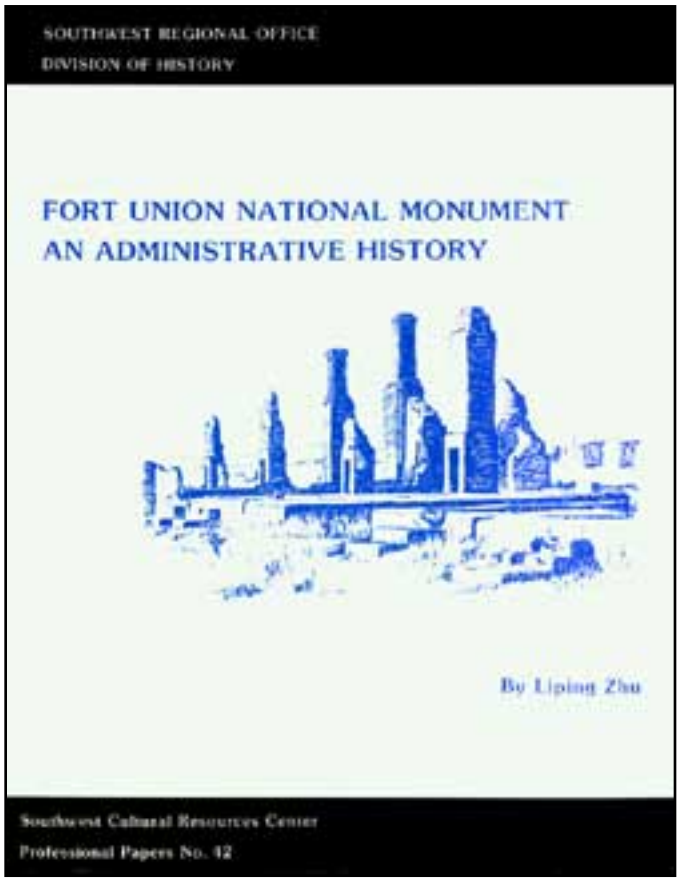
Fort Union

Administrative History



Fort Union National Monument

An Administrative History

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National Park Service
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To My Grandmother, Mother, and Father

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INTRODUCTION

Few places today inspire imagination about the American frontier experience as does Fort Union National Monument. Located in the Mora Valley in northeastern New Mexico, the 720-acre National Park Service domain contains an array of cultural and natural resources. Its principal features--the ruts of the Santa Fe Trail, the ruins of the Fort Union military post, and the dazzling prairie scenery--daily attract American travelers. The place has been serving society as a museum of the past, a classroom in the present, and a model for the future. Certainly it deserves the honor of a national treasure.

With the annexation of northern Mexico in 1848, the United States assumed the entire burden of protecting the Santa Fe Trail. The frequent Indian raids on travelers and settlers brought 1,300 soldiers to New Mexico. In 1851, Lt. Col. Edwin V. Sumner, the commander of the Department of New Mexico, decided to establish Fort Union at the junction of the two branches of the Santa Fe Trail in order to provide more effective protection for the region. With its troops constantly repelling Indian raiders, the fort soon won fame as the guardian of the Santa Fe Trail. When the Civil War broke out, the Confederacy attempted to seize the post as part of a plan to take New Mexico, carry the war into Colorado Territory, and threaten California. But the Confederates' dream died at the battle of Glorieta Pass, where Union soldiers from Fort Union were victorious over the invading Southern columns. In the quarter-century after the war, Fort Union contrived to help American settlers and played a key role in many of the Indian wars. At one time, it was the largest military post west of the Mississippi River. In 1891, a year after the traditional closing of the frontier, Fort Union was abandoned.

In the following 65 years, Fort Union suffered at the hands of a private owner, Union Land and Grazing Company. Because the company had little interest in using the buildings, the fort was left unattended. Consequently, foraging cattle, salvagers, and the merciless course of nature worked together and quickly turned the fort into ruins. In 1929, the Free Masons in Las Vegas became the first group to attempt to save the ruins of Fort Union, the birthplace of their lodge. The Masons took their cause to Congress and convinced Rep. Albert Simms of New Mexico to introduce a bill asking the federal government to preserve the historic site. The bill never reached the floor to face a vote. In the next 25 years, New Mexicans tried unsuccessfully several times to get congressional protection of the old fort. The land owner's stiff opposition easily defeated their efforts. Beginning in the early 1950s, the campaign for the

preservation of the fort gained momentum. With public support, Rep. John Dempsey of New Mexico again submitted a bill to establish Fort Union National Monument to the 82nd Congress. H.R. 1005 passed both houses, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it into law on June 28, 1954. Public Law 430 established Fort Union National Monument.

After Union Land and Grazing Company donated the land, the National Park Service officially took control of Fort Union. On June 8, 1956, the monument opened to the public. Meanwhile, the Park Service began to implement a comprehensive program that included the excavation, preservation, and interpretation of the fort's ruins. Within three years, Fort Union developed into a fully operational monument and held its dedication ceremony on June 14, 1959. With the exception of the period from 1980 to 1987, when its administration was combined with that of Capulin Mountain National Monument, Fort Union has been managed independently.

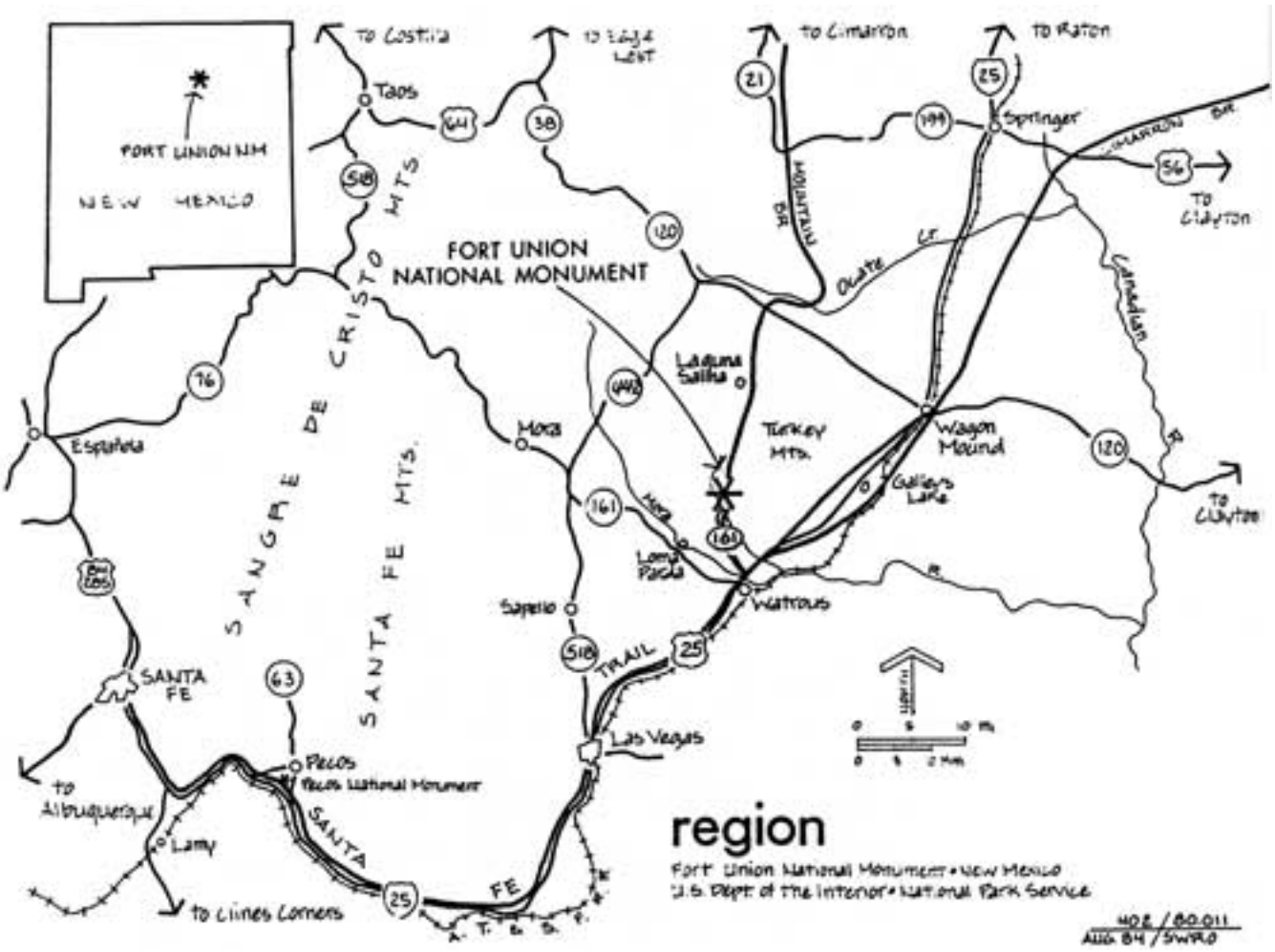

Figure 1. Region: Fort Union National Monument
(click on map for a larger image)

Through the park's history, the preservation of the ruins has posed the greatest challenge to management. Although the aged adobe walls have kept shrinking, the park staff has never yielded in its determination to preserve the ruins and has improved preservation methods. Also, the park administration has made great efforts to interpret the historic site. After nearly two decades of applying traditional interpretive methods such as museum exhibits and written explanations, park officials initiated a living history

program, which set the tone for future interpretive activities. During the first 36 years, the management of the park's cultural and natural resources was remarkable.

Fort Union's rich past attracts many scholars and researchers, but an overwhelming number of them show interest only in the fort's first four decades, from 1851 to 1891, when it served as a frontier post. Without denying the significant role that the fort played in winning the American West, there are also numerous fascinating stories about the place after its glorious frontier days, particularly in the last 36 years. This period deserves a comprehensive study that is long overdue. As a Western American history fellow at the University of New Mexico, I happily accepted the Park Service's assignment to bring the history of Fort Union up to the present time. The existence of enough books and articles about the Fort Union Military Post advises me not to spend too much ink on the fort's first 100 years. My work deals primarily with the period from 1956 to 1991, in other words, the administrative history of Fort Union National Monument.

This work has benefited from the assistance of many people. I would like to thank Superintendent Harry Myers and his staff, including T. J. Sperry, Frank Torres, Debbie Archuleta, Albert Dominguez, Teddy Garcia, Bob Martinez, Manuel de Herrera, and others, for their patience and cooperation throughout the course of this project. They not only answered my numerous questions and directed me to proper documents but also provided me with a pleasant research environment and constant friendship. In particular, Myers and Sperry read every chapter of the first draft; their critical but constructive comments helped the project move in the right direction. Indeed, I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with them at Fort Union.

Undoubtedly, my endeavor could not have succeeded without the support of the National Park Service Southwest Regional Office. Its special funds made this project possible. During my research trips, Regional Librarian Amalin Ferguson and librarian Cordelia Friedman showed their willingness to help me to find needed documents. Here, I express my deep appreciation. However, the person who has influenced me most is Regional Historian Neil Mangum. Overseeing the project from the very beginning, he has offered insightful criticism and thoughtful opinions. His frequent visits to the University of New Mexico campus gave me more opportunities to improve my study.

Finally, I would like to thank many of my colleagues in the Department of History. Their moral support kept me working at a steady pace. Although Professor Paul Hutton was not directly involved in the project, his teaching and scholarship plus his communication skills were extremely helpful in the completion of the work. Three of these sincere friends and colleagues deserve special mention here. They are Jolane Culhane, Aaron P. Mahr, and Christopher Huggard, who have carefully corrected many writing mistakes in the manuscript. Jolane Culhane provided a major hand in the final editing of the paper. All of them have contributed to the study's success but I am fully responsible for any errors that remain.

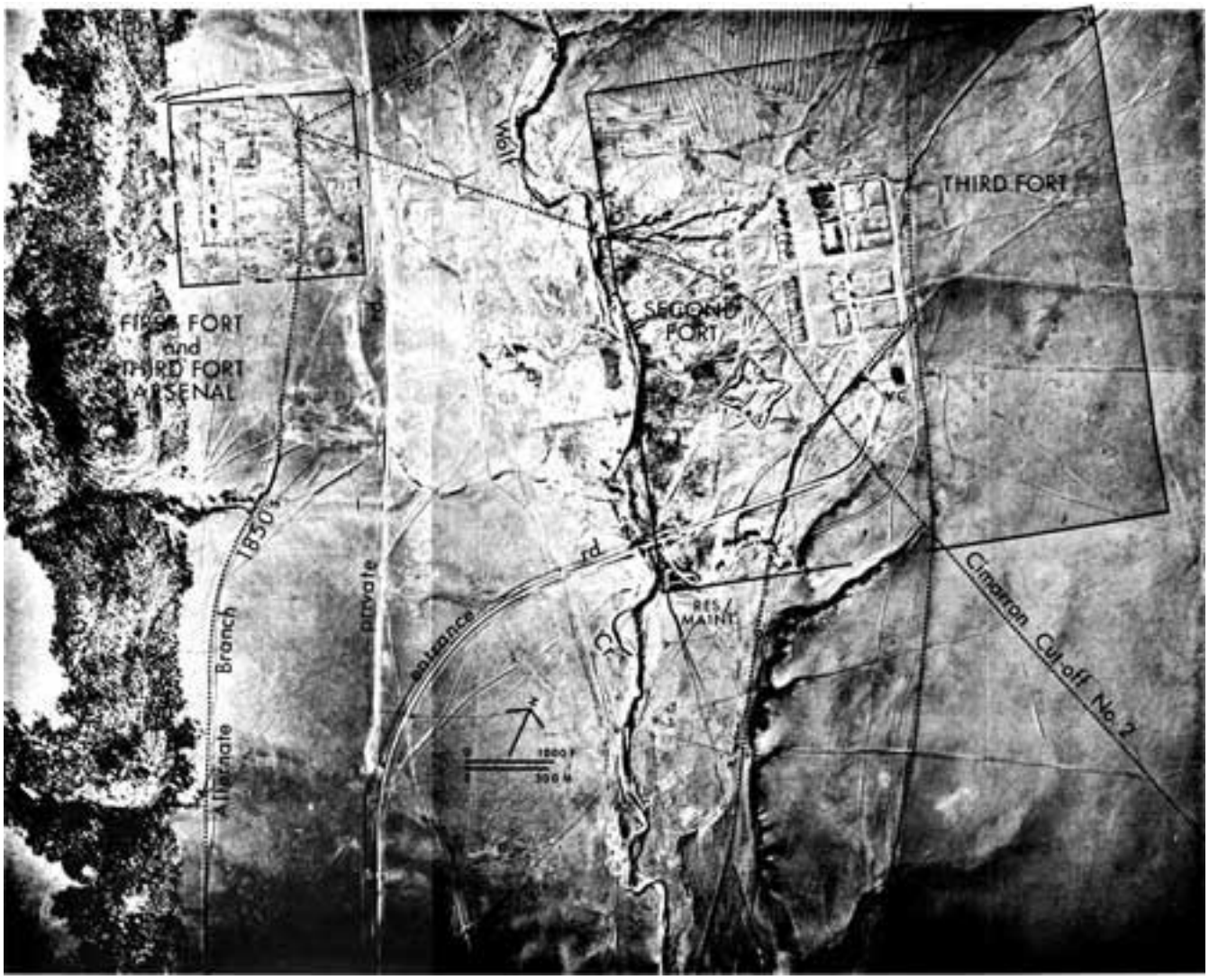

Figure 2. Site Map: Fort Union National Monument
(click on map for a larger image)

This year is the hundredth anniversary of the close of the American frontier and Fort Union as a military post. It is a perfect time to commemorate those who won the West. Although my work has little to do with honoring the frontiersmen, it shows an appreciation of those who have preserved the historic site. They are keeping our frontier heritage alive.

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CHAPTER 1: A FRONTIER POST

Figure 3. Fort Union was once the largest military post west of the Mississippi River. Officers' Quarters in 1875.
Courtesy of the National Archives.

The ruins of Fort Union, New Mexico, stand as a monument to the American frontier experience. The Southwest became a meeting place for various migrants throughout our nation's history as people from all directions moved into the area and built their homes. Constant military conflict and continuous cultural exchange among different ethnic groups has made the region legendary in American folklore. As a military post established to protect travel and settlement from 1851 to 1891, Fort Union witnessed many fascinating events in the course of western American history. A century later, the site of the old

fort remains as a vestige of the great American epic.

Fort Union National Monument is located in the Mora Valley in northeastern New Mexico at the westernmost edge of the Great Plains. On its way to join the Mora River, a southward flow of Wolf Creek softly touches the western boundary of the park. In the distance, the Turkey Mountains vigilantly guard its eastern border. Surrounded by a sea of grama grass, the park presents an authentic plains atmosphere even though it is only eight miles from the nearest town, Watrous, twenty-eight miles from Las Vegas, and ninety miles from Santa Fe. Despite its relative isolation, Fort Union is easily accessible from New Mexico Highway 161, which also links the fort to Interstate Highway 25 at Watrous.

At 6,700 feet, Fort Union has an environment conducive to abundant plant and animal life. The Mora Valley climate is mild without great extremes of heat or cold; the average annual temperature at the monument is 49.2 Fahrenheit. July has the highest monthly temperature at 69.7 Fahrenheit, and December the lowest at 33.1 Fahrenheit. Precipitation measures 18.01 inches per year. More than 80% of the annual precipitation comes between May and November. [1] Although it is in a semi-arid zone, the Mora Valley receives enough rainfall to support stands of ponderosa, which thrive on the mountain slopes. Juniper, piñon pine, and blue grama grass grow at lower elevations in the foothills. [2] In addition to the vegetation, more than 50 species of animals such as prairie dogs, rattlesnakes, Canada geese, and burrowing owls have also made their homes in the area. Occasionally, a few bald eagles visit the valley. [3] Lush pasturage, abundant timber, and numerous ponds make the Mora Valley a desirable spot for settlement.

Like most parts of northern New Mexico, the Mora Valley served as a refuge for at least five Indian tribes long before the arrival of Europeans. Navajos, Apaches, Utes, Kiowas, and Comanches either lived, passed through, or fought in the valley, but few written documents and little archeological evidence exists to retell the lives of these nomadic tribes.

By the mid-sixteenth century, life in this region began to change dramatically after European contact. With dreams of finding the seven cities of Golden Quivira, the Spanish Crown was first to encourage exploration of this vast new area. Francisco Vasquez de Coronado nearly reached the Mora Valley during his famous expedition of 1540-1542. After failing to discover gold, the Spaniards began to consider settling New Mexico. In 1598 the Spaniards built their first houses at San Juan near present day Española. Gradually, a chain of settlements emerged along the Rio Grande. Throughout the next 200 years, in fact, Santa Fe attracted many new immigrants, but on the east side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where the Mora Valley lay, there was little settlement until the late 1810s.

Leaving the northern frontier of New Spain unprotected, the Spanish unknowingly allowed Anglo-Americans to encroach into the area from the north. As early as 1802, a Pennsylvanian beaver trapper, James Purcell, adventured into New Mexico from Missouri via Colorado. In 1805, after running out of supplies and pelts, Purcell searched in New Mexico for other means of profit. He decided to mine gold, which he traded to local citizens for goods. Spanish officials in Santa Fe learned of Purcell's activities and ordered him to report for questioning as to his real intention. When he refused to comply with the

order, they incarcerated him. He was detained until 1824. [4] Purcell became "the first American who had ever penetrated the immense wilds of Louisiana." Capt. Zebulon Pike of the 6th U.S. Infantry followed in Purcell's footsteps. Under the instruction of the United States a small military team moved west to reconnoiter a potential territory for expansion. Initiating his exploration in the Rocky Mountains in 1806, Pike and his soldiers reached the headwaters of the Rio Grande in Colorado's San Luis Valley by early 1807. Spanish dragoons, however, discovered the Americans and ordered them to Santa Fe, due to their violation of international boundaries. The Spanish finally released him in June 1807, and by 1810 his adventures were published as the Pike Journals. [5]

Early American adventurers like Purcell and Pike threatened the northern frontier of New Spain and created a struggle for dominance in the region. Pike, in particular, with his memoir, mobilized support among the American public. His writings informed Americans of the possibilities for investment. Yankee merchants immediately realized New Mexico's market potential for American goods, after reading that local people had to haul most of their commodities 2,000 miles from Veracruz, Mexico. In the same year that Pike told of his adventures, a revolution broke out in New Spain, which culminated with Mexico's independence in 1821.

Infant Mexico lost no time in welcoming American traders to Santa Fe and abandoning the old Spanish system, which had prohibited American traders in New Spain. Meanwhile American merchants did not hesitate to accept the "invitation" and to inaugurate the Santa Fe trade. With several other enterprising Missourians, William Becknell was one of the first American merchants to send mule pack-trains westward. He crossed 800 miles of prairie and arrived in Santa Fe in the fall of 1821. Governor Facundo Melgares warmly received Becknell and the other Missourians, expressing "a desire that the Americans would keep up an intercourse with that country." [6] The Mexicans were so interested in American trade that it led historian David Weber to write that "Americans were as eager to sell as Mexicans were to buy." [7]

This Santa Fe trade, as well as the Santa Fe Trail, would significantly shape the history of the Southwest. On his second trip to Santa Fe in the spring of 1822, Becknell blazed a short cut by way of the Cimarron River, thereby avoiding the mountainous Raton Pass. The Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail intersected the Mountain Branch in the Mora Valley. [8] In 1825 a military surveying party under George C. Sibley marked out a suitable route from Kansas to New Mexico. By 1830 the Santa Fe Trail, an international highway between Mexico and the U.S., had been established, producing an even greater volume of trade.

Situated at the junction of the two routes of the Santa Fe Trail, the Mora Valley, with both strategic and economic importance, quickly became a focal point of concern for Mexican authorities. The best way to defend an area was to populate it. As early as 1816, a few families of New Spain moved into the western Mora Valley on the eastern slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Since the dying Spanish regime was unable to protect all the settlers against attack by the Plains Indians, nobody dared to go farther east. Most of the rich valley remained unsettled. [9] However, the young Mexican government showed its anxieties to defend this area. In 1835 Albino Perez, governor of New Mexico, granted 827,621 acres of

land including most of the valley to Jose Tapia and 75 others to initiate Mexican policies. [10] More settlers moved into the valley. The future site of Fort Union was at the center of the Mora Grant. In the next ten years, however, the valley sheltered more travelers than settlers since the Santa Fe trade was increasing at a magnificent rate. In dollars, the volume rose from $15,000 in 1822 to $450,000 in 1843. [11] By the eve of the Mexican War, Americans had become commonplace in the Mora Valley.

Soon the number of Americans was overwhelming. When war broke out in 1846 between the United States and Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail was transformed into a military road. Following the old wagon ruts that formed the trail, Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny led his conquering army swiftly into New Mexico and raised the United States flag without any resistance. On this journey, General Kearny and his troops camped one night near where Fort Union would later stand. [12] Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo the United States annexed New Mexico and California in 1848, turning the Santa Fe Trail from an "international highway into a national highway," linking the new territory with the rest of the country. [13]

Alexander Barclay, an American frontiersman born in Britain, was one of the first persons to realize the strategic location of the Mora Valley. An increasing number of Kearny's baggage trains and the government's freight wagons passing through the region meant more services were needed along the road. Barclay, therefore, selected the junction of the Mora and Sapello rivers, about six miles south of where Fort Union was later built, for his trading post. On June 11, 1848, he "laid the first doby of fort and fired cannon...." [14] Although he maintained contact with the military leaders and local communities, Barclay struggled to make his venture a self-sufficient and financially rewarding enterprise. If Indian raiders left his cattle and horses alone and his post profited some what, Barclay hoped that in the future he could sell the fort to the United States government. [15] Like Bent's Fort, a center for Indian trade in Colorado, where he had served as superintendent, Barclay's trading station played an essential role in shaping the Santa Fe Trail.

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CHAPTER 2: FROM RUINS TO A NATIONAL MONUMENT

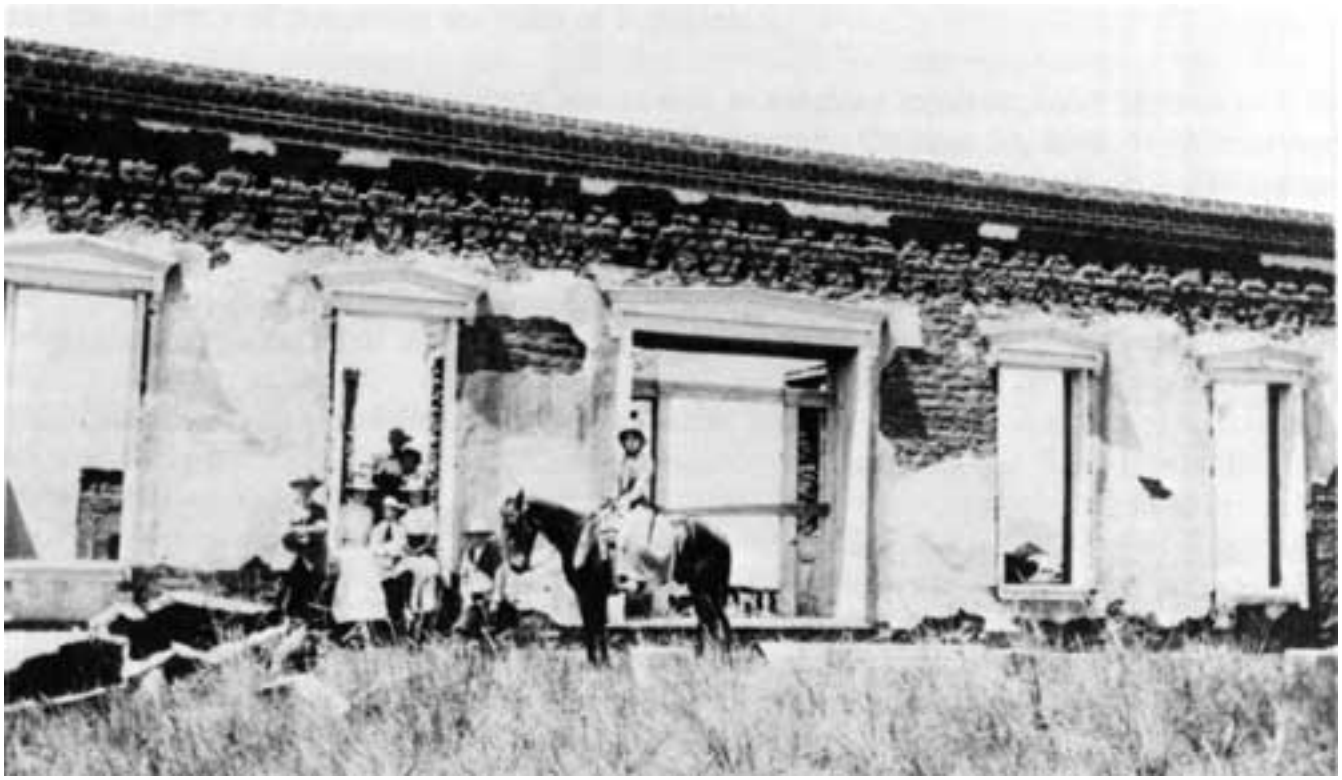

Figure 6. After the abandonment of Fort Union in 1891, the place was open to tourists and looters. Their activities accelerated the deterioration of the buildings. By 1912 Officers' Quarters had already become ruins. *Courtesy of Katherine Hand.*

On February 21, 1891, singing "There's a Land that is Fairer than This," the Tenth Infantry marched out from Fort Union for good. One non-commissioned person stayed as a caretaker. [1] Three years later, the War Department relinquished claim to the land on which Fort Union stood. Finally both the land and title reverted to the original owners of the Mora Land Grant.

By then the extensive ranchlands surrounding Fort Union had passed into the hands of the descendants

of Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler of Civil War fame. He purchased the lands from the claimants of the Mora Grant in the mid-1870s. When the military abandoned Fort Union, the Butler-Ames Cattle Company, (later the Union Land and Grazing Company, formed in 1885), inherited the title to the fort. Initially, the Butler-Ames Cattle Company tried to utilize the abandoned fort for economic and social purposes. On January 12, 1895, Paul Butler, Blanches Butler Ames, and Adelbert Ames, owners of the company, entered into a contract with Dr. William D. Gentry of Illinois to lease the buildings to be used as a sanitarium. According to the contract, the owners were responsible for repairing the buildings. For reasons unknown, the contract was never fulfilled. In the next 60 years, the company made no attempt to use the fort except to open it to cattle grazing. [2]

Although the Butler-Ames Cattle Company had little interest in reinhabiting the buildings, quite a few people did make an effort to live in the fort. After Fort Union's abandonment, several soldiers managed to stay there and ran cattle in the area. Nobody ever attempted to evict the squatters, who later moved away. [3] Since troops left almost everything there, Fort Union contained a large quantity of lumber and other construction materials, which interested local residents from the nearby communities of Loma Parda and Watrous. Whenever a family wanted to repair or even to build a house, the people went to the ruins of Fort Union to find what they needed. In Watrous, almost all the windows, doors, and vigas in the houses came from Fort Union. [4] They first took materials from the officers' and company quarters, then from the mechanics' corral, followed by the warehouses, and finally the hospital. Also, curiosity seekers often took items home. Rising above the open prairie, Fort Union invited scavengers and souvenir hunters.

Mother nature was as destructive as vandals. At the beginning unskilled soldiers had built the fort with adobe bricks and unseasoned, unhewn, and unbarked pine logs. Consequently, it decayed rapidly. The buildings of Fort Union required constant repair even during the period of occupation. A military wife, Genevieve LaTourrette, later recalled, "Toward the latter years at Fort Union, the quarters needed renovating badly....Roofs were leaking in the quarters to the extent that we went around with umbrellas." [5] The adobe walls, in particular, were vulnerable to all kinds of weather. After the fort's abandonment, the condition of the buildings deteriorated faster than ever. Along with vandalism, the sun, rain, snow, and wind turned the fort to ruins.

The first serious attempt to preserve the ruins of Fort Union as a historic site came in 1929 when the Freemasons in Las Vegas, New Mexico, called for the establishment of a national monument. Fort Union was the birthplace of two Masonic Lodges--Chapman Lodge No. 95 (later Chapman Lodge No. 2) and Union Lodge No. 480 (later Union Lodge No. 4). On March 28, 1862, some zealous Masons set up a new lodge under the dispensation of the Grand Lodge of Missouri. They named it Chapman Lodge in honor of Lt. Col. William Chapman, who was then in command of Fort Union. Many officers and enlisted men belonged to the lodge and attended the meetings regularly in the "House of the Good Templars." In 1867 the Army requested that the lodge be moved outside the government reservation, apparently for military reasons. The lodge was moved to Las Vegas. In 1874 another group of Masons asked for permission to establish a Masonic Lodge at Fort Union. This time they called it Union Lodge, which met in the fort until 1891. Then it moved to Watrous. [6]

With a purpose to enshrine the birthplace of the Chapman Lodge and the Union Lodge, Masons in Las Vegas became the first to ask for preservation of the ruins of Fort Union. On January 23, 1929, they appointed a four-person committee chaired by W. J. Lucas to "have Fort Union declared a national monument." [7] Taking the issue to Santa Fe, the committee successfully persuaded the state legislature to pass a joint resolution to petition Congress. In Joint Resolution No. 12 of 1929 the legislature of the State of New Mexico respectfully petitioned "the Congress of the United States to set aside this historic site and to preserve and maintain Fort Union as a National Monument." [8]

The campaign for the Fort Union National Monument soon gained support among the lawmakers of New Mexico. On April 20, 1930, Rep. Albert Gallatin Simms of New Mexico introduced a bill (H.R. 11146) in the 71st Congress, asking the Federal Government "to provide for the study, investigation, and survey, for commemorative purposes, of the Glorieta Pass, Pigeon Ranch, Apache Canyon battlefields, and of Old Fort Union in the State of New Mexico." [9] At this time, the nation was suffering the economic woes of the Great Depression. It was hard to imagine that Washington would pay much attention to the ruins of an old fort in New Mexico. Not surprisingly, the bill died in the House Committee on Military Affairs.

