

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

NEWSLETTER
MAY 2011

PECOS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, MAY 21ST

Corazon and Bent's Fort Chapter members will meet at the Visitor Center of Pecos National Historical Park at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 21st. There will be a presentation in the theater by Park Ranger Erick Valencia outlining the 12,000 years of historic significance of the area. We will visit the ruins of the colonial mission.

Bring your own sack lunch. After lunch, we will go to the Trading Post and the Glorieta Battlefield Trailhead.

The Park is located 25 miles east of Santa Fe, off I-25. Traveling north, take exit 299 to Hwy 50 to Pecos Village, south 2 miles to State Road 63 to the Park. Traveling south, take exit 307, go 5 miles north to the Park on State Road 63.

This is a combined meeting of Corazon and Bent's Fort Chapters. A large group is coming from Colorado, so plan to join in the fun. Be sure to wear your nametag.

This will be a two-day event for Bent's Fort and we are invited to join them on Friday afternoon in Las Vegas. Meet at 12 noon, Friday, May 20, in the lobby of the Plaza Hotel, Old Town. CCHP has arranged a tour for the group.

CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS, FORT UNION, JUNE 25-26

In June, Fort Union has the Cultural Encounters event. Corazon Chapter members, Faye Gaines and Dixie Odom will give a short program about Corazon Chapter, at 1 p.m. on the 25th. On both Saturday and Sunday members will have a table from which they will distribute literature and answer questions about our Chapter.

On both days there will be events and presentations of historic interest. More information will be in the June Newsletter.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The weather was in our favor and we had a good turnout at Elida's Restaurant for Doyle Foreman's program on the XIT Ranch. It was very interesting. Doyle had everyone's attention with his history details and cowboy humor. The Springer Museum was fascinating and I'm so glad I finally got to tour the inside. They had a lot of history memorabilia for us to preview. Everyone enjoyed the day. THANKS!

See you out on the Trail,
Paula Steves

XIT RANCH

Sixteen members and guests learned the history of the "largest range in the world under fence" when Doyle Foreman presented the program on the XIT Ranch April 17 at Elida's Café in Springer.

The State of Texas had progressed through its ten years as an independent nation, the horrors of the Civil War, and the trials of Reconstruction. By 1882 the Legislature

decided it was time for a new capital building. Bankrupt in everything but land, they offered 3,000,000 acres to anyone who would build a capital building in Austin.

Brothers Charles B. and John V. Farwell of Chicago, backed by a syndicate of mostly British investors, agreed to spend \$3,000,000 on a capital built of red Texas granite. In return, they received a parcel of land 200 miles in length, varying from 20 to 30 miles in width in the Texas Panhandle. It reached from the Yellow House headquarters near Lubbock to Buffalo Springs on the Oklahoma border.

The new owners set about immediately to put the ranch in working order. They hired a manager and a bookkeeper, had the land surveyed, built boundary fences (600 miles, 4-wire, 75,000 posts), and bought cattle (finally numbering 150,000). When they hired the 150 personnel, it was with the stipulation that gambling and drinking would not be allowed. There were specific crews—fencing crews, branding crews, windmill crews—instead of the one-size-fits all cowboys.

A cattle herd meant a brand. One of the biggest misconceptions about the ranch is that XIT stands for Ten In Texas. No! It was chosen because it was easy to apply with a straight iron and would be difficult for rustlers to alter.

Few of the investors had ever seen the land they owned or knew anything about ranching. When officers of the company came for a visit, they were given the red carpet treatment and glowing reports of ranch activities. Then when need for more funds arose, money was willingly sent

However, cattle prices fell, the winter of 1886 was especially severe and cattle died. Others were lost to wolves and rustlers. Prairie fires scorched the plains.

In 1901 XIT began selling land, both large parcels and small acreages. The last cattle were sold in 1912. And the ranch faded into history.

