that it was due to Professor W.R. Scott at the University of Kansas. At least four of his students came to NMSU after finishing at Kansas: Ralph Crouch, Delmar Boyer, me and John Irwin, in that order. Boyer and I were recruited by Crouch, and I think John Irwin came because he wanted to go somewhere where there was another abelian group

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