Even though the Great Depression temporarily halted work toward the preservation of Fort Union, New Mexico did not give up their struggle for a national monument. Articles on Fort Union frequently appeared in New Mexico's newspapers and magazines. In the mid-1930s the National Park Service also reintroduced hope for the preservation of the fort by showing interest in the ruins of Fort Union. Roger W. Toll of Rocky Mountain National Park drove down to the Mora Valley to inspect the "Proposed Fort Union National Monument" in December 1935. He took some notes and photographs and collected a few published articles. On March 24, 1936, the superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park forwarded Toll's report and gatherings to Washington. [10] Toll's efforts provided the National Park Service with a first-hand account of the condition of the ruins. These actions also gave renewed hope that the fort would be salvaged for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

After receiving Toll's initial account, the National Park Service decided to make an additional study of the fort. In 1937 Edward Steere of the Branch of Historic Sites and Buildings was assigned to write a frontier history of Fort Union. Within a year he finished a 108-page report entitled "Fort Union, Its Economic and Military History." [11] In this well-researched paper, he indicated that Fort Union played an important role in the development of the territory of New Mexico. The study not only provided the Park Service with the first comprehensive history of Fort Union, but also supplied the administrators with information on the urgency for preservation of the site.

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CHAPTER 3: REHABILITATING AND PRESERVING THE FORT

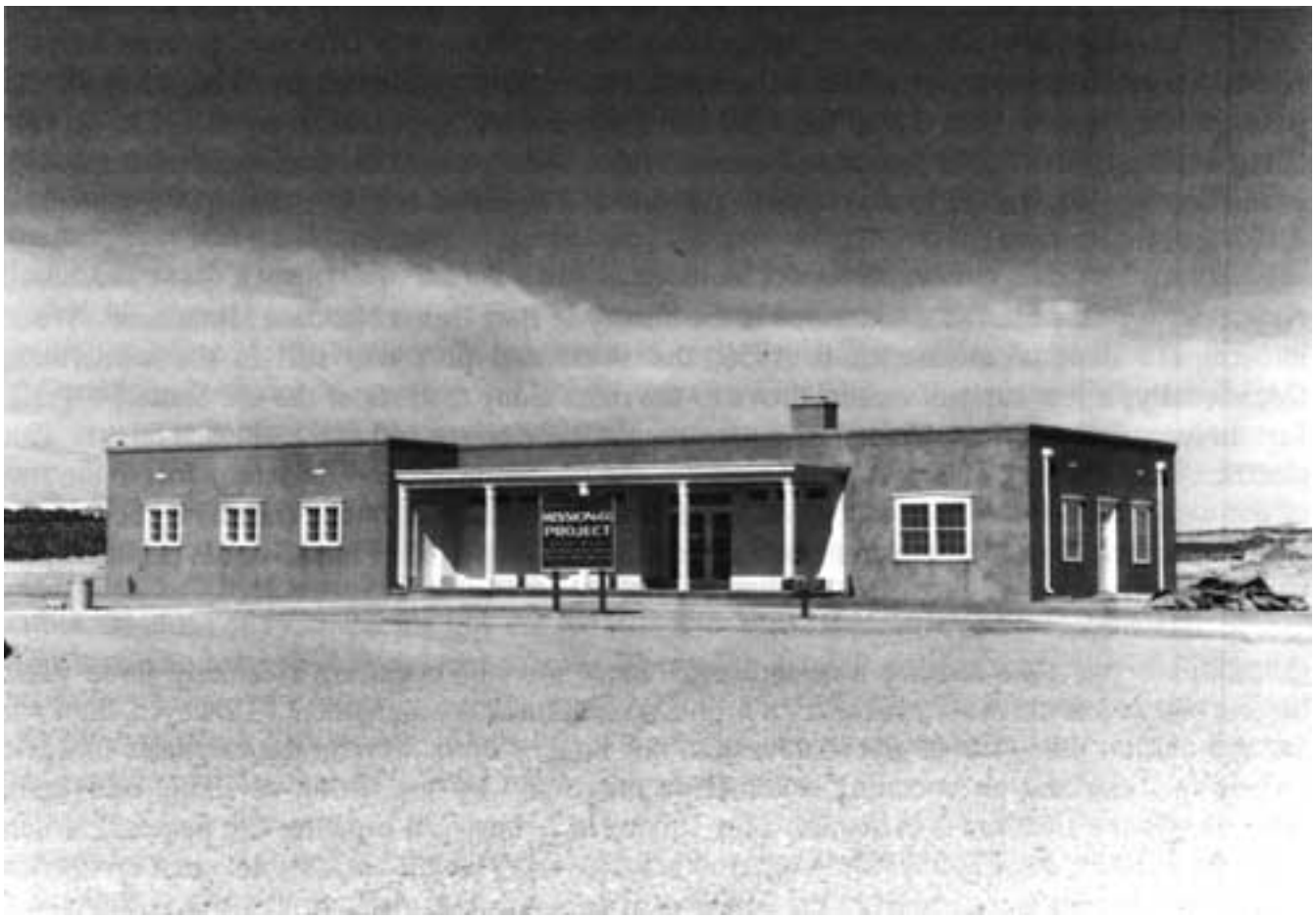

Figure 8. In April 1959, the permanent visitor center was to be completed. The sign in front of the building again indicated that the MISSION 66 program played a significant role in the development of Fort Union National Monument.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

The rehabilitation and preservation of the ruins of Fort Union have been extremely difficult tasks. Unlike the stirring campaign to secure the legal title to the land, the tedious daily routines to keep the ruins in optimum condition for the public have required more effort and resources. After acquiring Fort

Union in 1956, the National Park Service promptly developed it into an active national monument to greet interested visitors. Since then the Park Service Southwest Regional Office has devoted a considerable amount of money and manpower to the preservation of the remaining structures in order to keep deterioration to a minimum. As a faithful caretaker for 36 years, the National Park Service has done an admirable job in rehabilitating and preserving the historic site of Fort Union.

A few months before Fort Union joined the national park system, the Region Three Office (the present day Southwest Regional Office) had already started the development of the proposed national monument. On December 6, 1955, Kittridge A. Wing of Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico took up residence in Las Vegas as a Park Service representative. From there he personally supervised the construction of the entrance road, which was the first project at the monument. Twelve days later, he accepted appointment as acting superintendent of Fort Union National Monument and converted his rented residence into a temporary office. [1] At the end of 1955, Floyd Haake Construction Company of Albuquerque began to build a 7.6-mile road from U.S. Highway 85 to the fort. [2] Because of "perfect weather conditions," the construction progressed rapidly. By March 1956, the two-lane road across the prairie, with a concrete bridge over Wolf Creek and two cattle underpasses, was ready for surfacing. It took several more months to complete the paving. The Park Service accepted the road in early June.

While the new road was traversing on the prairie toward Fort Union, administrators at the regional office in Santa Fe labored at their plans for the physical development of the monument. A few of the major issues were the placement of buildings and utilities, the layout of trails, and the stabilization of the ruins. The Park Service first contrived to erect living quarters. On March 1, 1956, the fort received two house trailers from the Public Housing Administration of Piketon, Ohio. Before the Mora Electrical Cooperative extended service to the fort, Wing arranged to temporarily connect the trailers to utility lines at the nearby Needham Ranch owned by the Union Land and Grazing Company. [3] On May 5, he moved from Las Vegas and occupied one of the trailers at the fort. For the first time, the Park Service had a representative living close enough to monitor the fort daily. During that same month, Fort Union also obtained a 16'x20' wooden cabin from Los Alamos to serve as the temporary office and visitor center. [4]

In addition, Wing brought Clifford W. Mills, a seasonal ranger, from Los Alamos to assist him. The two immediately began work on a tentative visitor trail, which they finished within a month. Although Fort Union now had a visitor center, an interpretive trail, and living quarters, all of them were temporary. The physical development of the monument was just beginning.

Despite the few service facilities available at Fort Union, the Park Service was anxious to open the site to the public. On June 8, 1956, after two months of careful planning by Wing and Ross Thompson, the monument held a ribbon-cutting ceremony. In the morning, a sixty-piece band from New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas welcomed more than six hundred people. A rostrum and red ribbon straddled the new road about a mile southwest of the fort. Cutting the ribbon with a nineteenth-century cavalry saber donated by Harry and Sam Wells, Governor John F. Simms officially opened the monument. [5] Speakers congratulated those who had brought the plans for the establishment of the

monument to a successful conclusion. After that, most of the crowd jumped into their cars and formed a motorcade of 150 vehicles behind the governor's sedan, and drove to the monument. At the end of the program, Fort Union, Inc., treated everybody to a luncheon. [6] The opening ceremony, as Wing said, began "Fort Union's new life."

In reality, Fort Union's "new life" meant a full-scale effort toward rehabilitation and development. As soon as the honeymoon was over, the monument entered the first period of intensive construction, which focused on service facilities and ruins stabilization. Preventing the entry of cattle onto the site was one of the Park Service's main concerns. On June 29, 1956, Steve Franken of Las Vegas received a contract for $5,048 to fence both parcels of the monument (the Third Fort and the Arsenal). [7] Franken completed the perimeter fencing of the Third Fort area in less than a month. In early August, he enclosed the Arsenal. The completion of the fencing marked "the final exclusion of stock and the beginning of recovery of the grasses from recent overgrazing." [8]

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CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND VISITATION

Figure 11. Since 1974 living history has been a major interpretive method of the fort. This photograph shows Acting Chief Ranger T. J. Sperry and his wife Nicki Sperry doing daily interpretive activities in the summer of 1990.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

As one of the Park Service's main objectives for management, the knowledgeable presentation of this historic site to the public often takes a great deal of administrative effort. Working closely with the regional office, local community, and various experts, the park staff has been skillfully conducting an

unending dialogue between the past and the present by making the monument a showcase of American frontier history for the visitor. Because of its excellent interpretive program developed in the past 36 years, Fort Union National Monument stands as an inspiring classroom, as well as tourist stop.

At the beginning, poverty struck every corner of the proposed Fort Union National Monument. Non-existence of any support facilities and the lack of interpretive material and reference information about the fort's past posed a major obstacle to the establishment of an operational park. In 1955, when the Park Service started developing it, the only comprehensive study of Fort Union available was Edward Steere's 108-page report written in 1938. With a limited amount of literature on the subject, the monument had to compile a tour guide for future patrons. Also, a visitor trail containing explanatory signs was necessary. The park's first administration, which had only one person, faced a tough challenge to meet these needs.

Acting Superintendent Wing lost no time in creating a temporary interpretive program. As soon as he took up residence in Las Vegas, he started to compose an interpretive leaflet. Within three weeks, Wing produced the first draft of the text and sent it to Santa Fe for comment. After he finished writing it in late December 1955, he began to plan a self-guided tour of the Third Fort in anticipation of opening the monument to the public in the following summer. [1] It took another two months to complete the plan for a temporary visitor route. At the same time, Anna Wing drew the cover design for the leaflet. [2] It showed a covered wagon in the foreground with the ruins of the fort in the distance. By the spring of 1956, the monument was ready for full-scale operation of its interpretive project.

In March, with the assistance of his wife, Wing began to lay out a visitor trail through the ruins. Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado supplied cut-out letters for use on the interpretive signs along the route. This enthusiastic and talented couple did a speedy job. Before the ribbon-cutting ceremony, they put the last touch on the visitor trail. [3] Also, the mimeographed tour guide arrived at the fort on time from the printer. Opening-day guests were greeted with a tri-fold leaflet containing a road directory and several fort pictures. [4] Following the interpretive signs and reading the illustrative leaflet, people for the first time enjoyed a guided tour of Fort Union.

In activating a comprehensive interpretation program, the monument could not ignore collecting historic items and displaying them. The lack of sheltered space and historic artifacts had limited the park's capabilities to offer a rich exhibition. But Superintendent Wing managed to present a few things on opening day. While walking into the temporary visitor center, the first visitors spotted several framed maps and photographs on the walls. [5] These historic pictures whetted people's appetite to learn more about the history of Fort Union. A month later, the park staff built a 10-foot display cabinet in the lobby to house artifacts found among the ruins. And another set of five old photographs joined the existing ones. [6] Not only did this exhibit provide an attractive orientation for the public, but also a mini-museum was born.

From this humble beginning, the museum grew faster than anything else in the first few years. After the monument initiated the ruins rehabilitation project, the archeological team led by George Cattanach, and later Rex Wilson, excavated numerous artifacts in the area. Unearthed objects included almost

everything from glass bottle to a steam engine. As interested citizens learned of the establishment of Fort Union National Monument, they donated artifacts either collected at the site or inherited by their family. For example, Francis A. Timoney of Colorado Springs bestowed on several cases of unspecified U.S. Cavalry gear. [7] They created a nucleus around which to build displays. Through both excavation and donation, the monument owned a collection of 7,500 specimens by 1960. [8]

Storing these historic artifacts posed a problem. The nouveau riche had to find a safe place to deposit its unexpected wealth. After the cells of the stone jail at the fort proved insufficient, the recreation hall of Valmora, New Mexico, provided brief shelter for the material recovered through ruins stabilization activities. [9] In 1959, Fort Union ordered six museum cabinets for storage purposes, and the park staff put the catalogued specimens into the cabinets and moved them to the park residences' garages. [10] From the 1960s, the museum collections "permanently" rested in temporary metal storage buildings that lacked any moisture or temperature control. Plans to build a standard museum collection room have not succeeded because of lack of funding. Today more than 10,000 objects are still waiting for proper curatorial facilities.

The preparation of permanent museum exhibits proceeded without difficulty. While the park employees were busily sorting, cleaning, and cataloguing the newly acquired items, outside assistance aided in the planning of a long-standing display. Curator Per Culdbeck of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe volunteered his expertise in the restoration of copper, brass, and steel artifacts. [11] Historian Arthur Woodward provided valuable advice concerning the historical background of Fort Union. In 1959 when the construction of the visitor center was to be completed, the Park Service asked its Western Museum Laboratory in San Francisco to design and install Fort Union's permanent museum exhibits with an American frontier history theme. A few days before the official dedication of the monument, four members of Western Museum Laboratory set up the exhibits in the visitor center. [12]

Along with the development of the museum, the monument staff improved its interpretive tour guide. Almost from the very beginning, the administration realized that the three-page mimeographed leaflet used at the opening ceremony was too brief and could not satisfy people's interest. In December 1956, an eight-page information folder supplemented the original handout. It provided the visitor with basic knowledge about the past of Fort Union. [13] The following March the park staff revised and enlarged the primitive leaflet, incorporating new signs on the map and better photographs into the text. Soon the new edition of the Fort Union trail guide was available for sale at the visitor center. [14]

For the interpretive program to be successful, the job of bringing more visitor to the monument was crucial. From day one, the park administration strove to attract as many visitors as possible, thereby creating a symbiotic relationship between the park and the visitor. During the first months local citizens constituted more than eighty percent of total visitation. The infrequency of outside visitors was due to the newness of the monument, the absence of prominent highway signs, and the nonexistence of the entrance road on maps. To make Fort Union a "national" monument rather than a local recreation area, the park staff extended their work beyond the monument boundary.

Cooperating with state and private organizations, Fort Union quickly developed a plan for advertising. In October 1956, the New Mexico Highway Department helped install a sign showing the daily business hours of the monument at the junction of the entrance road (NM 477) with Highway 85. Also, the department proposed to move the Fort Scenic-Historic Marker to the same area. [15] In the park, a traffic counter began to record the number of entering vehicles. Three years later, the regional office allowed Fort Union, Inc., a non-profit organization that helped promote Fort Union National Monument, to set up another sign advertising the fort at the intersection of US 85 and NM 477. [16] As everybody expected, these signs increased traffic flow toward the monument.

In addition to the roadside advertising, the Park Service practiced other publicity methods. Much as a business corporation approaches market strategy, the monument sought out customers rather than waiting for their arrival. Through Fort Union, Inc., the park distributed free information leaflets at hotels, restaurants, and gas stations in the state. As a liaison officer between the park and society, Fort Union, Inc., often conducted trips to the ruins, published postcards of the fort, and dispersed interpretive literature among citizens. [17] The organization also sponsored an essay context for high school students on any topic related to the fort. Meanwhile, the park staff frequently delivered talks at various places including Rotary Clubs, the State Hospital, and public schools. Because of these aggressive campaigns, Fort Union National Monument soon became familiar to many New Mexicans.

With the increase in visitation, Fort Union needed a full-time historian to carry out the interpretive work of the monument. For almost two years, Superintendent Wing acted as a part-time interpreter; he designed the trail, wrote the guide, and directed visitors. An extra person would make it possible for Wing to concentrate on administration. In the spring of 1957, he drove down to Albuquerque and visited the Department of History at the University of New Mexico, and sought to recruit a graduate for the proposed historian position. [18] His trip was fruitless, but in September tour leader Donald Mawson of Carlsbad Caverns National Park agreed to take the position. A month later, he reported for duty at the fort. [19] The arrival of Mawson coincided with a new phase of the interpretive program.

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CHAPTER 5: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Figure 13. In order to prevent grass fire hazard, the fort regularly trains its employees in fire fighting. Two employees stand before a fire cache in the 1982 fire drill.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

One of Fort Union National Monument's managerial objectives is to conserve the scenery, the natural resources, and the wildlife both at the monument and in the surrounding area. The National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 directed the Park Service to preserve these resources and to leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. As a result of a number of factors, including the size of the park,

a shortage of personnel available to study the environment, and the status of the monument as a historic site, the management of natural resources remained secondary to the rehabilitation of the ruins and the interpretive program. In the last two decades, however, the Park Service has been broadening its responsibilities at Fort Union. The conservation of the physical environment is becoming a priority at the monument.

For years, natural resource management was nonexistent at Fort Union. Established to preserve the remnants of an old military post, the monument, more like a history museum than a scenic park, concentrated its efforts on management of the cultural resources. Even if there was an interest in the park's environmental aspects, the small permanent staff --usually three to four persons--limited the park's ability to conduct any large-scale scientific research. In contrast to many other units in the park system, Fort Union occupies a small area encircled by vast private lands. In the beginning there was no immediate need to consider a natural resource management program. Accordingly, the Park Service simply reacted to most natural resource issues. It responded to them only when nature posed an impending threat to the ruins.

A passiveness and unsophistication characterized all of the park's early decisions and activities in dealing with natural resources. For a long time, natural resource management and protection had been synonymous, encompassing such actions as suppressing fires, controlling floods, stopping trespassers, and guarding the flora and fauna from damage. Although Superintendent Kittridge Wing lacked any experience whatsoever in natural resource management, his intuition told him to protect the integrity of the fort as much as possible. Intended to preserve the ruins, not the environment, some of the measures implemented by his administration nonetheless benefited the natural world of Fort Union.

To save the remains of the old fort, the monument lost no time in enclosing its newly acquired property. Since the last of the troops marched away from the post in 1891, the Union Land and Grazing Company had allowed its cattle to feed freely in the fort area. Gradually the land became overgrazed; certain plant species increased at the expense of others, leaving the land in poor condition. [1] After regaining control of the area, the National Park Service prohibited grazing. Wing decided to fence the monument's boundaries. In April 1956, he secured enough funds to fence the territory. Two months later, the regional office granted a $5,048 contract to Steve Franken of Las Vegas. Following the marking stakes set by Regional Engineer George Johnston, Franken fenced both sections (the Third Fort and the Ordnance Depot) within five weeks. [2] The final exclusion of stock assured the recovery of the vegetation.

It was much harder to exclude fire, particularly unpredictable wildfires, from the park. This destructive natural force often posed a threat to the ruins. As early as January 1956, a wildfire engulfed 100 acres of short-grass sheep pasture ten miles south of the park, along Highway 85. Greatly concerned, Superintendent Wing observed, "if such a burn can happen in January in short grass, the alarming possibilities of a warm-weather burn in the long grass at Fort Union are evident." [3] There was an urgency to prepare for fighting wildfire, which could occur at anytime and anywhere.

The following month Wing contacted the regional forester in regard to a fire fighting jeep for the

monument. Although the regional office had promised to deliver a jeep, it ruled out any hope that the Park Service would furnish a tank and pump equipment. [4] Because of a previous agreement in which the Union Land and Grazing Company donated all of the needed fire-fighting equipment, the Park Service agreed only to maintain the property and personnel at the site. Thus, Wing's continuous appeal for help did not change his superior's mind. For quite a while, Fort Union had little fire equipment.

Despite little assistance from Santa Fe, Fort Union tried its best to cope with the problem. In August 1957, Wing, in cooperation with the Union Land and Grazing Company, made arrangements with the New Mexico State Highway Department to rent a grader to create firebreak lanes along the entrance road. In addition, the visitor area of the monument received firebreak lanes on three sides with Wolf Creek forming a natural defense on the western side. [5] The measure reduced the fire threat from outside. In 1958, a wildfire on the adjacent ranch property burned 200 acres. remaining calm, the park employees trusted to the utility of the firebreaks.

Nevertheless, the park was vulnerable to any fire hazard within the monument's boundaries. This situation did not change until 1959 when Fort Union got its first running water system. In January, the Star & Cummins Company of Albuquerque installed a 50,000-gallon water tank in the northwest corner and laid all the pipes to the main sections of the monument. The modern water system provided not only drinking water for the employees but fire protection for the previously unprotected ruins. Hose houses were erected at each fire hydrant. They increased the park's fire-fighting capabilities.

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CHAPTER 6: HUMAN THREATS TO THE PARK

Figure 15. In several cases, angry visitors who arrived just after the park's business hours bumped their cars against the locked gates to break into the park. This photograph shows the entrance gate that was broken the night of March 17, 1970.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

While quietly enduring the subversive impact of nature, the weather-beaten ruins at Fort Union National Monument faced unnatural threats to their existence and integrity. It is true that sometimes human wrongdoing, either malicious or negligent, are more evasive and destructive than natural forces. Without

exception, both people and the civilization they created often posed "external threats" to disturb the peaceful park. In the first 36 years of its history, the monument achieved a good safety record with only minimal damage caused by people due to geographical isolation, limited territory, and low visitation. But Fort Union never appeared as a safe haven for those to seek an escape from the dangerous world. Various undesired human activities, such as theft, vandalism, encroachment, pollution, careless fire, commercial development, and low-flying aircraft generated enough concerns for the Park Service. These problems and responses become another chapter in the story of resource management.

The concept of outside human threats to the existence of Fort Union surfaced rather slowly; it took no less than 25 years to reach its maturity. During the first decade after the establishment of the monument, the enthusiastic park administration paid little attention to such issues. The staff concentrated on ruins preservation and interpretation. More importantly, the location of the fort induced people to minimize their worry about human malice toward the ruins. Surrounded by a 97,000-acre cattle ranch, in single ownership, Fort Union was separated from civilization because no large population center existed nearby. The isolation was bad news for visitation but an advantage for protection. The dead-end eight-mile entrance road appeared less inviting for the visitor to come and more difficult for the criminal to escape. According to the park records, serious incidents involving human mistakes rarely occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, the Park Service believed that Fort Union was immune to the outside world.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, this belief began to erode as the conservation movement in the nation took a holistic approach to preservation. Changing perceptions of American society contributed to more aggressive vigilance on the part of the Park Service. The new concerns stretched beyond the borders of park areas. By the 1970s, the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) and other environmental groups that supported the park system had expressed concerns for the lands surrounding park areas. In 1976, Director Gary E. Everhardt declared that the most severe threats the system faced were external. [1] The issue immediately became prominent on the agenda of the agency. A Park Service study conducted in 1980 identified over two thousand outside activities affecting various units of the national park system. Suddenly, many people felt that the national parks had been "islands under siege." [2]

The combination of the new perception of threats and the growing pressure upon resources demanded attention from the staff at Fort Union. In accordance with the Park Service's policy to identify and counteract the broadening range of potential threats, fort management stepped up responses to once neglected outside threats. Within its ability, the park began to keep good records on incident cases. Also, the superintendent's annual reports focused more attention on the subject. It was unknown whether a growing notion of outside threats and an increasing number of incidents were coincident or not. Perhaps increased visitation was the cause. In any case, available documents enable us to examine the issue of management concern about outside threats.

As a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society, the War on Waste had reinforced the Park Service's determination that the safety of both employees and visitors was crucial. In 1964 when the

MISSION 66 program was entering its final stage, the Park Service launched a new campaign, MISSION 70, which aimed at accident reduction. According to program, each unit in the Park Service system would apply safety measures to prevent human-caused accidents and fires. Starting in the same years, the six regions and 221 units of the national park system participated in a five-year contest for the lowest record of accident and fire loss. Each year the winners would receive certificates. In 1965, after the first season, Fort Union won an award for excellent safety performance in which no disabling injury, motor vehicle accident, and structural fire occurred at the site. After the good start, for the next four years, the monument achieved a perfect record under the MISSION SAFETY 70 program. [3]

Throughout the history of Fort Union National Monument, the safety record of visitors was nearly perfect. No person ever died or was fatally injured in the park. Besides the previous mentioned snakebite incident, only one visitor required emergency care. In the morning on June 24, 1977, a female visitor appeared at the visitor center, calling for help. A few minutes before her husband had collapsed in front of the quartermaster's quarters. Ranger Robert Hoff rushed to the scene to assist the patient and then drove him to Las Vegas Hospital. The patient soon recovered from the illness caused by a combination of high blood pressure, high altitude, and irregular potassium levels. The quick and proper response to the emergency call avoided any serious consequences. [4]

Although no fatal injury or death occurred in the park, the administration prepared for any possible emergency situation. In 1973, Chief Ranger Robert Arnberger initiated a program to bring public safety operations up to Park Service standards. His actions included purchase of first-aid equipment, improvement of the record-keeping system, and training of qualified personnel. [5] In 1974, training received top priority. The slow spring season allowed all park employees and their family members plus neighboring ranchers, a total of 22 persons, to attend an American Red Cross multimedia standard firs-aid course. In addition, Superintendent Hopkins, Chief Ranger Arnberger, and Park Technician Ella Rayburn completed a 52-hour emergency medical technician course, sponsored by the American Red Cross and the New Mexico State Police, in Las Vegas. Thereafter, the park kept trained personnel at the fort to cope with emergencies. [6]

In 1979, students from New Mexico Highlands University broke the monument's perfect fire-control record of almost a quarter-century by kindling two grass fires among the ruins. In the afternoon of March 13, eight art students accidently threw lit material into the grass while they were painting. The fire broke out at 3:30 p.m. A visitor from Las Vegas, William Johnson, reported it to Ann Belen at the visitor center. She gave him a CO_2 fire extinguisher to take to the site. Three other park employees rushed to the fire scene with the 300-gallon pumper and equipment. They found that two grass sections were burning; one was east of the northernmost company barracks and the other was east of the prison. Fortunately, the wind was calm at the time, and the flames did not spread out of control. With the assistance of eight visitors, the park staff extinguished the fires in a few minutes. Since each student told a different story about what happened, Ranger Hoff was unable to identify the person who ignited the fire, and the students were released from the investigation. But the park staff did not cease their vigilance. On the contrary, they realized that human mistakes and outside threats could be devastating to the park resources. [7]

As with the students who almost caused a fire disaster, other negligent visitors and their careless behavior put different pressure on resource management. As a small historic site, Fort Union provided visitors with no lodging or campgrounds except a few picnic tables for day use only. The beautiful valley in which the fort was located often tempted travelers to stay overnight. Sometimes, they illegally pitched tents near the residential area outside the monument. Several unauthorized camping cases occurred each year. The campers made the park authorities nervous because their campfires or gas stoves could start a grass fire if the wind suddenly gusted. The park enforced the non-camping rule without compromise. As soon as the unwelcome travelers were discovered, the park rangers evicted them by issuing a verbal warning. This house-cleaning policy went on effectively.

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CHAPTER 7: IN RETROSPECT

The experience of Fort Union National Monument appears to be as fascinating as the legend of the Fort Union military post. Under the management of the National Park Service, the weathered ruins have served society as a museum of the past, a classroom in the present, and a model for the future. Like any other institution or organization, the park has tasted both success and failure. To understand the park's administrative history, the 36-year experience can be divided into four periods, artificially by the author and naturally by the decades. The four periods consist of the age of establishment from 1956 to 1959, the age of continuity from 1960 to 1969, the age of innovation from 1970 to 1979, and the age of improvement from 1980 to 1991. Each period contains its unique themes and characteristics, which make the administrative history exciting.

When Fort Union joined the Park Service family in 1956, the abandoned military post, still in a wilderness and frontier condition, had no supporting facilities or interpretive materials. Poverty struck at every corner of the proposed monument. Hoping to serve the public as soon as possible, the National Park Service concentrated its efforts on facilities construction, ruins rehabilitation, archeological excavations, and historical interpretation. Within three years, Fort Union had a permanent visitor center and two residences complete with electricity and running water. A paved highway and a telephone line linked the fort to the outside world. Even the aged adobe walls had received modern cosmetic treatments such as silicone coating. In the interpretive field, the visitor center provided people with the first exhibits and a trail guide. After cleaning most of the areas, the archeologists helped to accumulate the bulk of the museum's collection. Two scholars authored the first comprehensive studies on the history of Fort Union. By 1959 the monument had passed the first period of intensive development when the dedication ceremony announced a fully functional national monument.

After four years of intensive development, Fort Union entered a relatively quiet period. As the new decade of the 1960s arrived, fort management shifted emphasis of management from construction to maintenance. Routine operations such as cleaning the water tank, painting the wooden fences, and repairing the buildings occupied the park staff's many tedious working hours. The procedures for preserving the ruins remained unchanged even though the regional office asked the local unit to test a few new methods. Silicone coating, which later proved unreliable, still served as the principal formula

for maintaining the weakened adobe walls. Without any fundamental change in philosophy, the interpretive program grew steadily with an oral history project and a revision of the guidebook. A few slide-show talks and uniform demonstrations by Homer Hastings and the rangers did not become a mature program of living history. Free from accidents and crime, the park enjoyed a peaceful period. In this "era of good feeling," continuity was the theme.

The decade of the 1970s marked the most innovative and exciting era in the monument's history. Under the leadership of Ross Hopkins, fresh ideas and new events sprouted. The ruins entered another intensive care period as the fort received about half a million dollars for preservation. The maintenance crew developed a five-year preservation system to maintain the adobe walls that proved more effective. The once-static interpretive program took a major departure by shifting its emphasis to living history, in which vivid presentations recaptured the American frontier experience and attracted more visitors. The living history program set the tone for future interpretive activities. The most significant innovation, however, belonged to the field of natural resource management. Influenced by the nation's environmental movements, the fort's administration reconsidered its priorities and responsibilities by devoting more time to environmental issues. Consequently, a new field in management emerged. With so many changes, the decade marked the most important era for the fort's administrative history.

Less creative but no less active in the 1980s, the park sought to reach new heights in management. Following the trails marked by the previous managers, the park staff continued to improve their work in every aspect. In ruins preservation, the maintenance crew returned to the original adobe material because the mud coating appeared capable of surviving longer than did the other materials. A systematic study of the ruins instead of simple experimentation characterized the preservation program. To enrich the living history program, the interpreters arranged several special events each year, some of which became annual programs. Meanwhile, natural resource management began to harvest a decade of cultivation. Several topical studies and professional planning documents were completed. More areas of the park's resources received attention and the management was more specific. Based on the groundwork laid in the previous decade, the management of Fort Union improved a great deal.

Despite an overall picture of managerial success during the first 36 years, Fort Union National Monument is still struggling with some vexing problems. For example, annual visitation remains disproportionately low; it reached the 20,000 mark only twice. During the campaign for the establishment of the monument in the mid-1950s, history professor Lynn Perrigo of New Mexico Highlands University postulated that Fort Union would become a tourist center in the Southwest. That prediction proved too optimistic. People quickly blamed low visitation on isolation. The cases of Chaco Canyon National Historic Site in New Mexico and Fort Davis National Historic Site in Texas disproved this argument. Chaco Canyon is more isolated geographically and Fort Davis is arguably less significant than Fort Union. But both of them host three times as many annual visitors as Fort Union. Thus, a further study is needed to explain the mystery of low visitation at Fort Union.

Another questionable issue is ruins preservation. In an agreement with Congress in 1954, the Park Service promised not to rebuild the fort, only to preserve the remaining structures. For 36 years, several million dollars went into the preservation project. But the adobe walls have lost one-third of their total

square footage since 1956. While the adobe walls continue to shrink, the probability of attracting huge numbers of visitors is slim.

During the first 36 years, Fort Union National Monument received nearly half a million visitors who were curious about American frontier history. Using this abandoned military post, the Park Service has established a dialogue between the past and the present. A large measure of the success can be attributed to the competent and responsible management at the monument. Still nine years away from the year 2000, the fort administration has already begun to prepare for new challenges. As the *Statement for Management* (1990) points out, the park staff is going to make extra efforts "to preserve the resources of Fort Union as an integral whole which can inspire and educate visitors well into the twenty-first century." Fort Union National Monument is a place to link the past with the future.

