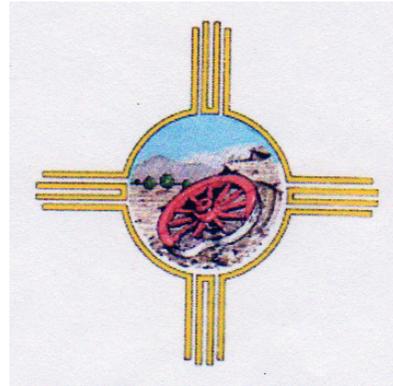


**CORAZÓN de los CAMINOS  
HEART OF THE TRAILS CHAPTER  
SANTA FE TRAIL ASSOCIATION**

**NEWSLETTER  
MAY 2014**

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



**Meet at the St. James Hotel, Cimarron, N. M. at 11:00 a. m. for lunch,  
organize, and truck-pool.**

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. Dennis is coordinator.

**The President's Report**

Dear Trail Trekkers,

Greetings to all you dedicated trail historians! The May 10 meeting at CCHP was very educational and informative. One could hardly dream of the impact that Fort Union had upon New Mexico and the entire Southwest. Our June 14 trip remains intact if we have good weather. Meet at the St. James Hotel in Cimarron at 11:00 a. m. to eat and organize. The next event happens on July 19, which is a tour of Catskill and Swastika. For planning purposes, we will inform you that you have three options for meals. You may pack a picnic lunch, eat lunch at the Vermejo Park Lodge for \$25.00 each, or \$55.00 each for dinner at the lodge. This trip is over a hundred miles of mountain roads, so everyone please fuel your all-terrain vehicles before making the June and July trips. We have a problem with the August 9, Valmora Sanitarium event. Las Vegas Heritage week is going on, and this ties up our hosts, etc. So we will substitute a trip from Wagon Mound to Watrous on this date, viewing ruts with J. D. Schmidt as our guide. The September, October, and November events should materialize as scheduled. Spring is here and I'm sure that many of you are occupied with school assemblies, baccalaureates, commencements, etc., plus starting the busy summer activities. But please! reserve space on your calendar for our chapter's various functions. We have people working hard to provide you with some outstanding activities. Dennis

My e-mail address is:

[schneidermusic@q.com](mailto:schneidermusic@q.com)

Telephone —575/376-2527;

Mailing address: 828 South Euclid Ave., Cimarron, NM 87714.

## May Meeting in Las Vegas

### THE IMPACT OF FT. UNION ON NEW MEXICO

On May 10, 2014, Lorenzo Vigil, NPS historian, spoke to us at CCHP and laid out the facts of his extensive research. Prior to 1851, New Mexico existed as a rather closed and isolated society who grew their own crops and livestock, and lived largely on the barter system. Then came the establishment of the largest fort in the southwest, which was not only a fort to subdue the natives, but to serve as an arsenal and a supply depot for the entire southwestern region. At first, General Sumner tried to make the fort self-sustaining, so the army created farms in the Ocate valley, and tried to raise animals as well. But there was never enough food for the troops or the animals. Fort Union had to supply forty-six other forts, many army campaigns, plus many government Indian agencies. The Santa Fe Trail became the chief supply line with the freight that had to be supplied from the Fort Leavenworth area. The army soon found that it couldn't pay for the animals it needed. A horse that cost \$150.00 at Fort Leavenworth would cost \$350.00 in New Mexico. Thus, the army was forced to hire freighting firms and contractors. During the 1850's we learned that 80% of all freight shipped over the trail was for the military. In 1850 there were nine teamsters at the fort, and in 1860 they had sixteen. So almost all the freight was handled by civilian contractors. The army also tried to escort the mail back and forth. They did this for four years, and couldn't continue due to lack of money, animals, and manpower. The freight rate was 8.20 for each 100 pounds per each one hundred miles.

One can hardly imagine how all this affected the people of New Mexico. The huge demand for goods and resources depleted all available supplies. Inflation skyrocketed due to demand. The residents suffered because the barter system was mostly done away with, and the price of goods was very high due to demand. Some merchants like the Ilfields and Spielbergs still accepted trade, but most people had to adapt to the changes or move away. Farmers and ranchers converted their land to produce beef, hay, and grain. The Mora valley became the breadbasket of the southwest. Contractors bought up crops, etc., from all the producers, and four main millers produced flour. Very soon, all flour was produced in New Mexico instead of being shipped here (1,070,000 bushels or more). Drovers were paid .50 a head each month to care for cattle, and \$1.50 per head per month to drive them to their destination. About 460 people were regularly employed for construction at the fort, but you can only imagine how many were engaged in unloading, storing, repacking, and shipping to the various installations. In 1860 the army spent \$1,065,000 (our New Mexico territorial treasury spent \$10,000). The Civil War was an especially difficult time. Volunteer soldiers were never paid (there was no money). The fort bought up all local resources and issued script and IOU's, which were never paid. By the end of the war most freight contractors went bust. People had to hold on, and maybe adapt to the new changes with the coming of the railroad (in 1880) and new economic possibilities.