

**CORAZON de los CAMINOS  
HEART OF THE TRAILS CHAPTER  
SANTA FE TRAIL ASSOCIATION**



**NEWSLETTER  
April 2014**

**MAY MEETING, MAY 10, 2014, AT LAS VEGAS CCHP, LAS VEGAS, NM 1 PM**

The May meeting will be held on May 10, 2014 at the LVCCHP, 116 Bridge Street, Las Vegas, NM at 1 pm. Lorenzo Vigil, a Ft. Union Park Ranger will speak about the economic impact and influence of Ft. Union on surrounding areas—particularly Las Vegas, Mora and San Miguel County.

Hope to see you all there.

**JUNE MEETING, JUNE 14, 2014, UU BAR RANCH TOUR**

The June meeting is a UU Bar Ranch tour from Rayado to the Ocate crossing. Steve Boyce (general manager) is confirmed as guide and narrator. This group is limited to thirty people carpoled in 4-W drive vehicles in good weather. All the slots are currently filled, so if you are on the list and cannot come, please let me know immediately, so I can call someone on the waiting list. **Meet at the St. James Hotel, Cimarron, N. M. at 11:00 a. m. for lunch, organize, and truck-pool.** Dennis is coordinator.

**The President's Report**

Dear Trail Trekkers,

If you missed the last meeting, then you have deprived yourself of an outstanding experience. Roger Sanchez, current Raton museum curator, worked in the York canyon mines. Joe and Leslie Modica from Trinidad (new members) were also present. Joe worked in the Allen mines and Leslie's father was mining supervisor at that time. To summarize the presentation, we should all know how the Maxwell land grant came into being. Maxwell first settled at Rayado and then brought about 150 families to settle on the Ponil creek when he came to Cimarron. He also sold tracts of land to ranchers, etc., many of them with just a handshake and an exchange of money. So when he sold the grant to investors, they tried to evict settlers who had no legal papers. This started the fifteen yearlong Colfax County War. Dawson was one of the ranchers who defied them with an armed standoff, and later sued the company and won. Dawson himself dug coal and sold it locally. Later he sold to Mr. Springer and Van Houten. As a result, we had eight coal mining towns in this area made up of 9000 coal miners of many nationalities. Many of these people were hired at Ellis Island as they entered the U. S., and sent here. Some Dawson representatives even went to Italy and sponsored 1000

people. Dawson had the gassiest mines, and they had two of our nation's largest disasters occur there. Dawson also had the largest population. Catskill is not to be confused with the other towns. It was a lumbering camp of 3000 people, which made a big contribution to the mines by milling railroad ties, mining props, lumber, etc. They also had large coke ovens to produce charcoal from the pinewood in the area. There is still enough coal in the area to last us for three hundred years, but the demand vs. the price of extraction has closed the market down. The final stroke was when the railroads converted from coal to diesel fuel, and everyone went to alternative fuels for heating and cooking. Roger had four tables loaded with pictures, schematics, etc., on Van Houten alone. I was impressed with the layout inside the Van Houten mines. The tunnels and offshoots went for miles and miles. You would have to have a map to find your way! Van Houten was originally named Willow, but the name was later changed. It was a town of about 700 people. Whittington Center served us a great lunch, and then Tom Ferguson and Roger took us on a tour of the site. We were each provided with a town site map, and I was surprised that Whittington Center had erected signs marking the major sites. It helped a lot when you saw the foundations, ruins, etc., and then have Roger show a picture of what it originally looked like. The walls of the mule barn were standing and we could inspect the watering trough, stalls, mangers, granary, and where the harnesses were hung. You could even see the names of some of the mules on the stall walls! Another highlight was going to the entrance of No. 2 mine and peering inside, seeing the coal wagon, airshafts, etc. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Our guides are to be highly commended. This may easily turn out to be the best event of our year.

Some of us had a workday at the Gaines ranch on Good Friday. Tom, Peggy, Gladys and me, helped Faye do some revitalizing at the rest stop there. Let's not forget our meeting at CCHP in Las Vegas on May 10 at 1:00 p.m. Also adjust your calendars to October 11 for the rock crossing of the Canadian near Springer.

The Santa Fe Trail Geocache Tour is up and running. Go to [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) to learn more about the tour. The geocache sites in our district are located at Point of Rocks, Wagon Mound, Ft. Union, Las Vegas, San Miguel del Vado, Rayado, Cimarron area, and the Raton Pass area. Happy Trails everyone!

Dennis

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