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Administrative History

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 12.

JOINT RESOLUTION PETITIONING THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO SET ASIDE OLD FORT UNION LOCATED IN MORA COUNTY, STATE OF NEW MEXICO AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT.

H. J. R. No. 7; Approved Mar. 12, 1929.

To THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES :

WHEREAS, In 1851 the United States Government established in the present county of Mora, State of New Mexico, a military post, Fort Union, which was for forty years the military headquarters and base of supplies for the Army of the Southwest, and,

WHEREAS, This Fort is located on the Comanche Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, and the California Gold Trail, and was a strategic point during the Civil War, and,

WHEREAS, many of our noted military figures were at some time during their career assigned to duty at Fort Union, and,

WHEREAS, these buildings are falling into decay, thereby risking the loss of a spot rich in historic lore, and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, including the Stephen Watts Kearney Chapter of Santa Fe, have unanimously endorsed the

movement started by the Las Vègas service clubs to preserve and maintain Fort Union as a National Monument, and have requested the Legislature of the State of New Mexico to memorialize the President and Congress of the United States on this subject,

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the legislature of the State of New Mexico respectfully memorializes and petitions the Congress of the United States to set aside this historic site and to preserve and maintain Fort Union as a National Monument; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That copies of this memorial be sent to the President of the United States and to the presiding officers of the Senate and House of Representatives and to the Senators and Representative of the State of New Mexico.

CHAPTER 181

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO THROUGH THE STATE PARK COMMISSION OR ITS SUCCESSOR TO ACQUIRE BY PURCHASE, GIFT OR CONDEMNATION FOR STATE PARK PURPOSES THE OLD FORT UNION MILITARY RESERVATION INCLUDING THE CEMETERY AND RIGHTS OF WAY USED AND TO BE USED IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, LOCATED WITHIN THE MORA GRANT, COUNTY OF MORA, NEW MEXICO; AUTHORIZING THE RECONSTRUCTION AND BEAUTIFICATION OF SUCH AREA; PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SAME; AND AUTHORIZING AGREEMENTS OR CONVEYANCES WITH OR TO THE UNITED STATES OF SUCH AREA.

HOUSE PUBLIC LANDS AND LIVESTOCK COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 297;
Approved: March 20, 1953

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of New Mexico:

Section 1. The State of New Mexico is hereby authorized to acquire by purchase, gift or condemnation the Old Fort Union Military Reservation, including the cemetery used in connection therewith, containing approximately eight hundred (800) acres, located within the Mora Grant, County of Mora, State of New Mexico as and for a state park to be administered, reconstructed, preserved, developed and beautified by the state park commission or its successor. The State of New Mexico is likewise authorized to acquire by purchase, gift or condemnation the necessary rights of way for public ingress to and from said military reservation, and is authorized to accept donations of money, equipment or

material for such purposes, and likewise to receive and accept endowments for the maintenance of the Old Fort Union Military Reservation or of any part thereof.

Section 2. Title to the Old Fort Union Military Reservation shall be taken in the name of the "State of New Mexico" or in the name of "The Governor of the State of New Mexico and the people thereof." Title to such property shall not be acquired or taken by the State of New Mexico for park purposes until the acceptance or taking of the same shall have been authorized by resolution of the state park commission or its successor. The state park commission is hereby authorized to enter into agreements respecting the acquisition of the Old Fort Union Military Reservation.

Section 3. The State of New Mexico through the state park commission or its successor shall have the right and is authorized to convey the Old Fort Union Military Reservation, which shall have been acquired for state park purposes by the state of New Mexico, to the United States or any appropriate agency thereof for the purpose of administering, reconstructing, preserving, developing and beautifying the same.

The procedure for transfer of title to the United States or any appropriate agency thereof shall be as follows :

The state park commission or its successor shall adopt a resolution setting forth the facts justifying a conveyance to the United States or appropriate agency thereof, which resolution adopted by the majority of the commission, or by the majority of the members of its successor, shall be transmitted to the Governor of the State of New Mexico, and if approved by him, he shall thereupon execute and sign a conveyance to the United States or appropriate agency thereof. Said conveyance, when executed by the Governor of the State of New Mexico, shall transfer and convey all the title of the State of New Mexico in and to the lands so to be conveyed to the United States or such appropriate agency thereof.

Section 4. Said Old Fort Union Military Reservation shall be administered in the same manner as other state parks are administered under the state park commission or its successor and subject to its rules and regulations; Provided, that the state park commission or its successor shall be responsible for the construction of reasonable fire guards and shall be responsible for maintaining reasonable fire fighting equipment to protect against the fire hazard created by the establishment of the Old Fort Union Military Reservation as a public park; and provided further, that the state park commission shall erect and maintain a legal fence along all rights of way acquired under the provisions of this act and shall establish and maintain adequate underpasses for cattle.

Section 5. The State of New Mexico through the state park commission or its successor is authorized and empowered to acquire the Old Fort Union Military Reservation by Eminent Domain proceedings and in addition thereto to acquire by such proceedings rights of way for ingress and egress of the public generally to and from such area. The procedure for

obtaining such area and rights of way by condemnation shall be the same as provided by law for the condemnation of land for railroad purposes.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

NEW MEXICO

ORDER ESTABLISHING FORT UNION NATIONAL MONUMENT

Whereas the act of June 28, 1954 (16 U. S. C., 1952 ed., Supp. II, sec. 450kk 450kk 1, provides for the establishment of Fort Union National Monument upon a determination of the Secretary of the Interior that sufficient land and other property have been acquired by the United States for national-monument purposes; and

Whereas title to 720.6 acres of land for national-monument purposes was accepted as of October 18, 1955, on behalf of the United States;

Now, therefore, I, Douglas McKay, Secretary of the Interior, having determined that sufficient property has been acquired for establishment of Fort Union National Monument, do hereby designate the following described lands as the Fort Union National Monument under and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the said act of June 28, 1954, supra:

PARCEL NO. 1

Beginning at corner No. 1 (a stake in stone mound), from which the corner common to the northwest corner of Section 6, Township 19 North, Range 19 East, NMPM, and the southwest corner of Section 31, Township 20 North, Range 19 East, NMPM, bears N. 670° 30' E., a distance of 8,707.30 feet:

Thence S. 60° 24' 30" W., a distance of 5,281.04 feet to corner No. 2 (a stake in stone mound); thence N. 29° 35' 30" W., a distance of 1,674.66 feet to corner No 3 (a stake in stone mound): thence N. 17° 11' 30" W., a distance of 844.6 feet to corner No. 4; thence N. 47° 12' 30" W., a distance of 598.70 feet to corner No. 5; thence N. 29° 35' 30" W., a distance of 2,209.0 feet to corner No. 6 (a stake in stone mound), thence N. 60° 24' 30" E., a distance of 5,279.53 feet to corner No. 7; thence S. 29° 35' 30" E. a distance of 5,278.9 feet to corner No. 1. the point of beginning, containing 637 acres more or less; and

PARCEL NO. 2

Beginning at corner No. 1 (a stake in stone mound), from which corner No. 6, Parcel No. 1, described above, bears N. 69° 56' E., a distance of 2,475.6 feet; thence S. 24° 51' E., 1,926.4 feet to corner No. 2 (a stake in the stone mound); thence S. 65° 09' W., a distance of 1,890.3 feet to corner No. 2 (a stake in stone mound); thence N. 24° 51' W., a distance of 1,926.4 feet to corner No. 4 (a stake in stone mound); thence N. 65° 09' E., a distance of 1,890.3 feet to corner No. 1. the point of beginning: comprising 83.6 acres more or less.

The areas described aggregate 720.6 acres, more or less.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all unauthorized persons not to appropriate, injure, destroy, or remove any feature of this national monument, and not to locate or settle upon any of the lands thereof.

The administration, protection, and development of this national monument shall be exercised under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior by the National Park Service in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable to national monuments.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the Department of the Interior to be affixed, in the City of Washington this 29th day of March 1956.

DOUGLAS McKay,
Secretary of the Interior.

[F. R. Doc. 56-2529; Filed, Apr. 4, 1956; 8:49 a. m.]

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106 68 STAT.]

PUBLIC LAW 430 JUNE 28, 1954

Public Law 429 CHAPTER 401

June 28, 1954
[H. R. 1005]

AN ACT
To authorize the establishment of the Fort Union National Monument, in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

Fort Union National Monument, N. Mex. Establishment.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, in order to preserve and protect, in the public interest, the historic Old Fort Union, situated in the county of Mora, State of New Mexico, and to provide adequate public access thereto, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire on behalf of the United States by donation, or he may procure with donated funds, the site and remaining structures of Old Fort Union, together with such additional land, interests in land, and improvements thereon as the Secretary in his discretion may deem necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act. Donated lands may be accepted subject to such reservations, terms, and conditions as may be satisfactory to the Secretary, including right of reversion to donor, or its successors and assigns, upon abandonment as a national monument, and reservation of mineral rights subject to condition that surface of donated lands may not be used or disturbed in connection therewith, without the consent of the Secretary.

SEC. 2. Upon a determination of the Secretary of the Interior that sufficient land and other property have been acquired by the United States for national-monument purposes, as provided in section 1 of this Act, such property shall be established as the "Fort Union National Monument" and thereafter shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the laws and regulations applicable to national monuments. An order of the Secretary, constituting notice of such establishment, shall be published in the Federal Register:

Publication in FR.

Following establishment of the national monument, additional properties may be acquired as provided in section 1 hereof, which properties, upon acquisition of title thereto by the United States, shall become a part of the national monument: Provided, That the total area of the national monument established pursuant to this Act shall not exceed one thousand acres, exclusive of such adjoining lands as may be covered by scenic easements.

Additional properties.

Approved June 28, 1954.

PUBLIC LAW PUBLIC LAW 100-35 May 8, 1987

Public Law 100 35
100th Congress

An Act

May 8, 1987

To amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Santa Fe Trail as a National Historic Trail.

[H. R. 240]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION.

(a) DESIGNATION. Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244 (a)) is amended by adding the following new paragraph at the end thereof:

Missouri.
Kansas.
Oklahoma.
Colorado.
New Mexico.
Public information.
Gifts and property.

"(15) The Santa Fe National Historic Trail, a trail of approximately 950 miles from a point near Old Franklin, Missouri, through Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado to Santa Fe, New Mexico, as generally depicted on a map entitled 'The Santa Fe Trail' contained in the Final Report of the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, dated July 1976. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the office of the Director of the National Park Service, Washington, District of Columbia. The trail shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior. No lands or interests therein outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired by the Federal Government for the Santa Fe Trail except with the consent of the owner thereof. Before acquiring any easement or entering into any cooperative agreement with a private landowner with respect to the trail, the Secretary shall notify the landowner of the potential liability, if any, for injury to the public resulting from physical conditions which may be on the landowner's land. The United States shall not be held liable by reason of such notice or failure to provide such notice to the landowner. So that significant route segments and sites recognized as associated with the Santa Fe Trail may be distinguished by suitable markers, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to accept the donation of suitable markers for placement at appropriate locations.".

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. Section 10(c)(2) of such Act (16 U. S.C. 1249(c)(2) is amended by inserting "and (15)" after "(13)".

Approved May 8, 1987.

LEGISLATIVE H1STORY H.R. 240:
HOUSE REPORTS: No. 100-16 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).
SENATE REPORTS: No. 100-39 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 133 (1987):
Mar. 10, considered and passed House.
Apr. 12, considered and passed Senate.

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APPENDIX B: PERSONNEL

Partial Listing of Permanent and Seasonal Personnel

Superintendent

Kittridge Wing 1955-1958
Homer F. Hastings 1958-1971
Claude Fernandez 1971-1973
Ross Hopkins 1973-1980
Clark Crane 1980-1987
Douglas McChristian 1987-1988
Jimmy W. Carson 1988
Harry Myers 1988-

Unit Manager

Willis E. Reynolds 1980-1981
Carol Kruse 1981-1987

Archeologist

George Cattanach Jr. 1956-1958
Rex L. Wilson 1958-1960

Administrative Assistant

George H. Adams 1959
Gerald P. Newfield 1959-1960
John A. Montgomery 1960-1963

Nicholas J. Bleser 1963-1966

Historian

Donald Mawson 1957-1959; 1961
Max E. Montoya 1960
Dale F. Giese 1961-1965
Jon B. Montgomery 1963-1964
Robert E. Davidson 1966
Nicholas J. Bleser, 1966-1969
Roy F. Beasley 1969-1974

Park Technician

Pierre Gonzales 1973-1974
Ella S. Rayburn 1974-1976
Paul S. Shampine 1974-1977
C. Susan Love (Shampine) 1974-1977
Diana Gutierrez 1976
Roy C. Richey 1977-1978
Sari Stein 1977-78
Jennifer Freed 1979-1982
Martha Mayben (Siebe) 1979-1980
Carl B. Friery 1982-1985

Park Ranger

Clifford W. Mills 1956
Palemon Arguello 1957-1958
Patricio Quintana 1959-1964
John Mondragon 1960
Max E. Montoya 1960-1962; 1965-1966
Keith C. Billiard 1966-1967; 1971
Lois R. Emrick 1968-1969
Ernest Ortega 1970-1971
Robert Arnberger 1971-1974
Robert Hoff 1974-1979
Paul Shampine 1976-1977
Donald Harris 1976-1977
Stephen Walker 1976-1977
Erwin Hand 1977-1979
Thomas Danton 1977-1978

Abelardo D. Navarrette 1979-1981
James Boll 1981-1983
Charles Spearman 1984-1985
David Roberts 1986-1988
Eve Smith ?-1987
T. J. Sperry 1987-
John Batzer 1988-1990
Phyllis Kay Townsend 1988-1989
Steven Townsend 1988-1989
Frank Torres 1990-
Terry Moore 1990-
Heather Hartman 1990-

Administrative Technician

Fredericka Steel 1987-1990
Debbie Archuleta 1990-

Park Aids

Marilyn Sandoval 1971
Eva Valencia 1971
James Abreu 1971-1972
Pierre Gonzales 1972-1973
Walter L. Hood 1974
Scott E. Walker 1975-1976; 1978
Martha Mayben 1976
Sari Stein 1976
Donald Harris 1976-1977
Arturo Marquez 1979-?
Dennis Segura 1979-1982

Clerk-Typist

Anita Jones 1959
Mary A. Oosting 1960
Carmen Segura 1966-1969
Theresa C. Gatti 1969-?
Theresa Fulgenzi ?-1973
Senaida Bustos 1973-1974
Donna Lowin 1974-1976
Ann Belen 1977-1979

Gina Espinoza 1979-1981
Fannie Little 1981-1983
Laurence P. Jone 1983-1985
Debbie Archuleta 1986-1990

Budget and Finance Assistant

Fannie Little 1979-1983

Maintenance Worker

Martin Archuleta 1956-1979
Benito Lucero 1957-1979
Brigido Archibeque 1958-1978
Ramon Garduno 1958-1980
Richard Godfrey 1958
C. Susan Love (Shampine) 1975
Paul S. Shampine 1975; 1977
Glen Moritz ?-1975
Teddy Garcia 1975-
Bobby Martinez 1975-
Napoleon Duran 1975-
Jose Padilla 1975-
Wilfred Valencia 1975-
Rudy Mondragon 1975-
Charles Garcia 1975-
Albert Dominguez 1975-
Manuel DeHerrera 1976-
Eddie Mares 1977-1979
Issac Archuleta 1977-1978
Richardo Ruiz 1978-1981
Thomas Quintana 1978-1981
Teresa A. Burns 1978
Willis E. Reynolds 1979-1981

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APPENDIX C: VISITATION

Visitation Statistics for
Fort Union National Monument, 1956-1991

Year	Total	Year	Total
1956	10,007	1976	14,903
1957	(no record)	1977	13,922
1958	c.10,000	1978	13,795
1959	c.15,000	1979	10,453
1960	10,147	1980	10,787
1961	10,503	1981	11,720
1962	11,824	1982	12,176
1963	12,510	1983	12,413
1964	13,100	1984	13,105
1965	13,800	1985	13,362
1966	15,001	1986	13,441
1967	13,724	1987	14,435
1968	12,512	1988	18,141
1969	10,936	1989	20,798
1970	14,221	1990	17,031
1971	14,906	1991	22,300
1972	17,483		
1973	12,812		
1974	13,898		
1975	15,288		

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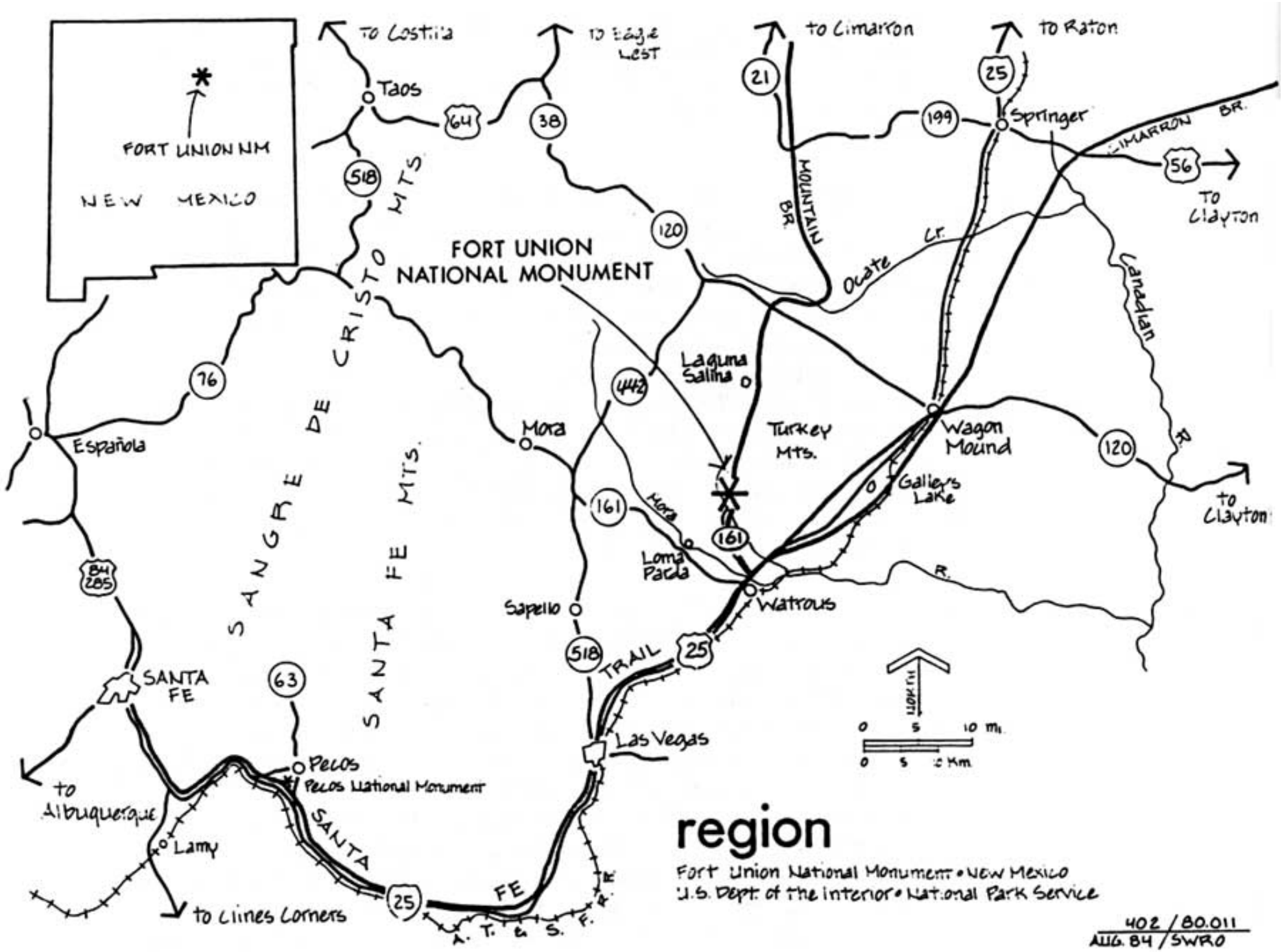

region

Fort Union National Monument • New Mexico
U.S. Dept. of the Interior • National Park Service

402 / 80.011
AUG. 84 / SWRO


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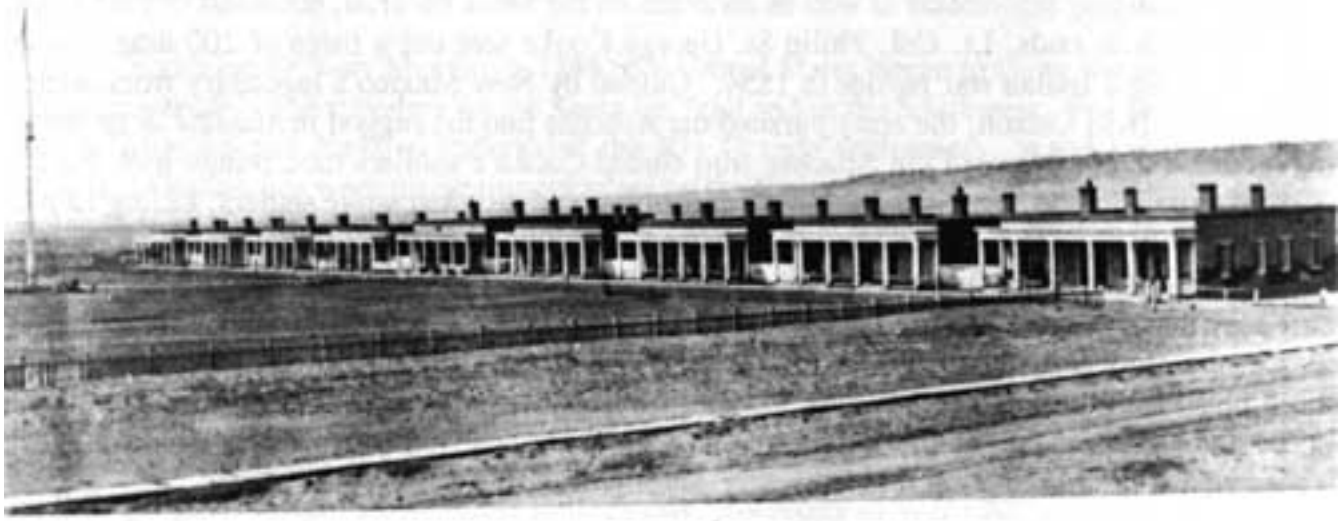
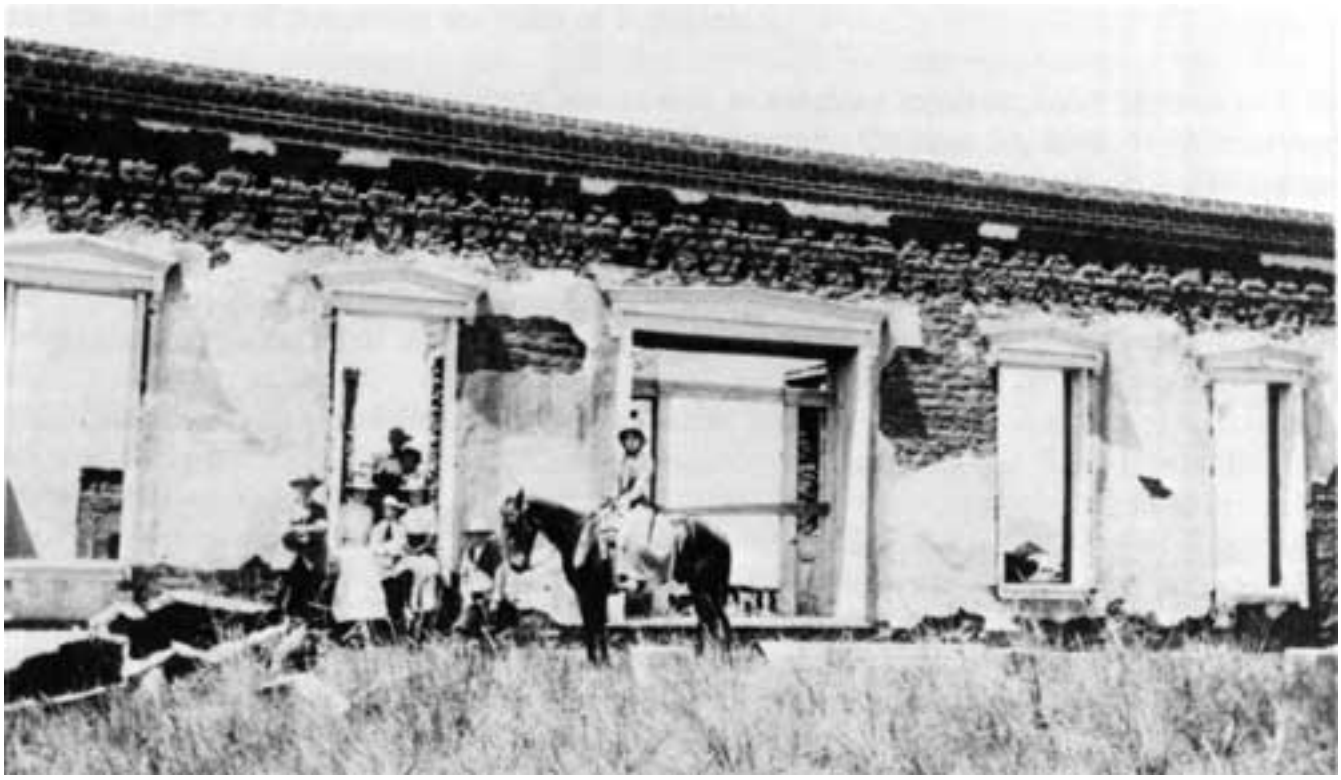
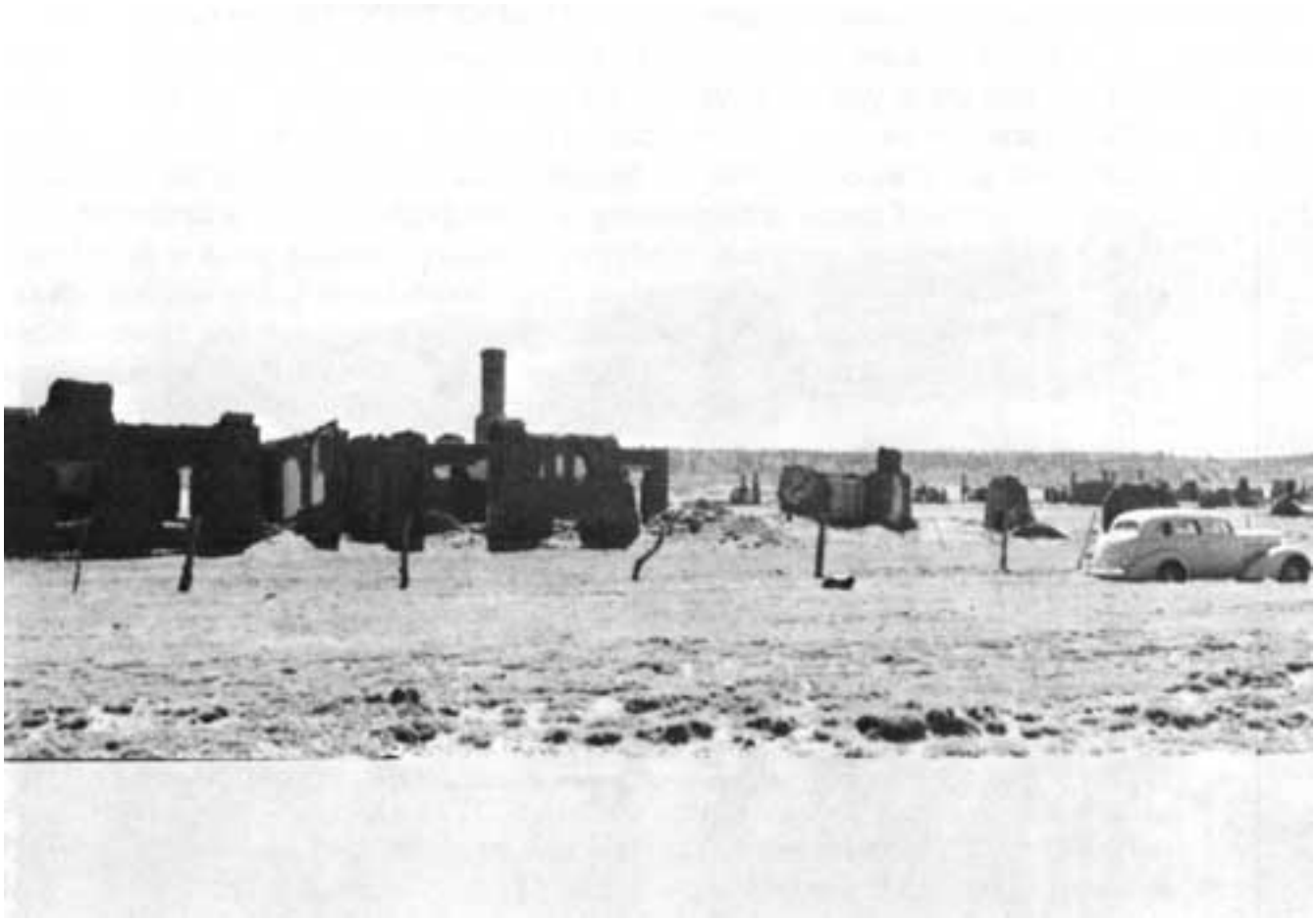
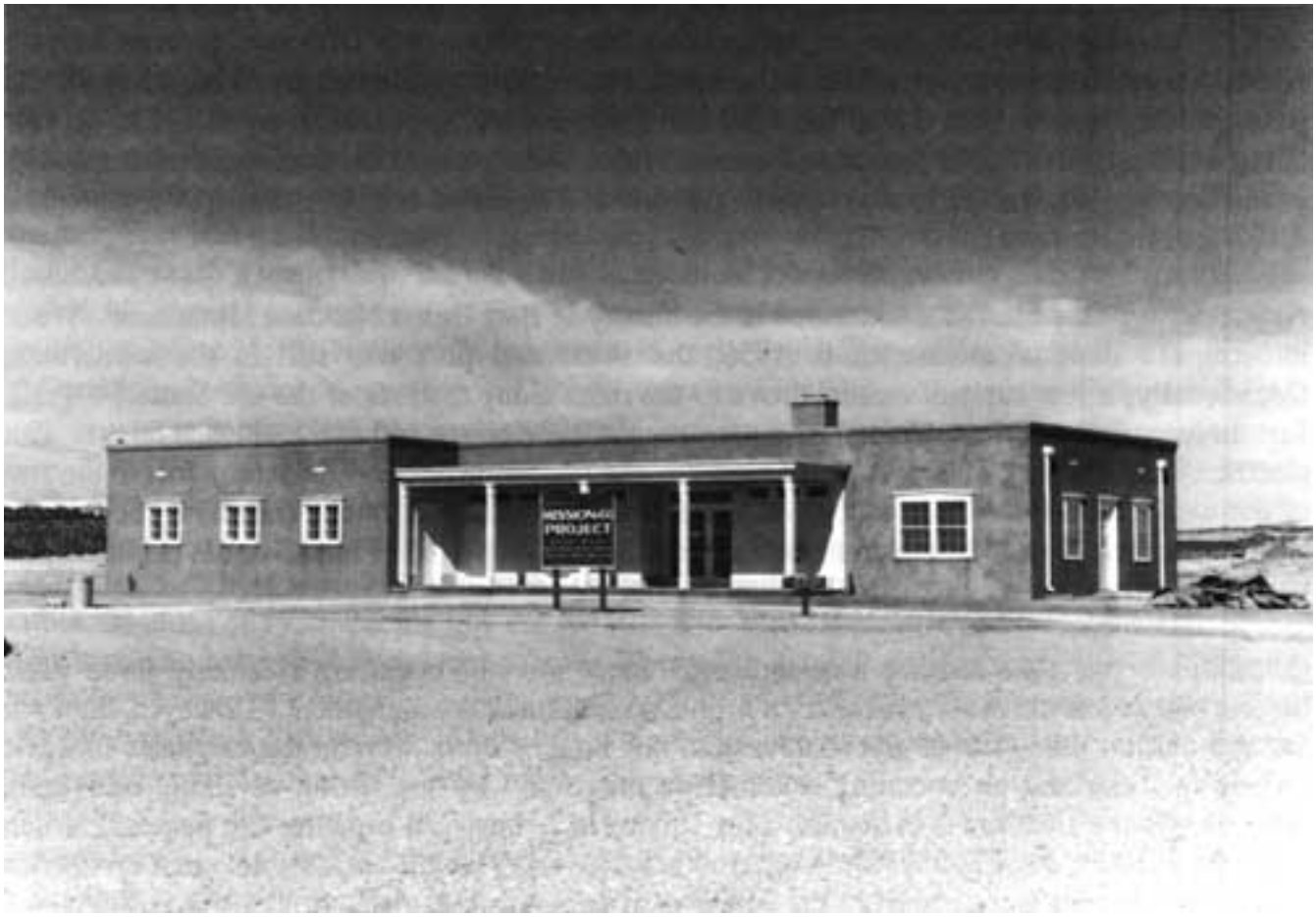
FORT UNION NATIONAL MONUMENT • NEW MEXICO