XIT was in existence for sixteen years and never showed a dime in profit. However, the investors did well as the price of land continued to appreciate,

Doyle recommends *Cattle Empire* by Lewis Nordyke as a reference for a history of the ranch.

OLD COURT HOUSE

The Old Courthouse building in Springer has been described as an "important artifact." Begun in 1879 and finished in 1882, the two-story gray stone structure has served as Colfax courthouse from 1882-1898, the first New Mexico Reform School for boys, a jail, the town library, City Hall and the Santa Fe Trail Museum.

Insufficient funds have led to the closing of the Museum and Interpretative Center. Colorful panels full of information on the Trail as well as interesting heirloom displays remain. "It is doubtful if the Museum will ever reopen," Doyle said.

ROUND UP AT POINT OF ROCKS

A schedule has been planned for the July 17th meeting at Point of Rocks east of Springer:

10 a.m. Henry Ostrander demonstrates musket rifle shooting (weather permitting)

11 a.m. Gilbert Quintana speaks on the history of the Jicarilla Apache

Lunch Hot dogs and hamburgers provided by the Chapter Bring a side dish, your choice
Tom Perry provides western music during lunch

1 p.m. Mike Olsen speaks on the history of the Taos Trail

2 p.m. Jerry Phillips tells stories of Black Jack Ketchum

Faye Gaines, our hostess, shares information about the Point of Rocks site

PLEASE make reservations with Paula Steves, elkrun2700@yahoo.com, 575-377-6726 or Dixie Odom, delo@bacavalley.com, 575-375-2705 by July 13.

NOVEMBER MEETING

For those of you who have followed the on-going saga as we attempted to plan the November meeting---Dorothy Smoker will give her Living History presentation “Land of Luz---Maria de la Luz Beaubien Maxwell. Arrangements are final and her fees will be paid by a speaker’s grant from the SFTA. Mark your calendars for November 19, 1 p. m. K-Bob’s Restaurant, Las Vegas.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

May 19th, Thursday---“Glimpses of the Past” program, 7 p.m. Interpretative Center, 116 Bridge Street, Las Vegas (I hope those of you who were interested made your way successfully to last month’s program after my time glitch. Oops! Sorry!)

May 21st, Saturday---Corazon and Bent’ Fort Chapters tour of Pecos National Historical Park Meet at the Visitors’ Center. Bring a sack lunch

June 9-10---Junior Ranger Camps for children ages 7-12, Fort Union National Monument, call 505-425-8025 for information

June 23-27---Mountain Men Rendezvous, Eagle Nest

June 25-26---Cultural Encounters, Fort Union, Speakers and activities begin at 10 a.m.both days. Corazon will participate with a program **June 25th, Saturday**, 1 p.m.

July 16th, Saturday---First Fort and Arsenal Tours, Fort Union

July 17th, Sunday---“Round –Up on the Trail”, Point of Rocks Ranch, 10 a.m.

All day event

August 4-14---Heritage Week, Las Vegas

August 20th, Saturday---Corazon Chapter Auto Tour, Raton to Cimarron 10 a.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

What appears to be a bell tower atop the Springer courthouse was actually built as a gallows. However, the only official hanging in Springer was outside. Damian Romero of Mora was convicted of murder by a Springer Grand Jury in 1881. Frank Springer of Cimarron and Judge Lee from Las were court-appointed defense attorneys and Thomas B. Catron was the successful prosecutor. Judge L Bradford Prince “sentenced Damian...hanged by the neck until dead...”

Although Damian was convicted on circumstantial evidence, all appeals and delays failed. On February 2, 1883 the 18-year-old Damian was hanged from the gallows in the courthouse yard. “He died in his faith,” his priest said.

Doyle shared that the fact the gallows in the bell tower was never used might have been because the trap door opened **directly** over the judge’s desk! .

Thanks go to Springer native Anselmo F. Arellano who compiled the story of Damian Romero and to Alma Gregory for her September, 2001 Newsletter.

Dixie