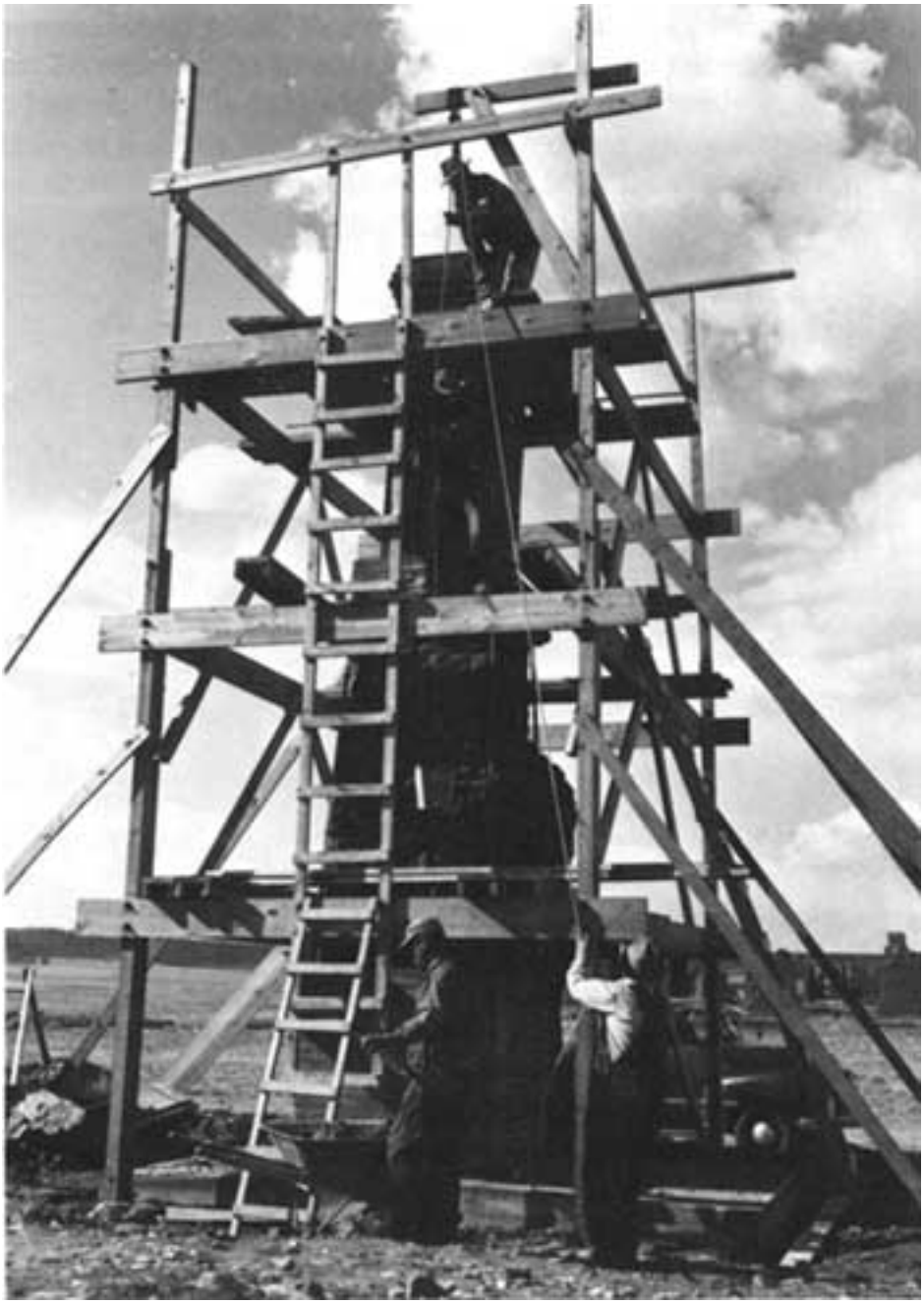


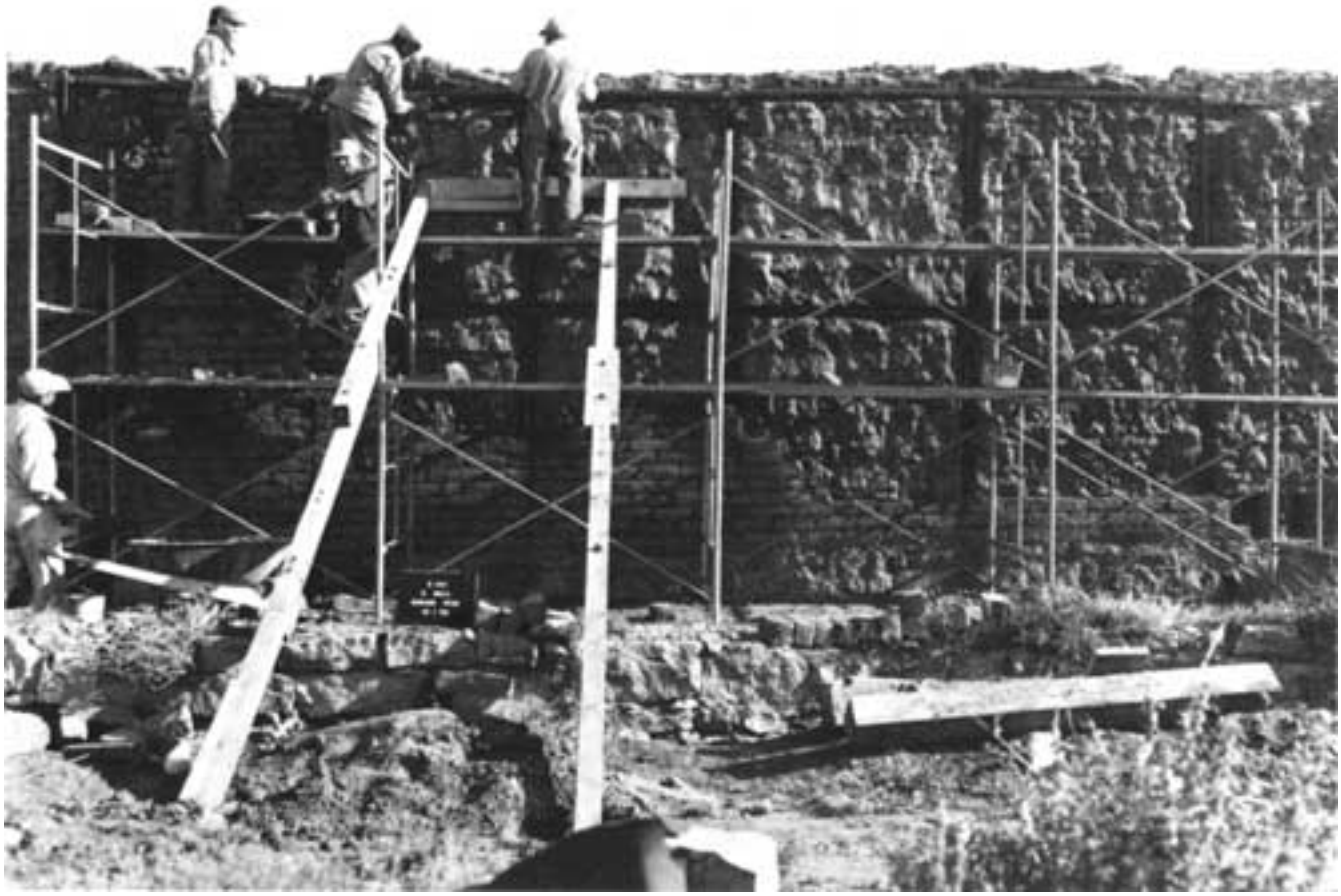
Officers' Quarters, Fort Union, N. Mex.









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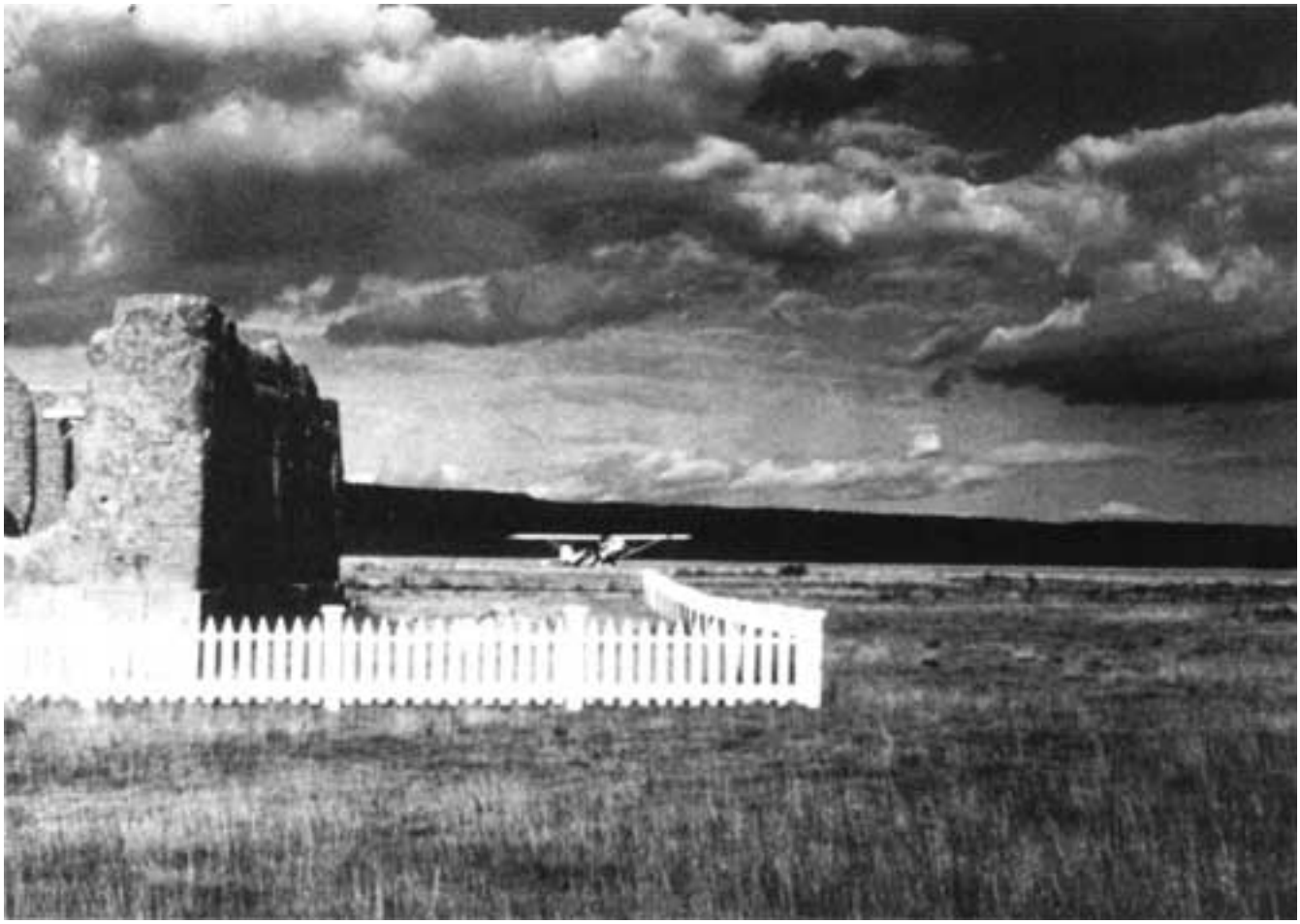

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6. David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 125.

7. Ibid., P. 128.

8. Ibid.

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13. Ibid.

14. George P. Hammond, *The Adventures of Alexander Barclay, Mountain Man, From London Corsetier to Pioneer Farmer in Canada, Bookkeeper in St. Louis, Superintendent of Bent's Fort, Fur Trader and Mountain man in Colorado and New Mexico, Builder of Barclay's Fort on the Santa Fe Trail, New Mexico in 1848: A Narrative of His Career, 1818 to 1855, His Memorandum Diary, 1845 to 1850* (Denver: Fred A. Rosenstock Old West Publishing Company, 1976), p. 91.

15. Ibid., P. 92.

16. Utley, *Fort Union National Monument*, P. 9.

17. Ibid.

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19. Edward Steere, "Fort Union, New Mexico: Its Economic and Military History," National Park Service, 1938. (Typewritten.)

20. Henry Woods, "Fort Union, New Mexico: The History of New Mexico's Most Famous Military Post," National Park Service, nd. (Typewritten.)

21. U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Title to Certain Military and Timber Reservations*. S. Rept. 621, 45th Cong., 3d sess., 1879, p. 3.

22. Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), pp. 143-46.

23. Ibid., pp. 147-52.

24. Chris Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), P. 247.

25. Darlis A. Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861-1885* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), pp. 221-23.

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28. Ibid., pp. 44-46.

29. Ibid., pp. 46-49.

30. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Title to certain Military and Timber Reservations*. S. Rept. 621, 45th Cong., 3d sess., 1879, p. 3.

31. Ibid., p. 4.

32. Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest*, pp. 393-409.

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9. U.S., Congress, House, Albert Simms's bill to provide for the study, investigation, and survey, for commemorative purposes, of the Glorieta Pass, Pigeon Ranch, Apache Canyon battle fields, and of Old Fort Union in the State of New Mexico, H.R. 11146, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 72:6139.

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Fort Union

Administrative History

CHAPTER 1: A FRONTIER POST (continued)

Figure 4. Officers' Quarters, Post of Fort Union, in the 1870s.
Courtesy of New Mexico Magazine

With the acquisition of New Mexico in 1848, the United States began to carry the entire burden of protecting traders and travelers on the Santa Fe Trail and in the Southwest. For two and a half centuries Apaches and Navajos had raided the Rio Grande settlements, at the same time that Kiowas and Comanches were disrupting travelers on the Plains. The Indians were defending their homelands from the encroachment of Europeans. The federal government countered these raids by sending better than

10% of the army to the area. By 1851 almost 1,300 soldiers were stationed at eleven outposts in the Territory of New Mexico. [16] The post of Santa Fe served as the headquarters of the Ninth Military Department.

Although the number of soldiers in New Mexico was relatively high, their performance did not please military commanders. Military expenditures were greatly increased, yet there appeared to be little progress toward stopping the Indian raids. Secretary of War Charles M. Conrad asked Lt. Col. Edwin V. Sumner to consolidate military posts in the territory and to move the troops "more toward the frontier, near the Indians." [17] As soon as he arrived in Santa Fe and assumed command of the Department of New Mexico, Sumner issued Orders No. 21 to remove "the troops and public property" to a new location named Fort Union. [18] In his zeal to carry out the order, Colonel Sumner managed to transfer most of the properties in the department headquarters at Santa Fe to the site of the new post within twenty days. [19] He also consolidated troops from Las Vegas, Albuquerque, Socorro, El Paso, and other posts and stationed them at the new fort. [20]

As a frontier post, Fort Union was strategically situated near the junction of the Mountain and Cimarron branches of the Santa Fe Trail. Noticing the activities of Sumner's entourage, Alexander Barclay offered to sell his fort to the army. But the military refused his offer and chose to build its own post six miles north of Barclay's fort. At that time none of the commanders or the soldiers knew this "free" site was private property within the borders of the Mora Grant. These unchallenged squatters immediately started building the fort. By the end of the first year, more than thirty buildings had been erected at the base of West Mesa. In 1852, under Sumner's Special Orders No. 30, Fort Union's territory expanded to eight square miles. [21]

As a key military post, Fort Union quickly became the guardian for American traders and travelers on the Santa Fe Trail. But by the mid-1850s, the Jicarilla Apaches stepped up their raiding of outlying settlements as well as caravans on the Santa Fe Trail, northeast of Fort Union. To combat their raids, Lt. Col. Philip St. George Cooke sent out a force of 200 dragoons and infantry to fight Indian war parties in 1854. Guided by New Mexico's legendary frontiersman, Christopher [Kit] Carson, the army pursued the Apaches into the rugged mountains in an attempt to subdue them. [22] Many of the Apaches who eluded Cooke's soldiers took refuge with the Utes in southern Colorado. A few months later they united and attacked white settlers, killing 15 men. In 1855 the U.S. Army launched another extensive campaign that led to the Ute War of 1855. More than 500 soldiers, reinforced by the First Dragoons from Fort Union, fought the united Indian tribes, which sued for peace after several devastating battles. [23] With this temporary peace, the army shifted its attention to the Plains, where the elusive Kiowas and Comanches had been plundering settlers and travelers. During 1860-1861, the soldiers from Fort Union pushed these Indian tribes out of the territory. Hence, in its first ten years, Fort Union played a significant role in protecting the new American highway, the Santa Fe Trail.

In 1861 when the Civil War broke out, the majority of officers at Fort Union were from the South. They resigned from the U.S. Army and joined the Confederacy. As soon as they assumed their new allegiance, the rebels marched back to New Mexico and tried to seize all Union posts and the Colorado mines. The

Confederates' invasion threatened Union control of the fort. The Union soldiers began to busy themselves constructing a massive earthen "fieldwork," later called the Star Fort, which was a mile east of the first fort and was designed to block the Santa Fe Trail against Confederate advance from the south. [24] In early 1862 the Confederates forced Union troops to evacuate Santa Fe and to take a defensive position at the Star Fort. At this crucial moment, the first Colorado Volunteer regiment, led by Col. John P. Slough, arrived in New Mexico. Between the Unionists and the Confederates lay Glorieta Pass, a rugged opening through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where on March 28, 1862, the two armies fought the decisive battle of the Civil War in the far western theater. In three days Union troops had achieved a victory, and the Confederates retreated to Texas.

After the battle at Glorieta Pass, Fort Union received no further threat from the Confederates. The new commander of the Department of New Mexico, Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, gave orders to build a new fort adjacent to the earthwork. The sprawling installation contained three parts: the Post, the Quartermaster Depot, and the Ordinance Depot. It took several hundred civilians five years, from 1863 to 1868, to complete construction. The new buildings at Fort Union were constructed of adobe brick, the walls standing on stone foundations and coated with plaster. The main structures had tin roofs, except the hospital, which was shingled. The military installation was the largest in New Mexico, and according to Inspector Andrew W. Evans, the most luxurious. [25]

In addition to normal military functions, the new fort, today called the Third Fort, became the army's supply center in New Mexico. In order to consolidate a number of the older forts in the region after the reunion, the army proposed to expand Fort Union into one of the largest posts in the West. The Fort Union Quartermaster Depot soon assumed the responsibilities of supplying other posts with nearly everything needed for their existence. As a British traveler observed in 1867, "Fort Union is a bustling place; it is the largest military establishment to be found on the Plains, and is the supply center" for "the forty or fifty lesser posts scattered all over the country within a radius of 500 miles...." [26]

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Fort Union

Administrative History

CHAPTER 2: FROM RUINS TO A NATIONAL MONUMENT
(continued)

With support from Washington, the National Park Service's Region Three Office in Santa Fe soon organized an investigative trip to Fort Union. On May 9, 1939, Hillory A. Tolson, director of Region Three, led a "reconnaissance party" to the old fort. This well-balanced team included George Hammond, dean of the Graduate School at the University of New Mexico, Herbert O. Brayer, assistant director of the Coronado Quarto Centennial Commission, Aubrey Neasham, regional historian of Region Three, Kenneth F. Woodman, statistician of the Park Service, and Charles A. Richey, assistant landscape architect of Region Three. The purpose of this trip was to investigate possible routes to the fort. [12] Since the area had not been accurately surveyed, it was necessary for Richey and his assistant to return on the following day in order to determine the boundary and acreage of the fort. [13] This investigative trip also helped to determine the willingness of the Park Service to establish a national monument at Fort Union.

Five days later, Tolson sent a contingent (Hammond, Brayer, and Neasham) to meet with Edward B. Wheeler, agent for the Union Land and Grazing Company, at his office in Las Vegas, New Mexico. [14] Wheeler had bitterly opposed government intervention because he had claimed $100,000 damages for illegal timber cutting on the estate of the Butler Cattle Company. This claim was based on the idea that the United States Forest Service had incorrectly surveyed the area. Both the House and Senate once voted for compensation, but President Franklin D. Roosevelt vetoed it. [15] Despite Wheeler's hostile feeling, the Park Service delegation persuaded him to cooperate with the government. At the meeting Wheeler agreed to recommend that the Union Land and Grazing Company donate to the United States Government approximately 1,000 acres of land for the establishment of a national monument. He also agreed to give a 200-foot wide right-of-way for an entrance road to the fort from Highway 85 (present day Interstate 25). [16] In return, the government agreed to fence the donated land, build a house for the company agent, furnish water and electricity, and construct at least three underpasses on the road for cattle passage. The agreement included a reversionary clause saying, "if at any time the land is not used by the United States as a national monument or reservation, title shall revert to the Union Land and Grazing Company or to its successor." [17] In the coming years, this clause was to prove the greatest

single obstacle in creating a national monument at Fort Union.

For several weeks Tolson and Wheeler exchanged letters concerning minor points of disagreement on the entrance road. Both of them agreed to send another boundary survey team to the site. The news of the successful preliminary negotiations with the Union Land and Grazing Company quickly spread in the New Mexico press. On June 1, 1939, Governor John E. Miles of New Mexico wrote to Regional Director Tolson, expressing his hope that the National Park Service would "do everything within its power to expedite the establishment of the Fort Union National Monument." [18]

The Region Three Office in Santa Fe attempted to speed up the process for the establishment of the Fort Union National Monument. In a memorandum of June 8, Arthur E. Demaray, acting director of the National Park Service, told Tolson that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments had "not as yet classified this area as of national significance." [19] In answer to Demaray's memorandum, Tolson wrote back, "it is urgently recommended that...it be submitted for classification and approval for establishment as a national monument at the Advisory Board's next meeting." [20] Meanwhile, Tolson asked Richey to do another survey of the proposed boundaries and the road. On June 8 and 27, Richey and his assistant made separate trips to Fort Union. They discussed various details of the proposed area with Wheeler: the right-way and scenic easements. [21] In July 1939, Tolson submitted to Washington a special report, in which he recommended that the federal government establish Fort Union National Monument by presidential proclamation. Convinced of the efficacy of New Deal legislation, he also thought to set up a Civilian Conservation Corps camp at the site "to preserve and develop the site adequately." [22]

The plan to establish Fort Union National Monument, therefore, was progressing well in the first few months. At the same time that Edward Wheeler presented his case to the board of directors of the Union Land and Grazing Company, the Park Service submitted its proposal for a national monument at Fort Union to the Department of the Interior, with recommendation that it be submitted to the Bureau of the Budget and the President. Almost without delay, the Department of the Interior agreed to the proposal. By early fall of 1939, the administrators of the Park Service were so confident that Fort Union would be a national monument that they had already sent out copies of the draft form of the proclamation, even before securing title to the land.

Just as the Park Service was preparing to celebrate its victory, unpleasant news arrived from New Mexico. On November 19, 1939, Wheeler sent Governor Miles a telegram saying, "Fort Union National Monument proposal encountered legal obstacle yesterday in Washington." [24] The U.S. Government wanted to omit the reversionary clause from the deed. According to the reversionary clause, the government would revert title to the company if the donated land remained "inactive." The federal government believed that such a guarantee was unnecessary even though the Union Land and Grazing Company insisted on it. Negotiations between the government and the company deadlocked.

Nevertheless, the Region Three Office of the Park Service reopened the dialogue with a new proposal. In December 1939, Tolson suggested that Fort Union be developed as a Public Works Administration

project. Wheeler felt that this action would be a sufficient guarantee to satisfy the company. [25] On January 15, 1940, E. K. Burlew, acting secretary of the interior, wrote to President Roosevelt and John M. Carmody, administrator of the Federal Works Agency, asking for an allocation of $98,000 to establish Fort Union National Monument under the supervision of WPA. [26] Of the $98,000 of Public Works Funds, $13,500 would be used to acquire 837.367 acres of land for the monument, and $84,500 for improvements. [27] Unfortunately, the Public Works Administration could not allot $98,000 for the project due to limited funds. Later, the Bureau of the Budget asked the Park Service to submit an annual budget of $12,000 for Fort Union. In July 1940, President Roosevelt gave his approval to proceed in acquiring the site for a national monument, provided that the maintenance costs would not exceed the fees collected from the public. [28]

The president's approval made it possible for the Park Service to begin a new deal with the Union Land and Grazing Company. Later that July, Tolson, then acting associate director of the National Park Service, wrote to Andrew Marshall, attorney for the company, to schedule a conference working out the details of the title transaction. The representatives of both sides met on October 28, 1940. [29] Since Andrew Marshall had advised the board of directors of the company not to transfer title of the land to the government unless the deed of transfer contained a reversionary clause, the representatives of the company were unwilling to give in on this point. [30] Marshall explained that because the site lay practically in the middle of the company's holdings, acquisition of this site by a third party would create an intolerable situation. On the other side, the government negotiators argued that the provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906 were not broad enough to permit the U.S. government to accept less than fee simple title to land transferred to it for national monument purpose. [31] But the government pointed out that it could accept the title with a reversionary clause under the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which assigned broad powers and duties to the Park Service. Marshall was interested in this idea; however, the conference did not reach any agreement.

The Park Service then decided to draft a new deed for the establishment of Fort Union National Historic Site under the Historic Sites Act of 1935. Its hope soon died when Tolson received a letter from Wheeler. On February 19, 1941, Wheeler wrote to Tolson, quoting Marshall, "there are so many pressing things to be done in connection with Mrs. Ames' estate, and there is so little enthusiasm in the family about making this gift to the government, that the matter has had to be postponed somewhat to await the doing of more important things." [32] Similarly, the nation was concerned with more important issues surrounding the Second World War. Thus, the movement to establish a national monument at Fort Union was again interrupted for a few years.

After World War II, people in New Mexico revived the campaign to create the Fort Union National Monument. New Mexicans had learned that the previous efforts failed because of the lack of local interest in the project. This time local citizens and interest groups decided to lead the movement to ultimate success. At a Masonic Lodge meeting in Las Vegas in 1946, William Stapp read a paper entitled "Chapman Lodge No. 2, A.F. & A.M.," in which he again asked his brothers to pay attention to the significance of Fort Union. [33] The paper also brought back memories of their 1929 campaign to preserve the fort.

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CHAPTER 3: REHABILITATING AND PRESERVING THE FORT
(continued)

As a unique section of the National Park Service, Fort Union was the first monument established and developed entirely under MISSION 66. In 1956, Director Conrad L. Wirth of the National Park Service launched an ambitious conservation program to develop national parks to permit the visitors' maximum enjoyment while still pursuing the preservation of the park's scenic and historic resources. The 800-million-dollar program was schedule to end in 1966, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service--hence the name MISSION 66. [9]

The construction of a permanent visitor center and residential housing topped the list of the master plan of development. People had different ideas about the location and style of the proposed visitor center. Some persons suggested that one of the historic barracks should be restored and used as the visitor center. But after a few months of discussion, the Park Service adopted Wing's blueprint to build a New Mexico territorial-style visitor center south of the main ruins and in line with the old hospital. [10] The National Park Service Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) worked out the preliminary plans of the proposed visitor center and residence houses. Just as people were ready to see the start of the construction in October, the regional directors' conference in Washington decided to withdraw the 1957 fiscal year construction funds from Fort Union, with the intention of completing most of the development in a "package" during the 1958 fiscal year. [11]

Nevertheless, some construction continued in 1957. In September, W. H. Elliot of Albuquerque received a $70,000 contract to construct two residences at the southern edge of the park near the main gate. His company completed a house and a duplex the following spring. [12] However, Acting Superintendent Wing was not able to enjoy the new living quarters. In January 1958, his wife Anna died of a heart attack. Soon after, he requested a transfer from Fort Union, where the couple had devoted a great deal of their energy to the new national monument. With sympathy for Wing's tragedy and praise for his work, the Park Service promoted him to assistant superintendent of San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico. In April, Homer F. Hastings, former superintendent of Aztec Ruins National Monument in New Mexico, arrived at Fort Union to assume his duty as superintendent. [13] He immediately took up

residence in the newly constructed house.

Born at Montrose, Colorado, Hastings began his Park Service career as a seasonal ranger at Carlsbad Caverns National Park during the summer of 1930. In 1937, he became a permanent employee, working first at Aztec Ruins. Before his new appointment at Fort Union, Hastings had served as superintendent at several Park Service units in Arizona and New Mexico. The arrival of this twenty-year veteran guaranteed strong leadership for the development of Fort Union National Monument. [14]

During his administration, Wing brought archeologist George Cattanach from Montezuma Castle National Monument in Arizona and filled the historian position with Donald Mawson, a tour leader at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. Following in Hastings's steps, Cattanach and Mawson occupied the separate duplex residence.

Since no modern facility had existed in the area, the new monument had to bring in everything from the outside. The basic utilities included water, electricity, telephone lines, and a sewage system. A small spring flowing in Wolf Creek west of the Third Fort appeared to be the only surface water accessible to the monument. Sometimes the creek was bottom dry. Thus, Fort Union needed a sufficient water source. After a groundwater study in July 1956, the U.S. geological surveyors affirmed the quality and quantity of groundwater at the site. They also helped to choose a suitable location for the well the following April. The Park Service awarded Red Top Drilling Company of Las Vegas a $3,725 contract to drill for water. On August 22, 1957, the company completed a 325-foot well. [15]

Meanwhile, the Park Service gave a $29,000 contract for water and sewage systems to Starr and Cummins Company of Albuquerque. According to the deal, the company would install one 52,000-gallon water tank at the northeastern corner of the Third Fort, two 300,000-gallon sewage lagoons at the southwestern corner, and all the pipe lines. By spring of 1958 the water and sewage systems were operational. A year earlier, the Mora Electrical Cooperative had extended power lines to the monument. A modern communication system was also necessary for the monument to operate efficiently. In February 1959, after much negotiating, the Mountain Bell Telephone Company finally provided its services to the remote fort. [16]

When the package of construction funds for the 1958 fiscal year arrived, Fort Union immediately invited various business firms and individuals to bid on all the related projects. Again, Floyd Haake won a contract for $30,148 to surface an existing 1,600-foot dirt road in the residential area and to construct a new parking lot in front of the visitor center. Kueffer Construction Company of Las Vegas, another low bidder, got a $71,804 contract to build a visitor center and a utility building and to extend power lines to both buildings and a telephone line to the visitor center. [17] Close cooperation between the two companies provided a healthy working environment to guarantee that all the construction progressed speedily. On September 2, 1958, the newly surfaced residential loop road and the spacious visitor parking area passed the Park Service's inspection. Kueffer Company handed the visitor center and utility room over to Fort Union on February 17, 1959. For almost three years prior to that, the park staff had run the monument from a shabby wooden cabin, without running water or sewage lines. Visitors as well

as staff had to use outdoor pit toilets. After blizzards or gales, the desks inside would be covered with either snow or dust. A reward eventually came in March 1959 when the park staff happily moved into the territorial style visitor center. [18]

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CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND VISITATION (continued)

Beginning in 1957, full-scale research into Fort Union's past took the lead in all interpretive activities. As soon as Mawson became acquainted with the area, he set to work on the James W. Arrott Collection at the Rodgers Library at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas. The study of historical documents significantly improved his ability to guide visitors and to answer their questions. At the same time, the regional office asked contract historian Arthur Woodward to write a book-length report on the history of Fort Union. Two years later, he produced a well researched paper entitled "Fort Union, New Mexico--Guardian of the Santa Fe Trail." It gave the most comprehensive picture of this nineteenth-century military post up to that time.

Two other frontier scholars, Chris Emmett and Robert Utley, were also working on the same topic. In 1957, James Arrott, a founding father of the monument, interested historian Emmett in writing a history of the fort. He spent eight years on the project before the University of Oklahoma Press eventually published his book, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest (1965)*. In 1959, Southwest Regional Historian Utley authored a special report, "Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail," for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. His concise account of the fort not only provided government officials with clearer ideas about the historical significance of the military post but also showed to the Park Service the potential of good interpretive material. In 1962, he expanded his paper into a handbook. Because of its solid research and colorful writing, *Fort Union National Monument* immediately became a popular handbook. Today, almost thirty years after its first publication, students and visitors alike are still enjoying Utley's classic work.

The study of Fort Union also included oral history. Since a few eyewitnesses of the nineteenth-century frontier were alive, the park staff, encouraged and directed by Superintendent Hastings, conducted a series of personal interviews with the people who had lived during the fort's heyday. As living archives, they offered valuable information that supplemented the written documents. For instance, 103-year-old Hough Loudin recalled the social life of the military personnel at nearby La Cueva, a former recreation spot for officers. The Reverend Jay Wilson of Laramie, Wyoming, discussed an early Protestant church at Wagon Mound. And Ramon C. Baca talked about the "good old days" at Loma Parda. [20] The oral history program continued until the mid-1960s when interest shifted to living history. By that time, the

monument had obtained an extensive collection of tape-recorded interviews for its library.

In 1961, Park Service Washington Office Historian Roy E. Appleman visited the fort and inspected its overall development. He found that the "museum exhibits, self-guided foot trail, and personal services... [were] not only good but superior to most similar features and services in most of the other units of the [Park Service] system." [21] Within a short period after its establishment as a national monument, Fort Union had developed an interpretive program, which enabled visitors to experience the ruins in an enjoyable and educational manner.

Beginning in the early 1960s, the interpretive program entered its second stage, a period of refinement. Without any major change in principle, the program improved in many aspects. Because of New Mexico's large Hispanic population, the monument planned to provide bilingual services. In 1962, Ranger Patricio Quintana prepared a Spanish language version of the self-guided trail booklet. [22] Although the Spanish language was less common than English in the park's operation, Quintana's task showed the consciousness of the administration to a bilingual approach.

The dated English version of the self-guided trail leaflet received more attention. In 1967, the monument decided to revise the text and to add a colored cover. The Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, a non-profit organization of promoting national parks and monuments in the region, kindly handled the printing. In June, just before another heavy tourist season, the new leaflet arrived at the fort. On the cover, a picture of a frontier soldier superimposed on a general view of Fort Union. The new guidebook, as Superintendent Hastings reported, was spectacular, and the park staff were anxious to dispose of the old leaflets so that they could start selling the new ones. [23]

Offsite talks and presentations, initiated by Kittridge Wing, became more common and popular during Hastings's administration. In 1961, Hastings assembled a set of slides accompanied by a tape with a musical background for his standard slide show. It introduced to the public Fort Union National Monument, as well as the National Park Service at-large. [42] In the same year, historian Dale F. Giese of Carlsbad Caverns National Park succeeded Donald Mawson, who transferred to Tumacacori National Monument in Arizona. Both Hastings and Giese frequently delivered speeches or presented slide shows at various places such as New Mexico Highlands University, the State Hospital, the Mora-San Miguel Electrical Cooperative, the American Legion, the Las Vegas Rotary and Lions Clubs, the Masonic Lodges, Kiwanis Clubs, and Castle Junior High School. [25] These offsite presentations strengthened the relationship between the park and the community.

The monument regularly informed the media about its most recent activities. Accordingly, the press and radio releases kept the public aware of changing activities at the site. Meanwhile, the fort sought to reach larger audiences through either educational or entertainment programs. In May 1968, Clear Sight Cable Television in Las Vegas began a biweekly series under the title "Fort Union, New Mexico--Yesterday and Today." It aired through September and resumed in February 1969 for another season. The following month, historian Nicholas Bleser recorded a 30-minute program about the fort for KNME-TV of Albuquerque. [26] The program was broadcast on April 4, 1969. The footage of Fort Union also

appeared on other television stations in the state.

The national monument needed more national publicity as well. Whenever a professional cameraman showed up at the fort, regardless of his purposes or affiliation, the park personnel offered assistance. As early as October 1958, a Life magazine photographer visited the fort to take pictures for an article on the old West. In July 1963, the Manco Recording Company of Fort Worth, Texas, filmed a documentary movie about Fort Union and the surrounding area. Two years later, a team from Screen Gems, Inc., shot film at the ruins to use in an advertisement for 1966 Chryslers. [27] All of these activities helped increase the national exposure of Fort Union.

Ironically, Fort Union personnel interpreted the historic site without an interpretive prospectus for eleven years. In 1965, a year after Giese left for the University of New Mexico to pursue a Ph.D. degree, administrative assistant Nicholas J. Bleser filled the vacant park historian position. He started to work on an interpretive prospectus and completed the first draft in March 1967. The prospectus presented three objectives: to explain the history of the American frontier, to stimulate the imagination of the visitor, and to provide access to detailed information. [28] It dealt primarily with the monument's physical improvement, such as the approach road, signs, photos, and the visitor trail. Although the 43-page document offered little in the way of new approaches or effective methods, it explained and justified contemporary practices.

Under the auspices of the prospectus, various improvements made visits to the park more enjoyable. In 1967, an army escort wagon and mule dump cart were placed in the center of the mechanics' corral. These vehicles of the 1880s created a vivid historic scene among the unadorned walls. Also, more than 30 metal photo plates featuring historic pictures were erected throughout the ruins for visitors to compare how the buildings appeared at present with how they looked in the nineteenth century. [29] A year later, park employees installed a replica cell door at the stone jail building and then added a new exhibit at the location of the Star Fort. [30] Piece-by-piece physical improvements animated this historic site.

In addition to the improved visual image of the fort, an audio system was introduced into the ruins areas to enrich the historic atmosphere. Park personnel had long realized that visitors often endured stillness along the 1.6-mile trail. The prospectus suggested that occasional soft notes of a bugle call could bring back the sounds of frontiersmen and their daily chores. In November 1970, the Park Service installed an audio system on the eastern end of the parade ground. It consisted of a recorder and clock-controlled speaker. The new device played thirty different calls, at regular intervals of sounds that were heard daily during the 1880s. Those "sounds of the past" gave the visitors a sense of the bustling activity of the garrison. [31]

After a three-year trial, in which the monument actively sought public opinion, the Park Service replaced the audio equipment with a high quality system. Following the suggestions of electrical engineer Daniel Zigler, the fort administration decided to relocate the speakers. According to the new plan, two speakers were mounted back-to-back horizontally on two 15-foot metal stands, running along the same lines as

the top portion of the wall, which camouflaged them from the visitor. Elevated from the ground, the speakers projected the sounds much farther, to every corner of the ruins site. [32]

Other audio devices also served as powerful interpretive tools. In 1970, for the first time, the monument set up two small audio stations among the ruins to tell about the history of the post. Regularly delivering the pre-recorded messages, the stations operated basically the same as did the bugle call system. [33] After a test period chief ranger Robert Arnberger decided to place eight extra message repeaters along the visitor trail to supplement the existing ones. In 1974, under a $2,486 contract, Cockrell Electric of Las Vegas erected the metal pedestals. [34] Southwest Audiovisual Depot helped make the tapes, which featured first-person dialogues revolving around incidents in the Red River Indian War of 1874. Each station had a speaker and push button. Whenever visitors pushed the button, they listened to the conversations. [35] Together with the bugle call system, the message repeating stations further broke the quiet atmosphere of the ruins.

In addition to those internal improvements, good public relations were crucial for attracting more people. To strengthen ties with the local community, the park staff took some of the museum collections to various places in the region and set up itinerant exhibits. For example, in 1968, the fort arranged a show at the museum at Springer, New Mexico. [36] In 1972, a Fort Union exhibit graced the lobby of the Bank of Las Vegas and later traveled to the Southwest Public Service Company. The bank employees thought that it was "the best received display ever." [37] In the same year, with the cooperation of the State Highway Department, Fort Union placed new exhibits at the nearest I-25 southbound rest area to stimulate traffic flow to the monument. [38]

Meanwhile, the Fort Union staff encouraged people to spend their special days at the fort. From Rough Riders reunions to Boy Scouts' adventures, special events often took place in the park. In the summer of 1971, the park initiated a fiesta called "Las Vegas Day at Fort Union." On that day, the one-dollar entrance fee was waived as a gesture of goodwill to all neighbors. As a result, five hundred people showed up. [39] Because of the success of the fiesta, the park staff planned to expand the event the following year. Sponsored by the Las Vegas Fiesta Committee, the second annual "Las Vegas Day Fiesta" occurred on August 13, 1972, and included a free luncheon for all the participants. The delicious aroma of barbecue beef, posole, chile, and beans lured a crowd of 1,200 people. Many of them saw the ruins for the first time. [40]

Other special events included an International Student Day and a Veterans Day observance. In the spring of 1972, with the help of Highlands University, Fort Union hosted a party for foreign students. Under a contract with the United States Department of Information, Patton Enterprise of Santa Fe filmed the activities for Hurst Metrotone News. [41] Working with the Veterans of Foreign War Post 1547 in Las Vegas, the park invited veterans to hold the Veterans Day observance at the fort. On October 23, an unexpected snowstorm forced all activities into the visitor center but the spirits of 250 veteran remained high throughout the ceremonies. [42]

Among the special visitors were foreign journalists. As a presentation of the American frontier legend, Fort Union drew the attention of Europeans, who were fascinated by western American history. In July 1969, three members of the Italian television station RAT-TV visited the fort and shot film for a program entitled "The History and Legend of the West." Seasonal ranger-historian Lois Emrick presented a talk and rifle demonstration to the camera team. [43] In September 1977, a film crew from West Germany came to film the historic structures at both the monument and the nearby ranch for a public education television series in the fatherland. [44] Fort Union National Monument was gaining international fame too.

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CHAPTER 5: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (continued)

Meanwhile, the park administration continued to highlight weed control and personnel training. The accumulation of dry weeds in arroyos and along the fences became fire hazards and required constant removal. Superintendent Homer Hastings hired Margarito Lovato and his team to mow undesired plants. In the fall, the New Mexico Highway Department again helped clean the firebreaks along the entrance road and inside the eastern edge of the monument. Also, Hastings conducted a fire control inspection and instructed the employees on the proper use of the fire-fighting equipment. [6] By the end of the 1950s, the monument staff had acquired the basic skills and equipment for fire control.

In managing water resources, Fort Union encountered a different situation. The problem was one of scarcity rather than abundance. The operation of the monument entailed furnishing a supply of water adequate for the needs of both the employees and visitors. A small spring meandering in the gully just west of the Third Fort could not meet the demand of ten-gallon-per-minute. The Park Service had to find other sources. To determine the feasibility of obtaining a ground water supply, the Park Service requested that U.S. Geological Survey study and assess ground water conditions. In addition to the field survey in July 1956, samples of well and spring water were sent to the laboratory in Albuquerque for chemical analysis. After the study, the surveyors affirmed the quality and quantity of ground water in the area. Later they helped select a suitable location for the well. [7]

As the first scientific study of the monument's natural resources, the survey gave people a better understanding of the fort's environment. While they searched for water, geologists examined various aspects of the park's geography, geology, and topography. In December, geologist I. J. Winograd presented a final report on the survey and its conclusions. His thirteen-page document became a collection of information useful for future research. The essential motive of the survey, however, came from a need to acquire water, not from a desire for more knowledge. As soon as fresh, pure water gushed out of the well, the Park Service lost interest in learning more about the area's environment. Accordingly, the Regional Office failed to conduct another scientific study on the natural resources at the monument for another 14 years.

The pragmatic and utilitarian approach to natural resources also guided erosion control and landscaping. Although annual precipitation measured only 18 inches, occasional rainfalls could leave their distinct mark on the once overgrazed land, washing away topsoil and creating small ravines. As a by-product of the ruins stabilization work in 1957, Superintendent Wing initiated efforts at erosion control by dumping unwanted earth and broken bricks into a gully at the northeastern corner of the Third Fort. The work eased the erosion problem for a small section. [8] Except for this experiment, there is no record showing any other erosion control in this early period.

During the construction of support facilities, bulldozers made people realize the need for landscaping. In Wing's view, "a great amount of regrading and reseeding" in the residential and visitor center areas was "required to make the environs of the new homes presentable." [9] Paul Gensemer of Las Vegas received a contract to beautify the natural scenery of the park. Although the Park Service expected him to complete the work before the formal dedication of the monument in June 1959, he did not meet the deadline. By the end of August, with exception of four loads of manure scattered over designated places, no progress occurred. In the following month, the Park Service terminated the contract, and later awarded it to James Vander Sys, a nurseryman from Santa Fe. Securing a number of Apache plum trees, salt bushes, and sumacs in Watrous, he planted them around the new visitor center and the residences. On April 29, 1960, he fulfilled his contract. [10]

Leaking sewer water caused by the inconsistent construction activities was another problem. It remained difficult to get the newly completed sewer lagoons to hold water due to the porous soil in the area. No sooner did the water enter the lagoons than it soaked into the ground. In the spring of 1958, Acting Superintendent George Cattanach made arrangements with Fort Union Ranch to put a dozen horses, loosely roped together, into each lagoon for a few hours to help compact the loose soil on the bottom. This method proved effective, and the lagoons began holding water in a sufficient quantity to permit them to function properly. [11]

The park administration realized the impact of nature on cultural resources. Wind, rain, snow, hail, drought, and fire threatened the historic structures at Fort Union. To protect the ruins, the monument staff had to pay attention to the area's natural resources. Although none of them had any formal training in natural resource management, their daily actions, as mentioned above, benefited the environment. Meanwhile, the fort sought to collect weather information by recording daily temperatures, wind speeds, and precipitation. In May 1957, Fort Union began submitting monthly precipitation reports to the Albuquerque Office of the U.S. Weather Bureau, in the hope of encouraging a systematic study of the climate of the Mora Valley. [12]

The monument carried on its traditional trouble-shooting strategy for handling natural resources into the 1960s. In the new decade, this passive and reactionary attitude still dominated all the decision-making processes. As long as the ruins and other man-made structures were safe, there remained no clear agenda for natural resource management. This did not forestall the fort administration in improving its ability in certain fields such as fire control. For example, in 1960 an additional tank and slip-on pump arrived at the fort, supplementing the existing fire equipment. Six years later, a new fire attack unit consisting of a

110-gallon water container and a one-horsepower pump replaced all existing equipment, which had proved unreliable in cold weather. [13]

Meanwhile, weed control efforts continued. The maintenance crew constantly inspected and cleaned the fire-breaks. Sometimes they had to work extra hours due to excessive weeds and grass caused by unusually wet weather. In August 1963, about six inches of rain fell, damaging the fire-break and the service roads north and east of the Third Fort. The maintenance crew quickly repaired them but correcting the soil erosion was beyond the park's capabilities. Again in 1965, more than 22 inches of precipitation, 15 percent above normal, resulted in abundant plant growth, which became a fire hazard. After failing to control weed growth in the summer, the maintenance workers had to conduct a controlled burn inside the foundation outlines of the historic buildings. [14]

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CHAPTER 6: HUMAN THREATS TO THE PARK (continued)

In protecting cultural resources, Fort Union had to keep illegal treasure hunters as well as campers away from its territory. After the close of the military post in 1891, the place became open territory to vandals and souvenirs seekers who took anything they wanted. Vandalism turned the remaining structures into ruins. When the ruins became a national monument in 1956, the Park Service prohibited artifact hunting on the government property. Few visitors wanted to challenge this rule. However, one or two treasure hunters tried to find valuable historic objects on the grounds and take them home. On July 2, 1987, a bold Texan used a metal detector and geologist's tools near the park entrance, looking for historic artifacts. Superintendent Douglas McChristian tolerated this for a few seconds. He stopped and questioned the Texan before he could find any item more valuable than rusty nails. Although such cases rarely occurred, illegal artifact hunting in the park never stopped entirely. [8]

Malicious vandals and shrewd thieves caused more trouble than this mindless Texan. On one hot summer afternoon in 1977, an unidentified visitor reported a hole in the heavy duty plexiglas exhibit cover at the commissary storehouse at the Third Fort to ranger Tom Danton. After a quick investigation and inventory, he found that a brass U.S. Army plaque and a blue culinary bottle were stolen. There was no evidence as to what had been used to break into the exhibit. Thus, the park authority remained clueless and the thief remained free. [9] Moreover, larceny occurred not only in a "remote" area but at the busy visitor center as well. On May 29, 1984, after counting the money in the safety box, ranger Carl Friery found forty dollars missing from the Southwest Parks and Monuments Association petty cash fund. Without any evidence, the park staff could not understand how the money disappeared from the safety box in the chief ranger's office. Since so many people, including employees and visiting researchers, had access to the office, it was impossible to identify a suspect. The case became another mystery. [10]

Most of the unlawful activities at Fort Union involved illegal entry into the monument. Curious visitors commonly drove into the residential area. Once, an unidentified person even broke a window of a ranger's house. [11] Whenever they ran into an uninvited guest, the rangers turned him or her away immediately. In several cases, angry visitors who arrived just after the park's business hours bumped

their cars against the locked gates to break into the park. Discovering the damage to the gates the following morning, the park rangers were unable to make any arrests.

Even during regular business hours, some adventurous travelers either used unusual means to tour the monument or entered prohibited sections. On a few occasions, visitors drove along the service roads used for maintenance purposes, perhaps not knowing that the vibration of motor engines could further weaken the fragile ruins. In another case, two riders turned their motorcycles off the established road onto the grass and proceeded in the direction of the Star Fort. Just in time, park technician C. Susan Shampine, in her patrol vehicle spotted the motorcyclists and stopped them with red flashing lights. She gave them a verbal warning. [12] In most similar incidents, the park rangers prevented illegal actions before they caused severe damage.

Despite the fact that the law enforcement played only a minor role in Fort Union's daily operations because of the few illegal activities, the park administration sought to prepare for possible crises in the future. In 1973 after a crime-free season, chief ranger Arnberger initiated a program of visitor protection and law enforcement. To meet the Park Service's new standards, Fort Union procured the necessary equipment including handguns and CB radio gear. Armed with modern communication equipment and first-aid supplies, a patrol vehicle was ready for duty at all times. [13] The following September, Chief Ranger Hoff attended a two-week law enforcement training course at Marana, Arizona, and graduated as a qualified law enforcement officer. [14] Then, the regular training of employees in law enforcement became an instituted part of human resource management. As a result, Fort Union was able to deal with misdemeanors.

To battle felonies, Fort Union still needed outside help. Its small semi-professional police force, usually consisting of only the chief ranger, could not effectively counter any major crime such as a murder, riot, or armed robbery. In most cases, the monument did not have the authority to act on those types of "external threats," so any satisfactory resolution of serious criminal incidents had to rely on consultation and cooperation with other federal agencies, as well as with state and local governments.

In 1974, Superintendent Hopkins and chief ranger Arnberger met with the U.S. Attorney in Albuquerque and officials from the New Mexico State Police and Las Vegas Police Departments to discuss pre-planning for cooperative efforts for riot and disturbance control. [15] Several years in a row, park management worked closely with these agencies plus the Federal Bureau of Investigation on details. Fort Union finally reached an agreement with these agencies for cooperation in mutual areas of interest in law enforcement. [16] In 1984, the park made a similar agreement with the Mora County Sheriff's Department. [17] More cooperation meant less worry about the park's own ability to counteract major crimes.

One incident showed the effectiveness of cooperation. At four o'clock in the afternoon of July 21, 1987, Chief Ranger David Roberts saw a strange man walking around the visitor center singing to himself. Quickly checking the parking lot, Roberts found no cars. Following the man to the rear of the building, the ranger saw a Toyota pickup parked on the interpretive trail. A sense of duty pushed Roberts towards

the vehicle. As he approached, the man appeared to be very nervous and tried to start his car hurriedly. Ignoring Roberts's knocking on the window, he raced his pickup along the trail to the mechanics corral, then across a field onto a service road to exit the park. Roberts called the State Police for assistance. The eight-mile entrance road was the only way out. Before the person could pass Wheeler Lake, policeman James Montoya had blocked the escape route. The trapped suspect had no choice but to surrender to the officer. After a preliminary investigation, the State Police found that he was suspected of car theft, and put him in Mora County Jail pending court action. [18]

In addition to the occasional vandal and criminal, developers also threatened the integrity of the monument. If the Union Land and Grazing Company decided to turn Fort Union Ranch into a ski resort or a petroleum field, Fort Union National Monument would lose its scenic setting and become "true ruins." As an island besieged by vast areas of private property, the park felt powerless in controlling its own destiny. In the seventies, the Southwest Regional Office began to express concerns about the future of Fort Union Ranch, and asked the park employees to keep an open line of communication with the landowner. Accordingly, Fort Union maintained close ties with the employees and officials of the company. The good neighbor policy of the Park Service enabled the fort personnel to detect any change in the use of the ranch lands. [19]

In the report that responded to the regional director's request, Superintendent Hopkins expressed doubt of any changing land status of Union Ranch in the near future, but several facts boosted his confidence. Both water and climate had limited the use of the land in the surrounding twenty-mile radius to dry farming, cattle ranching, and forest production. Also, no metropolitan center was near the monument. Las Vegas, thirty miles away, was a static, economically depressed town of 20,000 residents. It had little industry and its prospects appeared poor. Therefore, no immediate encroachment or industrial threat would occur near the borders of the park. [20]

Since the mineral resources in the Mora Valley were as poor as the economy of Las Vegas, the monument could escape the threat of industrial development. For a long time, outside entrepreneurs and landowners hoped to find "gold" on the Fort Union Ranch. In 1977, Andrew Marshall brought professional scientists to the ranch to search for precious metals and petroleum. From September through December, a survey team from Cities Service Oil Company sank two exploratory wells on the prairie, primarily seeking oil, natural gas, and carbon dioxide. The survey ended as none existed in the area. [21]

The siege of Fort Union by the vast private lands around it, under a single owner, could be protective to the park if the company continued to keep the area as a cattle ranch. Ninety-seven-thousand acres of grass and forest served as a buffer to separate the fort from the noisy world. Because of this natural defense, air and water pollution posed no problem. In 1979, Fort Union participated in the Park Service's survey of air quality, providing the Regional Office with perceptive opinions about its atmosphere. Although the fort staff could not determine how pure the air was in the region because of the lack of equipment, they believed the air at the fort was free of air pollution. Nine years later, the second survey produced the same results. Chief ranger John Batzer requested air monitoring equipment but the Park

Service never purchased any. [22]

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Administrative History

CHAPTER 1: A FRONTIER POST (continued)

Figure 5. Fort Union Depot served as the Army supply center for the Department of New Mexico. The Mechanic's Corral, Fort Union Depot, in 1866.
Courtesy of the National Archives.

In the quarter-century after the Civil War, Americans conquered their last frontier by settling on the Great Plains. The greatest barrier to American settlement was the Plains Indians such as the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Apaches, who had resisted white encroachment. To confine them to a designated area required intensive military campaigns. During that period, Fort Union participated in

several large operations against the Indians: the Mescalero Scout of 1867, the Campaign of 1868, and the Red River War of 1874. As the largest military post west of the Mississippi during the period from 1865 to 1875, Fort Union helped the nation to subdue the Indian war parties.

In September 1867, a Mescalero Apache war party ran off 150 head of stock near Mora. With several dozen soldiers from the Third Cavalry, Capt. Francis H. Wilson immediately rode out of Fort Union in pursuit. On October 18, the soldiers finally caught up with the raiders in western Texas. After a three-hour battle in Dog Canyon, the army destroyed a winter camp of 400 Mescaleros and drove the warriors into the mountains. Fort Union played a memorable role in the Mescalero Scout, in which the raiders received a severe blow. [27]

Replacing the Mescaleros, the Plains Indians once more drew the attention of Fort Union from the east. In the fall of 1868, Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan decided to launch a winter campaign against the Kiowas and Comanches. He planned to have four columns converge on the winter campground of the Indians. Participating in this unprecedented military operation, Fort Union sent its troops down the Canadian River as a western thrust to encircle the Indians. Led by Maj. Andrew W. Evans, the New Mexico column engaged in several battles in western Texas and broke the resistance of the Plains tribes. Some Indians yielded to government demands and accepted the hated reservation system. [28]

Beginning in the early 1870s, some recovered Kiowas and Comanches joined by a few Cheyennes and Arapahos increased their raids on settlements on the northern frontier of Texas. General Sheridan decided to repeat his strategy by fighting the tribes from different directions. One of the five converging columns came from New Mexico. Under the command of Maj. William E. Price, three troops of the Eighth Cavalry left Fort Union on August 20, 1874, and scoured the valleys of the Canadian and Washita rivers. At the end of the year, the Red River War resulted in victory; the defeated tribes of the southern Plains never again posed a threat to settlers. [29]

In its forty years (1851-1891) as a frontier post, Fort Union often had to defend itself in the courtroom as well as on the battlefield. When the U.S. Army built Fort Union in the Mora Valley in 1851, the soldiers were unaware that they had encroached on private property, which was part of the Mora Grant. The following year Colonel Sumner expanded the fort to an area of eight square miles by claiming the site as a military reservation. In 1868 President Andrew Johnson went even further to declare a timber reservation encompassing the entire range of the Turkey Mountains and comprising an area of fifty-three square miles, as part of the fort. [30]

The claimants of the Mora Grant immediately challenged the government squatters and took the case to court. By the mid-1850s the case reached Congress. In the next two decades the government did not give any favorable decision to the claimants, until 1876 when the Surveyor-General of New Mexico reported that Fort Union was "no doubt" located in the Mora Grant. But the army was unwilling to move to another place or to compensate the claimants because of the cost. Thus, the Secretary of War took "a prudential measure," protesting the decision of the acting commissioner of the General Land Office. He argued that the military had improved the area and should not give it up without compensation. [31] This

stalling tactic worked; the army stayed at the fort until its demise in 1891, not paying a single penny to legitimate owners.

The transcontinental railroad symbolized the conquest of the frontier. On Independence Day 1879, the first locomotive of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad steamed into Las Vegas. The railroad opened a new era in the Southwest by replacing the old Santa Fe Trail as the main artery of commerce. During the 1880s Fort Union lost its military importance and commercial usefulness due to the defeat of the Indians and the arrival of the railroad. The number of soldiers stationed at the fort declined significantly. The fort no longer had any great military value. Once the superintendent of Indian schools proposed to acquire the vacant arsenal buildings for the establishment of an Indian manual labor school. Certainly, the heyday of Fort Union had passed. [32] In 1890, with the census reports' symbolic closing of the frontier, the War Department decided to abandon many of the old frontier posts, including Fort Union. As a result, a year later Fort Union was officially closed.

As a military post to protect travel and settlement for 40 years, 1851 to 1891, Fort Union played a key role in shaping the destiny of the Southwest. During the first decade of its existence the fort stood as the guardian of the Santa Fe Trail. The fort acted as a federal presence in the Territory of New Mexico. The Civil War added to the fort's fame at the battle of Glorieta Pass, where Union soldiers stopped the invading Southern columns. In the quarter-century after the reunion, Fort Union contrived to help American settlers and devoted the rest of its life to the conquest of American frontier. As historian Robert Utley praised, "The ruins of Fort Union graphically commemorate the achievements of the men who won the West." [33]

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CHAPTER 2: FROM RUINS TO A NATIONAL MONUMENT
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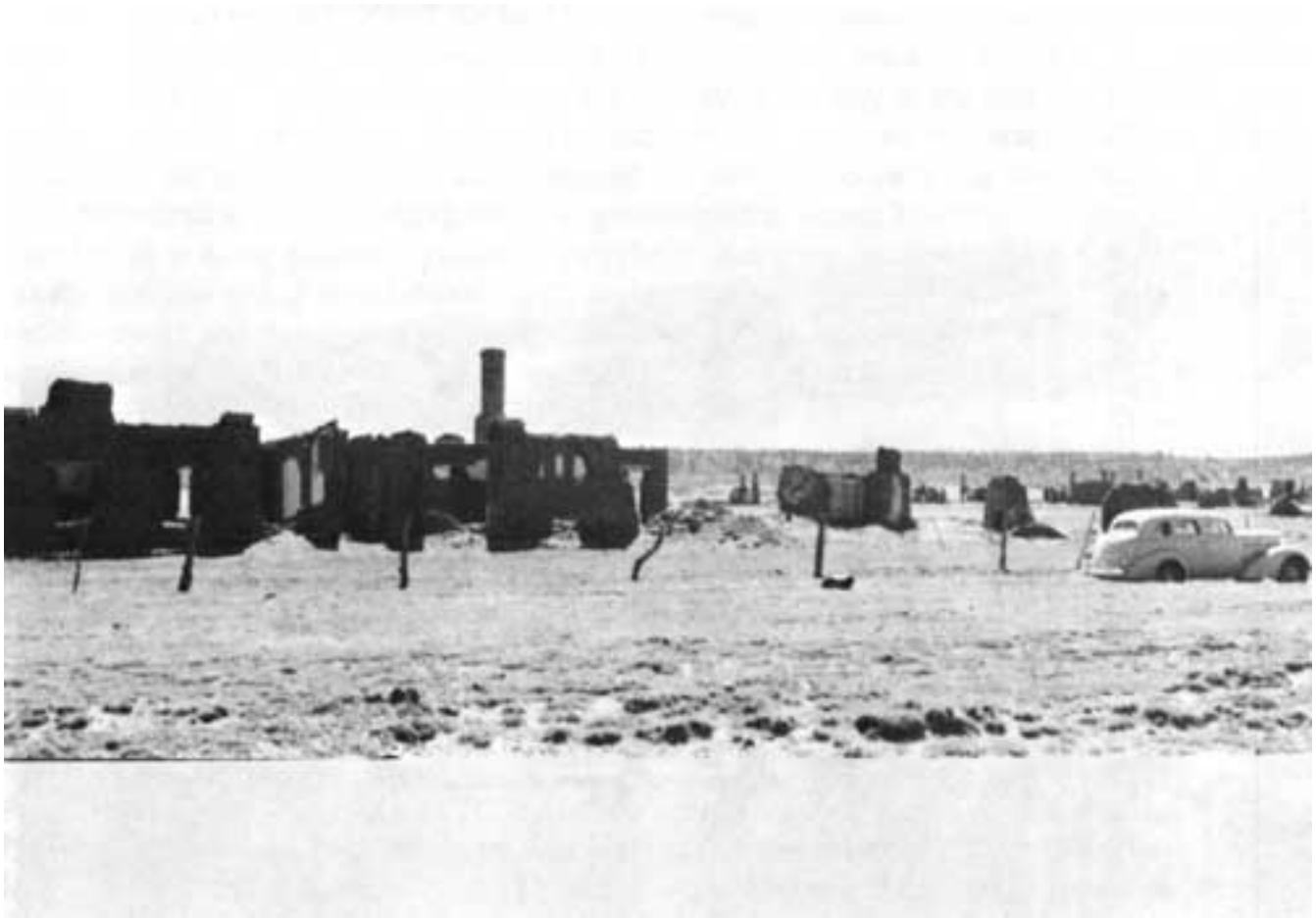

Figure 7. Fort Union Hospital in 1939. A visitor's car parked nearby.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

One incident finally started a widespread movement for the establishment of Fort Union National Monument. On June 17, 1949, E. N. Thwaites of a Las Vegas radio station called a local resident (Mr. Walter), indicating that on June 20, the Union Land and Grazing Company was going to raze Fort Union. Quickly passing among local citizens, this news prompted Boaz Long, director of the Museum of

New Mexico, and his wife to inspect the ruins the next day. They did not find anything unusual except some tourists' cars struggling to get through the muddy route. Once back in town, Long made half a dozen calls without getting any worthwhile information. [34] On June 19 Long repeated the process with no luck. Other people spent the day in search of Roger Reed, who had received a contract from the company to backfill all cisterns and wells in order to prevent people and cows from falling into them. When they finally found him, they asked him to suspend action until the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce met on June 20. Although no record showed Reed's response, the action did take place. Louis Timm, Reed's employee at the time, later recalled that he and other workers filled in all cisterns and wells, and toppled the weak walls and twenty chimneys. [35] Outraged by this action, people in Las Vegas saw the urgency of preserving the ruins of Fort Union.

With a strong will to save the historic site as well as ranching interests, local citizens took the issue to the Las Vegas-San Miguel Chamber of Commerce. On June 20, 1949, board members of the Chamber of Commerce, in regular session, voted to seek aid from the federal government and the state of New Mexico. They also voted to pay the cost of purchasing iron gratings to cover open wells and cisterns on the land. The next day their decision made headline news in the Las Vegas *Daily Optic*. [36] With a copy of the paper in hand, Lewis F. Schiele, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, lost no time in writing Clinton P. Anderson, U.S. senator from New Mexico, explaining the current situation of Fort Union and expressing his concern over past destruction. Schiele urged the senator to take steps necessary to encourage the government to acquire the site. [37] E. N. Thwaites, newly elected chairman of the Fort Union National Monument Committee, took the opportunity on June 22 to write Andrew Marshall, treasurer of the Union Land and Grazing Company, telling him that the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, the New Mexico Historical Society, and the Order of Masons were interested in preserving Fort Union as a historic site. Thwaites wanted Marshall to cooperate with local groups and hoped the company would participate in a new round of negotiations. [38] The actions taken by the Chamber of Commerce, which headed this committee, began a renewed campaign.

Sending a copy of Schiele's letter to the director of the National Park Service, Senator Anderson invited the Park Service to cooperate with the local campaigners. The Park Service's response was quick, enthusiastic, and favorable. Washington asked the Region Three Office to review its files on the project and to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. In compliance with this request from Washington, regional director M. R. Tillotson assigned the task to Dr. Erik K. Reed and Milton J. McColm. They went to Las Vegas to discuss the current situation with Schiele. From him they learned that Roger Reed, local manager for the company, was antagonistic toward any idea that would open Fort Union to the public. On August 17, 1949, they visited the ruins and found that "considerable further deterioration had occurred since 1939-40." [39] In the report Erik Reed and Milton McColm concluded, "the situation is evidently hopeless...." [40]

The situation back east was not much better. While Thwaites was waiting for Andrew Marshall's reply to his letter, U.S. Rep. Antonio M. Fernandez of New Mexico informed him about Marshall's tactics in Washington. Fernandez revealed that although Marshall had not written to Thwaites, he had written to fellow congressmen from his home state of Massachusetts, asking them to oppose any effort to create a

national monument at Fort Union. [41] At this point Marshall and his company had the upper hand.

Despite these unfavorable events, New Mexicans continued fighting for their cause. In 1949 the Masonic lodges of Las Vegas and Wagon Mound held their annual meetings at Fort Union for the first time since it closed in 1891. This initiated an annual pilgrimage to the fort. The largest one was in September 1951 when the Masons celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of Fort Union. More than three hundred people toured the ruins of the fort and enjoyed a barbecue. [42] "This celebration," Preston P. Patraw, acting regional director of Region Three, commented, "gave evidence of deep local interest in and support for the Fort Union National Monument project." [43]

During the same period, from 1949 to 1951, some people pushed for a state monument at Fort Union. Boaz Long first sold his idea to the New Mexico State Tourist Bureau, thinking the state could expropriate the site at a cost of $12,000. [44] He received support from both local citizens and the Tourist Bureau. By 1951 the movement for the preservation of Fort Union had gained solid ground in the state.

On August 13, 1951, more than 21 years after the first legislative attempt to make Fort Union a national monument, U.S. Rep. John J. Dempsey of New Mexico introduced a new bill (H.R. 5139) in the 82nd Congress to authorize the establishment of Fort Union National Monument. [45] The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives asked the secretary of the interior for his opinion. On August 30, Secretary Oscar L. Chapman, in his letter to the committee chairman John R. Murdock, recommended that the bill be enacted immediately. The hearings were held on May 29, 1952. At this time objection to the proposed legislation came from the owners of the Union Land and Grazing Company, who lobbied to block the bill. Influenced by Andrew Marshall, the committee felt that "action should be delayed until full consideration could be given to certain safeguards the owners desired." [46] Like the previous legislation, the bill died in committee.

On the home front, New Mexicans constantly pressured the Union Land and Grazing Company. Lincoln O'Brien, president of New Mexico Newspapers, Inc., bragged he could influence Marshall, now treasurer of the company, because he was a personal friend. After a few letters to Marshall, it appeared that O'Brien was as good as his word. On October 12, 1951, Marshall made a visit to New Mexico. Following an aerial survey of Fort Union, O'Brien flew Marshall to Santa Fe, where they met with Preston Patraw, acting regional director, Hugh M. Miller, assistant regional director, and Erik Reed, regional archeologist and historian. [47] At the meeting Marshall told them that "the Union Land and Grazing Company did not want to appear uncooperative or obstructive...." [48] The company was concerned that "a road-way would seriously interfere with the circulation of the range cattle and an influx of careless tourist would greatly increase the hazard of grass fires." [49] Although Marshall came to Las Vegas to meet with the representatives of the Park Service in February 1952, he remained unmoved in his opposition. For a year negotiations over the Fort Union project stalled.

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CHAPTER 2: FROM RUINS TO A NATIONAL MONUMENT (contined)

A breakthrough finally occurred in Santa Fe in 1953. State Senator Gordon Melody of Las Vegas helped to sponsor a bill in the state legislature. According to House Bill No. 297, the state of New Mexico would authorize the state park commission to acquire the Fort Union Military Reservation and the right-of-way for access through eminent domain proceedings. Then New Mexico would convey them to the federal government for national monument purposes. [50] On March 20, 1953, the state legislature passed the bill. Governor Edwin Mechem signed the bill on the following day.

When the state of New Mexico showed that it could acquire the land without approval from the company, the passage of House Bill No. 297 conceivably changed the attitude of Andrew Marshall and the company from one of antagonism to cooperation. As soon as the bill became law, The Las Vegas-San Miguel Chamber of Commerce planned to negotiate with the Union Land and Grazing Company to acquire lands for the proposed monument by appointing two committees: a negotiating committee and a financing committee. In less than a month the board of directors of the company, who believed the establishment of Fort Union National Monument was inevitable, decided to "deal amicably" with the representatives of the chamber of commerce. They sent Marshall to New Mexico to negotiate. Once in Las Vegas on May 6, Marshall frankly informed Assistant Director Hugh M. Miller of the Park Service, "they would not again exert pressure to defeat in Congress a bill authorizing the creation of Fort Union National Monument...." [51] In the next few months negotiations between Marshall and Schiele seemed cordial. Marshall again raised the issue of the reversionary clause and mineral rights because the company worried about the possibility of draining oil out from under its adjacent property. [52] But the company's fears imposed no serious threat at the bargaining table. By late August the two sides reached a tentative agreement that, after local donors paid the company a sum of $20,000 for "damages," the company would then transfer the lands directly for national monument purposes. [53]

In 1953 New Mexicans made their third legislative attempt in Congress to create Fort Union National Monument. Realizing the significant change through the new state law and in the attitude of the company, Rep. John Dempsey again introduced bill (H.R. 1005) authorizing the establishment of Fort Union National Monument in the 83rd Congress. [54] To accompany Dempsey's bill, Sen. Clinton P.

Anderson of New Mexico submitted a bill (S. 2873) in the Senate. With the absence of negative lobbying from the Union Land and Grazing Company, the bills received a warm reception on Capitol Hill. Meanwhile people in the executive branch showed their support, recommending the bills be enacted immediately. On February 19, 1954, the House Subcommittee on Public Lands held hearings on H.R. 1005. John Dempsey and Conrad L. Wirth, director of the National Park Service, testified before the committee. Both of them did a superb job in convincing the committee that the future operation of the monument would not be too costly. In the end, the members of the subcommittee unanimously approved the bill and sent it to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. [55]

Accompanied by a reversionary clause, which was acceptable to the Department of the Interior, H.R. 1005 encountered little opposition from the committee and passed the House in late March. Immediately, Senator Anderson urged the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands to support his monument bill (S. 2873) and to hold a hearing, which, he thought, needed only a few minutes. [56] During the era of the Second Red Scare, the McCarthy hearings had preoccupied the Senate Chamber in which many members "engaged in that circus everyday." Twice, Henry C. Dworshak, chairman of the Subcommittee, tried to set up the hearings on the bill and each time a scheduled hearing had to be canceled due to certain "difficulties." Finally, Anderson requested that the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs report the bill out without subcommittee's consideration. The full committee did so and sent the bill to the floor. [57] On June 15, 1954, the bill passed the Senate and went to the White House. On June 28, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it. The new law authorized the secretary of the interior to acquire the site and remaining structures of Fort Union for national monument purposes. [58]

Along with this long and troublesome legislative battle in Washington, the main campaign for the establishment of Fort Union National Monument was taking place in New Mexico. After the preliminary agreement between the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce and the Union Land and Grazing Company, the finance committee superseded the negotiation committee in taking a major role in the business. The finance committee was responsible for raising the $20,000 required under the agreement. In late 1953, those involved realized that a larger, independent organization was needed to handle contributions. Thus, a non-profit organization known as Fort Union, Inc., was formed to replace the finance committee in December 1953. The specific purpose of the new organization was to undertake the acquisition of the site of Fort Union through fund raising. [59] Recruiting interested citizens from different groups such as politicians, businessmen, teachers, and Masons, Fort Union, Inc., united all forces in the campaign in a coordinated way.

At the first meeting, on January 11, 1954, eleven of the original fourteen members of Fort Union, Inc. elected Ross E. Thompson as president, James W. Arrott vice-president, and Lewis F. Schiele secretary-treasurer. [60] Under the leadership of these three able and devoted men, the corporation launched a state-wide campaign to secure $20,000 to reimburse the Union Land and Grazing Company for their inconvenience. Since the proposed road to Fort Union had been approved as a secondary federal aid project, the New Mexico State Highway Department agreed to contribute matching funds of $10,000. Through its coordinators in Las Vegas, Raton, Gallup, Deming, Santa Fe, Socorro, Albuquerque,

Roswell, and Farmington, Fort Union, Inc., contacted various companies, organizations, and individuals who might be interested in helping the cause. [61] Fund-raising efforts were also taken to the public schools. No contribution was too small to be accepted. For example, Castle Junior High School of Las Vegas in a poster stated that even a five-cent contribution would be welcome. [62] Each student who contributed would receive a small card saying, "I helped save Old Fort Union." By the end of 1954 the organization had already collected $10,076 after spending only $431.14 on office supplies; it had a net deposit of $9,645.61. [63]

In the meantime, federal and state government politicians continued to work out the details for land title and the access road. The chief concerns of the company were the scenic easement and the cattle underpasses. According to the agreement, the government was going to build at least three underpasses on the highway and prohibit all billboards along the road. On June 10, 1955, Regional Director Hugh Miller sent a draft of the deed to Andrew Marshall and the attorney general of the United States. Six days later the board of directors of the Union Land and Grazing Company voted to grant 720.6 acres of land to the U.S. government. The final deal came on August 24, 1955, when Ross E. Thompson, on behalf of Fort Union, Inc., turned over to Marshall two checks totaling $10,000. On the following day the deed was recorded with the County Clerk of Mora County. With the approval of the attorney general, the U.S. government accepted the donation on October 18, 1955. On April 4, 1956, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay signed the order to establish the Fort Union National Monument in Mora County, New Mexico. [64] The ruins of Fort Union officially became a national monument.

After the nation bid farewell to the frontier in 1890, the War Department abandoned Fort Union, once the largest military post in the West. The land reverted to the original owners; the adobes reverted to the earth. In the next 65 years the buildings at the fort gradually deteriorated because of natural attrition and human vandalism. Many people, however, were concerned with saving the old fort from further destruction and asked for help from the federal government and the state of New Mexico. From the 1920s, New Mexicans, joined by government officials, campaigned to created a national monument at the site. In 1956, after many defeats, they finally achieved their goal. The establishment of Fort Union National Monument was the result of an arduous and persistent effort by both the officials of the National Park Service and the citizens of New Mexico.

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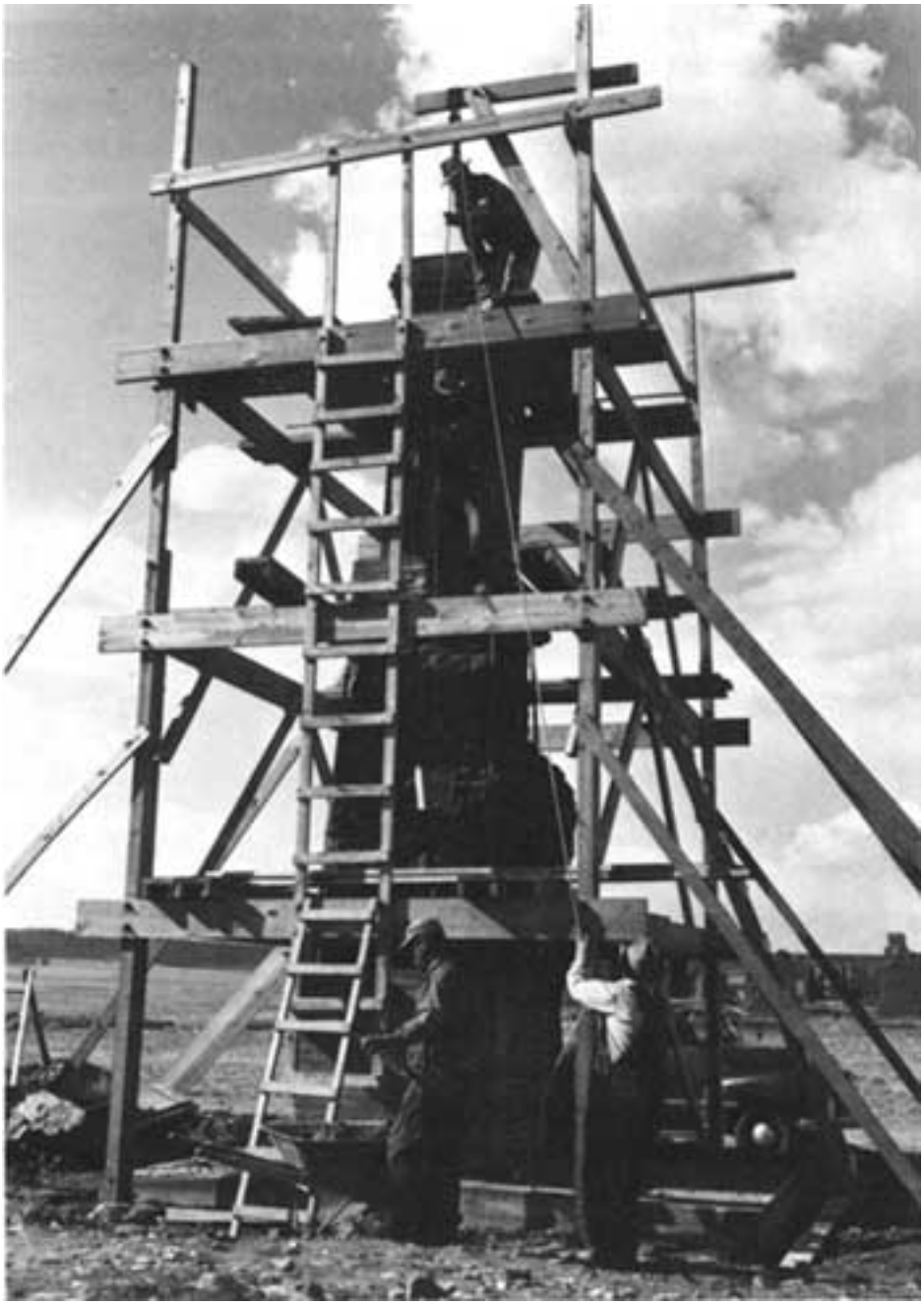

Figure 9. In late 1956, the stabilization team first worked on the remaining chimneys. Photo shows Martin Archuleta and other unidentified workers filling a chimney with cement. *Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.*

Along with the development of supporting facilities, the excavation and stabilization of the ruins received an equal amount of resources and energies from the Park Service. During his trip to Fort Union on December 13, 1955, archeologist Charles Steen of the Park Service realized that deterioration was taking place with astonishing speed at the ruins. Photographs taken in 1945 showed two dozen chimneys standing at full height; ten years later, only six full chimneys remained, and two of them probably would not survive another winter. [19] Steen's discovery urged the Park Service to come up with protective measures for the crumbling walls and chimneys. Accepting his suggestion, the regional office decided to start a rehabilitation program as soon as the monument was established.

On August 1, 1956, archeologist George Cattanach arrived at Fort Union to direct the stabilization and excavation of the ruins. Even though the Park Service already had accumulated much experience in the stabilization and preservation of historic structures, the adobe walls at the fort posed a new challenge. Because there was no proven method for stabilizing adobe buildings, trial and experimentation seemed to be the only satisfactory answer. Only a week after he reported for duty, Cattanach led a crew of five men to begin the emergency preservation program. Prior to this work, Acting Superintendent Wing had directed a four-man team to work on several preliminary projects such as picking up roofing tin from the grounds. This work made Cattanach's job easier. The initial objectives consisted of clearing away rubble and debris, reinforcing chimneys with concrete, and experimenting with various materials for capping the adobe walls. [20] In the first two months, excellent weather enabled the crew to complete the stabilization work on the remaining chimneys of the commanding officer's residence, and to clear the original flagstone sidewalks that totaled about 800 lineal feet in front of officer's row.

Although Cattanach and his workers accomplished the initial work, the entire program lasted less than three months. In the first two months, the stabilization crew spent $6,700 of the project's total $18,020 budget for the 1957 fiscal year. Thus, in late October, the park had to lay off four persons due to lack of funds. [21] During the winter, Cattanach and the only maintenance man excavated sections of the ruins. At the same time, he was planning a stabilization program for the next season, developing techniques, securing materials, and acquiring advice. The high winter winds continued to level the more fragile adobes. Once a six-foot block of chimney was blown down.

The stabilization work resumed in the spring of 1957. The first season provided the monument staff with much useful experience. Because the adobe walls of the forty historic buildings comprised a total length of five miles, one hundred percent preservation was impractical and too costly. Wing and Cattanach tried to define a limited objective for the project. Any building that contained more than fifty percent of original wall material would receive maximum stabilization attention. But they did not deliberately ignore the other structures because they knew that once a building was reduced to foundations alone, it became much less interesting to visitors. [22] Their strategy for priority never restrained their

willingness to save as much of the ruins as possible. In May, the stabilization crew increased to seven members with directions to focus on the adobe walls. They used steel braces and cement paste to support the weakened portions of buildings. Then the workers capped the weathered walls with soil-cement bricks. Finally, the entire structure was sprayed with a silicone preservative to make it moisture resistant. However, the silicone had to be applied annually to assure maximum protection.

The stabilization proceeded smoothly. In June, the preservation team recruited three more persons. Some of them began to work on excavation tasks while the stabilization job continued throughout the ruins. Again, in October, the park laid off the full crew of ten men due to limited funds, however, they had accomplished most of their job.

The winter of 1957-58 was an extremely hard one. Covering Fort Union with eight feet of snow, the cold weather hampered all construction and stabilization projects. As in the previous winter, Cattanach stayed inside his warm residence and contrived various preservation techniques for the next spring. As soon as the snow melted into Wolf Creek, a twelve-man crew started the new working season. In May 1958, the stabilization crew was expanded to 21 persons. Their main objectives were to excavate the buildings and improve the visitor trail through the ruins. By the summer, they had excavated most of the buildings by removing thousands of cubic yards of dirt. Under Cattanach's leadership, the crew did an excellent job on excavation and stabilization. To reward his superb performance at Fort Union, the regional office promoted him to a higher position at Mesa Verde National Monument. In early September, archeologist Rex L. Wilson of Ocmulgee National Monument in Georgia came to Fort Union to replace Cattanach. [23] As another winter approached, the park staff could look back on their most successful season.

Under Wilson's direction, excavation and stabilization continued at great speed. All stabilization was undertaken on a priority basis; those walls and features in most urgent need of repair received the earliest attention. Small repair jobs in buildings often followed at a later date. [24] Before the close of 1959, people saw the success, with the realization that the stabilization of the ruins would be completed by the next season. Thereafter, a small maintenance crew could handle the daily routines of preservation. By August 1960, after spending four years and more than $100,000, the Park Service had accomplished the initial emergency stabilization. [25] The program was extended for another fiscal year for wrap-up operations.

Despite success in protecting the ruins, stabilization at Fort Union left a negative impact on the archeological deposits located in the Third Fort area. Because of little information on the archeological deposits and the pressure of time on the project, Cattanach and Wilson allowed the crew to use destructive methods. For example, a bulldozer was used extensively on the exterior of the various structures to clear deposits that had built up against the walls. These efforts, which removed dirt and debris to the wall footings or below them, also removed archeological evidence of the construction or demolition sequences of the various structures. [26]

Although rehabilitation rather than reconstruction of the fort was the substance of a Capitol Hill

agreement for the establishment of Fort Union National Monument, the Park Service later modified its position. Along with the construction of supporting facilities on the outskirts of the ruins, a small reconstruction project took place. The park staff believed that if a replica of the flagpole could stand in the center of the parade ground, it would enhance the historical atmosphere of the fort. After a year of research, historian Donald Mawson produced an accurate drawing of the flagstaff. In February 1959, Kueffer Construction Company erected a replicated flagpole in front of the commanding officer's quarters. [27]

Another construction project at the ruins was a visitor trail. Designed by Wing himself, the primitive sand-gravel trail, 2,900 feet long and six feet wide, appeared in April 1957. A year later, workers added 2,500 feet of soil-cement trail. Some parts of the trail were surfaced with emulsified asphalt. In 1959, after spending $11,936, The crews at Fort Union had completed a 4,103-foot trail network. [28]

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CHAPTER 3: REHABILITATING AND PRESERVING THE FORT
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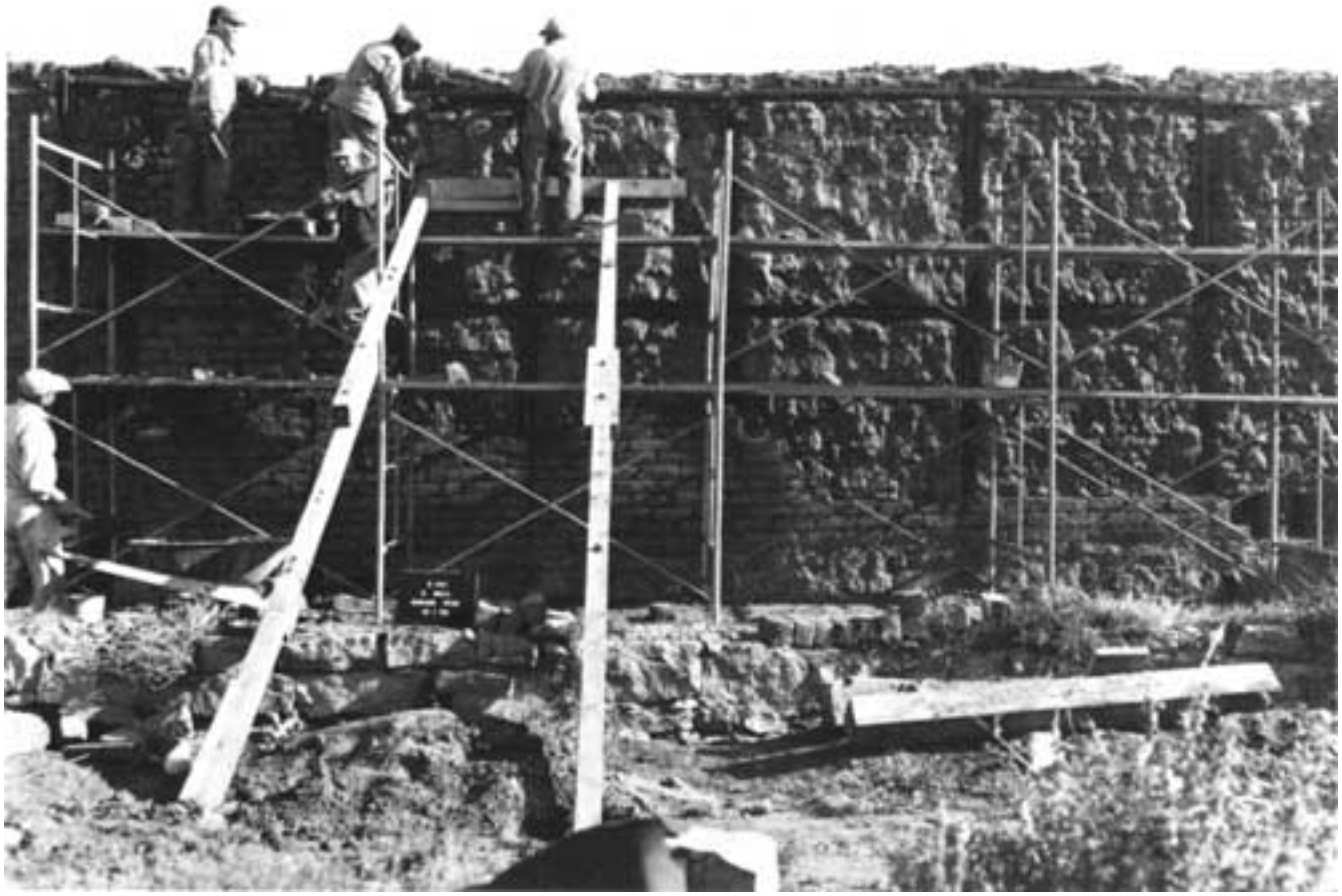

Figure 10. Carlos Lovato, Ike Trujillo, Benito Lucero, and Dionicio Ulibarri stabilizing the wall of Commissary Warehouse, October 1958.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

Nineteen fifty-nine marked a watershed in the history of Fort Union National Monument. When it became a national monument in 1956, the abandoned post was still in the wilderness. Occasionally, a few curious visitors drove to the ruins along the ruts of the old Santa Fe Trail. Just three years later, Fort

Union had a permanent visitor center and two residence houses with electricity and running water. A paved highway and telephone line had linked the fort to the rest of the world. Even the aged adobe walls had received modern cosmetic treatment such as the silicone coating. Indeed, the monument had finished its first period of intensive development and become a fully functional national monument.

Certainly, it was time to have a celebration. Since the ribbon-cutting ceremony three years before, people had constantly asked for a formal dedication of the monument. However, the Park Service did not think that it was wise to hold this kind of event without the existence of basic service facilities and an operating stabilization program. By the spring of 1959, everybody realized that the situation was mature; Fort Union, Inc., began to organize the pageant, which was scheduled for June 14, 1959. In order to bring as many people as possible, open invitations printed on placards were placed in the windows of most business firms in Las Vegas. [29] As had occurred during the campaign for the establishment of Fort Union National Monument, the dedication again showed the efforts of the community.

Around one-thirty on the afternoon of June 14, the Twelfth Air Force Band started playing while three thousand attendants took their seats between the new visitor center and the old officer's quarters. At two o'clock, four F-100 Super Sabre jets flew over Fort Union as the signal came to hoist the American flag up the replica flagpole. To give a 21-gun salute with a 105mm howitzer, 101 members from the 726th AAA Battalion of the New Mexico National Guard presented the colors. A series of speeches followed. Among the prestigious speakers were President Ross Thompson of Fort Union, Inc., Superintendent Homer Hastings, New Mexico's Lieutenant Governor Ed V. Mead, Brigadier General William C. Kingsbury of the Air Force, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Roger C. Ernst, and Director Conrad L. Wirth of the National Park Service. In his dedication address, Ernst delightedly expressed that he had the double opportunity to dedicate the fort and the visitor center. He paid tribute to those who won the frontier and those who won the monument. [30] Indeed, the ceremony formally ushered in a new era for Fort Union National Monument.

As the decade of the 1960s arrived, the administration of Fort Union properly shifted its emphasis of management from construction to maintenance. Routine operations such as cleaning the water tank, painting the wooden fences, and repairing the visitor center filled the park staff's many working hours. In 1963, funds available at the regional office permitted the addition of another residence at the monument. Cillessen Brothers Company of Albuquerque completed construction during the next spring. [31] Except for this small expansion, no major construction occurred at the place during the early 1960s. Most workers just kept themselves busy with daily maintenance.

Ruins preservation continued. The maintenance crew applied silicone coating to the walls that needed it twice a year. In 1963, however, the collapse of several walls due to high winds renewed the search for more reliable methods of stabilization and preservation. The workers tried a new technique that used Redi bolts and guy cables to strengthen those walls in the greatest danger of collapse. By September 1965, all the adobe walls at the fort had received a silicone coating with the exception of one section of the Post Hospital's wall, which was being tested with sandstone, adobe paste, and epoxy resin. It proved

that these new methods were better. [32]

From the mid-1960s, Fort Union National Monument began to try other new ways of preserving the ruins on a large scale. Previously, workers routinely applied silicone coating to the crumbling adobe walls to prevent them from further deterioration. Although silicone temporarily worked as a shield to fend off the sun, snow, and rains, in fact, silicone coating often trapped moisture inside the structures and weakened the entire building. White silicone coating, which reflected more light, destroyed the unique complexion of the ruins, which resembled the reddish color of the soil. Cooperating with the Park Service and the University of Arizona, the Globe Archeological and Stabilization Center in Arizona gradually developed a new technique to preserve the adobe structures. Specialists at the center recommended that Fort Union try epoxy resin and adobe paste on the ruins because they were closer to the original materials. Under the direction of the center, the monument underwent large scale experimentation. [33]

As devoted caretakers of the ruins for ten years, Fort Union's staff won their reputation in the National Park service. In July 1965, three regional offices of the National Park Service (the Southwest, Southeast, and Midwest) formed a joint committee to undertake a survey of seven western forts. [34] Fort Union's management was deemed the best among all seven western forts, and the committee suggested that the other forts learn from Fort Union's experience. "Fort Union, New Mexico," concluded the committee, "was an outstanding example of good management." [35]

One of the chief caretaking operations in the late 1960s was to reconstruct the visitor trail. When the monument opened to the public, the original flagstone walks built around 1877 were repaired to serve as a part of the visitor route. The larger portion of the route was a 4,000-foot path of emulsified asphalt laid in the late 1950s. After ten years, this weather-beaten path started to crack. Because the heat and moisture trapped by asphalt made the trail an increasingly fertile breeding ground for undesirable vegetation, rapid growth of weeds constantly broke the surface of the asphalt path from below. By 1967, Fort Union administrators had to consider the reconstruction of the trail, writing a tentative proposal for a $19,000 project. [36] Awarded the contract, Howard Flanagan of Las Vegas, in the spring of 1968, began to replace some sections of the asphalt trail with flagstones. Before the winter came, he finished approximately 1,700 feet of flagstone walkway. [37]

Extensive repairs of the visitor trail continued in the 1970s. Superintendent Claude Fernandez reported in 1972 that more than 13,000 square feet of the asphalt trail needed either replacing or repairing. Because of the unavailability of local gravel and a considerable amount of money, the park had to postpone the work for three years. In 1975, the regional office appropriated extra funds for the project. Then the monument replaced the remainder of the asphalt path with a rock-crusher waste walkway. [38]

In addition to the new visitor trail, a series of construction projects occurred at Fort Union in the first half of the 1970s. Expecting to provide better service to the public, park staff installed several picnic tables outside the visitor center and interpretive-resting benches along the visitor trail. For its own benefit, the monument acquired two storage buildings for stabilization equipment, general supplies, and

maintenance tools. Moreover, all the service buildings, including the visitor center, living quarters, and maintenance shop, received a facelift. In 1973, Superintendent Ross Hopkins reported that all the service buildings were in "a sad stage of deterioration." They needed to be repaired immediately. Carefully assessing the conditions of the structures, the park began to repair them the following spring. That summer, a heavy thunderstorm, which covered the ground with hail up to eight inches deep, caused $4,000 in damages to vehicles and buildings. But the storm did not stop this project. By the end of 1974, all the buildings were rehabilitated. [39]

During the same period, personnel changes occurred at Fort Union. In January 1971, Superintendent Hastings retired after almost 13 years of service at the monument. Although in the last few years of his tenure he became less energetic and creative, everyone felt that Hastings's leaving was a big loss to the park. He not only held the longest tenure as superintendent in the history of Fort Union National Monument, but also acted as superb leader in the early development of the park. In April, Claude Fernandez of Carlsbad Caverns National Park came to fill the vacant position. He remained at the fort for only 26 months, during which severe diabetes limited his performance. In June 1973, he accepted a new job as supervisory park ranger at Chamizal National Memorial in El Paso. Again, Fort Union was looking for a new, energetic, and healthy leader. Fortunately, a month later, Ross Hopkins, a 15-year Park Service veteran came from the Denver Service Center of the Park Service and began his seven-year administration. [40]

As soon as he arrived at the fort, Hopkins injected new energy into the never-ending task of adobe preservation. Although maintenance routines such as filling cracks with soil-cement bricks and capping walls with adobe mortar proceeded as usual, the preservation crew developed a new system to take care of the ruins. Besides emergency repairs following unpredictable severe weather, a regular five-year maintenance schedule was assigned to each wall section because erosion usually began to occur within a five-year period. Designed to beat mother nature, this system made the preservation crew operate more efficiently. Original wood beams were treated with wood preservative, and metal was painted with rust resistant paint on a five-year cycle.

When a spot check of the ruins using photos from the stabilization records showed most of the adobe walls firm and strong, the keen workers found that the stone foundations, which were not included in the routine maintenance process, were in increasingly bad shape. They needed a complete resetting and pointing. [41] The Park Service decided to use the skills and experience of some Indians who were experts in stone building. In the fall of 1973, archeologist George Chambers from the Arizona Archeological Center, with a special grant of $25,000, directed a ruins stabilization unit of Navajos to ameliorate the damage to the stone foundations. During the eight-week project, they focused on the officers' quarters and reset all the limestone foundations. The chosen sections were reinforced with cement. The Navajos did an excellent job. [42]

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CHAPTER 3: REHABILITATING AND PRESERVING THE FORT
(continued)

Beginning in the second half of the 1970s, the ruins entered another intensive care period. In 1976, Hopkins helped acquire special funds--$75,000 annually--for a five-year stabilization project. At the same time, the Division of Cultural Resources of the Regional Office provided the monument with a weather station, set up near the Sutler's store, to monitor weather affecting the ruins. [43] With the new funding, equipment, and enthusiasm, employees at Fort Union immediately started their work on stabilizing the ruins. Before winter arrived, they had complete basic training in masonry repair and a drain system for the foundations of some buildings. Because of this project, the monument kept a stable team of ten men to labor on the ruins from each spring through fall during the next five working seasons.

As usual, Fort Union established its goals each year. Cyclical maintenance and improvement of park facilities were the major objectives for 1977. The asphalt trail and flagstone walkways were repaired. Workers assisted the Division of Cultural Resources in photographing, measuring, and inventorying all Third Fort buildings for a historic structure report. In the following summer, maintenance personnel again replaced some parts of the stone walkway laid only a decade ago. In general, the maintenance operation went smoothly.

Nevertheless, mother nature caused more troubles for the ruins. As the result of heavy snow and winds in February 1979 and January 1980, several huge sections of the adobe walls collapsed. Thus, during these two seasons, emergency stabilization was the primary issue. [44] After receiving an additional $83,000 for this urgent need, the preservation workers re-treated all the walls of the Third Fort and Arsenal with adobe coating and metal supporters. By the fall of 1980, the crew members had completed the stabilization of the building foundations for all the post officers' quarters and half of the depot officers' quarters. [45] Most of the five-year emergency preservation plan was achieved.

In July 1980, just as it celebrated its twenty-fourth birthday, Fort Union National Monument underwent a major administrative change. With a strong desire to reduce administrative costs and inefficiency, Southwest Regional Director Robert Kerr combined the administration of Fort Union and Capulin

Mountain under Capulin's superintendent, Clark D. Crane. When Ross Hopkins left for Saguaro National Monument in Arizona on July 27, a unit manager position replaced the superintendency at the fort. Until the selection of a permanent manager, general foreman Willis E. Reynolds served as acting unit manager. In late December, the Regional Office offered the new position to Carol M. Kruse of Canaveral National Seashore in Florida. She reported for duty on January 6, 1981. Despite minor adjustments in operating procedures, the new organization made a smooth transition. [47]

Although Fort Union lost its sovereignty, daily business was as usual, and was perhaps even more efficient. Under the benevolent rule of the superintendent of the Capulin Mountain National Monument, all division chiefs at Fort Union were responsible for their own day-to-day operation. They looked to Capulin counterparts only for special expertise or the coordination of projects that affected both areas. However, Crane separated the maintenance functions from those of the preservation team by creating two distinct divisions: maintenance and preservation. Each had its own specific agenda. Consequently, this realignment resulted in a more productive operation for both divisions.

Besides this administrative reorganization concerning the maintenance of the fort, the strategies and tactics for ruins preservation took a novel departure from their traditional course. Since the establishment of the monument, workers had been using soil-cement bricks and silicone coating as the main materials to stabilize the crumbling structures. Later, it proved that both materials trapped moisture inside the walls and hastened their deterioration. From the 1960s, the park staff started to test some new material and techniques but they were never applied on a large scale. In the spring of 1981, prior to the new working season, Fort Union, with the assistance of regional architect Dave Battle, devised a comprehensive plan for ruins preservation. According to the plan, first the fort's workers would return to the use of original materials rather than the cement and chemical products in adobe and foundation work. Second, the preservation crew would concentrate on repairing the ruins whose condition constituted major safety hazards to employees or visitors. Finally, the monument would immediately reinforce the foundations where the identity of entire buildings or of remaining walls was about to be lost. These three points began to serve as the park's principles for future ruins rehabilitation. [48]

Undoubtedly, the preservation activities were better prepared and executed in the following years. The severe rains and storms in the summer of 1981 once more indicated that the traditional cement-base protective plaster proved unsatisfactory when it cracked and peeled off from the walls. This situation gave more opportunities for experimenting with new methods on a large scale. The crew patched the damaged and exposed adobe structures with an adobe paste, which consisted mainly of sand and clay. For the first time, the entire project was photographically documented, both before and after. [49] The photographs provided more accurate data for future care of the ruins. In 1984, the monument purchased a new 35mm Olympus camera to facilitate high quality photographs for the ruins preservation work. Today, Fort Union has a complete set of photo files of the ruins.

Through the mid-1980s, the preservation crew continued to try various new methods and techniques. A protective coating was applied to the exposed adobe surfaces when the multiple layers of cement plaster began to crumble away. The mud coating appeared capable of surviving longer than the other materials

did. Another new method was to make a large number of adobe bricks at the beginning of each working season to allow adequate drying time before use. This increased the life span of bricks. Moreover, workers realized that it was necessary to clear debris and weeds from the base of all structures for the purpose to minimize moisture penetration. From 1982 to 1986, the preservation crew devoted many hours to such activities as removing rubble from fallen walls, resetting rocks to original locations, and uprooting weeds around building foundations. These operations provided better care to the ruins in general. [50]

A systematic study of adobe structures is as important as preservation itself. Before Fort Union outlined an appropriate preservation plan, some basic information about these historic structures became crucial. From the late 1970s, the monument, with the help of the Regional Office, started to gather accurate data about the ruins. They included historical research and current surveys. In 1982, Dwight Pitcaithley of the Regional Office and Jerome Greene of the Denver Service Center completed a long-term project, "The Historic Structure Report, Historic Data Section, the Third Fort Union, 1863-1891," which provided an excellent data base for Third Fort buildings. [51]

Meanwhile, Fort Union obtained information pertaining to the fort and related historic structures from the State Historic Preservation Office because New Mexico had excellent records about historic adobe buildings. [52] The park staff also accumulated more data by surveying all the ruins. As a result of the studies conducted in 1984, the monument had a better idea about its assets. For example, surveys showed that the Third Fort, Sutler's store, and the Arsenal contained 18,072 linear feet of foundations and 125,336 square feet of adobe surface suited for preservation work. [53] The collection of information paved the way for future research and rehabilitation.

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(continued)

All non-historic buildings at the fort also underwent change. In 1982, the monument began to renovate the out-of-date visitor center by relocating the interior partitions, insulating the walls, carpeting the lobby, and installing florescent lights. Renovations included the reconstruction of two restrooms to provide easy access for handicapped visitors. When the remodeling of the visitor center was completed the following spring, it resulted in a more pleasant environment for both visitors and employees. [54] As had the visitor center, the residential houses and maintenance shop received new foam roofs and stucco paint. However, a severe thunderstorm in the summer of 1983 struck Fort Union. Concentrated in the residential and maintenance areas, the thunderstorm, combined with a 37 mile-per-hour wind, caused approximately $30,000 in damages, which included the destruction of a storage shed and damage to the new roofs. This was the most costly natural disaster in the history of the monument. [55] But maintenance workers soon repaired most of the damaged buildings. In 1984, Fort Union concluded its four-year reroofing project.

Another aspect of this fresh outlook at the fort was a new trail and roads. In July 1983, as a service project, the Boy Scout troops of Las Vegas laid out a flagstone walkway from the visitor center to the hospital. Additionally, the Boy Scout troop from Santa Fe erected three platforms along the trail for interpretive purposes. [56] In 1984, under the Federal Lands Highway Program, Fort Union received $200,000 to reconstruct its aged roads. Awarded this contract, R. L. Stacey Construction of Santa Fe began to reconstruct and resurface all the blacktop roads within the park boundary. The company repaved all the residential driveways, the entrance road, and the maintenance parking area. They finished most of the job in December 1985. [57] After the Park Service found some minor defects, the company returned the next summer to put new patches and fog coats on some cracked areas. [58] By 1986, Fort Union had renovated almost all its supporting facilities and become a more accessible and accommodating place.

In March 1987, Carol Kruse accepted a promotion to superintendent of Tonto National Monument in Arizona. The fort lost a good manager. Nevertheless, two months later, exciting news arrived that the

new regional director, John E. Cook, had decided to grant Fort Union independence from Capulin Mountain National Monument. Realizing that Fort Union and Capulin Mountain had represented totally different values and purposes, he dissolved the seven-year odd marriage between the two units. Although the separation cost a little money, it helped the development of Fort Union, which gained more budgetary freedom. [59]

Between June 7 and October 1, the administrative functions at the two sections were gradually separated. During that time, Douglas C. McChristian of Hubbell Trading Post in Arizona came to assume the superintendency of the fort. As an energetic manager, he helped carry out a smooth transition of the administration. Accordingly his administration placed emphasis on finding more efficient methods of ruins preservation. His tenure, however, lasted less than a year. In May 1988, John Cook called him to Santa Fe for a new appointment. Later, he was selected as historian of Custer Battlefield National Monument (the present day Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument) in Montana. Several months had passed before the monument got a new chief. On August 15, Harry Myers, a seven-year veteran as superintendent of Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial in Ohio, came to fill the same position at Fort Union. The arrival of Myers, an experienced leader who fully understood how to build relationships among and with employees, opened a new chapter in the administrative history of the monument. [60]

After Fort Union became a separate administrative unit, it immediately entered a new era of ruins preservation. Managers and workers were deeply involved in more comprehensive research and planning instead of simple practice. Until that time, the fort lacked enough information for the proper management of its cultural resources. Although Greene and Pitcaithley had produced a historic structure report, the study contained virtually no information on the First and Second Forts. The park even lacked a historical base map of the ruins. In 1989, regional historian Melody Webb initiated a new project for the creation of the historical base maps of Fort Union. Research historian James E. Ivey received the assignment. His work will soon be completed. [61]

In 1987, the Regional Office and Fort Union began to conduct a thorough investigation of the remaining structures. Their purpose was to collect all the data concerning the ruins and develop a comprehensive preservation plan. Approving $12,000 for a preservation-plan study, the regional office asked research historian Rick Geiser to do some preliminary work on the subject. [62] A large project was planned for the period from 1988 to 1990; it required $80,000 annually for a total of $240,000. In addition, $20,000 of the total was earmarked for a joint adobe preservation research project with Pecos National Monument. [63] Research historian Laura Harrison was assigned to do the historical resource study in 1988. Unfortunately, after only one season the National Park Service put the project on hold due to lack of funds.

Despite this big setback, the park staff at the monument continued to accumulate knowledge on preservation methods and techniques. In 1987, the Regional Office appropriated $2,500 to hire a special consultant to provide training in basic adobe preservation techniques, which included the selection of proper soil, the manufacturing of adobe bricks, and the coating of walls. [64] P. G. McHenry, an adobe

specialist from Albuquerque, received the contract to examine soil types and recommend a suitable one. He worked closely with the preservation crew at the fort and taught workers how to use new tools and more efficient methods. In September, he and Park Service adobe specialists conducted a hands-on workshop at Fort Union. Colleagues from other state and national parks attended this session. In the end, workers improved their methods of preservation and learned a better formula for soil selection. [65]

The ruins preservation at the fort continued to improve. In the late 1980s, workers conducted their routine operations without any significant problems. Each season they manufactured more than a thousand adobe bricks. The major work, as usual, was to plaster adobe walls and do emergency repairs after severe weather. [66] Even though the park was still waiting for a comprehensive preservation plan, the crew continued to search for the best way to protect the ruins. In comparison with other parks, Fort Union had done a remarkable job in adobe preservation, and its experiences were valuable for others. Again in April 1989, Fort Union hosted a three-week workshop for colleagues from other areas. [67]

Because of their nature, adobe structures present more preservation difficulties. Since the establishment of the monument, Fort Union has lost one-third of the adobe walls (from 200,000 square feet in 1955 to the present 120,000 square feet) due to natural causes. But workers at the fort have no desire to quit. Instead, they put more effort than ever into preservation work. They are still searching for the best way to save the ruins.

After 36 years of intensive care in the National Park system, Fort Union National Monument has matured. When the Park Service adopted this historic site in 1956, there was nothing on the land except the ruins themselves. Today, the monument has appropriate support facilities: a 3.39-mile road system, a 4,000-square-foot visitor center, and 15 residential and maintenance buildings. All of them are in good condition. The most significant aspect of good care at the fort belongs to ruins preservation, in which the park staff keeps the deterioration of the ruins at minimal rate. In general, the experiences of Fort Union in preservation and development have been remarkable.

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CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND VISITATION (continued)

Figure 12. Acting Chief Ranger T. J. Sperry and Ranger Frank Torres were two key players during the 1991 living history program.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

While making progress toward the goal of attracting more visitors, the park interpretive program suffered a temporary setback in 1973. Fifty percent of the permanent staff--administrative clerk Theresa Fulgenzi and Superintendent Claude Fernandez--transferred in June, just before the summer tourist season. Assuming the duty of acting superintendent, chief ranger-historian Robert Arnberger was unable

to concentrate on his primary duties. Also the Arab oil embargo of 1973 curtailed American tourism. The gasoline shortage caused a substantial decrease in visitation. The park's offsite talk and presentation schedule became less active for the same reason. [45] The park staff, however, did not await the recovery of visitation. Instead, the new administration, headed by the recently arrived superintendent, Ross Hopkins, worked hard to make the interpretive program more attractive.

The previous experience gained from the rifle and uniform demonstrations revealed to park administrators that a living history program might be successful. In early 1960s, historian Dale Giese introduced an idea of living history for the interpretive program. Occasionally, he arranged for a few "frontiersmen" and horses to wander among the ruins in order to give visitors a sense of frontier life. Since then park personnel had periodically worn old Army uniforms and fired weapons for visitors. Those activities often stimulated people's curiosity to ask questions about the fort's past. [46]

One day, a couple of girls from Texas burst into the visitor center, where historian Bleser was on duty. He was wearing a period reproduction uniform of an 1883 sergeant-major in the 23rd Infantry. The girls asked if there were any Indians around as in the old days. Bleser jokingly replied that there was one right now who was out chopping weeds on the grounds, pointing to Ralph Lujan, a Taos Pueblo youth working at the fort under a ten-week neighborhood youth corps program. Delighted by his presence, the two girls dashed out from the visitor center and ran to Lujan. They asked him to autograph their trail guides. When the girls came back, they topped off Bleser's day by asking, "did you capture him?" [47]

Despite positive reactions from visitors, the uniform and rifle demonstrations did not develop into a living history program until the 1970s. Becoming less creative and energetic in his late years at the fort, Superintendent Hastings, a conservative bureaucrat, showed little interest in such an idea of living history. He neither encouraged nor prevented rangers' initiatives. [48] Under Superintendent Fernandez's administration, living history gained more ground but his short tenure passed the opportunity to develop a living history program along to his successor.

When Superintendent Hopkins, a military history fan, arrived at the fort, he decided to undertake a departure in interpretation by shifting emphasis to living history. Living history in the National Park Service by the early 1970s, had been a "trendy" concept and the thing to do in interpretation. It was natural that Hopkins plunged Fort Union into the living history arena. Intending to attract more visitors, Southwest Regional Director Frank F. Kowski supported Hopkins' approach. [49] In 1973, planning for a living history program became one of the primary goals. As a loyal friend of Fort Union, Southwest Parks and Monuments Association continued its support of visitor services. In September, Hopkins requested financial assistance. The association donated $1,000 as "seed money" to begin the program. The following month the organization gave the monument an additional $4,000 to purchase uniforms, equipment, firearms, and other items. By the end of the year, approximately $6,000 had been donated for the project. [50]

Beginning in April 1974, on weekends, the park staff, dressed in clothing of the nineteenth century, portrayed military and civilian life on the frontier post. Offsite talks and presentations promoted the

theme of living history. Anticipating a full-scale program for the busy tourist summer, Hopkins hired three seasonal employees: Walter Hood, C. Susan Love, and Paul S. Shampine, all from the Texas A&M campus. After two months of dress rehearsals, the living history program deputed on June 16. Waiving the regular entrance fee for the day, Superintendent Hopkins extended an invitation to all residents of Las Vegas and the region. At noon, retired regional director Frank F. Kowski and the present director Joseph Rumburg opened Fort Union's living history program by firing the six-pounder howitzer. Echoing the past, it announced the birth of a new era of interpretation. [51]

With daily presentations throughout the summer, the living history program offered visitors a chance to see nineteenth-century frontier life. Shampine wore a blue coated uniform of the First Colorado Volunteers and Hood posed as a civilian craftsman while Love, in bonnet and wide-skirted calico dress, portrayed an army wife. In front of tents erected behind the visitor center, they demonstrated to visitors the daily routines of frontier army life. The more popular reenactment included woodstove cooking, cloth dying, soap making, candle dipping, and weapons firing. In order to make the program more meaningful, the living history personnel involved visitors. For instance, one Sunday the park rangers were making plum duff dumplings. Instead of watching, some visitors stepped in to knead the dough. After they were cooked, the dumplings were handed out for the visitors to taste. [52] Although many of these replica uniforms and primitive demonstrations were not historically accurate, they stimulated the visitor's interest in the ruins. As the *Denver Post* said, people felt that they had "relived at old Fort Union." [53]

The living history demonstrations recessed over the winter and resumed the following May. To do an even better job in the second season, chief ranger Robert Hoff and seasonal ranger Stephen Walker went to Fort Davis National Historic Site in Texas to participate in a Park Service course, "Camp of Military Instruction." [54] During the week of intensive training, they learned much about military life, which helped improve the living history program. A few days after they returned, the monument's living history program began another season.

To kick off the living history program for the summer of 1975, Susan Love and Paul Shampine were married in an unusual style at the fort on June 8, creating much drama for the opening day. Everyone who attended the wedding--bride, groom, flower girls, bridesmaids, parents, and even the Methodist minister Terry Voss--was clad in period clothing. Because this was the first wedding held at Fort Union since the 1880s, it received considerable publicity. Several local and regional newspapers including the *Denver Post* reported the event with detailed articles and photos. [55]

During the second season, the living history program improved in both quantity and quality. As part of the demonstration, the interpreters kept fresh ground coffee, which was the frontier soldiers' main beverage, hot and available for sampling. Occasionally, visitors tasted the soldier's typical meal of salt pork and hardtack. For the first time, a blacksmith's forge operated near the tents. Among the interpretive personnel, each individual had specific assignments. In addition to his performance, he was required to tell of his unit's role in the past, explaining all related topics to the visitors. [56] The park rangers no longer waited for a crowd. They were as likely to be talking to two people as to twenty-five.

[57]

Both the visitors and the staff, but particularly the latter, were delighted with the results of the living history program. The well-prepared program not only stimulated the public's desire to ask more questions but also induced them to stay at the site longer than before. Where the average visitors used to spend an hour at Fort Union, they were now likely to be there twice as long. Visits of four or five, and even six hours, were not unusual. [58] The magnetism of living history was amazing.

The park administration exploited the success of the living history project by extending it beyond the monument's boundaries. Whenever there was an opportunity to give a talk or a demonstration in the local community, Fort Union sent its personnel. The biggest offsite presentation of 1975 took place at the De Vargas Shopping Center in Santa Fe. Because of inflation and the energy shortage of the previous year, the state of New Mexico and the Park Service promoted local tourism aimed at New Mexicans. Encouraging people to "rediscover" New Mexico, the state government and the Southwest Regional Office co-sponsored an "inflation vacation exhibition" at the De Vargas Mall from June 11 to 14. While all eleven national park sites in the state shared a booth, Fort Union had its separate display with the theme of "living history in the Old West." Led by Shampine and Love, the Fort Union team, all in period clothing, contributed the event's best presentation. [59]

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CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION AND VISITATION (continued)

At the beginning, the living history program received dissenting reports from chief ranger Arnberger. He expressed that unlike reconstructed Fort Davis, Texas, the ruins of Fort Union offered no setting for living history. The noise of cannon and rifle demonstrations fractured the ghost-like beauty of Fort Union, which spoke for itself. Using live ammunition, weapons firing also posed a serious threat to the public safety. Rangers in period clothing robbed the park of green and gray uniforms. Since Hopkins had become addicted to living history, Arnberger's legitimate concerns had little effect on his superior's determination to pursue his hobby. Arnberger reluctantly but dutifully participated in the living history program, which he called, a "circus." [60]

In the fall of 1975, the two-year-old living history program went into "mothballs." In a speech before the National Press Club earlier in the year, National Park Service Director Gary Everhardt reminded the audience that some services in the park system were going to be reduced because of lack of funds. Consequently, the Regional Office in Santa Fe thought that Fort Union's living history program was too costly despite the fact that it produced a seventeen percent increase in visitation in 1975. In response to the suggestion of Santa Fe, Superintendent Hopkins agreed to suspend the living history project indefinitely so that the monument could direct all available resources to ruins preservation. Hopkins expressed hope that the park would resume the popular program in the future, as soon as it became economically practical. [61]

The cancellation of the project directly impacted visitation. In 1976 and 1977, two years in row, visitation to the park plummeted. During the same period, a 50 percent reduction in the interpretive staff precluded the usual summer extension of park business hours. This affected the monument negatively too. Thus, visitation in 1976 decreased by nine percent in comparison to that of 1975; visitation in 1977 declined by another six percent from 1976. The Park Service tried to lure visitors back by lowering the entrance fees at Fort Union, but with limited results. [62]

During the decline in visitation, the monument managed to spend more time and resources on the improvement of its existing interpretive facilities. In anticipation of increased reliance upon self-guiding

means, the park administration decided to upgrade the visitor trail at the Third Fort and to revise the decade-old guidebook. In 1976, all audio stations were rehabilitated and new trail guides printed. Catalogued for the first time, all books at the library went on newly-built wooden shelves. Above all, the most significant improvement was the museum exhibits. Because of energy conservation needs, the park reluctantly cancelled a plan to construct eight exhibits for the Bicentennial Celebration of the United States and rotate them through northeastern New Mexico communities. Instead, a new lobby exhibit for the visitor center was installed. [63] Those internal improvements helped ease the pain of cancelling the living history program.

In 1978 after a two-year hiatus, the living history presentations returned to Fort Union. New Regional Director, John Cook, played a key role in resuming the program by appropriating more funds to the fort. [64] Dusting off the old army uniforms and oiling up the replica military rifles, the park rangers started offsite talks and presentations. To help the ranger get a better feel for nineteenth-century military life, Hopkins sent a few of his men to attend a six-day camp in military instruction at Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Joined by two dozen comrades from other national parks, they lived as frontier soldiers, 24 hours a day. As soon as these highly trained "soldiers" returned, Fort Union began onsite living history performances on June 5. [65] In July, the staff presented the first weapons firing demonstration since September 1975.

Overall living history enhanced the fort's interpretative program. Unfortunately, visitors did not immediately return to Fort Union in large numbers. In the summer of 1978, the New Mexico State Highway Department inadvertently removed the Fort Union signs along Interstate 25. Visitation had been slowly increasing but began to drop after the removal of the signs. Although the signs were replaced in April 1979, visitation continued to decline due to a drop in tourism caused by a fuel shortage and economic recession. [66] Visitation for 1979 reached its lowest point since 1961. The nation's sluggish economic situation prevented a quick recovery of tourism through the early 1980s. It took 15 years for the park to attain the attendance numbers of 1972. Not until 1988 did Fort Union see a surge in the numbers of visitors.

Beginning in 1980, after Superintendent Hopkins, a living history advocate, left for Saguaro National Monument, Fort Union National Monument modified its living history program. An extravagant, summer-long living history program had become a burden to the park. Rangers agreed that a well organized event could draw more people to the site in one day than the monument normally did in a month. Thus, Superintendent Crane decided to change the fort's interpretive course by arranging a few special events, with a living history motif. Soon after the unit manager Carol Kruse arrived, she quickly institutionalized "special events," as a standard for future interpretation. [67]

Among creative ideas was a "Children's Christmas at Old Fort Union." On December 28, 1980, between ten o'clock in the morning and two o'clock in the afternoon, the fort hosted an old-fashioned Christmas celebration for local children. While eating cookies made from nineteenth-century recipes, children played old games such as Leap Frog Relay, There, Squat, Bird, Beast, and Skip. Also, a costumed ranger vividly told young visitors some frontier children's stories, most of which they had never heard before.

More than 300 children and their parents attended the celebration. The event was so well-received that the park considered making it an annual affair. [68]

Tasting the success of this special event, the interpretive personnel tried a few more ideas. Besides the second annual children's Christmas party, another fiesta called "A Family Day at Fort Union" was held on July 12, 1981. Two hundred thirty-five people spent a pleasant afternoon at the fort. In 1982 and 1983, the monument hosted only one large event each year. But it invited more performers, including both the New Mexico and Colorado Volunteers as well as several Boy Scout troops. In addition to drills, flag ceremonies, and conducted tours, these "frontier soldiers" demonstrated adobe making, hardtack baking, scrub board washing, butter churning, horse shoeing, and other routines of frontier life. Each two-day show attracted more than 500 visitors. After a period of experimentation, the park was ready to try a more spectacular event for 1984. [69]

To commemorate the founding of the first fort on July 26, 1851, Fort Union National Monument hosted a gala entitled the "Fort Union Founders Day" celebration on July 28 and 29, 1984. Little different from previous special events, the Founders Day mainly served to carry out the park's living history program. Forty-two volunteers-in-parks (VIPs) contributed 684 hours to make the program run smoothly. Handled by Mike Pitel of the New Mexico Travel and Tourism Department, news coverage appeared in several newspapers and magazines, including New Mexico and Sunset magazines. At the same time, park employees spoke on KFUN and KNMX radio stations in Las Vegas to publicize the upcoming event. As a result, visitation reached an all-time high, with 1,622 persons attending the two-day party. [70]

After the initial triumph, the Founders Day became an annual attraction, which occurred on the fourth weekend of July. Each year some fresh ideas and services were injected into the program. Starting in 1985, the park served a barbecue to all Founders Day visitors. Thus, tourists, particularly travelers from other areas, stayed longer at the site. In return, their presence helped the local economy. According to the New Mexico Economic Development and Tourist Department, the Founders Day celebration of 1985 generated $56,200 in travel industry gross receipts for San Miguel County, where Las Vegas was located. [71]

The living history program became more dramatic. For example, in 1986, Ann O'Shea, proprietor of "Old Clothes Only" store in Las Vegas, portrayed a prostitute from the nearby Loma Parda. A curious crowd gathered to hear her lecture as she sauntered up the visitor trail. Changing characters a moment later, Ann along with five other women conducted a "Temperance Rally" march followed by a speech on the "Evils of Alcohol." [72] The park developed the living history performance from simple skills demonstrations into refined skits.

Meanwhile, an outside event boosted the park's interpretive program. In the 99th Congress, House Representative Bill Richardson from New Mexico introduced a bill (H.R. 4794) to designate the Santa Fe Trail as a national historic trail. The bill received opposition from landowners along the route. They appeared before the House subcommittee and expressed the concerns of private landowners. The bill passed the House but suffered a lingering death in the Senate. [73] In 1988, Richardson reintroduced the

bill with certain revisions to the 100th Congress. This time, the bill passed both houses and President Ronald W. Reagan signed it into law. The Santa Fe Trail officially became a national historic trail. [74]

A growing interest in the Santa Fe Trail inspired the park administration to make some adjustments in interpretation. Because of its close ties to the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Union National Monument became a multi-theme park. In supporting the campaign for Richardson's bill, chief ranger Dave Roberts gave a speech on the Amtrak train running between Trinidad, Colorado, and Raton, New Mexico, in 1986 when the Santa Fe Trail Symposium was held in the region. [75] A year later, the fort changed the name of the Founders Day to "Soldiering on the Santa Fe Trail." The pageant remains the largest annual gathering at the site.

Nineteen eighty-eight was an important year for the monument. The congressional effort to declare the Santa Fe Trail a national historic trail helped market Fort Union. Consequently, visitation increased. To maintain this momentum, the park hosted three special events instead of one. In addition to "Soldiering on the Santa Fe Trail," "The Santa Fe Trail--the Early Years" and "An Evening at Old Fort Union" added two more shows to the park's interpretive program. In June, for the first time, the park administration opened the First Fort to the public. Because of its separate location, the First Fort hosted visitors only one day a year, usually on the Memorial Day weekend. Also, a Christmas open house was held on December 17 when students from Wagon Mound decorated a Christmas tree with reproductions of historic ornaments. The park's VIP, Nicki Sperry, researched and provided information to the school for the manufacture of the ornaments. Through the event, the students learned a great deal about the costumes, traditions, and material aspects of Christmas at the frontier post. [76] All of those developments, at both national and local levels, contributed to a revival of interest in the monument. Annual visitation increased by 25 percent.

Nevertheless, an even bigger season was ahead. While continuing to benefit from the historic trail activities, Fort Union did not forget to exploit the modern highway network. In 1988, with the help of the State Highway Department, the monument relocated its signs on I-25. The signs in both directions were moved farther away from the exit connecting the entrance road to the interstate. Thus, travelers now had more time to decide whether to visit the ruins. This old highway trick again worked well, and intercepted some hesitant or reluctant tourists who would have passed the exit if the signs had remained at the original locations. [77] In 1989, annual visitation for the first time reached the 20,000 mark.

Entering a new decade, Fort Union National Monument witnessed continued improvement in interpretation. The three special events held in the two previous summers were repeated in 1990. Since those annual pageants had established reputations, they drew people from as far away as Denver. Congressman Bill Richardson and Governor Gary Carruthers also visited the fort. But excluding special guests, attendance declined for the first time since 1979 after a decade of steady growth. There were three reasons: first, the honeymoon of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail celebration was over; second, the Persian Gulf crisis began in August and raised gasoline prices; and third, unpleasant weather occurred more frequently. These factors forced annual visitation to drop by fifteen percent. However, fewer visitors did not automatically mean less progress in interpretation. Acting chief ranger T. J. Sperry

continued to improve the quality of interpretation, making everything historically more accurate. The interpretive program was the pride of the park and it accounted for Fort Union being one of three finalists in the 1990 Lon Garrison Gold Award competition, a contest for the best interpretive program in the Southwest Region. [78] In 1991, Fort Union won the award.

Fort Union recently commemorated the 100th anniversary of the military post's abandonment, as well as the closing of the American frontier. The special ceremony to honor those historic events occurred on May 15, 1991. At seven o'clock in the evening, the band from Robertson High School of Las Vegas welcomed visitors. Despite a strong wind, 300 people remained in high spirits. Superintendent Myers gave an introduction. Then, history professor Michael Olson of Highlands University delivered the keynote speech to commemorate the significant role the fort played in the conquest of the West. Finally, the park interpretive personnel and volunteers, all in military uniforms and led by acting chief ranger T. J. Sperry, lowered and folded the American flag, recapturing the historic scene. As another success in the interpretive activity, the jubilee ushered the park into a new era. In 1991, annual visitation reached a new historical record of 22,300. [79]

Thirty-six years of experience in interpretation has produced a fine, mature program designed to encourage an unending dialogue between the manager and the visitor. The principal theme is the American frontier; and the chief goal is a marriage of recreation and education. Today, people can enjoy visiting the ruins while learning about frontier history. The park also serves as a research institute. Its library contains more than 1,600 Western books and numerous rolls of microfilm. The museum collection contains more than 10,000 objects. Fort Union National Monument has become a classroom for both tourists and scholars.

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CHAPTER 5: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (continued)

The growing interest in natural resource management at Fort Union resulted from the changing cultural climate in the United States. The passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964 announced the third natural preservation movement, following those of the Progressive and New Deal eras. This time, the noble cause attracted powerful grassroots support. Throughout the second half of the sixties, Americans, led by burgeoning environmental groups like the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, began to introduce environmental agendas into both local and national politics. The entire country articulated concerns about the state of America's physical environment. The "Keep America Beautiful" campaign that Lady Bird Johnson initiated during her husband's presidency educated the public on the issue. Environmental movements won a significant victory in 1970 when the federal government proclaimed "Earth Day." [15]

Americans cared about their land and the Park Service responded to the nation's call. The tone of the era made the agency reconsider its priorities and responsibilities. The MISSION 66 program was designed to provide visitors with high standard services that would encourage maximum enjoyment for those who used the parks. In 1966, the 80-million-dollar program ended successfully. However, an increase in visitation brought a need to protect the natural resources from the depredations of people. If the Park Service hoped to continue quality service in the future, the natural resources in its domain required more attention. After a decade in which the use of the nation's parks overwhelmed the system's capabilities to preserve its resources, Park Service policy began a dramatic shift in the opposite direction.

Astute officials in Santa Fe lost no time in implementing Washington's policy. Recruiting enthusiastic young preservationists armed with the latest scientific knowledge, the Southwest Region began to implement various environmental programs. As early as 1969, it launched a campaign for environmental awareness and education. Regional Environmental Education Coordinator William Brown arranged a field exercise, in which people contributed their ideas and suggestions about the program, at Bandelier National Monument on February 27 and 28. Representatives from the different park units in New Mexico, including Fort Union, attended the meeting, and the participants were "imaginative and positive in their commitment to the environmental management concept." [16] Each unit drew up its own plan.

In comparison with its counterparts, Fort Union's plan for environmental education appeared a little sketchy but practical. According to the plan, the staff was going to discuss the issue during daily coffee breaks and scheduled monthly meetings, with the hope that various themes for natural resource management could be developed before the end of 1969. In the following year, the monument would create an environmental study area for the use of Las Vegas schools. Thus, students would gain first-hand experience in the program. Also, Superintendent Hastings contacted the local agency of the Forest Service and Highlands University in order to obtain their advice. [17]

The environmental education program continued through the early 1970s. After Superintendent Hastings' retirement, park ranger Robert Arnberger carried on the unfinished mission, laying the groundwork for the establishment of an environmental study area at the First Fort. Like his predecessor, he solicited the local schools and college for support. With the help of professors Werner Muller and Bob Lessard, an introductory course on the environment became a part of the teachers' preparation program at Highlands University. [18] A group of public school teachers also showed an interest in taking an active role in the program.

Applying the same tactics used in the interpretive program to natural resource management, Fort Union sought to build close relations with the community. The park personnel frequently contacted preservation organizations such as the Sierra Club and the Adelante Conservation to recruit assistance. Arnberger was invited to speak to the local Sierra Club. [19] These contacts and meetings helped the park determine its agendas and goals. Meanwhile, environmental education materials were distributed at the visitor center. As a result, both the Park Service and society benefited from the environmental education program. It strengthened the public's belief in conservation. For the first time, the monument devoted much time to environmental issues. Indeed, a balance between cultural resource and natural resource management began to emerge.

As natural resource management formally occupied the fort's administrative calendar, a series of actions involving preservation and research occurred at the site. One of the priorities was soil conservation, because erosion threatened the safety of the historic structures. Every cloudburst washed away dirt and created unwanted ravines in the park. Although Fort Union occasionally conducted a few emergency measures to fight erosion, the problem was beyond the park's capabilities. It had neither the money nor sufficient knowledge to retain the soil. This situation lasted until 1970 when the National Park Service addressed the issue in a serious manner. In November, Assistant Park Service Director Edward Hummel sent to the regional headquarters guidelines for soil and moisture conservation at each unit. Washington also agreed to appropriate more funds for such purposes. [20]

Under the guidance of Washington and Santa Fe, Fort Union started planning soil erosion control. For the first time, the Park Service asked the experts to conduct a systematic study on both the conditions of, and the solutions to, soil erosion. In October 1973, U.S. Soil Conservation Officer Harold Dineen inspected the situation of arroyo erosion at the monument and outlined the necessary measures. [21] According to his suggestions, masonry check dams and ripraps should be placed in arroyos to stabilize the banks. In the following year, the maintenance crew experimented with his methods and filled some

of the arroyo heads with rubble and debris. Their work proved effective against the severe summer storms. [22]

The preliminary research and experimentation led to a well-planned and funded project for soil erosion control. In 1975, Fort Union and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Mora-Wagon Mound District reached a cooperative agreement. It required the district to prepare a land inventory map of Fort Union National Monument, showing the soil, water, and vegetation potentials and limitations. Also, the conservation officers were willing to supply available technical assistance and information on how to treat the land. In return, the monument followed the district's instructions and recorded data about its soil, water, and vegetation. The chief beneficiary of this agreement was Fort Union, which received a detailed proposal for soil erosion control. [23]

Designed by conservation specialist Gary Storch, the proposal detailed work that was to occur in two stages. During the first year it focused on diverting water. Sheer vertical arroyo banks would be sloped and cut to no greater than a 2:1 slope to limit damages from runoff to downstream areas. Several new waterways with erosion-resistant rock lining were to be constructed to help dispose of large quantities of runoff water more efficiently. For 1976, the second season, the main objectives were rack building and grass seeding. Certain spots would receive either wooden posts or metal bars to catch debris in the arroyos and reduce the speed of flux after a rain. But nothing was more effective than grass cover. Thus, the plan suggested that workers seed the disturbed sections with native grasses such as blue grama, little bluestem, and western wheat. Careful planning was the first step toward success. [24]

Meanwhile, the Park Service received funds for a number of projects from the Economic Development Administration as part of the Job Opportunity Program. Fortunately, Fort Union was a chief beneficiary, and got a lion's share of the funds with $71,000. The unexpected funds enabled the monument to hire twenty unemployed veterans from Mora County and to execute its elaborate scheme for erosion control immediately. Following the plan, the workers accomplished their assignments and went home before Christmas. In the spring of 1976, eleven returned for the second season. They labored through early December until both the Job Opportunity Program and the erosion control project were completed. [25]

As a result, the two-year program eased most of the troubles concerning soil erosion. Although it was impossible to solve all the problems at once, this intensive conservation program stopped the further depletion of the earth to a great degree. For the time being, park administration could shift its attention to other natural resource issues.

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CHAPTER 5: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (continued)

Certainly, water was another long-forgotten aspect, that required more study. Since the U.S. Geological Survey effort of 1956, the Park Service had shown little interest in water resource management at Fort Union. In the late sixties, the predominant national mood favoring environmental preservation influenced the attitudes of government bureaucrats at every level. Concerning the safety of visitors and the potential for future consumption, the Southwest Region decided to examine both the quality and the quantity of water in the fort area. In 1970, hydraulic engineers suggested that the fort keep records of water use, including domestic consumption and irrigation. The absence of meters, however, made it difficult for the monument to provide accurate data about water use. Without basic cooperation from the local unit, the regional office had no alternative but to postpone water resource research indefinitely. [26]

The 1970s witnessed no activity in hydraulic studies at the fort except for a brief test of the well. After the Red Top Drilling Company installed a new pump, the Park Service did a routine check of the new system. In April 1974, Hydraulic Engineer Garland Moore and his team arrived at the site. They inspected the well and the new pump. Surprisingly, they found that the water table had dropped from 85 feet in 1957 to 91.7 feet. Because the team could not decide why the underground reservoir had shrunk, the test remained inconclusive. To the monument, a comprehensive hydraulic study remained unavailable. [27]

Nevertheless, the quality of the groundwater at Fort Union remained unchanged throughout its history. Beginning in 1960, the park staff collected water samples twice a month for bacteriological tests by a state-approved laboratory. Thorough analyses were made every three years. The chemical quality of the groundwater always met the drinking water standards set by the Public Health Service in 1962. Also, the maintenance crew regularly cleaned the water tank to keep the artisan water pure. [28]

When Fort Union merged with Capulin Mountain National Monument, water resource management received new attention. Both Santa Fe and Capulin bosses requested an inventory of water resources in the fort area. With some assistance from natural specialists from Capulin, unit manager Carol Kruse prepared a detailed report entitled "Water Resources Management Profile for Fort Union National

Monument." Based on previous information and recent studies, the document dealt with various aspects of water resources such as physical description, legal rights, problem identification, recommended strategies, and bibliographical references. For the first time, the Regional Office received an overview of the fort's water assets and problems. Despite its primitive nature, the profile reflected a new approach toward resource management, from trouble-shooting to systematic studies. [29]

Although the small number of personnel limited Fort Union ability to conduct any large-scale research, the monument sought to learn more about water resources. In 1984, Carol Kruse requested that Santa Fe do a new examination of the well. The Regional Office brought in Hydrologist William Werrell from Fort Collins, Colorado, who arranged another aquifer test. After his field trip, Werrell compiled a detailed report about his survey. It suggested that a new well be drilled even though the existing one might be productive for a few more decades. His study gave the Park Service a better understanding of the groundwater situation at Fort Union. [30] In addition, the monument employees themselves continued to inquire into water resources. Throughout the 1980s, each management plan or superintendent's annual report showed progress in the field.

Unlike water resource management, which could pause at any time as needed, fire control required constant attention such as personnel training and equipment improvement. Because of its location where water was scarce and grass was abundant, wildfire posed the most dangerous threat to the park. Thus, the park employees were constantly on fire alert. They regularly checked and repaired the old fire-fighting tools. Every few years, new equipment was purchased and fresh ideas surfaced. In 1972, the monument redesigned its four fire hose houses and made them fireproof. [31]

Five years later, all the equipment was upgraded again. In April 1977, workers completed a new fire-resistant fire cache building in the maintenance area. The 300-gallon pump trailer received a new pump, improved hose reels, and other gear. Also, the monument procured a portable, backup fire pump for forest fire control use. Later in the season, four sets of bunker gear, including helmets, gloves, boots, turnout coats and pants, and self-contained breathing units, came to Fort Union to arm its mini-fire department. By the late seventies, with sufficient modern equipment, the monument had greatly increased its fire-fighting capability. [32]

The development of training in fire control went even faster. Wildfires in the neighboring areas offered the park staff good opportunities to acquire real battlefield experiences. In the seventies, natural fires broke out more frequently in the region than they did in previous decades. For example, one fire in April 1974 engulfed 1,500 acres of grassland belonging to the Union Land and Grazing Company. Armed with modern weapons, the park employees responded to calls for help and fought the fire effectively. [33] The only rewards for their sweat and bravery was enhanced skills and experience.

The park's amateur fire fighters also participated in suppressing wildfires in other regions and states. In June 1977, the La Mesa fire at Bandelier National Monument destroyed large portions of the Upper Canyon and Frijoles Mesa areas. Answering an emergency call for assistance, Superintendent Hopkins and ranger Thomas Danton, with their recently acquired equipment, quickly drove to the burning area.

Both spent six consecutive days in the blazing forest. No sooner did they put the equipment back into the cache building than a fire broke out at Sequoia National Forest in California in August. Chief Ranger Robert Hoff and battlefield-hardened Danton were assigned to the La Bonita fire. They flew there and stayed on the front line for a week. These airborne fire fighters performed excellently. At the end of the summer, Hopkins, Danton, and Hoff received interagency fire fighting qualification cards. These special occasions helped Fort Union to develop an exceptional fire fighting squad. [34]

Besides reliable equipment and proper training, cooperative activities within government, community, and citizenry were crucial for the suppression of large fires. In 1968, the Southwest Region of the National Park Service and the state of New Mexico reached agreement on mutual aid in the case of natural disasters. Although the agreement covered the Mora Valley, the management sought additional cooperation from the surrounding communities. In 1975, Superintendent Hopkins and Andrew Marshall, then treasurer of the Union Land and Grazing Company signed an agreement on a joint effort to deal with fire disasters. A revised version appeared three years later. During the same period Fort Union and the Watrous Volunteer Fire Department struck a similar deal. With these agreements, the monument bore more responsibilities, but in trade for better fire protection. [35]

The best protective measure was to prevent fires in the first place. After improving its fire control abilities, the monument exhibited a growing interest in scientific studies. In April 1983, Fort Union installed a fire weather station near the visitor center to collect data on wind, precipitation, temperature, and humidity trends. High winds often proved to be a major factor in determining fire hazards. Because the highest recorded winds usually occurred in August, that became the most dangerous month for wildfire threats. So the preparation began before each summer. [36]

Learning from other parks' experiences, Fort Union tried a new fire control method--"prescribed burn." It was an effective tool used to restore the historic scenery and reduce fire hazards by carefully burning small sections of the vegetated area under closely supervised conditions. On April 10, 1985, the maintenance crew burned off five acres at two sites. Minimal pre-burn information was available, but the revegetation was documented with photographs for the following six weeks. The prescribed burn slowed the growth of woody plants and in return, the prairie grass made a comeback. [37]

The monument continued to improve its fire management capabilities in every way. In 1990, the draft of the fire management plan for Fort Union arrived at Santa Fe for review. It showed the maturity of fire control. Recent decisions by the Park Service, however, prohibited any prescribed burn due to "safety" reasons. The maintenance workers returned to more traditional ways of limiting the growth of unwanted plants by regularly cleaning the firebreaks and mowing the overgrown areas. But in general, fire management at Fort Union was successful as no fire has ever damaged any park property since its establishment.

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CHAPTER 5: NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (continued)

Figure 14. A Canada goose posed itself in front of the Officers' Quarters and hissed at visitors through most of the spring of 1984.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

As a part of the cultural and natural resources of the monument, the Santa Fe Trail ruts raised a new issue for resource management. In the late seventies and the early eighties, the 800-mile Santa Fe Trail was developing a reputation in the public's eye as a significant historic resource in its own right. At Fort Union, the trail became a major attraction in addition to the ruins. A hundred years of revegetation,

weathering, and erosion had changed the original appearance of the trail by either deepening the ruts into arroyos or filling them with earth. Sections of the trail, within the monument grounds, were lost through the construction of the visitor center, residential houses, and maintenance buildings. Although the park staff carefully photographed and mapped the ruts for further research, they could not decide how to preserve the trail. [38]

Beginning in 1985, a soil erosion control project helped care for the Santa Fe Trail ruts. Assisted by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Mora District, Diane Jung and Keith Yarborough from the Southwest Region authored a plan for a two-year arroyo stabilization program at Fort Union. As soon as they finished the blueprint, the maintenance crew started constructing, mulching, and seeding earthen dikes. Banks of an arroyo at the northeast corner of the monument were sloped. In the summer of 1986, 45 Boy Scouts labored for 179 hours on the erosion control program. The project was completed in 1986 when the ruts of the Santa Fe Trail stood more firmly against the threat of erosion. [39]

But the problem was far from resolved. Since the visible ruts of the Santa Fe Trail stretched through the entire valley, their preservation as a whole seemed unrealistic. All wagon wheel ruts could eventually erode away. Even if the Park Service discovered a reliable way to preserve a small section of the ruts, it still could not restore the integrity of the historic trail. Realizing the situation, the fort administration pleaded with the regional office for further study on both the strategy and the tactics of preservation. In recent years, Superintendent Harry Myers made a few contacts with the Santa Fe Trail Association and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service to discuss possible measures. There was no quick answer. As are many interested citizens and government agencies, Fort Union is still searching for a solution. [40]

One of the best studies on the park's natural resources was Sandra Schackel's *Historic Vegetation at Fort Union National Monument, 1851-1983*. Then a history graduate student at the University of New Mexico, she accepted the Park Service's contract to produce an in-depth investigation of the fort's flora. Because the prairie environment affected Fort Union's physical condition regarding such things as soil erosion, fire hazards, animal habitats, and natural scenery, the Southwest Region decided to approach natural resource management at the "grassroots" level. Schackel pioneered the task. Working closely with the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, she investigated various species of plants and searched government documents to determine whether there was biological continuity or change through the park's history. In 1983, the first study on the history of the park's vegetation appeared.

According to Schackel's study, vegetation conditions at Fort Union in the early 1980s appeared similar to those documented in the historic records of the mid-nineteenth century. The valley possessed rich blue grama and other grasses interspersed with a great variety of beautiful wild flowers until the coming of U.S. troops in 1851. The construction of buildings, gardens, corrals, and the parade ground gradually turned the once luxuriant pasture into a barren, dusty area. In American frontier history, ranchers often followed soldiers. After the closing of this frontier post, the commercial grazing company replaced the military as the catalyst for environmental change. Cattle grazing continued to diminish the remaining vegetation cover for 65 years. However, the establishment of Fort Union National Monument brought new hope for environmental protection as the Park Service fenced the land and allowed the start of a

recovering process. In the last 36 years, vegetation at the monument was gradually restored. Today the prairie is once again growing toward a potential climax. [41]

Simultaneously, several other research projects, not funded by the Park Service, were under way. In 1982 while Schackel was studying the park's vegetation, Lee Boyd of West Texas State University came to Fort Union to research the geological features of the nearby Turkey Mountains, which formerly were included in the military reservation. This year-long study resulted in a scholarly work, *Geology and Joint Pattern Study of the Turkey Mountains*. Park volunteers Charles and Peggy Matlock performed the first survey of birds at the monument and the surrounding areas. They lived at the fort in the fall of 1983. Incorporating data from personal observations and previous records, the Matlocks compiled a report about bird activities in the area. These research projects broadened the park's scope in fields from geology to flora and fauna. [42]

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defined and listed all endangered species of flora and fauna in the nation. Fort Union was home to none of them. The threatened creatures of Mora County, the black-footed ferret, the swift fox, and the spotted bat never visited the fort. Only bald and golden eagles occasionally stopped at the fort during their long flights.

Of all the fauna at the park, snakes received the most attention. A considerable snake population lives in the Third Fort and the Depot, with sightings recorded in all months except January and February. Unchecked activities by these reptiles, particularly rattlesnakes, threatened public safety. Rattler sightings in public use areas averaged 25 per year, about half of which involved confrontations with humans. Concerned with the safety of visitors, the Park Service, since the establishment of the monument, placed warning signs along the interpretive trail and asked people to stay out of the grass, where poisonous serpents were likely to linger. In past years, the warning sign helped reduce the chance of snake confrontations. [43]

Throughout the history of Fort Union National Monument, there was only one recorded incident of a snake bite. On August 18, 1983, a boy, Nathan Hagman, walked off the marked trail and into the grass. Suddenly, a rattlesnake bit his left leg about six inches above the ankle. It took only five minutes for his father to report the matter to the park staff. Under park ranger Carl Friery's advice, Dale Hagman properly kept his son still with his legs lower than his heart, and rushed the boy to the Northeast Regional Hospital in Las Vegas. [44]

Although only one rattler attack was recorded, the search for a proper way to handle potential confrontations between humans and snakes was needed for both public safety and resource management. Historically, neighboring ranchers killed rattlesnakes on sight. From 1958 to 1971, records indicated that Fort Union exercised the same extermination policy as its neighbors. The environmental preservation movement made the Park Service realize the importance of ecology and the coexistence of various species. Consequently, Fort Union shifted its policy from extermination to relocation. In the last two decades, the relocation philosophy remained the standard. Whenever a rattlesnake moved too close to the public use areas, trained park personnel quickly captured the errant reptile. Each captured snake was

marked with brown paint on its tail and released on the northeastern boundary near the water tank. This method met the demands of public safety as well as environmental protection. [45]

In 1984, Fort Union issued its first written rattlesnake policy. Concise and perceptive, it gave an initial account of the park's experience in snake management, with thoughtful comments and practical goals. Approved by the Southwest Region, the rattlesnake policy became effective. In addition to the existing methods of warning and relocation, the park rangers began to encourage visitors to report rattler sightings. Public cooperation helped the Park Service gather more information for further research. The change of policy from extermination to relocation showed that the park administration supported "the native animal life of the parks for their essential role in the natural ecosystem." [46]

During the 1980s, natural resource management developed significantly. It became as important as preservation and interpretation. In 1976, personnel at Fort Union wrote a "Statement for Management," which gave natural resource management minor attention with only one short sentence that mentioned the desire to enhance the park's environmental quality. Soon, this attitude changed. Under pressure from the public and the Park Service, the monument began to prepare for a comprehensive management plan in 1979. It took about two years before unit manager Carol Kruse submitted the plan for approval. This time natural resources received significant attention; a natural-cultural resource balance in management began to arise. [47]

As the first plan of its kind, the "Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment" guided the fort's operations through the decade. Every three or four years the park administrators made efforts to revise and update it. The public was encouraged to provide input. In essence, by creating such a written document the administration saw the need for a natural resource management entity at the monument. [48]

In comparison with the ruins preservation and historical interpretation programs, natural resource management in the last two decades failed to cover the many problem spots that revealed themselves in management operations. Today, some areas are still waiting for research. For example, a pollen and soil study will augment Schackel's work and allow the mapping of soil as well as vegetation. A climatological study is needed to provide some insights into weather patterns and to predict their effects on ruins preservation. The animal population at Fort Union remains largely unstudied. Ground squirrels, whose burrows have severely weakened the trails and ruins, are not understood. The increased presence of rodent families raises additional concerns for human exposure to bubonic plague. Indeed, a careful appraisal of all these aspects of the environment is required before the park's natural resource management meets Park Service standards.

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CHAPTER 6: HUMAN THREATS TO THE PARK (continued)

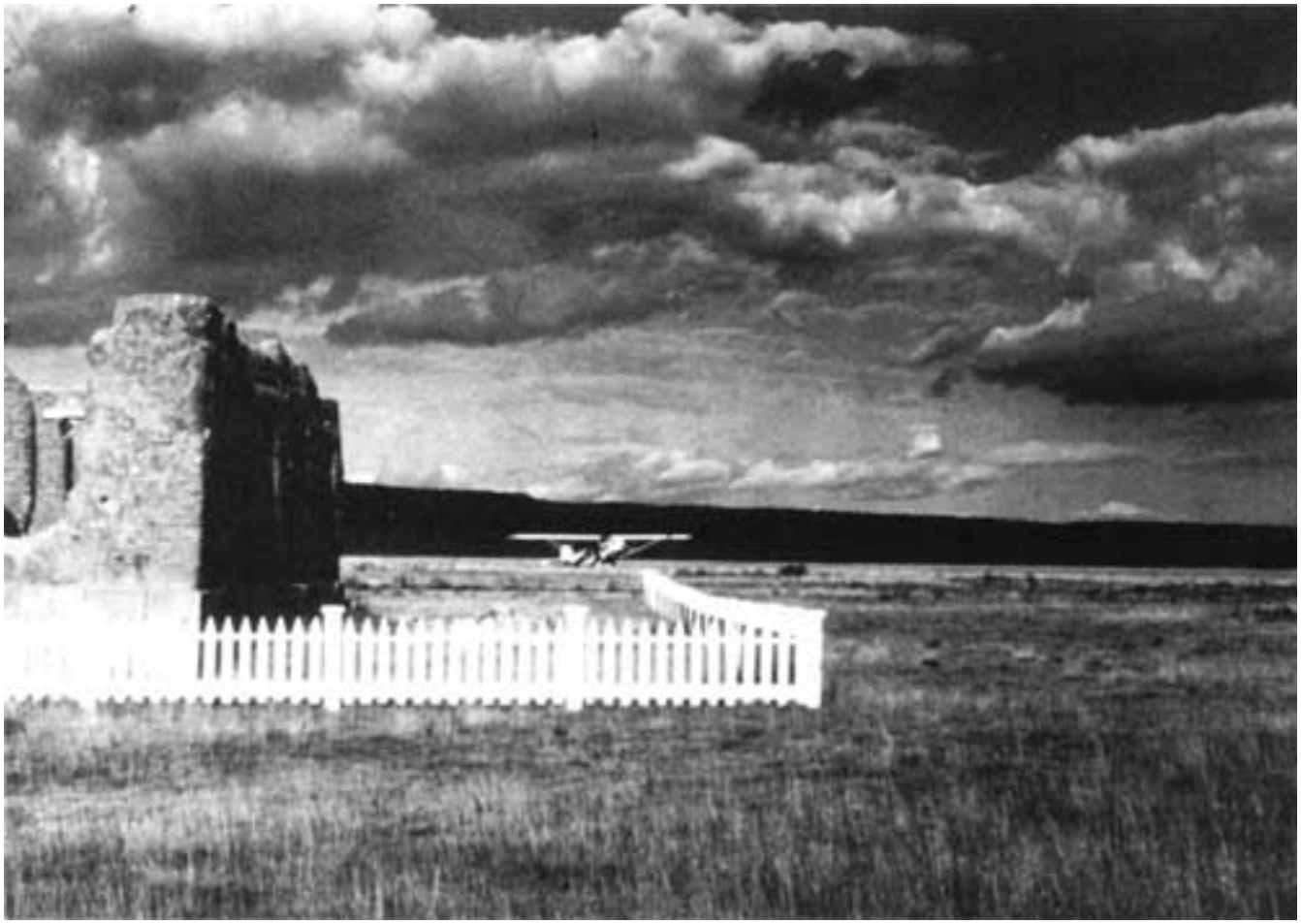

Figure 16. On October 7, 1984, a man from Dalhart, Texas illegally landed a single-engine plane near the hospital ruins.
Courtesy of Fort Union National Monument.

Few external human threats to Fort Union appeared as destructive and annoying as low-flying aircraft. Their frequent visits and sonic booms disturbed the visitors as well as the ruins, which developed a few more cracks every time an airplane passed the valley at low altitude. For the dedication ceremony of Fort Union National Monument in 1959, the Park Service invited the New Mexico National Guard to fly

its "Top Guns" over the site as the signal for hoisting the American flag. Four F-100 Super Sabre jets zoomed over the monument while three thousand attenders applauded. But nobody realized that aircraft was to pose a major threat to the historic structures in the future.

On November 29, 1963, the first visit Fort Union by airplane occurred. The three-man camera crew of the Columbia Broadcasting System landed their helicopter near the parking lot without advance notice. They were cruising over the region in search of material for a television program, "The Changing Face of America," to be presented on January 12, 1964. No sooner did they emerge from the helicopter than Superintendent Homer Hastings advised them that low-flying and landing on monument land violated the Park Service regulations. Apologizing, the crew members explained that the Santa Fe Trail and Fort Union as seen from the sky were well suited to their purposes. Also, they were low on fuel and concerned about the weight of the film equipment. Accepting this reasonable explanation, Hastings let them finish their job of shooting film. Afterward, park personnel hauled their luggage to the Las Vegas Airport by car so that the helicopter could leave safely. [23]

The Park Service began to realize the destructive impact of low-flying aircraft, particularly military jet on training missions over the ruins. Lightly populated, northern New Mexico served as an ideal area for the United States Air Force pilots to practice low-flying. Their sonic booms led the park staff to speculate on their effects on the historic structures. In 1971, the fort employees' assumptions proved correct that low-flying aircraft damaged the historic buildings. As Superintendent Claude Fernandez reported, "a tremendous sonic boom caused an existing crack on the ruins wall to widen." [24]

Sometimes airplanes even crashed near Fort Union, which, of course, made the Park Service nervous. Any direct hit by a crashing plane could destroy most of the park and turn the ruins into ashes. Just as darkness fell on April 14, 1967, a fire ball noted in the southeastern sky disappeared over the horizon and left a glowing bright light. Soon, the park staff learned that a USAF SR-71 Black Bird, the Air Force's fastest airplane, had crashed between Las Vegas and Fort Union and the crew had parachuted to safety. [25] Although it missed the monument, the fort personnel became convinced that they had to defend their skies too. According to the records, military aircraft caused less trouble for the park in recent decades.

After the military jets reduced their activities in the area, civilian aircraft filled the vacant sky. Their altitude was lower and their moves more capricious. According to the Federal Aviation Administration regulations, planes must maintain an altitude of 500 feet or more above people, structures, and vehicles. But reckless pilots often passed the fort below this safety altitude, trying for a bird's eye view of the old military post. On November 2, 1975, a Californian flew his twin-engine plane just above the ruins. He made two passes at an altitude of only 130 feet. The flight was so low that the park staff could read the plane's number. Five weeks later, another pilot made four passes over the ruins and residential area at an approximate altitude of 200 feet. The Park Service promptly contacted the FAA and provided the agency with the information. [26] The Californian pilot did not escape justice. As soon as the National Park Service filed complaint statements with the FAA, the government tracked him to Orange County, California. In February 1977, after a year of investigation and preparation, the trial began.

Superintendent Hopkins and Ranger Paul Shampine testified as government witnesses during the trial. In the end, an administration law judge for the National Transportation and Safety Board found the pilot guilty on two counts of violating the federal regulation code and ordered the suspension of the pilot's license for sixty days. [27] This was Fort Union's first successful case in air defense.

Nevertheless, the Park Service was not so lucky in tracking every pilot who buzzed Fort Union. In the eighties, the number of incidents increased but there were few cases that resulted in court convictions. Facing tougher challenges, the Park Service tried its best to deal with the problem. In 1985, the Park Service and the FAA signed an interagency agreement on joint efforts to prevent low-flying aircraft over national park territories. Two years later, Congress passed a law, the Aircraft Overflight Act, which made low-flying illegal. Under orders from the Southwest Regional Office, Fort Union documented all aircraft overflight problems. [28]

More dangerous than overflights was the landing of planes in the park. Over the years several cases involved aircraft landings inside the monument. They threatened not only the historic buildings but the visitors and employees. Any human error or mechanical malfunction could result in a fatal accident. In addition, an aircraft at high speed and low altitude had little room to maneuver. Once a pilot called the park and asked for permission to land his plane in the park. After the park authorities refused his request, the angry pilot buzzed the ruins.

Some bold and risky flyers landed their planes in the park regardless of the law. At 11:35 a.m. May 6, 1976, a single-engine Cessna 180, with two Santa Fe men on board, approached the monument. They made four circles; each time descending to a lower altitude, only fifty feet on the third run. On the fourth run the plane landed inside the park and parked one hundred feet southwest of the hospital. Quickly arriving at the scene, Superintendent Hopkins and Chief Ranger Hoff issued a citation for operation of an aircraft in a NPS area to the unannounced visitors. Then, the park authority informed the FAA Albuquerque Bureau about the incident. Before the two men visited the ruins, they were forced into the air and out of the monument. [29]

Another illegal aircraft landing occurred more quietly and elusively. Walking to the visitor center in the afternoon of October 7, 1984, off-duty ranger Charles Spearman noticed an airplane parked near the hospital ruins. Upon entering the visitor center, he asked on-duty park technician Carrie Vernon about the plane. Caught by surprise, she recalled that a couple who was touring the park mentioned they had flown in a few minutes ago. It did not occur to her that they had arrived by plane. Ranger Spearman called chief ranger George West at Capulin Mountain National Monument, the only commissioned law enforcement officer in the area. Following instructions, Spearman took several pictures of the plane and brought the pilot to the office. Then he phoned the FAA office in Las Vegas to report the incident. The pilot from Dalhart, Texas, claimed that he thought the plane had landed on land belonging to the Fort Union Land and Grazing Company. While Spearman was on the phone again, the pilot ran back to his plane and took off before he could be further questioned. [30]

After the passage of the Aircraft Overflight Act in 1987, the problem of low-flying and unauthorized

landing at the fort eased dramatically. In the last four years, only one helicopter from a television station landed in the park. While enjoying a temporarily peaceful period, the park employees remain vigilant for any threat from above, realizing that external threats are three-dimensional. Fort Union, as well as the Park Service, today continues to hope and work toward eliminating dangers from aircraft.

In comparison with other units in the national park system, Fort Union National Monument seemed to be a safer place. After 36 years in operation, no major disaster caused by human activities or mistakes had occurred. Although the monument constantly faced external threats, their intensity or degree in destruction appeared relatively low. For many years, the park achieved a perfect safety record. The credit for limiting the impact of human threats belonged to Fort Union's geographical isolation, low visitation, and responsible operation.

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